HASD Establishes Key Communicators Group

Next Meeting is March 22, 2018

In the Fall of 2017, the Halifax Area School District introduced the UNDIVIDED Movement through a series of meetings held in the school district and in the community. Halifax UNDIVIDED seeks to (1) help teachers increase the time they have to spend on education and student growth; (2) demonstrate the power of community to youth; and (3) present an environment of hope and inspiration to children, parents and staff.

One of the many projects to come from the Halifax UNDIVIDED Movement is the creation of a Key Communicators Group. Its purpose is to:
(1) Increase communication between the school district and the community.
(2) Engage the community in helping the Halifax Area School District provide the best possible services it can to students and families.
(3) Serve as a resource for all stakeholders to turn to for accurate and timely information about the accomplishments of the school district.
(4) Address misconceptions quickly.
(5) Increase volunteerism in public education and the community.
(6) Help the Halifax Area School District strengthen its relationship with the community.

Information about topics discussed at the first Key Communicators Group meeting can be found on the district’s website: www.hasd.us.

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Samsung Honors Wildcats: HS Technology students advance to national STEAM Contest.

Education in the News: Act 55 of 2017 brings changes to many aspects of district policy: testing, school meals, emergency drills.

Thanksgiving for All: Annual community event helped those in need and promoted goodwill in Halifax.

District Budget 2018-2019: Important dates; Opportunities for all stakeholders to participate in the budgeting process.

New School Year Registration Events: Dates set for Pre-K and Kindergarten registration events. Note paperwork requirements.

Spring Recess: March 30th-April 2nd

The Halifax Gazette is published quarterly, August-November-February-May, by the Halifax Area School District. Submit articles and pictures to Michele M. Orner, Ed.D.-Superintendent of Schools at ornerm@hasd.us.
HWEF Continues to Meet Needs

Moving full speed ahead to “enrich, enhance, and expand opportunities for students,” HWEF has wasted no time in putting the money it received from the EITC program and various fundraisers to good use. College in the High School tuition, AP test fees, Summer Camps, musical instruments for elementary & high school classrooms, the MS Author Program, and the 8th grade’s Holocaust unit and trip to Washington are just some of the programs HWEF has supported this year. Stay tuned for the 2018 Summer Camp calendar to be posted in late March.

Education News & Notes from Harrisburg

New Law Impacts HASD

Parents should be aware of these changes in state law under Act 55 of 2017 that became effective on November 6, 2017:

Delay in Graduation Requirements: The use of the Keystone Exam in Algebra I, Biology, and Literature as a graduation requirement is delayed until the 2019-2020 school year.

School Meals: Schools may not deny a meal to a student, regardless of whether he or she has money to pay for the meal or owes money. Students who cannot pay or owe money cannot be publicly identified or stigmatized, be required to perform chores, or forced to discard a meal after it was served.

Emergency Drills: Schools may conduct a security drill to practice procedures to respond to an emergency situation, such as an act of terrorism, armed intruder situation or other violent threat. Schools must notify and request assistance from local law enforcement and emergency management agencies, and must notify parents in advance of the drill.

Opioid Abuse Prevention: Beginning in the 2018-2019 school year, schools must provide instruction to students in grades 6-12 related to the prevention of opioid abuse.

Agricultural Education: The subject of forestry is added to the list of agricultural education topics for which the state must provide resources and programming to students in grades K-12. A new Commission for Agricultural Education Excellence will assist the Departments of Education and Agriculture in continuing efforts regarding agricultural education.

-PSSA Test Changes for Spring 2018-

The Pennsylvania Department of Education announced that students in grades 3 through 8 will spend an average of 20% less time on statewide PSSA testing this year, and an even greater reduction, nearly 25%, for the youngest students. The tests have been changed without changing the rigor of these assessments, which could eliminate up to two full testing days for some schools. For test administration in 2019, PDE anticipates shortening the window and moving it toward the end of the year to provide teachers more time for instruction and to minimize disruptions to classes.
Student Artists Recognized as Winners in Statewide Alcohol Awareness Poster Contest

Congratulations to Halifax Elementary students Cama Enders, Nola Cusick, and Ella Lebo! Their submissions to the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board 2017-2018 Alcohol Awareness Poster Contest were selected as winners. This year, nearly 800 entries were submitted, with 46 students being chosen for recognition. A ceremony honoring the student artists will be held at the State Museum of Pennsylvania in Harrisburg in April. Job Well Done!
HASD Helps Local Families in Need

Annually, the Northern Dauphin County based Thanksgiving for All Committee provides the components of a complete Thanksgiving meal to nearly 200 local families in need. The food bags enable families to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday with a traditional meal they would not other be able to afford. The most recent meal distribution was held on November 18th at the Halifax Ambulance Building, where 226 Thanksgiving dinners were provided to our community.

The food items that fill each bag are funded by the generous financial support of individuals and local business establishments. In the more recent years, help was solicited from our Halifax students in the form of food and coat and blanket donations.

This past Thanksgiving, the Committee again asked Halifax Area School District students and their families to help to increase our collective community outreach. We requested donations of “gently used” winter coats, mittens, gloves, hats, scarves, and blankets.

Collection boxes for the winter items were placed in the offices of each of our four Halifax schools. The response was tremendous and enabled us all to help our citizens beyond providing a Thanksgiving meal, by making it possible for them to keep warm through the winter season. Thank you, Halifax students, for showing that you care!

Celebrating 100!

In January, elementary students at Enders and HES celebrated one hundred days of learning. An annual tradition, even the teachers showed their school spirit!

Discovery Dodgeball Tournament Planned

Halifax High School’s Discovery classes led by Mr. Ruff, Mrs. Peters, and Mrs. Gingrich will host their first annual Dodgeball Tournament on March 23, 2018 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. in the high school gymnasium. Door open at 6:00 p.m. An entry fee of $2.00 will be charged to those interested in watching the games. All proceeds benefit the Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide. The tournament is part of the community service component of the Discovery Program, Halifax’s nationally recognized character education program.

Music Mentors Sharing Time and Talent:

Talented students from Ms. Aunkst’s Advanced Guitar classes have been providing guitar lessons to interested fifth graders at Halifax Elementary School. Nice Work!
Using STEAM to Solve and Serve: On February 12th Secretary of Education Pedro Rivera visited Halifax to congratulate Mike Weaver and his students for being named the Pennsylvania Winner in the 2017-2018 Samsung Solve for Tomorrow contest. The honor includes a $25,000.00 Samsung technology prize package for the technology education lab and the opportunity to continue in the competition. The proposed project uses Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) skills to design a device that minimizes the risk to first responders when dealing with emergencies on local waterways, especially in cold water situations. The Wildcats will represent Pennsylvania in the national contest in March. Visit www.hasd.us to learn more about the team’s accomplishments. Congratulations and Good Luck! (Pictured above: Secretary Rivera poses with project team members. Pictured below: Secretary Rivera learns more about the complexities of the design from students).

Have You Visited “The Den” Lately?
Halifax High School’s store, The Den, recently celebrated Career and Technical Education Month with Secretary Rivera. Sponsored by Mid Penn Bank and managed by students enrolled in the Wildcat Business Academy, the school store features vintage athletic gear, school spirit items, wildcat apparel, and other useful items. It also “sports” a fancy new paint scheme, courtesy of Mr. Crum’s talented art students. For updates on merchandise and pricing, follow The Den on Twitter: @HASStheDEN1. (Pictured below: Mr. Kaler talks shop with Secretary Rivera. Student artists and store managers pose with Secretary Rivera).

-Snow Make-up Days Announced-
Please update your calendars. School will be in session on the following dates:

Thursday, March 29, 2018
Friday, May 25, 2018

The revised school district calendar can be found at www.hasd.us.
Pre K Counts Classroom Enrollment

Halifax Area School District is planning to have 2 full-time Pre-K Counts classrooms offered at Enders-Fisherville Elementary for the 2018-2019 School Year.

The Halifax Area School District may be able to provide your child with a FREE, high quality preschool education! Children who benefit from quality pre-kindergarten programs have a better chance of being ready for success in kindergarten, grade school, and beyond.

Enroll your child in a PA Pre-K Counts Classroom!

What can I expect from Pre-K Counts at Enders-Fisherville Elementary School?

- Less than 20 children in a classroom with a highly-qualified teacher.
- Use of curriculum approved by the PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning to meet Early Learning Standards.
- Regular reviews of each child’s progress and a range of learning activities differentiated for children’s interests and needs.
- Support and transition to kindergarten.
- Academic and social-emotional growth.
- A FREE program, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

*The portion of the day that is funded through PA Pre-K Counts is free to qualified families. If your child requires additional care, before or after the funded portion of the school day, you may be eligible to use Child Care Information Services (CCIS) or another funding source to cover your payments.

Available slots will be filled based on multiple need factors from students registered during the enrollment window. Other eligible students will be placed on a waiting list.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR PRE-K COUNTS?

- Children age 3 until the entry age for Kindergarten (preference will be given to 4 year olds);
- Halifax families earning up to 300% of the federal poverty level (or a family of four earning $75,300 or less) are eligible to apply!

How much does Pre-K Counts cost?

Pre-K Counts is free to qualifying families.*

How can I enroll my child?

The first enrollment window is open until April 20, 2018.

Apply by contacting Dave Hatfield at 717-896.3416 x 108 or at hatfieldd@hasd.us

Jelly Bean Junction, RockStart and other local collaborators will offer programs for children not enrolled in Pre-K Counts.
-Kindergarten Registration Planned-

Kindergarten registration for the 2018-2019 school year in the Halifax Area School District will be held on Thursday, March 15th and Friday, March 16th at Enders-Fisherville Elementary School.

The registration process will last approximately one hour, with appointments being scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The process will include interviews with the principal, school nurse, school counselor, kindergarten teachers, speech and language clinicians, and transportation department personnel. Children will also have their vision screened by Dr. Craig Match.

In accordance with present policy, a child must be 5 years old before Saturday, September 1, 2018 to be eligible for kindergarten. Parents must bring the child’s original birth certificate (no copies accepted); immunization record with a physician’s signature or letterhead; and proof of residency (lease, sales agreement, real estate tax bill, or photo identification are the documents acceptable for proof of residency).

Parents who did not receive an information packet in the mail or who have questions regarding the registration process, may call the Enders-Fisherville Elementary School at 717-896-4054 extension 519.

Athletes Pursue College Opportunities

Signing Day Festivities: On February 16th several Wildcats participated in a signing day celebration as they declared their intent to play a sport at the college level. Pictured from L to R: Remington Paul: Messiah-Cross Country and Track; Ashley Sauder: Messiah-Women’s Soccer; Luke Blasick: Messiah-Baseball; Sam Hoon: King’s College-Football. Best wishes for continued academic and athletic success.

Wildcats Crowned Tri Valley League Basketball Champions

Congratulations to the Boys Basketball team: the 2018 Tri Valley League Champions. The team heads back to the Giant Center in Hershey on 2/28/18 to face Tri Valley rival Millersburg in the District 3 Class 2A Championship Final. Tip off is at 5:30 p.m. With an overall record of 22-2, Halifax is ranked as the top seed. Shout out to senior Luke Blasick, the Wildcat’s newest 1000 point scorer, achieving the milestone during the semifinal game against Antietam on 2/23/18.

Technology Training: During the month of February, Halifax educators participated in the Pennsylvania Technology Expo and Conference in Hershey. The event provided quality programs focused integrating technology into teaching. Each year, hundreds of exhibitors and educators share the latest ideas and products to a vast audience of teachers, administrators and technology professionals. Pictured above, Tricia Schultz and Heidi Eyster share technology integration strategies at an open session.
HASD Budgeting Process Begins

Administrators and school board directors have begun preparing the district’s budget for the coming year that begins July 1, 2018. School boards are required by law to adopt their final budgets by June 30th, and between now and then your board has various deadlines it must follow to allow for proper planning and public comment. However, the board’s June 30th deadline is the same as the General Assembly’s deadline to adopt a state budget. This means that school boards usually must create a budget without knowing how much money the district will receive in state subsidies. In years when the state budget is late, this is especially hard.

The amount of available funds can determine what programs and services school districts can offer or continue. Your school board must also budget money to pay for programs and services that are mandated by federal and state law. Many of these mandates are underfunded or districts receive no money at all to pay for them. This strain on budget flexibility, combined with unpredictable contributions from the state, make crafting school district budgets challenging.

HASD Budgeting Process: 2018-2019

March 13th:
Budget Notebook posted to website.

March 13th to April 18th:
Public budget review period. Email questions to Superintendent: ornerm@hasd.us

April 19th:
Budget Workshop @ 7:00 p.m. in the Media Cafe.

May 8th:
Proposed Budget Approved.

June 12th
Final Budget Approved.

Winter Wonderland: The view from Enders-Fisherville Elementary School is breathtaking during the winter months. It is pictures like the one above that make it a bit easier to deal with the season of weather delays and cancellations. Many thanks to the bus drivers, township road crews, maintenance staff, and custodians who clean up the winter mess. Mother Nature often leaves behind. (Photo courtesy of Kim Nause).