



KENNETT

CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Fall 2013

Message from the Board

by Aline Frank

A New Year for KCSD and Pennsylvania Schools

I had the opportunity to be at the Mary D. Lang Kindergarten Center on the morning of August 26 and witnessed the Class of 2026 arrive for its first day of school. It was a confident group, and I look forward to seeing what they will do with their time in Kennett. I hope they will work hard and take advantage of the many opportunities the District has to offer. I also wonder how new ideas and policies will shape their school experience.

In Pennsylvania, we are part of a national push for change and innovation in education. In just the past weeks, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) announced changes for Pennsylvania students for the 2013-2014 school year. These involve the Common Core standards, Keystone graduation exams, and the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) waiver. What do these changes mean for our District?

No Child Left Behind Waiver

A week before school opened, the U.S. Department of Education granted Pennsylvania a waiver from certain requirements of NCLB. I asked Superintendent Barry Tomasetti if this means that the pressure is now off for our District. He replied that the pressure will always be on [administration] "as we strive to have every student reach his/her potential." That said, there is no doubt the waiver is good news — it removes the negative labeling of schools when certain and often small subgroups of students do not achieve, and it puts in place an alternative system of accountability characterized by attainable goals, additional support for students in these subgroups, and broader criteria for evaluation. Regarding test data, the shift is towards emphasizing what each student achieves or "value added growth," which Dr. Tomasetti noted is a "truer measure of the effectiveness of our school system."

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STEM Takes Root at Kennett

The Kennett Consolidated School District, with the help of the Kennett Education Foundation, has been laying the foundation for three years to introduce Project Lead the Way to the middle and high school. In September their dedication to introduce this model curriculum for science, technology, engineering and mathematics, popularly referred to as STEM, came to fruition. A recent study revealed that fifty percent of engineers hired by American companies are from other countries. "Our STEM initiative will be Kennett's contribution to changing that statistic," said Superintendent Dr. Barry Tomasetti.

The School Board approved the Project Lead the Way curriculum in February, 2013. It is the curriculum that Harvard Graduate School of Education deems as a model for career and technical education. Dr. Tomasetti said, "There is no substitute for strong core course requirements. Students must demonstrate proficiency in four years of high school math and science courses to graduate."

The STEM elective courses engage students in activities, projects, and problem-based learning to provide hands-on classroom experiences. Students create, design, build, discover, collaborate and solve problems while applying what they learn in math and science. They are also exposed to STEM fields with professionals who supplement the real-world aspect of the curriculum through mentorships and workplace experiences.

All Kennett Middle School students will have a twenty-two day learning cycle of a Project Lead the Way course. Sixth and seventh grade students taking Design and Modeling are being introduced to the design process. "They learn to brainstorm solutions by using concepts they just learned. Afterward, the students reflect on outcomes of their finished products the way they do in industry," said Mr. Lorenzo DeAngelis, Kennett Middle School Assistant Principal.

Students know instantly if they solved the problem or need to go back a step in the design process, said Mr. Jeffrey Powell, Kennett Middle School's STEM teacher. Mr. Powell taught Project Lead the Way courses at a charter school in Lancaster, Pa. He likes the curriculum, adding that it is easy for teachers to follow and modify.

Sixth grade student Ava Hirs completed the Design and Modeling class. She says her favorite part of class was "working on the computer to design a skimmer that would work." A skimmer is an airplane-like structure designed to "skim" a distance across the floor when launched. For the skimmer activity the students had to measure the distance of the flight, record their results, make modifications and test again.

He is excited and a little anxious about the "coolest" part of his Introduction to Engineering Design course, the Virtual Design Project. He plans to partner with an instructor in another state and pair up students to work jointly on projects. Students will have to communicate remotely in their work to develop a final product and presentation. "What an opportunity and experience!" he said enthusiastically.



Eighth grade student Jason Nicholas and sixth grade student Ava Hirs work on a robot under the supervision of Mr. Jeffrey Powell.

Mr. Powell also teaches eighth grade students Automation and Robotics. A third course, Flight and Space, will be added in the 2014-2015 school year to create a three-year cycle of instruction.

Eighth grade student, Jason Nicholas, recently completed the Automation and Robotics class at Kennett Middle School. He explained that he never really thought much about robotics, but now he enjoys taking the time to trouble-shoot how to make his robot go faster or stop sooner.

In Project Lead the Way's inaugural year at Kennett High School, two courses will be taught by two teachers, Mr. Ron Phillips and Mr. Dan Folmar. Mr. Phillips, who is entering his eleventh year of teaching mathematics, believes the STEM curriculum will answer the question students often ask him, "Why are we learning this?" He explains that he sees the STEM curriculum as "the best way to link what students are learning in core classes to the so-called real world."

Mr. Folmar is teaching Principles of Engineering. He earned a degree in engineering and said he hopes students who are already thinking about a career in engineering will get early exposure to what they will encounter in college and that a few other students will decide engineering is a course to pursue.

Junior Kirsten Sharp is taking both Principles of Engineering and Introduction to Engineering Design. While she is enjoy-

ing both courses, she admits to liking Principles of Engineering better at this point because the work is more hands-on. In her Introduction to Engineering Design class, Kirsten is working with pencil and paper to get a feel for the design process. Eventually the class will use industry standard 3D modeling software to design buildings. Taking both classes has Kirsten performing a bit of a juggling act with her schedule, but she is thrilled with the work and is thankful that she was encouraged by her guidance counselor, Mr. Fran Ryan, to register for the courses.

Senior Cory Tomasetti is taking Principles of Engineering. This class exposes students to engineering concepts that they will encounter should they major in engineering after high school. He explained that the class has helped him solidify his interest in mechanical engineering as a college major. Like his classmate Kirsten, Cory also enjoys the

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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.

District Directory

KENNETT CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Jane Pedroso, Curriculum Supervisor for Language Arts and Social Studies
Mary Lynn Vincent, Curriculum Supervisor for Mathematics and Science

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

Alumni Spotlight: The Tatums: A Kennett High School Family Affair

Many parents in the Kennett Consolidated School District say they like the family atmosphere of Kennett's schools. For the Tatums, this atmosphere is figuratively and literally a family affair with three generations of alumni: a grandfather, daughter, and two granddaughters.

Mrs. Patti Tatum, a 1974 graduate and Kennett Middle School social studies teacher, said her father graduated from the "new" high school in 1940. She said, "He told me about his class leaving the old high school where Mary D. Lang is located now and walking up the steps of the [current] high school."

Mrs. Tatum grew up in Kennett and enjoyed living close to the schools. When she graduated and left for college, her goal was to return to Kennett and teach. "I'm more of the small town person and like the family atmosphere in the District," she said.

When she first started teaching in what is now the high school's science wing, she said, "I was teaching in rooms where I had been a second and third grade student." Now she is teaching a second generation of families. "I like the history of knowing the parents and the children."

Mrs. Tatum said teaching American History in Kennett is "easy" because it housed a local Underground Railroad stop and a segregated movie theater. "I help students make correlations, although they can't believe there was a theater in town, and that it was segregated."

In high school she played on the girls' tennis team. "I wanted to be the coach," Mrs. Tatum said. When she returned to Kennett, she coached the team for 10 years.

She also played clarinet and has fond memories of marching in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York City. Now she works with her eighth grade team to create memories for the students. "We work hard, and we play hard. It's the side events, like our trip to Washington, D.C., that students remember.

Alex, her older daughter and 2004 Kennett High School graduate, agrees. The fourth-year medical student at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York said she and her father "reminisce often about our favorite and funniest moments" from her senior class trip to Disney World, which Mr. Tatum chaperoned.

Although Mr. Tom Tatum is not an alumnus, he taught English at Kennett High School for 35 years. As the chairman of the English department, he taught Advanced Placement English and English Literature to his daughter, Alex.

She said it was not strange having her father as a teacher. "He cultivated a love of literature and writing in me when I was little, so discussions about English were not unusual for us - they were just more structured in the classroom."

Alex added, "I enjoyed having my dad and mom know all of my classmates well and having my dad participate in many of my high school activities." She was in band, orchestra, National Honor Society, Student Forum, FBLA, yearbook, and the senior class play. Alex also was class president all four years at Kennett High School.

She was recognized as a Presidential Scholar, received a partial scholarship, and graduated summa cum laude in Liberal Arts at George Washington University. She is studying medicine now "to become an advocate for the underserved." She chose this path after her Kennett social studies teacher Mr. Shawn Duffy told students he chose



teaching as a second career to have a lasting impact on others.

"I felt medicine would give me a practical skill set to better the lives of others," she said. Alex explored her long-held interest in maternal-child health through experiences she had in West Africa and Guatemala. Now, she is interested in the mental health of women and children. After finishing her core clinical rotations, Alex enjoyed OB/GYN, pediatrics and psychiatry the most.

She serves as the Director of Clinical Operations for The Weill Cornell Center for Human Rights in her free time. The medical student-run organization provides forensic medical evaluations to survivors of persecution seeking asylum in the U.S.

Reflecting on her high school education she said, "Kennett prepared me with the academic foundation to succeed in undergraduate and medical school. The encouraging atmosphere and leadership opportunities instilled self-confidence in me to pursue my educational and professional aspirations."

Erin, the Tatum's younger daughter and a 2010 Kennett High School graduate, earned film and LGBT degrees at the University of California – Berkley despite having cerebral palsy. She beat the odds, saying the university tells disabled students they will most likely

graduate in five years. Erin graduated in three years.

Her spirit, 37 Advanced Placement credits and summer school sessions helped her graduate early. She decided to attend Berkley because it is the "epicenter of disability rights," she said.

Berkley encourages first-semester disabled students to take a light load to transition to college life. Being wheelchair bound, Erin needs assistance "with everything," she said. As an 18-year-old, she had to interview, hire, manage, and sometimes fire an assistant.

The Berkley students were surprised she went to public high school. "Most of my classmates went to private school." She said the difference lies in making the most of every opportunity.

At Berkley, she studied the history and philosophy of silent and sound films. "My hardest class ever was on the 18th Century philosophy of What is the Meaning of the Camera?" said Erin.

She met often with a professor and they discussed "Skins," a British television show. After a number of talks, the professor made her an offer she couldn't refuse: Create a syllabus for a course on "Skins," and I will sponsor you.

Erin wove show themes and episodes together for a semester-long course that 25 students attended. "I knew about the actors and scripts. But I couldn't have done it without my co-facilitator who made slides and presented information because I can't talk that long."

Later, Erin whittled her course into a presentation that was accepted for the Teenagers and Contemporary Visual Culture Conference at Oxford University. She said, "I had no idea professors were applying to speak." Erin so impressed conference organizers with her presentation that she is now on the steering committee for next year's conference in Athens, Greece.

"My dream is to write scripts that portray the disabled, women, LGBT, and people of color differently so they are not stereotyped," she said. Erin credits Mrs. Hancock, her third grade teacher at Greenwood Elementary School, for teaching her grammar – and that her opinion matters.

Back at home now, Erin is taking a rest by deferring her acceptance to Leeds College in England.

Thinking about all that was said, Mrs. Tatum said, "Kennett has been very good to our family."

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Common Core Standards

As you are probably aware, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are an initiative of the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers designed to provide parents and schools with a clear set of expectations for what students in K-12 should know to prepare for college and the workforce. Pennsylvania adopted the standards in July 2010—among 45 states to have done so. However, from the beginning the Commonwealth chose to modify them, wanting the rigor of the CCSS and closer alignment to the design of the current standards and corresponding PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment). The modified standards are known as the PA Common Core Standards or PA Core Standards.

The District began preparing for implementation of the standards for math and language arts in the summer of 2011 with curriculum supervisors Ms. Jane Pedroso and Ms. Mary Lynn Vincent leading teacher professional development. The standards will be fully implemented during the current school year. The transition has been smooth. It should be noted that a big impetus

for developing the CCSS was that several states did not have any standards or rigorous standards. Because both the Commonwealth and KCSD already had high expectations, Dr. Tomasetti believes “the transition for the vast majority of students will be no trouble at all.” He added that

most students will excel on State tests and that expectations in the classroom and on teacher-made tests are set above the PSSA and Keystone exams.

At the September 9 Board meeting, Dr. Tomasetti noted that the new standards represent the “floor and not the ceiling” of what we expect students to achieve. There is no question that the floor has been raised! When asked to explain the difference between the old and the new standards, Dr. Tomasetti explained,

Most students will excel on State tests and that expectations in the classroom and on teacher-made tests are set above the PSSA and Keystone exams.

“There is much more emphasis on application of learned objectives and greater specificity in reference to student learning.”

Example:

PA Standards: What point of view did the author use to write his story?

PA Common Core: Analyze the author’s point of view and provide evidence from the text that supports

your answer.

Keystone Exams

On September 12, the State Board of Education adopted the final implementation schedule for the Keystone exams, which are rigorous end-of-course exams required for graduation and replace the 11th grade PSSA.

This year’s 9th graders, the Class of 2017, will be required to pass Keystone

exams (or comparable assessments) in three subjects: algebra I, biology and literature. Current 8th graders will be required to take a fourth exam in composition. Finally, current 6th graders (Class of 2020) and classes after that year will take a fifth exam, contingent on funding, in civics and government.

What is ahead for KCSD?

Prior to the first day for students, Dr. Tomasetti addressed the KCSD faculty and staff and outlined a clear set of instructional goals and initiatives for the 2013-2014 school year. Among other initiatives, KCSD is proud to be moving into a second year of implementing our Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) program.

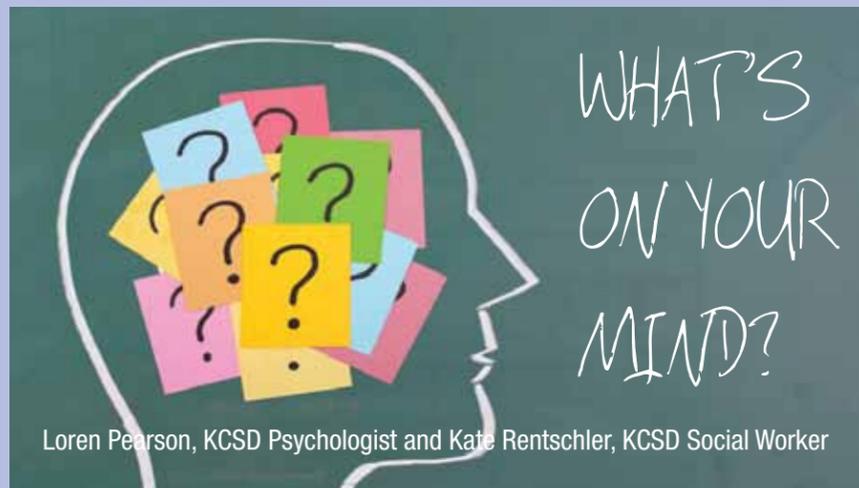
These goals and initiatives are rooted in the District’s mission to “increase the achievement of all students.” The new year is off to a strong start, and I look forward to seeing what we will accomplish as a District.

Cybersafety: What It Is and What We Can Do About It

As we all know, the Internet can be a very dangerous place. While access to the Internet can provide children with unlimited sources for positive experiences and learning resources, it also exposes them to risks not encountered in the “real world.” Cybersafety is knowing how to utilize the Internet in a positive and safe way.

It is reported that 97 percent of teens, age 12 to 17, go online; 73 percent of teens have profiles on social media; and one in three teens has experienced online harassment (Lenhart). Consumer Reports found 1 million children where harassed, threatened or subjected to other forms of cyberbullying on Facebook during 2011. Additionally, the Journal of Adolescent Health (2010) reported that in 82 percent of online sexual crimes against minors, the offender used the victim’s social networking site to gain information about the victim. Sixty-five percent of the offenders found information about the child’s home and school on social networking sites, while 26 percent used the victim’s social networking site to determine their location at a specific time. These statistics can be alarming, but there are ways to educate your child to be cybersafe and cybersmart.

Protecting our children involves education, involvement, and watching for warning signs. Children and youth who are victimized often experience significant mental health concerns that impact both home and school. These problems can include high levels of anxiety, depression, substance abuse, eating disorders, relationship problems, and suicidal ideation. Your child may be at risk if he or she: spends large amounts of time online, especially late at night; turns off the computer quickly when you come into the room or becomes upset if you ask to see what



Loren Pearson, KCSD Psychologist and Kate Rentschler, KCSD Social Worker

they are doing online; receives phone calls from adults you don’t know or is making long distance calls; receives mail or gifts from people you don’t know and uses an online account belonging to someone else.

Given the potential dangers of children’s Internet usage, the following suggestions for addressing Internet safety in the home are offered for parents.

1. Keep your computer in a common area rather than a child’s bedroom.
2. Regularly monitor your children when they are online and set time limits.
3. Install filtering, tracking and blocking software to monitor what your children are doing online.
4. Encourage your child to let you know if they are aware of others who may be victims of cyber abuse.
5. Although adults should consider the privacy needs of their children, concern for child safety should

override privacy concerns. Tell your child that you may review his or her online communications from time to time to monitor their safety.

6. Adjust the parental controls offered by your Internet Service Provider to limit your child’s access to inappropriate material.
7. Check your computer’s Internet history to see what sites your child visits.
8. Monitor your child’s screen name (avoid using any suggestive or vital information that could be used to exploit your child)
9. Advise your child to NEVER
 - agree to meet face to face with someone they’ve met online
 - provide their name, phone number, address, school name, sibling’s or parent’s name, or any personal information

- transmit a picture of themselves or others

As parents, we should learn as much as we can about the Internet and social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, texting, chat rooms, YouTube video behaviors, etc.). Ask your child to show you the places they visit online. Parents can also access information from the Attorney General’s Internet safety program called “Operation Safe Surf” through their website at education@attorneygeneral.gov.

As we start a new school year, we know our children will be busy learning new academic skills and juggling home and school activities. Keeping our children safe from cyber-stress will free them to focus on the academic and social behaviors that will help them grow in a safe and healthy environment and to achieve their potential.

Please contact Mrs. Rentschler at krentschler@kcsd.org or Dr. Pearson at lpearson@kcsd.org with questions, comments or ideas for future “What’s on Your Mind” topics.

Resources:

Education and Outreach Office of the Attorney General of PA., education@attorneygeneral.gov

Adapted and modified from Dombrowski, S. C., LeMasney, J. W., Ahia, C. E., & Dickson, S. A. (2004), [Education@attorneygeneral.gov](mailto:education@attorneygeneral.gov)

Greenwood Elementary School's Custom-Designed Summer School "Hits All the Marks"

Mrs. Tracey Marino, Greenwood Elementary School's principal, knew exactly how she would use a large federal grant. She would host a summer school to help 25 percent of her students, those who struggle most with reading and math, to retain what they had learned during the past year rather than lose ground during the summer. When they returned to school this fall, their test results "hit all the marks," said Mrs. Marino.

This success was made possible through a \$60,000 federal grant given to help Greenwood Elementary School attain Adequate Yearly Progress status after the school did not meet that benchmark for two years.

To help economically disadvantaged students stay at their current reading level throughout the summer, Mrs. Marino and Mr. Jon Kilpatrick, second grade teacher, researched elements of the most successful summer schools and molded them into their plan:

- Class size of 15 or fewer students
- 80 hours of summer school
- Math fact practice
- Students reflecting on what they do not know and working to learn those things
- Grouping students by reading ability level, rather than grade level, for instruction.

"We identified 150 students for the summer school, and 136 participated in the Monday-Thursday program. For those not participating, we asked parents what their plans were to help their child during the summer," said Mrs. Marino.

It was difficult for Mrs. Marino to assess the progress of kindergarteners and first-grade students who entered first and second grade this academic year because the measures used at this level change over

time. However, second, third and fourth grade students are assessed with the same instruments. Mrs. Marino was able to compare the data collected on students in May to the data collected on the same students in September. She then compared the progress of students who attended summer school to that of at-risk students who did not attend summer school. Mrs. Marino is pleased with the results – forty-three percent of the students who attended summer school maintained or improved their reading fluency and accuracy compared to only twenty-four percent of similar students who did not attend summer school.

Without support, research shows at-risk students can lose up to 20 percent of their reading level during the summer, which puts them at a further disadvantage when they return to school in the fall. Mrs. Marino states that research also shows that children who are not reading on level by third grade have an increasingly difficult time closing that gap and are exponentially more likely to drop out of school.

In 2001, the National Institute for Literacy published that "More than 20 percent of adults read at or below a fifth-grade level - far below the level needed to earn a living wage." Mrs. Marino explained that "Students stuck at this reading level will be unable to fill out job applications or read instructions on the French fry machine at McDonalds."

While she and Greenwood Elementary School's teachers were serious about helping students succeed in the class-

room and in life, they made the school's summer school something students looked forward to each day, which has carried over with students returning to school with good attitudes this fall.

To help set the tone to kick off summer school, students and parents attended a pep rally, complete with hot dogs and drinks. "We gave a bilingual presentation so all parents would understand the goals of the very structured program," said Ms. Emlyn Frangiosa, an ESL teacher and a summer school program coordinator. "We held the parents just as accountable as the students to make the program work. If a child was absent, we called to see if the child could come to school that day."

The structure included a "positive" start to the day as teachers greeted students getting off their buses, eating breakfast, and thinking about the "Morning Message," such as, "I will only say kind comments," which students were encouraged to think about on their way to reading, said Ms. Frangiosa.

Kindergarten students enjoyed working on iPads to learn how to sound out words, and they rotated from station to station in Miss Kaitlin Sipple's class to do literacy activities.

After nearly two hours, students switched to grade-level math classes. "We were looking at deficits and helping students entering grades three through five master the skills of adding, subtract-

Without support, research shows at-risk students can lose up to 20 percent of their reading level during the summer, which puts them at a further disadvantage when they return to school in the fall.

ing and working with 10s and 100s," said Miss Frangiosa.

Students assessed with higher math skills were given work that challenged them. All students practiced math facts or did workbook problems that reinforced Pennsylvania's Common Core concepts that students are expected to know.

To help create math lessons, Greenwood teachers shared their best lesson plans, which were compiled into teaching manuals. Mr. Kilpatrick said, "All the effort was worth it. We facilitated very good instruction."

He said another element of successful summer schools is using strategies to maintain focus and enthusiasm of the students, parents and teachers. Guest readers pumped up students' enthusiasm for "Creating a Community," which was the last portion of the day. Community members from Longwood Gardens, Longwood Fire Company, the SPCA, as well as District teachers and Superintendent Dr. Barry Tomasetti explained what they were going to read and why they like to read. A Longwood firefighter who plays old-time baseball for the Elkton Eclipse came dressed in his woolen uniform to read to students.

"It's advantageous for community members to help students. By building bridges, students will become more interactive with the community," said Mr. Kilpatrick.

In the meantime, Mrs. Marino is thinking about next summer. "I want to replicate the program, and I need to raise money for it." The federal dollars used last summer were given as a one-time grant. "If we only raise \$10,000, we'll serve as many children as we can. Obviously, the more money we raise, the more children we can help." Anyone who is interested in helping to subsidize Greenwood Elementary School's 2014 summer school program can contact Mrs. Marino directly.

A Summer of Science and Leadership for Two KHS Seniors

Kennett High School Seniors Fabian Zamores and Marco Zavala understand that hard work and determination is the basis for everything worthwhile they will achieve in life. They also know that learning is not limited to the nine month academic year. For the past three summers, both young men have been accepted to the prestigious Upward Bound Math and Science Program at Penn State University.

The purpose of the Upward Bound Math and Science Program is to assist students in recognizing and developing their potential to excel in math or science and to encourage them to pursue postsecondary degrees in these fields. The six week residential program serves approximately fifty students at no cost and currently holds a 92 percent post-secondary education acceptance rate and a 99 percent high school graduation rate for program participants.

Upon arriving, the students are divided into small groups. Over the next six weeks, each group works with a team of researchers on a large project. For example, Fabian's group studied infrared radiation and how it affected the ability to use satellite imagery. Marco's group considered carbon structure interchange as a means to making materials and products that are thinner and lighter. At the end of the six-week program, each team presented its project and findings to a panel of judges; Fabian's team was awarded third place.

In addition to working on the group project, Fabian and Marco took mini-courses including physics, calculus and communication. These intensive courses gave them valuable, first-hand experience in college life. Marco commented that he chose to take physics during the program in preparation for his physics

class at Kennett High School. Fabian, who also took physics, added that although the large auditorium was not filled, it was an interesting change from sitting in a high school classroom.

This summer, in addition to attending the Upward Bound Math and Science Program, both Marco and Fabian were accepted to the Science Leadership Program at Penn State's Eberly College of Science. This one-week camp prepares students for a future in scientific careers while providing an integrated approach to leadership. The focus of this year's program was on the Elements of Innovation. Each participant was expected to select at least two books to read and incorporate into a two-page reflection paper. Book choices included *Leading with the Heart* and *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens*.

With a focus on the arts, group projects, lab tours, and creative thinking, Fabian explained that this program was more social than the Upward Bound program. "I enjoyed having the time to speak with college professors about my life after graduation," he said. "I even had one professor offer to assist me during my senior year."

As they enter their senior year at Kennett High School, Fabian and Marco are looking forward to more hard work, including completing college applications. Fabian will be applying to Penn State and MIT with the goal of becoming an architectural engineer. Still deciding between medicine and engineering, Marco will be applying to Drexel University, Penn State, and Lehigh University.

Brian Allyon: KHS Freshman, Published Author, Impassioned Writer

Brian Allyon admits freely that he never did like to write. Now the Kennett High School freshman is an author with a book that was published on Amazon.com when he was in eighth grade – a year after a substitute teacher ignited his passion for writing. “She gave me the freedom to write what I wanted to write,” said Brian. Up to that point, Brian had only written research papers. The substitute teacher allowed him to write fiction for the first time. He said, “I like to let my mind create things rather than gather facts and write a report.”

Fast forward to eighth grade when his Honors Language Arts teacher challenged the class to write a novel in a month. Brian calculated that he needed to write approximately 1,000 words per day to meet his deadline for a 50,000-word novel. He said, “I would take half-hour breaks after school every day, and then I would get on my laptop and write away.”

Brian got the idea for his book, “Those Who Learn,” after watching a Japanese animation activity during After-the-Bell, an after-school program for Kennett Middle School students. He saw a lady control paper by turning it into different things for her purposes. “I loved the thought of controlling everyday objects in impossible ways,” said Brian.

His main character, Floyd, is an eighth grade boy who uses a set square as a shield or sword to “keep everyone safe from odd attacks by the faculty at his school.” Brian said, “I put myself into the main character and thought as he thought. It happened in real time. But I type slower than I think, and sometimes I would lose an idea.”

As an added incentive to the student’s writing, middle school teachers Ms. Kathryn Hahn and Mrs. Judy Jester enrolled all of their Honors Language Arts students



Brian Allyon, at right, signs books for his fans, including Dr. Tomasetti.

in the Young Writers Program of The Office of Letters and Lights, a non-profit that created NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month). Ms. Hahn and her students discussed character-driven vs. plot-driven novels and genres in which they could write. “During class they planned their plots and character development, and then they gave each other feedback on ideas,” said Ms. Hahn. Students selected word counts ranging from 5,000 to 20,000 words for their novels. Brian decided to take the NaNoWriMo challenge to write 50,000 words. While most students reached their word counts, they did not entirely complete their stories.

Brian tracked his writing progress on the NaNoWriMo website. “I enjoyed seeing the word counter bars go up and up.”

Brian put finishing touches on his novel at 11 p.m., an hour before the contest deadline. He uploaded his novel. “I

was so happy it was over. Then I realized I was 100 words short, so I had to write more.” When he reached the 50,000 word count, a video appeared. TheNaNoWriMo staff congratulated him and other winners. The prize: Amazon.com published Brian’s book (which he had to edit himself) and offers it for sale on its web site. Brian earns 66 percent from each copy sold, enough he hopes to help buy supplies when he goes to college.

But the real prize for Brian was discovering he likes to write fiction. Now, he reads about writing. “I should have gotten rid of entire chapters,” he laments. But he presses on, carrying a copy of “Wired for Story: The Writer’s Guide to Using Brain Science to Hook Readers from the Very First Sentence,” to read during study halls. He said his second novel will be about a girl who saves the world.

While Brian is unsure what he will study in college, he plans to “write on the side.” What a novel idea.

KHS Senior Attends Princeton Summer Journalism Program

Christian Cordova-Pedroza, Kennett High School senior, remembers his first summer adventure after his freshman year of high school. “My parents didn’t want me to travel alone, so I applied to the Future Latino Leaders Law Camp and told them after I was accepted,” he said. The nine-day program, held since 2005 by the Hispanic National Bar Association, offers students the chance to travel to Washington, D.C. to learn about the college application process, meet influential Latino leaders, and tour national monuments and various government agencies.

Christian’s parents conceded that summer and he hasn’t looked back, attending Penn State’s Upward Bound Math and Science program for three years. This past August he became one of 25 high school students from across the country to attend Princeton University’s Summer Journalism Program. The goal of this intensive, all-expense paid, 10-day seminar on journalism is to diversify college and professional newsrooms by encouraging outstanding students from low-income backgrounds to pursue careers in journalism.

Christian explained that the three tier application process was grueling and included a general application, three essay questions, teacher recommen-

dations, and a phone interview. “The interviewers asked difficult questions. For example, ‘What is the worst thing the American government has done to its people?’” Christian had just finished a paper on the Trail of Tears and used that as his answer. However, thinking more about the question after the interview he said that slavery and the Dred Scott case, as well as the Great Depression, are also on his list.

Christian described the 10-day seminar as a whirlwind of once-in-a-lifetime activities where he explored the world of journalism including topics such as news, sports, opinion and arts journalism, as well as television reporting. He also learned from some of the best in the profession including journalists from the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and *People* magazine. In addition to participating in classroom-style lectures, the group took field trips to New York City, touring the offices of the *New York Times* and *Newsweek* magazine and speaking with editors and a foreign correspondent.

Each day Christian would be up by 7 a.m. and would work until after midnight. “Our instructors told us that they only had us for 10 days and they needed and wanted to cover as much information as possible,” he said.

The seminar included lectures, debates and field trips and was organized like an actual newsroom. Christian admitted that many of the events the group attended and locations they visited were firsts for him. He described attending his first baseball and football games. “We went to a Trenton Thunder game when Alex Rodriguez was playing for them as a result of his suspension. We were able to interview other fans to get their thoughts on his alleged steroid use and suspension.”

“I appreciated working in a mock-up of an actual newsroom,” Christian explained. “We would write articles for each event or lecture, our editors would make changes, and we had to go back and re-write our articles based on the edits.”

In New York City the students were divided into groups, and each group was assigned to pharmacies in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx. The goal was to interview pharmacists on

Christian described the 10-day seminar as a whirlwind of once-in-a-lifetime activities where he explored the world of journalism.

their knowledge of the June ruling that made the emergency contraceptive pill Plan B One-Step available over the counter to people of all ages. Christian explained that this was the first controversial newspaper article he has written and that this article led the students

and professional journalists to debate whether student journalists and their publications are taken seriously because of censorship that often occurs with school-run papers.

The culminating project was publishing The Princeton Summer Journal. Each student chose two of the stories he or she had written during the 10 day seminar to include in the paper. Christian chose his film review article and his editorial titled *Growing up in the mushroom capital*.

Along with his classmates, Christian is in the midst of submitting his college applications. He will be applying to Brown, Yale, Columbia, and Harvard Universities as well as the University of California, Los Angeles.

KHS Video Production Teacher's Mantra Produces Awards and Life Direction

Kennett High School's video production teacher Mr. Frank Vanderslice repeats the following mantra to students every day: Make it better. It is this mantra that produces award-winning work and life direction for students.

In the 11 years that scholastic Emmy awards have been presented to high schools, students in his classes have won five Emmys and nearly 20 Awards of Excellence. Upon graduation, Mr. Vanderslice's students pursue broadcasting, video production and film careers.

Two 2012 graduates, Meghan Slaninko and Mikala Slicer, won a first-place Emmy last spring for a news segment on Mr. Ric Gillespie, a researcher who searched for aviator Amelia Earhart's remains. Mikala said she benefitted from Mr. Vanderslice's mantra, saying that he taught her everything she knows about video production and movie making. "He has been more of a friend to me than a teacher. He taught me school lessons every day in school but also how to succeed in life - to always give everything my best and seize every opportunity. Without him I would have never discovered my passion."

"Students understand that the goal of their work is to create projects that emulate videos seen on broadcast television," said Mr. Vanderslice. He encourages them to allow him to critique their work before submitting it for a grade. "I review technical aspects and the content or story being told. Most students appreciate the feedback and make changes."

Ethan Saltzberg, a 2012 graduate, agrees. "Mr. Vanderslice gave constructive criticism and inspiration which encouraged me to be more creative in my advanced video production class." Ethan is a Northwestern University freshman studying Radio/TV/Film after spending a year interning for NBC in New York City and at Teleduction in Wilmington, Delaware.

Mr. Vanderslice teaches six courses ranging from a hand-on TV studio learning lab to video editing with professional software and high-end iMac computers. "I encourage

(right) Annie Uhle uses Final Cut Express to edit a video.

(below) Heather McDonald operates a camera in the production studio.



Pacific Island and added narration explaining the search.

Students also are inspired to produce better work because they get critiques from Hollywood professionals and students across the United States. Mr. Vanderslice secured this collaboration with Independent Student Media (ISM) through a Kennett Education Foundation grant. This fall ISM plans to air the best student-produced videos on a cable network giving Kennett students an opportunity to gain national recognition for their work. For two summers, Mr. Vanderslice also worked real film productions with the ISM team in Hollywood. He met Hollywood executives, worked with studio technicians, toured studios and sound stages, and interviewed crew members. "I brought back that knowledge and continue to share it with my students," he said.

students to learn as many skills as they can," he said.

Meghan took four years of video production classes and credits Mr. Vanderslice for her direction in life. "Through his classes I met producers and went to production companies. He opened doors to many opportunities, including my dream to attend Full Sail University." She is studying video production to become a director.

Ethan visited Kennett High School the day of what could become Meghan's award-winning interview. He assisted her in setting up to record.

Teamwork is important in video production. While researching Mr. Gillespie and Amelia Earhart for the interview, Meghan asked Mikala for help, explaining that she "knew she was an awesome editor." Mikala spliced interview clips with shots of Mr. Gillespie's search of a

Lucas Ransick, a Kennett High School junior, enjoys his video production class so much that he bought editing software and video equipment to use at home. "I enjoy seeing the final product and being able to show off my creativity in a way you can't with a drawing or photograph." He also hopes to pursue a career in video production.

Annie Uhle, a 2013 graduate studying broadcasting at Ithaca College, once told Mr. Vanderslice, "We don't do work in your class. When you do things you really enjoy, it isn't work!"



2012 graduates Meghan Slaninko and Mikala Slicer won a first-place Emmy last spring for a news segment on Mr. Ric Gillespie, a researcher who searched for aviator Amelia Earhart's remains.

New Garden Elementary School Begins Year with Creative Collaboration

In an effort to get her students creating on the very first day of art class, New Garden Elementary School's art teacher, Ms. Katherine Skopowski, introduced the students to a collaborative art project based off an activity called The Exquisite Corpse. In The Exquisite Corpse activity a collection of words or images is collectively assembled with each collaborator adding to a composition in sequence by being allowed to see only the end of what the previous person contributed. The idea is a spin-off of the Surrealist era's belief that creative ideas can come from accidents. The game began as an old parlor game where participants would write a part of a sentence, fold the paper and pass it along. When the sentence is revealed, a story comes to life.

In Ms. Skopowski's version students received a square: some of them had black lines on them, some were blank, but each one was unique and odd. Students were asked to decorate their square however they wished - some students created portraits, others drew scenes, and some were completely abstract. Fourth grade student Nina Garlewski-Goel liked that she was able to color anything she wanted on her square, while her classmates Edgar Franco and Lauren Kane found the mystery of the final piece to be exciting.

Once each square was completed, the pieces were put together like a puzzle creating an ultimate image with the black lines, reinforcing the idea that although each piece was individual,

it was also part of a whole. However, before each image was assembled, the students were asked to guess which iconic piece of artwork their pieces would create. In total, five famous pieces of artwork emerged from their work with a new image created each day. Once the images were assembled, the students could see the line drawings of the famous pieces of artwork that were displayed throughout the halls.



The Night the Lights Went On in Kennett: Community Celebrates Stadium Lights

“It was awesome when the sun set and the lights were shining on our field. I got goose bumps,” said Liam Clarke, co-captain of Kennett’s football team. As he looked out over the unusually large crowd that came to celebrate Kennett High’s first night home football game to be played under the new stadium lights, he thought how good it was to see community members united as a group.

During the season opener against Avon Grove on August 30, Kennett’s other football co-captain, Sean Rooke, said, “It was a great feeling knowing we were the first team in Kennett’s history to play a night game in our stadium. Our hard work paid off.” The team helped raise money for the metal halide lights which were inspired by another high school football game.

Mrs. Barbara Nash, Demon Lights Committee member, was driving through a small town one evening after a high school football game. “People were everywhere, walking around and standing in a long line outside a pizza shop.” She felt a sense of community and thought, “We could have this in Kennett.” Her inspiration sparked the formation of a committee to raise funds for stadium lights. She and Mr. Jeff Roland, lights committee co-chair, took on fundraising when their youngest children were graduating. They had missed attending their children’s midday games when they could not leave work and wanted other parents to have the opportunity to see their children play



after work hours. Now that Kennett has stadium lights, boys and girls soccer and field hockey games will also be played at night during the fall, said Mr. Jeff Thomas, Assistant Principal and Athletic Director.

After four years of fund raising, Mrs. Nash’s wish came true. Mr. Thomas estimated 4,000-5,000 people attended the “White Out” celebration. Mr. Roland said white represents light, and to celebrate the committee gave away 700 white T-shirts within 30 minutes of the gates opening.

Demon Lights Committee members honored during a half-time presentation include: Mr. and Mrs. Jeff and Cathy

Roland, Mr. and Mrs. Jim and Barbara Nash, Mrs. Pam Ramagano, Mr. and Mrs. Carl and Carol Lowe, Mr. Mike Fragale, Mr. Joe Sexton, Mrs. Heather Schaen, and Mr. Mike Finnegan.

To add to the excitement, NBC10 covered the game, airing pre- and post-game segments, and featuring the game and both schools on “The Blitz,” a new weekly show. Students and community members from Kennett and Avon Grove cast nearly half of the 55,000 votes received by the station to win coverage over two other regional match-ups that week. “It was great for our school to receive this publicity. It definitely showed many positive aspects of Kennett

High School,” said Dr. Michael Barber, Principal.

Reflecting on all that was accomplished to make the lighting a reality, Dr. Barry Tomasetti, Superintendent, said, “We are extremely thankful to the Demon Lights Committee, our community members, and business partners for their contributions in making our stadium lights a reality.”

Mr. Roland said raising \$225,000 for the stadium lights was a community effort. “People gave what they could during the economic recovery. All donations of \$5 to \$10,000 counted.” Mrs. Nash added, “We also really appreciated the community supporting the carnival during the hot, hot July days.”

Football team members also raised funds. They each needed to sell \$120 worth of pancake breakfast tickets. One player, Sean, sold tickets during the Memorial Day parade, and one man told him he wanted four sets of tickets because “Kennett needs the lights.” After Sean ran out of tickets, he asked for donations and raised \$800 that day.

The Demon Lights Committee gave special thanks to the following donors: Diver Chevrolet, Chester County Technical College High School, Genesis, BeDriven, Southern Chester County Soccer Association, The Mushroom Festival, and Seasons Pizza.

STEM Takes Root at Kennett

Continued from page 1

hands-on aspect of the class, saying that not only are they learning about the six simple machines – inclined plane, screw, wedge, lever, pulley, and wheel and axle – they apply their knowledge to create solutions to various challenges, document their work and communicate solutions.

In order to implement this curriculum, classrooms at both schools were reconfigured with workstations. Students are

also working on new robust computers which can handle engineering software.

Costs for Project Lead the Way teacher training, equipment, and software is being underwritten by two grants. The Kennett Education Foundation pledged \$150,000 and the Bemis Corporation awarded the high school \$35,000 for program costs.

To further help students understand STEM concepts and learn about related careers, Dr. Tomasetti is seeking collaborations with local companies. “We have parents who are engineers who work for companies such as DuPont, Boeing, Gore, Exelon, and others. They can show students how STEM objectives are relevant to the workplace.”

Over the last several years numerous academic institutions have released reports

highlighting Project Lead the Way’s success in engaging the hearts and minds of students through STEM education. Among other things, the reports find that students who participated in Project Lead the Way outperform their peers in school and that they are more focused on attending college. While every report is different, the results are clear: Project Lead the Way is preparing students for the global economy.

From Morning Meetings to Academic Choice – Responsive Classroom Provides Strategies that Work

Responsive Classroom approach is not simply a set of behaviors and rules. It is a teaching approach where a social curriculum is fully merged with the school’s academic curriculum. It is a research- and evidence-based approach to elementary education that leads to greater teacher effectiveness, higher student achievement, and improved school climate. It is an approach that Bancroft Elementary School teachers Mrs. Gina Brodie and Mrs. April Reynolds enthusiastically embrace in their fourth grade classrooms.

The core idea of the Responsive Classroom approach is that the social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum because children learn best through social interaction. The approach, which seeks to create a safe, joyful and challenging learning environment for every child, has several distinctive features. These include:

- Morning Meeting in which classes gather each morning to greet one another, share news, and warm up for the day ahead.
- Positive teacher language in which teachers use words and tone to promote children’s active learning and self-discipline.

- Positive approaches to student discipline where logical consequences are used based on the discipline issue.

“The philosophy behind the Responsive Classroom approach is that we, as teachers, can’t expect students to do something correctly without it being modeled for them,” Mrs. Brodie explained. “For example, if we want students to look each other in the eye when they speak and to speak loud and proud, then we must model this behavior with each other and with the students. As teachers we need to understand that children may not come to our classroom knowing how to take turns, listen, disagree respectfully, or do many other things that reflect positive school behavior.”

To help the students learn these skills, teachers carefully break the skills into small parts, briefly describe the behavior they are looking for, model the behavior themselves, give the children practice and feedback, and then reteach as necessary throughout the year.

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Kennett High School Celebrates National Merit Semifinalists

Kennett High School is proud to announce that four Kennett High School students have been recognized as National Merit Semifinalists in the 59th annual National Merit Scholarship Program. The National Merit Semifinalists are (back to front) seniors Katherine Coughlan, Kiera Judge and Kristen Miller. Gabriel Leto was not available to be photographed.

These academically talented seniors were among more than 1.5 million juniors in more than 22,000 high schools who entered the 2014 National Merit Program by taking the 2012 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) that served as an initial screening of program entrants. The nationwide pool of semifinalists represents less than one percent of high school seniors and includes the highest scoring entrants in each state. The number of semifinalists in each state is proportional to the state's percentage of the national total of graduating seniors.

These students are eligible to continue in the program competition for some 8,000 National Merit Scholarship awards worth more than \$35 million to be offered in the spring. To advance to the finalist level and to be considered for a Merit Scholarship award, semifinalists must fulfill several additional requirements. These include an outstanding academic record, endorsement by their principal, and SAT scores that confirm the preliminary results. The semifinalist and his/her counselor must submit a detailed scholarship application that includes the student's essay and information about his/her participation and leadership in school and community activities.

Kennett High School offers the PSAT/NMSQT each year in October. Juniors at the high school are encouraged to take this test so that they may be eligible for consideration in the National Merit Program.



The National Merit Scholarship Program is sponsored by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC), a not-for-profit organization that operates without government assistance. Established in 1955, NMSC uses its own funds and those provided by approximately 440 business organizations and institutions of higher education to provide scholarships that encourage the pursuit of academic excellence.

Responsive Classroom

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The Responsive Classroom approach was introduced at Greenwood Elementary School in 2009 and at the Mary D. Lang Kindergarten Center when it opened. New Garden Elementary School uses concepts and framework from the Responsive Classroom approach but not the actual model.

Rule development is a major component of Responsive Classroom, and each school creates its own rules. Bancroft crafted four major rules: Be Responsible, Be Respectful, Be Safe, and Be the Best that You Can Be! Each classroom was responsible for developing what these rules look and sound like in the classroom, hallway, bathroom, cafeteria, multi-purpose room, and school busses.

At Bancroft Elementary School all grades implement a daily Morning Meeting according to the Responsive Classroom model, but only those teachers trained in Responsive Classroom I and Responsive Classroom II are implementing the additional pieces such as Interactive Modeling and Academic Choice.

This past summer Mrs. Brodie and Mrs. Reynolds joined a few of their Bancroft Elementary School colleagues for an intensive, week-long workshop where they built on their Responsive Classroom I training while other teachers were introduced to the approach.

The level two training focused on academic choice, redirecting student behavior, and logical consequences. "The theory behind Academic Choice is that student learning increases when they are provided with teacher-structured choices in their work," Mrs. Brodie explained. "For example, to study

and learn their weekly vocabulary words my students can choose to use flashcards or to use the words in written sentences. I encourage them to use what works best for them."

Mrs. Reynolds explained that with Logical Consequences she is teaching her students to respond to misbehavior in a way that allows them to fix and learn from their mistakes while preserving their dignity. "For example, the consequence for spilling a classmate's glue would be to apologize and help with the cleanup. But, not following directions could lead to being removed from the group for a period of time. However, taking a break from the activity gives the student a quick way to calm down, relax and rejoin the group with dignity."

Findings from two research studies out of the University of Virginia show that the Responsive Classroom approach increases student engagement, decreases discipline problems, improves academic achievement, and leads to more high-quality teaching.

Mrs. Reynolds added that her favorite element to the Responsive Classroom approach is the Morning Meeting. "Every morning students gather as a whole to greet one another, share news and prepare for the day's activities," she said. "The Morning Meeting helps the students feel like they are part of a family. It is a wonderful teambuilding exercise that smoothly leads us into the academic day."

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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.

Reading is Fundamental -

<http://www.rif.org/kids/leadingtoreading/en/leadingtoreading.htm>

Semillitas de Aprendizaje -

<http://www.rif.org/kids/leadingtoreading/es/leadingtoreading.htm>

There are plenty of kids today who are reading off of the Internet before reading a book. Reading is Fundamental encourages children and their families to embrace all platforms for reading. Reading is Fundamental's award-winning website and educational video series is designed to help parents and caregivers develop the language skills of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Reading is Fundamental's fun and interactive site offers stories, games, music, and other engaging activities for young children to experience together with adults in English and Spanish.

ReadWriteThink - www.readwritethink.org

Engaging resources, games, and activities for students at all grade levels, every lesson plan on ReadWriteThink has been aligned not only to the International Reading Association/National Council of Teachers of English Standards for the English Language Arts but to individual state standards as well.

Colorín Colorado - www.colorincolorado.org

Colorín Colorado is a bilingual literacy site that provides information, activities and advice for families and educators of English Language Learners. Colorín Colorado is an educational initiative of WETA, the flagship public television and radio station in Washington, D.C.

Reading Rockets - www.readingrockets.org

Reading Rockets includes information and resources for parents on how young kids learn to read, why so many struggle, and how caring adults can help. Reading Rockets is an educational initiative of WETA, the flagship public television and radio station in Washington, D.C.