

Dear Student Support Staff: The start to the 2021-2022 school year has been busy and exciting. It has been wonderful to have all of our students back in school full time. The first few weeks of school has set the foundation for building the essential relationships paramount to the learning process. Taking short periods of time throughout the school day to discover student interests, strengths, motivators, triggers and challenges, enables us to effectively move forward in achieving positive outcomes in all domains. While everyone continues moving ahead through the scope and sequence of required curriculum, also please keep at the forefront, the importance of recognizing critical moments in the relationship development process between students and staff.

Over the past several weeks, it has been a pleasure to visit classrooms and to engage in meaningful conversations regarding the unique learning needs of students. Our problem solving process continues to remain collaborative as we find solutions to address multiple needs. Keeping the lines of communication open and holding targeted data based discussions will continue to propel our students on a positive trajectory to accomplishing their goals. As the first marking period is now behind us, continued focus on progress monitoring and data review to demonstrate skill development at multiple points throughout the school year is critical.

Our 21-22 school year department goals have been developed and an over view is provided in this newsletter. Additional information and specific action steps will be ongoing through our monthly department meetings.

I wish everyone a joyful, safe and happy Thanksgiving! I hope that all will cherish this special holiday with family and

friends. Sincerely, **Diana Rich**



2021-2022

Department Goals and Initiatives

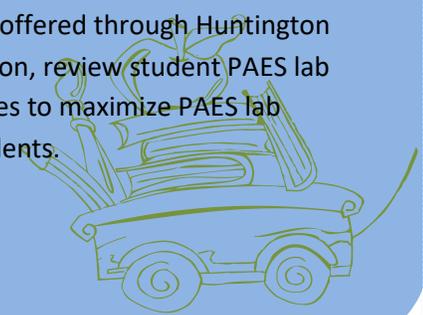
As measured through state reporting data, the special education department continues to make progress with goals in the areas of student outcomes and Least restrictive Environment (LRE). The district is fully in compliance with meeting the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requirements.

The following goals have been identified as areas of focus and ongoing improvement for the 2021-2022 school year:

LRE- A review of all CSE program data recommendations from the 2019-2020 school years, will reflect a 2% increase in the number of students with disabilities receiving special services in the general education classroom 80% or more of the school day.

Parent Engagement – Parent input and involvement is a critical component in the CSE decision making process. Upon completion of a parent survey, 90% of district parents will report that their input was considered, their concerns were addressed and accounted for in the decision making process at CSE meetings.

Post Secondary Outcomes and Transition Planning– Upon review of transition assessments, the department will increase the type and number of job skills programs offered through Huntington High School. In addition, review student PAES lab data and make changes to maximize PAES lab opportunities for students.



The Importance of Explicit Feedback

Recently in district, many of us were able to attend a session provided by Frank Kros. The session focused on the power of words and how our choice of words can have both positive and negative impacts for students. It seems simple and obvious, but it really got me thinking closely about how we provide feedback to our students. We all know how important immediate and specific feedback is to the learning process and research shows that it has a tremendous positive effect on both academic performance and on building the teacher/student relationship. In a review of the available research titled "The Power of Feedback," University of Auckland Professors Helen Timperley and John Hattie highlight the importance of supplying learners with specific information about what they are doing correctly or incorrectly.

Strategies for effective feedback:

- Feedback should be specific to the academic task and/or goal of the lesson – For example: Shift from statements such as "great job on the math problem" to "you used the ___ strategy to compute the math equation correctly."

-Feedback should be timely and provided as soon as possible in connection to the learning task. Feedback should be ongoing and provided regularly – Plan for providing feedback into your daily lesson plans

-Be mindful of your student's individual needs and personalities – while some students may prefer verbal feedback, others may prefer more discrete, nonverbal or written feedback

-Focus feedback on what the student can do, what they should improve on and how much they have improved.

-Teach students how to provide feedback to each other.



Reasons to be Thankful for our SS Staff

As we enter the holiday season and the last month of the calendar year, it is important to recognize all we are grateful for, both big and small. There are dozens of reasons to be thankful for the work that everyone in our department does. We have multiple support staff, teachers, aides, therapists, office assistants who contribute to our collective success. Here are some of the top reasons to be grateful for you:

1. Your **persistence** – for encouraging students to persist in the learning process while advocating for their needs and while persisting through the most challenging situations of the past, present and future – you do it all.
2. For **exploring** – new ideas, instructional approaches, and methods to open the doors for our students
3. For **adapting** – to the ever changing world around us and for your **flexibility** in meeting the needs of all of our students
4. For **noticing** – when our students need different instructional approaches, extra help or strategies to be successful and for noticing when you need support or professional development to grow
5. For **expecting** only the best and for **striving** for excellence

20 WAYS TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK FOR LEARNING		teachthought
FEEDBACK SHOULD BE EDUCATIVE IN NATURE.	ASK THE 4 QUESTIONS.	
FEEDBACK SHOULD BE GIVEN IN A TIMELY MANNER.  BE SENSITIVE TO THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF THE STUDENT.	HOST A ONE-ON-ONE CONFERENCE. 	
FEEDBACK SHOULD REFERENCE A SKILL OR SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE.	CONCENTRATE ON ONE ABILITY. 	
GIVE FEEDBACK TO KEEP STUDENTS "ON TARGET" FOR ACHIEVEMENT.	ASK ANOTHER ADULT TO GIVE FEEDBACK.	
FEEDBACK CAN BE GIVEN VERBALLY, NON-VERBALLY OR IN WRITTEN FORM.  EDUCATE STUDENTS ON HOW TO GIVE FEEDBACK TO EACH OTHER.	HAVE THE STUDENT TAKE NOTES. 	
ALTERNATE DUE DATES FOR YOUR STUDENTS/CLASSES.	USE POST-IT NOTES. 	
USE A NOTEBOOK TO KEEP TRACK OF STUDENT PROGRESS.  RETURN TESTS, PAPERS OR COMMENT CARDS AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS.	GIVE GENUINE PRAISE.	
	"I NOTICED..." 	
	PROVIDE A MODEL OR EXAMPLE.	
	INVITE STUDENTS TO GIVE YOU FEEDBACK.	

Star Staff Spotlight

The week of November 8-11, 2021 marked National School Psychology week which is dedicated to highlighting the important work that school psychologists and all educators do to help students thrive. This year's theme is, "Let's Get into **Gear.**" The acronym encourages us to **grow** professionally and personally. It encourages us to **engage** in best practices and **advocate** for mental health and learning supports. To **rise** implies **resilience** and over coming challenges of the past. Please join us in recognizing and supporting our school psychology department and the collaborative work they do with all of our amazing educators.

Coming up!

Professional Development:

Collegial Circle Special Class Teachers – 12/2/21,
1/6/22

Collegial Circle Teacher Assistants K-6 – 12/16/21

WIAT IV – 12/1, 12/7 and 12/8

SEPTA Meetings: All will be held via Zoom until further notice.

January 6th @ 10:00

February 3rd @ 7:00

March 8 @ 10:00

**Another warm
welcome to our new
staff!
Mallory McClafferty
Jeanne Gergenti
Jessica Rodriguez
Catherine Juliano
Mary Guzman Lewis**



REPOST because this is too good to miss!

During these challenging times, I have tried to find inspirational/enjoyable activities and I decided to go back in time for this one. A few years ago, I remembered watching a You tube video of Jonathan Mooney presenting his journey as a student with ADHD and dyslexia and was so moved by his story, I followed up by purchasing and reading his book titled The Short Bus. If you are not familiar with Jonathan and his work, he is an award winning writer, public speaker, entrepreneur and a staunch advocate for people who are neuro diverse. He has written additional books including Learning Outside the Lines and his most recent publication in 2019 titled Normal Sucks: Living, Learning and Thriving Outside the Lines all of which are great reads. Jonathan did not learn to read until he was 12 years old and he speaks about how his reading/spelling skills are still commensurate with the 12th percentile of performance. He has gone on to graduate with a degree from Brown University, an Ivy League institution. In his speaking engagements, he fondly pays tribute to the teachers who forged positive relationships with him through his school years and that they were the driving force behind his success. Check out his books and videos on You tube!

www.jonathanmooney.com

HUFSD MISSION STATEMENT:

RECOGNIZING THE STRENGTHS OF OUR DISTRICT'S TRADITIONS, ITS HISTORY OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT, THE DIVERSITY OF OUR POPULATION AND OUR COMMITMENT TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE, THE MISSION OF THE HUNTINGTON UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT IS TO EDUCATION STUDENTS BY EFFECTIVELY TEACHING AN ENRICHED BODY OF KNOWLEDGE THROUGH THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF ALL STUDENTS, BUILDING UPON THEIR UNIQUE TALENTS AND ABILITIES TO PRODUCE CREATIVE, SELF-ASSURED, RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS WHO ARE CAPABLE OF CRITICAL THOUGHT AND ACTION.