

# WEST DEPTFORD SCHOOLS

## “Give Me Five” Oakview!

Oakview staff and students have established their own common language to help improve communication and gain students’ attention in a safe and timely manner. “Give Me Five” is a three word phrase and hand signal that is now used by all staff members throughout the day. Whether it is in the classroom, outside at recess, or in the hallways, “Give Me Five” is well-known by all students and has helped increase student attentiveness, as well as maximize time on-task.

“Give Me Five” is initiated when a staff member holds his/her hand in the air with the expectation of students to then hold their hand in the air, following five instructions: eyes are watching, ears are listening, lips are zipped, hands are still and feet are quiet.



Students have embraced the concept and exceeded our expectations in adjusting to this new school-wide initiative. Mrs. Wentz’s second grade class has even recorded a demonstration video to show other students and classes what to do when they hear the instruction, “Give Me Five.”

The staff members have really worked hard to incorporate this as part of our culture here at Oakview; and we, are very proud of the way it has improved students’ attention in all areas, especially large group settings like lunch/recess, assemblies and bus lines. “Give Me Five” has become a very popular phrase throughout our day, and we encourage you to continue to practice this at home and allow our students to teach you what it means!

## Red Bank Students Begin a New Adventure

A brand new school year means the start of a new adventure for most of our West Deptford students at Red Bank Elementary School. All West Deptford 1st graders began their academic careers together in one building. As part of our looping concept, these students are making friends from all parts of our community and building relationships that will last until graduation day 2027. Some may even be meeting their “forever friends” for the very first time.

We have a new librarian this year, Mrs. Dawn Jasper, who will share her services with all the schools in our District. However, it was the elementary schools that experienced the magic of reading first hand. Mrs. Jasper and our Library Aide, Mrs. Ligameri, crafted a lesson so engaging that the kids will remember it for a long time to come. They wanted to instill a love of books and how to take care of them by pretending to be book doctors and save the life of a book that just wasn’t healthy! Under the strong lights of the operating table, our “doctors” did everything they could to save the book’s life. Unfortunately, our book could not be repaired. This was the perfect segue to a lesson about respect and responsibility for our School.

The following week was the beginning of “Respect Week.” Our Guidance Counselor, Mrs. Durham, had various lessons and activities planned for character education on respecting and being kind to each other. The week ended with the “Good Egg” program kick-off. As part of PBSIS, the goal of this program is to create an environment that encourages and supports positive behaviors school-wide. Flight tickets were given out to recognize good behavior and random acts of kindness.

Tickets will be entered into a drawing to win prizes and additional incentives.

As you can see, Red Bank has been quite busy and the entire staff is looking forward to an exciting and successful school year.



# West Deptford Middle School is Making Connections

Recently, sixth grade science students met in the West Deptford Middle School band room for a lesson on the properties of waves. Students studied the various frequencies of the vibrations generated by different notes and instruments. As they moved from octave to octave, they calculated the frequencies and made relationships between their data and the sounds and pitches that the various notes made. Students then analyzed the shapes of various waves produced by the notes that were played. In addition, students compared the acoustic properties of the room with those of their classroom. As the lesson concluded, students left the room with a strong understanding of how the concepts of motion, vibration, and frequency, play out in their everyday life.

What they were studying wasn't wholly science, nor were students delivered a traditional lesson in music. Those students were learning about the world around them as it occurs, with strong connections between concepts that we have historically studied in separate disciplines. This activity is but one example of how West Deptford Middle School is focused on making the connections necessary to create an environment in which students, parents, and staff, collaborate to make learning effective and important.

The Middle School's STEM program, now in its second year, allows students to explore the important relationships between Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. This year, WDMS has added Digital Design courses which will provide skills for students in virtual modeling and 3D printing, cutting edge technologies which are changing the way that we view our world. These classes complement

the existing WDMS STEM courses, Engineering Design and Creative Computing. Learning activities in these classes have an authentic focus in which they can apply concepts learned in science and math classes to develop real-world problem solving skills in meaningful ways.

Later this fall, all WDMS math teachers will be trained in Bootstrap, a curricular module which teaches algebraic and geometric concepts through computer programming. This program, which is partnered with the National Science Foundation, code.org, and the NYC Foundation for Computer Science Education, is research-based and is built upon transferable skills that students can use in other programming languages or in solving problems of all types. Mr. Becker, WDMS Creative Computing teacher, was trained in Bootstrap last October, and will be incorporating the program into his courses during this school year.

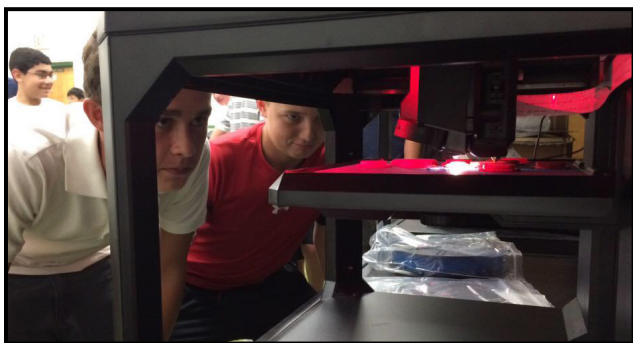
Throughout the course of this year, WDMS science courses will be aligning their curriculum with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), a national set of standards that was recently adopted by the New Jersey Department of Education. The NGSS aim to foster a deeper understanding of science as it appears in our daily lives by emphasizing the relationships between science and other disciplines, including English Language Arts, Mathematics, Technology, and Engineering. In addition, the NGSS is aligned to the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics. WDMS science teachers began their curriculum revision process in the spring of this past school year by meeting with representatives from the State's Department



of Education and developing plans to transition to a full adoption of the NJ Model Curriculum for Science. In doing so, science classes will blur the lines that separate it from other subjects and present the study of science in a more coherent way.

WDMS is also refining the ways in which its students connect with their learning by embracing Google Apps. Our District has been a leader in the integration of technology in the classroom, and many WDMS teachers have active webpages where students find and interact with instructional content. This school year, WDMS teachers are exploring Google Classroom, a learning management system that allows teachers to create and collect assignments paperlessly while using Google's collaborative productivity tools, like Google Drive and Google Docs. Students using Google Classroom can keep track of assignments that are due and pose questions to their teachers or classmates. As more teachers adopt Google Classroom, students will have an easier time organizing their work with fewer webpages to visit for their various classes.

West Deptford Middle School has extended this focus on interconnectedness to its relationships with the West Deptford school community. The School installed a new digital sign on the edge of the property. Details of school and community activities are now shared for all who drive past the School on Grove Road. The School is also increasing its use of electronic communication for correspondence with parents and dissemination of report cards and other previously printed materials, and has plans to install flat screen monitors within the building to display important announcements that will help keep students informed and involved.





# Board of Education Candidates

---



## Peter Guzzetti

Peter M. Guzzetti is a 1991 graduate of West Deptford High School. He moved back to West Deptford in 2003 with his wife, Kate, also a West Deptford alumni, to raise their children Madelyn, Joshua and Emma in their hometown.

Peter graduated from Thomas Jefferson University in 1996 with a B.S. and M.S. in Physical Therapy. After several years of PT practice, Peter used the Clinical IT and business experience he had gained to move into the field of healthcare information technology. Peter currently works for Cerner Corporation, the world's largest publicly traded health information technology company. In his role at Cerner, Peter performs strategic planning and fiscal management for a large multi-million dollar IT budget. Peter also continues to work on weekends as a per-diem physical therapist at Inspira Medical Center Woodbury. In addition, he has been active in the community as a coach for travel soccer and little league.

“As a parent of 3 children, I have a vested interest in ensuring that West Deptford Schools provide the same opportunities for my children as it provided for me. As a taxpayer, I have a vested interest in ensuring this is done in a cost effective manner, especially given our State and Township's significant fiscal challenges. In my role at Cerner, my primary responsibility is to assess the true value of proposed projects and investments, and act as a decision-maker for these proposals within the confines of a limited budget. I believe this real-world experience translates well to the role of a school board member, and it would be my honor to serve you in that fashion.”

---

## Donald Hicks

Don is a lifelong resident of West Deptford and graduated from West Deptford High School in 1986. He resides with his wife, Gina, a West Deptford High School graduate, class of 1989. Gina is an art teacher at Red Bank and Oakview Schools. The Hicks' have two sons, Jake and Dan, and a daughter, Abby, and live in the Rolling Brook Farms section of West Deptford.

Upon graduation from West Deptford High School, Don went on to receive a Bachelor's of Science in Business Administration from Florida State University and a Master of Business Administration from Saint Joseph's University. He is employed by Cardiology Consultants of Philadelphia as their Chief Operating Officer. Don has previously served on the West Deptford School Board from 1998-2008 & 2009-2013.

“The West Deptford School System provided me with an excellent educational background. It prepared me well for college and the workplace. By serving on the Board of Education, I am given the chance to contribute to that System. I want my children to continue to have the same positive educational opportunities that both my wife and I experienced in West Deptford Schools. My seat on the Board of Education allows me to serve our community and help to shape lives of West Deptford students for the future.”



## Dr. Tom Lee

Dr. Tom Lee is a three-year member of the West Deptford Board of Education. He is a lifelong resident of West Deptford Township and graduated from West Deptford High School in 1984. He resides in West Deptford with his wife Kim and daughters Christina and Katie.

Dr. Lee is the owner of West Deptford Chiropractic. He enjoys being active in our community and his chiropractic office helps support local charities, especially Operation Blessing. Dr. Lee has volunteered his time to help others, including coaching for the West Deptford Basketball Club, Pet Savers and caring for our U.S. Military soldiers.

Dr. Lee is committed to making sure the children of West Deptford Township receive the best education possible in an effort to secure a bright future.

# Exploring STEM at West Deptford High School

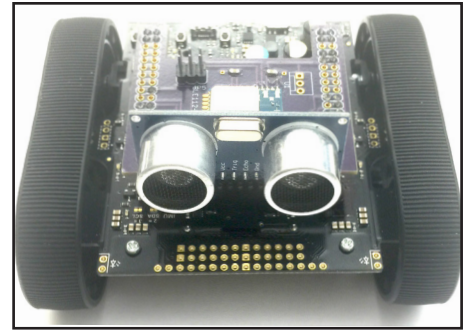
West Deptford High School is committed to our District's mission statement in developing productive students ready to take on what the 21st century offers. Over the past two years, we have increased our exposure of digital literacy and technology concepts to our students. We believe these curricular changes can help our students increase their success in an ever-changing digital world.

In the 2014-2015 year, West Deptford Students were first introduced to the semester course, Introduction to Computer Science I. Due to its success, we expanded in the current year to include a sister semester course, Introduction to Computer Science II. These two courses provide a direct focus on the programming end of computer science in which students investigate several programming languages. Beginning with Logo, a language created at MIT in the late 1960s, and moving through Scratch, Processing, and Python, students will discover and investigate abstractions and algorithms, while becoming more aware of the strengths and weaknesses of each language. Students will design and create artistic scenes, games, and interactive programs throughout the year.

In addition to these two semester courses, WDHS has added two full-year courses to its newly developed STEM curriculum. The first, Advanced Computer Science Principles is a pilot for a new Advanced Placement course which will be released by the College Board for the 2016-17 school year. WDHS is working with schools around the country to investigate

and fine-tune this course in which students explore the foundational concepts of computer science and how computing and technology can impact the world. Students will use a problem-solving approach to investigate real-world applications of programming, abstractions, algorithms, large data sets, the Internet, cybersecurity concerns, and computing impacts. Through September, these students have read and debated the topics introduced in the book, *Blown to Bits: Your Life, Liberty, and Happiness After the Digital Explosion*. Currently, this group of students is working with binary and other number counting systems, including creating physical binary systems and investigating network protocols using the Internet Simulator.

This September also marks the debut of West Deptford's first ever engineering course, Exploring Engineering I, for 39 students. We are partnering with Dr. Pramod Abichandani, PhD in Electrical and Computer Engineering, of Drexel University to develop this course which motivates student learning through sensor-based engineering challenges instead of discrete skill-building lessons that are only applied at the end of the course. We live in a world surrounded by sensors; a prime example is the iPhone. Therefore, we thought it would be powerful for our students to develop the ability to harness this power of sensors. In our course, the students will use a tank-like robot with 2 DC motors with encoders, an accelerometer, a gyroscope, a magnetometer, RGB LED's, distance and temperature sensors, and Bluetooth wireless connectivity.



Students will eventually design and conduct experiments using the sensor and motion resources of their robot. They will also evaluate, process, and visualize their data using their knowledge of math and science and the software tools available to them through our laptop initiative. Using all of these results, the students will design an algorithm adapted to the language their robot understands. Students can command the robot using a GUI app running on an iPhone, or upload their GUI command program to a web-based program which can translate it to the Python programming language. Students will find that learning Python will greatly expand their options for controlling their robot. As the course progresses, design challenges will include the use of multiple sensors. Later in the course, students will be learning the basics of 3D printing, and use the Arduino minicomputer to build and study individual sensor circuits. Students will conclude the course with a design project. It is our hope to continue in this engineering direction and offer the course, Exploring Engineering II, in the 2016-2017 school year.





# Green-Fields' Students Get Ready for a Week of Respect

It has been a wonderful start to the school year at Green-Fields, and students recently had an opportunity to celebrate the State-wide Week of Respect that began on October 5th and continued through the October 9th. Our School Guidance Counselor, Mrs. Kurnellas, and members of the PBSIS and School Safety team, created a fun schedule of events for the "Five Days of Fun". These special activities emphasized the importance of respecting yourself, others and the community, and are detailed below...



4th Grade students Collin Conway, Gabriella Regalbuto, and Mara Monahan proudly display their "Blaze Bucks" next to Menu of Reward choices for their excellent behavior during October's Week of Respect.

**Monday:** Students started the day with a "Pledge of Respect" and took time to watch videos created by the PBSIS team demonstrating respectful behaviors throughout the building.

**Tuesday:** The focus was on "Respect for Yourself". Students wore gym attire and participated in a fun group workout during recess to emphasize making healthy choices.

**Wednesday:** We emphasized respect for others by hosting a mismatched sock day. Students wore two different types of socks to school to illustrate that, like people, socks come in all different colors, shapes and sizes, but they are all still socks.

**Thursday:** The highlight was on the school environment. Each teacher selected a time during the day where their class, "dropped everything and cleaned". It's important to take care of our classroom and make it a place where everyone can be ready to learn. Later on that night, our building custodians chose a classroom that was the cleanest and most organized.

**Friday:** Each student created a one page essay on what Respect means to them, and was placed in a Book of Respect to be kept in the classroom library.

In addition to these activities, staff and students kicked-off our yearly PBSIS Program or Positive Behavioral Support In Schools. The purpose of this program is to provide a research-based framework from which we can encourage and support pro-social student behavior using current, best practices. In that regard, we are constantly looking for students who are demonstrating positive social behaviors within the school setting. We reward these students with special incentives including, but not limited to, lunch with the principal, Wii Lounge, extra recess, Fine Dining, Alex's Lemonade Tickets, and computer lab passes. Parents and staff also enjoy incentives such as local business gift cards, or coverage for extended lunches. It is our hope that we will effectively continue to honor students who work hard every day to demonstrate appropriate and positive behavior.

## West Deptford Schools Welcomes New Staff!



**New Elementary/ Child Study Team Staff**  
Patricia Pauro, Amanda Peticari and Patricia Haider



### New Middle School Staff

Michele Lanciano, Joanna Dzinski, Adam DiLorenzo, William Malone, Jennie Redkoles and Janice Beane



**New High School Staff**  
Gabiella Mendek



---

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

Kate Cargill, President  
Brian K. Gotchel, Vice-President  
Steven Catando  
Amy DeGirolamo  
Lisa A. Eckley  
Peter Guzzetti  
Megan Kerr  
David Kline  
Thomas Lee  
William H. Thompson, Board Secretary

## FOCUS ON WEST DEPTFORD SCHOOLS

is a publication of the Board of Education  
of West Deptford Township.

Kevin A. Kitchenman, Superintendent  
William H. Thompson, Asst. Superintendent for  
Business/Board Secretary  
Shawnequa Carvalho Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer  
Thomas N. Tucci, Director of Technology & Spec. Projects

---

## Message from the Superintendent

This is our annual Fall Newsletter. I invite you to read through its pages to see what is new in our District. There are a number of interesting developments in our schools that I would like to highlight for you.

As you can see from the previous pages of this newsletter, we added a significant number of outstanding new staff members this year that will do an excellent job educating your children.

As all of you are aware, a significant number of projects that were part of the "Building Excellence" Referendum that was approved in September of 2014 were completed during the last six months. While there are still punch-list items that need to be finalized, the following list represents those projects that are substantial-ly completed:

- Installation of high efficiency water heaters in WDMS and WDHS
- Installation of 13 new rooftop HVAC units at WDMS
- New fire alarm systems at the 3 elementary schools, and new ceiling tiles/grids in all 5 schools
- New electrical panels in all 5 schools
- New security vestibules in all schools
- New roofs on portions of WDHS and Oakview Elementary
- Conversion of the Auto Shop at the HS to a brand new chemistry lab
- Renovations to the existing science rooms and science labs in the high school
- Renovations of the HS Media Center
- Renovations of HS athletic fields/stadium\*

\*Work on the track, stadium and perimeter fencing is still ongoing. Projects that are still underway or yet to be started are as follows:

- District-wide HVAC controls (underway)
- Elevator for the HS (not bid yet)
- Renovations to the sewage lift station at the HS (bid awarded on 8/24)
- 5 classroom Early Childhood addition at Oakview (bid opening scheduled for 10/22)
- New gymnasium floors (HS, MS, OV, GF), new cafeteria and stage floor (HS), new exterior windows and doors (HS, OV, GF, RB), atrium renovations (GF), bathroom upgrades (OV), and exterior dryvitt wall repairs (all buildings). These projects have yet to be bid.

As many of you have become accustomed to, there are some changes for the 2015-16 school year from the NJ Department of Education. This year marks the second year implementation of the PARCC assessments, and there have been some changes to the testing schedule and format for this year. The testing windows have been reduced from two to one, the total test time has been reduced by 90 minutes, and the number of test units has also been reduced. Those of you who have students who are required to take PARCC assessments will be receiving more detailed information from their school(s).

You will also find Board of Education Candidate profiles in this newsletter. The School Board Election is scheduled for Tuesday, November 3rd, and the 3 candidates who are running for four available seats (3 three-year terms and 1 one-year term). There will not be a "Meet the Candidates Night" this year, since all are running unopposed, and actually there will be an open three-year term seat, barring any write-in candidates.

Hopefully, all of our parents had the opportunity to visit our schools and meet their children's teachers during our Back-to-School Nights. I encourage all members of our community to support our students in their activities by attending our sporting events, concerts, activities, plays and productions. Please check the District website for a schedule of events, or contact our schools directly.

I look forward to working with the members of the West Deptford Community to continue to provide our students with excellent educational opportunities, an enriched and aligned curriculum, and a safe, orderly, technology-rich environment.

---

**We're on the Web!**



[www.wdeptford.k12.nj.us](http://www.wdeptford.k12.nj.us)