



HIGHER | GREATER
expectations | student results

SCSD Teaching & Learning Newsletter

IN THIS ISSUE

CAO's Thoughts

Dear SCSD Colleagues,

I am excited to bring you the latest issue of the SCSD Teaching & Learning Newsletter. Within these pages you will find updates from our content area supervisors and directors:

- Melanie Cifonelli, Director of Mathematics mcifonelli@scsd.us
- Francine Grannell, Director of Professional Development fgrannell@scsd.us
- Jackie LeRoy, Director of ENL, World Languages and Bilingual Education jleroy@scsd.us
- Bob Leslie, Director of Career and Technical Education rleslie@scsd.us
- Rhonda Zajac, Director of English Language Arts rzajac@scsd.us
- Dr. Dana Corcoran, Supervisor of Science and Technology dcorcoran@scsd.us
- Sara Gentile, Supervisor of Fine Arts sgentile@scsd.us
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- Manami Tezuka, Supervisor of Libraries mtezuka@scsd.us

Please reach out to these individuals if you have any questions or need additional support and resources.

We are rapidly approaching the time when NYS Assessments will be administered to students in grades 3 – 8. Given the intensive work teachers are doing to prepare students to be successful, I am optimistic that many of our schools will see increased rates of growth and proficiency. Our efforts include, but are not limited to, work in 3rd grade writing, 4th grade science, 5th grade mathematics and Personalized Learning. In future years, I am confident that we will see even greater results in ELA due to our Early Literacy Initiative that includes LETRS training in pre-kindergarten through 2nd grade.

Summer school will begin at all levels on July 9th. Applications for teaching and teaching assistant positions are available online. Please click [HERE](#) to apply. The application deadline is **Friday, April 6th**.

Linda D. Mulvey
Chief Academic Officer

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Library Media Services

Salem Hyde Library

The 4th graders in the Salem Hyde Library love learning with Osmos! This interactive devices pair with an iPad to provide vocabulary and math learning games. These students are having so much fun they forgot they're learning!



Henninger Library

Students explored their love for reading by having a blind date with a book.

Bellevue Library

Students in 2nd and 3rd grades are engaged in an enrichment cycle about computer coding. We are using a station rotation model so that students can access each technology piece. Students are using a variety of coding tools such as Dash and Dot, Cubelets, Osmo Awbie Coding, and a Life-size coding simulation game.

Personalized Learning Update

Check out [the latest PL highlights](#). *This looks best on your phone!

Enrichment

In the Pre-K – 3rd grade Enrichment classrooms students are exploring fairy tales from an urban viewpoint, storytelling, Anansi spider adventures in Ghana, types of dance from around the world, constructing music, looking at the literary works of the Pinkney family, extending the Science activities in the FOSS kits: renewable and non-renewable resources, magnetism, sound, life cycles.

In the Enrichment classrooms in 4th through 8th grade, students are completing a re-enactment of the civil war, studying "The Tempest", and local weather (a real challenge for our Syracuse area). In dance classes, 7th and 8th grade students are instructing younger 1st and 2nd grade students. Other activities include: understanding the Karen culture; Photography; Martial Arts; Guitar and Music class; Building Men; and other choices. Students finished wrapping up Black History month in many of the buildings with projects and celebrations.



Social Studies

We think you may be interested in the following:

[Students Take Active Role in Government](#)

[Social Studies Department Collaborates with High School Teachers on Curriculum & Professional Development](#)

[New York State Global and American History Regents Exam Updates](#)

[Sunday is now Social Studies Sunday where we feature a weekly Political Cartoon task for Analysis](#)

[Nevertheless, She Persisted: Honoring Women's History in the SCSD](#)

[Do you have a desire to do something about Parkland, Florida?](#)

Fine Arts

We have lots of happenings going on in the Fine Arts Department!

We have a record number of music students selected to participate in the upcoming Elementary and Jazz All-County events in April. These students were judged, in an audition process, to be the top performers at their levels in Onondaga County. They will perform with students from surrounding districts –[check the Fine Arts Calendar](#) for dates and times!

Our hardworking and dedicated Arts Task Force members have met three times thus far. The group includes SCSD staff, parents, and individuals from community arts organizations. We look forward to creating an Arts Action Plan for our district in order to systematically move arts programming forward for ALL of our students. It's an exciting time!

PK-8 teachers have engaged in a department PLC this year and are making great strides in their learning and planning. It has been thrilling to see art and music teachers collaborate to improve their practice! We are already looking forward to our next session and thinking about how to improve this model in future years!



Pre-K & Elementary Division

Good Morning Meeting?

Syracuse City School District staff and students enjoy a good meeting in the morning! Morning meetings are a way for students to develop relationships and create a positive classroom environment. Morning meetings are used daily in many of our Elementary and Pre-K-8 schools. At Dr. Weeks students participate in morning meetings each day. Third-grade teachers at Dr. Weeks, Hollyann Farwell and Ashley Pedrotti, explained that a morning meeting allows students to start the day with structure and share something about themselves with the class. They believe in the importance of nurturing students' social and emotional health to ensure academic success. A positive morning meeting sets students up for a successful day. At H.W. Smith, students participate in morning meetings to start the school day and learn from each other. According to Principal Haley, "the morning meetings create a warm and friendly classroom community where students are willing to take risks in their learning."



Professional Development

Increasing the effectiveness of professional learning is the leverage point with the greatest potential for strengthening and refining the day-to-day performance of educators.

Last year, the Professional Development department adopted *Standards for Professional Learning* as part of the yearly NYS PD Plan. *Learning Forward*, the only professional association devoted exclusively to educator professional development, developed the Standards for Professional Learning with the contribution of 40 professional associations and education organizations. Standards for Professional Learning (as listed in the accompanying table) outline the characteristics of professional learning that lead to effective teaching practices, supportive leadership, and improved student results. The Standards make explicit that the purpose of professional learning is for educators to develop the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions they need to help students perform at higher levels.

STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING			
<i>Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students ...</i>	LEARNING COMMUNITIES: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.	LEADERSHIP: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.	RESOURCES: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.
DATA: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.	LEARNING DESIGNS: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.	IMPLEMENTATION: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.	OUTCOMES: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

CTE Alignment

Bringing CTE Pathway Awareness to the Middle Schools

Aligning SCSD middle school curriculum to Career and Technical Education high school options is not only a good idea but is a recommendation of the newly completed Blue Ribbon Task Force. It is also consistent with the NYSED revised Middle School CTE regulations focusing on increasing career exposure for students.

The district plan is to enhance the current middle school technology, family and consumer science and health curricula, infusing them with the broader career clusters that fit within each content area. For example, hospitality and tourism career information could be included within the family and consumer science curriculum to highlight our culinary and natural resources program. Architecture, construction and manufacturing will be emphasized in the technology class to help raise awareness of our high school CTE programs in construction technology, electrical trades, welding and mechanical and electrical technology. Exposing students to the 16 Career Clusters from the US Department of Education model will allow middle school students broad exposure to skills and careers, connecting the dots from middle school to high school career pathways.

Enhancing the CTE alignment in the middle schools will also introduce students to the Career Ready Practices. The Career Ready Practices encompass those universal skills and behaviors that are key to success as adults. They include acting as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee, effective communication skills, utilizing critical thinking skills to solve problems and perseverance through the process of solving them, working productively in teams, etc. Initiating the Career Ready Practices in middle school will prepare students for high school CTE, college and future careers.

The middle school curriculum already employs project-based learning. Proposed enhancements will increase exposure through interdisciplinary projects and the use of authentic audiences, which are often used in high school career and technical education. Students will use self-assessments to track their own growth. Another possibility is having high school CTE students mentor middle school students.

Enhanced middle level CTE will serve as a bridge to high school CTE. Curricular planning with middle school teachers takes place over the summer.

ENL, World Languages & Bilingual Education

On March 3rd the Department of ENL, World Languages, and Bilingual Education hosted the 2018 March Symposium at the Marriott Syracuse Downtown. The theme of the March Symposium was, "Championing the Success of Language Learners". The March Symposium provided all educators an opportunity to participate in unique professional development sessions to strengthen how we meet the needs of students that are acquiring a new language. The goal was to empower educators to feel prepared to support language and culture learning and to promote the vision of SCSD students achieving bilingualism, bi-literacy, multilingualism, and multiculturalism.

The March Symposium began with the first keynote speaker, Dr. Kate Menken, who presented current and historical language education policies in the United States, and offered recommendations to harness growing interest in bilingual education with consideration to social justice. Attendees then enjoyed two breakout sessions, facilitated by department teachers and Nationality Workers; all uniquely focused on educating language learners. The day closed with a final keynote speaker presentation by Dr. Tatyana Kleyn. Dr. Kleyn's presentation looked closely at pedagogical approaches that can be enacted across all settings that have the potential to play a transformative role in the education of multilingual students.

Displayed throughout the event was a showcase of SCSD student writing, from grades K-12, that highlighted our students' thoughts on being multilingual. SCSD ENL, World Languages and Bilingual Education teachers submitted student responses to writing prompts on the benefits of learning a new language and the importance of being bilingual or multilingual.



Mathematics

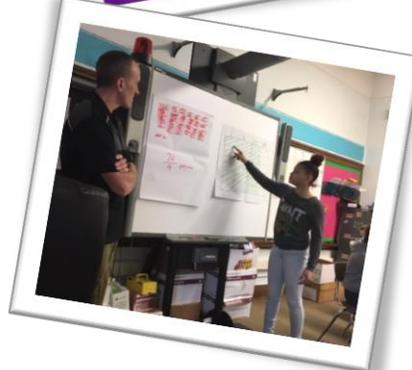
The SCSD Mathematics Vision is for all students in the Syracuse City School District to graduate as powerful thinkers who are **mathematically proficient** and **persevere in solving problems** in innovative ways. In order to meet our vision for all of our students, we believe that students must engage in problems that invite collaboration with peers, discussion and argument. "Research from both cognitive science (Mayor 2002; Bransford, Brown, and Cocking 2000; National Research Council, 2012) and mathematics education (Donovan and Bransford 2005; Lester 2007) supports the characterization of mathematics learning as an active process, in which each student builds his or her own mathematical knowledge from personal experiences, coupled with feedback from peers, teachers, and other adults, and themselves" (NCTM, Principals to Action, 2014; pg. 9).

Over the past four years math teachers have had the opportunity to study the [5 Practices](#) to Orchestrate Mathematical Discourse with the co-author Peg Smith and an associate from the University of Pittsburgh. This resource helps to [structure](#) and plan for lessons in which students are actively and cognitively engaged in mathematics, consider different ways in which other students are thinking about the mathematics and develop a deeper understanding of the concepts built within our standards.

The study of the 5 Practices focused this year in 5th grade mathematics and Algebra 1. In our sessions teachers thought deeply about topics in mathematics as we discussed ways to:

- engage students in the task
- support students to productively struggle using assessing and advancing questions
- how to orchestrate a whole group discussion that will move student thinking forward

During the year we had the opportunity to run Lesson Labs in 5th grade and Algebra 1 classes. The host teacher planned a lesson with Peg Smith or an associate from the IFL and delivered the lesson to their students with peers observing and taking note of student engagement and teacher practices. We were able to collect evidence of student understandings, misunderstandings, students' willingness to try something new and willingness to share their understanding with their classmates.



Lesson Labs have uncovered some findings for teachers:

- How the task is launched is critical. We must ensure students understand the situation without giving away a solution path.
- [Task selection](#) is important. The task must have a variety of entry points for students. This will help with engagement and supporting a class with many different levels of thinking. This also helps to create some very interesting discussions.
- Solo time should be short. This is a great time for the teacher to ensure all students have a starting point into the task.
- Planned [assessing and advancing questions](#) for different solution paths are crucial for keeping students engaged and moving students toward the learning objective. (The teacher is always on the move with questions).
- We must ask students about their current thinking (assessing questions).

And finally,

- This takes practice for both teachers and students. Teachers who continued this work report more student engagement, an increase in student self-efficacy and promotion of a culture of collaboration and cooperation.

I would like to extend warm thanks and gratitude to the following teachers who hosted Lesson Labs in their classrooms. Your willingness to open your practice to others is a testament to your commitment to all students in SCSD. I look forward to more collaborative efforts for years to come!

- April Thorpe and Deborah Gilbert – HW Smith PK-8 School
- Ashley Passardi – Bellevue Elementary
- Nichole Murray and Lorraine Liepke – Henninger
- Matt Brigati – Huntington PK-8 School
- Danielle Guiffre – Dr. Weeks
- Adam Lesh – PSLA @ Fowler
- Ken Keech - Nottingham

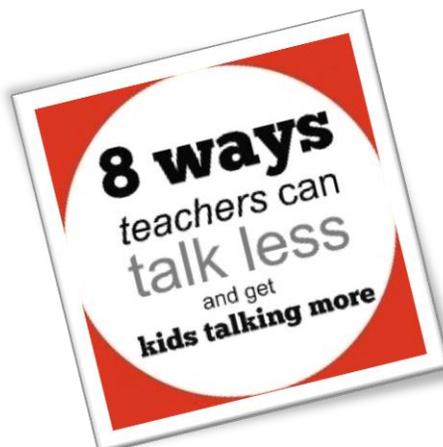
Science & Technology

Members of the Strategic Leadership team, which continues to facilitate the implementation of the NYSSLS, had the opportunity to attend training in Albany and learn from Tricia Shelton, a member of the National Science Teachers association, and writer of the NYSSLS standards. This learning will assist the leadership team in designing lessons and units that are coherent, student-centered and focused on the NYSSLS standards.

We are happy and thankful to announce that the STEM office and Lincoln Middle School has been awarded a very substantial PLTW grant made possible by Verizon to implement the new course, App Creators. The award is \$15,000 in 2018-19 and an additional \$5,000 in 2019-20. The funds can be used for equipment and materials, professional development and training.

This course will expose students to computer science as a means of computationally analyzing and developing solutions to authentic problems through mobile app development. It will also convey the positive impact of the application of computer science to other disciplines and to society. Congratulations to PLTW teacher Mike Foley, who put in a great deal of work to secure the grant!

It has been very exciting to see 4th grade classrooms utilizing the next FOSS Science Kit: Soils, Rocks, and Landforms. Students continue to be engaged and are making connections with other content areas through this work!



English Language Arts

It has been a pleasure spending time in classrooms across the district so far this year.

I see many teachers and coaches striving to improve reading instruction in support of our Early Literacy Initiative, building writing stamina and skill using Units of Study, and implementing Personalized Learning across the grades. Kudos to all of the teachers who continue to learn and improve their practice in order to create more engaging learning experiences for our students!

One thing that seems to still be a challenge is shifting the ratio of classroom talk from favoring the teacher to favoring the student. I know that, personally, this is a struggle as I work to support my own son with his nightly homework. There are so many times that I do some of the thinking for him, or lead him to a response, when I should bite my tongue and push him to do it. I see similar struggles in the classrooms across all grade levels and content areas. There are two directions from which to attack this problem:

1. You talk less
2. Get students talking more

I came across [this article](#) suggesting 8 ways to talk less and get your students talking more. Tips include:

1. Don't steal the struggle
2. Move from the front of the classroom
3. Teach students signals for often-repeated phrases and for transitions
4. Use non-verbal reinforcement for behavior whenever possible
5. Turn your statements into questions or prompts
6. Instead of asking, "Does that make sense?" say, "Can you put that in your own words?"
7. Stop repeating yourself
8. Notice moments when you summarize/review for students and instead get their input

To further support students talking more, consider increasing your use of Teacher Talk Moves to build student habits around discussion. Attached are the Scope and Sequences for Habits of Discussion for both [elementary](#) and [secondary](#) students. Also attached are the [Accountable Talk Moves and Functions](#).

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