

## Rumson's Kindergarten Presents at the Early Education Leadership Summit

The Rumson School District has partnered with Rutgers Graduate School of Education, The Department of Education Division of Early Childhood, and the National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER) to work on Kindergarten Implementation Guidelines. Since 2016, our Kindergarten teachers have worked on outlining a comprehensive, continuous, and developmentally appropriate as well as academically rigorous approach to education in Kindergarten through Grade 3.

This endeavor has been valuable in looking at developmentally appropriate practices and assessments. Mrs. Brooke Huff, Ms. Nancy Kelly, Mrs. Jennie Lucci, Mrs. Karen Newman, and Ms. Gina Varanelli have worked diligently to implement the information they have learned encompassing the importance of classroom design, programming, and data collection. Their collaborative work provides a model for meeting the needs of students and their families.



Ms. Jennie Lucci, Ms. Brooke Huff, Ms. Sara Stanziola, Ms. Gina Varanelli, Ms. Karen Newman

This fall, NIEER brought together leaders from districts across the state to share their work. The day included speakers who are national experts in the field of elementary education. Our own Rumson Kindergarten teachers were asked to share their expertise about the exemplary work on student centered learning and student autonomy happening in Deane-Porter classrooms.

Teachers presented the work they had engaged in over the past several years. They explained that they altered their daily schedule to allow for more flexibility in addition to creating a physical environment to support student independence and student initiated choice. By opening up their schedule, it permitted them to provide instruction on subjects at the time of day that was best for their own students. This supports children's learning and development and enables them to learn to their potential. The schedule may be different daily or weekly depending on topics and strategies being taught.

Additionally, flexible seating was introduced to make learning more student centers. The change has increased student engagement and focus. It helps students to take responsibility and become more autonomous. In the beginning it takes time for students to test and try out seating to find the choices that work best for them. Giving them the choice to aid in their learning.

Project Based Learning has been a focus for our kindergarten. This permits student voice and choice which experts at the Summit stated, has an effect of 20 extra learning days per year. Rumson's kindergarten staff continues to explore best practices that fit within our district's vision and enhance student learning.

