

Delaware County Schools

Celebrate American Education Week

November 13-19, 2022





Together for Safe, Just & Equitable Schools

This week we highlight the many individuals who work in our public schools, as well as students, families and communities. **American Education Week** (AEW), first celebrated in 1921, is an opportunity to celebrate public education, to inform the community of the accomplishments within our public schools, and honor individuals who are making a difference in ensuring that every child receives a quality education.

This special edition newsletter is a celebration of the ongoing efforts in our school districts to provide excellence in education for all students, every day, everywhere. Each district provided its own unique story to highlight their district for this publication.

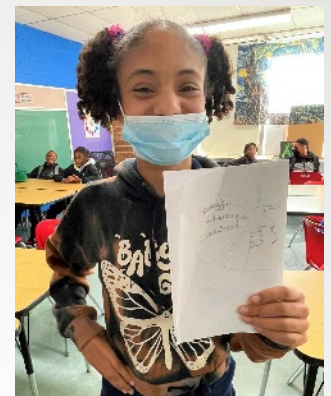
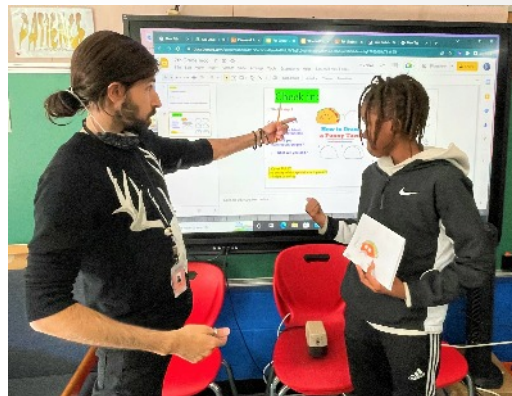
The DCIU values the important partnerships we have forged with administrators, school boards, parents, students, and the community and all those making a difference in the lives of students and families.

Chester Upland

The Arts are Back at Toby Farms!

While the arts often fall victim to school budget cuts, they can be very important to students' success in school. The arts inspire learning and help make curriculum and traditional subjects more approachable for students. The arts are also capable of leveling the playing field by expanding learning opportunities for all students and allowing them to experience the different learning styles that work best for them. The arts help engage students and excite them about the work they are doing in school.

At the Toby Farms Intermediate School, in the Chester Upland School District, the arts are fully back this year after a more than two-year hiatus for some due to staffing issues and the COVID-19 pandemic. And, the arts are better than ever as they allow students to experience various specials which offer a variety of classes and curricula. It's exciting that Toby Farms students are once again being exposed to the arts, which can help lead to better academic outcomes and inspire them to set higher career goals and be more engaged. Further, the students, who are in grades 6-8, are experiencing curricula that will lead them to appreciate the arts and understand their importance in our daily lives.

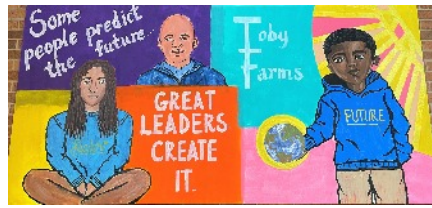


The students rotate through the following courses throughout the school year, giving them the opportunity to explore different interests, learn new skills, experience learning in different ways, and expand their ways of thinking. Every student takes each of these classes once a week, all school year long:

Multimedia Exploration. Taught by Mr. Robert Johnson, a former radio/TV producer, this class introduces students to the basic concepts of video, music and print production and other relevant applications used in today's modern society. The course is designed to enhance a student's appreciation for the media they use every day, or even spark an interest in working with media arts as a career option. One 8th grade student, Talia P., remarked that one thing she found interesting in this class is that they wrote about the Black Lives Matter movement, which they saw play out on the news. Talia has plans to be an attorney, so this assignment provided experience in research and writing about a major current event. The students learn in the classroom and then move into the "Toby Studio" for hands-on learning and demonstrations, such as operating a sound board. This class provides a huge head start for students who see a career in communications or multimedia in their future.

The Arts are Back at Toby Farms!

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Spanish. This is the first year that Spanish has been added as a special. Taught by Mr. Leslie Thomas, this course exposes the students to something different from their usual specials. They're not only learning basic Spanish words, how to form simple sentences, and verb conjugations and pronouns, they are also learning about different Spanish cultures and countries in the process, expanding their horizons beyond their everyday lives. The class teaches students to interact in a simple way, ask and answer questions about themselves, the people they know and their possessions, in Spanish. This class challenges the students to rethink any assumptions they may have had about the Spanish culture. It also helps to promote personal growth while enabling them to learn new things about another culture.



Music. Mr. Riley Ernst is the wonderful new music teacher at Toby Farms. The students haven't experienced music class since 2020, so his arrival has added a special, fun learning opportunity to the students' day. Realizing that music education can have major, positive impacts on growth and development, the school leaders were determined to bring music back to their students. Music education is an important aspect of providing children with a well-rounded education and can help them grow in self-esteem, build essential skills and prepare for bright futures. The students at Toby Farms are learning about various instruments, reading notes, terminology, music patterns and more.

Art. While art has been the one consistent special the school has had, Mr. David Inzinna is relatively new to Toby Farms as the Art Teacher. Mr.

Inzinna's goal is to help the students find their strength as artists. Students often come to class expressing that they are not artists, that they cannot draw. Mr. Inzinna uses a process with them that starts out with drawing a basic shape, and then adding on over time, to complete their very own creation. The students are beginning to change their "I'm not an artist" tune to one of more wonder and awe as they see their creations come to fruition. He keeps a portfolio of each student's work so that they can see how they've actually grown as artists over the year. Further, for Mr. Inzinna and his students, art is more than just drawing. It's about culture and reflects the economic and social substance of people, places and times. This year, Mr. Inzinna has integrated Spanish into the art curriculum; this bodes well with the Spanish language special the students are also taking.

Gym. Gym was welcomed back enthusiastically this year, as the class existed only in the second half of the last school year. Gym Teacher, Michele Dunleavy, who has a great deal of spirit and energy, combines real physical education with health lessons, as the two really do go hand-in-hand. For example, the students are learning about heart rates, both resting and elevated, what's a healthy or normal heart rate and what is not. So as to not overwhelm or "bore" the students, she gives them snippets of health education and tries to tie in a physical activity to go along with the health lesson. Because she makes gym class fun, the students love going and actively participating in this class.



Chichester

Celebrating Success



*H*illtop Elementary School is a K-4 school in the Chichester School District. The school's climate and culture are infectious! The school prides itself on implementing PBIS with fidelity, inclusivity, and an atmosphere that encourages and motivates its students and staff. Hilltop is a place where students want to come to learn, and teachers want to come to teach! Parents say that their children and they have had "an amazing experience at Hilltop."

The positivity starts each morning when students walk through the door. As students get out of their cars or buses, they greet staff and one another with a hello or smile and wish each other a good day. Mrs. Hall, a parent of a fourth-grade student, said, "In the car rider drop off line I witnessed Mrs. Matijasich (Principal) interact with the children as they got out of their cars, and you can see that they are her top priorities and that her relationships with them are special." All students know that they should follow "Earnie's Expectations" when they are both in and out of school. It is commonplace

to see kind deeds done for the sole reason of standing true to our motto of being "respectful, responsible, caring and safe." The positive climate at Hilltop provides a place for students to grow both socially and academically. They encourage each other, help each other, and show kindness. Greetings are not just with words. We work hard at being inclusive in all ways. Everyone in the school learns a weekly word in sign language so that our students who are non-verbal are greeted in a way they can understand as well.

As the students enter their classrooms, they are greeted by their teachers and classmates with a friendly smile, a warm hello, a fist bump, hug, handshake, or high-five. The students then begin their day with a "Morning Meeting." This is where the students explicitly learn about our monthly PBIS themes such as kindness, respect, and citizenship. Students are taught and can share about how to be a good friend and how to follow anti-bullying rules. Our "Morning Meetings" are where we build our homeroom community, a smaller community within the greater Hilltop Community. Monthly themes are discussed not only in the classroom, but also throughout the whole building. There is a theme board in the main hallway and students hear about each skill trait over the announcements daily. Teachers share out distinctive characteristics of traits during Morning Meetings and students work to be "Eagle Winners" by demonstrating these traits. These traits are then reciprocated at home where students' families are involved by writing out "Home Brag Notes" where students demonstrate these characteristics in their homes. We are teaching students how important it is to be a good person on the inside.



Chichester

Celebrating Success

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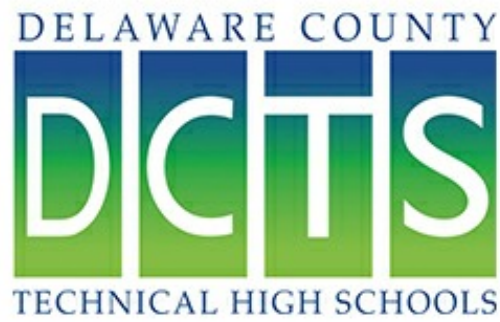
When walking into classrooms or through our hallways, it is easy to notice how our students take pride in their learning! Our bulletin boards and hallway displays feature student-centered activities that reflect learning happening in the classrooms and around the school. When our students walk through the halls, they follow expectations by walking in quiet lines. Our students know that the noise volume in our halls should be at “Zone 0.” Learning takes place outside of school hours as well. We have many students who voluntarily come to school early or stay after school each day to take part in a variety of learning clubs and activities.

During school hours, students can “swoop” by and visit *The Nest*, our school store, which operates in conjunction with our PBIS program. Students can trade earned tickets (our currency for following Earnie’s Behavior Expectations) for desired rewards! *The Nest* features school spirit items like T-shirts and hats, fun school supplies, small electronics, and collectible items like toys and trinkets. Our team has added creative no cost ideas for students to work towards, such as shooting hoops with teachers or having a special lunch with a favorite staff member. Not only does *The Nest* motivate our students, but it is also a student-centered authentic learning experience from start to finish. Fourth grade students submit applications and participate in a mock interview process to be “employed” at *The Nest*. They discover personality strengths and select which position will be a good fit for them. They learn about customer service and how to collaborate as a team. Students can work in the retail, advertising, or graphic design departments. *The Nest* allows our students to gain real world experience while supporting our positive school culture! Students are also able to use their tickets to be the teacher of the day or the principal of the day.



Success at Hilltop, no matter how small or big, is consistently celebrated. “Shout Outs” are read during the morning announcements so that the entire school can recognize the accomplishments of a student or teacher. Students and staff encourage one another and genuinely look forward to our monthly celebrations of “Eagle Winners” which are a special time for the whole school and community to come together as one and celebrate our standout students and their successes.

“Not only does the *Nest* motivate our students, but it is also a student-centered authentic learning experience from start to finish.”



All students enrolled in Delaware County Technical High Schools have the opportunity to participate in at least one Career & Technical Student Organization (CTSO). Students who become members in these co-curricular organizations have the opportunity to participate in a broad spectrum of activities including skill competitions, career and technology fairs, trips, service projects, special events and social activities. Delaware County Technical High Schools offers several CTSO opportunities for students: HOSA-Future Health Professionals, SkillsUSA, Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America, and National Technical Honor Society.



These CTSOs offer competitions where the skills students learned are “put to the test” as they compete against other students. These competitions include testing of knowledge and hands-on skills in a variety of trade and leadership events. Students who are fortunate enough to win their events at a district or state competition are able to compete at the national level and travel to locations such as Louisville, KY, Kansas City, MO, San Diego, CA, Orlando, FL, and Cleveland, OH.

HOSA-Future Health Professionals (HOSA) is a global student led organization, whose mission is to promote career opportunities in the health industry and to enhance the delivery of quality health care to all people. During the 2021-2022 school year, 408 students from DCTS have participated in local HOSA sponsored activities and competitions. DCTS had 90 students compete at States. In total, DCTS had 25 students who placed in the state competitions and had the chance to compete in the HOSA National Competition that was held in Nashville, TN this past June 2022.





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Skills USA a partnership of students, teachers and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. “SkillsUSA activities develop positive attitudes, build self-esteem and empower students to excel. They give students a head start in developing valuable professional skills such as communications, interpersonal abilities, time management, teamwork and more” (SkillsUSA). On January 25th and 26th, 2022, students from different schools visited and competed in various competitions. DCTS had 24 students earn 1st place, 11 students earn 2nd place, and 6 students earn 3rd place. First place winners traveled to Hershey for the state Skills Competition where they could qualify for the National Competition!



Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) PA State Leadership Conference was held on March 22, 2022. DCTS had several students attend to compete in different competitions for the possibility of earning scholarships and other accolades. This CTSO encourages students in Family and Consumer Sciences education programs.

The National Technical Honor Society is an educational non-profit that exists to honor, recognize, and empower students and teachers in Career & Technical Education. During the 2021-2022 school year, DCTS inducted 33 new students and awarded 5 students a second-year pin. THS encourages higher scholastic achievement, cultivates a desire for personal excellence, and helps top students find success in today’s highly competitive workplace. The society is committed to the recognition of excellence in every arena of career and technical education including student achievement, community service, outstanding chapters, and contributions from business, industry, and educational professionals.

All Delaware County Technical High School students are encouraged to participate in one of these student organizations to increase their awareness of opportunities, earn scholarships, make friends, and represent DCTS! These opportunities are unique to DCTS. Students can learn more about the DCTS programs, Career and Technical Student Organizations, and more by visiting www.DCIU.org/DCTS.

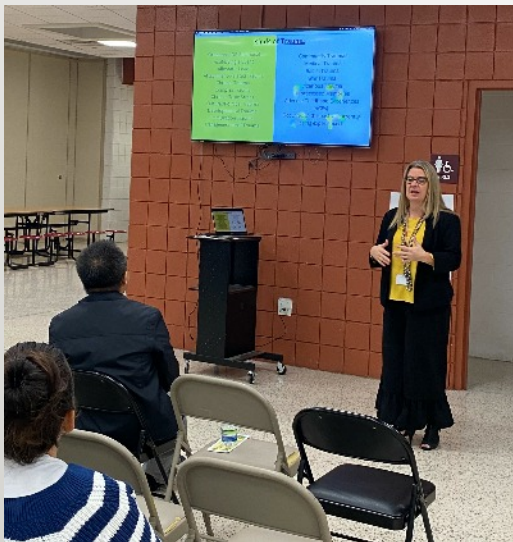


Garnet Valley

Garnet Valley is a Community That Cares

American Education Week is dedicated to the coming together of families, educators, and communities to honor and support excellence in public education for all students. We know that great public schools transform the lives of students and their communities, so we can create a more just and inclusive society.

The Garnet Valley Community that Cares (GVCTC) is a prime example of the important work taking place in the community that supports schools, students and families, and contributes to the healthy growth and development of students. The GVCTC is a vital, collaborative effort that makes a difference in the lives of our children as they confront the challenges, risks, and pressures of growing up. The GVCTC engages a proven “how to” recipe in providing this invaluable service to the Garnet Valley community. That recipe includes the main ingredients of caring adults, data informed decisions, measured progress and open and ongoing communication. And, as with any good recipe, there must be additional ingredients with accurate measurements and step-by-step directions to make it palatable.



The GVCTC has as its additional ingredients: collaborative, coherent, and convincing strategies; support of children in a multi-layered manner; educate adults on the new realities of parenting; foster open dialogue between community members; promote the best possible environment for our children and engage our community and schools in a partnership to support, educate, parent and prepare our children to grow into healthy adults. All ingredients combined make up a delightful recipe of a multi-faceted approach to preparing healthy, well-adjusted, well-rounded students for independent, successful lives -- cooked to perfection!

The GVCTC carries out its mission by celebrating accomplishments, providing creative, positive choices for youth, providing community education, strengthening families, developing youth leadership skills and opportunities, and sharing a vision.

Garnet Valley

Garnet Valley Is A Community That Cares

Continued...

Again, before we begin a new recipe, we read it thoroughly to familiarize ourselves with the timing, techniques, equipment, and ingredients we'll need. The GVCTC thoroughly digested and utilized the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) data to develop programming with the district to direct its prevention and intervention efforts with youth and families, prior to moving forward.

As a result, the work of the GVCTC helps to support many school programs, including:

- New Realities of Parenting Series
- Graduation Walk
- Red Ribbon Week
- Speak Up
- Bullying Prevention
- Great American Vape/Smoke Out
- Prom Promise
- Aavidum Club
- SADD Club
- Family Information Nights



One of GVCTC's recent programs was a district wide event entitled, *New Realities of Parenting*, held on November 9, 2022.

This event, created for all Garnet Valley K-12 parents, featured breakout sessions from a variety of speakers discussing important topics and answering questions about: Trauma Informed Mental Health; Partners in Social & Emotional Learning: Families, Schools & Communities; What Your Children Don't Want You to Know About Social Media; Incorporating Mindfulness into Family Routine & Self Care; What to Know Today: Drugs & Alcohol and School Safety. Attended by over 200 people, this was a unique opportunity for parents to learn, share, and support each other as a community.



Haverford

Haverford Sports Media Celebrating Student Achievement



Haverford Sports Media (HSM) is a student-led and operated media group that encompasses student broadcasters, journalists, photographers, videographers, web designers, social media publicists, and statisticians at Haverford High School. The club aims to give students a hands-on introduction to the world of sports media. Students learn the skills necessary to not only commentate for live broadcasts of Haverford sporting events but also become familiar with the technical aspects of producing a live broadcast from managing audio and video feeds to compiling and processing data in real time. While the group's main operations involve live broadcasting of varsity sporting events, the impact of this group has transcended Haverford athletics and has had a tremendous impact on the school district and community as a whole.

Haverford Sports Media has helped to establish a culture of positivity, appreciation, and celebration by putting our students' efforts and excellence on full display, whether it be their hard work on the sports field, personalities on the live-air broadcast, or their capabilities as technology workers, writers, photographers, journalists, and web designers.

You can follow the HSM team on Twitter @whhssportslive and Instagram @whhssportslive and watch live on the Haverford Athletics YouTube page: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSsethr_BK5BtqjS9pCUnFg.

HSM is 21st-century education and career readiness where students are working in a full capacity job, with on-the-job career training, that could lead to fully compensated employment after graduation. With the autonomy of a student-run and operated team, come tremendous opportunities for leadership and followership development. HSM uses technology and social media, including YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter to publicize our athletics to the community in a fun, creative, and comprehensive way.

The group has continued to grow to encompass more students with broader interests as well as including more facets of our school curriculum. Students are designing athletic social media posts in their web design class, developing broadcasting ideas in the video production class, and learning the operations side in their sports management class. Most importantly, Haverford Sports Media has created a high standard of excellence and professionalism for all of our students by showing what they can do with the facilitation and support of our teachers and administrators.

Interboro

Interboro School District's Journey to The Science of Reading

What Is the Orton-Gillingham Approach?

OG is a powerful instructional approach to teaching reading and spelling with these key features:

1 Multisensory

Lessons involve all the major pathways to the brain: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.

2 Sequential

Concepts are taught in a logical, well-planned sequence.

3 Incremental

Each lesson carefully builds upon the previous lesson.

4 Cumulative

Constant and consistent review of previously taught concepts is provided.

5 Individualized

The unique needs of each student are met.

6 Based on Phonograms

English is simplified by teaching letters and letter combinations known as phonograms.

7 Explicit

Students are taught exactly what they need to know in a clear and straightforward manner.



Beginning in December of 2018, the Interboro School District began its journey towards an instructional shift in reading instruction to **The Science of Reading**, featuring a *structured literacy approach*. Our initial shift occurred at a micro level, beginning with Interboro's Title 1 Reading Specialists attending training for the Orton Gillingham (OG) framework of phonetic instruction through the Institute of Multisensory Education (IMSE). Once trained, our Title 1 Reading Specialists began implementing OG to our neediest readers in grades K-2, officially starting our pathway to the Science of Reading. Through a deep dive into current phonetic data, coupled with active self-reflection, Interboro identified a greater need for enhanced instruction to address this topic across our primary grade levels. This ultimately led to OG being adopted as our core phonetic platform in grades

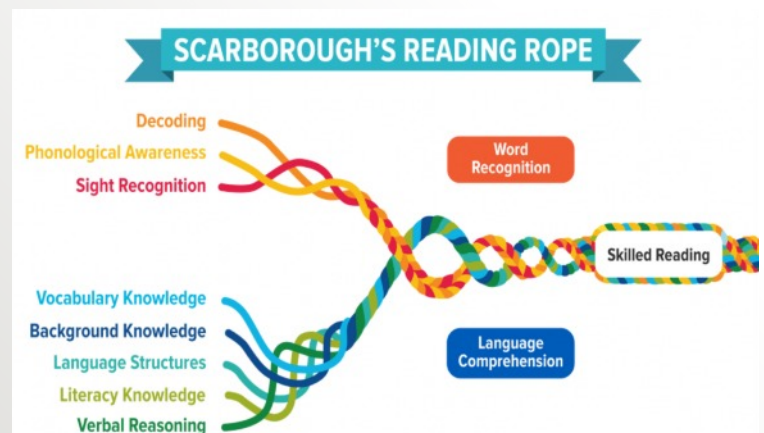
K-2. From that initial step, we began placing a greater emphasis on other components of structured literacy, such as increasing our focus on phonemic awareness instruction, implementing decodable texts, and adding a new core reading program centered on building language comprehension.

Since that initial step, we moved to implementing OG across all kindergarten and special education (K-3) classrooms by providing authentic training from IMSE for our teachers. At the beginning of fall of 2020, we advanced OG instruction by adding grades one and two. This year, we have "bumped up" OG instruction to include our current third grade, to address one of our neediest groups of learners, stemming from their kindergarten experience, which was cut short in March 2020, due to the Pandemic. Since its inception, Interboro has strived to enhance its OG instruction through continuous coaching in-house and by IMSE, check-in meetings, and data analysis. OG has been utilized to provide our students with explicit and systematic phonemic instruction to begin advancing their early reading skills.

More recently, Interboro has added Heggerty to our Pre-K to grade two classrooms to support student's phonemic awareness skills. While still in its infinite stages, we have found Heggerty to pair well with Orton Gillingham as they have combined to support the decoding strand of Scarborough's Reading Rope more effectively.

Using current research and classroom experiences with Orton Gillingham, ISD transitioned to a greater emphasis on the implementation of decodable text at the primary level. Gillingham and advancing due to Benchmark Advance adoption and continuous

research, we have also placed a greater emphasis on the implementation of decodable text at the primary level. This update has led to less reliance on leveled readers, specifically at the K-2 level. Decodable texts implemented across this grade band are now providing our students with authentic applications of current and previously learned phonetic concepts, providing them with content they can attend to and read.



Interboro

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Interboro School District's Journey to The Science of Reading

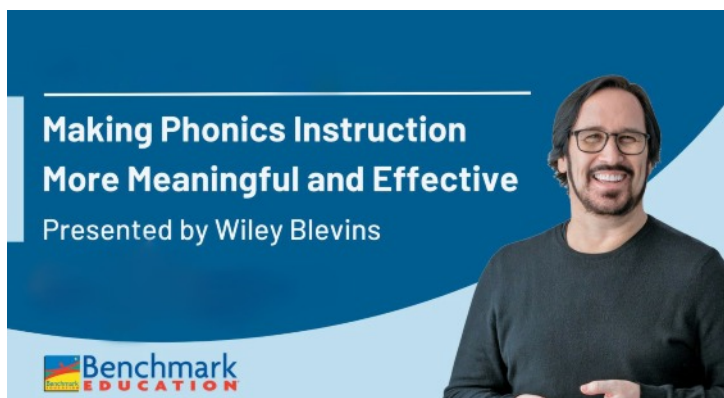
Students are starting to take notice of the power of decodables within their daily reading instruction, commenting they can read them due to this authentic application of phonetic concepts, increasing their comfortability with reading!

With our introduction to Orton Gillingham and advancing due to Benchmark Advance adoption and continuous research, we have also placed a greater emphasis on the implementation of decodable text at the primary level. This update has led to less reliance on leveled readers, specifically at the K-2 level. Decodable texts implemented across this grade band are now providing our students with authentic applications of current and previously learned phonetic concepts, providing them with content they can attend to and read. Students are starting to take notice of the power of decodables within their daily reading instruction, commenting they can read them due to this authentic application of phonetic concepts, increasing their comfortability with reading! During the fall of 2022, Interboro officially adopted Benchmark Advance as our new core reading program at the K-5 levels. Benchmark Advance is being implemented to address and support the language comprehension strand of Scarborough's Reading Rope, emphasizing elements such as knowledge building, vocabulary, and language structure. To further promote our journey to date, Interboro welcomed Wiley Blevins, a nationally renowned author and expert on structured literacy to the district on November 8, 2022, to present on meaningful phonics instruction and effective use of decodable readers, further cementing our ambitions to grow previous and current reading instruction. With recent additions and initial steps taken, Interboro has begun to further our journey along The Science of Reading pathway. Due to an evolving focus on implementing structured literacy approach that fully connects the decoding and language comprehension strands of Scarborough's Reading Rope, we are continuously striving to develop skilled readers. We are hopeful that this shift in reading instruction will ultimately yield greater results in the form of increased skills for all students.



Interboro's Supervisor of Literacy and district reading specialists with Wiley Blevins

On November 8, 2022, Interboro hosted a variety of teachers and administrators from thirteen different schools and districts in and around Delaware County to share Wiley Blevins presentations on Meaningful Phonics Instruction, as well as Choosing and Using Decodable Readers. The first morning session was kicked off by a video presentation, highlighting Interboro's inroads into The Science of Reading. The video showcased many of the programs and explicit instruction we are currently utilizing to grow our students as readers.



QR Code for video access

Marple Newtown

Using A Creative, Systematic Approach to Teach Problem-Solving

Marple Newtown School District's newly-developed K-5, **Design Thinking** *special* program aims to enrich elementary students' authentic learning experiences through project based learning opportunities (via the *Defined Learning* platform) and social-emotional skill instruction (via the *Second Step* program).

Students practice PDE's career ready skills as they plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems, and make informed decisions using appropriate digital tools and resources to gather, evaluate, and present information. In this way, students build capacity in the 21st century skills of collaboration, creativity, communication, and critical thinking by applying their knowledge to solve real-world challenges. The Design Thinking special joins the weekly rotation of Art, Music, Library, and Physical Education.



MNSD's STEM education model is also delivered through the lens of Design Thinking. This approach allows teachers the opportunity to tap into and nurture every students' capacity to be creative problem solvers. Instruction is delivered using Project-Based Learning (PBL), a teaching method in which students learn by actively engaging in real-world problems. In this way, each student uses design thinking to develop his/her own creative potential. Students often work in teams to tackle authentic problems by conducting research, working through a

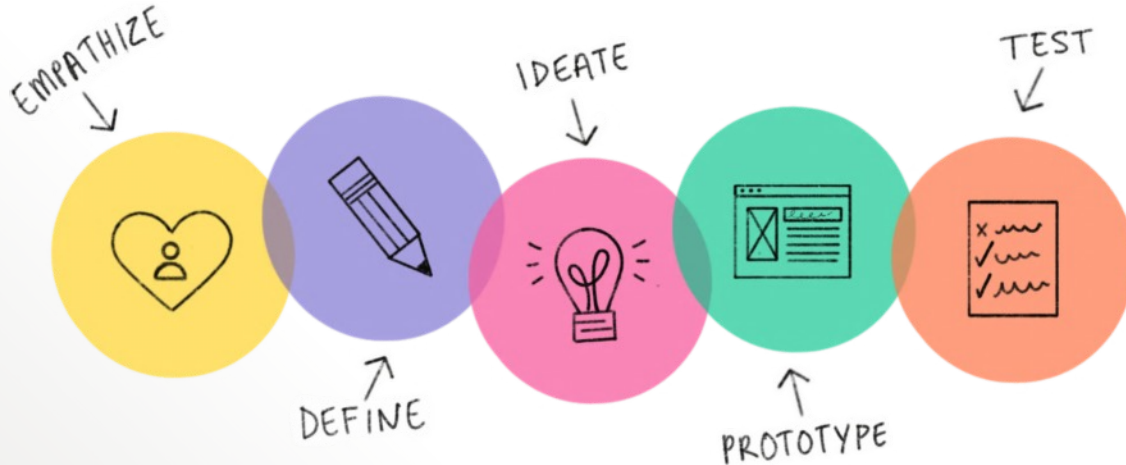
design process, and creating a compelling solution and product. In this team-approach, students are challenged to apply a dynamic range of both academic and affective skills, thus pairing social-emotional learning with 21st century skill practice.

The students may, as one task requires, be asked to answer a question such as the following:

Your neighborhood has decided to improve their community and build a small park where people can gather to socialize and children can play. There will be a design contest and the winning design will be the model selected to build the park. You must use your math and science skills to create a design to enter the new park contest.

Driving Question - How can we plan a park that people will want to visit?

Design Thinking Process



To solve a real-world problem like this, students would work collaboratively in groups to conduct research, work through a design process, create a compelling solution and product, and then present their model to the class.

Now in its second year, the Design Thinking special is developing into a favorite course among many MNSD elementary students. PBL and STEM programming are District goals and are ones that MNSD Administration believes will provide more students with interest in and access to STEM related coursework, career pathway programming, and possible enrollment in the Marple Newtown High School STEM Academy.

Through this programming, MNSD aims to equip students with the 21st century skills they will need to live productive and fulfilling lives.



Penn-Delco

Penn-Delco Is Committed to Academic and Social Emotional Growth In A Post-Pandemic World

Penn-Delco School District, like most districts in the county, was challenged in 2020 by the sudden closure of its schools, driving students and staff to remote education and communication, interrupting not only academic learning, but social-emotional learning as well.

The 2021-2022 school year delivered continued interruptions to normal events and activities, with masked and socially distanced days that slowly returned to some semblance of normal by years end. While parents, administration, and staff worked with their students to reengage, it became clear to all educators that the separation from normal school and social life had left its mark. Armed with research, grants, and survey results, Penn-Delco began an effort to reconnect with students to assess and address social emotional needs in the 2022-2023 school year.



From reinvigorated PBIS programs at the elementary schools, to the growth of the **Choose to Be Nice** program at the middle school, to the installation of a new Dean of Students position at the high school, Penn-Delco is committed to lifting its students and each other. For many, that means simply returning to the traditions that make school productive and fun.

Our elementary school administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers reconnected with their students in the fall by taking a fresh look at the important rituals students relied upon and remembered. Pennell Elementary saw a first day of school in the pouring rain with their new principal, Christa Palladino, umbrella in hand, personally greeting car riders as they sloshed into the building. A

special welcome committee met bus riders and guided them through balloon covered entrances to the gym, where students were greeted by their teachers with a welcoming presentation and a theme fittingly titled **"Don't Quit."**

Later that month, elementary schools across the district returned to **Pinwheels for Peace**, which gives students an opportunity to interact with each other, their families, and the world, by offering openness, understanding, and communication. Through self-expression in art, students created displays to share with their communities and each other. The return to working together to share ideas and build an art display was therapeutic for all.

The newly created **"Proud of Me Day"** at Parkside Elementary took on a whole new perspective in 2022 as students celebrated their unique strengths and talents with each other. Instead of a Halloween dress-up day, October 30 was a day to celebrate a passion, a talent, a strength, a characteristic of their own. Students created puzzle pieces highlighting their strengths that fitted together creating a mosaic of pride symbolic of how students' differences create a community of strength and beauty. It has become Principal Tara Young's most favorite event.



"Proud of me Day" is an effort to build self-confidence in our students, to have them start thinking about what they offer to the school community, and how what makes each individual special impacts our entire school," she explained.

"It has been a positive experience that highlights strengths that may or may not center around academics. This year, we held a school-wide **Proud of Me Parade** where we saw gardeners, scientists, karate students, dancers, artists and so many more line our halls. Even in our tight-knit school community, students have learned so much about each other that they would not otherwise know."



Elementary students at Aston and Coebourn returned to their Veterans Day celebrations, using art, music, and lessons to recognize and understand their local heroes. Dozens of veterans were invited to well-planned ceremonies featuring student speeches and performances. Planning these events required participation from the entire school community, including PTL members and staff. Students were taught the importance of ritual and honor and how working together for a common goal can produce an event that is worthy of the sacrifice of our most treasured community members.

At our high school, ninth-grade students arrived on their first day without upper classmates for an opportunity to meet each other and their new teachers independently. These transition grades missed many of the milestones in development that other classes enjoyed.

In an effort to offer high school students even greater support and voice, Sun Valley instituted its first Dean of Students, John Moletteri, whose main role is to help create a culture of belonging. Sun Valley Principal John Paul Roskos believes this role is key in developing a new, stronger culture at Sun Valley. “We believe that to prepare our students to be successful in life a strong academic foundation cannot be built without students having strong relationships and a sense of belonging within their learning community,” he said. “Bringing on a Dean of Students at Sun Valley dramatically increases our ability to enhance our fundamental core values of a student being ready, respectful and responsible. This leadership position increases opportunities for creating a culture of belonging through our PBIS program that focuses on expectations and healthy relationships.”

The Choose to Be Nice program at Northley Middle School is also an opportunity to reengage and support students. Dedicated to building communities where kindness, compassion, empathy, inclusion, connection, and appreciation for others prevail, Northley students are encouraged to envision a world where kindness is the expected norm, where people lead with compassion and empathy, and thrive through meaningful connections with others. It's been a wonderfully successful year so far.

Principal Ryan Buterbaugh appreciates the power of the program and its impact on his entire school community: “The one message that resonates with me and is such a simple and powerful message we have posted throughout the school is *“be the nice kid,”* he explains. “Our goal is to encourage and realize an empathetic and kind experience for our middle school community.”

While all of these efforts and programs support reengagement with our students, Penn-Delco also recognizes that there are some students who face even greater mental health challenges each day. With recent grants bestowed from COVID support, the district has engaged with NeuroLogic by Lakeside whose professional expertise is addressing the basic physical, mental, and social outcomes of trauma.

Penn-Delco’s first district-wide in-service in November featured workshops to address the impact of trauma and how interventions and strategies can bring growth and healing to those impacted brain regions. “In the effort to improve the continuum of support services for all students, the district is pleased to partner with NeuroLogic by Lakeside for trauma-informed support services to improve social emotional and academic achievement for all students,” said Regina McClure, Director of Pupil Services and Special Education.

Penn-Delco School District continues to deliver Excellence in Education and also prides itself in supporting the entire individual. Their mission to re-engage and reconnect with each other and their students helps to ensure that their graduates will move ahead stronger and more resilient.



Radnor

Radnor's Next Generation Innovators

Students enter the colorful classroom, 3D printers hum in the background, excitement fills the air. On this day, Ithan Elementary School fourth graders are learning how to code using Play-doh, their fingers, and online tools to design solutions to problems. If that's how they learn how to code, it is easy to understand why the new Innovation Design Studio (IDS) special is a favorite class among elementary students across Radnor Township School District. As one student shared, "It's so much fun! The new technology let's you be so creative."

Since the 2021-22 school year, every student in grades K-5 has benefited from a new subject area called, "**Innovation Design Studio**," dedicated to Computer Science (CS) through computational thinking, hands-on experiments, innovative instruction in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

Students often work in collaborative teams on projects that focus on the design process, applying next generation maker mindsets. This elementary-wide subject area complements the established Specials of Art, Music, Library, Physical Education, and Wellness to allow for a common experience in Computer Science and STEM for all students and to deliver Pennsylvania Computer Science and International Society for Technology Education (ISTE) learning standards. By developing these next generation skills, Radnor students are preparing for the world of the future.

Dr. Scott Hand, RTSD Director of Technology Innovation and Instructional Design says in IDS "we are able to provide all of our students with experiences in computer science, beginning as early as Kindergarten and extending through high school. The early exposure to CS helps develop strong problem-solving skills and inspires our students to consider CS as a potential career field."

"By developing computational thinking practices such as logic, pattern recognition, and algorithmic design, students are able to apply these skills not only in IDS, but also apply these transferable skills to other studies as well as other areas of their lives. We are deeply committed to sharing computer science with students at all levels and inspiring a new generation of makers, creators, programmers, designers, and engineers."



To learn more about the Innovation Design Studio, visit Radnor Township School District's website at

<https://www.rtsd.org/people/departments/technology/innovation/id-studio>

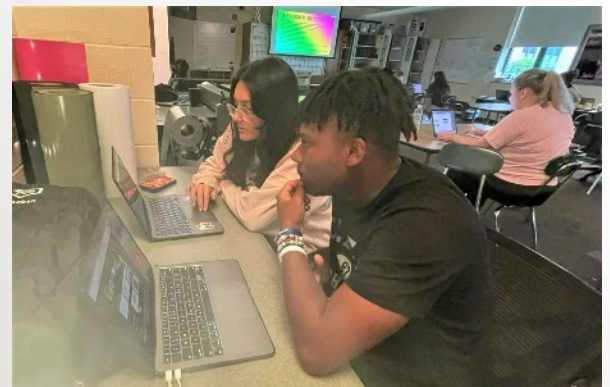
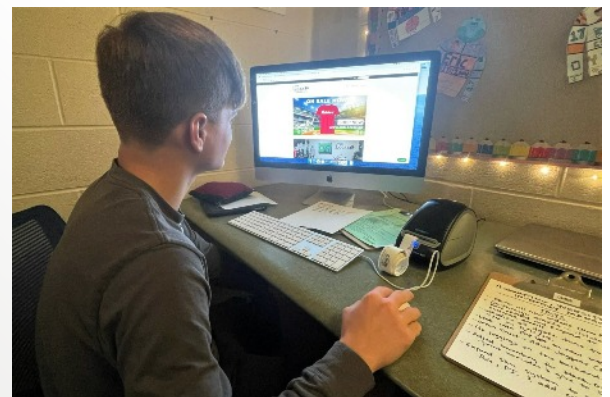
Ridley



When we think about dynamic educational models we think about techniques and programs that allow students to discover knowledge on their own. The Locker at Ridley High School is transforming minds in a learning environment characterized by **change, activity and progress.**

Established by students in 2016, The Locker, a non-profit store which provides apparel and other merchandise to students, faculty, staff and the community. RHS Business Teachers Kristina Rosato, Kristin Milewski and Paul Louth were awarded a \$5,000 grant from the Ridley Educational Foundation to start up the student-run business. Profits from the store help to support Ridley High School's Business Club, Ridley Families in Need and the Ridley Educational Foundation. To date, The Locker has donated over \$27,000 back to the Ridley community.

Students operate the business by working in different departments. These departments include marketing, fashion design and visual merchandising, accounting, website and inventory management, and production. Almost all apparel is made by students in-house with the use of equipment from the RHS Maker-space, including vinyl cutters and heat presses. Students who have taken advanced graphic design classes with the art department help to design apparel that is then cut and heat pressed by the production team.



“My experience in the store has helped me to realize that I want to focus my college studies on business and marketing.”

-Devin Duffy, Ridley High School Senior

THE LOCKER

STUDENT RUN. COMMUNITY DRIVEN.
— www.thelocker.biz —

Continued...



Aside from the brick-and-mortar location in the high school, students run an e-commerce business through the website, www.thelocker.biz.

The accounting, website and inventory management team designs and manages the website, runs analytics and determines profits based on income and expenses. The Marketing team runs our social media accounts and utilizes Canva to create promotional materials. The fashion design team explores current fashion trends and helps to purchase and design apparel and other merchandise to be sold in store and on our website.

The school store is open Monday through Friday during student and faculty lunches. Throughout the school year, The Locker holds special events outside of school hours to allow community members to come in and support the store.

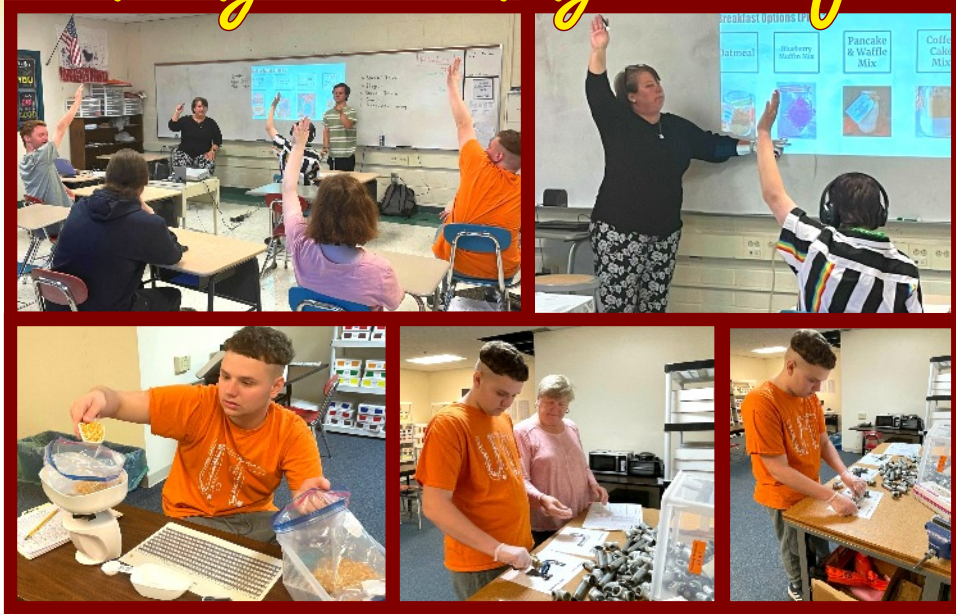


"The Locker has encouraged me to utilize my photography skills and creativity to help promote school spirit to the Ridley community. Designing our new website has allowed me to realize that I am able to do much more in a business setting."

-Jahmir Taylor, Ridley High School Senior

Rose Tree Media

Linking Learning to Life



Teachers hope the information they convey to their students has a practical application. That connection is especially important for students with disabilities.

Rose Tree Media School District launched **Linking Learning to Life** in 2014 and it is still successful and impactful in 2022. The Linking Learning to Life program provides opportunities for students with disabilities to strengthen their employability and independent living skills. The Linking Learning to Life Program is a two-tier secondary transition program designed to aid students in making the progression from the classroom to post-school life. Activities are based on the individual's needs, ranging from those with mild disabilities to students with more significant needs who require extensive support.

A classroom at Penncrest High School was converted into a studio-style apartment, which the students visit twice weekly to learn skills such as doing the laundry, maintaining a clean environment, preparing a meal and making minor repairs. Lessons are taught on topics such as soft skills for employment, budgeting, planning social gatherings and protecting one's identity. Students also practice techniques including traveling, making change, self-advocating, ordering food, socializing with friends and proper etiquette at the table during community-based learning experiences to the grocery store, YMCA, the City of Philadelphia, and local businesses. The program supports travel training and incorporates the use of public transportation into community outings. Students from Penncrest High School often accompany the students from the program during community based instruction to make the experiences more inclusive.

A career coaching opportunity, designed to teach concepts for successful employment such as social, problem-solving and work skills, serves as preparation for transition to the workplace. Students begin by learning basic occupational techniques during in-house modules, then transfer the skills as they work for local companies under the supervision of a job coach. The District is proud to partner with community businesses including Nifty Fifty's in Newtown Square, DCI Products, The Dog House of Delco, the YMCA, New Way Air Bearings. The District has also provided competitive employment to five students where they serve as the Education Center receptionists, bus mechanic helper in transportation, and paraprofessional and assist in athletics.

Rose Tree Media

Linking Learning To Life

Continued...

Another way students learn and experience real life opportunities is through the PAES lab (**Practical Assessment Exploration System**) was purchased in 2019. This lab is designed to mimic real workplace settings, with the instructors' becoming supervisors and students becoming employees. Students explore jobs in five areas such as business/marketing, service, production, construction/industrial, and computer technology.

In 2021, the Linking Learning to Life Program partnered with the Penncrest Football team. Students support the team by serving as the water and ball boys, filmers, and selling programs. "It is wonderful to see the relationships developed between the team and our students both on and off the field. They are supported by paraprofessional staff and are on the sidelines cheering for the Lions every Friday at home and away games," said Dr. Tiffany Orrin, Supervisor of Transition Programs.

In 2018, the District supported the creation of the TOPS (Transition Opportunities in Post-Secondary Settings) Shop, a storefront located at 31 West State St. Media PA. TOPS was created to provide employment training opportunities for students of all levels. The store highlights products made by students at Penncrest High School. This holiday season, TOPS is offering its first Holiday Catalog. The items being offered have been chosen and created by the students in the program. Students are excited to fulfill the orders and work in the store this holiday season.

"I am so proud of the rich opportunities this program and our dedicated staff provide to our students to assist them in strengthen their social, employability, independent living, executive functioning skills, and confidence as they prepare for adulthood," said Dr. Orrin.



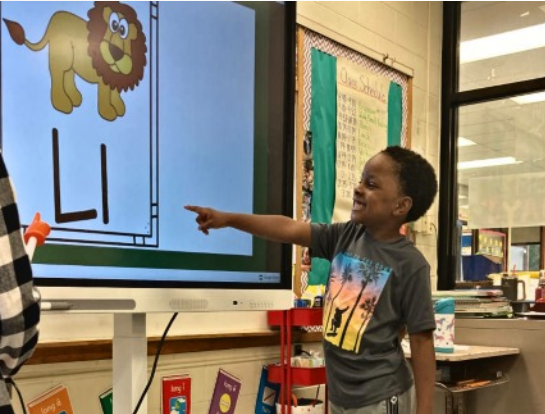
Southeast Delco

New Instructional Technology and Great Teaching at Delcroft Elementary School

We know for sure that technology provides instant access to information, which is why its presence in the classroom is so vital. Smartphones, computers, and tablets are already a constant element of everyday life for students and teachers alike. Therefore, it's only natural that the use of technological devices in the classroom is explored to create meaningful learning experiences for students of all ages. This

rings true at Delcroft Elementary School in the Southeast Delco School District.

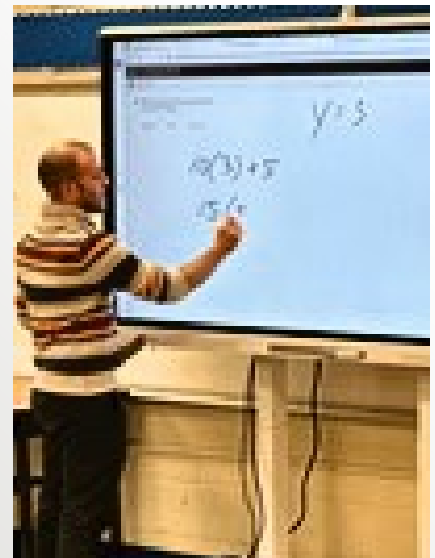
Students have started the year strong, receiving enhanced, quality teaching practices, small group instruction and new technology initiatives. All elementary



schools within the district were outfitted with state-of-the-art SMART technology, allowing teachers the opportunity to make learning come alive within their classrooms. Teachers are using the technology to actively engage learners in the learning process and supporting them in reaching their objectives. Integration of technology in the classroom creates learners who are actively engaged with learning objectives and pathways for differentiated instruction to meet the unique needs of students as individual learners within a broader classroom climate.

At Delcroft, one teacher in particular put new instructional strategies into place to provide effective and productive learning. Ms. Julie Reagan, 4th grade teacher, is leading her classroom of learners through various modalities, including guided math practice, while incorporating new technology into her daily instructional practice. She has adapted to the learning styles and other needs of each student and is helping them become more independent learners.

Ms. Maura Hope, assistant principal can be seen often checking in on learners within this 4th grade class as they navigate center-based learning activities utilizing Chrome technology and visual instructional tools. Instructional technology will continue to be used to build fundamental skills to prepare them for future independent learning not only at Delcroft, but across the District. ***Delcroft students are working diligently to grasp new concepts using new state of the art technology to enhance their learning!***



Springfield

A Decade of Dedication to Music Education



*F*or the tenth consecutive year, Springfield School District has been honored with the **Best Communities for Music Education** designation from the **National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation** for its outstanding commitment to music education.

This accolade is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students. This award program recognizes outstanding efforts by teachers, administrators, parents, and students who have made music education part of a well-rounded education.

To qualify for the Best Communities designation, Springfield answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, and support for the music program. Responses were verified with school officials and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

The NAMM Foundation is a nonprofit supported partly by the National Association of Music Merchants and its approximately 10,300 members worldwide. For more information about The NAMM Foundation, please visit www.nammfoundation.org.

Congratulations to the members of our SSD community who have made a decade of quality music education possible! This honor truly reflects Pride in All Things.



Upper Darby

UPPER DARBY SCHOOL DISTRICT NURSES

Unsung Heroes

The Upper Darby School District Nurses are the critical link between the health of our students and education. They are the on-site health providers with expertise in school-age children. They are responsible for applying preventative measures and for the daily health management of thousands of our students. Their duties are diverse and complex as they also assist in the management of chronic conditions such as diabetes and asthma. They must evaluate, triage, and treat a wide variety of emergencies ranging from playground bumps and bruises to life-threatening emergencies. Additionally, school nurses attend to students' social and emotional health and are tuned into evolving needs across childhood development. Our school nurses exercise impeccable communication skills, championing student needs with building principals, parents, and teachers, to make learning environments inclusive and safe. Our school nurses are vital advocates for health within the walls of the school and in our local communities.

Not only do our nurses manage all of these roles in our schools during regular school years, but their work became even more crucial during the COVID-19 pandemic. We already knew the value of our nurses, but during the pandemic, we came to truly understand how integral they are to the successful opening of schools and to keeping schools open and everyone safe and healthy. The demands on school nurses increased in many ways during the pandemic. Our nurses were key to weighing each child's health and educational needs throughout this dire time in education and in our nation. School nurses led COVID-19 symptom screening and contact tracing, providing guidance to parents and staff daily. They offered health expertise in the writing and re-writing of risk mitigation procedures, often facing criticism from polarized communities.

The role of school nurses is indeed vital to the health of students, teachers, and communities. For their hard work and tremendous efforts, the Upper Darby School District Nurses received the **Unsung Hero Award** from the Board of School Directors for serving as role models for our students and community and for providing exemplary, caring service in a loyal, dependable, friendly, and humble manner. During American Education Week and every day, we salute them.



Wallingford-Swarthmore

Welcomes Students Back With 'The First Four'

As the 2022-2023 school year began in Wallingford-Swarthmore School District, students and staff entered their buildings with the familiar excitement that the occasion brings: developing new goals, participating in new learning experiences, and making new memories. This year, schools welcomed students with **'The First Four,'** a district-wide initiative for the entire first week to strengthen community within classrooms and throughout buildings. In the weeks leading up to September, teachers and building administrators planned and organized activities and learning experiences to build and support strong relationships with and among students. With collaboration across the district, teachers, staff, and administrators prioritized a shared vision: one of strengthening a sense of community, inclusivity, and belonging



The initiative speaks to the district's mission, vision, and belief statements, and ties into its ongoing professional development work around equity, inclusivity, and belonging. Reaffirming the district's commitment to engaging and incorporating these values into curriculum and instruction, 'The First Four' supported teachers in holding intentional space to build these connections, and to set the tone for the new year.

"With excitement for the year ahead, I remain steadfast in our commitment to supporting every single student in every single classroom. **The first four days** at the building-level will be focused on strengthening our relationships, fostering belonging, and building community. That, at the heart, is the work of inclusion and equity," Dr. Marseille, Superintendent of Schools, wrote to the district's staff in the days leading up to students' return.



Wallingford-Swarthmore

Continued...

Welcomes Students Back With 'The First Four'

Visiting classrooms at each building, vibrant and lively dialogue and engagement could be seen and heard at every level. Grade-specific get-to-know-you games and activities like “Diversity Makes Us Smile” and “Identity Wheel” focused on helping students learn more about the value of celebrating and embracing differences, while building-wide activities, like “Say Hello Day” at Strath Haven Middle School, encouraged students to greet and connect with their peers. As teachers took the opportunity to plan and organize, the district’s Cultural Proficiency Equity Teacher Leaders (CPETLs), who take part in professional development and leadership around cultural proficiency and equity, were essential in collaborating on activities and programs at each grade level. Seen wearing ‘The First Four’ t-shirts throughout the week, district teachers and administrators used the experience as a springboard for further activities during the year.



Dr. Marseille emphasized the importance of every single teacher, staff member, and administrator in building these relationships at every level of the District.

“Each and every person on our team brings an undeniable, unique set of skills that contribute to our overall success in the development of our long-term plans. Regardless of what role they fit in, whether being the first person that greets a child as they step on to a bus or are walking into a building, or the last person who a child sees before they return home from school or an extracurricular activity, the role each and every one of our staff member plays is an essential piece of the tapestry that together supports our children,” Dr. Marseille noted.

Debriefing at the end of the month, CPETLs reflected together on ‘The First Four,’ several of them noting the importance of intentionally holding spaces that can help students feel a stronger sense of connection and belonging. Some expressed excitement about the fruitful conversations, connections, and plans that came out of the week, many emphasizing that the work is imperative - not “in lieu” of learning, but rather in support of it. In the first four days and every day thereafter, the district continues to cultivate and value connections, bringing community to the forefront.



William Penn

Park Lane Elementary Students "Say NO to Drugs"



*A*s public educators, we know that teaching students is not always just about reading, writing and math. A good public school education should be focused on the ideas of core content knowledge, citizenship, and the skills necessary for young people to be successful once they become adults, such as decision-making, critical thinking, focus and self-control, just to name a few. In addition to the academics, students and staff at the Park Lane Elementary School

have been embracing a very important lesson for many years saying NO to drugs!

The Park Lane Elementary School held its annual Red Ribbon Week Anti-Drug March on October 28, 2022, whereby the entire school, parents, Darby Borough Mayor Darren Burrell, and members of the Darby Police and Fire Departments marched through the streets of Darby carrying signs encouraging neighbors to “say no to drugs” and to express their commitment to be drug free. This was the first year that the annual tradition took place since the Pandemic.

School counselor, Marnie Jackson, organizes the annual march, which she started in 2004—18 years ago! “Taking a united and unequivocal stand against unhealthy habits sends a powerful message to our students that their success depends on identifying and making positive choices,” Ms. Jackson stated. This annual activity brings together the entire school community, as they march through the streets of Darby, PA chanting, “**Say no to drugs!**” In the days leading up to the march, the school held a different activity each day to build up the excitement and to increase the awareness and understanding of what this march means to the community. Activities and daily themes included: **Sock it to Drugs** (wear crazy socks); **Turn Your Back on Drugs** (wear your shirt backwards); **Team up Against Drugs** (wear your favorite sports jersey); Red Ribbon Day (all students and staff wore red ribbons and cited the Red Ribbon Pledge to Stay Drug Free, led by school Principal, Ms. Audrey Fields; and, Wear Red Day (everyone wore red). In addition, teachers and staff completed prevention and educational activities with the students to further explore the dangers of drugs.



William Penn

Continued...

Park Lane Elementary Students "Say NO to Drugs"

Celebrate Life.



Live Drug Free.

**RED RIBBON
WEEK**



The community support for this event has been steady and robust. "I can't say enough about Chief Joseph Gabe and the Darby Police Department. We have a great relationship and partnership with the department; they support and attend several Park Lane Elementary School events," said Ms. Jackson. The Darby No. 1 Fire Department has supported the walk for the last 18 years as well. "We are so very grateful for their continuous support."

Ms. Jackson also thanked the community, parents, Mr. Rudy Taylor, Darby Borough Council President and Mr. Robert E. Wright, Sr., William Penn School District Board of Directors, for supporting the school's mission to keep students healthy and educated about how poor choices can impact their lives forever. Education is the biggest opportunity one can use to change the world! Park Lane's principal, counselor, staff, and students are on a mission to make a difference in the community!



DCIU Options Success Story: Partnership With Villanova Results in Employment for OPTIONS Graduates

Villanova University has successfully partnered with the Delaware County Intermediate Unit OPTIONS program and has hired several past students once they become postgraduates.

The OPTIONS program, through grant funding by the Office of Workforce Development (OWD), has placed students at Villanova for work experience, and are paid through the grant. After six months of positive workplace experience, the students may be hired by Villanova as an employee of the university. The OWD grant focuses on fourteen key elements to enhance the knowledge and practical learning of students so they can become productive adults. It helps prepare students for life in the real world. The OPTIONS program enables them to take advantage of community partnerships, like Villanova, gaining experience in a variety of workplace settings.



One recent student, Brandy Turnier, a 2022 graduate of Marple Newtown, worked hard to prove she can excel by not giving up. Brandy was enrolled in several of the OPTIONS programs. She started in the Community Living and Learning apartment to learn domestic maintenance and independent living skills. She then advanced to the Employability program, and after six months of increasing her skills, was eligible for the OWD grant.

During the first year of the grant, Brandy began working one day a week and increased her stamina to be able to maintain engagement for up to five hours, multiple days a week. She received job coaching in multiple job sites including Boeing, the Morton Mailroom, and the Thrift Shop on the Avenue. She began to read non-verbal cues during communication, understanding that listening is just as vital as talking. Through grant funding, she was able to earn a paycheck while training at these sites. She applied her reading skills while sorting, labeling, alphabetizing, delivering, and identifying outgoing and incoming mail. Her skills from working in the kitchen and gift shop at Boeing prepared her for her current position as a food prep and server at Villanova. More importantly, her confidence grew drastically. She transformed from a shy young teen to a young adult able to advocate when she needed clarification.

Brandy began working as a part-time employee at Villanova University in November 2022. She no longer relies on the school bus to transport her to her work experience site. She currently is working up to 20 hours a week over three days. She has been assigned to a new building and is adjusting nicely to a new team.

Her colleagues, Barb and Ruby, both encouraged her and praised her work efforts. Brandy enjoys the consistency of a job, looking forward to the days she reports to Villanova. She has increased her ability to work with peers and enjoys helping others. Her family is happy that she is actively engaged in the work world, a few days a week. She enjoys the routine and tries to get to the gym to work out on her days off. In her spare time, she likes to watch her favorite television shows. Although Brandy enjoys her current position at Villanova, she is setting new goals for herself and may one day seek an assignment working with animals. Brandy is a great example of the education and training taking place in public schools and in DCIU programs.

Thank You

To our amazing school districts in Delaware County who contributed their individual stories to this celebratory newsletter for American Education Week.

We commend you for your excellent work and tireless efforts in providing quality public education to all students.



Empowering Partnerships For Education

