

# HIGH POINT REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

299 PIDGEON HILL ROAD – SUSSEX, NJ 07461-2733

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July 13, 2020

Dear Montague Community:

I hope all of you are healthy and doing well during this uniquely challenging time. We are hard at work preparing for the safe and successful opening of school in September. Despite the pressing need to focus all of our energies on reopening, I believe it is necessary to take a moment and once again address concerns regarding High Point's commitment to the success of all students.

When school ended in June, we invited 71 students who failed one or more courses to attend a credit recovery program staffed by High Point teachers. Next week dozens of these students will successfully complete this intervention and earn credit for their respective courses. This task involved an enormous amount of time and resources -- this is a reflection of our commitment to support our students. We believe in the potential of EVERY student and we are committed to their academic success.

Despite this level of commitment, students do sometimes fail courses for the year. In 2018-19, the last year for which all grades have been calculated, students passed **98.7%** of all full year courses. When comparing how students from different municipalities performed, that passing rate varied from a low of **98.48%** to a high of **98.92%**. Clearly this indicates two things:

1. Despite struggles and challenges throughout the four marking periods, High Point intervenes, helps, teaches and guides students toward success;
2. If one were to compare the academic performance of students according to the municipality in which they reside, the frequency with which students pass or fail courses is statistically and academically insignificant.

Enclosed are letters I sent to the Montague community on three occasions over the past 18 months. **They address grades, PSAT's, SAT's, marking period and yearly passing rates, and more.** When viewed collectively and in context, the data continues to indicate, over and over again, that students from Montague experience success at High Point Regional High School.

I hope that this information reassures you of High Point's commitment to ALL students. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Scott D. Ripley, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

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## High Point Regional High School

**To:** Montague Community  
**From:** Scott D. Ripley, Ed.D.  
**Re:** Academic Concerns  
**Date:** March 4, 2020

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*Dear Montague Community:*

*In recent weeks, as has been the case several times during the past two years, I have been contacted by many of you regarding your support for High Point, as well as your frustration over claims which suggest that High Point is not a strong academic school which supports the needs of all students.*

*Both core academic data (grades and test scores) and anecdotal accounts of student success, make one thing abundantly clear -- students from Montague continue to excel at High Point!*

*Rather than draft a new response to repeated concerns over the same insinuations and specious claims, I would like to refer you to the letter (enclosed) I shared with you in November which addresses these same concerns.*

*High Point remains deeply committed to the long-term success of ALL students. Should you ever have any question or concerns, I welcome you to contact me personally.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "S. Ripley", written in a cursive style.

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November 8, 2019

Dear Montague Community:

High Point is deeply committed to the continued academic success of all students. We serve the diverse needs of students who come to us from six municipalities, and we value each and every student equally.

Student privacy laws significantly limit what performance data can be shared with the public. However, some data may be shared. That data, along with our philosophy and our approach of educating all children, enable us to point out the following:

**A) Philosophy:** As a general practice, High Point is hesitant to compare student performance data by municipality. We proudly embrace each and every student as one of our own, and we never treat children differently based upon where they reside. Obviously, socioeconomic factors and family supports strongly influence student success. However, our goal is for students to overcome obstacles and to be empowered by the education we provide. High Point is a comprehensive, regional high school, equally dedicated to the success of ALL of its students.

**B) System of Supports:** High Point allocates more significant resources toward supporting struggling students than any high school in northwest New Jersey. When students struggle academically or socially, we employ interventions which have been proven to be effective. During the current school year (2019-20), these support services include:

- Four exceptional guidance counselors, one of whom is dedicated to supporting students with learning disabilities
- A full-time counselor/student assistance coordinator who has experience working with adolescents facing challenges related to mental health and substance abuse
- An Intervention & Referral Services Team which seeks to provide support to any student struggling academically or socially
- RTI (Response to Intervention): a multi-tiered system of academic support services specifically targeting Math and English
- A reading specialist
- An enhanced Child Study Team which includes two psychologists, as well as, a licensed clinical social worker

**C) Marking Period Failures:** Of course, marking period failures exist, and we believe they occur too frequently. We are working to reduce these failures, and our interventions are succeeding.

- A review of marking period failures conducted in 2019 indicated that the marking period failure rate for High Point underclassmen from Montague was somewhat higher than that of students from other municipalities, yet the failure rate was lower among Montague students in 12th-grade than it was for students from most other municipalities.

**D) Course Failures:** What is far more significant than a student failing to pass an individual marking period, is what happens after a student is identified as struggling.

- A review of High Point students from Montague conducted last year (2018-19) revealed that **seven** of the more than 85 Montague students at High Point had failed a course at High Point during the 2017-2018 school year. This rate of failure, although higher than we would like to see, is consistent with the failure rate of students who come to High Point from other districts.

**E) Standardized Test Scores:** An analysis of Montague students' academic performance indicates a strong correlation between standardized test scores (PARCC/NJSLA, PSAT, etc.) and classroom performance. Specific students who struggle to demonstrate proficiency on these assessments are typically among those who struggle in the classroom.

- All students take the PSAT8/9 when they enter High Point (October of freshmen year). Last year the average PSAT score for all High Point freshmen was 905. The average PSAT score for freshmen from Montague was 881. Correspondingly, the average GPA for Montague freshmen during this period was 3.5, while the average GPA for all freshmen was 3.8.
- The PSAT data referenced (905/881) is a reflection of where students are when they enter High Point. The SAT reflects students' ability in grades eleven and twelve. Montague students performed well above the state and national average, and they also outperformed their High Point classmates from other municipalities.

<b>SAT Mean Score: Class of 2019</b>	
Class of 2019 (High Point)	1105
Class of 2019 (Montague)	1117

**F) Holistic Experience:** High Point students from Montague excel in advanced classes, are regularly represented in our National Honor Society, and participate in a wide range of athletic and extracurricular activities. They are nurtured, challenged, supported and well-prepared for college and career.

**G) Vertical Articulation:** Most High Point students come from four districts: Frankford, Lafayette, Montague and Sussex-Wantage. We work with these districts to share best practices, support the needs of specific students and synchronize curricula. We will

continue to work with all four districts so that we may assist one another in providing the best possible education for all students.

I hope that this information provides you with some degree of reassurance that High Point is an outstanding school, and that our commitment to the overall success of ALL students is absolute.

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Scott D. Ripley, Ed.D.

### **COMMUNITY: Pretty in Pink Annual Fundraising Game:**



### **ACADEMICS: Student STEM Projects:**



### **OVERVIEW: Curriculum & Activities:**



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January 15, 2019

Dear Montague Community:

I hope you had a joyous and restful holiday and that your new year is off to a wonderful start. High Point is enjoying a great year with our staff and students and we are thrilled to have more than 90 students from Montague calling High Point home this year. At High Point we consider every child to be unique and critically important. One of the many things that make High Point such a special place is that students come to us from six separate municipalities and quickly meld into one, tightly-knit student body and community.

Recently, we have been contacted by members of the Montague community expressing concerns as to the academic well-being of our students from Montague. Please allow me to make two points absolutely clear: High Point does not view students differently based on their address; all students are supported, affirmed, challenged and inspired by our dedicated staff. Second, Montague students are receiving a world-class education at High Point: our faculty, facilities and curriculum are unmatched in the region.

I invite any parent to contact High Point to discuss concerns you may have regarding your child's education, or about High Point's educational philosophy or approach -- we believe that we are here to serve you and your child. Privacy laws impede our ability to present data comparing students based on zip code; however, the thought of doing so is both divisive and counter to who we are as a district. ALL STUDENTS are equally inspired and cared-for at High Point; their success and positive educational experience is our focus. Please contact us if you would like to meet to discuss any concerns related to the academic success of your students.

Sincerely,



Scott D. Ripley, Ed.D.

**High Point 2019-2020 Program of Studies:**

<http://www.hpregional.org/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=3487832>

**High Point Pathways:**

<http://www.hpregional.org/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=36226331>