

# Three Cheers for Innovation, Creativity & Originality!

There's nothing like a new school year to bring out the optimist in all of us.

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renovations of the first floor to include new doors, and a new computer-aided design room. We also renovated bathrooms located near the gymnasium. This was all accomplished because of careful district-level planning and spending.

Also, over the summer, nearly 150 staff members came in to work on further developing our exciting and innovative program, and to clarify and refine the instructional practices that support our curricular goals. Our sole focus remains on offering curriculum which ensures that rigorous content, 21st Century competencies, effective technology integration, and

**C**ALL ME CRAZY, but there is nothing like the start of a brand new school year. Whether it is the fresh notebook that is well-organized and free of doodling (at least for the time being), the unused crayons (who doesn't love a new box of crayons?), or the last-minute rush to complete summer assignments, the start of the school year represents new beginnings for some, and a continuation of success for others.

Perhaps, your teenager is making the big transition into middle or high school. Perhaps, your first born is entering kindergarten. Maybe your child will be tackling his or her first AP class, or beginning the study of a new language. No matter what the circumstance is, in Ramsey, we are all eagerly beginning another exciting school year focused on innovation, creativity and originality.

Over the summer, we were busy getting our buildings ready for September. Many bathrooms, roofs and driveways across the district have been upgraded. Smith School students will have a brand new 8th-grade science lab, renovated girls and boys locker rooms, a new food room and a new art room, renovated bathrooms, and new lockers that will actually hold most bookbags. At the high school, we have continued the

authentic assessments are an integral part of every unit of study throughout the district. My message here has been clear and consistent—our students need to be provided with the necessary content and experiences that reflect the demands of a changing society. We can no longer give them the answers. They must work with information to solve complex problems. In other words, to paraphrase Tony Wagner, “It is not now what you know, it is what you do with that information.”

My philosophy to get this done is simple—“Invest in people and not programs.” It's not only cost-effective for the community, but it's the only way to ensure the systemic changes our students deserve.

Finally, during this school year, we will once again be offering parent academies specifically tailored for our different age groups. These academies will be centered on a variety of topics including digital citizenship, wellness, etc. They are open to everyone in the community. I hope you can come and join us this year.

Our goals for the school year can be found at our Web site. I invite and encourage you to read them and send me any feedback you may have. Feel free to reach me via e-mail at: [mmurphy@ramsey.k12.nj.us](mailto:mmurphy@ramsey.k12.nj.us). You can also follow me on Twitter at [@drmatthewmurphy](https://twitter.com/drmatthewmurphy). ☺