



South Side

Area School District



District Newsletter

October, 2008

Message from the Superintendent

Dear South Side Community

As always, we've had a very busy summer here, on the South Side campus, as we prepared for the opening of the 2008-2009 school year. I trust that you and your families have had a safe and enjoyable summer. Please allow me to provide you with a snapshot of some of our district's recent accomplishments, while also sharing some of the work that lies ahead.

Elementary Addition and Renovation

The final phase of South Side Elementary School's addition and renovation project was completed in May of 2008. This final phase included the demolition of "The Pod" and subsequent new construction housing a new library, gymnasium, art room, music room, and sixteen classroom spaces. The dedication of the new addition was held on the evening of September 11, prior to the elementary school's open house. After four full years of cohabitating with construction, it is fair to say that the elementary administration, faculty, staff, and of course, the students, are thrilled to be settling into their new classroom spaces.

Future Capital Improvement

With the completion of the elementary addition and renovation, the district has now set its sights on capital improvement projects that will focus on the needs of South Side Middle School and South Side High School. The district has secured the services of VEBH (Valentour, English, Bodnar, and Howell), a highly reputable, Pittsburgh based architectural firm, as the district's architect of record. VEBH is currently working with various district stakeholders, in developing a capital improvements master plan that will address our secondary facilities' needs, for years to come. Project work ranges from the installation of air conditioning in the middle school/high school library and nurse's suite, along with upgrading the air conditioning system in the auditorium, to replacing one of the original, 1950's vintage, locker rooms. Additional plans are in the works to replace the stadium concession stand and public rest rooms, resurface the track, and resurface the campus parking lots and driveways. There are plans to replace the middle school/high school roof and redesign the main entrance of the two secondary schools, so as to create a more secure, yet welcoming, reception area for parents and other school visitors.

PSSA Performance & AYP

I am pleased to report that in late August the district received notification from the Pennsylvania Department of Education that each of South Side's schools... elementary, middle, and high school, met the state's performance requirements for Adequate Yearly Progress, under No Child Left Behind. The Pennsylvania Department of Education has made this determination after reviewing the 2007-2008 Pennsylvania System of School assessment (PSSA) results, graduation rates, and attendance rates for the district, as well as for each individual school. Kudos to South Side students, and to South Side's faculty, administration, and of course, South Side parents who, working together, were able to achieve yet another academic milestone. A more detailed report of South Side's PSSA performance will be forthcoming via the District's Report Card which will be published and distributed to the community later this year.

Full Day, Everyday Kindergarten

2007-2008 marked a groundbreaking initiative here at South Side, that being the move from a full day, alternate day kindergarten program, to a full day, everyday kindergarten program. Parent and teacher response to this move has been overwhelmingly positive. Along with the obvious doubling of instructional time provided to students over the course of a standard 180-day school year, the continuity provided to students, by virtue of their attendance on a daily, Monday through Friday basis, resulted in a more consistent, less disruptive learning environment for our kindergartners. Preliminary feedback from 1st grade teachers at the onset of the 2008-2009 school year has been very encouraging regarding the readiness skills and overall disposition of their incoming students.

Looking Ahead - Two District Initiatives for 2008-2009

Of course, our work is never done as we continually strive to provide South Side students with a high quality, educational program. As such, allow me to share with you two district initiatives for the '08-'09 school year.

Acuity - A Benchmarking and Formative Assessment Tool

As noted earlier South Side students have demonstrated solid academic growth again this year, as reflected in each of our three schools' achieving AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) on the Pennsylvania State Assessment. One tool that the district has used to facilitate the monitoring and assessing of individual student growth, has been the 4Sight benchmark program. This year, the district is moving to a more user friendly program called Acuity. We are optimistic that the Acuity program, targeted for grades 3-8, will be a more efficient predictive and diagnostic assessment tool, thereby further assisting teachers in their quest to have each of their students reach his/her fullest potential.

High School Needs Assessment

On another front South Side has contracted the services of Dr. William Daggett, and his International Center for Leadership in Education, to conduct a needs assessment specific to South Side's secondary program. With the rapid changes in international politics and the overall globalization of manufacturing, commerce, ultimately the world economy as we know it, public education must respond. We cannot afford to be complacent, and continue to deliver our educational program in a "business as usual" fashion. To maintain a competitive edge for our graduates, we must assess our present program, build upon our successes... make some minor adjustments, or potentially, make some radical changes. Nonetheless, what is obvious is that we cannot be satisfied with the status quo and we must look forward to the challenges that lie ahead. I am hopeful that the upcoming needs assessment by Dr. Daggett's organization will provide us with the much-needed insight of an impartial observer, to help us move confidently into the 21st century.

Again, these are just two examples of our commitment, here at South Side, to continually improve upon the educational programming provided to each and every child in the South Side community.

Here's wishing you the best for the 2008-2009 school year.

Sincerely,

Bob Del Greco

Student Leadership at South Side High School

Last spring, the Athletic Department and Administration met and identified several leaders or potential leaders on our athletic teams both in the classroom and on the playing fields at South Side. Mr. Ledbetter has been a part of the South Side community for the past nineteen years and has always been extremely impressed by how well our student body gets along, supports each other and by the pride that our school shares in each others accomplishments. The Athletic Department and Administration feel that this idea of community and "school spirit" is vital to the success of our athletic teams and school in general. The Athletic Department is dedicated to keeping our "South Side Spirit" strong and developing leaders.

The Athletic Department invited any interested athlete in this senior class to attend the 4th annual Student Athlete Leadership Academy at Robert Morris University this past summer. Six seniors, Kristen Beal, John Derosky, Brooke Hunter, Abby Kucher, Sam Minich and Dustyn Steckman accepted the invitation and participated in the training and I heard wonderful things about it from them. These six students are going to help with our leadership training during this school year by sharing some of their experiences with the rest of the group.

Our first training meeting was held on Wednesday, September 10th from 6:45 AM to 7:30 AM. At this first meeting we discussed the results of a survey that the kids completed and laid out a course of action. We will be meeting once every two weeks to create the type of positive culture and atmosphere that our school needs and help these student-athletes acquire the skills necessary to become the type of leader that their teammates and classmates need.

State Engagements for Director of Curriculum

South Side Area School District's Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Ronald Ladick, has been invited by Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell, the Education Commission of the States and the W.W. Kellogg Foundation to be a contributor to the Pennsylvania Governor's Forum: Linking Ready Kids to Ready Schools. The forum, which will occur over a two day period in Philadelphia in early December, is designed to bring together educational leaders from across the Commonwealth, as well as the United States, to contribute to the drafting of a policy framework that speaks to the transition of students from early childhood educational programs into the public elementary schools. There will also be a focus on the alignment of practices used within each of these separate schooling systems. This "invitation-only" event will spotlight national speakers with expertise in the realm of early childhood education as well. Experts such as Dr. Sharon Lynn Kagan, associate dean for policy at Teacher's College, Columbia University, Dr. Catherine Scott Little of the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at UNC-Greensboro and Roger Sampson, president of the Education Commission of the States will be among those present.

Dr. Ladick has also been recently appointed to the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Kindergarten Advisory Board. Board meetings, which will be held in Harrisburg at the Office of Early Childhood Education, will focus this year on addressing issues pertinent to aligning early childhood education and kindergarten standards, teacher preparation and development and engaging communities and parents. It is through working with state and national education leaders that Dr. Ladick hopes to bring attention to and support for South Side School District's own early education programs.

Public Awareness

The South Side Area School District offers a full continuum of special education programs and services to all students eligible for such services. Special education programs and services are available for eligible children ages three (3) to school entry age and may be requested by contacting Ms. Tammy Adams, Director of Pupil Services or the Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit at 774-7800. Services for eligible students of school entry age through twenty-one (21) years of age may be requested by contacting Ms. Tammy Adams at 573-9581, ext. 2612.

Special Education programs available include services for eligible students who are identified as:

Developmentally Delayed (ages 3-9)	Multi-handicapped
Mentally Retarded	Neurologically Impaired
Learning Disabled	Physically Impaired
Autistic/Pervasive Developmental Disorder	Seriously Emotionally Disturbed
Visually Impaired	Speech and Language Impaired
Hearing Impaired	

The South Side Area School District conducts on going identification activities to determine if students are in need of special education services.

The South Side Area School District operates the following special programs:

Life Skills Support	Gifted Support
Learning Support	Speech/Language Support
Emotional Support	

Services for eligible preschool age children are provided through the Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit. In addition, the Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit provides the following special education services on behalf of the South Side Area School District:

Developmentally Delayed (Pre-school and Kdg. Only)	Life Skills Support
Speech/Language Support	Physical Support
Visually/Hearing Impaired Support	Autistic Support
Emotional Support	Multi-handicapped Support

Beaver County Head start operates a class in the South Side Elementary School. For more information on this program contact Ms. Adams or the Head Start Office at (724) 375-2300.

The South Side Area School District has an on going screening process to identify students in need of special services and specially designed instruction. The screening is conducted in each building, (elementary, middle and high school) beginning in May of each year with kindergarten screening and continuing in September with review of all group achievement and ability test results. Individual screening as needed takes place throughout the remainder of the school year.

Parents or guardians may request their child be screened or evaluated for special education services. Requests for screening or evaluation should be made in writing and directed to Ms. Tammy Adams For further information parents or guardians may contact Ms. Adams by telephone at 573-9581, ext. 2612.

All information collected as part of an individual student referral or evaluation is treated in a confidential manner and does not become a part of the student's permanent record file. A written policy regarding the confidentiality of student records is available for review by contacting Ms. Tammy Adams, the building counselor or the building principal.

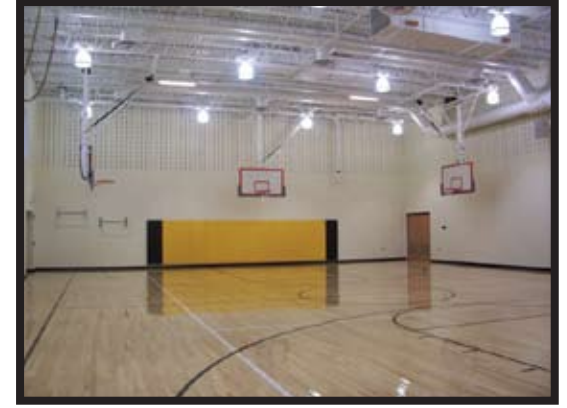
If you have any questions about special education services, the screening or evaluation process, or any other information, please contact Ms. Tammy Adams, Director of Pupil Services at 573-9581, Ext. 2612.

Printed information regarding available special education services and programs and parent rights as they pertain to special education is available in the building principal's office or the office of the Superintendent of Schools.

The district placed the above public awareness information in the district newsletter, all local doctor's offices, head start classrooms, local newspapers. It is also posted in all district offices – principals', counselors', nurses' and the central office.

Elementary Renovation and Construction project

An Open House for the Elementary Renovation and Construction project was held on Thursday, September 11th. After almost four years of planning and work, the elementary building has a whole new look and feel. The entrance to the building was updated along with the addition of several ADA compliant access ramps. A new security system was installed that allows the office staff to monitor more closely who is entering and exiting the building. What was once the "pod" area was torn down to make way for the new gymnasium, library, music and art rooms, large group instruction room and several new classrooms. The gymnasium is a much larger and brighter version of the one that it replaced. The library has vaulted ceilings, beautiful dark wood accents and a heated floor area where students can take a book or two to read. The music room was designed specifically for its acoustics and the art room with its curved wall and windows is an inviting spot for kids to express their creativity. All of the new classrooms have updated lockers, large dry erase boards and a lighting system that automatically turns off the lights once everyone leaves the room. In all, the renovations and additions that were made to the elementary building have made it a more secure building that is student friendly and a great place for our boys and girls to come and learn.



Rebecca Warner Attends The Governor's School for the Arts

South Side senior and budding photographer, Rebecca Warner was named as one of 10 students throughout the state to participate in The Governor's School for the Arts. Rebecca spent five weeks at Mercyhurst College this summer experimenting with different techniques in composition, color, angles, and shapes. "They really forced us to move out of our comfort zone," Warner remarked. The instruction included photographic work in both digital and film.

Honors in photography are not new for Rebecca. She was a semi-finalist for Governor's School as a sophomore, a photographer for the World Affairs Club, and her work has been published in the National European Union Newsletter. She has received regional gold keys from the Scholastic Art and Writing Contest resulting in a New York exhibit of her work in the summer of 2007.

This year Rebecca is participating in an Independent Study in photography. For her senior project, she hopes to implement a community-wide art show. She plans to pursue photojournalism in college.



Rebecca, with her fellow students, is fourth from the left.

South Side Wellness Committee Visits Linsly Outdoor Center

On August 19, 2008 the South Side Wellness Committee participated in a low ropes course at the Linsly Outdoor Center. The morning began with field initiatives that included problem-solving activities that required teamwork and novel thinking strategies. The committee members next moved on to the low ropes course. This course offered eight elements requiring a high level of teamwork. The members focused on building trust and group problem-solving skills. The Wellness Committee extends a special thank you to Linsly Outdoor Center Director, Mr. Jeff Hasis and his staff for providing a successful team building opportunity.



A Special Keynote Speaker to Start the New School Year

On Friday, August 22, the 2008-2009 school year officially began for South Side Area School District teachers, administrators and instructional support staff with the district's annual In Service Day. But this day would differ from past In Service Days, thanks to a very unique and special speaker who was brought in to kick off the new school year.

Dr. Cathy Hamilton presented to district employees a program entitled "Safe, Invited and Master Taught: Creating the Intentional Community That Enhances Achievement for All Students." Dr. Hamilton is a renowned national speaker who is well versed on speaking to issues that challenge those students of rural schools. She is also a nineteen year veteran of the classroom, a former high school principal (and Indiana "High School Principal of the Year") and, herself, a child of generational poverty. Dr. Hamilton's program presented to those in attendance concrete strategies for increasing awareness of all students' needs, while offering research-based best practices that give help and hope to those students struggling to meet Adequate Yearly Progress benchmarks. To celebrate this special occasion, the district also hosted a luncheon for all in attendance.

Many found the time with Dr. Hamilton to be as inspirational as it was enlightening. Dr. Hamilton's program provided a positive start to what hopes to be another successful academic year for the South Side Area School District.

South Side Area Homelessness Awareness

Federal guidelines, as set forth in No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, require that school districts identify children who are homeless (temporarily displaced.) The federal mandate, and the intention of South Side Area School District, is to ensure that homeless children and youth have access to free appropriate public education on an equal basis with other children. Children who are homeless, including those living with others, may qualify for assistance with school lunch, with school supplies/materials, with tutoring, and with transportation so that they can remain in their school of origin.

If you believe your child(ren) may qualify for this service, please contact Tammy Adams, Director of Pupil Services at 724-573-9581x2612.

Homeless children may be identified as living in the following situations:

- Public or private shelters;
- Public or private places not designated for/or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations such as vehicles, parks, motels, campgrounds, etc;
- Living with a parent in a domestic violence shelter;
- Individuals and/or families living with relatives or friends due to a lack of housing;
- Living in transitional housing programs;
- Runaway children (under age 18) and children who have been abandoned or forced out of the home by parents or other caretakers. They may be in temporary shelters awaiting assistance from social service agencies, or may live alone on the street or move from place to place among family members, friends or acquaintances. This also includes such youth from 18 to 21 of age who may still be eligible for educational services in regular or special education;
- Children of migrant families who lack adequate housing;
- Children abandoned in hospitals or awaiting foster care; or
- School-age, unwed mothers or expectant mothers living in houses for unwed mothers when they have no other available living accommodations.

If your living situation changes during the school year or over the summer, and you and your child(ren) become homeless, please be sure to contact the school.

Geneva College Partnership

Geneva College believes in the importance of pre-service teacher preparation for education majors that is best accomplished in the field with a variety of on-the-job experiences in real educational settings. With these beliefs, the South Side Area School District is collaborating with Geneva College for the fall 2008 term. The South Side special education teachers are mentoring eight college interns in a variety of support settings. These interns are gaining experience in becoming the best possible teachers that they can be while working in inclusive environments. Great job, South Side, in preparing prospective teachers. Any questions or comments can be directed to Ms. Tammy Adams, Director of Pupil Services at 724-573-9581; ext. 2612.

SOUTH SIDE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
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South Side Area School District is an equal opportunity education institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sexual orientation, national origin, sex, and handicap in its activities, programs, or employment practices as required by Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504.

For information regarding civil rights or grievance procedures, contact Dr. Robert Del Greco, Title IX coordinator and Section 504 Coordinator, at 4949 State Route 151, Hookstown, PA 15050, (724) 573-9581. For more information regarding services, activities, and facilities that are accessible to and useable by handicapped persons, contact Ms. Tammy Adams, Director of Pupil Services, (724) 573-9581.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Superintendent	Dr. Robert Del Greco
Director of Curriculum and Instruction	Dr. Ronald Ladick
High School Principal	Mr. Vincent Trombetta
Middle School Principal	Mr. Timothy Strader
Secondary Assistant Principal	Mr. Samuel Adams
Elementary Principal	Mr. Michael Lewis
Assistant Elementary Principal	Ms. Andrea Marsh
Secondary Guidance	Dr. Judy Kravec
Middle School Guidance	Ms. Julia Diveglia
Elementary Guidance	Ms. Jane Cebula
Director of Pupil Services	Ms. Tammy Adams
Elementary Nurse	Ms. Dorothy Iannetti
Secondary Nurse	Ms. Jeanne Bendik
Director of Food Services	Mr. Andrew Lucchino
Director of Transportation Services	Ms. Sharon Kramer
Director of Buildings and Grounds	Mr. Robert Hospodar
Director of Finance	Ms. Lori Byron
Director of Payroll	Ms. Margaret Frazier
Director of Accounts Payable	Ms. Penny Kramer

CURRENT SCHOOL DISTRICT RESIDENT

BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS

Mr. Keith Pistorius	President	Ms. Jennifer Parsons	
Ms. Shelly Youree	Vice President	Ms. Carson Robbins	
Dr. Joseph Iannetti	Treasurer	Mr. Kevin West	
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