

# Paulsboro PANORAMA

SPRING 2023

District-Wide News ♦ **Paulsboro Public Schools**

## Personalizing Education at Paulsboro Public Schools

The mission of the Paulsboro School District is to work with students, parents, educators, and community to develop excellence in education while preparing each student to be viable and productive citizens in society. The district's goal is to develop the unique potential of the whole student by creating a challenging and diverse learning climate that prepares students for the 21st century and is rich in tradition and pride.

Maintaining this mission and attaining this goal were challenged significantly by the pandemic. It impacted nearly every aspect of life – including the education of our students in the Paulsboro Public Schools.

But even before the pandemic, Dr. Roy Dawson, PPS Superintendent, and other members of district administration were looking for ways to identify academic weaknesses among students and find better ways to meet student needs. The pandemic and its impact on student learning provided greater urgency.

### Changing the Culture

There were two things working against students in Paulsboro, according to Director of Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction Christine Lindenmuth. The first was a lack of comprehensive assessment tools. The district needed better ways to identify student needs – individually – than what had been available. It needed benchmarks that could help develop instruction that would address specific student needs, assess teaching effectiveness, and monitor student progress.

The other issue was the culture that existed around assessment. Lindenmuth said students either panicked at the very thought of an assessment or did not care.

Neither is helpful. There needed to be a district-wide cultural shift that changed the whole climate surrounding assessment. "It needed to be much less threatening," explained Lindenmuth. She said students – and parents – needed to understand that the assessments were a means of assisting in creating programs that support student growth and achievement.



*In addition to LinkIt support specialist Tiffany Bradley, seen here facilitating a training session for Paulsboro Junior and Senior High School faculty and staff, the district has two staff member facilitators: History teacher Rachel Wulk and mathematics teacher Doug Foglein.*

### Foundations, i-Ready, and LinkIt

Through the efforts of Dr. Dawson, Lindenmuth, and district administration, a series of programs has been implemented throughout Paulsboro Public Schools. Foundations® is used at Billingsport, and i-Ready has been implemented at Loudenslager. The program used at Paulsboro Junior and Senior High School is LinkIt.

These programs not only assist in challenging the stigma attached to assessments, but most important,

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enable teachers to pinpoint areas where students have fallen behind, are on target for their grade level, or are functioning beyond their grade level.

### **Learning to Read at Billingsport**

The Wilson Foundations® is a program used at Billingsport to provide students with a structured reading, spelling, and handwriting curriculum. It makes learning to read fun by using various sensory techniques.

According to Billingsport Principal Tina Morris, Foundations supports important foundational skills by emphasizing phonemic awareness, phonics/word study, reading fluency, and comprehension strategies. It also assists with handwriting.

In addition to providing basic concepts, the program helps identify where each student may be struggling or excelling. This enables teachers to build on that information to use specific lessons in the Foundations program to meet each student's need.

### **Utilizing Incentives and Personalizing Learning at Loudenslager**

The i-Ready program is in its second year at Loudenslager, according to Basic Skills/Intervention teachers Corey Hoffman (Reading) and Shirley Gill (Math). The teachers said Loudenslager Principal Matthew Browne began looking at the program to help “meet the kids at the level where they were,” and “provide a more personalized education for them.” It is an innovative way to help bridge the gap in children's education caused by the pandemic.

i-Ready is an online program for reading and/or mathematics that helps the Loudenslager teachers determine students' needs, personalize their learning, and monitor progress throughout the school year.

Hoffman said i-Ready enables the teachers to meet students exactly where they are because it provides data needed to increase a student's learning gains. There are two parts to the i-Ready program: Diagnostic and Personalized Instruction.

The first part of the program – i-Ready Diagnostic – helps to determine how best to support a student's learning. Program scores help educators personalize each student's learning experience. The assessment is given three times a year: fall, winter, and spring. During the computer-driven assessment, the questions are adjusted to meet a student's needs. Each question/item is individualized based on the student's answer to the previous question.

According to Gill, a series of correct answers will result in slightly harder questions. If a series of answers elicit incorrect answers, explained Hoffman, the next group of questions would be easier.

The second part gives students personalized lessons based on their individual skill level and needs. This enables students to learn at a pace that is right for them. The computer-generated lessons are fun and interactive, designed to keep students engaged as they learn.

Hoffman and Gill use data from the diagnostics to help identify students who need a more intense educational intervention. They also have discussions with classroom teachers to get more information about a student who has been identified as in need of intervention.

Gill said the i-Ready program coincides with the RTI (Response to Intervention) program of Tier 2 and Tier 3 students. Those identified as Tier 2 students work with an educational staff member in groups of three and four to help learn skills they currently are working on in the regular education classroom. Other skills may be taught as well.

Students identified as Tier 3 work with Hoffman or Gill in their offices individually or in groups of two. These students are exhibiting a deficiency in prior skills needed to help them succeed in their regular education classroom.



Are students really engaged? The photo shows a student who earned the right to give Mr. Browne a pie in the face during the halftime of a student vs. faculty flag football game. The lucky student who pried Mr. Browne passed the most i-Ready lessons over the course of four weeks!

Students celebrate their achievements with the program, rather than being concerned about getting

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a score or grade. Last year, students in the class that completed and passed the most lessons earned a pizza party during the school's March Madness competitions.

Not only are the students engaged, but they are enjoying the program, said Gill. "They see their progress, and they like the interaction of the program. It really does keep them engaged."

Hoffman noted students can work on their individual paths at home if they have the computer access. He said parents can get involved by encouraging their child to work on these paths as another avenue for learning.

### **Pulling it All Together with LinkIt**

According to Lindenmuth, a curricular initiative for Paulsboro Junior/Senior High School was to implement a data-centric strategy that would help inform instruction. The data and analysis would "travel" with students throughout their educational careers in Paulsboro.

A pilot of the LinkIt program was implemented in the spring of 2022 at the Junior/Senior High School as an action step toward this goal.

In the fall of 2023, the students participated in their first benchmark assessment using the LinkIt platform. The data, triangulated with various other data sources, was used to provide insight into students' strengths and

weaknesses. The purpose is to ensure that every student receives the proper interventions to improve their educational experience and performance, much the way the i-Ready program is being used at Loudenslager.

Lindenmuth said LinkIt enables Junior and Senior High School teachers and administrators to customize students' academic journeys through the collection and analysis of assessment information for each student.

Although still in its infancy stages, Wilson's Foundations and iReady will feed into LinkIt for each Paulsboro student as they continue through the schools in the District. Children will have had the opportunity to participate in assessments that enable teachers to provide them with precisely the assistance necessary to reach student achievement goals.

Paulsboro Public Schools are excited to continue working with the three platforms. Administrators are evaluating them to assess the potential effects on student progress and achievement on such high-stakes tests as the New Jersey Student Learning Assessments and the New Jersey Graduation Proficiency Assessment.

The most important result, however, will be ensuring Paulsboro students achieve excellence in their education.

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## Billingsport Promotes **Healthy Smiles**

Billingsport Early Childhood Center has initiated a free oral health education program to help students maintain a healthy smile and learn how taking care of their teeth and gums impacts their overall health.

The program provides oral health education on topics covering good oral hygiene through brushing and flossing, preventative measures for tooth decay including fluoride and sealants, oral injury prevention, and cavities and gum disease. The presentations to students all are age- and grade-appropriate.

Students also learn about the impact of healthy food choices, as well as the impact of tobacco and vaping on dental health.



# GAPCAP

News from the Gibbstown and Paulsboro Community Advisory Panel (GAPCAP)

## Industrial Flares - Safe and Controlled

**Y**ou are driving down a road and see a flame coming from a pipe on an industrial site – what is that? No need to panic. It is a normal industrial operation and is called flaring.

### What are flares?

Industrial flares are combustion devices designed to burn gaseous materials in a safe, controlled manner. They are used in various industrial operations, including petroleum refining and chemical processing. The primary purpose of flares is to act as a safety device to protect equipment from over-pressuring.

Additionally, by combusting the gases, flaring reduces the environmental and community impacts from the gaseous material. A flare burns the gases and converts them to common combustion products. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations specifically identify flares as appropriate control devices which reduce emissions for many different constituent compounds.

### When are the flares operated?

Complex industrial operations can result in non-routine operating conditions producing gases that cannot be directed to the primary operating equipment. In these circumstances, these gases can be collected and directed to a flare for combustion, instead of allowing them to be released into the atmosphere. The Paulsboro Refinery operates four flares subject to, and in compliance with, all applicable regulations to ensure proper operation.



*...flaring reduces the environmental and community impacts...*

Additionally, the Paulsboro Refinery operates two flare gas compressor systems consisting of six total recovery compressors. This is important because they enable the refinery to redirect and recover some of the gases from routine processes elsewhere in its operations.

For example, the gases may be redirected to be used in process heaters throughout the refinery, reducing the required input of natural gas.

### What happens when flaring occurs?

A flare has a flame. The size and brightness of the flame is dependent upon

how much gas is burning. The more material being processed through the flare, the larger the flame. Additionally, steam is injected into the flame of a flare to reduce the formation of smoke. The injected steam can cause vibration, which in turn can cause noise. Often, this noise is described as a rumbling sound. The sound level can fluctuate based on the amount of steam being used.

### Reporting requirements

Even with the flares and recovery systems, some emission rates will require reporting to the Gloucester County Office of Emergency Management (GCOEM) and the State Office of Emergency Response. The need to report these does not mean there is a threat to human health or the environment. If there were to be a release from the refinery which would require action on the part of the local community, GCOEM would make this determination and notify the public.



## Update on the Salem Wind Port Investment in South Jersey

GAPCAP members were updated at the end of 2022, on progress at the Salem Wind Port by Ron Burkhardt, Director of Business Outreach and Continuing Education for Salem Community College at the end of 2022.

Located on a 220-acre site near the nuclear plant in Lower Alloways Creek, Salem County, the Wind Port will include a manufacturing site where parts for the wind turbines will be built. There also will be a marshaling and staging area for assembling turbines. These will be loaded

onto ships to be delivered to wind farms along the East Coast. The site is considered ideal because there are no obstructions, such as bridges, to hinder the transport of the huge wind turbines.

Burkhardt said the Wind Port project will create more than 80,000 indirect jobs, provide \$3.5 billion in economic benefits, and will provide a \$500 million “boost” to the state GDP and bring 1,500 direct manufacturing and stevedoring jobs to the area on an ongoing basis.

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## Remembering Marc Kamp



In November 2022, the GAPCAP – really the entire community – lost one of its staunchest supporters, Marc Kamp.

Former Paulsboro Public Schools Superintendent – and Marc’s long-time friend – Walter Quint, Ed.D., wrote of Marc, “As a lifelong resident of Paulsboro, he was totally devoted to his hometown.”

Those who worked with Marc on the GAP-

CAP agree. “Marc worked so hard for Paulsboro,” said Laura Bishop, longtime GAPCAP member and Managing Principal of Laura Bishop Communications. “Not only was he devoted, but he was a kind man and so generous with his time.” Judy MacKenzie, Community Member, Greater Paulsboro Chamber of Commerce Liaison, said “Marc was truly one-of-a-kind, and a dozen people won’t be able to fill his shoes. His memory will be a blessing to all who knew him.”

A 1962 graduate of Paulsboro High School, Marc was inducted into the Hall of Distinguished Alumni in 2022. Marc was President of the Paulsboro High School Golden Anniversary Club, a member of the Paulsboro High School Hall of Distinguished Alumni Committee, Paulsboro High School Centennial Committee, Pegasus Education Foundation, and Paulsboro Public Schools Key Communicators.

His community service was legendary. Marc served on, and in many cases, chaired Paulsboro Day Committee, Paulsboro Parade Committee, Neighborhood Preservation Program, Paulsboro Centennial Celebration Committee, Paulsboro Planning and Land Use Board, Paulsboro Environmental Commission, Paulsboro Events and Celebrations Committee, Greater Paulsboro Chamber of Commerce, and Paulsboro Historic Preservation Commission, among others.

Marc founded the Tinicum Rear Range Lighthouse Society and was president for its first 25 years. Under his leadership, the lighthouse was added to the National Register of Historic Places. It is estimated nearly 40,000 tourists visited the lighthouse during Marc’s tenure.

In 2003, Marc was honored with a Community Service Award from the Greater Paulsboro Chamber of Commerce. He was a two-time nominee for the American Association of Retired Persons Andrus Award for Community Service.

Marc earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Spring Garden College in Construction Engineering Technology. He was a project manager at Hughes-Foulkrod Construction Company, an estimator at DIC Concrete Corporation, a zoning officer for the Borough of Paulsboro, a Clerk of the Works for Paulsboro Public Schools, and

was an assistant manager at Weiss True Value Hardware. He also was a member and vice-chairperson of *The Record Today* where he also worked as photographer. Dr. Quint said Marc always had a camera in his hand.

As Dr. Quint noted in his eulogy for Marc, “We are all better because Marc was our friend – we will miss him deeply.”



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# Congratulations to PPS' **New Members** **Teachers** **Join Board of** **of the Year** **Education**

The talent, dedication and commitment of our teachers and staff are what make Paulsboro Public Schools so special.

Although all our teachers and staff members are remarkable, we want to congratulate those who have been outstanding. Please congratulate the PPS Teachers of the Year:

**Billingsport Early Childhood Center**

Christin Goss, Instructional Aide  
Candell Maxie, Teacher

**Loudenslager Elementary School**

Erica Scott, Classroom Aide  
Bonnie McHale, Teacher

**Paulsboro Junior/Senior High School**

Melba Moore-Suggs, School Counselor; Grades 9 & 12  
Kelly Kovalsky (PJHS), Teacher, English  
Dr. Phil Neff (PHS), Teacher, Science

Paulsboro Public Schools' Board of Education welcomed three new members at its reorganization meeting in January. The new members were elected during the mid-terms in November.

Lawrence Haynes, Sr. will serve a three-year term, while Frank Damminger and Michelle Baylor will serve two- and one-year terms, respectively. Board Members Theresa Cooper and Kyana Evans were both re-elected to a three-year term.

Haynes is a retired Public Works Director for Gloucester County and a past president of the Paulsboro Little League. Baylor serves as the Director of Health and Human Services for the Gloucester County Department of Health. Damminger, a Paulsboro alum, has been a Health and Physical Education teacher with the Gloucester County Special Services School District for more than 20 years.