

North Schuylkill



District Newsletter

August 2015

Superintendent's Message

North Schuylkill School District strives to make the world a better place, by positively impacting each and every student through the educational process. Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." We live in an ever-changing society and quality education for our students is more important today than ever in our history.

Thanks to your support, the North Schuylkill School District continues "to graduate students who have a passion for learning and are empowered to be self-sufficient and successful." The new school year brings with it a fresh start, renewed energy, commitment and new opportunities for our students and families. Our staff continues to prepare for the challenges of educating and implementing the new learning standards for all children in our community. Our recent capital projects have permitted renovation and construction throughout our School District to offer all students safe and appropriate educational facilities.

The North Schuylkill School District has long enjoyed a reputation of providing excellent educational programs taught by a dedicated and professional staff with strong community support and enthusiasm. With the continued support of our community, the dedication of our staff and the hard work and commitment of our students, I am confident that we will be able to realize our mission and to prepare all students to successfully meet the challenges that lie ahead.

The contents of this newsletter are designed to provide you with critical information about the District and the coming school year, yet it may not answer all your questions. We welcome your questions and your input as members of the Spartan Community. If I personally can be of help, please don't hesitate to contact me. I am available to you at (570) 874-0466 or by emailing rackell@northschuylkill.net.

District Vision: The North Schuylkill School District will graduate students who have a passion for learning and are empowered to be self-sufficient and successful.

NSSD Comprehensive Plan

The North Schuylkill School District will be in the first phase of submitting our comprehensive plan. Comprehensive planning is a web-based framework for thoughtful data-driven and research-based district and school planning. Comprehensive planning facilitates communication and collaboration, promotes shared practices and resources, and ensures that every stakeholder is working toward common goals. Additionally, comprehensive planning assists local education agencies to create and manage a continuous comprehensive plan to submit to the Department in order to maintain compliance with state and federal mandates.

To help promote that shared practice and collaboration within the Spartan community, the North Schuylkill School District will be working with members of the community to be part of the planning team. We welcome input from all stakeholders. If you are interested in being part of the Comprehensive Planning Team, please email Dr. Robert Ackell at rackell@northschuylkill.net.

"Good is the Enemy of Great..."



- Dr. Robert Ackell
Superintendent of Schools

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Supervisor of Curriculum's Update

I am pleased to report that the 2015-2016 school year will deliver many new and exciting additions to our students. For instance, we have updated our wireless internet network and created a Technology Plan to continue with technological upgrades that will complement the curriculum. Along with that, students will be participating in the Writing - CDT's (Classroom Diagnostic Tools). The Pennsylvania CDT's are a set of online tools, divided by content area, designed to provide diagnostic information in order to guide instruction and remediation. The program is fully integrated in the Standards Aligned System (SAS) on the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) website. We have also updated our Math resources and purchased a new Math textbook series which includes online resources for students in grades 6-12. To increase the rigor in our English Language Arts and Reading classes, we purchased more advanced novels at the Jr. High level. To provide support, all staff will participate in a presentation on the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) model which strives to provide strategies to help differentiate the curriculum. As we continue to review data and create stronger data teams, we will be able to incorporate necessary strategies. In addition to the already very successful and productive AP courses we offer, we will bring back AP Chemistry and have added AP Probability and Statistics. Expanding North Schuylkill's AP Courses is an area we will continue to explore.

Aside from academic programs, we are proud to say a number of teachers and administrators will participate in meaningful trainings throughout the year. The first is the Penn Literacy Network. PLN is evidence based Pre K-12 professional development that is aligned to the State Standards and can improve student test results. In addition, administrators will also attend the annual conference from the PA Dept. of Education titled: Educational Practices that Work. It will provide diagnostic information in order to guide instruction and remediation. In order to get a better understanding of how to ensure the safety and security of our schools, administration participated in a Leadership Forum presented by Dr. Peter Langman on the topic of preventing school shooters.

Overall, it has been an extremely productive summer. We feel very fortunate to be able to provide all of these technological advances, instructional programs, and opportunities for teachers' professional growth. Thank you for your continued support. We want our students to receive the very best educational experience. North Schuylkill has terrific schools, but we are committed to continually improve.

I look forward to the start of the school year and continuing to work with the school community to ensure that our students are successful.



- Kimberly Groody

Supervisor of Curriculum & Federal Programs

Safety and Security

While facility improvements are critical, please know that we are dedicated to school safety and security as well. We are committed to ensuring that our students feel physically and emotionally safe at school. We will continue to make refinements and updates to our procedures in each building.



Business Office—New Location

Curriculum Maps—PDE SAS

Teachers have been working very hard to create the best curriculum maps for each subject. Our curriculum is aligned to the PA Core Standards and includes the resources needed for students to be successful. Please visit our website in the near future for the posting of our maps using the PDE SAS website.

Act 126 Requirements

As of January 2, 2013, **Act 126** requires that all school entities who have direct contact with children complete a three hour training every five years on child abuse recognition and mandated reporting. We will be offering this again at NS for new teachers, parents, coaches, etc. during the Fall of 2015. Please see our website or contact Mike Evans—mevans@northschuylkill.net if interested.

Business Office New Location

The North Schuylkill School District Business Office is now located behind the elementary building. There is a separate entrance towards the back of the building. The Business Manager, Payroll Clerk, Transportation Secretary, Purchasing Agent and Child Account Secretary are located in this office. The public can enter at this entrance for paying taxes and for central registration

Cardinal Brennan

Open House— Former Cardinal Brennan Campus

On Saturday, September 5, the North Schuylkill School District will be conducting an Open House of the former Cardinal Brennan campus.

Residents of the North Schuylkill Community and Alumni of Cardinal Brennan are encouraged to visit the campus and tour the buildings that day from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m..

Coming Events:

- ◆ 1st Day of School
Monday, August 31
- ◆ Meet the Teacher
Grades K—3
Wednesday, August 26
5:00-7:00 p.m.
- ◆ Meet the Teacher
Grades 4—6
Thursday, August 27
5:00-7:00 p.m.
- ◆ 7th Grade Orientation
and 9th Grade Visitation
Thursday, August 27
1:00-3:00 p.m.
- ◆ Jr./Sr. High School
Meet the Teacher
Wed., September 2
5:00-7:00 p.m.

School Board Meetings:

The North Schuylkill Board of Education meets the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM in the Large Group Instruction room located at the Junior-Senior High School. Committee Meetings occur the third Wednesday of every month at 7:00 PM. Please check local newspapers for changes to the schedule and special sessions.



Former Cardinal Brennan High School

NSSD Campus Buzzed with Activity All Summer

The excitement is building as the renovation project comes to an end. It is amazing how much progress was made in a few months. Below are just a few pictures. Please visit www.northschuylkill.net to view more pictures and to stay in touch with the great things that are happening in our schools.



Monthly Parent Involvement Opportunities

There will be a different Parent Involvement presentation each month during the 15-16 school year. Topics each month will vary. We invite all to attend! The first presentation will be on navigating and creating accounts on the CSIU parent portal. It will be held on Wednesday, September 30 from 6:00—8:00 p.m. in the Jr./Sr. High School Large Group Instruction Room.

2015-2016 State Testing Dates & Letter from the Pennsylvania Dept. of Education

PSSA Testing Windows:

English Language Arts (ELA) April 11–15, 2016
Math April 18–22, 2016
Science April 25–29, 2016

Keystone Exams Testing Windows:

Winter, January 6–20, 2016
Spring, May 16–27, 2016

The State Board of Education approved the new PSSA cut scores for our students as the next step in a process that began several years ago. Now, as we prepare to receive official student and district PSSA data in the coming weeks it is important to remember a few things:

1. The PA Core Standards that were adopted in 2013 were expected to be much more rigorous.
2. The PSSAs in English Language Arts and Mathematics administered this past spring were comprised solely of the new, more challenging standards.
3. Our new, more rigorous standards have resulted in lower standardized test scores, particularly in Mathematics.

It is important to note that these anticipated results represent a snapshot in time of student progress on a more rigorous assessment. The PA Core standards that were adopted in 2013 set the bar high, purposefully, in order to better prepare our students to be college and career ready when they graduate, and be successful in the 21st century work force. Our students haven't changed, but the assessment has.

At PDE we understand there are secondary impacts of these scores, and we're committed to helping you --- the state's educators, school administrators, and stakeholders -- in improving student achievement and communicating the new assessments and the results in your communities. Further, I assure you that we understand that standardized test results should not be the sole indicator of a student's or school's success, and will be part of a larger conversation on accountability, and how we best serve our students.

Pedro A. Rivera, Secretary of Education—Department of Education

District Contact:

Please feel free to contact the NSSD at any time!

NSSD

15 Academy Lane
Ashland, PA 17921
(570) 874-0466

Dr. Robert Ackell, Superintendent
rackell@northschuylkill.net

Merri Lynn Craig, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent
mcraig@northschuylkill.net

Robert Amos, Business Manager
ramos@northschuylkill.net

Kimberly Groody, Supervisor of Curriculum and Federal Programs
kgroody@northschuylkill.net

Knute Braford, Supervisor of Special Education
kbrayford@northschuylkill.net

Ashley Palubinsky, Assistant Supervisor of Special Education
apalubinsky@northschuylkill.net

Mark Andrewcavage, Coordinator of Computer Services and Technology
mandrewcavage@northschuylkill.net

Frank Brennan, Director of Buildings and Grounds
fbrennan@northschuylkill.net

James Gross, Athletic Director
jgross@northschuylkill.net

North Schuylkill School District

15 Academy Lane
Ashland, PA 17921

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North Schuylkill School District Board Members:

Charles Hepler—President & I.U. Representative, **Roy Green**—Vice President, **Raymond Reichwein**—Treasurer, **Suzanne O'Neill**—Legislative Liaison, **Thomas Fletcher**, **Douglas Gressens**, **Mark Kessler**, **Janine Simms**, **Glenn Weist**, **Jim Caravan**—Solicitor, **Merri Lynn Craig**—Secretary

