Over the past several months, the District has been exploring ways to adapt and expand our programs to provide every student with the tools needed to successfully navigate college and careers. “Each of the new programs, once set in motion, will expand upon and reinforce several educational initiatives that the District has already brought to fruition,” said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Steven Cohen. “This includes, for example, our professional development program, where teachers lead the charge with curricular enhancements that provide all of our students with real-world perspectives.”

Over the next several months, proposals for each of the new programs will be presented to the Board of Education and community for feedback in order to strengthen the program recommendations. “It is our intent to support our students and provide greater engagement with curriculum,” said Dr. Cohen. “We believe these proposed initiatives will support our students and the District’s vision.”

Among the initiatives under consideration is adjusting school start times. “Studies have shown that students perform better when they get more sleep,” said Alan Meinster, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. “We are looking into adjusting our school start times to give students the time they need to ensure proper rest.”

The District is also exploring the idea of a summer institute, which will enhance students’ educational experiences through enrichment programs. “We have been working hard to identify possible ways to supplement student learning, and we believe a summer institute has the potential to provide this,” said Mr. Meinster.

Additionally, the District is continuing work to advance its flipped classroom initiative and AP Capstone program, both of which offer students opportunities to expand their horizons and gain a deeper understanding of curriculum.

Finally, the District is working toward obtaining membership to the prestigious Tri-State Consortium, which would broaden opportunities to enhance curriculum and instruction by incorporating authentic assessments of student comprehension of material covered.

“Our vision is to continue to seek out ways to incorporate innovative and reflective learning experiences that prepare students for tasks demanded by today’s colleges and workplaces,” said Mr. Meinster.

To learn more about the District’s proposed initiatives, see pages 2 and 3.

“Each of the new programs, once set in motion, will expand upon and reinforce several educational initiatives that the District has already brought to fruition.”

- Superintendent of Schools Dr. Steven R. Cohen
Saved by the Bell

Shoreham-Wading River’s school bells may be ringing at new times at the start of the 2017-18 school year. To boost student performance, the District is exploring the idea of later school start times for its High School and possibly Middle School students.

“Research has shown that adolescent-aged students perform better when they are able to get more sleep,” said Mr. Meinster, who explained that the biological makeup of teenagers does not allow their bodies to go to bed early enough to get the sleep they need to perform at their peak.

To improve the situation, the District has formed a committee, made up of administrators, teachers and parent representatives, tasked with investigating any factors that might be impacted by implementing such a time shift. It is anticipated that the committee will make a presentation of its findings to the Board of Education in the spring.

Collaboration Is Key

To further its goal of providing students with opportunities to demonstrate their learning in creative ways, the District is working to align itself with the six-year-old Tri-State Consortium.

The Consortium is an alliance of 46 school districts, spread over three states, that share the common goal of creating student-centered, authentic learning tasks that promote critical thinking.

If accepted into the partnership, the District will be provided with a multitude of collaboration tools to accomplish its goal. For example, teams of teachers who are interested in developing projects that incorporate performance-based measures of student learning can attend workshops with member districts to explore ways to implement their projects.

“There is a true value in participating in the consortium,” Mr. Meinster, “It helps us to promote critical thinking while also expanding upon the resources available to our teachers.”

The District intends to enter into a long-term partnership with the consortium in the 2016-17 school year, provided it is accepted. A decision is expected at the end of May.

Enrichment Opportunity

To create opportunities for students to expand on their learning, the District is exploring the idea of creating a summer institute. The institute, which would likely commence in the summer of 2017, would be available to all students and provide a combination of basic foundational skills alongside enrichment programs to explore extended topics connected to existing curricula.

Foundational skill offerings would teach key elements of curricula that a student would be learning at the start of school in September. At the High School level, for example, students entering Algebra II could learn basic algebraic concepts before stepping foot in the classroom.

Research Skills for the Future

Since the District was approved as an AP Capstone School, administrators, principals and teachers have been implementing the rigorous program, which will provide students with advanced research skills that they can use in college and careers.

Mr. Meinster said the District is on track to offer the first of two AP Capstone courses beginning in the 2016-17 school year. The first class, AP Seminar, will introduce upperclassmen to college-level research. The second course, AP Research, will be available to seniors in the 2017-18 school year. Students taking both classes will create a college-level research project that includes a major research paper. They will subsequently graduate with a prestigious AP Capstone Diploma, provided they score a 3 or higher on their AP exams.

“We are looking forward to offering these courses to our students, who will benefit greatly,” said Mr. Meinster. “The program will help students cultivate the skills needed to conduct independent research and produce an academic thesis.”

Flipped Classrooms on the Rise

The District is continuing to promote a flipped classroom model at the High School and Middle School by providing enhanced technology in both buildings.

The flipped classroom model offers students an authentic learning experience by reversing the traditional lecture and homework components of a course. Instead of giving a lecture in class, the teacher, using Google products, provides students with multimedia presentations to review at home. Students then spend class time doing inquiry-based work.

To further support this effort, the District has moved forward with integrating the Google Apps for Education platform as another tool to enhance what students are able to do outside the classroom in preparation for in-class work. This application, said Mr. Meinster, is a great platform driver for flipped classrooms, as it allows teachers to upload videos, assign work and grade work in real time.

Additionally, the District is expanding teacher access to technology by opening its network to wireless devices and also providing remote access by teachers to the network when they are away from school. Opening access to the District’s wireless network to students and the public is also in the works and should be available in the near future.
With the completion of state-of-the-art science classrooms and labs at the High School at the start of the school year, the District moved forward with other building projects and field renovations. During the summer months, work commenced on the tennis and basketball courts. As of January, nine brand-new tennis courts and a basketball court have been installed. The tennis courts are new with new wind screens and a drainage system. Lighting conduits have also been installed.

Also at the High School, the District commenced on a major project to convert the football field into a multi-sport artificial turf field. The project, which began in September, included the re-turfing of the field, new drainage, irrigation and sprinkler systems, and the installation of lighting conduits.

Additionally, the District installed a new elevator at the High School, as well as new roofing over the High School’s auditorium, gymnasium, auxiliary gym and locker rooms. New roofing was also nailed down at Prodell Middle School over the two gymnasiums.

With a large bulk of Health and Safety Proposition projects complete, the District is now working toward NYS Education Department approvals for voter-approved Bond projects. Projects awaiting SED review include an addition and interior renovations to Miller Avenue Elementary School, an addition and cafeteria at Wading River Elementary School and a cafeteria and kitchen addition to Prodell Middle School, as well as door and window replacements at Prodell and the High School.

**Facilities UPDATE**

- A project to re-turf the multi-sport field at the High School is underway.
- The District has completed the construction of new state-of-the-art science labs at the High School.
- High School students are now learning in several new science classrooms.
- There are now nine new tennis courts and a basketball court at the High School.