

# FORT LEE DISTRICT NEWSLETTER



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Ms. Haquisha Q. Taylor  
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Director of Human Resources

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### SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE:

Spring has finally arrived, dare I say. It seems that winter is finally behind us as we focus on spring sports, barbeques and mowing the lawn. In the spring, schools have two major topics: standardized testing and the district budget. The testing is ongoing and will be completed by early June. I am confident that our students are well prepared the various assessments. The proposed district budget for 2019-2020 school year has received approval from the Bergen County DOE Office. This budget maintains our existing programs and enables us to continue to advance our curriculum, activities and programs. The budget presentation is available for your review on the district website. Enjoy the warmer weather.



### BUDGET 2019-2020:

The District has been working since October to develop a budget for the 2019-2020 school year that best meets the needs of our students. The budget for the 2019-2020 school year will be \$77,632,125, funded through local, state and federal sources, which represents a 3.79% annual tax impact for the Borough. The development of the budget involved stakeholders from all over the district and focused on supporting the great programs we have in place as well as new ones that are set to be implemented. Among other things, next year's budget has been designed to improve facilities across the

district, accommodate the needs of special education, English as a Second Language, and other groups of students with unique learning needs, further develop STREAM, balanced literacy and other academic programs, and maintain our robust athletic and co-curricular opportunities. The district has been undergoing a period of growth in the student body and is opening a new 5th and 6th grade building on the Middle School campus. Special attention was paid to these concerns during budget development, including increasing our staff by four teachers, twelve paraprofessionals, one guidance counselor, three custodians, one nurse, one security guard, one bus driver and one bus aide. These additional staff members will allow the district to continue providing a high quality educational experience for all students. The preliminary budget was presented to the Board of Education at the public meeting on March 18, followed by a public presentation at the High School on April 23, and is set to be formally accepted by the Board at the public meeting on May 6.



**BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:****3/7/19**

Mr. Rota introduced Mr. Ambrosio, Principal, who made introductions regarding the special presentation of School No. 4. Mr. Rota made a Special Presentation to Mr. Bendul and his team for their efforts and dedication during the tragedy of last month's Linwood Park Apartments fire in Fort Lee. Board President Esther Han Silver also commended Mr. Bendul and his team.

**3/18/19**

Mr. Rota requested a moment of silence for the victims of New Zealand and for the passing of Dr. Alan W. Sugarman, former Superintendent of Fort Lee Public Schools.

Mr. Rota shared that there was a visitor from Trenton (Governor Phil Murphy), holding a Press Conference at the Fort Lee High School to discuss funding.

Mr. Rota had the pleasure of introducing Dr. Daniello. Dr. Daniello shared that the Lewis F. Cole Middle School completed the revisions to its Unified Arts curriculum by building a music technology lab. This is a shift from the traditional approach of music appreciation. Students now get the opportunity to work with technology in a project-based setting. They are learning the basics of Pro Tools software by creating and arranging music in a digital format. Three grade 8 students, along with music teachers Mr. Gioia and Mr. Resetovs, presented their digital music projects to the Board of Education and Fort Lee community. The students had the opportunity to speak about the process of creating digital music and then play the audio recording.

Mr. Rota recognized the Winter Coaches and Student Athletes. Mrs. Han Silver congratulated Coach John Ziemba, Head Coach, for his Induction into the New Jersey State Coaches Association (NJSCA) Hall of Fame for Boys' Basketball and Girls' Volleyball. Mrs. Han Silver congratulated the Boys' Winter Track Team for their advancement and participation in the 2018-2019 Big North Conference, American Division Championship. Each coach and player were recognized. Mrs. Han Silver congratulated the Boys' Bowling Team for their advancement and participation in the 2018-2019 North 1 B, State Sectional Championship. Each coach and team player were recognized.

Mrs. Han Silver congratulated the coaches of the Wrestling Team for the 2018-2019 Season.

Mrs. Han Silver and Mr. Rota recognized Alex Almeyda, Jr. for his accomplishments as 1st Team All-League; 3rd Team All-County; District 6 Champion; Region II Champion; and 7th in the NJSIAA New Jersey State High School Wrestling Championship.

Mrs. Han Silver and Mr. Rota recognized and awards were presented to the 2018-2019 Governor's Educator of the Year (GEOY) Nominees:

**School No. 1:**

- Ms. Jill Purritano, Grade 4 Teacher
- Ms. Mary Vincenti, Paraprofessional

**School No. 2:**

- Ms. Jessica Tomarchio, Kindergarten Teacher
- Ms. Tara Deady, Smart Readers/Teacher, Grades 1 and 2

**School No. 3**

- Ms. Dana DeLucca, Resource Room Teacher, Reading & Language Arts Teacher, Grades 1-5
- Ms. Dawn Ohrnberger, Paraprofessional

**School No. 4:**

- Ms. Mary Rizzo, Grade 3 Teacher
- Ms. Genia Alabugina, Paraprofessional

**Lewis F. Cole Middle School:**

- Ms. Priscilla Yoon, Language Arts Teacher, Grade 7

- Ms. Holly Alasio, School Nurse

**Fort Lee High School:**

- Mr. Diego Lombardo, Physical Education Teacher
- Ms. Tara Lawlor, Guidance Counselor

Mr. Rota presented the 2019-2020 Fort Lee Board of Education Budget.

Mr. Rota congratulated Ms. Colbath for receiving her Certificated Board Member award and Mr. DiMeglio for receiving his New Board Member award from New Jersey School Boards Association.

**4/1/19**

Mr. Rota thanked Mr. Berman for hosting the Board meeting and welcomed him to introduce the Fort Lee School No. 3 presentation.

Mr. Berman gave some background on the collaboration between the Fort Lee High School Academy of Theater Arts and the School No. 3 Musical Theater program. Mrs. Etra and her students have worked with the School No. 3 students in producing a musical for the past four years. To date, they have performed *Seussical the Musical*, *the Wizard of Oz*, *Bye*

*Bye Birdie* and this year, *The Little Mermaid*. Mr. Berman then introduced the cast of *The Little Mermaid* who performed several scenes from this year's show. After the performance, he thanked everyone involved, including the BOE and Mr. Rota for their ongoing support of this program.

Administrators and teachers from Schools Nos. 1 – 4, Middle School and the Fort Lee High School shared their respective proposed school goals aligned with district level goals.

**CYCLE FOR SURVIVAL 2019**

Cycle for Survival is an indoor cycling event where participants put together a team of riders and each team member has the opportunity to cycle. There are Cycle for Survival events in 16 cities across the country for the annual ride. Instructors from Equinox, Cycle for Survival's founding partner, led rides at the high-energy events. On March 3, 2019, Genna Kornweiser (BSI Math Teacher, Schools 1 and 4) and Michele Carlor (K-12 Supervisor), participated in one of the Cycle for Survival events that was held at Equinox of Paramus. At the time of the event, their team, the Pink Pedalers, raised over \$1,000. The team rode in honor of two of Ms. Kornweiser's family members who have been touched by rare cancers.



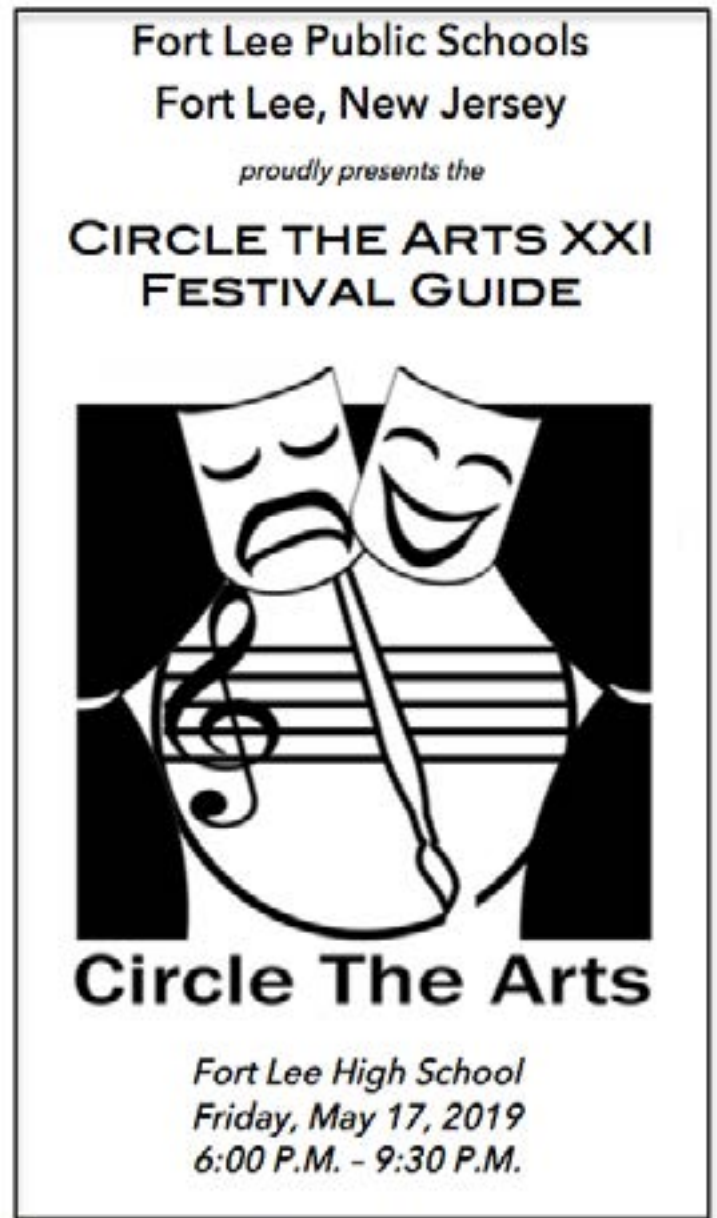
Every dollar raised funds for rare cancer research studies and clinical trials led by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, which owns and operates Cycle for Survival. Cycle for Survival raised over \$40 million this year and more than \$214 million in over a decade. All the money that is raised during Cycle for Survival is directly allocated to rare cancer research at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center within six months of the event. Rare cancer patients make up about half of all people fighting cancer, but they often have limited or no treatment options because rare cancer research is drastically underfunded.

# Celebrating Circle the Arts...

The first Circle the Arts festival was held in 1984, at the Lewis F. Cole Middle School. The event was attended by many residents of the borough and was declared an immediate success. Through personal and professional commitments between staff members in the district, the Circle the Arts festival now sets the stage for all of Fort Lee's students' unique artistic talents.

The dedication and devotion of the Visual, Performing and Practical Arts' Departments of the Fort Lee Public Schools have enabled the Circle the Arts festival to evolve into a celebration of artistic distinction in the Borough of Fort Lee. Fort Lee High School's West Gym transforms into a gallery of fine arts, highlighting student work from Fort Lee High School Seniors to that of Kindergarten students. Middle school and high school practical arts classes create exceptional pieces that continue to astonish the residents that stop by. Music ensembles from all grade levels perform various pieces throughout the evening. Children's voices resonate down the corridors as the choruses from each of the district's schools take the stage. Various theater acts amuse and amaze their audiences.

On Friday, May 17, 2019, Fort Lee Public Schools will celebrate the extensive efforts of the students, teachers and staff with the hope that you enjoy all that this festival has to offer: the visual and practical arts exhibits, the vocal and instrumental music ensembles, and the extraordinary acting skills of the students in our community.



*The Circle the Arts logo was created by former Fort Lee High School students James Laughlin & Joseph Abutin in 2017.*



# A Tribute to Dr. Seuss...



## Dr. Seuss Parade

School No. 3 celebrated the birthday of Dr. Seuss by having students in grade 2 create their own "Cat in the Hat" creations, which they proudly paraded around the school for all the students to appreciate.



## Read Across America

This past month, School No. 2 celebrated Read Across America. Guest readers visited School No. 2 to read to students in their classes. Thank you to Mayor Sokolich, Chief Bendul, Dr. Amato and all of our guest readers for making the day special. The event was organized by the School No. 2 PTO, and they also treated each student to a donut from Dunkin Donuts!





# What's Happening @ S#1...

School No. 1's annual fundraiser, provided by Boosterthon, is HeroFit this year. Students will be participating in a multitude of exercises to raise money for School No. 1. Boosterthon brings a message to our students about Character. This year's 5 Character values that will be taught are as follows: Citizenship, Zest, Growth Mindset, Integrity and Teamwork. This is a school community event.



*Birthdays are celebrated monthly for our School No. 1 students.*



*Ms. Holman's 2nd grade class growing plants from seeds in our hands-on Science program.*



# What's Happening @ S#1...



*Our outstanding Occupational Therapy program addresses all small motor coordination skills to help our students grow.*



*Even our kindergarten students are learning to code -- all within our media/library time.*

# What's Happening @ S#2...

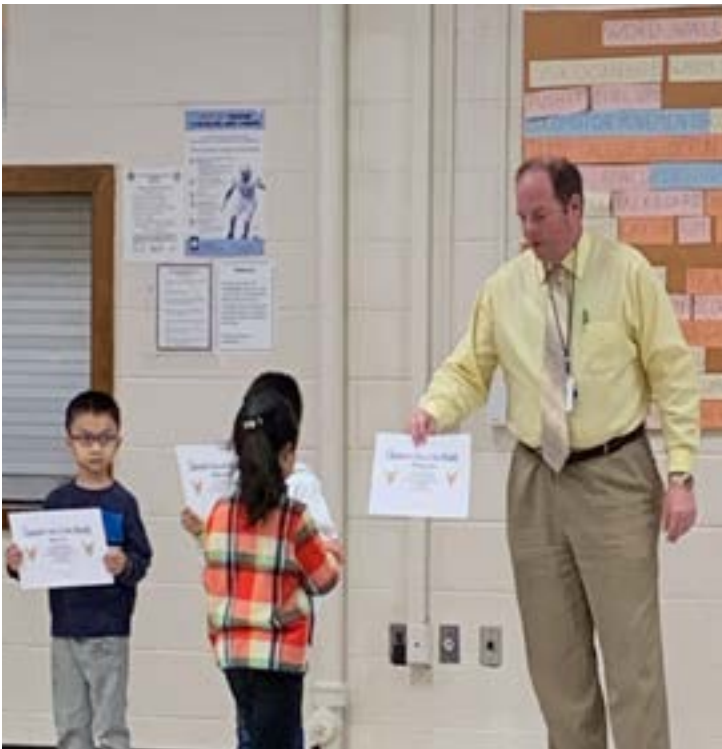
## Surprise Assembly!

Our sixth graders received their School No. 2 sweatshirts this month. The sweatshirts were donated by the PTO and make an awesome keepsake from our students' elementary years. Students received them in a surprise assembly and afterwards enjoyed delicious cake.



## Character Awards

School No. 2 students were rewarded for their good character at our bi-monthly Character Awards assembly. The themes for the past two months were diversity and kindness. Congratulations to all those recognized for their good character.





# What's Happening @ S#2...

## Autism Awareness

April is Autism Awareness month and School No. 2 recognized the month and raised awareness by participating in our *Light It Up Blue for Autism* walk. Our walk was organized by Mrs. Ng who also decorated our building with puzzle pieces with each School No. 2 student's name on it.



## Food Lab

Our Kindergarten students had a great experience visiting the Mobile Food Lab. This exciting activity helped students learn about the science behind food. Our students even got to prepare and taste some food!



## Craft Event

This month our SADD committee organized a student craft event. Students in grades 4-6 who like crafting organized the event under the direction of Ms. DeSheplo. The event was held in the School No. 2 library. Mrs. Sgro and Ms. McMahon assisted our students in creating some great projects!





# What's Happening @ S#3...

## **The Little Mermaid**

School No. 3 continued its collaboration with the Fort Lee High School Academy of Theater Arts, directed by Jodi Etra, in the production of *The Little Mermaid*. This was the fourth musical theater production in this program.



## **Fun Run**

School No. 3 held its annual Fun Run fundraiser on the school field. The students raised over \$12,000 in pledges for this event.





# S#3 Wins Basketball Classic...

**Put It Up! Put It In!**  
**Tigers For the Win!!**

*By Fiyinfoluwa Okwechime, Aidan Sugar, and Nicholas Ye*

**Let's cut to the chase:**  
**WE WON! TWICE!**

On March 28, 2019, School No. 3 Tigers beat the School No. 2 Eagles by 20 points. The ending score was 29 to 9. All of the School No. 3 cheerleaders were there to cheer the basketball team on. That was the first game we won during the week of the D.A.R.E. games. Then, only a day after our victory, we beat the School No. 4 Penguins on Friday, March 29 at the Fort Lee High School during the Championships. Many people thought that we would lose because School No. 4 has some of the best players in the whole of Fort Lee. Nevertheless, we beat them! This win was thanks to none other than Gelson Rojas, who scored close to 25 of our points. Because of this, Gelson was also awarded the male MVP prize of the game. At the end of the first quarter we were down by about 20 points. Luckily, the boys were able to come back and make a difference during the 2nd quarter. During the halftime break, we watched some excellent cheers from the School No. 3 Tigers and the School No. 4 Penguins. As the 3rd quarter was ending, the girls were falling behind by another ten points. When the 4th quarter started, the boys made such a difference in the score. As the score stood from 41 to 39, there were only five seconds left! BAM!!! Gelson Rojas made the last basket making the School No. 3 Tigers win 43 to 39. The School No. 3 Tigers won the final D.A.R.E. game in Fort Lee history! We, the sixth graders, made history that very night!





# More Basketball Classic News...

The 2018-2019 Detective Buda Basketball Classic did not disappoint the fans. This year School No. 4 showed spectacular energy, making it to the Championship Game versus School No. 3. Congratulations to School No. 3 as they took home the Championship Trophy! We are very proud of the School No. 4 Cheerleaders, Mascots, and of course, our Basketball team. A very special thank you to our PTA, our basketball Coaches, Ms. Renee Mattesich, Mr. John Ziemba, and our Cheerleading Coach, Ms. Brittany Butler.



*Above are the Basketball, Cheerleading and Mascots who participated in this year's Detective Buda Basketball Classic.*



*Pictures from the 2018-2019 Pep Rally! School No. 4 students and staff getting ready for the opening game of the DARE Basketball Games.*



*The School No. 4 Cheerleading Squad "cheering" on our team!*



*Chief Bendul presented Coach Mattesich with the 2nd place trophy.*

March concluded with the DARE Basketball games and cheer competition. Our School No. 2 basketball team, coached by Ms. Mattesich, Ms. Piccinich and Ms. Cosgrove won the overall Spirit Award and our cheerleaders coached by Mrs. Rodriguez and Ms. Sietsma finished in second place. A fun time was had by all. Go Eagles!





## What's Happening @ S#4...



During the March 18th Board of Education meeting, the Fort Lee School District recognized the School No. 4 Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Mary Rizzo, and the Educational Services Professional of the Year, Ms. Genia Alabugina. We are very proud of both of them!



Ms. DeLuca, Kindergarten Teacher at School No. 4, had her students participate in the "March Madness Book Bracket Challenge" to find their favorite class "read-aloud" book. The students read different books in a variety of categories and voted on their favorite to move to the next round! And...the winner is..."It's a Puppy's Life" by Seth Casteel!



Our 7th Annual Project Cicero Book Drive was another success! Thanks to School No. 4 families' donations and diligent efforts made by the SADD representatives, we were able to donate over 3,300 chapter books and pictures!





# What's Happening @ LFCMS...



*Pictured above are students, staff and parents who led the way.*

***From left to right:*** LFCMS Principal Dr. Robert Daniello, PTO Vice- President Julene Stassou, Aislynn Diaz, Jashelin Roca-Pimentel, Mustofa Kamal, Asgam Kothari, S.A.D.D. Adviser Mrs. Pinajian and PTO President Michelle Jean-Louis.

## **Gift Cards Collected for Fire Victims**

Students of S.A.D.D. and the LFCMS PTO worked together to collect over \$1,400 in gift cards for the fire victims on Edwin Avenue. The gift cards were given to Fort Lee's Human Services Director Jillian Raimondo for distribution to those affected. We are proud of our students' efforts to give back to those in need in the immediate Fort Lee community.



**BOOK  
DRIVE**



## **Annual Book Drive**

Project Cicero was a huge success this year and gave the students at LFCMS the opportunity to collect lightly used children's books to help support literacy in schools. This annual book drive helps under-resourced schools in New York City create and enhance classroom and school libraries. Our annual drive was led by our media specialist Mrs. Spahn, who provided a space for the collection of the books and called on student volunteers to sort them into reading levels and age-appropriate categories. Our student volunteers then took a trip to Dwight-Englewood High School to assist the Project Cicero team packing and shipping all books collected from all participating schools. In total, our school was able to donate over 1,700 books for this worthy cause. During the Dwight-Englewood visit, they were able to box and ship over 10,000 books in total. Our students learned the true value of community service and volunteer work, and we were able to make a significant impact in Project Cicero's annual book collection. Thank you to all who donated and helped to support this effort. Pictured above are all of our student volunteers with Media Specialist Mrs. Spahn and teachers Mrs. McArdle and Mrs. Cevasco.

# What's Happening @ LFCMS...



Pictured above are Art Adviser Mrs. Anderson, Literary Co-adviser Ms. Pacciani, CSPA Executive Director Edmund Sullivan and Literary Co-adviser Ms. Yoon.

## Intermedia Earns Silver Crown Award

The middle school's art and literary collection **Intermedia** earned a Silver Crown award for the 2017-2018 publication. Crown awards are the highest recognition given by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association to a student publication for overall excellence. Judges consider all aspects of value to the reader/viewer: Content, Design, Overall Presentation, Artwork, Photography, Writing, and Editing. Of 1,172 eligible submissions, only 8 middle school art and literary publications in the country were awarded with this distinction. **Intermedia** 2017-2018 received the Silver Crown Award at the CSPA conference. This also equates last school year's publication as the second best in the entire nation. This is **Intermedia's** 5th Crown Award from CSPA in the last 20 years. In addition to the Crown Award, **Intermedia** 2017-2018 merited a Gold Medal Award in its annual critique from CSPA. We are proud of our students' work and the advisers that guided them throughout the school year. Art work from the middle school students is always available to view on the middle school's web page under the "Photo Gallery" tab.

## National Campaign - Live a Tobacco-Free Life

Lewis F. Cole Middle School participated in the annual Kick Butts Day on March 20. Kick Butts Day is a national campaign that provides educational resources related to helping our students make a decision to live a tobacco-free life. This year's campaign focused on kicking Juul, the e-cigarette that has become enormously popular amongst youth in America. Our student organization Students Against Destructive Decisions (S.A.D.D.), directed by Adviser Mrs. Pinajian, led the way with this campaign by creating numerous amounts of posters and hanging them throughout our school.



Pictured above are the students of S.A.D.D. holding some of the posters created.  
Back row: Jashelin Roca, Anna Macharashvili, Aislynn Diaz, Ashley Kim, Suejean Kim, Rachel Bae, Aagam Kothari, Sulaiman Hoshmi  
Front Row: Hayun Jun, Amishi Mittal.





# FLHS Performs "Godspell 2012"...



## FLHS'S SPRING PRODUCTION OF "GODSPELL 2012"

A musical comedy composed by Stephen Schwartz with the book written by John-Michael Tebelak found its way onto the Fort Lee High School stage. **Godspell** is based on the Gospel according to St. Matthew that tells the story of the lessons of Jesus Christ using song and dance which demonstrates joy and celebration of the family of man.

Congratulations to the theatrical students, through the leadership of Drama Director Jodi Etra, for a great performance of **Godspell** on April 4th, 5th and 6th in the Fort Lee High School auditorium.

*"I believe there is one thing we can all agree on and that is that we need a little more peace in this world. If we join together in song and spirit perhaps we can accomplish just that."*

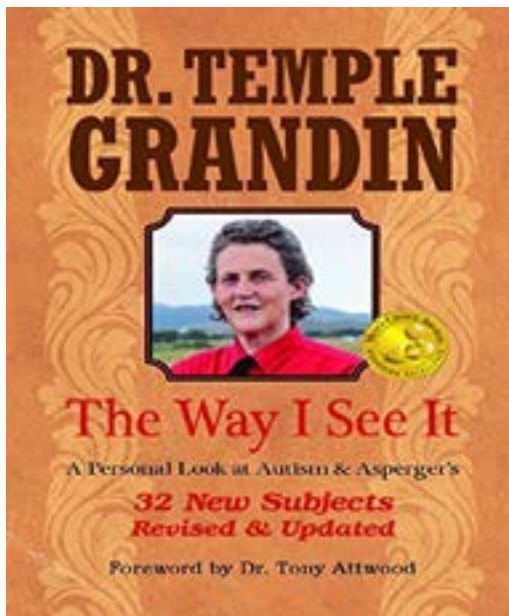
--Madame Jodi Etra



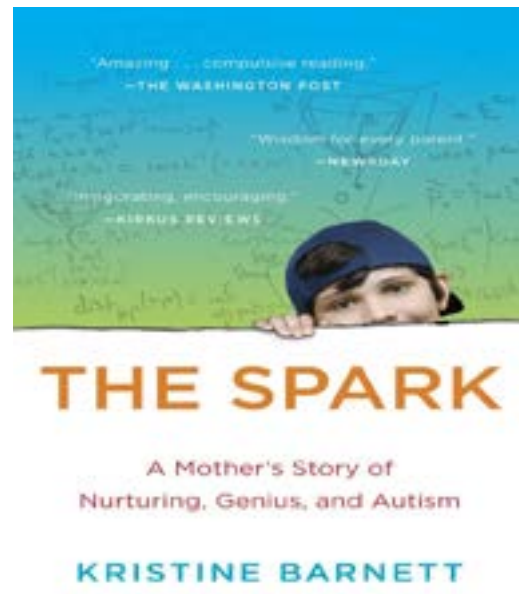
## Fort Lee Public Schools Special Education Department Book Discussion Group

The purpose of the book group is to explore a topic in depth, gain new perspectives, and to bring people together. All school and community members are welcome to participate by reading the books and attending the discussion.

### 1 Topic: 2 Books



(4<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2015)



### 2 Books: 1 Discussion

Date: June 11<sup>th</sup>

Time: 7pm

Location: LFC MS Media Center

RSVP by June 4<sup>th</sup> to Sonja Timpone at (201)585-4652 x1811 or  
[stimpone@flboe.com](mailto:stimpone@flboe.com)

The district has 15 copies of each book, which can be borrowed for up to three weeks. Contact Sonja Timpone in the CST Office.





#### MINDFULNESS PRACTICE OF THE MONTH:

##### Go inside your body.

Mindfulness pioneer Jon Kabat-Zinn from the University of Massachusetts encourages people to do a "body scan." Sit or lie with your kids and, starting with the toes, silently or out loud bring awareness to one body part for a moment, until you've worked your way up to the top of your head. A variation is for everyone to take turns naming one part of their body out loud and briefly describing how that part feels. You might start by saying, "I'm focused on my stomach, and it feels rumbling." Your child then continues, "I'm focused on my left toes, and they feel tingling." Continue for as long as there's interest, or just do one round periodically through the day.

Mindfulness Activities to do as a Family: <https://www.parents.com/fun/activities/5-mindfulness-activities-you-can-do-as-a-family/>



#### CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Monday, May 6, 2019	Board Meeting (FLHS Media Center)	7:30 p.m.
Friday, May 17, 2019	Circle the Arts (FLHS)	6 - 9:30 p.m.
Monday, May 20, 2019	Board Meeting (FLHS Media Center)	7:30 p.m.
Monday, May 27, 2019	Memorial Day - DISTRICT CLOSED	
Monday, June 3, 2019	Board Meeting (FLHS Media Center)	7:30 p.m.
Monday, June 17, 2019	Board Meeting (FLHS Auditorium)	7:30 p.m.
Monday, June 24, 2019	EARLY DISMISSAL	
Tuesday, June 25, 2019	EARLY DISMISSAL - MS COMMENCEMENT	
Wednesday, June 26, 2019	EARLY DISMISSAL - HS GRADUATION and Last Day for Classes	