



August 26, 2021

Dear Families of the Absecon School District,

Looking at the calendar, it is hard to believe that summer has almost passed us by; however, let's not give up just yet on the remaining few days prior to the official start of school. This week has been a wonderful week as we had our first students of the year enter our building, as we hosted both our preschool and kindergarten orientations. It was amazing seeing many of our younger children enter a school building as students for the first time; the thoughts of the opportunities and resources they will have to ensure a successful future for all was overwhelming and heartwarming.

Over the next few days, please continue to take time to rest, have fun, recharge, and enjoy family and friends as the school year will prove to be one of substantial rigor, great opportunity, and significant success. As we approach September, I hope that each of you are as excited as I am to continue our journey together. The Board of Education, Administration, Teachers and Support Staff have been working tirelessly to ensure an outstanding year for you and your child. I know that the start of a new school year sometimes may come with feelings of apprehension, wonder, and anticipation; therefore, we have scheduled some events to put both you and your child's mind at ease:

- Community Meet and Greet
 - August 30th at 5:00pm - This event will highlight our newest members of our educational team, and allow parents and community members to meet the new faces of the district
- STARS Before and After Care Program
 - August 31st at 6:00 PM Meet and Greet, Q&A, and New Program Review
- Board of Education Meeting
 - August 31st at 7:00 PM
- 5th Grade Orientation
 - September 2, 2021 at 9:00 AM
- Back to School Nights
 - Marsh - September 30, 2021 at 6:00 PM
 - Attales - September 23, 2021 at 6:00 PM
- Title 1 Parent Night: Informative and interactive event
 - Marsh - October 14th
 - Attales - October 21st



Our Absecon Learning Community has many things to celebrate: a top notch staff that is truly dedicated to their profession as evident in each staff's commitment towards student advocacy and achievement, parents that are extremely dedicated to being a part of the process to provide the best educational opportunity for their children, and an Administrative and Board of Education Team that is devoted to providing students with the most enriching curricular and extra curricular opportunities. All of this, compounded by a population of students that is eager to learn, eager to please, with unlimited talents and drive, and who frequently surpass even the highest expectations; I look forward to this year with great optimism and excitement. With the support and drive of all stakeholders we will solidify Absecon School District's success in the year to come and beyond, despite any obstacles, including COVID. In an effort to maximize our schools' potential we have set rigorous, yet attainable, expectations as outlined below:

2020-2021 Highlights and Initiatives:

Staff Highlights:

- Introducing STAR: Students Thrilled About Reading
 - This additional course is being provided at the elementary school that integrates essential literacy standards with various other content areas to reinforce classroom instruction while providing a unique perspective to meet the needs of our diverse learners. Students will participate in small group instruction, independent reading, library book check out, and the SMILE program with Skye and Hope.
- New Educational Technology Specialist
 - As we continue through the educational process that is more reliant upon technology than ever, our goal continues to be the engagement of students in the learning process. This position will provide high quality professional development and coaching on the effective use of instructional technology to support best practices for delivery of content within the district.
- Additional School Social Worker
 - A school social worker will be working with our early childhood department to provide social, emotional, and behavioral support for our youngest learners. This position will also offer professional development and training opportunities to our educational team and parents to support growth and development in our students.
- New Behavior Specialist
 - A Board Certified Behavior Analyst joins our special services department to provide direct services to students and hands on support for our educational team in meeting the behavioral needs and proactively supporting the social emotional needs of our district.
- Additional BSI
 - The Intervention Team is expanding to include four teachers to service our students for supplemental instruction in grades Preschool through Eight.

Programming:

- SCTP (School Climate Transportation Project): Mentor, Dr. Stephen Bernardini, Rutgers University
- Connected Action Roadmap with FEA and NJDOE
- Attales Special Area Courses

- Literacy: Update
 - We will continue to advance our agenda in Balanced Literacy with Guided Reading, Writer’s Workshop, and Phonics First, as we align our resources and curriculum to support the best teaching and learning practices to ensure our students immediate and future success.
- Math Program: Ready Math
 - Following a two year pilot initiative, the district will implement a consistent math program in grades kindergarten through eight this year. Ready Math is a comprehensive mathematics program that is supported by research to provide high quality content that is aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. Students will engage in critical thinking skills that encourage the understanding of mathematics, rather than simply completing rote calculations. This program also provides support for all learners with an online component that will assess strengths and areas in need of improvement; after which students will embark on MyPath and complete assignments meant to support weaker skills and accelerate areas of strength.
- Food Services:
 - All students will be entitled to free breakfast and lunch throughout the school year
- STARS (Shining Together As Rising Students) New Initiatives:
 - Please come out to see us on August 31st at 6:00 PM (Please See Flyer from Social Media and Our Website)
- Technology
 - 1 to 1 initiative for every child in the district, preschool through eighth grade
 - Addition of a New Educational Technology Specialist for the District
- Facilities:
 - New Preschool and Kindergarten playgrounds
 - Upgraded elementary playground
 - Outdoor eating areas
 - Outdoor mask break areas

Please remember that my administration remains committed to our open door policy. It is our continued mission to collaboratively engage with all members of our school community in order to provide the best educational opportunities for our students; this was hard to do during the trials and tribulations of COVID but even in the worst of circumstances we are only a call, email, Zoom, or in person meeting away. I would like to thank each of you in advance for the tremendous amount of work it will take for us to meet our shared goals, and we look forward to celebrating our many accomplishments together this year and in years to come.

Thank you,
 Dr. Daniel J. Dooley
 Superintendent of Schools