



**HIGHER | GREATER**  
expectations | student results

# SCSD Teaching & Learning Newsletter

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## CAO's Thoughts

Dear SCSD Colleagues,

**Personalized Learning (PL)** is an important initiative in our schools. We have made a large investment in promoting PL structures to provide teachers with the professional development and tools needed to transform instruction to better meet student needs and accelerate student learning. Over the past two years, schools have designed and implemented PL structures for full-school implementation. This year, Wave 3 schools - Clary, WSA, Frazer, ELMS, LeMoyne, Dr. King, Porter and Lincoln are formulating their design plans and launching in January. For Wave 1 and 2 schools, our 2018 goals are:

**All Wave 1 Schools:** Bellevue, Delaware, Dr. Weeks, Franklin, Meachem, Van Duyn, Danforth, Grant, Huntington

Every teacher will be providing students with a personalized learning experience by April 2018.

**Wave 2 PK - 8 and Elementary Schools:** Ed Smith, HW Smith, Roberts, McKinley-Brighton, Webster, Syracuse Latin, Hughes, Salem Hyde

Every teacher will be providing students with a personalized learning experience by April 2018.

**Wave 2 High Schools:** Corcoran, Henninger, ITC, Nottingham, PSLA at Fowler

Every teacher in grades 9 and 10 will be providing students with a personalized learning experience by April 2018.

The "personalized learning experience" is not a single, isolated, event - it involves ongoing transformation of classroom structures. Wave 1 and 2 school leaders are championing Personalized Learning. They recently attended "Reflect and Iterate" sessions with their Design Teams to craft plans for full implementation by April. The Teaching and Learning Team is providing feedback and continued support to schools as they put their plans into place. There is a great deal of enthusiasm and excitement for the power of Personalized Learning to transform teaching and learning in our classrooms. Please check out this [PL link](#) for more exciting PL news and updates.

During this season of thanksgiving, I would like to extend a heartfelt "Thank You" to those that work with our students in classrooms, administrative and support roles. The work that you do is challenging, yet the rewards are many! Take some time over the holiday to reflect on the positive difference that YOU have made in the lives of our students and families. I am so proud of the work we do and the impact we all make. Thank you for being a valued member of our SCSD family.

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday!

Linda D. Mulvey  
Chief Academic Officer

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## Library Media Services

Here are some fun library facts!

**Top three most checked out books between September 1 and November 1:**

- 1) **Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth** by Jeff Kinney (Checked out 152 times!)
- 2) **Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Old School** by Jeff Kinney (Checked out 151 times!)
- 3) **Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Cabin Fever** by Jeff Kinney (Checked out 122 times!)

**Our top three most popular authors are:**

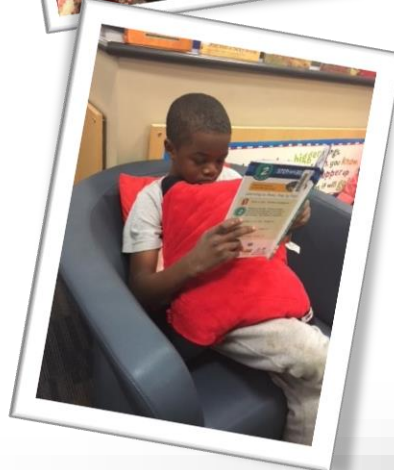
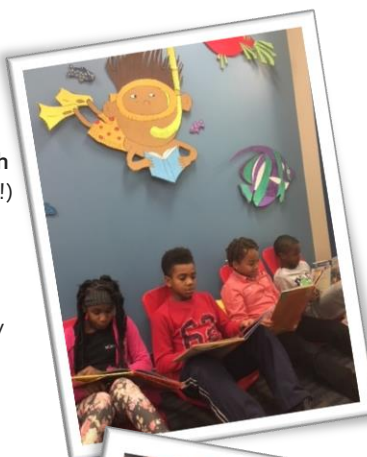
- 1) Jeff Kinney
- 2) Kwame Alexander
- 3) Laurie Halse Anderson

Our most popular database for elementary is Brain Pop!

Our most popular database for secondary schools is Britannica Schools.

High Schools have hosted over 25,000 student visits, not including classes coming to the library!

High school Book Clubs have over 300 student members!



## Enrichment

We have just celebrated the first Shareformances of the year at Frazer, Seymour and Van Duyn. Students integrated their classroom content with costume design and took to the runway with their fashions. What a fun way to show off their flare! They strutted designs based on the themes of feelings, patterns, artists, states, rain forests and ratios.

**Peaceful Schools** has been deeply engaged with their new choice options (launching rockets!) and building social-emotional skills at Dr. King.

**Catholic Charities** is deeply engaged in a rich culture program and partnership with Syracuse University with a Nepali/Bhutanese emphasis.

**Syracuse University** had glowing reviews from their new NGSS work with extending the FOSS kits through their enrichment program. First grade students made their very own air-powered balloon rocket cars!

**Strengths across the enrichment programs in schools based on recent progress monitoring:**

- Use of "result-focused" collaborative planning meetings with clear objectives and key deliverables.
- Analysis of interim assessment data in order to develop concrete action steps to improve instruction and better address student's needs.
- Designing professional development based on learning needs and input from teachers.
- More student voice and choice in programming.

## Special Education

It's the most wonderful time of year – annual review season! The Special Education Department has made significant changes to the process this year in an effort to improve parent participation in the CSE process, student programming, and the quality of IEPs. Information regarding the changes will be listed on our WIKI site and liaisons will meet with school teams to share the guidance and answer any questions.

We are very excited to announce that we are in the process of planning a district-wide Special Olympics event that will take place in the spring. We are partnering with teacher volunteers and student organizations to bring this event to life. Stay tuned for details!

Special Education Leadership is held the last Thursday of every month from 4:00 – 6:00 PM at Henninger High School. This is an opportunity to network with your colleagues, receive the latest information from the Special Education Department, and ask questions of the Director. We would love to see you there!

Please don't hesitate to reach out to our Department with any questions or ideas – 435-4425.

## ENL

### SCSD New York State Seal of Biliteracy

The Office of ENL, World Languages and Bilingual Education is promoting and encouraging all eligible seniors and juniors to apply for the New York State Seal of Biliteracy (NYSSB). The intent of the NYSSB is to encourage the study of languages; identify high school graduates with language and biliteracy skills for employers; provide universities with additional information about applicants seeking admission; prepare students with twenty-first century skills; recognize the value of foreign and native language instruction in schools; and affirm the value of diversity in a multilingual society.

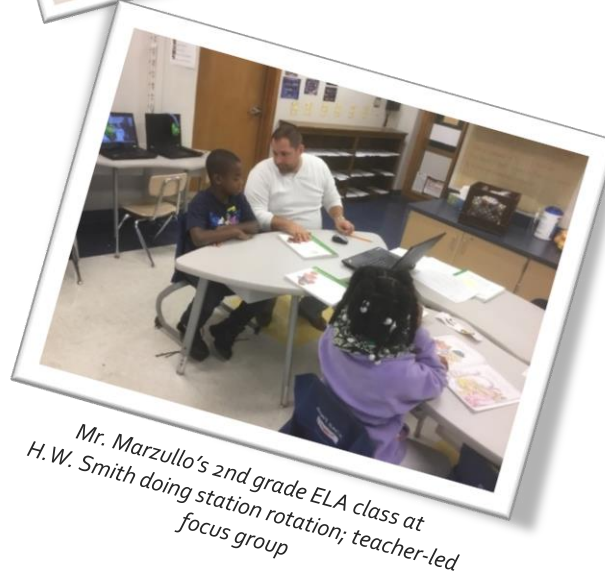
The New York State Seal of Biliteracy recognizes high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages, in addition to English. It will be awarded by the Commissioner to students who meet criteria established by the Board of Regents. Participating students must achieve a proficiency level of Intermediate High, based on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) scale as outlined in the SCSD NYSSB Handbook. The seal will be attached to diplomas and transcripts of graduates who have attained Seal criteria, at no cost.

More information can be found in the [SCSD NYSSB Handbook](#).

Questions can be directed to the ENL, World Languages and Bilingual Education Office x4927.



Mr. Marzullo's 2nd grade ELA class at H.W. Smith doing station rotation; independent group



Mr. Marzullo's 2nd grade ELA class at H.W. Smith doing station rotation; teacher-led focus group

## Pre-K & Elementary Division

### Primary Grades Personalize Learning

Primary grade teachers are no strangers to station rotation, identifying specific interventions for students and targeting instruction. In fact, some of Syracuse City School District's highly effective teachers have used this methodology for years. An instructional focus for the 2017-18 school year is Personalized Learning. Many of our primary teachers are familiar with this type of pedagogy but they are taking it to a new level by utilizing a variety of online digital

tools including i-Ready, Lexia, Imagine Learning, Smarty Ants and myON. This allows for greater personalization of students' learning experiences and, ultimately, improved student achievement.

Principal Devendorf (Roberts) and Principal Moulton (Meachem) indicated that personalizing learning increases teacher collaboration and use of data.

They are also seeing higher levels of student engagement in classrooms through student to student collaboration and helping each other with work.



Mrs. Sullivan's 1st grade class at H.W. Smith working in a collaborative group



# English Language Arts

## PK-2 Early Literacy Update

Key Practice Areas from the SCSD Literacy Action Plan frame the work for the Early Literacy Initiative. A summary of the action steps from the plan is to the right.

The SCSD Early Literacy Team includes ELA Director Rhonda Zajac, Principal on Special Assignment Ann Sherwood, four Early Literacy Coaches, Early Childhood Director Margo Nish, Assistant Director Cindy Watkins, and the PreK Coaches. Our work this year started with initial planning meetings where principals, Ann Sherwood, Early Literacy Coaches, Instructional Coaches and PreK Coaches shared information on current state, school-specific goals and priorities, and how the group could effectively collaborate to improve early literacy outcomes in each school.

Since those initial meetings, the Early Literacy Coaches have been hard at work delivering professional development to teachers to ensure that all PK-2 teachers have the content knowledge essential to effective early reading instruction. They have also created resources and met with teachers to provide support in the diagnosis of reading needs and the planning of targeted small group instruction to address the specific needs of individual students.

Rhonda and Ann appreciate the time we have had to share information with school administrators at their monthly cohort meetings and look forward to ongoing collaboration and improved results for students!

Key Practice Areas	Action Steps
Systemic Data Use	Prioritize and communicate grade level targets for critical literacy skills by grade level.
	Develop and disseminate a comprehensive literacy assessment plan for <u>PreK</u> -grade 2.
	Provide ongoing, differentiated PD for teachers on the use of data to drive instruction.
Standards-Based Curriculum	Clarify expectations for resource implementation and effective instructional practices in grades PK-2.
	Provide intensified coaching support for teachers in grades PK-2.
Tiered System of Instruction and Intervention	Provide comprehensive early literacy professional development (Becoming an Early Literacy Expert-LETRS) to PK-2 teachers to build critical content knowledge for teachers of early reading.
	Develop guidance to schools to support development of <u>RI</u> plans focused on literacy.
Family and Community Involvement	Collaborate with community partners and agencies to facilitate out-of-school Independent Reading initiatives.

## Grade 3 Writing Update

We are extremely pleased with the efforts of the third grade teachers across the district who are implementing the Writing Units of Study. Teachers were enthusiastic participants in October's professional development sessions and are expressing a great deal of optimism about the way their students are engaging in the writing workshop and in the writing their students are producing.

We want to express sincere gratitude to school leaders for their flexibility and willingness to allow teachers to participate in these professional development sessions. Although it puts a strain on schools, teachers tell us that these sessions are critical to program implementation. Thank you!

## Secondary ELA Intervention Update

Several of our PreK-8 schools and middle schools administered diagnostic assessments to their middle school students and, as a result, have been placing more emphasis on the implementation of Language! Live as a reading intervention for their struggling readers. Reading Intervention Specialist BethAnn Smith has been providing professional development and support to these schools and we are anxious to monitor student progress. If you need more information, training, or support in increasing or improving Language! Live implementation in your school, please reach out to ELA Director Rhonda Zajac at [rzajac@scsd.us](mailto:rzajac@scsd.us) or x4804.

## Professional Development

On January 26th and 27th, 2018 the SCSD Professional Development Department, Syracuse Teacher Center and Syracuse Teacher Association will host the **Winter Summit** at PSLA and ITC.

The Winter Summit will provide an additional opportunity for staff to attend content sessions presented at the Summer Summit and will also include additional content sessions. Educators will have the opportunity to participate in professional development and collaborate and network in a professional, conference-style environment.

The theme of the Winter Summit is building culturally responsive schools and personalizing learning for all students to advance equity and excellence in SCSD. The Winter Summit will open with a reception on Friday, January 26, 2018 from 4 pm – 6 pm at PSLA featuring student performances, student artwork and guest keynote speakers. On Saturday, January 27, 2018 the Winter Summit will continue at both PSLA and ITC offering 97 concurrent sessions aligned to

the [Professional Development Strands](#) for 2017-2018. SCSD Parents, Families and Community Partners will be involved in the Winter Summit through collaboration with Parent University and Enrichment Programs.

The Winter Summit features a new portfolio of personalized professional development and learning offerings utilizing several online platforms. These innovative opportunities for educators will help to engage those eager to reach beyond the boundaries of their own work setting to enrich their professional learning.

The Winter Summit reflects the District's commitment to develop and honor educators sharing their expertise, knowledge and passion for teaching and learning. Registration details will be sent out via email and posted on the [SCSD Professional Development Web Page](#). All registration for the Winter Summit will be through Performance Matters.



## Mathematics

Last spring, a large group of teachers, administrators, parents and community members met to develop a three-year [Mathematics Action Plan](#) for our district. This document contains current data for 3-8 NYS testing, the Algebra 1 Regents and Geometry Regents for our district. This document also outlines the rationale for our work, our yearly goals and the work we will engage in over the three years. The key practices are centered around Teaching and Learning, Curriculum, Assessment, Access and Equity and Technology.

Our end of year goals were built to be challenging yet attainable. The team identified major domains of focus for each grade level (see page 5 in the Action Plan). These domains were chosen because they are major domains in each grade level and they are areas our data shows that need improvement.

Within these areas of focus, here are some effective practices I have seen taking place in schools.

**Data:** Explore the data that we have from NYS Assessments, STAR and formative assessments in class. Are students showing that they have the procedures, but cannot apply the procedures to word problems? This could indicate a lack of conceptual understanding. Consider ways to build concepts through rich tasks in the class. Here is an [example of a task one](#) 5th grade teachers used last month an [example of a task that Algebra 1](#) used this month in a lesson lab!

**Collaborative Planning:** [Unpack your units](#) with colleagues and coaches to identify the major concepts (understandings) and procedures students must develop during the unit.

**Co-plan** a concept building lesson with a colleague or with a coach. Here is a [task analysis guide](#) to help choose a task. Here is a [guide to help plan the lesson](#). Teach the lesson and bring back samples of student work. What are you noticing? What did you learn about student understanding? Do some students need remediation now? Are there some natural small groups that you can form based on what you learned?

Please reach out to your coach if you would like to engage in this work! **Together** we will realize our vision of ***all students in SCSD graduating as powerful thinkers who are mathematically proficient and solve problems in innovative ways.***

[NYS Educators Guidance Document for NYS Mathematics Testing](#) has been released by NYS. Please review this document to become familiar with grade level expectations for instruction, the major standards of emphasis and the 2-day testing change. This document also includes the blueprint for each assessment by grade level.

[Next Generation Mathematics Standards](#) document has been released by the state. Please take some time to read the introduction to the standards and begin to look through the changes. There are some very nice clarifications and coherence indicated on this document.

## Social Studies

### Students Meet Atomic Bomb Survivor Bringing History to Life!

On October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017, students from all of our high schools had an opportunity to meet Atomic bomb survivor and storyteller Keiko Ogura who held an open conversation at the Everson Museum. She was in Syracuse, as part of the *That Day Now* program for remembering the events of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This event at the Everson was a unique opportunity for students to speak with Ms. Ogura to ask her questions and relate their own thoughts and experiences. Ms. Ogura took students in the Member's Council Gallery, which currently houses [That Day Now: Shadows Cast by Hiroshima](#), an exhibition organized and designed by Syracuse University Professors Yutaka Sho, Edward Morris and Susannah Sayler. Overall, students witnessed history come alive!



### Curriculum News

#### Grade 5 ELA & Social Studies Professional Development Training

Please ensure that you review the following [memo](#) that was sent to Grade 5 teachers and instructional coaches regarding an upcoming unit that the social studies office has collaborated with the ELA Department on to enhance interdisciplinary alignment and learning! We are very excited about this opportunity and look forward to following up with teachers.

#### Grade 6-8 Social Studies Benchmark Assessments Information

The Middle School Benchmark Assessment windows begin in November for all grades 6-8 Social Studies Benchmark Assessments. The following [memo](#) has been shared with all teachers and instructional coaches. Please do not hesitate to contact Nick Stamoulacatos at x4052 with any questions.

#### Grades 9-12 Social Studies Update

It was a busy week for high school social studies. All grade 9 Global Connections teachers attended professional development on their unit of study for November and December which is aligned to the new practices of the new Global Regents Exam and promotes personalized learning and writing in the content area. The state education department has also put out detailed information for anyone who is still confused about the Global 10 Regents Exam. Grade 12 Economics teachers embarked on a two day professional development session to pilot an extensive college ready curriculum in Economics that is also aligned to the ELA Common Core Standards and promotes active citizenship! Please keep in mind that all Global 10 and US 11 students will be taking a district wide Mid-Term assessment the week of **December 18<sup>th</sup>**. More information will be provided soon. If you are interested in taking a look at any of the materials feel free to click on the links below!

[Global 9 Module III Materials](#)

[Global 10 Regents Update](#)

[New Economics Pilot Materials](#)

### Social Studies Expressed through the Arts!

The Social Studies and Fine Arts departments have started a collaboration project with the Everson Museum in establishing the Everson Teen Arts Council. The Everson Teen Arts Council is a partnership between the Everson and teens from our high schools, offering a safe platform for students to share their voices, work with their peers and engage with the greater community. The Teen Council provides teens with dynamic leadership opportunities to create meaningful and relevant programs and exhibitions, while giving teens space to explore identity, build skills and prepare for college, career and civic life. The first exhibition for this council will take place on February 18, 2018.



## Secondary Education

### Blue Ribbon Task Force II - Follow up Study on the Status of Career and Technical Education at SCSD

In the spring of 2012, the Syracuse City School District engaged the Career and Technical Education Technical Assistance Center of New York (TAC) to facilitate the development of a five-year plan for Career and Technical Education. The TAC was charged with three objectives. First was to access the current CTE programs including student performance, facilities, personnel and other relevant outcomes and resources. The second was to develop a common understanding on the part of the district leaders including core academic areas, national CTE Program Standards, model programs and quality indicators. The last objective was to provide the Superintendent and the Board of Education with a five-year plan for Career and Technical Education.

Now, five years later, Superintendent Alicea and the SCSD CTE Partnership Council have asked that the study be repeated. The goal of the new Blue Ribbon Task Force II study is to evaluate where SCSD is in relation to the original study and make recommendations for the next five years. During the month of October, the task force members interviewed over forty business and higher education partners, CTE teachers, administrators, parents and students. Interviews were conducted with partners from all over the state and in every high school. The process of interviewing and evaluation will help us to measure how far we have come and where our next opportunities lie. On Tuesday, October 31<sup>st</sup>, the core team, made up of multiple Partnership Council members and community members, met for the second time to listen to preliminary findings of the consultant team from TAC. The core team will meet twice more before the release of the study to dive deeper into the re-evaluation to make recommendations for the future of Career and Technical Education at SCSD.

The original Blue Ribbon Task Force Study 2012 can be found [here](#). Look for the Blue Ribbon Task Force II report to be released in January of 2018.

### Career and Technical Education (CTE)

Career and Technical Education programming is fully accessible to all students in the Syracuse City School District. Working closely with our Special Education Department, we are able to expose identified students to our vocational curriculum. One such example of these collaborations is happening in our Media Communications classroom with teacher Jeffrey Newell. Mr. Newell works at ITC and recently teamed up with students in the 12:1:1 classroom to create a presentation on a topic they have been studying, the weather. Special Education teachers Ms. Tredo, Ms. Kallfelz, Ms. Richard and Ms. Lundy taught their students about various aspects of weather as evidenced by what students shared in this video. Please click [here](#) to see the fruits of their collaboration.

Dan Cummings from Local Syr.com spent some time with Career and Technical Education (CTE) students at PSLA. An interview with Cyber security teacher Brittany Mazzaferro highlights the success that the CTE are attaining. A panel of PSLA CTE students provided insight into SCSD CTE pathways. The video can be found [here](#).



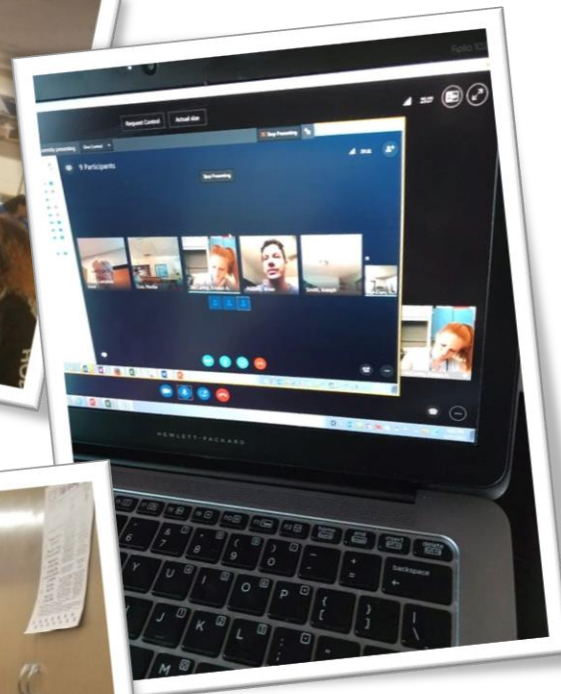


## Science & Technology

The STEM office is sharing important information surrounding the New York State Science Learning Standards (NYSSLS, formally known as the NGSS). We are developing alternative modes for receiving professional development in the 2017-2018 school year. Our goal is to use webinars, book clubs, and other remote modes to deliver professional development. This will enable convenient access to professional development for ALL science and technology teachers. The first in our series of PD has been done through Canvas, and our STEM monthly meetings have been done through Skype.

We are providing teachers with support around Personalized Learning in the Science and Technology classrooms, and have been very pleased with what we are seeing. Teachers are using student data to create personalized learning groups and discover ways in which to best support their classroom needs.

Our 4th grade teachers have begun teaching their first investigations from our new FOSS program. The engagement and excitement is evident in the classrooms we see! Students are truly enjoying their hands-on science learning!





**Board of Education**

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Civil Rights Compliance Officer

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725 Harrison Street • Syracuse, NY 13210

(315) 435-4131

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