

# Sussex Charter News

*Building Future Leaders in the STEM Community*

Noreen Lazariuk, Executive Director

Deirdre Mastandrea, Principal

## GOOD LUCK MRS. LANGEN!

Over the last 8 years, one thing at Sussex Charter has remained constant -Mrs. Janet Langen greeting parents and students at the front desk. This October 2016, Mrs. Langen has decided to retire from Sussex Charter and she and her husband will be moving to Florida.



Mrs. Langen has had a rich and varied professional life. She started out at the New York Stock Exchange as secretary to five account executives at Dean Witter. She was then the Secretary to the VP of Paint Development at Dutch Boy Paints. Mrs. Langen then took a 7 year hiatus from working outside the home so that she could work taking care of her two sons. She returned to the workforce as a Secretary to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers at Byram Intermediate School. She later worked at Sparta Middle School as a classroom aide in a technology classroom, which evolved into teaching computer programs to 6th, 7th, 8th graders along with teachers and a few parents. Mrs. Langen then worked as Secretary to the Sales Director, Sales Manager and Sales Department at Clear Channel Radio (Now iHart Radio.) Finally, in 2008, Mrs. Langen joined Sussex Charter School as the Secretary to the Administrative Principal

Mrs. Langen has always enjoyed working with middle school students. One of her responsibilities has been handling the admission lottery. She has found this to be very rewarding because it is a chance to “meet all our new students.” “It has also been my honor to tearfully prepare information for our 8th graders, applying to the high school of their choice, sending them on to their next adventure.” Mrs. Langen has a parting message for her Sussex Charter family: “Parents, I want you to know that your students have the most amazing teachers guiding them through their everyday middle school journey. I have witnessed teachers tirelessly working one on one with students until they

understand what was taught. All of the staff is here for you and your children to make sure they are prepared and successful for the next level. My Charter family will always have a special place in my heart. I am going to miss the students, parents and faculty very much. You have all been an important part of my day to day, in a good way.”

## Principal’s Message



We have had an amazing start to the 2016-2017 school year and I feel so privileged to get to share it with the students and teachers at Sussex Charter. You will see, in this newsletter, some of the great things we have already started doing and some of our plans for the next few months. Parents, as always, please reach out to me with any questions you may have, or any ideas of more ways that we can enhance your child’s experience here.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish Mrs. Langen the very best as she embarks on her latest adventure. Mrs. Langen can always be counted on to work tirelessly, and long past her contracted hours, always putting the best interest of our school ahead of her personal schedule. As the Principal, I can also attest to the fact that, in addition to her unwavering dedication, Mrs. Langen can always be counted on for a good laugh when you need it. Some days, that is as equally appreciated as the long hours she keeps.

We will truly miss Mrs. Langen and hope that she will still be available to answer our questions as she lounges out on her lanai!

- Deirdre Mastandrea

## Leadership Corner



On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to welcome all of our students, parents and teachers to the beginning of the 2016/2017 school year. Late last month, I spoke briefly to our incoming Sixth Grade students. In response to my opening question, they told me that they were excited to be at Sussex Charter. I explained that their teachers and the Board members are also excited that they are at our school. We are excited to meet them and to get to know them as a group, and more importantly as individual.

We are also looking forward to working with our Seventh and Eighth Grade students. We view each of our students as unique individuals with unique talents and potentials. We believe our job is to do what we can, using the best current practices in education, to help them reach those potentials. Our staff is also available to help parents in the important role that they play in guiding their pre-teens and teens as they navigate their way through the true life adventure of learning about the world and more importantly about themselves. This adventure calls on us to work through many obstacles and challenges. However, with hard work and dedication, I am sure we will be successful.

On behalf of the board, I would also like to thank Mrs. Janet Langen for her service to Sussex Charter School since 2008. She has been an integral part of our success and she will be greatly missed.

- Dr. Edwin Selby

## BOARD UPDATES

The Board of Trustees meets the second Monday of every month. On even months we meet at 4 PM, on odd months we meet at 7 PM. We invite parents, teachers, students and staff to attend our meetings and to learn more about how our school operates and different ways to become part of our school community.

### Board Members

Dr. Edwin Selby, President [eselby@sussexcharter.org](mailto:eselby@sussexcharter.org)

Mr. Jason Apter, Curriculum & Policy, Personnel & Negotiations [japter@sussexcharter.org](mailto:japter@sussexcharter.org)

Mrs. Wendie Blanchard, Personnel & Negotiations, Technology [wblanchard@sussexcharter.org](mailto:wblanchard@sussexcharter.org)

Mr. Michael Nelms, Finance [mnelms@sussexcharter.org](mailto:mnelms@sussexcharter.org)

Dr. Mary Rapuano, Curriculum & Policy, Finance [mrapuano@sussexcharter.org](mailto:mrapuano@sussexcharter.org)

Mrs. Michelle Syre, Building & Grounds, Public Relations [msyre@sussexcharter.org](mailto:msyre@sussexcharter.org)

Mr. Charlie Teufert, Buildings & Grounds, Technology [cteufert@sussexcharter.org](mailto:cteufert@sussexcharter.org)

## STEM OFF TO A GREAT START

Sussex Charter's first full time STEM program started this month and the students could already be heard excitedly talking about their projects in the hallways. Individual and group problem-solving are always components of STEM activities. Students began with tasks that got them to work as a group to achieve a common goal. Problem-solving tasks continued the following week as students began lessons and activities focused on forensics.



## A New Look in Our Classrooms

Anyone who attended Back to School Night noticed a change in how the Language Arts classes are looking. Inspired by Mrs. Mrs.



Myslinki's vision, ELA teachers worked very hard, over the summer, on incorporating flexible (or alternative) seating into those rooms. This means that when students are working they do not have to sit at their desks. Instead, they have the freedom to find comfortable spaces around the room to work. This can include kneeling, standing, sitting in a traditional desk, working on carpet squares, leaning on a pillow with a clipboard, sitting at a table with a stool, or working on a bench. There are many possibilities of what this can look like in a classroom.



Although these classrooms look very different from the classrooms most parents are used to seeing, research shows that students are able to focus and do their best work when they are comfortable. If you are interested in further research on the benefits of flexible seating in the classroom please visit:



<http://www.edutopia.org/blog/flexible-seating-student-centered-classroom-kayla-delzer>

[http://journals.lww.com/pedpt/Fulltext/2006/01810/Alternative\\_Seating\\_Devices\\_for\\_Children\\_With.23.aspx](http://journals.lww.com/pedpt/Fulltext/2006/01810/Alternative_Seating_Devices_for_Children_With.23.aspx)

and/or

View this video:<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4cscJcRKYxA&feature=youtu.be>

## HELP WANTED



Volunteers are needed for the SCCST Beautification Committee. This committee of parents, students and teachers will oversee gardening and outside decorating throughout the year. Anyone who is interested should contact Deirdre Mastandrea.

## WHAT DO STUDENTS THINK ABOUT FLEXIBLE SEATING?

- "You can move to a distraction free place to get your work done."
- "Sitting in the same place all the time can get boring. Getting to change where you are sitting can make reading and writing more fun."
- It's easier to concentrate when you're somewhere comfy because if you're not you waste time moving around."

## National Junior Honor Society

Sussex County Charter School for Technology is pleased to have restarted their chapter of the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) as of spring, 2016. NJHS is a student-centered, student-led organization that focuses on the five pillars of membership: scholarship (a student's cumulative GPA at the end of the second marking period, as determined by the faculty council and advisor), service (activities the student has been a part of that focus on helping those in their community with no monetary benefit to themselves), leadership (roles the student has taken to be a leader in their community, both inside and outside of school), character and citizenship (who the student is a person and how they behave on a day-to-day basis).

SCCST's chapter of NJHS will be meeting 1-2 times each month during the school year to establish their leadership for this academic year and begin to plan for community service projects that the students will organize and execute themselves. We are also pleased to announce that we plan on partnering with an area middle school to work together on a service project. Watch for updates as the school year progresses!



### ATTENTION 8<sup>th</sup> GRADERS:

**Registration, first deposit and Eligibility Contract for the Boston Trip are due OCTOBER 13<sup>th</sup>.**

## PTO NEWS



A warm welcome to all new and returning Sussex Charter PTO Facebook members!

If you haven't had a chance to do so yet, we hope you will take the opportunity to complete the PTO membership/volunteer form and submit it and your donation at your earliest convenience. Envelopes with your form and donation can be addressed to SCCST PTO and submitted to the main office.

It is through PTO fundraising that we are able to provide food for events such as the 6th grade orientation, teacher in service luncheon, 8th grade final fling, the year-end picnic/BBQ and graduation. We are able to provide entertainment such as DJs for the dances/parties and fund inspirational speakers as well as help provide bussing for trips. And each year the outgoing 8th grade class makes a donation to the school for future classes. We can thank last year's 8th graders for the new 3D printers and art scanners as well as the supplies to keep them going.

Current Funrsisers:

Save Around books: 9/7-9/21

Gertrude Hawk Candy Bars: 9/14-11/1

Mixed Bags: 9/16-10/3

Thank you so much in advance for your support. We look forward to a great year!

## WELCOME 6<sup>th</sup> GRADERS

Our sixth graders started their Sussex Charter experience, on August 24<sup>th</sup>, with a grade-wide picnic. Students participated in team-building activities and then had a scavenger hunt throughout the school. During the scavenger hunt, students were given clues about teachers and staff and then had to find items throughout the building. It was a great way for them to learn about their teachers, as well as figure out their way around the school. Do you know what Ms.



Graziano's favorite animal is? What Mrs. Mastandrea collects on vacations? What Mrs.



Steffens favorite baseball team is? Find a 6<sup>th</sup> grader and they can tell you!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- 9/21 Save Around Fundraiser Concludes
- 9/22 PTO Meeting 6 PM
- 10/10 School Closed (Teacher In-Service)
- 10/10 Board of Trustees Meeting 4 PM
- 10/11 Keith Hawkins Assembly
- 10/13 Final date for 8<sup>th</sup> grade trip registration
- 10/16 Mixed Bag Fundraiser concludes
- 10/28 Halloween Dance

Be a part of the team that helps maintain a positive school climate at Sussex Charter School!



The team meets after school approximately 5 times a year.

If you are interested, please contact Mrs. Palumbo at [lpalumbo@sussexcharter.org](mailto:lpalumbo@sussexcharter.org)