



Superintendent's Report August 9, 2023

It's August! While the summer is still in full swing, we are busy preparing for school opening in twenty-eight days. We will welcome students back on Wednesday, September 6, 2023!

This school year, we will warmly greet eleven new staff members, seven long-term leave replacement teachers, and five new paraprofessionals. The new hires will attend a district orientation on Monday, August 21, 2023, to learn about our instructional expectations, the evaluation process, business office procedures, and daily procedures. Our new teachers will then attend a three-day instructional orientation delivered by the Northern Valley Curriculum Center beginning on Tuesday, August 22, 2023. During that orientation, they will learn how to support students as they grow academically, socially, and emotionally. I trust that the experience and skills of our newly hired staff will enrich our wonderful school district.

Our full staff will return on Friday, September 1, 2023, and Tuesday, September 5, 2023, for staff orientation and professional development.

As previously discussed, the proposed Board of Education bond referendum vote will be held on Tuesday, September 26, 2023, from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at regular voting locations. The Board of Education will present an information session for senior citizens at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, August 16, 2023, at the Closter Senior Center. A referendum information session for all citizens will be held on Thursday, September 7, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in the Tenakill Middle School Auditorium. We have mailed all residents a referendum information card, which should arrive this week. If approved by the Closter voters, this bond referendum will allow us to replace boilers and replace roofs at both schools, replace windows at TMS, and add HVAC in the TMS gymnasium. The projects are eligible for debt service aid from the state of New Jersey, thereby reducing the cost to taxpayers. I encourage everyone to visit [our district webpage](#) to learn more about the September 26th referendum vote.

This week I have received some communication from parents and community members concerned about ratings on GreatSchools.org. A not-for-profit organization maintains this website, and its ratings are unofficial. The ratings are based on New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) data from 2021-2022. Our testing data shows that students are achieving far above the state average, and most are at or above grade level (in language arts and mathematics, the tested subjects). The GreatSchools.org rating of student progress is most likely based on the New Jersey student growth percentile that measures student growth compared to other students in the state who have scored similarly. Admittedly, some of our students grew less significantly after the pandemic while remaining above grade level. The student growth percentile measures the relative change in a student's performance compared to all students in the state who took the same two tests year-over-year. So for Hillside School, only fourth-grade students receive a student growth percentile rating because two years of state testing scores are necessary to calculate growth. It is designed to measure student growth in the aggregate. Still, it is not designed to estimate the effect of the school on that growth or to measure the quality of a

school. When I presented the [state assessment data report for 2021-2022](#), I shared interventions we put in place to help students meet and exceed state standards and to help students to make significant growth. We will measure the success of those interventions when we receive finalized results from the 2022-2023 state assessments in September. After receiving that information, I will present the data report to the Board and community. Closter Public Schools has dedicated administrators, excellent teachers, supportive parents, and intelligent students. We will continue supporting all learners and providing quality instruction every day. I am hopeful that we will see improvement in our student growth outcomes.

Enjoy the last weeks of summer!

Vincent Mc Hale