

Honeywell Update- May 1, 2019

Good evening Highland Park and welcome back from spring break; this is Dr. Taylor. Among the accolades our district has received for academic performance and service-learning contributions to the community, it is most timely of me, since Earth Day 2019 just passed on April 22, to call out our four schools' designation as bronze-certified Sustainable Jersey Schools. Sustainable Jersey for Schools is a certification program for New Jersey public schools that want to go green, conserve resources, and recognize ways to promote healthy living. Irving, Bartle, the middle and high schools make up only 242 schools in the state that are certified.

Three core elements of our march toward sustainability have led to this recognition. First, the district has committed to making physical wellness a high priority. Did you know that our relatively small school district supports 25 organized after-school athletic activities in the middle and high schools? To encourage our youngest kids to see the benefits of being fit, we've also instituted elementary-level programs such as Run for Fun at Bartle.

Now, I've talked ad nauseum over the years about our fight to make social-emotional wellness highly significant. Well, you should know that strategies such as Responsive Classroom, the Bartle Social-Emotional Decision-Making Lab, and restorative practices all coupled with the push to improve physical well-being are fostering in our kids a balance they need to live a life of whole-wellness.

On the "green front," we've been doubling down on ways to cut pollution. You'll start seeing more anti-idling sign posts around the school driveways. Principals have been communicating to their school communities reminders that the law in New Jersey only allows drivers to idle their cars for three minutes. To cut down on driving cars around our 1.8 square mile town, Irving and Bartle have facilitated special walk and bike-to-school initiatives. We refer to our push to encourage families to commute by foot or pedal as "Safe Routes to School." Our board of education even adopted a formal resolution to codify our effort!

A special shout-out has to go to parent volunteer Melanie McDermott for serving as an overseer and guide for the path toward being a Sustainable Jersey School District. Also deserving mention is district coordinator and second-grade teacher Tracey Maiden.

That's it for now. I look forward to speaking with all of you via Honeywell message on May 22. Have a good night.