



SOMSD E-Newsletter

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School Notes

August

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- 28-29 New Staff Orientation

September

- 2 All Teachers Report
- 3 Staff Development Day
- 4 Students Report: Grades K-7 & 9
- 5 Students Report: Grades 8 & 10-12
- 30 District Closed, Rosh Hashanah

Rosetta Wilson named as Assistant Superintendent

for Curriculum and Instruction

At the July 21st meeting, the Board of Education appointed Rosetta Wilson to the position of Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction starting August 25th.

Rosetta Wilson most recently served as Coordinating Director for Curriculum and Instruction in the Paterson Public School District, where she worked collaboratively with all stakeholder groups to develop, implement, monitor and assess new curricula, and to redesign the district's staff development efforts to provide relevant, differentiated and aligned training at the schools. Ms. Wilson possesses deep knowledge of curriculum as well as experience in achieving consistency in implementation across an entire school system.

Prior to her district level work, Ms. Wilson spent six years as a successful principal. Her ability to work with teachers, counselors, support staff, parents, and students to improve teaching and

learning at the building level was the catalyst for improving student performance and turning around a low performing school. Her understanding of school change and working with teams will help to bridge communication and build synergy between schools and central office.

Ms. Wilson brings with her a strong practical knowledge of strategic planning and the ability to work with central office and schools to improve organizational effectiveness. She holds a Bachelors of Science degree in Business Administration from Drexel University in Philadelphia, PA and a Masters degree from New York University in New York. She is currently completing a doctorate of education at Fordham University in New York.

Ms. Wilson was named Administrator of the Year by the Business Coalition for Educational Excellence at the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce in 2006 for her work with the National Board Certification initiative. She spent time in Japan in 2003 as part of the Fulbright Memorial Teacher Program, and currently serves on the State Alternate Route Committee.

Ms. Wilson was selected from a pool of 71 candidates. Of the 71 applicants, ten were selected for an interview with a Search Committee comprised of a variety of stakeholders including principals, supervisors and SOMEA and ASCA representatives. Four of the ten candidates were invited to a second round interview with members of the district's senior leadership team, and Ms. Wilson was chosen as the finalist by the Superintendent after joint visits to summer school classrooms, a review of writing samples, and extensive reference checks.

Ms. Wilson shares our district's commitment to excellence, equity and innovation. She will be a welcome addition to our efforts to

improve the quality of instruction for every single one of our students, as we strive to prepare every student for the 21st century. Please join us in welcoming Rosetta Wilson to the South Orange-Maplewood School District!

Summer Construction Projects Update

Unlike the implications in Alice Cooper's lyrics, "School's Out for Summer," things are very active in the South Orange Maplewood schools this month. Specialized academic programs are taking place throughout the district and recreational programs are happening at various sites. So the district schools are anything but quiet this month.

Construction crews have begun working on the 43-plus projects identified this past winter when the Board of School Estimate approved the issuance of \$12,000,000 in bonds. Projects include corridor and gymnasium lighting district-wide, exterior door replacement district-wide, mechanical upgrades at various schools, elevator replacement at South Orange Middle School, roof replacement at South Orange Middle School, gymnasium bleacher replacement at Columbia High School, toilet room renovations at Columbia High School, and continuation of district-wide painting projects, amongst others.

Possibly two of this summer's most visible projects are the renovation of the field and track at the Underhill Sports Complex and the re-grading and reseeding of Ritzer Field at Columbia High School. The Underhill project, funded by the Columbia High School Alumni Association, is scheduled to be completed in time for the Homecoming football game in October. Ritzer Field will be closed until the spring sports season, although the Project Adventure

equipment and soon-to-be-installed walking path will be available for fall physical education classes.

Summer months are one of the few times when larger maintenance and construction projects can be accomplished. As is often the case with older structures, some of our buildings have asbestos contained within the walls. Although harmless in a contained state, when construction projects may disrupt the containment, precautionary preparation and abatement is performed. This month both Columbia High School and Maplewood Middle School were closed for this state-monitored abatement process. No issues of contamination existed at either site as abatement areas were sealed as required before the process began and access was restricted to abatement professionals. Both abatement projects are proceeding according to schedule allowing construction contractors to begin their work in these buildings in early August.

Some construction projects will continue after school hours in the fall and some will carry over to the next summer. Many of the projects, including cleaning and painting projects and the creation of full day kindergarten rooms, will welcome staff and students back to an exciting opening of school in September.

Bridge to Success Program



Columbia High School is continuing an exciting transition program this summer. This unique high school orientation experience is known as the Bridge to Success Program. Thirty-one specially selected students, recently promoted from grade 8 in Maplewood

Middle School and South Orange Middle School, are attending the Bridge Program between June 30 and July 31.

The students who participate in the Bridge Program are experiencing intensive Math, Language Arts, and Study Skills curricula, for which they will receive 1 ¼ high school credits. They are developing a ten year academic/career plan for the future. In addition, the students are receiving training in conflict resolution and are involved in the community-based organization known as the LOFT. The Program operates from 8:30 – 3:00, Monday through Thursday.

The Program is led by Hope Taylor, CHS grade 9 Dean. Columbia High School teachers, Scott Stornetta, Carolyn Johnson, and Nicole Bradley are the instructors for the academic portion of the Program. Amanda Picone, of the LOFT/Family Connections, coordinates the afternoon events.

The Program activities will culminate with a gala assembly on July 30, at which time parents and guardians will be exposed to a showcase of the experiences their children have had this summer.

The academic and social performance/development of the Bridge participants is tracked throughout their high school careers.