



Boyertown

SPRING 2017

ESSENTIALS

To enable all students to succeed in a changing world.

BOYERTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Budgeting Guided by Core Values



Richard Faidley, Ed.D.
Superintendent

It is often said that change is the only constant. From how we work and play, to our culture and values, change affects us daily. To better prepare all our students, the Boyertown Area School District must continue to evolve, anticipate, and be open to changes that will afford our students the opportunity to succeed in a global

society. Yet, public schools are often criticized for not changing fast enough, or for not making the 'correct' changes. I believe that in our District, and generally throughout public education, you will discover many exciting examples of meaningful change, including more effective teaching practices, greater responsiveness to individual student needs, and an ever increasing use of advanced technology to not only keep pace, but to prosper. Staying ahead of the curve to meet the needs of students is a formidable challenge for every school district. And it is in large part budget-dependent.

In our state the pension crisis still looms large. There is disproportionate financial investment in school districts, a lack of meaningful charter school reform, and substantially increased costs in special services. The issues we face in Pennsylvania are compounded by the uncertainty of school reform and policy changes at the Federal level. Those are the realities my administration, the Board of School Directors, staff, and community must weigh in developing the District's 2017-2018 fiscal year budget. Fortunately, while change is constant, and sometimes confounding, we find reassurance rooted in our rock-solid core values that are worth repeating at this time:

- Safety and Well-Being
- Acceptance and Respect
- Communication and Collaboration
- Learning and Growth

These core values are the underpinning of all our work, including the budget process.

By way of an update on the budget, the administration and Board of School Directors continue to hold work sessions at which we hear from the community. This feedback is vital and every opinion expressed is valued and respected. Here are some key facts central to some of those discussions:

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Quiet on the Set: CMN Is Live

As the clocks throughout Colebrookdale Elementary School tick their way toward 2:45 p.m., teachers and students throughout the school begin to wrap up another day. However, in Room 102 the "Colebrookdale Morning News" (CMN) production team springs into high gear to prepare for the next day's broadcast.

The brainchild of Colebrookdale Elementary School principal, Mr. Michael Stoudt, and sixth grade teacher, Mrs. Susan Dennis, CMN, the school's daily news broadcast began in May 2016. Mrs. Dennis explains that CMN is owned and operated by the sixth grade students.

"The station has achieved voluntary student involvement of 75%," Mrs. Dennis says. "They have embraced their roles and take their jobs seriously."

Behind the Scenes

Although they record each broadcast the day before, there are still tasks for the students involved to complete the morning of each show. Morning preparation begins when the first student arrives at 8:25 a.m. The team goes live at the 8:45 a.m. bell. By 8:40, the producers are buzzing around



Members of the CMN production team (from left) Justice Ramsay, Aleeya Anousaya, and Brooke Eidle give Mr. Jason Powell from QVC an overview of the CMN studio.

their laptops, the week's anchors are in their stools and making final adjustments, and support technician, Jacob Benner, is ready to flip the switch to let the class know that CMN is on-air.

Justice Ramsay, Aleeya Anousaya, and Brooke Eidle are the daily broadcast's producers. They are

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Seniors Recognized as National Merit Finalists

The principal, Dr. Brett Cooper, of Boyertown Area Senior High is proud to announce that seniors Grayson Hamrick and Abigail Keebler have been recognized as National Merit Finalists in the 62nd annual National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) program.

These students were among the 1.6 million students who entered the 2017 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the 2015 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, which served as an initial screen of program entrants. A nationwide pool of 16,000 semifinalists were chosen in September, representing less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors. To advance to the finalist stage, semifinalists had to demonstrate an outstanding academic record, be endorsed and recommended by a high school official, write an essay, earn SAT scores that confirmed their performance on the qualifying test, and submit a detailed scholarship application including an essay, and information about participation and leadership in school and community activities.

"Boyertown Area Senior High School is very proud of Grayson and Abigail for their accomplishments both inside and outside of the classroom.

Their hard work and dedication towards academics and co-curricular/extra-curricular activities is an example of the perseverance they both exhibit in their daily routines," says Boyertown Area Senior High School Principal Dr. Brett Cooper. "We would like to both congratulate Grayson and Abigail on becoming National Merit Scholarship Finalist and wish them both continued success in this scholarship competition."

Both Grayson and Abigail are now eligible to compete for some 7,500 Merit Scholarships from the group of more than 15,000 finalists. Congratulations to both Grayson and Abigail on this amazing accomplishment.



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The Boyertown Area School District Newsletter is published by the Boyertown Area School District.

For questions or comments regarding this publication, please contact Kristine Parkes at Communications@Boyertownasd.org.

Alumni Spotlight: BASH Alum Looks Back on 100 Years

The Center at Spring Street in Boyertown celebrated a very special milestone for one of its beloved participants on February 28th. Mr. Charles Weller, (at right) who has lived to see 18 different presidents, beginning with Woodrow Wilson, celebrated his 100th birthday at a surprise party hosted by the Center. A week later, Mr. Weller laughs as his friends, still glowing from the birthday celebrations, come up to say hello and shake his hand.

Mr. Weller was born February 28, 1917, and graduated from Boyertown Area School District in 1934. He was a member of the last class to graduate from the borough's original high school building—there were a whopping 62 students in his graduating class. Compare that to the 508 students who graduated in 2016. In the early years of the 20th century, there were no school buses and cars were a rarity, so Mr. Weller had a long walk to get to school. The only sport offered was basketball.

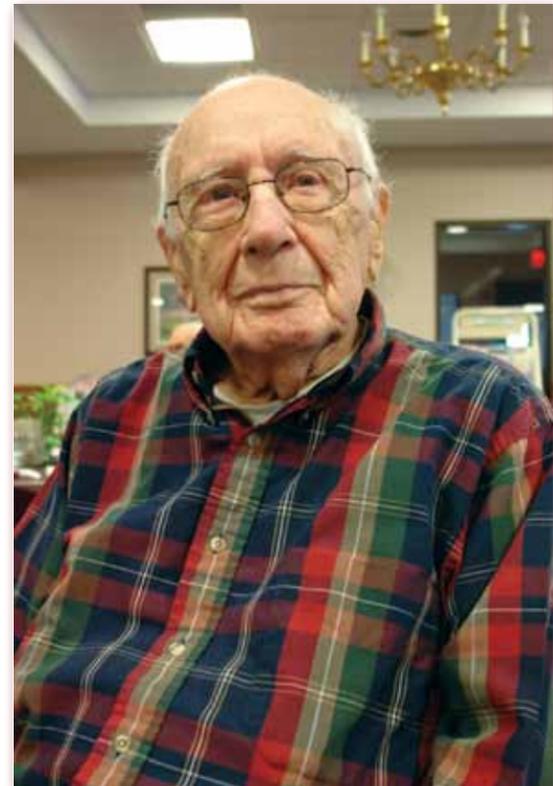
“What was Boyertown like back then?” Mr. Weller responds when asked. “It was an old Pennsylvania Dutch and German town. Just a plain old town.”

After graduating from Boyertown Area School District in 1934, Mr. Weller attended business school for a few months before signing on to a job with the Boyertown Burial Casket Company (BBCC) in 1935. The company, founded in 1893, became the second largest casket maker in the world and brought national and international attention to Boyertown. Early in the 20th century, as the iron mining and cigar industries in the area died, most of Boyertown's prosperity was due to the growth of the casket company. BBCC became the largest employer in the borough.

Mr. Weller worked at the BBCC for seven years and married his wife, Mildred, in December of 1941. They were married in the Catholic church in Boyertown and were photographed in the yard of his parents' house following the ceremony.

“She was a wonderful woman,” says Mr. Weller. “She was the boss of the house, and she kept me straight and legal. She did everything. She was an artist, a seamstress, and a painter; she knit; and boy, did she light up the dance floor.” The two had a long, happy marriage until her passing in 2012.

In January 1942, along with 40 other employees from the BBCC, Mr. Weller joined the military. Like the rest of Boyertown and the country, the casket company went into high gear to support the war effort. Upon being discharged from the service in January 1946, Mr. Weller returned to Boyertown and to his job at BBCC, where he worked as a



photographer and had his own studio and lab. He continued to work for the BBCC until he retired in 1985.

Mr. Weller has traveled internationally on a few different occasions. During a trip to England, while in the city of Bath, he noticed there was an establishment called Weller Pub in town. He remembers with fondness enjoying a drink at his namesake establishment. He loved to play golf, mostly locally, but he also played a game at the St. Andrews course in England.

He and Mildred had one son, who attended Boyertown as well, and their two granddaughters now live in New Hampshire.

“No date with an angel last night, Charlie?” a fellow senior at the Center teases him.

“I heard them knock,” he responds. “But I was too tired to answer. Maybe next year.”

At 100 years old, Mr. Weller still drives his own car and lives on his own. He's sharp as a tack. He likes to read and play with his computer. He enjoys spending time with the people at the Center and hearing their stories and everything they have to share about their livelihoods. But for now, he has to get home, clean up a little bit, wash his clothes, and get some sleep.

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Superintendent Message

- Tax millage: Our rate is 24.27 in both Berks County and Montgomery County. For comparison purposes, in Berks County the Boyertown Area School District has the 17th lowest tax rate of the 18 county school districts. And in Montgomery County we have the 17th lowest tax rate of the 22 school districts.
- Per pupil spending: In Berks and Montgomery County, our rate (\$13,041) and is the 3rd lowest out of the 18 Districts in Berks County, where the average is \$14,449. Our rate is the lowest among all 22 Montgomery County districts.

The disparity in per-pupil spending means, in one respect, that many districts in Berks and Montgomery County invest millions of dollars more in instructional resources for their students. It also means that we have to be very careful when considering any reductions because of the adverse impact on programs, which directly affects students. However, given

the spending comparisons, it is remarkable, and a credit to our staff, that we continue to achieve outstanding student achievement results. And we strive for continuous improvement.

The District administration along with the Board of School Directors are faced with difficult decisions. I want nothing more than to do what is right for our students and community and to continue to experience the wonderful programmatic and academic offerings currently available. I want to lead and continue to make progress in our District mission: to enable all students to succeed in a changing world. I urge members of our community to engage with us, to focus on the many positives in the Boyertown Area School District, and help us continue to change for the better, for the benefit of every student. As always, your opinions matter, so do not hesitate to contact me at rfaidley@boyertownasd.org or 610-369-7402. Thank you.

Pine Forge Elementary School Celebrates THINK Week

Pine Forge Elementary School recently participated in THINK Week, a five-day celebration of the school-wide behavior initiative THINK. Designed to foster an environment conducive for optimal learning, administrators and teachers developed the THINK initiative to help students remember appropriate school behaviors. The acronym reminds school community members to Take care of each other with kind words and emotions; Help keep our school quiet and orderly; I follow staff directions; Need to be attentive and ready to learn; and Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.

Throughout the week, the entire Pine Forge Elementary School family participated in activities and projects inspired by one, or more, principles of THINK per day. At the end of the week, Pine Forge Elementary School held its first ever Pine Forge THINKers award ceremony, which honored students who modeled one or more of the THINK principles.

The first ever Pine Forge THINKers recipients (at right) included kindergarten students William Parmley and Michael Wydrzynski; first grade

students Kaylee Laboy and Janelle Tuck; second grade students Andrew Jani and Tessa Wolfe; third grade students Ellie Moser and Christianna Burkle; fourth grade students Erin Kennedy, Makena Zawislak, and Kendra Holiday; fifth grade students Kailyn Lawless and Lauren Bosler; and sixth grade students Alyssa Heffner and Keiyana Mosley.

The assembly also featured an exciting video directed and produced by Pine Forge Elementary School students and staff. The video showed students exhibiting kind deeds and good behavior, clearly THINKing about their actions.

“The best part of the week was seeing so many of our students setting great examples of what THINK truly looks like at Pine Forge Elementary School,” said Principal Mr. Stephan Pron during the culminating assembly. “I am so proud of each and every one of our students.”

It’s safe to say, THINK has proved to be a great way to remind students to truly think about their actions.



Art Club Fosters Community

At Junior High East, the After-School Art Club is not just for making art. From painting and sculpting to communicating and collaborating, this unique club provides an opportunity for students to expand upon their artistic abilities while creating a community of artists across the District.

Every Monday and Tuesday, when classes are done for the day, Junior High East art teachers Mr. Steven Fegely and Mrs. Shannon Diaz welcome advanced art students to stay after school for two extra hours of studio time. Students can work on class projects, create their own independent art, or gain experience on the pottery wheel. The after-school club time also allows Mr. Fegely and Mrs. Diaz the opportunity to provide one-on-one instruction to students. In fact, the club is so popular, it is not uncommon to see students from Boyertown Area Senior High School participating, as well.

“We are excited to offer the After-School Art Club to our students,” says Mrs. Diaz. “It is a wonderful way for students to develop an appreciation for the profession of teaching and to build a community. Every year, we have students come in to job-shadow us, and every year the students who are pursuing an art teacher career were part of the After-School Art Club at some point.”

The After-School Art Club also helps to raise

money for the Make-A-Wish Foundation through Junior High East’s annual Bear-A-Thon. Each year, Mr. Fegely selects three to four students to create a portrait poster of the child receiving his or her wish. The one-of-a-kind poster is then signed by all Bear-A-Thon participants and presented to the Make-A-Wish family.

“Providing students with a place to embrace their creativity and imagination is what the After-School Art Club is all about,” says Mr. Fegely. “We are laid-back. We listen to music, eat snacks, and make wonderful art! There is no right or wrong. Students can take positive risks by trying something new like the pottery wheel or practicing their painting techniques. It is truly amazing to see what our students are capable of.”

Ninth grade students Alyssa Kane and Mikayla Ridge, who are currently working on the Make-A-Wish portrait poster, both agree that the club offers many benefits.

“I like to have extra time to work on my school projects as well as independent projects,” says Mikayla.



Ninth grade students Alyssa Kane (at left) and Mikayla Ridge work with Mr. Steven Fegely on collaborative piece.

Alyssa, agreeing with Mikayla, added, “The After-School Art Club gives us more time to ask for advice and have one-on-one instruction time.”

With the variety of activities to participate in, ninth grade student Mackenzie Pope could not pick just one favorite. “I enjoy using the pottery wheel, painting, and drawing,” she said with a smile.

Kindness Is Contagious

Many elementary schools across the country have student councils that participate in Random Acts of Kindness Week. However, at Washington Elementary School, a Kindness Council has replaced the student-council model. Like the student council model, members of the Kindness Council are elected by their peers. There are 11 members, and each classroom in grades four through six has its own representative.

During February, the Kindness Council organized a schoolwide food and essentials drive to benefit Boyertown Area Multi-Services. Fourth grade teachers and Kindness Council co-advisors Mrs. Juliee Carns and Ms. Jeannine Wightman explain that Washington Elementary School has been collecting items for the nonprofit for 15 years.

“The students truly embrace the spirit of what we are doing,” Ms. Wightman says. “They can’t wait to hear the daily count.”

To add a bit of excitement, the Kindness Council added a competitive aspect to the collection drive: the classroom that brought in the most items would win the Shenanigans Award, which gives the class the opportunity to choose what fun mischief will happen to their principal, Mr. Christopher Iacobelli. The winning class got to choose between

mummifying him in toilet paper, making him camp out for the night in the school lobby, making him serve lunch to students for the day, or having him host the winning classroom outside for an extra recess one day.

To ensure that a variety of items would be donated, Kindness Council members came up with fun names for collection days, such as Throw Away Thursday, which encouraged students to bring in disposable items such as toilet paper, tissues, and paper towels.

There was a lot of excitement on the final day of the food drive, with Mrs. Monica McGrow’s third grade class bringing in 151 items on that day alone! The Kindness Council was thrilled to surpass its goal of 2,500 items donated, for a total of 2,539.

With the assistance of several volunteers, the Kindness Council delivered their donation to Boyertown Area Multi-Services.

And the winners of the Shenanigans Award? Mrs. Kimberly Seiz’s fifth grade class! The class decided on an extra recess hosted by Mr. Iacobelli. They plan to collect their prize when the weather gets warmer and they can go outside.



Kindness Council members (standing, L-R) Julia Derstine, fifth grade; Connor Heil, sixth grade; Antonio Zaffino, fourth grade; and (kneeling, L-R) Ashley Haring and Lauren Wensel, both fourth grade pose with just a few of the donations.

New Hanover Elementary School Introduces Legos After School STEM Program

If you ask elementary-age students “What do you want to be when you grow up?” the list will be limited only by their imaginations. From doctors and police officers to pilots and astronauts, the many possibilities reflect that they are full of ambition. Over time, however, the once limitless list will narrow, influenced largely by what careers the students have encountered—or not—through their families, education, and the media. In an effort to increase Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) career awareness, New Hanover Elementary School has introduced the Legos After School STEM Program.

The new three-week program invites fourth grade students to stay after school once a week to imagine, build, explore, and collaborate using Lego Education WeDo sets. The sets challenge students to seek answers and design creative solutions using Lego pieces and an included computer-based curriculum. In pairs of two, students act as scientists and engineers, coding and building robots using the Lego kits and iPads provided by New Hanover Elementary School’s Parent Teacher Community Association (PTCA).

“It’s important that we provide opportunities for our students to learn about STEM careers and concepts,” says New Hanover Elementary School principal Mr. Brian Rohn. “Thanks to our dedicated PTCA, we are excited to offer the Lego After School STEM Program to interested fourth grade students.”

Club facilitators, fourth grade teacher Ms. Bethany Jordan and third grade teacher Mrs. Wendy

Gilbert, agree that the students learn much more than how to code a robot through this program.

“The Legos After School STEM Program fosters creativity and critical problem solving skills,” states Ms. Jordan. “The program’s hands-on approach builds confidence in all of our students, empowering them to choose a career path they might not otherwise know about.”

Mrs. Gilbert, who has been teaching in the District for 30 years, is also thrilled to offer this unique program to students. “The Legos After School STEM Program is a valuable way to give students a hands-on approach to working together. There is no failure. Students work through problems confidently and collaboratively. This program provides a safe risk-taking environment where students are encouraged to take risks and build from both their mistakes and successes.”

“Everyone can learn something from this program,” Mrs. Gilbert concluded. “I’m learning right along with our students.”

Fourth grade students Lauren Grim and Sylvia Tex both agreed that this program will help them discover new careers.

“My favorite part of the Legos After School program is working with a partner,” said Lauren. Sylvia was quick to agree. While both Lauren and Sylvia are still



Fourth grade students Megan Stenn (left) and Emily Gates (right) are having blast participating in the Legos After School STEM Program.

deciding what they want to be when they grow up, they are now both open to becoming an engineer or a scientist.

Approximately 76 fourth grade students participate in the after-school program. To make it available to all fourth grade students, New Hanover Elementary School is offering three sessions of the program.

The Boyertown Area School District is proud to offer unique programs that empower students to reach for the stars.

Progress Dinner Celebrates Community

Boyertown was in the spotlight at the Tri-County Area Chamber of Commerce’s annual Boyertown Area Progress Dinner. This annual event highlights growth and progress taking place in the Boyertown Area School District.

A highlight of the evening has always been the debut of a student-produced video highlighting growth in the community. This year’s video, *Indiana Jones and the Crusade of Progress*, was produced by Boyertown Class of 2017 students Brandon Karcewski, Shawn Corkran, Alex Loughin, Michael Raineri, and Erin Morrell. The video highlighted Boyertown’s 150th Anniversary Celebration, the Boyertown State Theatre, and the Clock Tower at Good Shepherd United Church of Christ. The students worked with the organization involved with

each to create a clever video showcasing a unique aspect of the landmark or event and what it brings to the Boyertown community.

Superintendent Dr. Richard Faidley introduced the video to the audience of more than 125 community members, saying, “Whatever your role in the community, thank you for coming out tonight. Boyertown is a unique and special place. I want to thank you for the opportunity to continue to serve the community. I look forward to working with each of you to continue to build, create connections, and work hard on behalf of our students.”



BASH production team (from left) Alex Loughin, Brandon Karcewski, Erin Morrell, Shawn Corkran, and Michael Raineri celebrate another successful video.

Leidy Rhoads & Frank and Amanda Hartman Educational Funds Available

If you have a student or are a student graduating this June, consider this:

Boyertown Area School District students, depending on where they live in the District, are eligible to receive funding from two different educational funds. To qualify for a Leidy Rhoads Fund grant, the student must be a resident of the Borough of Boyertown. To qualify for a grant from the Frank and Amanda Hartman Fund, the student must be a resident of the Borough of Boyertown, Colebrookdale Township, or the townships of Douglass-Berks or Douglass-Montgomery.

Students who satisfy either of these residency requirements, should fill out the application (which can be used for both funds), and return it with an official transcript, a description of career objectives, a copy of a parent’s latest federal tax return, and a copy of a Student Aid Report or FAFSA info (if completed). Completed applications should be mailed to the P.O. Box listed on the application. Application can be found by visiting the Boyertown Area Senior High’s website and clicking on Resources -> School Counseling -> Scholarship Information.

The deadline to apply this year is May 5, 2017.

Book Club Enables Students to Take Control of Their Own Learning

A new club at Junior High West is inspiring students to take control of their own learning and dive deeper into the critical analysis of literature.

The Enrichment Book Club is a new program for seventh-grade students developed by language arts teacher Mr. Jonathon Kalejta. While it's not uncommon to see students in his classroom flipping through the pages of a book or working on a writing assignment, Mr. Kalejta saw the club as an opportunity to engage with students who possess an accelerated aptitude for literature beyond the classroom.

"I joined the Enrichment Book Club to further my reading skills," says student Laura O'Connor.

Working like a typical book club, students select a book, read an assigned number of pages or chapters, and meet weekly to discuss what they have read. During each discussion, stu-

dents are challenged to think critically about their assigned reading. While Mr. Kalejta facilitates the discussion, the Enrichment Book Club is a student-driven, cooperative learning experience.

Currently, the students are reading The City of Ember by Jeanne DuProu, a post-apocalyptic science fiction novel, and enjoying challenging their friends to think critically about the characters, author, and storyline.

"I really like talking to people who engage in a conversation and enjoy talking in a group," says member Riley Charles.

Book Club members Ethan Josuweit and Mason Keane both agree that the club is a fun, and a great way to relieve stress at the end of the day.

While the Enrichment Book Club is still new to Junior High West, Mr. Kalejta is proud of his students and their dedication to learning.



Mr. Kalejta and Enrichment Book Club members pose for a picture. Pictured: Laura O'Connor, Riley Charles, Carlee Strunk, Ethan Josuweit, Hannah Monger, Mason Keane, Conor McCartney. Not pictured: Elle Stehman.

Quiet on the Set: CMN Is On-Air Continued from page 1

model stands in front of the green screen, it looks like she is standing on the beach performing her yoga pose. The daily yoga pose segment is the favorite of Mrs. Sue Groff's first grade students (pictured at right).

There is another segment that is different depending on the day. For example, on Mondays it's Mindset Monday, which involves a skit written by Brooke that demonstrates a student having a "growth mind-set." Brooke explains that having a growth mind-set means that you are open to new things.

Other members of the CMN team include Spark-O-Cam Technician Shane Weinstein, YouTube Technician Kadin Ruyak, iMovie Technician Michael Ricci, and Support Technicians Matt Hudak and Harley Ingram.

For Mrs. Dennis, the technicians have been a lifesaver. "Whenever I ask, the

students step right up to help," she says. "They are fearless to figure out a piece of equipment or technology and then teach me... They are great!"

Technical Difficulties Solved

For example, Mrs. Dennis explains that the CMN broadcast is not live because the school doesn't subscribe to a secure YouTube channel. Instead, the students shoot each broadcast as if it is live (as in no do-overs), and then Mrs. Dennis sends a link to CMN's private YouTube channel to every teacher in the building. When YouTube changed its setup for available processes over last summer, it took a bit of research to find out exactly how best to set things up to make the show available to all the classrooms.

"Kadin was my go-to person," Mrs. Dennis says. "He was familiar with YouTube and was very persistent in figuring out the new process for us."

A Visit from QVC

To help the students connect their work on CMN with that of professionals, a fan of CMN arranged for Mr. Jason Powell, a master control supervisor at QVC, to speak with the sixth grade class. Mr. Powell explained his current position with QVC, as well as his former job with Comcast SportsNet. He also spoke about his educational background and answered the students' questions. Mr. Powell shared photos of both QVC's and Comcast SportsNet's master control room and explained that it is the technical hub of a broadcast operation.

After speaking with the entire sixth grade, Mr. Powell was treated to a behind-the-scenes tour of CMN with each student explaining their role in



the production process. Before he left, Mr. Powell filmed an opening for the students to use in future broadcasts.

"I am impressed with the students' work and level of professionalism," Mr. Powell commented. "Their excitement for their work is contagious."

Boyertown Alumna Brings Message of Acceptance to Boyertown Elementary School

For the third year in a row, Boyertown Elementary School students welcomed singer-songwriter Ms. Stephanie Grace for an inspiring assembly about kindness and acceptance. Ms. Grace, a 2015 Boyertown Area Senior High School graduate, is passionate about raising awareness about bullying and travels the country performing upbeat assemblies that encourage a positive school environment.

This year, students and staff enjoyed a 45-minute assembly that had everyone in attendance singing and dancing along. Between singing original songs and covers of songs by artists such as Taylor Swift, Ms. Grace talked about what it takes for a school to be healthy and challenged students to consider what it looks like to be appreciated, accepted, acknowledged and cared for.

During each interactive assembly, she invited a few teachers to try something new and hula-hoop in front of the entire school, to show students that it's okay to try something new and to believe in themselves.

"I do assemblies all over, but performing in the Boyertown Area School District is special," says Ms. Grace. "I want students to realize that they can do anything they set their minds to. I never thought I could sing on stage, but if you believe in yourself and work hard, you can do anything, and part of that begins with a positive school environment."

"This is one of my favorite days of the year," says Boyertown Elementary School principal Mr. Craig Kehl. "Ms. Grace has such a positive message for us each year."

Ms. Grace and Boyertown Elementary School fourth grade student Landon Mathias.



Celebrating Read Across America

Boyertown Area School District joined with thousands of schools across the country in celebrating the National Education Association's 16th Annual Read Across America. The yearly event began in 1998 as a way to celebrate the legacy of prolific children's books author Dr. Seuss and encourage children to read. Since its creation, educators, parents, and students have embraced Read Across America and helped to turn it into one of the largest celebrations of its kind in the world. This year, all seven elementary schools across the Boyertown Area School District joined in.

Gilbertsville Elementary School got into the Read Across America spirit by hosting a week filled with Dr. Seuss-themed activities. To start the week off, Gilbertsville Elementary School held its annual door-decorating contest. Students and staff members were invited to participate in special themed days, such as What Pet Will You Get Day and Fox in Socks Day. Students had the option to try green eggs and ham at lunch and enjoyed a visit from the famous Cat in the Hat himself. Gilbertsville Elementary School wrapped up the exciting week with Community Reader Day. This highly anticipated event invited local community members, such as Superintendent Dr. Richard Faidley, to read their favorite books aloud to students.

Earl Elementary School held multiple reading-based activities to honor Dr. Seuss, including an appearance by The Cat in the Hat. The school invited members of Boyertown Area Senior High's National Honor Society to read Dr. Seuss books to students and to participate in Read Across America activities. Earl Elementary School also held "Stop, Drop, and Read!" moments: The organized reading breaks were sprinkled throughout the school day.

Joining in the celebration, Colebrookdale Elementary School hosted a school-wide competition as part of Read Across America. Students and faculty from kindergarten to sixth grade were challenged to read 300,000 pages in four weeks for a chance to turn Principal Mr. Michael Stoudt into a human ice cream sundae! Students were also invited to participate in spirit days like Crazy Hair Day and Dress Like Your Favorite Dr. Seuss Character Day. Guest readers joined in on the fun and visited classrooms for read-aloud activities. At the end of the week, students were thrilled to hear they had met their reading challenge, and they enjoyed turning Principal Mr. Stoudt into a human ice cream sundae, complete with a cherry on top! It was a sweet way to end an exciting week.

Pine Forge Elementary School kicked off its Read Across America celebration with a Dr. Seuss Mystery Cat in the Hat Challenge. One mystery faculty member dressed up as The Cat in the Hat, and students had to guess his or her secret identity. Throughout the week, students enjoyed a visit from local author and Pine Forge Elementary School parent, Mrs. Pamela Tuck. Teachers also used online videos to bring guest readers, such as author J.K. Rowling, into their classrooms. To end the week, the Pine Forge Elementary School family participated in lunchtime book swaps and grade-level assem-

blies at which Principal Mr. Stephan Pron presented a Principal's Challenge, encouraging students to collectively read for 100,000 minutes throughout the month of March. As the final bell rang on Friday afternoon, every student went home with a brand-new book in his or her backpack, thanks to the Pine Forge Elementary School Parent Teacher Association and Scholastic Books.

Washington Elementary School celebrated Read Across America with multiple reading-based activities. Throughout the week, students and teachers participated in a QR Code Search, which led them on an expedition through the school, seeking and solving reading questions. One of the most exciting events was the Teacher Swap! Students had to guess which teacher would be visiting their classroom for a fun read-aloud session. Students also enjoyed an action-based



Local author Ms. Danelle Matlack read Alfie the Allergic Alligator to first grade students at Boyertown Elementary School.

learning activity in the gym that was inspired by Dr. Seuss classics Hop on Pop and Oh, the Places You'll Go!. This fun activity promoted the importance of living a healthy lifestyle as well as actively reading. To conclude the weeklong celebration, Washington Elementary School held its annual Book Bingo.

Boyertown Elementary School celebrated Read Across America with weeklong reading-focused activities featuring Dr. Seuss works and characters. During the week, author and Gilbertsville resident Ms. Danelle Matlack presented her book, Alfie the Allergic Alligator. Ms. Matlack put on a fun interactive assembly, and the entire school enjoyed it. Students were also invited to participate in spirit days like The Cat in the Hat Day and The Foot Book Day. Students in third through sixth grade enjoyed a special Skype question and answer session with Mr. Dan Gutman, the author of the ever-popular My Weird School. In preparation for his visit, students were encouraged to read Gutman's books and prepare questions. Students also enjoyed book swaps and school-wide reading breaks. In culmination of a great week, guest readers visited the school to share their love for reading with Boyertown Elementary School students.

New Hanover Elementary School participated in Read Across America by inviting students to experience the fun in reading. Students ate green eggs



Fifth grade students (from left) Katie Macaluso, Payton McDonald, and Allison Roeder at Washington Elementary School got in the spirit of dressing



Over at Earl Elementary School National Honor Society student Reece Horne, senior at Boyertown Area Senior High helped Riley Reinboth and her kindergarten class celebrate Read Across America.

and ham in the cafeteria and dressed up for themed days. The students enjoyed Rhyme Distribution Day, sponsored by the New Hanover-Upper Frederick Elementary School Parents, Teachers, and Children Association (NHUF PTCA). Thanks to the group's generosity, each student received a free book. The school also hosted its first annual door-decorating contest. Together, teachers and students selected a favorite book as a theme to decorate their classroom door. To end the weeklong celebration, students participated in a Teacher Swap, where teachers read their favorite Dr. Seuss selections to students in other classrooms.

Boyertown Area School District is proud of all the schools for providing opportunities for students to improve upon their reading skills while also making great memories. As Dr. Seuss wrote, "The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."

BASH students helping the Community

As part of the Life Skills Support Program's career exploration component, Boyertown Area Senior High junior Lucas Bullock and seniors Trevor Kristoff and Alexis Shaner are volunteering at Boyertown Area Multi-Service. The students are helping in the food pantry, the office areas, the senior center, and the home-delivered-meal program.

"This career exploration will help the students with employability skills not found in the classroom as well as helping the community."

states Natalie Warren, work-study/transition assistant. "They love helping people and are excited about participating. It's a win-win for all involved."

Lucas, Trevor, and Alexis are also working with Boyertown Area Multi-Service on a project called Coupons for a Cause. This program involves cutting, totaling, and sorting coupons that are up to six months expired. The coupons are then sent to military families here and overseas to be used when shopping on base

to help make their hard-earned dollars go farther.

News from the Foundation for Boyertown Education

Giving Back to Community

Waste Management, Community Relations Manager, Patty Barthel presented a check to the Foundation for Boyertown Education. The check, presented in the amount of \$3,500, is part of the Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program (EITC). The Foundation for Boyertown Education will use this donation to fund innovative programming in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM).

Boyertown Oil & Propane, a division of the Rhoads Energy Family of Companies, knows the importance that education plays in the lives of

the children in our community. Boyertown Oil & Propane's Marketing Coordinator, Heather Stehman presented a check to the Foundation for Boyertown Education. The check, presented in the amount of \$1,000, is part of the Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program. The foundation will use this donation to fund innovative programming in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). Pictured at right are: Heather Stehman, Marketing Coordinator (left) and Tessi Melchior, Foundation Executive Director.



Helping Our Students Reach Their Goals

When you look at your child as he or she is today, imagine what services or supports will be needed to achieve their dreams tomorrow. In the Boyertown Area School District, planning for your child's transition from school to adult living, begins when your child turns 14. In an on-going commitment to providing all students with the best support and services as they transition out of high school, the District welcomed Mrs. Stacey Thierry as the new secondary transition coordinator for the 2016-2017 school year.

As the secondary transition coordinator, Mrs. Thierry works directly with students who are found eligible for an Individual Education Plan (IEP). An IEP is a plan or program developed to assist students who have a disability and are in need of specialized instruction and related services. Mrs. Thierry initiates meetings with students from both Junior High East and Junior High West to facilitate the collection of information such as career matchmaker results, career cruising activities, and other transition assessments to help students determine their personal goals. Then, Mrs. Thierry works closely with parents, administrators, teachers, and school counselors to determine the instruction program, goals, objectives, related services, supports for school personnel, and specially designed instruction to meet the need of each student.

These plans could include the kind of education and training a student may need, the type of job he/she might want, consideration for in-

dependent living, and opportunities to participate in both school and community activities.

Sophomore Dehleana Bartman is one of the many students with who Mrs. Thierry has worked.

"I cannot say enough nice things about Mrs. Thierry," states Dehleana's mother, Mrs. Donna Bartman. "We are very thankful for her assistance and guidance as Dehleana transitioned from junior high to senior high ... She puts the students first."

Mrs. Bartman explains that Dehleana wants to be a dolphin trainer, and Mrs. Thierry has helped Dehleana "set realistic goals, stay focused, and have confidence."

Mrs. Thierry serves as a liaison to identify appropriate accommodations for student success before and after they transition to adult life. She works with students on their interviewing skills, and provides opportunities for students to travel to local seminars like Berks County Transition Coordinating Council's Annual Employability and Transition Agency Expos.

Mrs. Thierry also works closely with the community cultivating unique learning opportunities for students. Some students will participate in mentoring opportunities at local businesses or colleges, while others will travel to other educational facilities to receive specialized instruction, such as the Berks Career Technology Center. The District partners with the Berks Career Technology Center to provide specific skill training for those students who have the

aptitude and behavioral skill to benefit from such training.

Mrs. Thierry meets regularly with students as they journey through 8th and 12th grade, evaluating progress and adjusting plans accordingly. She serves as a resource for families, parents, and students in accessing transition services as well as providing information on transition topics.

"Transition planning is an integral part of secondary education as students move into the adult world," says Mrs. Thierry. "I am proud to work in a District where students are given opportunities to explore, research and practice skills with the support from our faculty to best prepare them for adult life."

Mrs. Thierry has been an integral part of the Boyertown Area School District for 12 years, working as a learning support teacher at Boyertown Area Senior High School. Now, as the District's secondary transition coordinator, Mrs. Thierry strives to build programs specifically tailored to the individualized needs of students, and equip students with skills which will enable them to succeed in a changing world.

If you are a business owner and are interested in working with the Boyertown Area School District to provide job shadowing opportunities, please contact Mrs. Thierry at sthierry@boyertownasd.org.

Athletic Highlights

The Boyertown Area School District would congratulate the following student-athletes who recently signed their National Letter of Intent to play collegiate sports: Nicholas DoCiacco, baseball, Penn State Berks, Ali Marcus, basketball, Albright College, Lauren Haley, soccer, Moravian University, Kyle Kooker, football, Moravian University, Georgianna Saxon, lacrosse, Gwynedd Mercy University, JT Cooley, wrestling, Lehigh University, Hannah Gallagher, field hockey, Albright College, Katlyn Burkhardt, field hockey, Alvernia University, Grayson Hamrick, lacrosse,

Haverford College, Michael Raineri, baseball, Misericordia University, Erin Reitmeyer, soccer, Gwynedd Mercy University, and Sam Marks, soccer, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

Boyertown Area School District is proud to announce that the Boyertown Area Senior High School girls basketball team has won their 2nd Pioneer Athletic Conference Championship in the past three seasons!

The District is also proud to announce that the Boyertown Area Senior High School wrestling team



has won their fourth straight District 1 AAA West Tournament Title!

Junior High East Hosts Youth and Government Conference

On February 18, approximately 200 students from across eastern Pennsylvania engaged in an exemplary display of civic duty. Boyertown Area School District's own Junior High East hosted this year's Youth and Government program's Pre-Legislative Session. The Youth and Government program is a national program of the YMCA that allows thousands of students across the country to participate in model-government programs organized by state. At this session, students campaigned to serve as delegates at the 2017 Pennsylvania state conference, where they will have the opportunity to debate bills on the floor of the legislature. Of the seventeen candidates running for election, three were from Boyertown Area School District.

By participating in this program, students in seventh through twelfth grades experience democracy firsthand by mirroring the government of the United States and experiencing the political processes used to propose legislation. Youth and Government provides a platform for students to discuss and debate issues that directly affect their communities.

"Government can be beautiful. Bureaucratic and convoluted it may be, but just and righteous we can make it," says Lainey Newman, a senior at Obama Academy in Pittsburgh and the program's current governor of Pennsylvania. "I don't think that I am the only one in the room who marvels at the ingenuity and prescience of our founding fathers. Democracy is about the people participating, and we here in Youth and Government are eager to participate." Lainey, who will attend Harvard University in the fall, gave a poignant speech that emphasized her passion for government and inspired the aspiring politicians in the room.

In its fifth year at the junior-high level in Boyertown Area School District, the Youth and Government program is a school-based club supported by the Boyertown YMCA. At the high school level, the program meets after school at the YMCA. Participating in the program expands students' public-speaking skills and provides them with a safe place to talk through their beliefs and opinions on pressing issues and express them articulately. The

program gives students something to aspire to and allows them to form lasting friendships with their peers from across the state.

Mr. Greg Rudder, Executive Director of the State YMCA of Pennsylvania, reminded the students, "You have humility. What sets you apart is that you recognize that the other side's opinion has value. The country is watching your generation."

From April 20 to 23, the students will take over the state capitol to act as state representatives, state senators, state Supreme Court justices, and journalists at a model government session in Harrisburg.

"This is one of the few programs where students can express their opinion and have their voice heard," says Harrison Otto, a senior at Boyertown Senior High School who has been with the program for the past four years. "We have the chance to meet so many different people from across the state and the opportunity to work with them in Harrisburg is really unique."

The Great Kindness Challenge

This year, Earl Elementary School joined with 15,000 other schools worldwide in celebrating the Great Kindness Challenge, a week-long initiative designed to inspire students to turn up the volume on practicing acts of kindness.

Celebrated January 23rd to 27th, the Great Kindness Challenge fit perfectly with Earl Elementary School's Quarter Two building theme, "Be Kind and Helpful." Throughout the week, students and staff members participated in kindness-inspired activities. From kindness lunches to spirit days, the Great Kindness Challenge proved to be an effective tool in engaging all students and staff members.

Sixth grade students served as Kindness Ambassadors, setting an example for their peers. Each morning, the Ambassadors visited classrooms to share quotes about kindness, suggest new ways to show kindness, and remind other students of upcoming events.

Teachers held daily Kindness Class Meetings and set up Kindness Corners in their classrooms; students decorated Post-It notes with inspirational messages that were placed on the "Spread Kindness Like Confetti" bulletin board in the school's main hallway.

The entire Earl Elementary School family participated in a midweek assembly that featured the video *Color Your World with Kindness*. Following the video, students and staff had a discussion about what each of them can do at Earl Elementary School to "color the school" with kindness.

Students then broke off into groups and participated in a QR Code Kindness Challenge. A Quick Response code, or "QR code" for short, provides a way to have student work come to life in the voice of the student or for classroom instruction to take on a new dimension. Together, students used District-provided iPads to find and scan QR codes. Each code revealed a kindness challenge that students then acted out as a group.

Students also participated in the Art Kindness Lesson, which paired an older student with a younger student. The pairs began the lesson by tracing each other's hand onto a piece of a paper. Teachers then asked the students to think of different ways people can be kind to others. Inspired, students wrote down ideas and drew acts of kindness on their paper hands. Students then cut out their artwork and arranged it on poster board, collaboratively creating a piece of art that could inspire the entire school.

"The Great Kindness Challenge was a powerful, positive week here at Earl Elementary School," says Earl Elementary School Principal Dr. Sara Obarow. "There was a palpable energy across the building as students actively pursued ways to be kind and helpful."

The Boyertown Area School District is proud to offer these unique experiences to our students. The Great Kindness Challenge provides a powerful tool that actively engages students, teachers, administrators, families, and communities in creating a culture of acceptance, tolerance, unity, and respect.



Second grade students Cecelia Thurston (left) and Cienna Perri (right) had a wonderful time spreading kindness.

Local Author Shares Positive Message

The Boyertown Area School District is proud to announce that a book by local award-winning author and mother of 11 children Mrs. Pamela M. Tuck, of Boyertown was chosen by the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists Foundation to be read by an actor, Mr. Dulé Hill, on Storyline Online to celebrate Black History Month.

In the video, the former star of *The West Wing* and *Psych* reads the award-winning children's book, *As Fast as Words Could Fly*, written by Mrs. Tuck, illustrated by Mr. Eric Velasquez, and published by Lee and Low Books, the largest publisher of children's literature specializing in diversity and multiculturalism.

As Fast as Words Could Fly tells the story of Mason Steele, a young African-American boy living in the South during the civil rights movement, who supports his activist father with the help of a typewriter. The story is inspired by the real-life experiences of the author's father, who lived in North Carolina in the 1960s. A winner of the New Voices

Award, *As Fast as Words Could Fly* speaks to the power of hard work, determination, and resilience in the face of injustice and prejudice.

Mr. Hill concludes his reading with a personal note to his viewers: "Words do matter, but actions matter that much more. . . . So no matter what people think about you, what they say about you, you don't always need to respond. Just do you."

"Dulé is a gifted actor and storyteller," said Mr. Cyd Wilson, Executive Director of the SAG-AFTRA Foundation. "He was a natural choice to read for Storyline Online, and he chose to read a very powerful book. The video is a free educational tool for teachers and parents to share during Black History Month."

The video comes with supplemental activity guides for both home and school, aimed at students in third through fifth grades, that strengthen verbal, written, and comprehension skills while engaging the themes from the book such as civil rights, /discrimination, overcoming obstacles, heroism, conflict, and resolu-

tion. The activities encourage students to walk in Mason's shoes and to identify injustices that exist today.

"The Boyertown Area School District is pleased to provide each school in our District with a copy of *As Fast as Words Could Fly*, which will be added to each library's collection," says Chief Academic Officer Dr. Melissa Woodward. "It is indeed a privilege to support Ms. Tuck, our own district resident and parent, as she tells her father's story of determination in the age of desegregation. There are many valuable lessons to learn from this text and we are honored to share them with our students."

Mrs. Tuck is very active within the Boyertown Area School District and regularly makes time to visit schools and share her knowledge and passion for writing and reading with the students. Mrs. Tuck is a native of Greenville, North Carolina, but has resided in Pennsylvania for 19 years. She credits her writing to her upbringing surrounded by Southern storytellers.