



HIGHER | GREATER
expectations | student results

SCSD Teaching & Learning Newsletter

IN THIS ISSUE

CAO's Thoughts

I am proud to present our first Teaching & Learning Newsletter of the school year. The Teaching & Learning Division seeks to improve communication with administrators, teachers, teaching assistants and support staff within our schools. We want to keep you informed of the work we do and the support we provide to schools. Our bi-monthly newsletter will include brief updates from each department within our division. These departments include:

- Early Childhood and Elementary Education
- Secondary, Adult and Career and Technical Education
- English Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Social Studies
- Science and Technology
- Fine Arts
- Library Media Services
- English as a New Language, World Languages and Bilingual Education
- Health, Physical Education and Athletics
- Grants and Funded Programs
- Professional Development

The Teaching and Learning Newsletter will be published before the end of the month in September, November, January, March and May this school year. We will post the issues on the SCSD Teaching and Learning website and send you a link, via email, each time a new one is posted. Please let us know what you think and what suggestions you have for future issues.

We appreciate all that you do for our students and families. Thank you for being a part of one of the most successful openings of the school year ever. We look forward to working with you in a school year filled with higher expectations and greater student outcomes!

Sincerely,

Linda D. Mulvey

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Professional Development



On August 21 – 23, 2017, the SCSD Professional Development Department, Syracuse Teacher Center and Syracuse Teacher Association

hosted a **Summer Summit** at the Marriott Syracuse Downtown. The Summer Summit inspired and launched the school year for educators through providing professional development, collaboration and networking in a professional, conference-style venue. 625 Educators, 120 presenters and co-presenters, 25 student volunteers and 35 support staff members convened around a commitment to building culturally responsive schools and personalizing learning for all students to advance equity and excellence in the District. The Summit was opened with two motivational keynote speakers: Anthony Kim, CEO of Education Elements, our PL partner, and Dr. David Kirkland, Executive Director of the NYU Metro Center for Research on Equity and the



Transformation of Schools. Following the keynote addresses, educators self-selected from over 120 content sessions aligned to the [PD Focus Strands](#) for 2017-2018.

In the development of the Summer Summit, a committee of stakeholders started with the goal of collaborating to design and plan an innovative professional learning model in SCSD. It quickly became evident in reflection on the District priorities, that the Summer Summit could be a way to bring together a diverse and vibrant community of educators dedicated to accelerating improvement in education with a focus on personalized

learning and culturally relevant education. The Summer Summit also provided a way for content areas to be innovative in rethinking how they deliver professional learning. The SCSD Summer Summit started with the belief that “the answers are in the room,” in that our educators, themselves, are valued as the most impactful and core stakeholders in affecting teaching and learning. The Summer Summit *call for proposals* was designed to capture best practices within our district, and was sent to teachers, teaching assistants, leaders, community partners and content supervisors in SCSD. The process for procuring content for the SCSD Summer

Summit reflects the District’s commitment to developing and honoring our teachers to share their expertise, knowledge and passion for teaching and learning.



Physical Education, Health & FACS

The Physical Education Department had a busy summer rolling out new curriculum and textbooks in Family & Consumer Sciences and new health textbooks at the middle and high school level. I would like to thank the teachers and staff members that assisted with this work. The curriculum was presented to staff this summer and other sessions are planned to

work with the new curriculum and textbooks this fall.

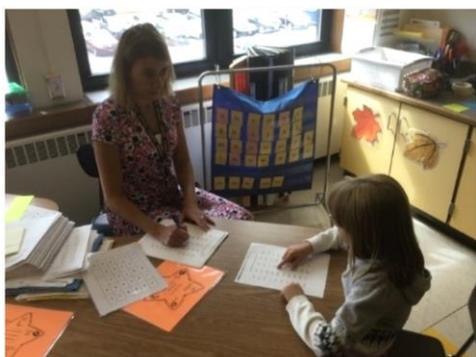
I would also like to congratulate Donna Bill (FACS Teacher at Grant) and Paula Delallo (Health Teacher at Grant) on their retirement from the district.

Early Childhood & Elementary Education

PRE-K TO 2 TEACHERS ARE ROCKET SCIENTISTS



Mrs. Zollo, 2nd grade teacher at Van Dуйn Elementary, assessing a student's phonemic awareness during breakfast on the second day of school.



Ms. Mohr, 2nd grade teacher at Roberts PreK-8, assessing a student's phonemic awareness reading block on the third day of school.

Library Media Services

SCSD Librarians are looking forward to supporting and collaborating with teachers this year. We have added [Brittanica Launchpacks](#) and [Brittanica Image Quest](#) to our database collection to provide excellent resources to support instruction. Your librarian loves to guide you through using the databases and finding you any additional resources you need. Remember to tell them which books you would like to see in your school library before their orders are due in October!

Pre-K to 2 teachers have the knowledge to be "Rocket Scientists." Yes, you read that right, Pre-K to 2 teachers have the skills to be "Rocket Scientists." How do you ask? The answer is simple because they teach children how to read. One of Superintendent Alicea's focus area is Pre-K to 2 literacy. The superintendent's focus is fitting because he was a kindergarten teacher and knows what it takes to teach children how to read.

Research has demonstrated that a personalized balanced reading program that focuses on phonemic awareness, fluency and comprehension are the keys to developing successful readers. Thankfully, Syracuse City School District Pre-K to 2 teachers and administrators understood the need for a personalized balanced reading program and started the very first days of school assessing students on the continuum of reading development.

This school year, Pre-K teachers will utilize the Gold assessment to gain a deeper understanding of students' developmental levels. The Gold assessment will allow teachers to personalize instruction and expose students to developmentally appropriate activities. Kindergarten to 2nd-grade teachers will use assessments such as STAR, ANet, and Running Records to evaluate students and personalize their reading instruction to increase the number of students on or above grade level. Special thanks to Van Dуйn's 2nd grade Teacher Mrs. Zollo and Roberts 2nd grade Teacher Ms. Mohr who started individualized assessments the first day of school and then again during breakfast on day two. Also, Assistant Superintendent Wilson and Executive Director DiFlorio want to give special thanks to all elementary teachers and administrators for an excellent and positive start of schools. Higher Expectations = Greater Student Results.

Personalized Learning

We are excited to see all the new devices going into buildings! A big thank you to IT for the extra work they put in to make sure as many as possible were in buildings for the start of school. We can't wait to see teachers and students using them to learn! Check out our latest [PL update!](#)

Enrichment

The enrichment partners and school leaders have done amazing job of launching the 2017-18 school year! Here are some of our new changes for the 2017-2018 school year:

- Student choice in most school locations from 3rd grade through 8th grade
- Inclusion of STEM options/choices in all schools
- Increased connection to ELA and Math standards
- Cultural focus for the enrichment program at Franklin
- Enrichment staff at Seymour that are fluent in Spanish and English
- NGSS connections to the Science content at Dr. Weeks with deeper dives guided by professional development delivered by Dr. Sharon Dotger of SU.

We are all excited to roll out the new changes and thankful for the hard work put in over the summer by everyone! Stay tuned to the [ELT Enrichment Website](#) for more updates.

Fine Arts

It was a busy and exciting summer in the Fine Arts Department! We rethought our summer programming and launched our first ever Summer Arts Intensive. This consisted of two 2-week camp style sessions offering classes in music (vocal and instrumental), dance, and visual arts. We doubled our participation rate over last summer in our previous programming! This provided students more summer arts opportunities than ever before and it was a thrill to watch them develop their skills throughout the program. We can't wait to see this program develop in the coming years!

The Fine Arts Department also engaged in some high-quality, productive professional learning this summer. Teachers learned about more effective strategies to fully meet the needs of special education students, strategies to effectively plan for the long term, and best practices for planning interdisciplinary/integrated lessons and units of study.

We will begin field testing various digital content in our classes and look forward to continuing to highlight best personalized learning practices during meetings and PD sessions. Our teachers are ready to hit the ground running and fully engage in personalized learning for this new school year! Keep track of our events at [Fine Arts Event Calendar](#) and follow our progress and good news on [@SCSDArts](#) on Twitter!

Secondary Education

Secondary School Students Take Ownership of the Learning Process in a Personalized Learning Classroom

Middle and high school students across the district are realizing that “personalized learning” allows a teacher to connect with students in a very unique and personal way. The teachers help students to identify their strengths and weaknesses and they work together to address areas of concern. The students are encouraged to look at their own data benchmarks to help determine how teachers can best support them. This approach is very different than ones we have used in the past. The teacher and the student will work together collaboratively as a team to meet the individual needs of the student.

Each team looks at the student’s results on various authentic and formative assessments and together they will discuss strategies for improvement. The students are asked to partner with the teacher and take ownership of their learning objectives. All students are encouraged to be a part of the learning process.

Personalized learning has been implemented in the District at all of the high schools and two middle schools. The remaining middle schools will design and implement their initial plans this year. This innovative teaching strategy will allow students to focus on their personal educational outcomes. Students will have opportunities to work cooperatively with their peers, use digital programs to further their

development, and work strategically with teachers on identified skills in need of support. Assistant Superintendent Davis and Executive Director Odom have visited many of the middle and high school classrooms that have adopted personalized learning goals. Students are excited and focused on classroom objectives and lessons.

We personally want to thank all staff members for a great opening and we look forward to visiting more classrooms throughout the school year!

HIGHER EXPECTATIONS = GREATER STUDENT RESULTS



Students are working collaboratively in Ms. Duquette’s 8th grade ELA classroom at Grant Middle School.



An example of “Personalized Learning” in action. This is Ms. Duquette’s 8th grade ELA classroom at Grant Middle School.



Another example of focused students individually reading an article using digital content, also in Ms. Duquette’s 8th grade ELA classroom at Grant Middle School.

English Language Arts

PK-2 Early Literacy Kickoff

On August 31st, over 300 teachers came together to kick off the Superintendent's Early Literacy Initiative. Following a warm welcome from Superintendent Alicea and an introduction from Marie Fay, SUNY Oswego Professor and Founder of The Reading League, Dr. Maria Murray led us all through a fascinating and informative history of reading research in the Central New York Region and the role Syracuse City Schools played in it all. Teachers then participated in two short content sessions summarizing brain research related to reading instruction and emphasizing the importance of phonological awareness instruction for early readers.

I'd like to offer a special thanks to the PreK Department for their collaboration on this effort as well as Ann Sherwood for her support. Finally, a big thank you to the Early Literacy Coaches and our Reading Intervention Coach who will be supporting your schools: Jorene Cook, Amy Gribnau, Mindy Lochner, Marisa Montalto, and BethAnn Smith.



Grade 3 Writing: Units of Study

We are off to a strong start with the implementation of Writing Units of Study in Grade 3. Teachers came together on August 31st for a fantastic day of learning and preparation. Implementation will be supported this year by Kate Franz of KFF Literacy and Laura Jackson, District Writing Coach. Composition notebooks were provided for every 3rd grader in the district for use as a writing notebook. We can't wait to see what the students produce!

Secondary ELA: Summer Summit Highlights

Middle school ELA teachers came together at this year's Summer Summit to unpack their first instructional unit and dive into their Unit 1 texts. A big thank you to ANet's Tiffany Alvarez-Smith and Tiffany Campau for their facilitation!

High school English teachers gathered to dive into Personalized Learning and how it can be implemented in their classrooms. We look forward to ongoing collaboration and strategy sharing as the high schools move forward with their implementation of Personalized Learning. Thank you to Jamie Gartner and Sarah Snell for their facilitation!



Science

The STEM office has been busy preparing science teachers for the newly adopted science standards. These standards, known as the New York State Science Learning Standards (NYSSLS) were written through a collaborative, state-led process. The new K–12 science standards are rich in content and arranged thoughtfully across disciplines and grades to provide all students an internationally benchmarked science education. The STEM department is building awareness of these new standards across all grade levels multiple times throughout the year.



The STEM office is excited to continue its implementation of the FOSS science kit program at 4th grade. Professional development sessions were held over the summer and on Superintendent Conference Days. The focus of these initial sessions was inquiry-based pedagogy and materials management. We look forward to visiting classrooms and seeing young SCSD scientists!



Mathematics

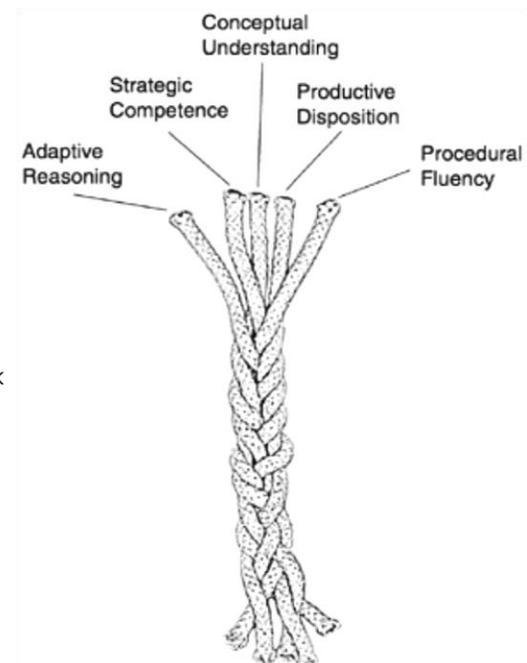
Welcome back to another productive, new school year! The Mathematics Department knows that it will be filled with exciting new learning.

Superintendent Alicea established a Mathematics Task Force last spring. The group was charged with developing a three-year Action Plan to build excellence in our math programming district-wide. As a part of the work, the task force studied what it really means to be mathematically proficient. This visual from Adding It Up: Helping Children Learn Mathematics by the National Research Council provides us with all of the strands needed to be mathematically proficient.

It is important that these strands are developed as a connected entity, not as single skills. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics publication, Principles to Action: Ensuring Mathematical Success for All, highlights key instructional practices that will develop all of the strands. If you are excited to work on these practices please contact your instructional coach or your administrator to begin to unpack this learning!

Other Important Information:

- Please find the sequencing of units using [this link](#).
- Curricular guidance documents for grades 6-Algebra 2 will be available soon!



ENL, World Languages Bilingual Education

All SCSD Educators Have Access to Instructional Strategies in Ellevation

Access to the data platform Ellevation, is now available to all English as a New Language (ENL) teachers, administrators and general education teachers working with English language learners (ELLs). Ellevation is a data platform that provides educators of ELLs with access to student demographics and data that will help inform and support instruction in Stand-Alone and Integrated Co-teaching classes. Through Ellevation, classroom teachers can identify their ELLs'

proficiency levels, view suggested language scaffolds and develop a deeper understanding of second language acquisition.

- How to Log-in:
<http://www.syracusecityschools.com/districtpage.cfm?pageid=7932>

Now all teachers can be teachers of language with using the resources found in the Instructional Strategies component of Ellevation. Classroom teachers are able to integrate 70+ classroom activities into any lesson plan to incorporate language instruction, regardless of content area or grade level. Within each activity, the My ELLs feature lists each of the teacher's students and provides specific guidance on how to "support" the activity in different ways based on each student's proficiency level. Each activity integrates the latest

research and best practices on effective instruction for ELLs that is easily accessible to all teachers working with ELLs.

- Instructional Strategies preview:
<http://info.ellevationeducation.com/instructional-strategies-preview>

If you need assistance with logging in, please contact the ENL Office at 4927.



Social Studies

All of us are coming back to our classrooms in yet more pivotal moments of the history of our nation and the world. It is no secret that social studies plays a daily role in our lives and clearly impacts all of us. I look forward to an exciting 2017-2018 school year. As always, I can be found via e-mail at nstamoulacatos@scsd.us and or at extension 4052 at Central Office. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or assistance any of you may have.

If you are looking for the most important information regarding Pre-K-5 social studies instruction you will find it [HERE](#). Scholastic Magazine is being offered and should be delivered to your

schools. Please contact our instructional coach, Ellie Leach, if you do not have them yet at ELeach@scsd.us.

If you are looking for the most important information regarding 6-12 social studies instruction you will find it [HERE](#). Middle school teachers should really take advantage of the Assessment Cycle Toolkits provided for the first units of study!

Deliveries regarding materials for literacy instruction such as class sets of Common Roadmaps for students and Enduring Issues Posters at the grades 6-9 level will be delivered at the beginning of the school year.

We think you may be interested in the following:

[Why I Will Not Be Teaching About Charlottesville](#)

[Operation Active Citizenship \(A Guide of Resources for Constitution Day/Citizenship Week\)](#)

[What Students Remember Most About Teachers](#)



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