



# SOUTH AMBOY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



240 John Street, South Amboy, NJ | 732.525.2100 | www.sapublicschools.com

Volume 2 | Issue 5

## Board of Education:

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Paula Taggart  
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Student Rep.

Jorge E. Diaz  
Superintendent

Peter Frascella  
Board Secretary / BA

## ~QUICK LINKS~

- [District Website](#)
- [Genesis Parent Access](#)
- [ES Principal's Page](#)
- [MHS Principal's Page](#)
- [Athletic Schedules](#)
- [South Amboy PTO](#)

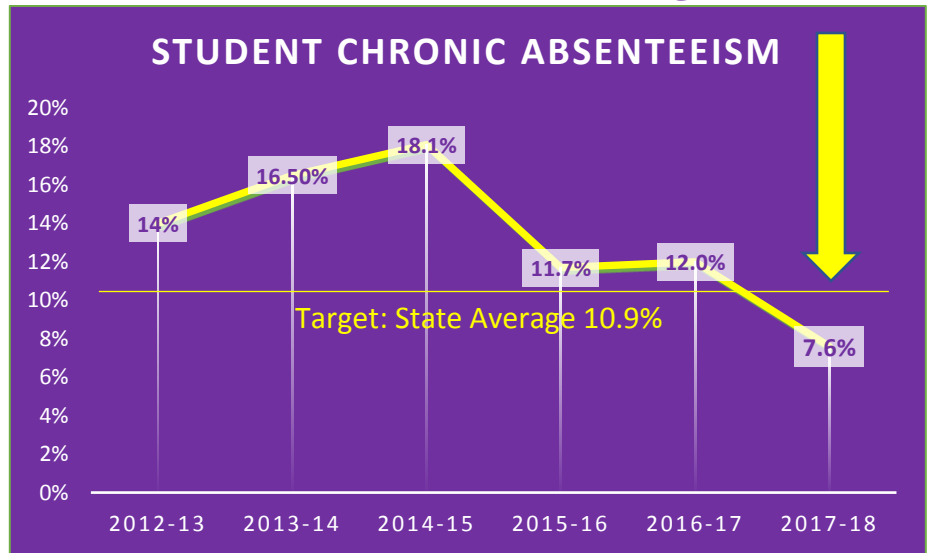


### Social Media:

District Twitter:  
@SAPublicSchools  
Superintendent Twitter:  
@SASuptJdiaz

Elementary Twitter: @SAES08879  
Athletics Twitter: @SAHSAthletics  
Instagram: @SAPublicSchools  
Facebook: SAPublicSchools

## Chronic Absenteeism Drops Significantly\*



\*District-wide

By Jorge E. Diaz, Superintendent

Schools have always recorded student attendance, but have we analyzed the effects of chronic absenteeism on students? Although attendance has always been important to school districts, the accountability for attendance rates has been limited to the mandate of meeting the 90% attendance rate school-wide. However, in the past, little attention has been given to the effects of chronic absenteeism on students who are absent for more than 10% of school days.

Chronic Absenteeism is defined as missing school for more than 10% of the possible school days. For students enrolled for a full-year, this represents missing 18 or more school days for any reason. While there are absences that may be excused throughout the school year for illness, religious holidays, and other permissible reasons, any student that reaches 18 or more days of absence are categorized as chronically absent regardless of whether the absence is excused or unexcused.

***“Both South Amboy Schools met the State requirement for chronic absenteeism...”***

New Jersey has required chronic absenteeism rates to be reported on the annual School Performance Report and further to be used in factoring school accountability measures. Schools must fall below the state chronic absenteeism average, which was 10.9% for the 2017-18 school year. Not meeting that expectation is not only reflected on the School Performance Report, but an indication of a problem needing serious attention.

For the 2017-18 school year, both South Amboy schools met the state requirement for the chronic absenteeism indicator for the first since the state began tracking chronic absenteeism. The chronic absenteeism rate for the Elementary School was 7.7%, and the rate for the Middle High School was 7.5%. There is a direct correlation between student academic achievement and absenteeism. Simply put, if a student is not in school, they are missing valuable instructional time. There has been plenty of research regarding student absenteeism.

Researchers and advocates have demonstrated how missing too much school for any reason -excused or unexcused - could help educators predict who could be at risk for dropping out of high school or failing to read by third grade.

How do we combat chronic absenteeism? It begins by educating parents on how quickly absences can erode academic performance and encouraging them to convey the importance of attendance to their children starting in the early grades. As a district, we are generating daily phone calls and attendance letters at certain absence intervals to inform parents of student absences. Although there are legal remedies schools have to enforce mandatory student attendance, such as court referrals, our schools need a more proactive and collaborated approach. Parents need to communicate with school administrators and counselors to identify the root causes of their child's absenteeism before it becomes a problem affecting student academic performance. Please understand that if, after several notifications, students accumulate

10 or more unexcused absences, a court referral will be processed. Again, we advise you to keep track of your child's attendance and communicate with the school to address any issues that are preventing your child from coming to school. Do not allow the accumulation of absences to put your child at risk of falling behind, retention, or loss of credit. The following are some resources to help address student chronic absenteeism:

<http://absencesaddup.org/>

<http://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/the-problem/>



## Board Members Sworn-in during the Board of Education Reorganization Meeting on January 2, 2019

The Board of Education conducts an annual reorganization meeting in early January to swear-in and install board members elected during the November general election. Five candidates filed and ran for three seats on the school governing body. Incumbents Lynn Kasics, Paula Taggart, and John Dragotta all won re-election. In addition, Anthony Conrad was re-elected to serve as the Board's President and Lynn Kasics was re-elected to serve as Vice President.

Pictured from left to right: Lynn Kasics, Paula Taggart, and John Dragotta. All three were re-elected to serve three-year terms.



## MIDDLE HIGH SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

By Dr. Patrick McCabe, Principal

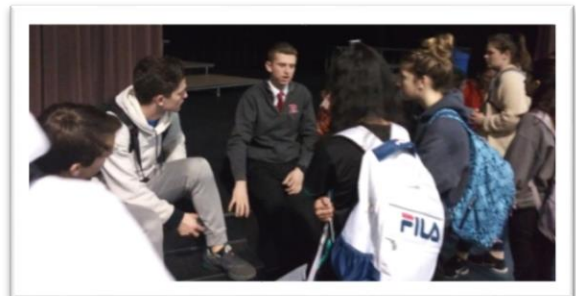
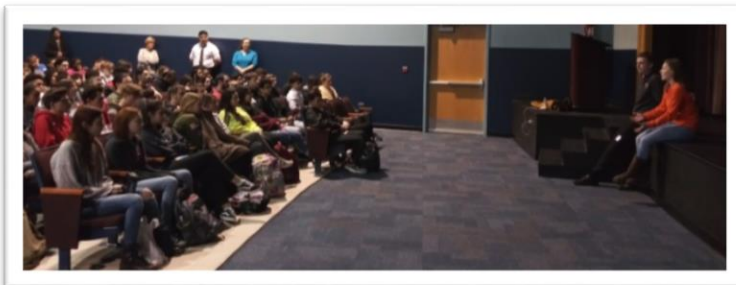
### Students of the Month for November/December (will be in the Home News on 1/18/19)

- Throughout the school year, the Middle/High School teaching staff nominates students. The nominations are based on character, school spirit, and academic integrity. For November/December, we are happy to announce our winners. Pictured from left to right: Principal - Dr. Patrick McCabe, and Middle School students: Grade 6 – O. Slomiany, Grade 7- L. Grasso, Grade 8 – N. Szatkowski, and High School students: R. Piazzolla and S. Kennedy.



### Graduates Return, Again!!!

Mary Whiteley and Pat Walsh once again came to meet with our juniors and seniors about life after high school. They touched upon topics such as: College life, budgeting, planning, steps to take now, and had a nice Q&A session afterwards followed with a crowd of students wanting more.



### Our New Media Specialist has hit the ground running!

*Look for more changes to the Media Center webpage! Co-teaching activities have already begun.*

*Welcome to Mrs. Betsy Quinn*



## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

*By Sean Dunphy, Principal*

- The New Year began with our Big Ten Reading Challenge this week. This is run by Reading Plus an online literacy program we began utilizing this year. The Big Ten Reading Challenge is a motivation program for our students (grades 3-5); we are scheduled to “compete” against other schools that utilize the Reading Plus program as well. The school with the highest average number of Reader lessons will earn a win for the week. Ties will be determined by highest average reading comprehension. There will be a “tournament” at the end of the 8 week schedule.
- We held our holiday concert for the students this week. We were able to get all students PK-5 into the gym to watch our chorus and band perform. Special thanks to our music teacher Mrs. Cotter!



## ATHLETICS:

Congratulations to Senior basketball player Kyle Gasiewski for reaching the 1000 points club during his high school basketball career. The milestone was reached on 15 January 3rd with 60 seconds left in game regulation. The team celebrated a 69-46 win against Roselle Park the same evening!



For athletics schedules, please visit:

<https://www.greatermiddlesexconference.org/public/genie/343/school/27/>

## PTO

The purpose of the South Amboy PTO is to strengthen the relationship between home and school, so that parents and teachers may work together for the success in the education of children at our schools. Our group helps the staff and students of our district by raising funds to provide technology and supplies needed, and has events to promote family unity.

If you're interested in helping with various activities such as a Fun Day committee, box top counters, and monthly birthday ice cream coverage. Please email a letter of interest to [sapto08879@gmail.com](mailto:sapto08879@gmail.com).

For upcoming Events, please visit our [website](#).

For more information on our PTO, please email us at [SAPTO08879@gmail.com](mailto:SAPTO08879@gmail.com)



### District Events/Activities

Date	Time	Description
1/16/19	6:30 p.m.	PTO Meeting @ MHS Cafe
1/18/19	----	Mother Daughter Dance (Grades P-5)
1/21/19		Schools Closed – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
1/28/19	6:00/6:30 p.m.	BOE Regular Public Meeting
1/30/19		Consumer Bowl Competition @ MHS
2/8/19	----	PTO: Me and My Guy Dance (ES)
3/8/19	----	PTO: Mother Son Dance (ES)
3/14/19	6:00pm-8:00pm	Middle School St. Patrick's Day Dance

MHS = Middle High School  
ES = Elementary School