

Dr. Seuss Night 2010



The Penn-Delco Education Association and the Penn-Delco School District hosted another successful Dr. Seuss Night on March 2nd. An estimated 800 students and parents came out to enjoy an evening of games, music and activities.

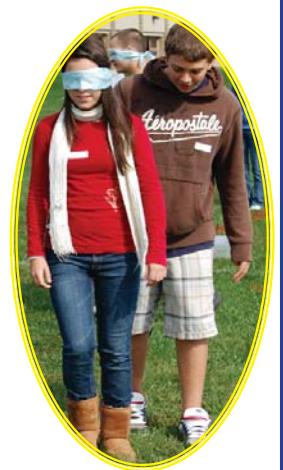
Freshman Academy

Sun Valley implemented a Freshman Academy for the 2009-2010 school year. One wing in the high school has been dedicated specifically to 9th grade core classes, which include English, Math, Social Studies and Science.

The Academy was developed with a focus on improving grades and teaching students the expectations within the high school. Activities are centered around collaboration, leadership and camaraderie among freshmen students. The Academy also provides positive reinforcement that rewards students for making wise decisions and performing well.

“The Freshman Academy contributes to achievement by effectively supporting students as they transition from middle to high school,” stated 9th Grade English Teacher Mrs. Lauren Schneider. “The Freshman Academy teachers work diligently as a team to identify and address student need, enhancing their academic, extra-curricular, and social success.”

Freshman Gianna Belgiorno noted, “I like the Freshman Academy because it’s like a community. All of the students know most of the teachers because all the teachers are in the same hallway. It’s really helped in getting to know Sun Valley.”



Students participate in a 9th Grade team-building exercise

2nd Annual Technology Expo - Thursday, March 11th

Penn-Delco will host our 2nd Annual Technology Expo on Thursday, March 11th from 5:00-8:00 p.m. at Sun Valley High School. The entire community is invited to learn and see how our teachers and students make meaningful use of technology to enhance their academic experience and make learning more relevant to their lives.

Students and faculty will be on hand to demonstrate the latest educational technology used in our District to better prepare the children of today to become more skilled citizens of tomorrow.

A few of the technology items that will be on display are:

- Digital Music
- Wikispaces
- Blogging
- Interactive Promethean Boards
- Computer-Aided Drafting
- Green Screen Technology
- Podcasting
- Much, much more!!



From the Superintendent



Dear Residents:

Over the past few years the Penn-Delco School District has made substantial investments in educational technology. In addition to increasing the number of computers and laptops available for student use, the district has purchased an impressive amount of

Dr. George Steinhoff instructional technologies that can infuse real 21st century skills into the learning process. Still, simply purchasing cutting-edge technologies lacks merit without making purposeful use of these tools to improve learning. To that end, our staff has been utilizing the technologies in ways that are meaningful and relevant to students. From blogs, podcasts, interactive whiteboards, digital music applications...you name it, our students and staff are doing remarkable things with the latest technology. I believe parents and residents in our district deserve to see the process, products, and promise of our investments in technology. As such, I encourage you to visit the district's 2nd annual technology expo which will be held on March 11th at Sun Valley High School. Most adults will be amazed at what so many of the next generation can accomplish with these tech tools.

While it is critical that the students of today have access to technology vital to their future, I remain cognizant of the fact that no computer program or device can take the place of a teacher dedicated to outstanding practice. For years some "experts" have said that computers will be able to replicate much of what teachers do in the classroom. I don't buy it. I can't imagine any technology that can take the place of a teacher who brings dry subject matter to life, makes learning meaningful, uses proven best practices to teach lessons, and simply cares enough to do all it takes to improve student achievement. The essential qualities that make an exceptional teacher can never be replaced by a computer, but technology can indeed make learning more relevant to the digital generation that we serve.

Going forward, the Penn-Delco district will surely invest in technologies that improve our student's academic experience and performance, but we will do so by staying first and foremost focused on the most important teaching tool of all – an outstanding educator dedicated to inspiring students towards high levels of academic achievement.

As always, I appreciate your continued support for our district.

Sincerely,
George Steinhoff, Ed.D.

300!!!

In bowling, it's a perfect score. In history, it's the number of Spartans who fought at the Battle of Thermopylae. But to Sun Valley Girls basketball coach Frank Ridpath, the number 300 has a meaning all its own...victories.

Mr. Ridpath recorded his 300th career victory on January 15th. Amassing an average record of 16-6 over the past 18 years, he has been at the helm of the Sun Valley squad for 10 years.

"I think this record and my success is a tribute to the talented girls I've had playing for me over the years," stated a modest Coach Ridpath.

"Frank puts in the time to be successful and his teams over the years have shown how the work pays off," stated Sun Valley Athletic Director Mr. Brian Trotter. "Frank has coached both boys and girls on the high school level, which further shows how much of an impact he has had on his student-athletes."



Coach Frank Ridpath (photographed with the Sun Valley Girls Varsity Basketball Team) recorded his 300th career victory on January 15th.

Hope for Haiti

The Penn-Delco community of students and teachers conducted a "Hope for Haiti" fundraising drive to assist over 2 million people left homeless after a tragic earthquake devastated Haiti. The District is proud to announce that over \$10,300 was raised and will be donated to Doctors Without Borders, an international medical humanitarian organization. The primary source of contributions came from the sales of Hope for Haiti T-shirts.

The fundraiser, spearheaded by elementary foreign language teacher Mr. Sean Capkin, developed quickly. "I was impressed and moved by how many of our elementary students were aware of the Haiti earthquake and the crisis Haitians are facing," stated Mr. Capkin.



Sun Valley High School Principal Thomas Jakubczyk and students Justin Choate and Britanie Seng present a ceremonial check to Doctors Without Borders

Aston Elementary School Named PA School of Character...Again!

Congratulations to the faculty and staff of Aston Elementary School. For the second consecutive year, the school has been named a Pennsylvania State School of Character (PSOC) by the Center for Leadership and Ethics. The PSOC program recognizes schools or districts that excel in exemplifying the Character Education Partnership's (CEP) Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education and demonstrate an outstanding character education initiative that yields positive results in student behavior, school climate, and academic performance.

To be eligible for the award, schools have to be engaged in a character education program for a minimum of three full years. They are also required to submit a 7-page narrative that explains how their school's character education initiative exemplifies the Eleven Principles, as well as a 25-page portfolio that provides supporting evidence for the narrative and a self-assessment score sheet using the Quality Standards that shows the results of their self-assessment. Aston began their award winning program back in 1996.



Aston added several new initiatives to their program this year. The new GameDay/Recess Menu Program provides more alternative games at recess to help make their playground a safer environment. A student cafeteria video was also developed by students, Aston Elementary School Counselor William Reaume and other staff members to demonstrate proper behavior when entering the cafeteria, while in the cafeteria and lining up to return to class. A school bus video to demonstrate proper behavior at the bus stop, on the bus, while leaving the bus in the morning, and also when waiting in the bus line at the end of the school day is now being created with a number of our students starring in the video.

"I am most proud of the effort of our staff, students, and support of our parents, as we continue the voyage to develop students, not only well versed in the art of learning, but also as people of character," stated Principal Gary Bender.

A Quick Glance Ahead...

3/11	District Technology Expo
3/13	SAT Testing at Sun Valley
3/15	Interim Progress Reports Mailed
3/18-20	Sun Valley Spring Musical (Bye Bye Birdie)
3/29-4/5	Spring Recess
4-12-5/7	PSSA Testing
4/14	End of Third Quarter
4/23	Report Cards Issued

A complete listing of District events and activities are available on the Penn-Delco calendar located on our website at www.pdsd.org.

From the School Board President



Anthony Ruggieri

Dear Residents:

Penn-Delco enjoyed a very successful 2009. The progress and great academic achievement made will likely continue into 2010. In this newsletter I wanted to touch a little on some of the accomplishments your Board of School Directors has achieved over the last year or two. As you know, we have the daunting task of ensuring a quality educational environment for our children, while being mindful of the tough economic times that have

descended upon us. We must be transparent in our decisions as they pertain to board governance, and more importantly, be fiscally responsible in the ways we utilize your tax dollars. I can assure you that our school board, under my leadership, is committed to this objective.

Our Board has been proactive in addressing the following issues:

1. Over the past two years, we have approved new collective bargaining agreements for our employees, all of which were fair and reasonable to all parties.
2. The Northley Middle School lobby and pool have been completely renovated, making it more aesthetically pleasing for all those in the community who enjoy it.
3. The district refinanced several bonds for a cost savings of more than a half-million dollars, allowing the board to redirect more funds to instructional programs.
4. We have made substantial progress in updating all of our board policies.
5. We have renegotiated many prior vendor contracts, bringing them into compliance with district policies and the expectations of good governance.
6. The board approved the purchase of new band uniforms and continues to make significant investments in our performing arts programs.
7. A paperless form of board governance has been adopted, allowing us to more efficiently govern district business and provide the public with greater access to board agendas, minutes and other documents.
8. We have secured and allotted more than \$300,000 in technology grants to upgrade district technology.
9. Exterior surface drainage issues at Coebourn Elementary School have been rectified.
10. Last but certainly not least, the Board has approved the installation of new software that allows parents to access and electronically deposit money into their child's food service account.

These are just a few of the accomplishments the Board has achieved while keeping student needs first within an especially challenging economic environment.

In closing, I want to wish everyone a happy and productive year going forward.

Sincerely,
Anthony Ruggieri

A Pair of Penn-Delco Teachers Form A Non-profit Organization to Fund Student Travel

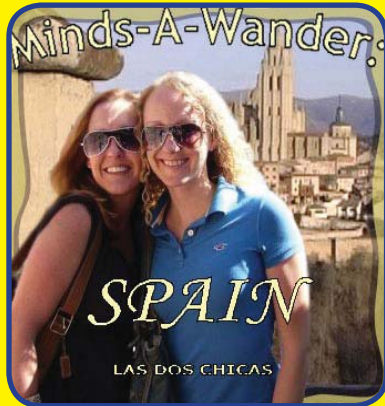
Traveling abroad can be one of the most exciting adventures a student experiences. For two Penn-Delco Foreign Language teachers, they decided to take their passion for travel from the streets of Europe to the classrooms of America and make it easier for their students to do the same. Northley Middle School teacher Erica Mier and Sun Valley High School teacher Jill Bednar have produced films intended to share their recent experiences in Spain and Canada in an educational format that is not only mindful of its intended audience, but will also provide financial assistance for students to travel.

Las Dos Chicas, the name of Mrs. Mier's and Mrs. Bednar's corporation, is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization that funds students to participate in study abroad programs. Their goal is to use the profits from educational films they produce to create an endowment fund which will help students who desire to study and/or volunteer abroad. Their mission is to promote cultural awareness through education, while demonstrating similarities across all of humanity and inspiring students across the United States to experience the world through travel.

"Study abroad had such a profound impact on my life and how I see myself as a citizen of the world," stated Mrs. Bednar. "My mind was opened to the beauty and value of differences among people. My goal is to get passports in the hands of as many students as I can and to make study abroad travel a reality for them."

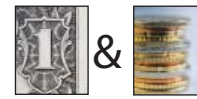
"I love traveling and really wanted to show my students different places I'd been through the education videos that were available; however, I was always so frustrated when we'd receive them," stated Mrs. Mier. "I remember thinking, if I, who love to travel, am put off by these films, imagine how my 13 year old viewers were feeling."

"Minds-A-Wander: Spain" is a thirty minute film that takes viewers on a journey across Spain through the heart of Castille, visiting Madrid, Segovia, Salamanca and Valladolid. The two teachers, who also appear in and narrate the film, share insight from their week-long visit overseas. In addition to the film, the DVD also includes bonus features that provide a behind the scenes look at typical aspects of Spanish living. Mrs. Mier and Mrs. Bednar intend to produce additional educational DVDs highlighting other countries as they visit them. They plan to release their second project this spring, which was filmed in Quebec, Canada.



Jill Bednar and Erica Mier

From the Business Office



Proposed Budget Information

The Board of School Directors adopted a resolution on January 26th not to exceed the Act 1 index for the 2010-2011 budget. The District's Act 1 index is 3.4%. The Act 1 index was established to deliver property tax relief to every Pennsylvania homeowner. It protects taxpayers in every school district from extraordinary tax increases in the future. The proposed budget reflects several significant challenges this year, including health care premium increases and a dramatic increase in the District contribution to the Pennsylvania State Employee Retirement System (PSERS).

A budget presentation is scheduled for the March 23rd School Board Meeting. This presentation will offer more details concerning the budget process, revenue sources and expenditure costs. The final budget will not be approved until later in the school year.

PaySchools and Café Prepay

Making purchases has become a lot easier since Penn-Delco began offering the services of PaySchools and Café Prepay. Parents, students and community members can now create accounts and pay for items and activities on-line.

PaySchools allows customers to pay on-line for various services, such as Adult Education classes, swimming lessons and pool parties at the Northley Middle School. Currently the Class of 2010 is using PaySchools to collect dues, and plans to add tickets for musicals, sporting events, summer school and summer enrichment programs are in the works.

Penn-Delco felt that parents and students with busy schedules would welcome the convenience of an on-line payment system 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Financial information is not stored, easing the concerns of new users to internet purchasing and ensuring that transactions remain private and secure.

Café Prepay is available for all Penn-Delco students, a secure, on-line payment system that allows parents to add money to their child's lunch account and view student purchases on a daily basis. Subscribers simply select the Café Prepay option from the District website and create an account. Parents are then ready to view their child's purchase history and add money into their account via credit card.

Not only will parents no longer have to worry about lost checks or forgotten lunch money, but they will be able to identify what their children are purchasing at lunch. The system also provides users with an automatic low balance notification. For more information, please visit www.pdsd.org.

Penn-Delco School District

2821 Concord Road
Aston, PA 19014
610-497-6300
www.pdsd.org

Board of School Directors

Anthony Ruggieri, President
Kim Robinson, Vice-President
Brian Walker, Treasurer
A. Lewis Boughner
Carrie Gerding
Kathleen Ieradi
John O'Donnell
Kevin O'Neill
Kevin Tinsley

Superintendent of Schools

George Steinhoff, Ed.D.