

# In Our Schools



Fall 2011



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NEWARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Newark Students "Read for the Record!"

On October 6, 2011, State District Superintendent Cami Anderson and Mayor Cory Booker added their voices to the more than 2 million individuals nationwide who celebrated the love of reading with the book, "Llama Llama Red Pajama" by Anna Dewdney. The Superintendent and Mayor joined teachers at Speedway School in reading to primary grade students.

Advisory Board Chairperson Eliana Pintor Marin, who read at Benjamin Franklin School, was among the various guest readers who stopped by schools throughout the district to delight students with the story.

Teachers were provided with guides for activities to supplement the reading sessions. The various activities included a llama puppet show, a re-enactment of the llama story, a llama rhyming game, and a llama puzzle.

Read for the Record is a partnership with the Pearson Foundation and Jumpstart organization to encourage lit-



eracy skills among young students in low-income neighborhoods. The Pearson Foundation is an international education and information company that partners with leading non-profit, civic and business organizations to provide financial, organizational, and publishing

assistance across the world. The Foundation aims to make a difference by sponsoring innovative education programs and extending its educational expertise to help in the classrooms and in local communities.

## Teachers Participate in Focus Forums

In an effort to encourage employee feedback, Superintendent Cami Anderson recently hosted a Teacher Focus Forum at Harold Wilson School where she invited teachers for a dialogue focusing on teacher quality and student achievement. Pre-K through fifth grade teachers joined in a conversation and shared teaching experiences and effective instructional strategies.

Technology was infused into the meeting by adding response card keypads that allowed the Superintendent to ask questions; and participants were able to type their responses and the results were instantly tabulated and displayed on screen. The questions asked were in reference to English/Language Arts and math and if teachers felt they had adequate assessments to gauge student progress and whether or not the curriculum was a good tool to help students achieve content mastery.

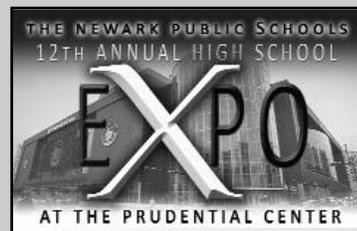
Mount Vernon ESL teacher Sheila Miller attended the program and was very pleased with Superintendent Anderson's leadership style.



Continued on Page 6

## 12th Annual High School Expo Prepares Students For High School and Beyond!

Thousands of eighth grade students, high school students and their parents merged on the Prudential Center for the recent High School Expo, entitled, "We are One...Making the Dream Happen." The Expo was designed to help students select the right high schools and review career options connected to the district's academic programs. A hugely popular program that attracted individuals from across the city, the Expo was an example of the benefits that can be realized when family and community are engaged together. Superintendent Cami Anderson, County Superintendent Dr. Lawrence Feinsod, Advisory Board Member Shavar Jeffries, former Superintendent Dr. Marion Bolden and former Deputy Superintendent Anzella Nelms were among the special guests who turned out to bring greetings to the students and their parents. Students were encouraged to visit high school and college information tables and talk to their peers and administrators. In addition, guest speakers and performers provided inspirational messages in terms of self esteem and the importance of planning for future directions. The High School Expo was sponsored by the Newark Public Schools, Office of Career and Technical Education.



**Inside This Issue!**

	Page
Read for the Record .....	Cover
Superintendent's Teachers Forum ....	Cover
High School Expo.....	Cover
Teacher Innovation Fund .....	2
Newark Students See Stars .....	3
Parent Place.....	4
Senior Check List .....	5
New Student Board Member .....	5
Wilson Avenue Update .....	6
Shared Campuses Update .....	7
Oliver Street Drew University Grant .....	7
Quitman Ribbon cutting.....	7
Lunch Application Update .....	8
GradTracker .....	8

In Our Schools is a publication of The Newark Public Schools Communications Department. For more information call 973-733-7338.

**Where Can I Find Information on Newark Schools and Programs for Newark Parents?**

**Online @  
the NPS Website:  
[www.nps.k12.nj.us](http://www.nps.k12.nj.us)**

**MS. CAMI ANDERSON  
STATE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT**



**ADVISORY BOARD**

- MS. ELIANA PINTOR MARIN, CHAIRPERSON
- MS. SHANIQUE L. DAVIS-SPEIGHT, VICE CHAIRPERSON
- MS. ANTOINETTE BASKERVILLE-RICHARDSON
- MR. SHAVAR JEFFRIES
- MR. IVAN LAMOURT
- MR. MARQUES-AQUIL LEWIS
- MR. JUAN RIVERA
- MS. NAKIA J. WHITE
- MING DING WENG, STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

**Teacher Innovation Fund**

**N**ewark Public Schools teachers will now have the opportunity to develop programs that directly impact their classroom experience. The Foundation for Newark's Future (FNF) announced a \$600,000 initiative to fund teacher-designed and driven programs that will begin in schools citywide this school year. FNF CEO Greg Taylor was joined by Newark Mayor Cory Booker, Newark Schools Superintendent Cami Anderson and New Jersey Education Acting Commissioner Christopher Cerf at Harriet Tubman Elementary School for the official launch of the Teacher Innovation Fund.

The fund will provide teams of 3-5 Newark classroom teachers with up to \$10,000 in grant funding to design and implement a new, innovative program in their school buildings. Teachers will be empowered to target specific areas in need of improvement at their schools, and address them in a comprehensive way. Programs will fall into one of three FNF-priority grant categories: teaching and learning, teacher growth and development or connecting schools and communities.

Teachers taking part in the Newark Teacher Innovation Fund Project will formalize ways to share their work with their colleagues and the entire school. This peer-to-peer collaboration will provide educators with the opportunity to learn from each other on an ongoing basis. The Foundation will convene grant recipients from across Newark at the end of the school year for a project showcase and discussion of lessons learned. Teachers can begin applying for grants through an online application that will be available in November.

"Teachers are best positioned to know the needs of the students in their classrooms," said Greg Taylor. "The Teacher Innovation Fund was established to provide teachers with the opportunity to work together in peer networks to develop innovative approaches to teaching and learning within their schools. It's just one way the Foundation for Newark's Future is trying to invest the entire school community-from teachers to leaders to families-in transformative change for children."

"In every conversation I have in schools and with families, having an effective teacher in the classroom is always a top priority," said Superintendent Anderson. "The Teacher Innovation Fund puts educators in the driver's seat so they can strengthen their skills and be the best teachers they can be."

"There's no question that great schools start with great teachers," said Mayor Booker. "We are committed to strengthening teacher quality by giving them the tools and support they need to build their skills. This is a pillar of our larger goal in Newark, ensuring every student has access to an excellent education, and the Foundation for Newark's Future is taking the right steps to improve achievement for all children."

"This funding has the potential to result in transformational change for Newark's public schools and I congratulate the Foundation for the thought and care that has gone into their long term grant making strategy," said New Jersey Acting Education Commissioner Chris Cerf. "This funding presents a real opportunity to ensure that all students in Newark have the tools they need and the conditions necessary to graduate from high school ready for college and a career."

Foundation for  
**NEWARK'S FUTURE**

## Newark Students See Stars...Nationally Recognized Celebrities Visit Newark Schools



Melba Moore is surrounded by admiring students during her visit to her alma mater Arts High School. The singer and Tony Award-winning actress, returned to the school, her first visit since graduating, as part of the national History Makers program.



Actress Tisha Campbell, popular star of the ABC hit series, "My Wife and Kids," gave the Arts High School student body a treat when she visited the school recently on her 43rd birthday. She shared her experiences with the students and encouraged them to remain committed to their goals.



Actress Goldie Hawn, who is also the founder of MindUP, a self awareness and meditation program for young children, recently shared her philosophy and disciplines with students at Oliver Street School. Goldie met with the students to explain the benefits of beginning the day with a peaceful mind and learning to control negative thoughts and behaviors.

### Anderson Cooper Surprises Brick Avon Teacher

On Friday, October 21, 2011 Brick Avon Academy Kindergarten teacher Princess Williams was pleasantly surprised in her classroom by talk show host Anderson Cooper. As part of a segment for his new talk show *Anderson*, Mr. Cooper selected Ms. Williams as an outstanding teacher deserving of a day at the spa while he took over her teaching duties for an afternoon. As she and her mother Samantha Lucien were whisked away, Anderson and assistant teacher Alkeisha Robinson took over.



The children read stories, created original art projects and enjoyed a snack with the energized guest teacher. The children especially enjoyed reading *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*, by Mo Willems. The picture book, one of the children's favorites kept the day lively. The event even drew attention from WPIX news and also home to the Anderson show. Sah'Jaidah Joseph, an adorable student in the class was interviewed for the local television news program. She had nothing but favorable things to say about Mr. Cooper.

Interestingly, last year, Anderson was named the person most likely to serve as a substitute teacher by the National Education Association's Annual Substitute Teachers Poll. He beat out a number of celebrities for this distinction and based on the children's hugs and excitement at the end of the day, he did a pretty good job. The following week, Ms. Williams and her class traveled to the Anderson Studio to tape a segment for the show. The children joined Mr. Cooper on stage and were later treated to a pizza party. It was truly a day Ms. Anderson and her students will never forget.

After the taping of the show, Anderson Cooper donated a classroom library of books and a \$5,000 gift certificate to the school.



# The Parent Place... Making A World of Difference!

## Cyberbullying

There have been many stories in the news recently about bullying and how it is affecting more and more children. Parents, teachers and other school staff together can help combat bullying and keep children safe. As technology increases, we are now seeing an increase in cyberbullying across the country. Cyberbullying is using online technology to willfully cause hurt or harm verbally, emotionally or psychologically to another person. It can be through the use of email, text messages, chat groups, social networking, cell phone and blogs. Using these cyber tools takes bullying to the next level because one does not necessarily see the bully. Additionally, harmful messages can be delivered quickly to multiple people and at times it's even hard to identify the originator of the message.

New laws in New Jersey have been enacted to protect children from the negative effects of cyberbullying. Louisa Wuebbens serves as the Anti-Bullying Coordinator for the Newark Public Schools. She stated, "The new law has consequences for acts of cyberbullying, however the focus is on preventative measures within the schools and district. Character education is infused in the curriculum throughout the school year and additional strategies for anti-bullying will be utilized by guidance counselors and social workers in the schools. These programs will foster a positive school climate."

Parents should talk to children about the Internet and mobile devices. Children are exposed to technology at a younger age and while there are many benefits, there are also consequences. Please remember that cyberbullying can be emotionally damaging to children and can lead to low self-esteem, depression, a drop in grades and attendance and suicide. In addition to talking to children about this issue, parents should also monitor their child's computer usage and keep the computer in a central location at the home. Parents can also purchase software that restricts access and filters websites.

Cyberbullying is covered under the NJ Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights and handles incidents off school grounds. Each school has a copy of the bullying and cyberbullying policy, procedures and rules. Students can also report incidents of bullying anonymously even if they are not the victim and simply a bystander. This is an important issue and to learn more about the effects of cyberbullying, visit: [www.Njbullying.org](http://www.Njbullying.org).

### Know the Terms

- **Cyberbullying** - using the communication capabilities of computers, the Internet, and/or other digital/communication devices to include but not limited to: e-mail messages, instant messaging, text messaging, cellular telephone communications, internet blogs, internet chat rooms, internet postings, and defamatory websites to bully others.
- **Cyberharassment** - Cyber harassment describes the actions of persons who relentlessly pursue others online with the intention of frightening or embarrassing the victim.
- **Cyberstalking** - use of Internet, e-mail, or other electronic communications to stalk, and generally refers to a pattern of threatening or malicious behaviors.

## Thank You and Congratulations to Newark Parent Volunteers!

NPS Advisory Board Meeting,  
October 25, 2011 at Arts High School

Advisory Board Member Marques Aquil-Lewis, Parent Volunteers: Ternice Meadows-Coles, Mary Bethel Franklin, Angela Purpura, and Superintendent Cami Anderson



## High School Senior Check List

For most students and their parents, the senior year of high school consists of a flurry of activities, deadlines, testing and seemingly endless applications. Even for the most seasoned parent, the process of helping your child get into the right college or career track is somewhat overwhelming at times. Taking the time to talk with your senior and setting up a clear plan of action can alleviate some of the tension and often confusion associated with this process.

By now all Newark seniors who are planning to attend college, should have logged into the district's Naviance system to assess what is needed to keep on track in identifying the college and career of their choice. If your senior has not yet set up his/her Naviance account, please have him/her contact the guidance office at the school.

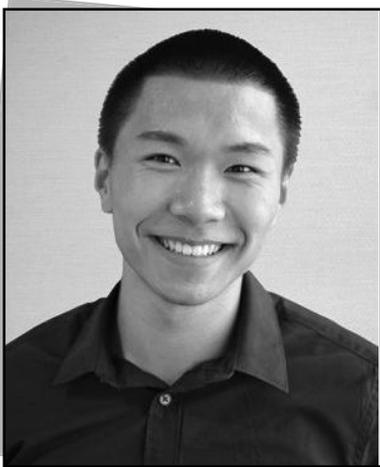
The following is a check list that parents can share to help the senior to stay on track:

- At the beginning of the school year, check with your guidance counselor to ensure that you have the courses necessary to graduate in the spring.
- Use your computer and go online to get basic information regarding college requirements, curriculum, tuition, fees and deadlines.
- Register and take the ACT or the SAT and the SAT Subject tests, as necessary, in time to meet the deadlines noted for the colleges to which you are applying.
- It is important to review college applications early in your senior year to ensure you know the deadlines. Post a calendar showing all of your application deadlines for admission,



financial aid, and scholarships.

- Keep your grades up and continue to participate in your extracurricular and volunteer activities as these will enhance your application.
- Identify teachers and other professionals who will be willing to write letters of academic or personal reference.
- Remember, any forms that must be completed by your high school principal or guidance counselor should be submitted at least 2 weeks before the date they are due.
- Keep a log to verify with your guidance counselor the schools to which transcripts, test scores, and letters are to be sent.
- Make sure to request that your test scores are sent to the colleges of your choice.
- If you have the time, visit colleges while classes are in session to get a feel for campus life.
- Get an accordion folder and keep copies of all of the applications that you send out to keep track of applications, financial aid and scholarship forms.
- If heading into the military or workforce find out necessary requirements before graduation.
- Most importantly, remember, to relax and enjoy your senior year!



## New Student Advisory Board Representative

Ming Ding Weng was recently sworn in as the new Student Advisory Board Representative for the 2011 - 2012 school year. He said his focus will be on keeping his peers informed about programs that they may not be in tuned with and helping to strengthen the communications between students and administrators. Ming was born in the Fuzhou Province of China and at the age of four his family emigrated to the United States and settled in Newark, New Jersey in the Ironbound section. He attended Ann Street School prior to enrolling in Science Park High School where he is a senior. After graduating he would like to attend Northeastern University in Boston and major in sociology. Ming has a passion for history and the law and has plans to attend law school.

## Wilson Avenue School Emergency Repairs to be Completed Sooner



The Wilson Avenue School community had good news mid October when they were told of a plan to have students return to the school early in the new year. The school was evacuated at the very start of the school year in September due to mold caused by water damage from Hurricane Irene. Despite the timing, and a student population of 844 to accommodate, no school days were missed. Newark Public Schools (NPS) administrators immediately implemented a safe, long-term solution, noting parents' concerns.

A two-phase plan was worked out after NPS urgently consulted the various agencies involved: the state, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the insurance company. District facilities teams began carrying out Phase 1 (indoor remediation and repairs). Phase 2 (major outside repairs) will be carried out later in the year by the state Schools Development Authority (SDA), who is responsible for capital facilities projects in the district. For years NPS has not been allowed to raise capital funding for facilities projects since the Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act in 2000 was meant to alleviate problems with old school buildings.

Since the evacuation, students in grades one through three have been attending St. Anthony's School in Belleville, which the district has temporarily leased, while fourth through eighth-graders have attended Quitman Street School. Wilson Avenue Principal Margarita Hernandez and Quitman Principal Erskine Glover and their staff have worked extremely hard to accommodate the needs of the students, staff and parents, showing strong, yet flexible leadership.

In addition to the repair plan, students' time in the classroom has increased, due to a new bus schedule written into a district contract solely to transport Wilson Avenue students to and from the temporary locations. In the event of an emergency and/or hardship, NPS is providing special support to parents who need to reach their children urgently.

## Teachers Focus Forums (cont'd. from cover)

"This event was a great opportunity to meet Cami and get a sense of what type of leader she is. It is important to have a leader address the needs of teachers and curriculum. It was equally important for teachers to meet each other and share their best practices," Ms. Miller stated.



*Superintendent Anderson shared her vision and priorities during the teachers forum.*

### District Vision:

Ensure Newark students achieve at the highest levels and graduate college and career-ready.

*"Five priorities focus on what will most rapidly drive dramatic student achievement gains and what will enable you - as teachers - to reach and support all of our students."* Cami Anderson State District Superintendent

**Leadership:** Ensure that every school has an excellent leader with the autonomy and support to drive unprecedented levels of student achievement

**Teacher Quality:** Recruit, train, support, and retain the highest quality teachers for every Newark classroom

**Operational Excellence:** Organize the central office to efficiently and effectively support schools/educators and families

**Family and Community Involvement:** Partner with families and community groups to ensure all of Newark's children graduate with college-level skills

**Innovation:** Implement initiatives to accelerate student achievement such as extended learning time, socio-emotional learning/support for students, and streamlined curriculum with real-time assessment data

## The Shared Campuses

State District Superintendent Cami Anderson, Mayor Cory Booker, Executive Director Ross Danis of the Newark Education Trust Fund and President and CEO Greg Taylor of the Foundation for Newark's Future unveiled the Shared Campus Grants at a recent press conference.

The grants, totaling \$350,000 will be used to provide \$10,000 to \$50,000 grants for the eight shared campus locations over the next two years. The criteria will include building relationships and community across schools, planning shared activities for students and families and codifying and promoting promising practices between schools-including joint professional development.

Shared campuses exist when two or more school programs (district, new district models and/or charter schools) share a district school building. The eight shared campus locations include: **Burnet Street School Building** - Burnet Street Elementary School and Great Oaks (Charter); **Former Camden Middle School Building** - People's Prep (Charter), Bard High School Early College and Newark Bridges Academy (New Schools); **200 Washington Street** - YEES Center and Newark Hybrid High (New School), **Newark Vocational Building** - Newark Vocational High School and Newark Leadership Academy (New School); **13th Avenue Building** - 13th Avenue Elementary and North Star Elementary III (Charter); **George Washington Carver Building**-GWC Elementary School and TEAM Spark (Charter).

## Oliver Street School Partners with Drew University for Veterans History Project

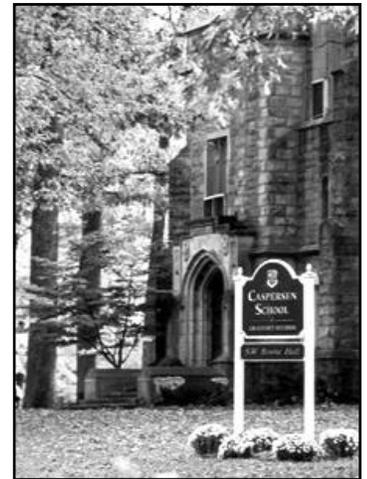
Oliver Street School has partnered with Drew University in Madison, NJ to take part in the Library of Congress Veterans History Project.

Students in Mr. Montalbano's 8th grade class visited Drew twice in October. Graduate students from the Master of Arts in Teaching program at Drew also visited Oliver Street School on several occasions.

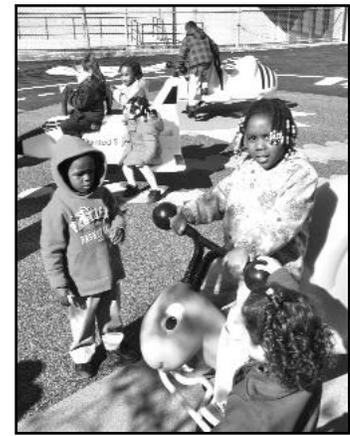
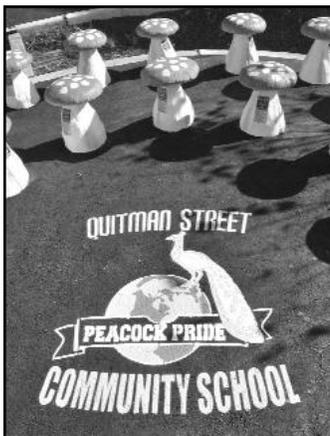
While at Drew, the 8th graders from Oliver were trained in how to conduct an oral history interview. They also had a chance to tour the campus and meet with Drew professors to explore their college and career interests.

On October 28th, four veterans of the Iraq War came to Oliver Street School and were interviewed by the students. The interviews were recorded and will be submitted to the Library of Congress to be included in their Veterans History Project archives.

For more information about the Veterans History Project please visit the Library of Congress website at [www.loc.gov/vets](http://www.loc.gov/vets).



## Quitman Street School Playground Ribbon Cutting



Students, teachers and parents who planned the new pre-kindergarten through third grade playground at Quitman Street School attend the ribbon cutting along with Superintendent Cami Anderson, Principal Erskine Glover, Trust for Public Land Newark Director Scott Dvorak, funders and officials. The colorful peacock mascot-embazoned play area features slides, a tricycling track, performance space, outdoor classroom, a variety of equipment (including some appropriate for autistic students) and a wheelchair accessible ramp.

The Newark Public Schools  
 Communications Department  
 2 Cedar Street, Newark NJ 07102

Non-Profit  
 Standard Mail  
 U.S. Postage  
 PAID  
 Permit No. 6519  
 Newark, NJ

## Lunch Application Update

**C**ongratulations to parents and school staff for a job well done and thank you for helping the district reach 91% of lunch applications processed as of October 21st. Three schools have reached 100% and many more are very close behind, with 32 schools having 95% or more of lunch applications completed.

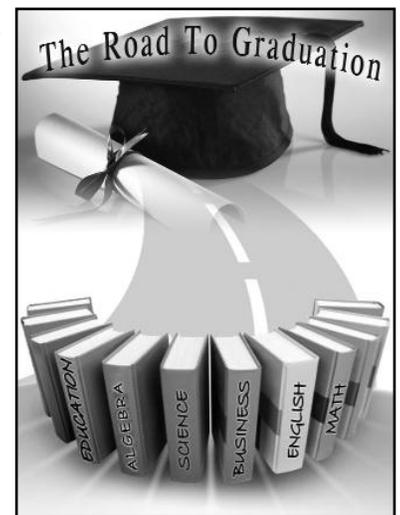
A special thank you should go out to all the volunteers from the Coalition for Effective Newark Public Schools who helped schools reach out to parents and provided assistance.

We ask that our school communities please keep up the momentum as applications are accepted throughout the school year. Every application processed may assist a family in need of a free or reduced price lunch.



## District Introduces GradTracker

**S**uperintendent Cami Anderson wants to advise every current senior as well as any student who has been in high school for 4 years or more, of his/her progress towards graduation. Essentially, the GradTracker Report is a representation of the courses needed to meet graduation requirements with indication of the students' successful completion of those courses.



To ensure that we do not provide parents and students with inaccurate information, appropriate staff members in NPS high schools have been involved in a student-by-student review of the historical grades for each of these students to ensure that they receive proper credit for all successfully completed courses. In most cases, the staff involved in this review are the Vice-Principals in Charge of Scheduling (SVP); in schools that do not have an SVP, the principal is conducting this review.

GradTracker reports were given out at parent/teacher conferences on November 16th and are available in Standard French, Spanish and Portuguese. Please contact the Bilingual Office at 973-733-8319 for further information.

## NJ Devils Honor Roll Program

**T**he New Jersey Devils Honor Roll program is a partnership between the Newark Public Schools and the New Jersey Devils. The program rewards our students for their academic achievements. This school year the New Jersey Devils will continue to support our learning communities and acknowledge students who make the honor roll by rewarding them with complementary tickets to a home game at the Prudential Center. Students in grades 3 to 12 are eligible based on the program's criteria. Additional information is available at the schools.

