

# Principally Speaking . . .

**Pequannock Valley Middle School — Pompton Plains, New Jersey**  
**Main Office Telephone: 973-616-6050**

Dr. William H. Trusheim, Principal  
Jennifer K. Mildner, Assistant Principal  
Dr. Frank Fischel, Supervisor of School Improvement

Nancy Paxton, Guidance Counselor  
Terri Praschak, Guidance Counselor  
Cindy Wolkowitz, RN, School Nurse



*"NJ School of Character"*

October 2008

Dear Parents/Guardians,

With the coming of the month of October, the new school year is now in full swing. At PV School, we have been able to enjoy the fruits of our hard work from last year on several fronts. First, we are now in the second year of all the programmatic changes that we made for the 2007-08 School Year. Secondly, we know that our changes produced the kind of results we were looking for. At the end of August, we received preliminary scores for the NJASK tests given last April and May. The results indicate that we met our building improvement objectives and I am very proud of the hard work of our faculty, staff, and students in making the grade on these tests. Beyond this good news about test scores, we also had the opportunity to refine what we are doing based on our experiences from last year. Both students and teachers enter this year with a new sense of confidence about the changes implemented in 2007-08 and we look forward to a successful 2008-09!

October is also a month where we look at the issue of substance abuse through **RED RIBBON WEEK** activities. As you already know, we have been a state and national leader in drug and alcohol prevention as a result of our proactive random drug and alcohol testing program. I am happy to say that we are maintaining a high percentage of voluntary student participation in this program, but I always invite additional student sign-ups for the testing pool. If you have any questions regarding this program, please call me during regular school hours. Special events scheduled for **RED RIBBON WEEK** include a parent presentation by Matt Bellace which will be given at PTHS on October 16. Dr. Bellace did presentations at PV School last spring and was a hit with both students and parents. As a result, we are incorporating our regular October HSA meeting into Matt's parent presentation. I invite all PV Parents to attend Matt's presentation at the high school which will be followed by our Home and School business meeting which will also be held at the high school this month. On Friday, October 24, our students will hear a powerful anti drug and alcohol message from Maureen and Jesse Morella during assembly programs. Their story provides a personal and compelling reason not to use.

Another prevention activity that is important to us is the gathering of information to add to the research on the drug and alcohol problem. Students at PV who have turned in parent "Consent to Survey" forms will respond to two important surveys during **RED RIBBON WEEK**. These are the Partnership for A Drug Free New Jersey Survey about the effectiveness of random drug testing programs and our own administration of the American Drug and Alcohol Survey. Data gathered from both of these surveys will help us better understand student attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors relative to this national problem. If you wish to submit a consent form for one or both of these surveys, please contact me at the school.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone for their cooperation in the smooth opening of the 2008-09 School Year and I ask that you cooperate in stressing the importance of student safety. Traffic patterns for drop off and pick up have been altered in order to provide a smoother traffic flow. I remind you that in the afternoon you can use our North Lot to pick up students. You may park in this lot while waiting for your child. Please observe good safety practices in and around our school. Thanks for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Dr. William H. Trusheim  
Principal

**PEQUANNOCK TOWNSHIP**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
538 Newark-Pompton Turnpike  
Pompton Plains, NJ 07444

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
Bulk Rate  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Pompton Plains, NJ  
Permit No. 20

# PEQUANNOCK VALLEY NEWS

OCTOBER 2008

## PV Improvement Plan a Success!



The 2007-08 School Year was a year of change for Pequannock Valley School. We made significant programmatic changes which affected every course offering except lunch and gym. Among these changes were extended teaching time in Math and English, blocked alternate day instruction in Science and Social Studies, and a new expanded elective program. We also included Honors English course offerings in seventh and eighth grade and enriched offerings in English and Math at the sixth grade level. We were able to reconfigure our schedule to incorporate daily "PLC time" for teachers to use in a variety of ways. We continued to conduct benchmark testing, expanding our offerings to include NWEA (Northwest Education Association) testing. We provided academic coaching through the PROPEL program and individualized computer practice using Study Island. All of these changes were pointed at raising the rigor of a PV School education and increasing student achievement.

In late August, the results came in and we found that all of our work paid off! We saw a dramatic increase in test scores across all grades. In July, the State Board of Education established new "cut scores" which changed the proficiency and advanced proficiency levels of the NJASK tests. In essence, our students are now being held to a stiffer standard than we originally expected. Even with this new standard, we met our overall goals and objectives for the 2007-08 School Year. In his quarterly report on the Five-Year Plan, Dr. Reynolds called PV's performance on last year's standardized tests the "PV Breakout." We looked at these numbers by school, by grade level, and by individual student. To give an example of the significance of this improvement, the average score increase for last year's eighth graders was over 11 points in Language Arts Literacy and almost 18 points in Math. That is an outstanding performance by PV's Class of 2008!

As we begin the 2008-09 School Year, we can say with confidence that the changes we made last year contributed to improve student achievement across the board. We are working toward similar gains in the coming school year. Our PLC members and their leaders are committed to maintaining our rate of progress as we continue to challenge our students appropriately to do their best work.

We are most proud of the achievements of our students and we credit the hard work and dedication of the PV Faculty as the catalyst in our school improvement success!

### ***Team Names Have Changed for 2008-09!***

Instead of the familiar "6A" and "6B", we have decided to change the team names to correspond to the school colors. Here is a chart you can use to understand the new names:

<b>New Name</b>	<b>Former Name</b>	<b>Team Leader</b>
6 Red	6B	Mrs. Callaghan
6 White	6A	Ms. Espie
7 Red	7A	Mr. Slaff
7 White	7B	Ms. Asaro
8 Red	8B	Mrs. Azrak
8 White	8A	Mrs. Dykstra



**PLEASE NOTE:** *The New Jersey Department of Education requires that all teachers meet the highly qualified requirements for their subject area and that school districts notify parents of their right to inquire about HQT status for their school. Every member of the Pequannock Valley School teaching staff has attained "Highly-Qualified-Teacher" status. You may contact the Office of the Superintendent (973-616-6040) should you require more information about the "HQT" process.*

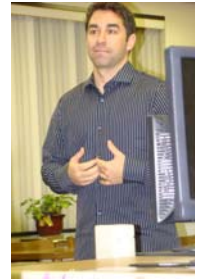
# PEQUANNOCK VALLEY NEWS

OCTOBER 2008

## RED RIBBON WEEK Activities Planned



**Red Ribbon Week**, a national event which focuses attention on drug and alcohol resistance, will be celebrated from October 16-24. PV School is planning several activities which will allow our school community to reaffirm its commitment to resist the use of drugs and alcohol. On Thursday, October 16, Matt Bellace will be presenting a parent program on making healthy choices. Matt has previously presented assembly programs at PV and because we know parents will want to hear Matt speak again, we are moving our PV School HSA Meeting to the High School on October 16. We will begin by attending Matt's presentation at 7 PM and continue with a short business meeting in the Media Center following the presentation.



We are committed to adding to the body of research on the drug and alcohol problem in our society and we are collaborating with the Partnership for a Drug Free NJ and Fairleigh Dickenson University on a student survey on the effectiveness of random drug testing programs. Students who have signed parental consent forms will take this survey on Tuesday, October 21. On Wednesday, October 22, students with signed parental consent will take our own American Drug and Alcohol Survey. This survey provides a look at student attitudes and behaviors relative to drugs and alcohol and other risky behaviors.



On Friday, October 24, we will end the week with student assembly programs given by Jesse's Journey. Maureen and Jesse Morella deliver a powerful and memorable anti drug and alcohol message that encourages our students to live drug and alcohol free. If you wish any further information on any of these activities please contact Dr. Trusheim during regular school hours at 973-616-6050.

### New Back-to-School Night Format

This year, we held Back-to-School Night on September 25 utilizing a new format which emphasized the importance of PLCs and Teaching Teams to our new school schedule. Parents had the opportunity to attend a general meeting in the gym before hearing a team presentation and having an opportunity to meet the teachers. The evening ended with grade level sessions to learn about our elective/exploratory program given by special subject area teachers. This new format decreased the amount of time parents spent moving from class to class and increased the amount of time devoted to learning about our programs and meeting our teachers.



Back-to-School Night General Session

### Home and School Plans Vendor Night

The PV School Home and School Association is sponsoring a Vendor Night as part of its Sunshine Fund which benefits families with special needs in our community. The event will be held on Wednesday, October 29 from 7-9 PM in the Pequannock Valley Cafeteria. Representatives from Tastefully Simple, Lia Sophia, Mary Kay, Pampered Chef, Longenburger, Tupperware, Creative Memories, Arbonne, Home Decor, and Connie's Candles. There will also be pocketbooks and Christmas Crafts. We hope you can join us for a fun evening that will benefit others in our community.

**PV BOOK FAIR** - Our annual book fair will be held during all lunch periods from Oct 14-17. This year we will also open the Book Fair during afterschool hours on Thursday, October 16 from 3 to 4 PM for parents and students.