

HOPATCONG BOROUGH SCHOOLS

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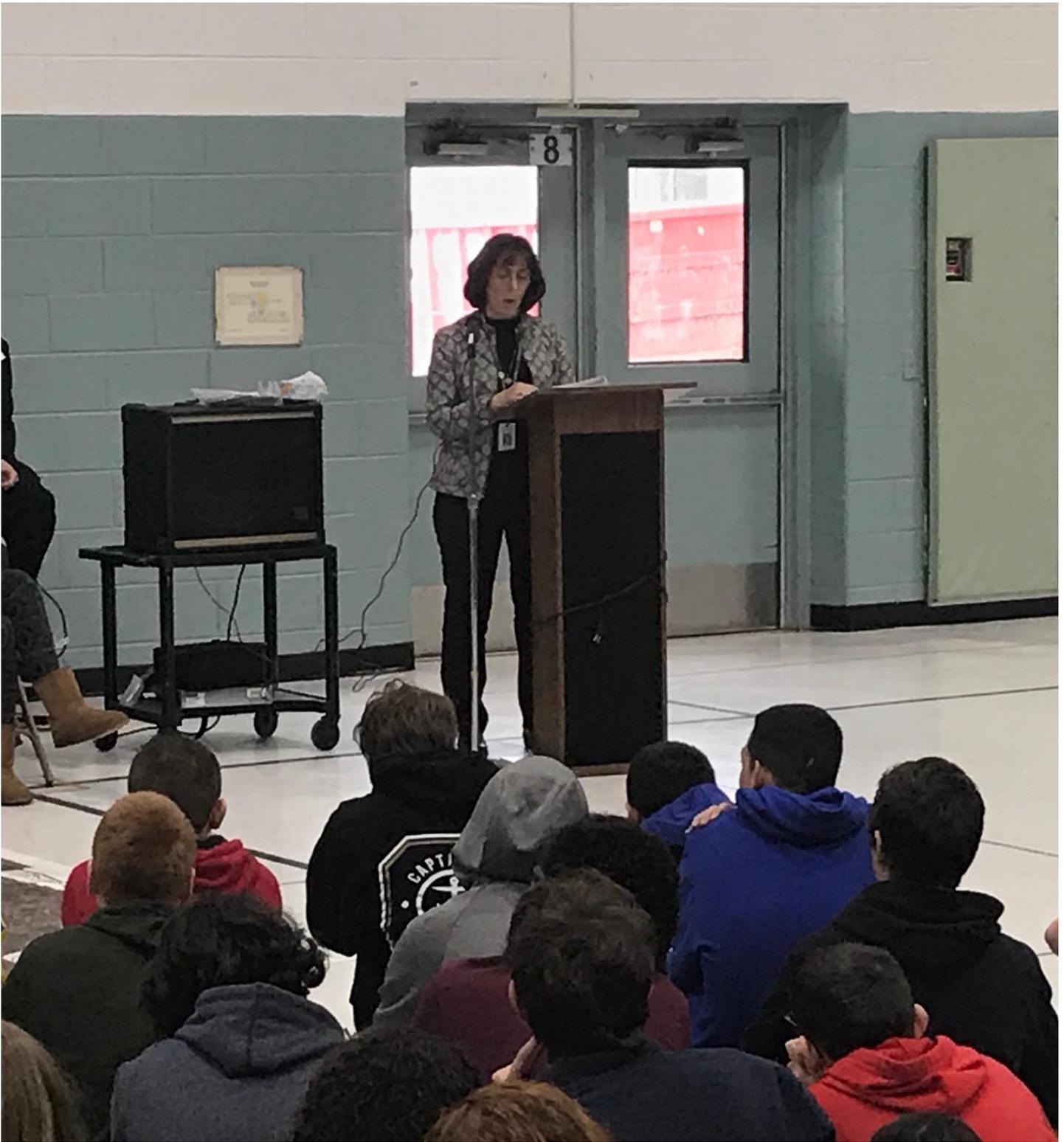
DATE: 02/12/19

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Title: **Drug Court Substance Abuse Prevention Program Comes to HMS**

Art DiBenedetto, Hopatcong Superintendent of Schools, Announces-

Hopatcong Middle School was pleased to welcome, the Sussex County Drug Court, "Jail Cell" program who presented to our 7th and 8th-grade students. Members of the program who have suffered from addiction, incarceration, and who are now in recovery spoke to our HMS students about their struggles with dependence to drugs and alcohol. This program was intended to educate students about the nature of addiction, and the terrible consequences it can have on someone's life. Many young people start using drugs and/or alcohol in Middle School, and we believe education is a crucial factor in prevention. This program helped our 7th and 8th graders see that addiction can begin in Middle School and it can happen to anyone if they make the choice to start using drugs. Each presenter was a person in recovery from addiction and wished they had never started using drugs in the first place. They also advised the students to talk to someone and seek help if they are struggling. It is important for our students to know the reality of using drugs and alcohol and the damage it causes to their lives as well as their families. The students were reminded before they left the assembly they have the choice to never start using. "Our communities are plagued with this tragic opioid crisis and other addictions. Lives of our youth are being destroyed or lost every day. Education is a key component to prevention and if we can touch just one life it is all so worthwhile.", said school Board Vice President, Alex McLean, who worked with the Program and the District Administration to bring the presentation into the schools.



In the above picture, Middle School science teacher Mary Burns is speaking to 8th grade students at the presentation.