A Message from Dr. Duval

The holiday season is traditionally the time for many of us to count our blessings, reflect on the year that is soon coming to an end, and perhaps spend some time doing for others. As a school community, our faculty and staff at South Allegheny have also been doing the same through participating in activities such as Toys for Tots, the Festival of Trees, and also hosting events such as Sensitive Santa for the 10th year in a row.

I continuously say how proud I am to be a part of this community, as a school employee and a local resident. When I see the acts of compassion, even if it is a small gesture of helping a student secure a winter coat or involving many as we rally around a family in need, it restores my belief that South Allegheny is a community that continues to do for others. We are accomplishing many impressive things here at SASD, addressing our students’ academic needs as well as their emotional needs, and it is my intent to share, through this newsletter, the good that is taking place.

During this holiday season, I ask that you let the young people of our communities know how much you support them, challenge them to grow, and push not only them but also the South Allegheny School District. We are a community that values what is best for our future, and our students are just that...our future.

I wish each of you a wonderful holiday season filled with the absolute best memories, and I thank you for your continued support of our schools.

Dr. Lisa N. Duval
Superintendent
South Allegheny Elementary School

#SAProud Awards

The SAE awards students every Friday with the #SA Proud Award. Teachers select a student from their homeroom each week that has demonstrated a positive accomplishment, behavior, task, etc. Students’ names are called over the intercom on Fridays to accept their award in the office and to get a group picture. We are proud of our SA students and their accomplishments!

“The SA family is so supportive. It makes me feel welcome to come to school every day.” ~Liam M., grade 4

Leukemia and Lymphoma Society Fundraiser

What an exciting time we had during our Pennies for Patients program. Our students have been able to learn about kindness, bravery, and how working together for one common goal will help us become proactive members of our community. With all of our students and teacher’s hard work and dedication we were able to raise just over $5000.00 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Our school worked very diligently to bring in their loose change daily for others in need. The top class was Mrs. Godzin’s third grade class collecting $452.79. Way to go SAE!

Kindergarten Thanksgiving Feast

As a culminating activity for their Thanksgiving unit, kindergarten students participated in a feast. Thanks to generous donations from families, the students enjoyed healthy treats and some fun time together!
Lessons Learned; Lessons Shared

Middle School reading teacher Laura Thomson earned a scholarship from Classrooms without Borders to travel to Poland this past summer. The scholarship, which covers all travel and seminar expenses, is designed for teachers to participate in a study seminar to Poland that focuses on the history of the Holocaust. Miss Thomson and the seminar participants were accompanied by Howard Chandler, a Holocaust Survivor (see photo). This seminar enables educators like Miss Thomson to create classroom programs, activities, units and lesson plans that reflect on the knowledge and experience they acquired so their students will be more informed about the causes and outcomes of the Holocaust.

SA Middle School GRIT Award Winners

Every Friday, teachers give out weekly GRIT awards to students that display positive behavior in their classes. Awards are given for positive relationships with peers, being responsible and prepared for class, being a team-player during projects and activities, and giving 100% effort towards tests and assignments. The Principal calls each student down to the lobby via intercom to congratulate the students each week.

Festival of Trees

Our Middle School Students attended McKeesport’s annual Festival of Trees. This year the students decided to create a Military tree to honor our American heroes.

To the left: 8th grade students beginning to create amusement park rides to explore physical science concepts. Students will use the Hummingbird Robotics Kit to put their rides into motion and will also journal their successes and challenges along the way.
From Nurse Fetch:

Please be sure that if you are in 11th grade and/or are going to be a senior for the 2020-2021 school year that you have received your 2nd Meningitis Vaccination and have turned your physician documentation into the school nurse before April 30, 2020.

Also, current 6th grade students are to receive their Tdap and Meningitis Vaccinations and turn in your physician documentation into the school nurse by April 30, 2020, or risk not being able to attend 7th grade.

Any questions, please contact Nurse Fetch at 412-675-3070 ext 1208.

Please do not delay!!

Student-Centered Learning

The first part of the year in 6th grade science focuses on Astronomy and wraps up with a unit of study on the Solar System. As the unit on the solar system came to a close, the students were challenged to think outside the box and come up with a project to showcase their learning. Each class brainstormed an extensive list of options that ranged in complexity from writing an original song or anchoring a fictional news story to creating a more traditional poster or model. Once the list was complete, it was sent home to parents along with a contract for both students and parents to sign, acknowledging that they knew about and would complete the project.

The next step in this activity was to figure out how this project would be graded. Based on the contracts returned, the original list of potential projects was narrowed down to about 10 different options, which each required a specific rubric. As a class and along with the teacher, the students brainstormed what an “A” project looked like and how points would be allocated. Rubrics were created, agreed upon, and then printed and made available to the students as they began working on their projects.

The end result was pretty fabulous as you can see in the picture! The students were excited to complete their projects. Their creativity and the effort they put into their final products was truly impressive! They enjoyed being involved in the entire process, from brainstorming a list of options to deciding how each project would be graded! It allowed them to really take ownership of their learning.

Students who were notorious for not completing assignments, were now coming into school with posters and models. A group of these students even said that they all met up over Thanksgiving break at Mama Pepinos in Glassport to work on their poster! Another student shared his thankfulness for this project allowing him to be creative and giving him time to share his project with his peers. Other students commented that they enjoyed working with their parents on the projects because they got to spend quality time together. The students enjoyed being creative and having a choice in how they presented their learning and also having the option to work together with their friends.

SA Community Fitness Center

The South Allegheny Community Fitness Center has partnered with The YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh to offer The YMCA’s Diabetes Prevention Program on site at South Allegheny High School. It is scheduled to begin in late January or early February. For more information on the program and to see if you qualify please contact Vince Ranalli at vranalli@ymcapgh.org

Following in the steps of Warhol, Dali and other artists, the Art 1 students designed Christmas window displays.
South Allegheny High School

Through the summer and into this year, we have made many updates to the secondary building. Creating an environment where our students can be excited and engaged in new and meaningful ways supports the overall vision of the South Allegheny School District. These are just a few of the spaces we have updated!

“All the changes in the high school, have allowed me to pursue my personal passions that I never thought I would be able to accomplish in a school setting.”
~Mason M., grade 12

SASD Marching Band in Disney

The high school marching band members marched in the evening parade at Walt Disney World’s Magic Kingdom Park on Saturday, November 23rd. In addition, the students participated in an instrumental workshop. This workshop was a Disney sound studio experience where the students worked with a professional Disney World musician to record part of a famous Disney movie.
The South Allegheny Education Center is a new program for the District this year. The program offers educational flexibility to students in grades 6-12 who may work better in a smaller setting, who need to refine their life goals and choices, or are working to make themselves better individuals. We focus on mindfulness, accepting responsibility, appropriate self-advocacy, better school attendance, physical health, empathy, social competence, a desire to help others and a sense of purpose. The creation of this program is affording students who may otherwise need additional supports, to receive them within our boundaries and under the direction and leadership of our staff. The South Allegheny Education Center...focuses on the whole child.

“Wow! I never expected this program to be in a building so colorful, organized and well kept. You have such nice places for the students to learn.” ~R.K., Parent

If we want students to solve real life problems when they leave us, then we need to give them real life problems while they are with us. Students hunger for more engaging learning experiences that will afford them skills that they can apply to real life application. Students want opportunities where they can take their learning outside the traditional classroom into places where they can learn and give back to their community. Never underestimate the heart of a wayward soul...sometimes the only reason they are lost is because no one has truly found them.