



# KEYSTONE CONNECTIONS

## From the Desk of Steve Farmer

\*\*\*\*\*

I truly hope you took advantage of the beautiful weather to go outside. My family and I spent most of our long weekend in North Carolina helping our daughter and her husband move. It was H.O.T., but I loved it! ☺ It was good seeing Emily after 5 months!

Do you realize that we have only TWO more weeks after this week before we are out for the summer?! Keep up the good work you have been doing. The end is in sight! YAY!

It was brought to my attention that some people don't check/read emails or the Keystone Connections. I would like for you readers to help us encourage others to read their emails. We have SO MUCH information to share! Within this issue alone, we are sharing information about graduations at SSDHHC, WPSD, and Children's Centers; Staff Support Committee; discussions about Parents Surveys results; upcoming events; trainings; and tidbits from HR... As you can see, we are sharing A LOT of important information. Also, during the summer, even if you aren't working. It is encouraged that you check your emails at least occasionally. This will be one of the biggest means of communication throughout the summer as well.

Please know ALL of you are appreciated. Thank you for all you do. Stay safe. Stay healthy.

---Steve

## Notes from Scranton

\*\*\*\*\*

Recently a parent survey was sent out to families. The responses have been overwhelmingly positive and understanding of the current circumstances that everyone is experiencing. Please know that I am very impressed with your resilience, perseverance, and determination.

In line with this determined streak, Mr. Boersma, Ms. Somers, and Ms. Snopak are committed to providing an unforgettable graduation memory for our kindergartners and graduating seniors. Last week they drove to the 'graduating' kindergartners houses with graduation caps, gowns, cameras, and a green screen in tow, and traveled far and wide across three counties over a two-day period to photograph all of the kindergarten students and seniors. They took the smashing new SSDHHC van and put it through its paces and it took a prominent place in some of the photos. I look forward to seeing everyone's smiling faces on the end-of-the-year kindergarten graduation/8th grade promotion/awards ceremony/senior recognition video on June 10, 2020. In addition to this video event, we also hope to have an in-person graduation ceremony on campus in July. A big thank you to Ms. Taylor, our high school teacher, for coordinating with families and setting up the times for the senior photo shoot.

Please be sure to save the dates for our rescheduled Gala. The new date is Thursday, September 17, 2020. The times and the location remain the same. The golf tournament is being scheduled. A date is selected. Once details are finalized with Stonehedge Golf Course, Save the Date cards will be going out soon! Last but not least, our annual car show was canceled this year due to the pandemic. Sunday, May 16, 2021 is the date selected for next year's car show. Please save that date on your calendars now.

Activity continues on and off campus and I'm thankful for everyone's efforts. The school garden has begun growing and we hope to add to it as the weather warms. There are three weeks left, let's finish the year strong and be proud of our work.

Have a great week!

---Kevin McDonough

## **From the CECO's Corner**

I continue to hope that this finds you safe and healthy, and hope you enjoyed the long Memorial Day Weekend. Last week was again full of screen time, as I'm sure it was for most of you, as well.

100% of our staff completed their assigned online Public School WORKS trainings which were due May 15. Other batches of trainings have been assigned, including a "COVID 19" training assigned to all staff.

Deans Ennis-Blahut, Halik and I conducted ILP interviews on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons. It was nice to see the juniors and seniors who applied, nice to note how they've grown and matured in their time at WPSD, and nice to learn what skills they currently have and what skills they want to acquire in the ILP.

On Wednesday morning we had another all-residential staff meeting - we all appreciated seeing each other again! Congratulations to Lori Cain on the birth of her new grandchild! We discussed deploying the residential staff to assist in maintenance, groundskeeping, housekeeping and laundry. Everyone is ready to get back to work on a more regular basis!

Thanks to Sally Wellman for giving me the heads up to watch Jerry Dickinson debate Mike Doyle on WTAE Wednesday night! It was a good debate and Jerry made two references to WPSD while calling for support for disability and special needs support! Emily - let Jerry know that I appreciated the workhorse-showhorse-dead horse remark, and also the baseball metaphor!

Please continue to stay safe and healthy!

---Marybeth Lauderdale

## **From the Academic Team**

By now, everyone should have received an email from the Staff Support Committee inviting you to join the Staff Support Google Classroom. If you did not receive an email notification, it is likely because Google Classroom notifications are shut off. To access the classroom you can follow the steps below:

1. Go to <http://www.classroom.google.com>
2. Click the "+" button on the top right corner of the page
3. Click "Join Class"
4. When prompted to enter a code, enter 4xta441
5. Once you are in the room, use the "Classwork" tab to access the resources available during this time.

Please feel free to explore the resources, and please let the Staff Support Committee members know if there is anything additional you would like to see in the support room! If you have not yet completed the Staff Support Needs Assessment survey, you can find it at <https://forms.gle/oRnSyuUzkvyG5aaW9>.

Last week, a survey was sent to the parents of students at all four locations of the Programs of WPSD. Overall, parents have provided very positive responses, comments, and suggestions regarding how we can make distance learning even more effective for them and their children. Although some parents did comment that distance learning has been difficult for themselves and their child, many provided comments thanking the schools, the teachers, and the related service providers for the amount of parent/teacher communication that they have been receiving, the assigned learning activities that have been assigned, the use of technology, and how we are supporting their children's mental health needs during distance learning. Keep up the amazing work that you are already doing and please know that the parents recognize how well you are meeting their needs and the needs of their children.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, an in-person graduation ceremony is scheduled for Saturday, June 13th. To maintain in compliance with social distancing guidelines, graduation will occur in a modified format. Graduates and their families will not gather in the auditorium as in the past, but will be assigned to specific classrooms where they will remain until it is their time to enter the auditorium and walk on stage. We will conduct graduation in 15-minute time slots, with five minutes in between to disinfect areas where graduates and their families were seated. More information can be found on the school's website at the following link: <http://www.wpsd.org/academics/graduation-2020/>.

Kindergarten graduation will be celebrated virtually on June 10 at 2:30. Each student will be introduced and recognized for their accomplishments. A certificate and gift will be sent to their homes along with a special DVD, including a picture slideshow and a special story, "I Wish You More," signed by Christie Homell. We will host First Grade Orientation on the afternoon of June 4.

**From the Human Resources/Payroll Departments:**

**FSA:** Reminder: All staff enrolled in the FSA program, please remember that part of the [CARES Act](#) (COVID-3 Stimulus Bill), permits the coverage for Over-the-Counter (OTC) medications and drugs for reimbursement from our FSAs accounts. **These items can be purchased with funds from eligible accounts without needing a prescription.** If you have any questions regarding this new "temporary" addition to our FSA Account, please do not hesitate to contact Dori Bachar and she can assist with questions or reimbursements.

**Employee Assistance Program:** Please know that the EAP Program, Back on Track, is available to any staff member who needs assistance or has concerns with problems at work or at home that are affecting their daily lives, especially in these uncertain times.

As you may remember, the program provides a confidential helpline (1-800-566-5933). EAP staff are available to listen and provide you with information. You can also learn more about the Back on Track EAP by reviewing the website at [www.backontrackeap.com](http://www.backontrackeap.com). Through the website, you can access an abundance of information on topics such as balancing work and family, eldercare, parenting, budgeting, mental health, and alcohol/drug dependency. To access the website, you will need to use the following information:

*WPSD Staff:* User name: w18200 Password: confidential help  
*SSDHHC Staff:* User name: w18700 Password: confidential help

**Payroll:** If you need to make any changes to your banking information for direct deposits or would like to change your W-4, please email Barb Hancock or Dori Bachar and we will want to follow up with you through a personal conversation due to the increased concerns of on-line fraud.

**Employment Opportunities:** During distance learning and working remotely, we will be continuing to interview applicants for our open positions via Google Meeting or Zoom Meetings for the 2020-2021 school year.

Our open positions are as follows:

*WPSD Positions:* Choices for Children Teacher (part-time), Teacher, One-on-One Teacher's Aide position (Children's Center), Residential Supervisor, Residential Supervisor (Overnight) One-on-One, Housekeeper, summer maintenance positions - 2 Painters and 4 Laborers, and Substitute Positions: Teachers, Teacher's Aide, and Security.

*SSDHHC Positions:* Substitute positions: Teacher, Teacher's Aide, Nurse and Security.

*Hershey Positions:* Part-time SL

**\*\*Reminder:** Any employees interested in applying for a posted position should complete an internal application, signed by their immediate supervisor, attach an updated resume/application, and forward to the Human Resources Department.

---Dori Bachar

**From the Department of Institutional Advancement:**

**COVID-19 resources:** We have added a coronavirus resource page to the WPSD and Scranton websites. The page can be found under the "Academics" tab on the main menu and next to the "Continuity of Education Plan" on the drop down menu. If you have encountered a helpful resource for students, parents, or staff, please email it to Matt Campion at [mcampion@wpsd.org](mailto:mcampion@wpsd.org) to have it added to the page. Feel free to share any of the links on the page with those who may benefit from the materials.

**E-newsletter subscription:** On the WPSD and Scranton School home pages, visitors have the option to subscribe to an electronic newsletter for each school. The software collecting and managing the names of those who subscribe has recently been upgraded and improved. If you are interested in joining the distribution list visit the home page for either school, click the 'subscribe' button and complete the short form. Staff emails will not be automatically added to the distribution list. In addition, feel free to enroll friends and family members who may be interested in receiving news and events from our schools.

**Facebook:** Are you following WPSD and The Scranton School on Facebook? These social media channels are key pipelines to families and communities to let them know the many exciting things that are happening on each campus and about the achievements and efforts of our students. If you have not had the chance, please 'friend' us on Facebook this week. For our current "friends" and followers on Facebook, please be sure to 'like' or 'share' a post to your page. This will introduce WPSD and SSDHHC to an entirely new group of people who may have never encountered the schools or know what we offer to deaf and hard of hearing children.

**Auction & Gala:** Even though we may be apart right now, we are looking ahead to the future! WPSD's annual Auction & Gala event is set for Friday, October 2 at the Rivers Casino. Stay tuned for more details. We hope to see you all there!

In order to prepare for the big event, as always, we need your help. We are constantly on the hunt for fun items to auction off at the event - whether they be stand alone or part of a basket. Please consider donating an item or items. We would really be appreciative of anything you would be willing to give! We are also searching for baskets. Feel free to donate an empty basket. We need lots of baskets to hold all our items. Baskets of all sizes are welcome, but large ones are especially needed. Contact Sarah at [sburtlebaugh@wpsd.org](mailto:sburtlebaugh@wpsd.org) if you have a basket or donation you're willing to contribute. Thanks so much!