

# Southeast Delco School District Board & Community Update

## *District Offers "Parent University" at Academy Park*

The Southeast Delco School District will present the school year's first *Parent University* event on November 13<sup>th</sup> at Academy Park High School at 5:30 - 8:00 PM.

Parent University is a community collaborative where Southeast Delco partners with local agencies and organizations to offer free courses, family events, and activities that will help equip families with new or additional skills, knowledge, resources, and confidence.

The goal of *Parent University* is to increase involvement in our children's education and empower parents to raise children who are successful in school and in life. Research has shown that parents can increase a child's academic success through involvement with schools and in their communities. Parental involvement improves student morale, attitude, and academic achievement across all subject areas



Attendees can attend two sessions on the following topics:

### ***How to Make the Most of Your Parent Conferences***

This session will provide parents with strategies to ensure that their parent teacher conferences are successful.

### ***Confident Parenting: Positive Communication and Discipline***

This session will focus on how the beliefs of society mold a child and how parents can be positive role models for their children.

A meeting for parents with children enrolled in the English as a Second Language program will also be offered.

Even if you are not a parent, we encourage you to become involved with Parent University. Volunteer opportunities are available. Please contact Kimberley Brown, Director of Special Education, at 610-522-4300 ext. 5322.

## *Student Achievement Measured by District-wide Benchmark Assessments*

District students have been taking benchmark assessments in an effort to prepare for year-end or end-of-course testing. Students at the high school have been utilizing Study Island in advance of the first round of Keystone Exams this winter. Students in 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grades will be taking exams in Biology, Algebra I, and Literature. Another round of Keystone exams will be held in the spring, with additional students in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade who are enrolled in Algebra I taking the Algebra Keystone exam.



Students in grades 3 - 8 have finished their second round of 4Sight testing. Overall scores in Reading are above last year's achievement on the PSSA. While that news is positive, district administrators remain cautious over the reliability of 4Sight as a predictor of PSSA success.

In Mathematics, the scores are increasing by double-digits as students master new grade-level material and content. It should be noted that the district is moving towards being able to provide their own benchmark assessments so it may retain control over the content of the assessment and the data gained from them.

## *Supplemental Educational Services*

SES, or Supplemental Educational Services tutoring, begins this month. This tutoring is required by and funded through Title I. Parents are free to choose any vendor that has been approved by the state. Southeast Delco has been named as an approved provider of these services. These services are free to any family receiving free or reduced lunch. Currently, students in both Academy Park and Harris are eligible to apply. There will also be another round of SES tutoring during the second half of the school year.

## *District-Wide Science Fair*

School Science Fairs for grades students in grades 6, 7, and 8 are being held throughout November. Darby Township, Delcroft, Harris, and Sharon Hill Schools will hold individual science fairs throughout the month culminating in the district-wide fair on November 28<sup>th</sup> at Academy Park High School. Guest judges will review the top nine displays from each school and award medals to the three best projects. Those students will then be invited to display their science project at the County-wide competition in February.



## *Retired Southeast Delco Teacher Hopes to Pay It Forward*

Harris Principal Shawn McDougall and Dr. Watson met with Terry Axler; a retired Southeast Delco teacher who is interested in developing a pilot program to mentor our students. She has the desire to give back to the children of the district and will co-ordinate with other retired teachers as she develops this mentoring program, which will begin at Harris school.

## *Curriculum News*

The district is planning to update our ten year old core reading series in grades K - 5 this year. This timely decision will support the implementation of the PA Common Core. The series selection committee, which consists of teachers and building and central office administrators, will attend presentations from three vendors. Two programs will be selected to be piloted in the spring semester.

## *District Teachers Continue to Learn Through Professional Development*

Teachers in grades K - 8 had a very productive professional development day on Tuesday, November 6<sup>th</sup>. Teachers in grades K - 5 attended an anti-bullying presentation; they learned Prezi, a new type of PowerPoint; they worked on their Go Math technology offerings, and had specific time to review data and make educational decisions. Teachers in grades 1 and 2 viewed a webinar on Project Read, which is the district's phonics program in those grades. Middle school teachers also learned Prezi, and had an opportunity to analyze their student data to make educational placement decisions. Language Arts teachers met with Lisa Gannon who reviewed with them new aspects of the Reading Edge program, as it reflects Common Core. Math, Science, and Social Studies teachers viewed online training modules presented by the Teaching Channel on content specific lesson strategies and responded on a feedback form.



Allyson Zalewski, Colleen Burke, and Dr. Monica Watson met with Dr. Richard Cunningham of Neumann University to discuss our graduate school needs for Southeast Delco teachers as they develop new programs at the university. During that conversation, Dr. Cunningham offered the opportunity to also have a Doctoral program cohort here in our district tailored to the availability of district administrators. Seven principals and assistant principals are interested in pursuing their doctorates in this manner. We will be working with Dr. Phil Lowe of Neumann University to make this happen for our administrators.

Teachers in grades 1, 3 and 4 met with REACH Associate Jody Pittcock for training on the second mode of process writing: Opinion. Teachers also reviewed some narrative pieces and scored them using a rubric developed by a committee of teachers. Writing has become very exciting on the part of our students and teachers in grades 1 - 5.

District principals and assistant principals met with Cathy Feldman of REACH Associates to receive an overview of the writing process that our teachers in grades 1 - 5 are learning to prepare their students to become process writers as per the Common Core. This training informs our administrators about the “look fors” as they monitor and support teachers in this process.

Dr. Watson met with Janice Thomas from Pearson’s Success Maker, which is a digital K - 8 reading and math focused on the needs of the individual learner. We have the opportunity to pilot this program, at no cost, with a small group of students and teachers to determine its effectiveness as an intervention.

## *Future Board Meetings*

Board Organization -- Monday, December 3, 2012 -- 6:00 PM, ESC

## *Winter Concerts*

- Darby Township School – Wednesday, December 12<sup>th</sup> – 7:00 PM
- Harris School – Thursday, December 13<sup>th</sup> – 7:00 PM
- Sharon Hill School – Tuesday, December 18<sup>th</sup> – 6:00 PM
- Academy Park High School – Wednesday, December 19<sup>th</sup> – 7:00 PM
- Delcroft School – To Be Determined

## *School Events*

- Parent Teacher Conferences – Grades 9 – 12 - November 13<sup>th</sup> – 6:00 PM
- Home & School Turkey Bingo - Harris School – November 16<sup>th</sup> – 6:00 PM
- Report Cards – Grades 9 – 12 - November 16<sup>th</sup>
- Parent Teacher Conferences – Report Cards – Grades 1 – 8 - November 19<sup>th</sup> through 21<sup>st</sup>
- ***Thanksgiving Holiday – No School for Students or Staff – November 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>***
- District-wide Middle School Science Fair – November 28<sup>th</sup>
- Home & School Winter Wonderland – Darby Township School – December 8<sup>th</sup> – 12 to 4:00 PM
- National Geographic Bee – Grades 6 – 8 – December 10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>
- Family Night – Cultural Heritage Celebration – Kindergarten Center – December 11<sup>th</sup> – 6:30 PM
- District Spelling Bee – Grades 6 – 8 – December 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>
- ***Winter Break - No School for Students or Staff – December 24<sup>th</sup> – January 1<sup>st</sup>***