

Southeast Delco School District

Board & Community Update

Neither Snow Nor Rain.....

Despite all of the snow days, students and staff are still busy preparing for this year's round of state testing. Some Academy Park students have already taken their Keystone exams in Biology, Algebra, and English. Elementary and middle school students will soon be taking the Pennsylvania System of School Assessments (PSSAs) in the coming month.

Each year, students in grades 3 - 8 take PSSA assessments in Reading, Mathematics, Writing, and Science. Not all students take every assessment; they differ according to grade level. This year, testing will begin with the Reading and Mathematics assessments, scheduled to start on March 24th.

The district uses its own assessment system to prepare students for the rigors of high stakes testing and to monitor how students are progressing throughout the year. Students in grades 1 - 8 take Benchmark assessments created by the district in Reading and Mathematics. The high school is designing assessments for their Keystone courses. The next step in the evolution may be the addition of benchmark testing in Science and Social Studies in the elementary grades.

We are confident that our students will do their best on all upcoming assessments. When we receive the data back from the state, we will be sure to share it with the Board and the community.

Extended School Year Preparations Underway

The special education department is preparing for this year's extended school year program (ESY). The program is a federal and state mandated service for students with disabilities. Held four days per week, the district program is scheduled to run from June 23rd to July 31st. Participating students receive intensive Reading, Math, and social skills remediation and spend one day a week swimming at Ridley Park Swim Club.

Broadening Horizons

Students enrolled in the district's gifted program are being exposed to a variety of encounters they may not otherwise get to experience.



Students are participating in the *UNLESS* Campaign, a project sponsored by the Philadelphia Zoo to research and develop ways to address the devastating state of the endangered Sumatran Tigers. The name "UNLESS" was adopted from the *The Lorax*, a children's book written by Dr. Seuss that chronicles the plight of the environment and the fictional Lorax, who states "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing will get better, it's not." The *UNLESS* campaign is also an actual contest in which students will be judged based on qualitative and quantitative criteria. Students participated in an animal study at the zoo on January 29th and will remain committed to this project through March, 2014.

As they did last year, middle school gifted students will participate in Drexel University's SeaPerch Challenge, an underwater robotics program supported by the US Navy. This year's SeaPerch kick-off and teacher training was held in December. The theme of this year's competition is "The Heist". Two mentors, both Navy engineers, have been assigned to the team. The first meeting was held on January 9th.

The gifted teachers continue to expose their students to the arts and humanities. Students attended the ballet, *Serenade*, on February 6th. A preparatory lesson was held during the month of January at DTS so that students could develop the background necessary to appreciate this art form.

Students are also scheduled to visit the Drexel University School of Engineering. This will be the second of three trips. The focus of this lesson is on biomedical engineering. Building on a partnership with the Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers, students continue to meet in the MATH COUNTS Club in each of the four schools.

Teaching and Learning

Harris art teacher Christine Hall is spearheading the Dream Flag Project at that school. Students will create dream flags by writing down their dreams on letter-size pieces of cloth that can be as personal as wishing for a dog or as global as hoping for an end to war. They will then decorate the flags with colorful markers or paint. The act of expressing and sharing helps students to move from vaguely dreaming to being doers and taking action in their lives. This project is rooted in the dream poetry of Langston Hughes.



This year, our curriculum is focused on updating English / Language Arts. In our current spring 2014 semester, English / Language Arts teachers in grades 6, 7, and 8 will continue to pilot a second series, *Collections*, from Houghton Harcourt. At the same time, our high school Literature texts and resources will be updated. Academy Park is also piloting two series during the second semester in grades 9 - 12. A decision, after much discussion and comparison, will be made in May 2014, and will be purchased for the next school year.

For the 2014 / 2015 school year, our curriculum cycle will focus on Science for all grades, which indicates that we will be updating our texts and curriculum to align with the PA Common Core and to prepare our students for the high-stakes PSSA and Keystones in Science and Biology. The pilots will occur during the 2014 - 2015 school year with purchase of new resources in spring 2015.

This spring, the district will also be providing fiction and poetry text exemplars for grades K - 5 in Reading / Language Arts to be used for our proficient and advanced readers. Next school year, we also plan to add non-fiction texts sets for our proficient and advanced readers to be used during daily enrichment classes.

Our assistant principals will receive training on the Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), which are part of the Effective Educator Evaluation System from Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE).

Induction class for our ten teachers new to the district this school year was held on February 11th. The focus was on the Penn Literacy Network (PLN) Strategies of best teaching practice. High school teachers, and former PLN coaches, Susan Reutter and Susan Morrissey, presented these teaching strategies to our new teachers.

The elementary and high school guidance counselors have begun an intensive three day training on creating Comprehensive Career and Readiness Curriculum through PDE at Chichester School District. Three districts were invited to this consultation: Interboro, Southeast Delco, and Chichester.

Save the Date: District Family Literacy Night - May 28th at Darby Township School.

Future Board Meetings

Committee of the Whole	Thursday, February 20, 2014	6:00 PM
Board Business	Thursday, February 27, 2014	7:00 PM

School Events

- *Progress Notices Issued – February 21st*
- *Read Across America Events – Week of March 3rd – March 7th*
- *Rising Scholars Meeting – March 8th – 8:00 AM to Noon - APHS*
- *District Band and Chorus – March 12th – 7:00 PM – APHS*
- *Rising Scholars Meeting – March 22nd – 8:00 AM to Noon – APHS*
- *End of 3rd Marking Period – March 26th*