



KENNETT

CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Fall 2012

Why We Chose the KCSD

Award-winning academics is one reason parents choose Kennett Consolidated schools for their children's education. However, once children settle into school, parents are pleased with activities, staff members, and student diversity that enhance their children's public school experience.

Some parents and children visit the District when considering a move to the area. Dr. Mitchell Saltzberg lived in Chicago and accepted a job with Christiana Care Health System in Delaware.

After visiting schools in different districts, he and his family met principals from Kennett Middle School and New Garden Elementary. "They sold us and our kids on Kennett Consolidated School District, so we bought a house in Landenberg."

Dr. Saltzberg and his wife, Dr. Karen Antell, attended public schools and earned Ivy League medical degrees. "Our options were not limited because we attended public schools," he said. "Our children's futures will be positively affected by our choice to educate them in the Kennett Consolidated School District."

Dr. Saltzberg said his "Expectations have been exceeded at multiple levels. From the individualized approach to education to opportunities in music and drama and the responsiveness to concerns by the teachers and district leaders we have no regrets."

Mr. Chris Ransick does have regrets. He wishes he had placed his children in Kennett Consolidated schools sooner. He moved from Delaware to Pennsylvania in 2004 but kept this daughter and son in private schools in Delaware. He transferred his daughter from one private school to another, but she complained about her teachers.

"I heard good things about Kennett, so I decided to move her to Kennett High School for 11th grade," Mr. Ransick said. "This is the end of my world!" Nora Ransick told her father. Within

Continued on page 3

Kennett High School Students Continue to Achieve National Merit Status

Hannah Frank and Molly Shiflet (not pictured) are 2012 National Merit Semifinalists who participated in the 58th annual National Merit Scholarship Program. Since 2009, 74 Kennett High School students have attained varying commendations based on their Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). This test serves as an initial screen of program entrants.

Hannah and Molly join nationwide pool of semifinalists representing less than one percent of high school seniors and includes the highest scoring entrants in each state.

These students are eligible to continue in the program competition for 8,300 National Merit Scholarship awards worth more than \$34 million that will offered in the spring.



Congratulations to (L-R) Jason Kim (Commended), Koji Shimomura (Commended), Hannah Frank (Semifinalist), Richard Fucci (Commended), Emma Spell (Commended), Zachary Bolten (Commended), Connor Dalphon (Commended); Semifinalist Molly Shiflet is not pictured.

To advance to the finalist level for Merit Scholarship award consideration, a semifinalist must fulfill additional requirements. He or she must submit an outstanding academic record, an endorsement by the Principal, and SAT scores that confirm the preliminary results. Each semifinalist and his or her

counselor must also submit a detailed scholarship application with the student's essay and information about his or her participation and leadership in school and community activities.

In the past four years, National Merit Scholarship Programs has recognized Kennett High School students as follows: 19 Finalists, 20 Semifinalists, 32 Commended, 2 National Hispanic Recognition, and 1 National Achievement Scholar.

This year's National Merit Commended students include Jason Kim, Koji Shimomura, Richard Fucci, Emma Spell, Zachary Bolten, and Connor Dalphon. Kyle Ropp, who no longer attends Kennett High School, also attained Commended status.

District Teachers Taught English and Learned Lessons in China

While they taught students in China how to speak English, they learned about people, politics and living in the land of plenty last summer. Four teachers and two library media specialists from across the Kennett Consolidated School District were some of the first Americans to participate in an English program in northeastern China.

The program selects teachers that speak English plainly. "I submitted a voice sample with my application and resume," said Ms. Elizabeth Ely, Kennett Middle School library media specialist. Initially, the four-year-old program exclusively used teachers from the United Kingdom. Some Irish teachers' accents were too hard for students to understand. Thus, program administrators required voice samples to select teachers who the students would understand during the two-week summer camp.

The program paid for flights, lodging, breakfasts and lunches.



Ms. Elizabeth Ely poses with her class in China.

Teachers on the Learning Curve

The educators were on a cultural learning curve while visiting the Great Wall, the Lama Temple and Beijing markets.

Ms. Ely said, "They don't have traffic control. In the markets, meat is displayed on ice out in the open." One staff member needed medical help, and the doctor was smoking in the exam room.

Several staff members said the smell from pollution was potent. Ms. Ely drew a comparison, "Kennett's mushroom smell is not a big deal."

"There is no such thing as personal space," said Mr. Herman Engel, KMS seventh grade social studies teacher. "It feels like New Year's Eve in Times Square

all the time. One kid in the Forbidden City came up and rubbed my belly."

Ms. Ely chimed in, "In Kennett, we see people of different cultures walking on the streets. Over there, nobody is like us."

The language barrier created problems. "We were discriminated against by taxi drivers who did not want to pick us up," said Mr. Engel.

Mrs. Joanne Connolly, Mary D. Lang Kindergarten Center learning support teacher, said people laughed, pointed and took photos of the group.

District staff members also had positive experiences while they were getting used

Continued on page 5

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Kennett High School (grades 9-12)

100 East South Street
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610-444-6620
Dr. Michael Barber, Principal
Raymond Fernandez, Assistant Principal
Dr. Tomorrow Jenkins, Assistant Principal
Jeffery Thomas, Assistant Principal and Athletic Director

Kennett Middle School (grades 6-8)

195 Sunny Dell Road
Landenberg, PA 19350
610-268-5800
Dr. John E. Carr, Principal
Lorenzo DeAngelis, Assistant Principal
Karen Gerlach, Assistant Principal

Bancroft Elementary School

181 Bancroft Road
Kennett Square, PA 19348
610-925-5711
Leah McComsey, Principal

Greenwood Elementary School

420 Greenwood Road
Kennett Square, PA 19348
610-388-5990
Tracey Marino, Principal

Mary D. Lang Kindergarten Center

409 Center Street
Kennett Square, PA 19348
610-444-6260
Carla Horn, Principal

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265 New Garden Road
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610-268-6900
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For questions or comments email us at PR@KCSD.org

KHS Alumni Spotlight: Coreen Haggerty

People tell Coreen Haggerty she is a confident person. The 1986 Kennett High School alumna managed continuing education programs for doctors in Delaware, directed alumni relations for the University of Pennsylvania's School of Veterinary Medicine (UPSVM), and now directs marketing for a veterinary hospital with a staff of 85. She credits her Kennett Middle School teacher for giving her the confidence to step outside of herself.

"I was a gawky and insecure in middle school, but my science teacher, Mr. Bob Rosselle, helped build my confidence," Haggerty said. If she lowered her eyes when talking to him, he would drop low to lift me up, she said. He required students to find current events related to science each week and that boosted Haggerty's interest in science.

Haggerty graduated with honors from West Chester University with a Speech Communication/Public Relations degree and began working for the Medical Society of Delaware. She worked with hundreds of hospitals and non-profit organizations to coordinate the continuing education programs doctors need to retain their medical licenses. Haggerty managed community affairs for the medical society, developed marketing plans, designed newsletters and was a liaison for state health initiatives.

For personal fulfillment, Haggerty answered phones on weekends for a small group of specialty care veterinarians in Newport, Delaware. "I found I loved medicine and supporting veterinarians, which piqued my interest in veterinary medicine," she said.



On a whim, Haggerty applied to UPSVM. The school hired Haggerty to plan its annual, three-day conference and other special events for 200-1,200 participants. Within a year, Haggerty became the director of alumni relations. She managed conferences, fundraising events, and scholarship and mentoring programs.

She continued working weekends in client services at the veterinary hospital in Delaware, acting as a social worker for the pet owners. On Sundays when many vet offices are closed, owners carried their sick and hurt pets into the hospital for the first time. She held the pets while their owners completed forms. "I treat owners and animals gently. It is like working in pediatrics," she said.

Last fall, the partners of Veterinary Specialty Care in Delaware asked Haggerty to join the team as the director of marketing and outreach. The budding practice where Haggerty worked weekends for 11 years had blossomed into a practice with 85 staff members. She conducts market analysis and watches trends to help her brand and market the practice with 30 specialists and emergency doctors. Pet owners from New Jersey, Maryland, southern Chester County and Delaware drive up to two hours to bring their animal to this practice.

In her spare time, Haggerty serves on the board of the Delaware Humane Society. She also adopted male and female American Eskimo dogs. She works with volunteers nationwide who are foster parents for Eskimo dogs until "forever homes" are found for them. Haggerty fostered dogs, too. "Two came and stuck," now she has four Eskimo dogs.

Haggerty's drive and devotion crystallized at Kennett High School. "The teachers, curriculum and honors courses helped me become a hard worker," she said. Haggerty has fond memories of growing up a block from the school. "I felt a sense of community at school. I was involved in flag twirling, sports and a lot of groups. I felt supported," Haggerty said. She summed up her time at Kennett High School by saying her experiences gave her confidence to meet life's challenges.

First Place Finish for KCSD Graduate

They say dreams come true at Disney World®, and that was the case for Miss Alicia Hobson, recent graduate from the Health Occupations program at the Chester County Technical College High School (TCHS) Pennock's Bridge Campus. Hobson placed first in the national HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America) competition held in Orlando, Florida, from June 20-23.

The 2012 Kennett High School graduate earned a bid to the national competition by placing third in Personal Care at the Pennsylvania HOSA State Leadership Conference.

"My goal was to place in the top ten, but I surprised myself by placing first nationally," said Miss Hobson.

In the Personal Care competition, Miss Hobson was asked to make an occupied bed and transfer a patient from bed to wheelchair. "The skills are detailed," she explained. "You have to make sure you hit every point exactly. If you don't, they will mark it wrong and it can make the difference between placing and not placing."

She said participating in the Health Occupations program at TCHS Pennock's Bridge Campus was an eye-opening experience.

In addition to textbook learning about subjects like anatomy and physiology,

Miss Hobson had the hands-on opportunity to become a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). She experienced the profession firsthand and realized it was not the right career for her – before she received her high school diploma. Miss Hobson decided instead to study dental assisting at Harcum College. She hopes to become a dental hygienist.

"Coming to this career and technical school helped me decide what I wanted to do," she said. "It made me prepare myself and see what's out there in the real world."

Even though a tropical storm kept the Florida sun hidden behind clouds, Hobson said the national competition was a great experience.

"It was nice just to get away and be with classmates one last time before I left for college," said Miss Hobson. "When I placed, I had to get on stage in front of 7,000 people. My classmates and my teacher were supportive. It was very rewarding."

The Technical College High School (TCHS) Pennock's Bridge Campus is a joint venture of the Chester County Intermediate Unit (CCIU) and Delaware County Community College (DCCC). As Pennsylvania's first hybrid career and technical high school/community college, TCHS offers career



and technical programs for high school students; and DCCC offers associate degree and certificate programs to college students.

As a public high school, TCHS is free to high school students living in Avon Grove, Kennett Consolidated, Octorara Area, Oxford Area and Unionville-Chadds Ford School Districts.

The school offers high school students dual-enrollment classes that blend career and technical programs with associate degree college courses. Students in dual-enrollment programs can graduate from high school with up to 16 college credits.

All Around the Schools

Greenwood Students Enjoy Books that are “Just Right” for them

Greenwood Elementary students are choosing books using the Goldilocks method. They look for books that are not too hard, not too easy, but are just right for their individual reading level.

“Just Right Reading” is a philosophy that all Greenwood Elementary School teachers are using this year to help students enjoy what they read. Principal Tracey Marino said research shows students who read at their “just right” level progress faster.

Mrs. Shawn Godfrey, first grade teacher, said “Just Right Books” should be new to the student, interesting, and ones they can read without help from an adult.

There are hard words in “just right” books, said Ms. Susan Collins, second grade teacher. Students decode these words with different strategies and thus grow in their reading skills. Using context clues, students look at surrounding words in relation to the hard word to figure out its meaning. They also break the hard word apart, looking for a root word they may know. Lastly, students turn to the dictionary for definitions.

Mrs. Godfrey tells students they are detectives using phonics skills to crack the secret code of a word they do not know. She likes creating a holistic connection for students by tying phonics to reading.

In the beginning of the school year, students took an online test to determine their reading range. If a student’s grade-level reading ability ranges from 3.8-6.2, he or she can choose any “just right” library book by checking the “Just Right Reading” level label on the cover. Students must pick at least one “just right” book per visit. They may also check out fun or challenging books that are out of their range, too.

Ms. Collins also taught her students the 5-Finger Rule to see if a book is too hard or too easy. She has them open a book to a middle page and count on their fingers how many words they do not know. “If they use four or five fingers, the book is too hard. If they count one hard word, the book is too easy. If they find two or three hard words, the book is ‘just right.’”

Reading on the “just right” level increases fluency. “When there are too many words a student does not know, he will stumble over them and miss the story line,” said Mr. Bill Hicks, fifth grade teacher. “Some of my students want to read ‘Harry Potter,’ but it’s on the eighth grade level. It may be too tough.” His students’ reading levels range from 5.6-12.2.

Ms. Jenna Joiner, reading specialist, said by reading on the right level, “The child should understand what is happening in most of the story and be able to retell what was read,” she said.

After a student finishes a “just right” book, he or she takes an online quiz using Accelerated Reader, a web-based program with questions covering 20,000 books. Ms. Collins said the student’s score does not count toward his grade but gives an assessment of his or her reading skills. As students score higher, they move up in their reading zone. Mrs. Sarah McCafferty, third grade teacher, commented, “My students all want to move their reading zone up, so they are motivated to read more.”

During morning meetings and reading groups, Mrs. McCafferty said her students have enthusiastic discussions about what they are reading. “This encourages reluctant readers to explore books they would not have otherwise selected,” she said.

Mrs. Godfrey motivates her first grade students to read by using Beanie Babies™ as “Reading Buddies.” She puts a “Reading Buddy” into a plastic bag with two ‘Just Right’ books and a reading log. Students read books alone and to

adults before filling out their reading log. Mrs. Godfrey sets a goal for each student: read 100 books. She will give students “Reading Buddies” to take home at the end of the year.

Mr. Hicks set a class goal of reading 500 books a month. He assigns 15 minutes of reading each night as homework. His students read 450 books in two and a half weeks. He said, “When students come into class in the morning, they ask, ‘Can I take my quiz now?’”

Ms. Collins sees many students reading in the hallway before school starts rather than playing with friends. “They are enjoying books they understand and find interesting,” she said.

Her second-grade students are embracing “Just Right Reading.” One said, “If you don’t read, you’ll stay at a lower level.” Another said, “Reading is food for your brain.”

“We are not only creating a culture of readers but thinkers. The thinkers we are creating now will be the thinkers of our future,” said Ms. Joiner.

“When students come into class in the morning, they ask, ‘Can I take my quiz now?’”

-Mr. Bill Hicks

Why We Chose the Kennett Consolidated School District

Continued from page 1

two months, Mr. Ransick said Nora felt at home and had friends.

“I’m a fool for not embracing Kennett Consolidated School District sooner. I could have saved a lot of money,” he said. “The schools offer a very rigorous level of academics. Nora got a fair amount of college credit at Temple University from her Advanced Placement test scores,” Mr. Ransick said. Nora also benefitted from being part of the high school’s diverse student population. “She had no problems adjusting at Temple, which is very diverse,” he said.

Lucas Ransick transferred from a private school to Kennett High School in ninth grade. Lucas loves the video program and said Kennett has better facilities and equipment than the private schools. Mr. Ransick added, “There was no step down academically going from a private school to Kennett.”

Mrs. Pam Ramagano said her children experienced a step up in curriculum as they moved from parochial schools to Kennett Consolidated schools.

When her daughter, Katie, was in parochial middle school, Mrs. Ramagano said there were no hands-on science experiments. Mrs. Ramagano transferred Katie to Kennett Middle School in seventh grade.

“Katie came home from school excited about pond scum that she learned about in science class,” said Mrs. Ramagano. She appreciates that Kennett Middle School students have double periods of math and science. “The curriculum is more challenging. It gets the most from my kids,” said Mrs. Ramagano said.

“Transferring Katie to Kennett Middle School was the hardest decision I ever made, but she was ready for the move. It only took two weeks for her to have a sleepover with girls screaming and laughing until 4 a.m.,” said Mrs. Ramagano. Katie now attends East Carolina State University.

“I love the diversity in Kennett’s schools because I grew up thinking everyone was white and Catholic. The District is a melting pot, and that’s the way the world is,” said Mrs. Ramagano.


She said Dr. John Carr, principal, and Mrs. Karen Gerlach, assistant principal, know every student’s name. “I am blown away by that. We feel like family here,” she said.

Over time, Mrs. Ramagano and her husband, Mr. John Ramagano, transferred their three other children to Kennett Consolidated schools. Samantha Ramagano transferred to Kennett High School in eleventh grade after

attending a parochial school and academy. She now attends the University of Pittsburgh.

“Kennett offers so much besides academics. There are sports, community service and other extra-curricular activities,” said Mrs. Ramagano.

Dr. Saltzberg agreed, “I encourage any parent to take full advantage of the opportunities afforded in the Kennett Consolidated School District.”



Drop us an email at PR@KCSD.org. We’d love to hear about projects happening in the Kennett Consolidated School District or great news about current students and graduates alike.

KHS Football Team Rolls Over Avon Grove and Learns to Roll with Life

Kennett High School's football team started its season with two firsts: first win of the season and first win over Avon Grove High School since the program was reinstated in 2005. Head coach Scott Green said he is focused on teaching the student athletes a winning approach to life, not just football.

Off-season workouts helped the Blue Demons roll over the Red Devils, 42-10. Head Coach Scott Green said, "The players started lifting [weights] in February and attended mini camps in May and July. The coaches put in a lot of hours. We were fully prepared to beat Avon Grove." He added, "We have a strong team and we are looking forward to a strong year."

Six senior team members are on the state's District 1 Watch List: Albert Magana, defensive lineman, Brandon Liddick, tight end and middle linebacker, Jordan Lardani, full back and defensive back, Jorge Lara, defensive lineman, Ray Maxwell, defensive tackle, and Stephen Masha, middle linebacker.

Coach Green entered his 17th year of coaching and said the team is facing a tough schedule. "Since the Avon Grove win, I have not thought about it. We are preparing for our next opponent." He is passing on this winning mindset to the team.

"We talk about success – pursuing excellence in life and letting that spill over onto the football field," Coach Green said. He and the other coaches thought up life top-

ics to discuss with players on a weekly basis. The coaches take turns talking to the team.



Quarterback Jordan Jones takes a snap from center Cory Tomasetti. Captain and fullback Jordan Lardani is in the backfield.

Superintendent Dr. Barry Tomasetti and Principal Dr. Michael Barber talked to the team about "The Responsibilities and Dangers of Social Networking on Facebook and Twitter." An assistant coach leaned over to Coach Green during the talk and whispered that the student athletes were really listening. "They were 100 percent focused because this topic is relevant to their lives," Coach Green said.

Besides learning life lessons, being a part of the football team means, "You have 45 friends. We foster unity. The players care about each other, and do not want to let the team down by becoming academically ineligible," said Coach Green.

The coaches take eligibility seriously and talk almost daily about the importance of school. They provide resources for players who are struggling. Coach Green said he and another coach

have an open-door policy during lunch and prep periods so players can get math help from them.

Coach Green summed up the football program, "There is no better experience as a coach than to see student athletes be friends and do well in school."

Kindergarten Specials Foster Interests Outside the Classroom

Kindergarten students get a little taste of the related arts every day at the Mary D. Lang Kindergarten Center.

Students attend one "Special" for 25 minutes each day. They rotate through a six-day cycle of "specials" in art, music, physical education, information literacy, Spanish, and developmental guidance.

Principal Carla Horn said, "Kennett Consolidated School District provides specials to help students become well-rounded students. They learn other fundamental skills that reach outside of what they learn in their academic classrooms."

Mrs. Linda Parkinson, guidance counselor, said she and guidance counselors, Mrs. Jan Turner and Mrs. Tia Ennis, each teach five classes of students all year.

"We teach students about developing positive attitudes towards academics,

growing socially and emotionally, and recognizing strengths they may use in a career," said Mrs. Parkinson.

She puts a "feeling" word, such as "Happy" on the word wall to get students talking about what makes them happy. Throughout the year, the guidance counselors will help kindergarten

students learn how to develop long-term relationships, express feelings that can be heard by others, and promote positive play behaviors.

For academics, Mrs. Parkinson teaches students how to develop positive attitudes toward learning, follow school rules, and accept their mistakes.

The guidance counselors introduce the concept of careers by talking about the jobs of school staff members. Students talk about what their parents do for work. At this young age, Mrs. Parkinson wants students to "find their strengths and develop them because they may turn into their careers. Some children may not have strong math or reading skills, but they may be good singers."

In the gymnasium, Mr. John Howanski focuses on participation and teamwork when students have physical education special. Students do warm-up exercises for five minutes, such as pushups and jumping jacks.

During their main activity, Mr. Howanski reinforces concepts students learn in the classroom. "I use a parachute with red, yellow, blue and green sections and tell them

to hold up red sections while everyone counts to 10," said Mr. Howanski.



Librarian Mr. David Livergood reads to students during the Library special.

The kindergarten students also learn about personal space and safety during physical education. Mr. Howanski has them stand on colored "X's" taped to the floor. He teaches students to stay in their own area when they do activities so they will be safe and not hurt others.

Students enjoy using potato sacks, beanbags and hula-hoops for relay races, which foster teamwork. Individually, students will work on throwing and catching a ball. Mr. Howanski also works on listening skills during games of "Mother, May I?" He tells students to touch their toes, but he may touch his knees instead. "I try to fake them out to see if they are listening, not just watching."

His goals for students include developing a positive self-concept, working on fitness skills, and learning to accept strengths and limitations.

When the kindergarten students have a musical special, Mrs. Jessica Eves helps

them work on rhythm and pitch. "It is like learning a new language," she said.

Students walk to beats, clap to beats or move freely to feel beats. "Students enjoy using rhythm sticks, hand drums and wooden blocks to learn to keep time, too," said Mrs. Eves.

Students learn simple folk songs, such as "This Old Man," "Skip to My Lou," and "Twinkle, Twinkle." Mrs. Eves said the quality of their singing is not great because they are just starting to use music as a language. "Although students may have a vocal range of two octaves, I want them to focus on hitting a few pitches correctly," she said. When they succeed in this, they will be able to listen while they sing more pitches.

Miss Horn said, "Specials teachers may plant seeds of interest in future artists, musicians, athletes, professors, and counselors that blossom into careers."



Music teacher Mrs. Jessica Eves works on rhythm with one of her classes.

District Teachers Taught English, Learned Lessons

Continued from page 1

to the culture. Ms. Lisa Teixeira, KHS library media specialist, said, "Yes, it was dirty and crowded, but the people were wonderful."

People were accepting and helpful. "At a restaurant where no one spoke English, people gave me bites of their food to sample," she said. She made pig and chicken noises to order food.

Chinese Educational Priorities

"Families in China make education a priority," said Mrs. Kimberly Black, Bancroft Elementary third grade teacher. The Chinese are impressed with American innovations. They want to be like us because they want what is best for their kids, Ms. Teixeira said.

Students start using English workbooks when they are 6 years old. "By 12, they are pretty good at reading and writing, but they cannot speak English because there are 50-60 kids in each class," said Mr. Engel. He taught 12-13 year olds with Mrs. Connolly and Mrs. Black at a traditional school in Tangshan, a "small" city of seven million. They taught English in 45-minute blocks from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. with British teachers.

Ms. Ely, Ms. Teixeira, and Miss Gabriela Stephens, Foreign Language in the Schools teacher at Mary D. Lang Kindergarten Center and Bancroft Elementary School, taught 750 students in Qinhuangdao. Their university-like camp was two hours from Tangshan and 20 kilometers from the South China Sea. Students traveled up to 11 hours across the province to the wooded camp to learn English in a new, intimate way.

Mr. Engel said Chinese teachers use a lot of technology in their classrooms, but their teaching methods are 40-50 years old. The teacher lectures and students take notes, said Ms. Ely. "They have to do this because there are so many kids in the class," Mr. Engel said.

The summer camp teacher-student ratio was 1:20, making the experience more individualized than usual for the students.

Teaching, Western-style

At first, students were hesitant to learn in a new way. "They were very shy and did not speak or participate," said Mrs. Black. Teachers modeled activities to encourage participation.

"We played 'Snowball,' and thank goodness, I had two Chinese teachers to help me demonstrate," said Mrs. Connolly. Each student wrote his or her name on a piece of paper, crumpled and threw it into a pile. Then, each student picked up a "snowball," uncrumpled it and found its owner to talk about a topic Mrs. Connolly called out.

Chinese and British educators created units for students to practice speaking English. For example, "All About Me" is a unit that covers topics on themselves, hobbies, home, family, food and money. "We did a lot of activities with the students to get them talking," said Mrs. Connolly.

Teachers and students sat in a circle for morning meetings to talk about favorite things, such as colors and places they vacationed. Mrs. Black said students talked about their favorite and least favorite kinds of books. Teachers paired up students with similar interests for more discussions.

As the Western teachers taught, the Chinese teachers took notes and video taped new ways of engaging students.

When students could not understand a word or concept, the Chinese teachers translated for them. If confusion remained, Ms. Teixeira drew pictures on a Smart Board® or acted it out.

She also used her community theater acting experience to lead an afternoon drama group. Forty students broke into groups, wrote 5-minute plays, practiced and performed them in English.

Mrs. Black used the American card game Uno® as an afternoon activity for students to practice speaking English.

Perceptions and Realities, Differences and Similarities

Each District staff member thought all Chinese students would be like "little soldiers that stand in straight lines and obey." Not so. "They are just like us. Some fooled around. Some did not do homework. I had to tell others to stop talking or put phones away. It was striking to me," said Ms. Teixeira. Mrs. Black added, "Kids are kids everywhere."

Mr. Engel thought Chinese people would be very careful speaking about their government. Instead, he found they were open, questioning and curious.

One difference staff members noticed at their schools was government oversight. "We knew the Communist Party official was keeping an eye on the staff and students, but I did not feel constricted," said Mr. Engel.

He did say though that it was surreal being driven to the hotel by the Communist Party official - in a red car.

Ms. Teixeira linked her classroom computer to her one at home so students could peek into her house to see what foods Americans eat. Ms. Teixeira's daughter, Elizabeth, labeled foods she displayed in the dining room and kitchen. "My students were excited to see so many familiar foods like watermelon, bananas, rice, eggs, corn, and my wok and chop sticks," said Ms. Teixeira.

Enlightenment

District staff members realized things about themselves, their resources, perceptions of the Chinese, and how "aliens" feel.

The flight crew gave instructions for landing in Beijing and called non-Chinese passengers "aliens." Mr. Engel did not like that. "I'm not from another planet," he said.

The staff members gained an appreciation for the struggles of students new to the U.S. Mrs. Connolly said she and her companions were the only Americans in their city. "Being discriminated against, I am keenly aware of the people I teach, especially the Spanish-speaking population," she said.

Every District staff member remarked about Kennett Consolidated School District's many resources compared to what Chinese teachers and students work with.

Many American teachers think about resources they lack for their classrooms. The poor condition of the school where Ms. Teixeira taught would be unacceptable in the U.S. "It looked fine on the

outside, but inside there was peeling paint, leaky ceilings and black mold." The school is four years old.

Ms. Ely said America's class size model is advanced. "Chinese teachers cannot possibly know and help each child. As educators, we are lucky to get to know and work with each child. We have so much."

Mr. Engel found time and events are loosely structured in China. "Plans changed five minutes before an event. As the head teacher, I had to deal with the changes." He said such experiences helped him become more flexible.

Fostering Friendships

Back in her Bancroft classroom, Mrs. Black is having her third grade students write to her Chinese students. The students are true pen pals - they write with pen and paper and send each other messages. "It's a great way for my Chinese students to practice their English and my Bancroft students to practice their

writing." Mrs. Black said her seventh grade students in China write on a third grade level, which is a good match for the pen pals.

Ms. Teixeira receives emails from two Chinese teachers, several Brits and several students. Joy, 16, was in Ms. Teixeira's drama group. She emails regularly about school, studying and wanting to travel. Joy attends a boarding school and day school, commutes, attends classes 12-14 hours every day, and studies a few hours before going to bed.

The District's staff members said their three-week stay in China was good, hard, and eye opening and that they would go again if given the chance.

Mrs. Connolly wrote blog posts about her experiences. She said, "Read them to know why you should not go to China and why you should." They are online at www.blogster.com/american-teachersinchina.

Chinese Students Experience School at KMS

As Mrs. Patti Tatum's American history class ended, the eighth grade students got up to switch classes. She pulled aside Herman and Sky, two of 19 Chinese students visiting Kennett Middle School. (Eleven students also visited New Garden Elementary School.) They were touring large east coast cities with nearly 60 other students from Hebei, a northeastern China province. Six District staff members taught English in Hebei this past summer.

Sky and Herman were shy, but smiled and agreed to talk about what it is like going to school in America.

Sitting on a bench, they twisted to look out of a second floor window. Fourteen-year-old Herman said in English, "Students are friendly. School is beautiful. Teachers are good. Like it here."



(L-R) Herman and Sky, student visitors from china, enjoyed the scenic beauty of the area during their visit.

Sky spoke better English. He said, "The school so small. My school has a lot of students. [There are] 60 students in my classes. Here there are 20 students [in a class]."

Chinese have larger classes and longer school days. Sky said school starts at 6:14 a.m. and ends at 5:14 p.m.

Each exchange student was paired with a buddy to shadow during classes. Mr. Lorenzo DeAngelis, assistant principal, said, "This was a learning experience for everyone. Chinese students came to see how our students work together and learn collaboratively."

The Chinese students got their first impressions of American schools on Back-to-School Day. They met their

buddies and walked through the school for an hour. Then, they were off to see Longwood Gardens.

On day two the boys sat through classes. Sky said, "I like music class. We were singing and dancing." After school, Sky and Herman, their classmates, and their new American friends headed to the gym where they played Wiffle Ball®, basketball and learned a dance.

That evening, Ms. Lisa Teixeira, Kennett High School library media specialist who taught English in China, hosted an American barbecue. She served hamburgers, hot dogs (donated by Country Butcher), watermelon, corn on the cob, macaroni and cheese, and baked ziti. Ms. Teixeira said, "We also had cake and ice cream bars from La

Michoacana, which were discounted for the event. They were by far the favorites of the students!"

Some students at the barbecue had attended the English summer camp program that Ms. Teixeira and other District staff members taught in China last summer.

As the boys finished reflecting on their visit, they looked out the window again. Sky said, "It is so beautiful... [the] forest, [the] birds."

When they got up from the bench and started walking down the hall, Mr. DeAngelis told the boys they were switching buddies. They were off to meet new American friends.

New Garden Elementary “Buddies” Encourage Learning and Leadership

“Buddies” at New Garden Elementary School look forward to seeing each other, and they grow academically and personally from spending time together. Some buddies are close in age while others have more of an age gap, depending on which teachers team up.

“Buddies” is not a formal, school-wide program. Teachers initiate the collaborations that Principal Susan McArdle must approve. She said there are benefits to pairing up younger and older students. “It fosters new friendships. Younger children look up to their older friends who model skills they have learned.”

Mr. Troy Harris, fifth grade teacher, and Mrs. Lisa Shoemaker, first grade teacher, had their students meet during a nature walk focused on observation by using the senses.

The buddies picked up acorns, smelled mushrooms, felt leaves, and saw a partly cloudy sky. The older students guided the younger ones around the school’s perimeter on their nature scavenger hunt.

Mr. Harris said, “Taking the walk was a big deal because the younger students were unfamiliar with the other side of the school’s large property.”

Mr. Harris and Mrs. Shoemaker carefully paired students. “We took some extra steps to match up personalities by thinking about who is kind, friendly, shy, or needs to be with a boy,” said Harris. There are 26 fifth graders matched to 20 first graders. Teachers thought some students might benefit from two buddies.

Mrs. Kate Walls teaches fourth grade and teamed up with Ms. Sarah Squires who teaches third grade. They matched students by personalities and reading levels. Since Mrs. Walls has a larger class than Ms. Squires, some younger students have two buddies. The teachers view these relationships as mentorships focused on literacy skills.

Mrs. Walls said students must read non-fiction materials for half of their reading time to meet Common Core standards. Buddies read National Geographic Science

assignments together since the third and fourth curricula are closely related. They are working on life science units about plants and animals.



Buddies (left) Jack Ward, fourth grade, and Dalton O'Neill, third grade, talk about their similarities and differences.

Mrs. Walls’ and Ms. Squires’ classes meet the first Friday of the month during their literacy instruction time. Ms. Squires said, “Every Friday, my students ask if they are meeting with their buddies.”

Likewise, after the first and fifth grade buddies first met, they keep asking, “When are we going to do buddies again?” Mr. Harris said, “To ensure we finish all of our other work, we only plan two buddy meetings each month.”

The third and fourth grade buddies got to know each other better as they worked on a compare and contrast unit. They talked about themselves. Then, the buddies shared laptops and diagramed their similarities and differences for a Read, Write, Think activity.

Buddies in first and fifth grades will do different activities during the year. In October, they will work on a Halloween craft activity. Mr. Harris said, “Some of the pieces will be harder to put together, so the older students will help their younger friends.”

If Mr. Harris and Mrs. Shoemaker have little time to meet, their buddies can work on small things. The older students can help the younger ones by using math flashcards or teaching them computer programs.

On story day, Mr. Harris said the first grade students will visit his classroom. The fifth grade students will read to their first grade buddies.

The younger students look up to their older buddies as role models. Ms. Squires said, “My students get excited in the hall when they see their buddies. They are glad to have a helpful friend at school.”

Writing Life Stories in Six Words

Seventh grade students in language arts teacher Ms. Alyse Halpin’s class are summing up life on Post-It® notes.

The six-word memoir supposedly evolved from a challenge to a famous American author. “There is mystique and legend about novelist Ernest Hemmingway making a bet with buddies during lunch about writing a six-word novel,” said Ms. Halpin. He wrote, “For sale: baby shoes, never worn.”

In 2006, Ms. Halpin said online magazine “Smith” challenged readers to put a personal twist on Hemmingway’s very short story. Readers had to post Six-Word Memoirs on Twitter, a social media site for messages that are 140 characters or fewer in length. The response was so great it boosted popularity of the new web site, Mrs. Halpin said.

Smith’s editor, Mr. Larry Smith, compiled the brief memoirs of everyday people and celebrities in a book, “Not Quite What I Was Planning.” Ms. Halpin heard Mr. Smith interviewed about his book, which led to her taking

a writing workshop on Six-Word Memoirs at University of Pennsylvania.

Now she teaches her seventh grade students to write by working hard to distill their lives into six words. “I am not teaching them to write shorter. I am teaching them to write better,” Ms. Halpin said.

Word choices are important and take a lot of thought. “I want them to use rich, unique words that cannot be replaced with better words,” she commented.

Ms. Halpin said this type of writing is authentic. “This is literature, it is like a mirror. We hold it up to see ourselves and make corrections. It is incredibly freeing,” she explained.

Her students are reading Mawi Asgedom’s memoir, “Of Beetles and Angels.” He wrote about civil war in Ethiopia, living in a Sudanese refugee camp, and moving to Chicago when a church sponsored his family. They did not know

English and survived on food stamps. Mr. Asgedom won a full scholarship to Harvard. He wrote in his memoir about overcoming hardships. In 2007, Mr. Asgedom spoke to Kennett Middle School students about “The Code: The 5 Secrets of Teen Success.”

Reading Mr. Asgedom’s feelings encouraged students to write about themselves honestly. They wrote their six-word memoirs on Post-It® notes and put them on a wall for all to read. “They were so good. You would never think a 12 or 13 year old could write like this,” Ms. Halpin said proudly.

“You can tell a lot about kids by what they write,” she said. Ms. Halpin let parents read their child’s six-word memoir during Back-to-School Night. She said parents discussed the memoir with their child.

Ms. Halpin said students learn about self-efficacy, which is not self-esteem, through this writing process. “Kids can look at themselves

and figure out their strengths,” and learn to use them well. This makes students feel special, important, she said.

Her students went to the computer lab and each chose an image that represented their six-word memoir. Ms. Halpin made a video of the memoirs and images and set them to music.

She will expand her students’ nonfiction writing experience by moving from six-word memoirs to a “This I Believe” essay. Edward R. Murrow launched “This I Believe” radio broadcasts in 1951 and aired brief, positive essays people wrote about their values. National Public Radio (NPR) now airs “This I Believe” essays on “The Bob Edwards Show.” Anyone may submit a personal essay. If one is selected, the author records it to play on the air. Ms. Halpin’s students will submit their “This I Believe” essays to NPR.

Whether writing shorter or longer essays, Mrs. Halpin said her students are learning about literature, writing, analysis, and themselves.

Normal... It just didn't work out.
- Danny D.

Always looking to build my life.
- Abbie D.

Explore, discover, enjoy, live, love, laugh.
- Meghan G.

How to Raise a Resilient Child

"Into every life, some rain must fall"
Longfellow, 1942

You've probably heard of the 3 Rs: Reading, Writing, Arithmetic—a focus of education. What about the fourth R—Resilience? Resilience is the ability to bounce back from setbacks, learn from failure, be motivated by challenges, and believe in your own abilities to deal with the stress and difficulties in life. Resilience skills are as important as the other 3Rs. Why? Because every child's life will be touched by setbacks as well as achievement, pain as well as joy, loss as well as triumph. In order for children to reach their fullest potential, they need to know how to approach life with resilience. What you might not know is that, just like reading, writing, and arithmetic, resilience can be learned. Children can learn—from their parents, teachers, and others—how to develop the skills of resilience. Resilience enables your child to thrive no matter what life puts in his or her path.

Resilience is not all or nothing. It comes in amounts. You can be a little resilient, a lot resilient, resilient in some situations, but not others. And, no matter how resilient your child is today, you can help him or her become more resilient tomorrow. Research has identified a variety of important ingredients of resilience, but there are several that we can most easily teach our children.

Emotion awareness and control. One of the myths about resilience is that resilient people tough it out without expressing emotion; they keep it all inside and are stoic in the face of adversity. This view of resilience might be common, but it's not accurate. Resilient people—adults and children—are comfortable with their feelings and they express them. In fact, resilient children experience a broad array of emotions—happiness, joy, fear, and sadness. So, when a resilient child goes through a tough time, she does feel sad or scared or anxious. After all, she is human! However, there is an important difference that distinguishes the more resilient from the less resilient. Resilient children don't

get "stuck" in an emotion. Although they might feel sad or scared, these feelings don't prevent them from coping with the situation and moving forward.

Realistic optimism. Optimism is another key ingredient of resilience. The research on optimism is clear: Optimistic people



are happier, healthier, more productive, have better relationships, succeed more, are better problem solvers, and are less likely to become depressed than pessimistic people. Research shows that kids can learn these skills and that optimism and resilience protect children against depression and anxiety. This is critical because at any one point in time as many as 10%–19% of adolescents report moderate to high level symptoms of depression. Children and adolescents with high symptoms of depression are more likely than their peers to have academic difficulty, smoke cigarettes, abuse alcohol or other drugs, and attempt suicide. Resilience is about seeing yourself and situations as optimistically as you can—but within the bounds of reality. Realistic optimism keeps you shooting for the stars without losing sight of the ground below.

Impulse Control. We all have impulses to do and say things that often are not in our best interest or helpful to others. Resilient children have internalized the "stop and think" message and use it to make choices about their actions. The good news is that impulse control can be learned so even if your child is impul-

sive, you can learn strategies to teach him to handle situations better.

Flexible thinking. Resilient children are flexible thinkers and problem solvers. They view problems from several different perspectives. Why does this matter? It matters because flexible thinking

increases the likelihood that you'll be able to come up with solutions to the problem you're confronting. Flexible thinking means that you'll generate a number of different ways to handle the situation, so if your first solution doesn't work, you'll have a Plan B ready. Teaching children to problem solve using "Thinking Steps—Stop, Think, Plan, Check" can build flexible thinking.

Self-efficacy. A basic ingredient in resilience is belief in one's self or self-confidence. Resilient children believe that they are effective in the world. They have learned what their strengths and weaknesses are, and they rely on their strengths to navigate the challenges in life. But don't confuse self-efficacy with self-esteem. Self-esteem is about feeling good about one's self and self-efficacy is about effecting change in the world. The road to resilience is through self-efficacy, not self-esteem. If your child is confident and knows how to master what life throws in his path, self-esteem will follow. Helping your child identify his strengths or talents will help build self-efficacy.

Empathy. Resilient children are connected with others. In fact, some of the landmark studies in resilience show that children who have at least one enduring relationship with a caring adult (a parent, a neighbor, a teacher, a coach) do well and can overcome even the most difficult hardships. Empathy is an important component of strong social relationships. Children who care about others, are interested in other people's feelings and experiences, and want to help others through tough times are more likely to have strong, healthy friendships. Teaching your child empathy or how to "put yourself in others' shoes" serves resilience by facilitating strong relationships.

Reaching out. Resilient children take risks. This doesn't mean hurling themselves off mountaintops or riding motorcycles without helmets. It means appropriate, horizon-expanding risks. Children who are resilient don't see failure as something to be avoided. They are willing to try new things to learn more, achieve more, and enjoy life more. The risk taking might take the form of signing up for a hard class or talking with someone they've never met before or even just trying a new food. Their optimism fuels them, and their self-efficacy gives them the confidence to try, even when that means risking failure.

Remember, we can all become more resilient tomorrow than we are today, and as parents and teachers we can help our children learn and build the resilience skills they need to deal with the "rainfall" in life.

Please contact: Mrs. Rentschler at krentschler@kcsd.org or Dr. Pearson at lpearson@kcsd.org with comments or ideas for future "What's on Your Mind" topics.

This article is adapted from the National Association of School Psychologists resources and work by Karen Reivich, PhD, University of Pennsylvania.

Keystone Exams Coming to KCSD

The Keystone Exams are standardized tests that will measure how well students meet the state's Common Core Standards and are replacing the 11th grade Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) statewide. They are not replacing PSSAs for grades three through eight. Students in the Class of 2017, who are in eighth grade now, must pass the exams to graduate. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) set standards of what students should know and be able to do to succeed in college and the workplace.

Kennett High School principal, Dr. Michael Barber, said the Keystone Exams are rigorous, content-based exams that will measure student proficiency on Common Core subjects. Teachers, curriculum directors and college specialists from across Pennsylvania decided what subject areas would be included in the Keystone Exams.

"The exams will focus on shared ownership of performance between school,

"All Kennett High School eleventh grade students must take the first wave of the exams December 10-14 to measure proficiency in Algebra I, Biology and Literature."

family and the student," said Dr. Barber, a member of the state's transition committee for the Keystone Exams.

"All Kennett High School eleventh grade students must take the first wave of the exams December 10-14 to measure proficiency in Algebra I, Biology and Literature," he continued. The literature exam will measure students' interpretation skills and vocabulary, not their knowledge of certain works of literature.

The students' scores will count toward Kennett High School's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), which the Common-

wealth monitors for all schools. Dr. Barber said the District must test at least 95 percent of all eligible students to measure its AYP. Kennett High School's AYP will be calculated using the Algebra I and Literature scores. Biology scores will count for participation purposes only.

A second wave of exams, scheduled for May 13-24, will be given to all Kennett High School students who have taken these subjects, as well as eighth grade students taking Algebra I this academic year. When a student receives a "proficient" or better score, it will be "banked" toward his or her state graduation

requirements. If a student fails an exam, he or she may retake it twice during the same school year. The state-determined Keystone Exam windows are in the winter, spring and summer.

Dr. Barber said, "If the student cannot pass the exam, he or she must complete a project-based assessment." The state is developing standards for such projects.

Future Keystone Exams will include additional subjects - a second English exam, geography, civics/government and chemistry.

Besides passing the Keystone Exams, the Pennsylvania Department of Education is considering other milestones students must meet to graduate.

More information on the Keystone Exams, as well as state standards for all subjects at all grade levels, is available in English and Spanish at: <http://www.pdesas.org/module/assessment/Keystone.aspx>.

Kennett Middle School Earns “No Place for Hate” Designation

Kennett Middle School is “No Place for Hate” (NPFH®). During an all-school assembly on October 11, an Anti-Defamation League (ADL) spokesman presented students of the bullying prevention taskforce with a “No Place for Hate” banner. The taskforce worked with the ADL to present three programs last year to celebrate diversity and promote respect in order to earn the designation.

Mr. Jeremy Bannett, NPFH® assistant project director, said, “The ADL has program guidelines, but gives schools freedom to identify concerns and address them in meaningful ways.” Students, staff members and Parent-Teacher Organization members worked together on the taskforce to develop the programs, which Mr. Bannett pre-approved and reviewed after they were completed.

“Students participated in ‘No Name Calling Week,’ a week of multimedia lessons and activities to challenge bullying and promote respect, and an assembly featuring a dance troupe that presented an anti-bullying message,” said Mrs. Karen Gerlach, assistant principal.

Dr. Barry Tomasetti, superintendent, told students he wants to make sure they feel safe. “No Place for Hate’s® goals will help you learn good citizenship, which will help you succeed in life.”

Mr. Bannett told students, “The best way to combat hate is to keep it from developing. If you allow bullying, it will be a foundation for hate in your life.”

He shared risks of bullying, such as victims being more likely to commit suicide and the fact that bullies are more likely to commit crimes, abuse alcohol and drugs, and continue to abuse others.

One in five students is bullied in the United States, and 160,000 students miss school daily because they are afraid of being bullied, said Mr. Bannett.

“We need to learn to appreciate differences, not fear them,” he said.

Dr. John Carr, principal, told students that several years ago he saw a girl in the lunchroom sit down at a table and everyone got up and left her. Another girl saw what happened and sat with her. Dr. Carr wants students to do the right thing, like the girl who stepped in to be kind.

Near the end of the assembly, students rose from their seats and recited a “No Place for Hate” resolution.

Afterwards, Mrs. Jennifer Reinheimer, sixth grade counselor, said, “This is your daily commitment to respect people.” She said “No Place for Hate’s” mission is to treat people equally.



Naomi Simonson is on the No Place for Hate task force, and spoke at the assembly.

NPFH® will be an ongoing commitment at the school. Eighth grade taskforce member, Naomi Simonson, said students took a survey last May and decided they would like 2013 No Place for Hate events to include a Diversity Dance, an ice cream social, and participation in

the Walk Against Hate.

Mrs. Reinheimer said, “The ongoing initiative will help our community evolve into one that embraces, respects and includes all individuals.”

Kennett Middle School joins nearly 160 schools in Pennsylvania that have earned a “No Place for Hate” designation banner.



Parent/Student Resource Corner

Welcome to the Kennett Consolidated School District’s Parent/Student Resource Corner! In each issue of the newsletter, parents and guardians will find educational web sites that will help keep their student academically engaged and challenged outside of the classroom.

PARENT RESOURCES

The state of Pennsylvania and the Kennett Consolidated School District have adopted the new national K to 12 Common Core State Standards in Mathematics and English Language Arts. These standards provide a framework for instruction to prepare students to be college and career ready by the time they graduate from high school.

The links below provide parent-friendly guides for each grade level in mathematics and literacy, both English and Spanish, to support your child’s learning.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Parent’s Guide to Student Success by Grade Level (K-12, English & Spanish)

<http://pta.org/4446.htm>

MATHEMATICS RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

Coolmath for Kids (<http://www.coolmath4kids.com>)

Grades preK-12. Games and other activities offer students fun working with numbers and operations. Try “Number Monster” and “Arithmattack.”

PBS KIDS (<http://pbskids.org/cyberchase>)

Grades K-8. Animated games are presented for each grade level on a wide variety of topics. Excellent graphics are used to make the games entertaining as they teach basic skills.

A+ Math (<http://www.aplusmath.com>)

Grades 2-8. Flashcards, games, worksheets, and a section called “Homework Helper” are found on this site. The activities cover a variety of skills and operations.

Khan Academy (<http://khanacademy.org>)

Grades 1-12. With a library of more than 3,400 videos on everything from arithmetic to physics, finance, and history and hundreds of skills to practice, Khan Academy helps students learn what they want, when they want, at their pace.

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