

FROM THE DESK OF Phyllis Alpaugh



SUPERINTENDENT'S NEWSLETTER

Rockaway Borough Schools
March 2020

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RAMS CORNER

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these or other topics, feel free to
contact me at pa@rockboro.org



Happy Birthday Dr.
Seuss!

During the first week of March, it is a time honored tradition in the Borough as well as across the country to celebrate the birthday of Theodor Suess Geisel, otherwise known as Dr. Seuss. His March 2nd birthday and the entire week surrounding it was first observed in 1997 as an initiative by the National Education Association (NEA) to celebrate and promote reading across the United States. It was their hope then, as it is now, that encouraging reading would help students increase their vocabularies, broaden their overall knowledge and most importantly, instill a lifelong love of books and literature.

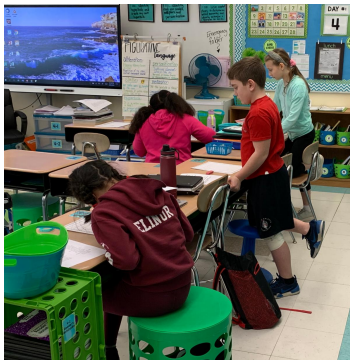
This past week, we honored Dr. Seuss for his countless contributions to children's literature and the many memorable stories and characters that he has shared with us throughout the years. As part of the celebration in both schools, there were numerous literacy activities such as guest readers, mystery readers, and students reading to other students, as well as a visit from a children's author and even the Cat in the Hat himself. I want to thank all the staff for their efforts and participation in recognizing the importance of reading and how events like this can support student success. Many thanks as well to you the parents and family members who also encourage reading at home and stress its value. Because, as Dr. Suess has taught us, who knows *All the Places You Can Go*, if you are a good reader.

This issue's FEATURED ARTICLE...

Why is Flexible Seating Gaining so much Attention?



Some examples of flexible seating from around the district



In the last several years, flexible seating has been gaining popularity in educational circles. While the look is certainly a departure of the traditional classroom look that most of us grew up with, it is one that is quickly gaining momentum and winning "the thumbs up" from students and teachers alike, especially for the potential benefits it offers both parties.

So when you think about flexible seating, what comes to mind? While flexible seating environments vary greatly in their set-up and composition, there are some basic tenets that are a must to designate a classroom environment as "flexible". Basically, flexible seating provides students with a choice in their seating options as well as variety of options for seating. In essence, it allows students to choose where they work and with whom they work with. It also allows them to change their location and positions in the classroom as needed. Educational researchers supporting flexible seating believe that giving students choices about their physical classroom space not only teaches them higher-order thinking skills, but also encourages problem solving and independence which are much needed skill sets in the today today's real world.

Besides the obvious advantage of choice, there are many other benefits derived from flexible seating. Here are just a few:

- Physical Health--Students need to move around during the school day and flexible seating allows them the opportunity to wobble, bounce, rock or stand up when needed. In addition, this resulting physical movement helps build core strength, burn calories, and increases metabolism; all of which are linked to higher academic performance.
- Comfort--An uncomfortable student is easily distracted and unproductive. Flexible seating encourages students to find their best spot to stay comfortable, calm, focused, and on task, as well as be happy.
- Building a Sense of Community --Traditional seating can make students territorial or possessive over their space and supplies. Flexible seating encourages students to share, take turns and work productively together; skills that are valued by future employers.
- Collaboration--This is a significant benefit in the world we live in today. When taking advantage of flexible seating, students can easily work in pairs, small groups, or discuss topics freely with collaboration occurring more naturally and frequently between all parties.
- Commitment to Learning--Learning environments have a direct impact on student achievement. When students have control of that environment through choice seating, their learning becomes more personal, they take ownership, and they become more invested in their education.
- Communication--With flexible seating, students and teachers have a greater sense of open communication because choices have to be made. This in turn builds problem-solving skills, promotes emotional skills like conflict resolution, and fosters turn-taking and patience.
- Sensory Input--Flexible seating stimulates students' sense of touch. This type of stimulation can help students focus and process information and is especially helpful for those children with ADHD, ADD and ASD.
- Mindset Shift--Redesigning the classroom to allow for flexible seating, puts a spin on traditional teaching philosophies and structures that generally promote higher levels of student engagement as well as gives students more opportunities to take control and be responsible for their learning.

- FUN--No explanation needed!



In Rockaway Borough, we as a staff, have most definitely seen and are experiencing the benefits of implementing flexible seating in our classrooms. While teachers in both buildings have taken different approaches and selected many different types of seating options and configurations, students have overwhelmingly responded positively to the new settings and of course, the choices they offer. Whether it is bean bag chairs, yoga balls, standing desks, low tables, couches, cushion seats or simply spreading out on the floor, the district has made a commitment to support the movement and all the benefits it brings to students and their social well-being and academic progress.

[Read more about our why Flexible Seating Might Be a Good Option for your Child](#)



ROCKAWAY BOROUGH SCHOOLS www.rockboro.org

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