

CURRICULUM NEWS

State Grant Assists Secondary Students

Toward Proficiency

The Oxford Area School District is participating in the Pennsylvania Educational Assistance Program funded by a PA Department of Education grant. This program was established to assist students at the secondary level (grades 7-12) to achieve proficiency in meeting the state academic standards.

All students who had not yet achieved a proficient level on the last administered PSSA were offered the opportunity to receive after-school tutoring. The grant is also funding transportation for students enrolled in the program.

Currently over 150 students in the district are receiving tutoring through this program. Each student's progress is monitored through use of 4Sight testing (see Fall Curriculum News) and local district assessments.

ESL GROWS BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS

The Oxford Area School District English as a Second Language (ESL) Program is experiencing growth in many areas. As the student population has increased, so has ESL staffing.

The district now has six full-time teachers at the elementary level and two at the secondary level. Through federal funding, we are offering after-school tutoring to our ESL students.

To assist parents, we have held evening meetings with translation services provided, provided translation services for parent-teacher conferences (Continued on Page 2)



Jordan Bank School ESL teacher Leah McComsey helps students prepare for their daily session using the LeapPad Learning System.

PSU Great Valley partners with OASD

The Oxford Area School District has developed a partnership with Penn State Great Valley through which Penn State will offer graduate courses at Oxford Area High School. The partnership was officially launched on January 22 with the offering of a graduate certificate in

Instruction in General Classroom Settings.

This certificate consists of four courses (14 credits). "The certificate attracts teachers because it is offered on-site and is geared toward the general educator in the classroom," said Assistant Superintendent Dr. Raymond Fischer.

The certificate is open to all teachers in the Oxford Area School District and surrounding school districts, and fulfills Act 48 credits and/or professional academic development.

The course currently in session is "Motivating (Continued on Page 2)

Grade level facilitators keep colleagues up to date on curriculum trends

Henry David Thoreau said, "The greatest compliment that was ever paid to me was when someone asked me what I thought, and attended to my answer."

To make sure that we listen and attend to what we hear from our educators, the Oxford Area School District has developed a program of grade level facilitators. Each month, facilitators from each building meet with District Math Coach

Jean Catani and District Literacy Teacher-on-Assignment David Pugliese.

Through these meetings, grade level issues are discussed, materials and information are disseminated and training is offered. The facilitators in turn meet with the teachers in their buildings and through this system all teachers can receive the information and materials they need.

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District Math Coach Jean Catani with Oxford Area High School Mathematics Department Chairman Scott Wooddell at a recent meeting of K-12 grade level math facilitators.

PSSA Dates

March 12-23:
3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th,
7th, 8th & 11th Grade
Math and Reading As-
sessment

April 23-May 4:
4th, 8th & 11th Grade
Science
Assessment

E STRATEGIC PLANNING SET FOR OASD

At the February meeting of the Oxford Area Board of School Directors, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Raymond Fischer outlined the process for creating the district's Strategic Plan for 2008-2014. Essential to this process is the implementation of eStrategic Planning (eSP), which Dr. Fischer highlighted for the board members.

eSP is a systemic, ongoing, web-facilitated strategic planning framework that:

- Is data based and driven.
- Aligns goals and strategies to research.
- Continuously monitors progress and documents outcomes.
- Satisfies multiple planning and reporting requirements.

According to Dr. Fischer, the eSP system will:

- provide a comprehensive strategic planning framework and process;
- facilitate the development of state-mandated strategic plans in a web-

based, centralized environment;

- follow a logical workflow so that the creation, submission, review, and approval of strategic plans is clear and concise.

In March the administration will begin to establish a Strategic Plan Steering Committee made up of parents, students, board members, and teachers, including one preschool or pre-K teacher. Also serving on the committee will be education specialists, administrators, and business and community representatives.

Once the committee is selected, members will gather and analyze data using eSP, with the major part of the plan concentrating on improving student achievement.

"They will look at student achievement data such as PSSA and SAT scores, standardized test scores, and district assessments, in order to formulate an internal and external needs analysis," said Dr. Fischer.

He also noted that the committee will study data on vari-

ous school programs and how many students participate, fiscal information, societal trends, and demographic data including enrollment, attendance, ethnicity, gender, mobility and language proficiency.

"We also plan to conduct surveys and interview students, parents, and community members to get an idea of how the district is perceived," said Dr. Fischer.

The committee will meet in September to review this data in order to establish a Mission Statement and goals for 2008-14.

The committee members will then form action teams to address means of achieving each planning goal, again relying on eSP to help gather and share information.

The Strategic Plan will be presented to the school board for approval in June 2008. In August 2008, the plan will be made available to the community for review.

In September 2008, the Strategic Plan will be submitted to the PA Department of Education for final approval.

OASD PARTNERS WITH PENN STATE (CONTINUED)

Exceptional Learners" which meets on Tuesdays from 4 to 7 p.m. at the high school through April 17.

Registration for the fourth course begins on March 10 with "Methods of Classroom Coaching and Supervision," scheduled for Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:30 to 7 p.m., from March 13 to April 30.

"The professor teaching the course said that she was very impressed with our staff, especially in their dedication to their students," said Dr. Fischer.

For further information, go to www.gv.psu.edu/education, or call 610-648-3237.

District ESL Program is Growing by Leaps and Bounds (continued)

and are increasing the ESL materials. At Jordan Bank, a home to school translation program uses tape recordings from the teacher to the parent in the home language.

Also at Jordan Bank, ESL teacher Leah McComsey was awarded an Oxford Educational Foundation grant to

purchase six LeapPad learning systems. Different books can be placed in the LeapPad unit, and students use electronic pens to touch pictures inside the books.

When the student touches a picture, the object, letter,

number or shape is identified by a friendly voice in a pair of headphones worn by the student.

"The system provides for individualized instruction at the student's own pace," said Mrs. McComsey. "It's fun for

them and they are able to advance to higher level books quickly. Once they pick things up, they really take off."

Mrs. McComsey says the system is so effective that she encourages parents to purchase it for use at home.

Facilitators keep up to date on curriculum trends (continued)

"The facilitators play an extremely valuable role in the school district," said Mr. Pugliese, "especially when you consider the many changes that have happened in education over the past few years, such as No Child Left Behind."

When the formal meetings are held, all grade level facili-

tators are present.

"In Oxford we are working to achieve a seamless K-12 curriculum, so it is important that all grades are together in one meeting," said Mr. Pugliese. "Performance at each level will eventually impact all levels."

He added that the district's Reading Specialists are wel-

come to attend the meetings whenever possible.

Previously a fifth grade teacher at Elk Ridge, Mr. Pugliese said he enjoys his current assignment, now in its second year.

"It has enabled me to see our district from a broader perspective that is not always possible as a teacher," he said. "It has been very rewarding."



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