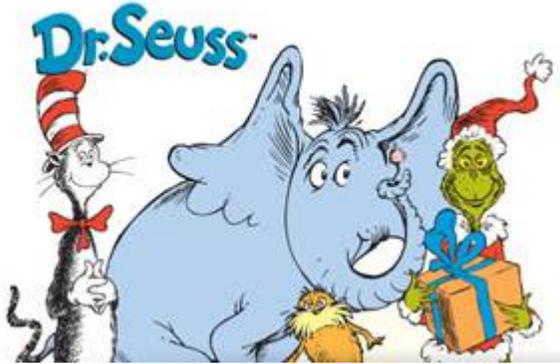


# Southeast Delco School District

## Board & Community Update



### *Read Across America Day*

"You're never too old, too wacky, too wild, to pick up a book and read to a child."

As in years past, each of our elementary schools and the Kindergarten Center will join with thousands of schools across the country in celebrating Dr. Seuss's birthday on

Read Across America Day. This year's celebration will be held on Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup> and each school will stage a variety of Dr. Seuss themed events.

Board members, district administrators, community members, non-teaching staff, and high school students are invited to serve as guest readers. If you would like to join in the celebration and share the joy of reading with our students, please contact the school of your choice to volunteer. The staff and students will be happy to include you in their celebration.

### *Southeast Delco Special Education Programs and Services*

Southeast Delco school district's special education program provides Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) for children in grades Kindergarten through age 21. The district currently provides special education services (remedial and enrichment) to 17.7% of the students in the district. Students who are in need of special education services are identified by a school-based team or by request from a parent or guardian. School-based teams provide intensive interventions prior to qualifying students for special education services. Many of the students referred do not qualify for special education services once the school-based teams identify appropriate interventions that enable the student to make adequate progress within the regular education program. These teams work closely with the director of special education to identify resources to implement effective interventions.

Students that do qualify for special education services are given individualized education plans that are closely monitored through the use of Aimsweb Progress Monitoring. This program provides research-based probes for reading and math and is completed weekly. Aimsweb data is then graphed and sent home to parents on a biweekly basis. Students with IEPs are also reevaluated on a two or three year cycle, depending on their classification, to see if they continue to qualify for special education services. The reevaluation cycle enables teachers to return students into regular education



when they have made enough progress to no longer require special education services. To date this school year, the district has returned 35 students back to regular education.

The district's special education teachers provide individual and small group instruction, and co-teach with regular education teachers. The special education teachers work collaboratively with regular education teachers to provide modification and accommodations for special education students in all content areas.

Following are overviews and activities of some of the programs and services provided to special education students:

### **Enrichment Program for Gifted Students**

Southeast Delco's Enrichment program provides challenging instruction to children with exceptional academic aptitude. Students receive specialized instruction and appropriate enrichment opportunities across the curriculum. In order to provide students with enriching programs beyond the classroom, the district has partnered with several organizations throughout the Philadelphia area, including Drexel University, the Philadelphia Zoo, and the Opera Company of Philadelphia.

Our partnership with Drexel University has provided students with the advantage of experiencing a major university while increasing interest in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) related studies through hands-on activities within a collaborative environment. A select group of middle school students will represent Southeast Delco in the SeaPerch Robotics Competition. This fun, challenging, and educational experience will allow students to design and create an underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) while developing basic engineering skills.



Given that our students have the passion, enthusiasm, and creativity to help solve real-world problems, they have been provided with the opportunity to launch an action campaign in conjunction with the Philadelphia Zoo. Their mission is to increase awareness in others that energy conservation can have a positive impact on wildlife around the globe. Their action campaign, complete with logo and tag lines, has proven to be a huge success. Students are also meeting with zoo experts for a more in depth study of polar bears and frogs.

Enrichment opportunities have been further extended into the arts and humanities. Students are participating in the *Sounds of Learning Education Program* sponsored by the Opera Company of Philadelphia. They are currently preparing to attend a performance of the opera *Mozart's Magic Flute* at the Academy of Music in April.

### **Emotional Support Program – Darby Township School**

The Emotional Support (ES) program at DTS has been very active this school year. Students are working very hard academically and socially. Students who earn enough positive behavior points are

being mainstreamed into regular education classes and participating in service projects around the school. They also have the opportunity to join out-of-school field trips.

All classes have participated in the school recycling program, the collection of soda tabs for the Ronald McDonald House, and cut coupons that will be sent overseas to our military and their families.

The school year was kicked off with a Sharon Hill / Darby Township Emotional Support get-together. Mrs. Condon hosted an ice cream social in her room and all six emotional support classes were given an opportunity to meet and get to know each other.

Several field trips were enjoyed by all. A trip to the Herr's Factory in Nottingham PA educated students on how a factory operates. The highlight of the trip was the free snack of hot potato chips right off the conveyor belt! Students also visited Lincoln Financial Field to experience the Philadelphia Eagles Tour and ate lunch at Pizza Hut. The students were all smiles when they sat in the press box, club box, walked out of the tunnel onto the field, and visited the locker room. The Pizza Hut staff commended the students on how well-behaved, mannerly, and respectful they were while in the restaurant.



The group's latest trip was to GIANT Food Store. Students took a 'healthy tour' around the market and shopped for their lunches. The students shopped off a grocery list and picked healthy options on a budget. All of the students came to DTS and ate in Miss Wise's room.

Some upcoming field trips include a service project to Cradle to Crayons, Philadelphia City Hall, and the Ronald McDonald House. Students enjoy these outings and can't wait to see their friends from Sharon Hill. Each school is selling gourmet lollipops after school to help fund the field trips so everyone will have the opportunity to attend.

### **Emotional Support Program – Sharon Hill School**

The emotional support program in Southeast Delco School District has become more unified than previous years during the first half of the 2012-2013 school year. Sharon Hill and Darby Township Schools are both in their second year using *Steps to Success* – a goal setting, record keeping program. *Steps to Success* has given all students in the ES program a visual reminder of how well they're progressing. It has also enhanced communication and information sharing between home and school.

In addition to the *Steps for Success* program, both schools have been united in the various field trips that were detailed above by Ms. Ashley Wise, who has emerged as an unofficial leader in the group. These out-of-school activities provide students with an opportunity to exercise their social skills. Additionally, the students from each school are developing emerging relationships with the emotional support teachers and staff of their counterpart school.

At Sharon Hill School, the students receive 30 minutes of individual counseling each week. Additionally, the same licensed social worker conducts a group session weekly and consults with staff on any issues that arise. In each classroom, the teachers set appropriately high academic goals while also addressing

the students' social, behavioral, and emotional needs, including anger management, conflict resolution, and appropriate peer interactions.

In the Sharon Hill School community, our students are participating in many activities with their regular education peers. This includes attendance in regular education classrooms, Student Assistance Program groups, athletic teams, intramural sports, and peer mediating. With continued support and encouragement, we are hoping that our emotional support class members will be invited to participate in Reading Olympics, chorus, and other school-wide activities.

### **Life Skills Class – High School Students**

High school life skills students up to the age of 21 participate in a Community Living and Learning program. Students spend three days per week in an independent living facility and two days learning in a traditional classroom. Between the two learning environments, students develop various skills that address academic, social, and independent living skills.

In the community classroom, students further their independent living and social skills. The students prepare shopping lists to purchase food for meals and take public transportation to purchase the items from a local market. The students then use the items they have purchased to prepare lunch for the group.

In addition to meal planning and preparation, students are assigned housekeeping chores, including mopping and vacuuming floors; dusting furniture; taking out trash and recycling on community pick up days; cleaning bathrooms; and raking leaves and cleaning debris from the yard. The class maintains the inventory of cleaning supplies and replenishes them as needed. Students have also used the local Laundromat to wash towels and table clothes. For leisure activities, students take public transportation to go bowling at MacDade Bowls, eat at Pat's Pizza in Ridley, purchase snacks at the local Wawa, play board games, toss a football in the backyard, and assemble puzzles.



During their traditional classroom time, the students develop functional reading and math skills to support the independent living goals needed in the community classroom.

### **Life Skills Class – Elementary School Students**

The life skills classrooms at Harris School have been very busy at school and in the community this year. In the school community, these classes have been helping sort and deliver mail, gather daily attendance, help take care of plants, and assist in fundraising efforts for the Home and School Association. In the classrooms, these students are working on academics, developing their social and functional skills, and learning to cook and take care of their personal needs. We have gone on monthly trips into the community to work on money skills and basic street safety. Some of these trips have included Cupcakeology, Wawa, Rita's Water Ice, and Femis Pizza.

Our classes visited the high school apartment-based living for a snack and hot chocolate during the holiday season and have joined with the Autistic support classes from Delcroft on several field trips, which have included Linvilla Orchards, the Philadelphia Zoo, Macys Christmas Lights, and bowling. We

look forward to the rest of a great school year.

## **SWEEP**

The Southeast Delco Work, Employment, Education Program (SWEEP) officially kicked off in high gear for the 2013 school year. Highlights include:

- SWEEP employs 18 students this year (up from 9 last year)
- SWEEP students volunteered at the Winter Festival
- 9 students went to the Career Fair at DCCC (up from 4 last year)
- Career Cruising is being used by all special education students for transition information. Training has been provided to teachers (APHS, Sharon Hill School and Delcroft) and in-class support has been (and will continue) for teachers at APHS when they work with students during seminar
- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) applications are currently in progress with 5 students (up from 4 last year). One student currently has an application to Ken's Krew
- Community Classroom runs 5 days each week, involves 3 different groups of students (for a total of approximately 27 students)



## **Early Intervention Students Prepare to Transition to Kindergarten**

Early intervention transition meetings are currently underway. Children enrolled in early intervention will be transitioning to the Kindergarten Center in September. Transition teams consist of the school psychologists, speech pathologists, Kindergarten staff (special education teacher, reading specialist and interim principal) as well as the early intervention staff from Delaware county Intermediate Unit. Many of the children will participate in the extended school year (ESY) program during the summer to ensure a smooth transition into Kindergarten in the fall.

## ***Safety and Security***

The district continues to build its partnership with our local community police departments. Walkthroughs of each district school will be conducted to familiarize the departments with the unique physical layouts of each building. Electronic copies of the layouts will also be provided so that first responders will have immediate access to the information in their patrol cars. Finally, we are exploring the capability of allowing local police to access the district's radio network in the event of an emergency. This would increase communication between organizations to effectively collaborate in the event of an emergency. We will continue to partner with local law enforcement to provide the safest environment for students and staff in the district.

## ***Title I Monitoring***

The district is preparing for its upcoming Title I monitoring. This monitoring occurs every three years and is conducted by a representative from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. After our last visit, it was suggested that the district provide some of its communication home to parents in their

native language and that we develop an equity plan for staffing. Both of these suggestions have been accomplished.

This year, we will be working with the monitor to gain strategies into increasing parent involvement across the district. The monitoring will occur between March and May. Once complete, we will make the Board aware of any recommendations for improving our programming.

### *Professional Development*

Principals and assistant principals met with Cathy Feldman of REACH associates to review Whole Group Shared Reading to strengthen their ability to support teachers in reading. Principals have an assignment to visit five classrooms and return in March with artifacts of their observations. Teachers in grades 2 - 5 met with REACH Associates' Jody Pittock for training on Constructed Responses, which supports student work in PSSA. Teachers in grade 1 were trained on a unit of letter writing. Teachers in grades K-8 reviewed student data and met on various topics ranging from Reading Olympics to discussions of acceleration of math classes beginning at the end of grade 5 and the usage of calculators in classrooms.

### *Future Board Meetings*

Committee of the Whole	Thursday, February 21, 2013	6:00 PM	ESC
Board Business Meeting	Thursday, February 28, 2013	7:00 PM	ESC
Committee of the Whole	Thursday, March 14, 2013	6:00 PM	ESC
Board Business Meeting	Thursday, March 21, 2013	7:00 PM	ESC

### *School Events*

- ***Presidents' Day Holiday – No School for Students and Staff – February 18<sup>th</sup>***
- ***Read Across America – Celebrating Dr. Seuss's Birthday – Kindergarten Center and all Grades 1 – 8 Schools – March 1<sup>st</sup>***
- ***District Honor Band and Chorus Concert – APHS – March 6<sup>th</sup> – 7:00 PM***
- ***Frosh Dance – APHS – March 6<sup>th</sup> – 7:00 PM***
- ***Progress Report 3 – Grades K – 12 – March 8<sup>th</sup>***
- ***PSSA Writing – Grades 5, 8, and 11 – March 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>***
- ***Spring Break – No School for Students – March 25<sup>th</sup> – April 1<sup>st</sup>***