

Celebrating Black History Month!



MID VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT – A LEARNING COMMUNITY DEDICATED TO EXCELLENCE

CURRICULUM NEWS



MARCH 2017

Celebrating Black History Month

Some of our seventh-grade students took a leading role in celebrating Black History Month! Felicity Martin, Alyssa Dowdy, Jaila Jones, and Kiliyah Jones (pictured above, left to right), with the assistance of Mrs. Beck and Mr. Rovinsky, created an informative and beautiful bulletin board presentation recognizing the achievements of outstanding African American leaders. High school students also created another bulletin board upstairs. Great job!



Faculty Spotlight: Recognizing our Teacher Librarians



Mrs. Sarah Davis

1. Educational background:

High School: Brockport High School; Brockport, NY.
 College: Master of Education in School Library and Information Technology; Mansfield University, Mansfield, PA.
 Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, Minor in Music; Marywood University, Scranton, PA.

2. Favorite book or author - why?

My favorite children's author is Jan and Stan Berenstain. I have always enjoyed their books for the simple way they have created loveable characters children can look to for guidance in real life situations and how to be good members of a community.

3. Given our digital information revolution, how has the role of a librarian changed?

Many people think they can get all of the information they need electronically, making librarians unnecessary. Unfortunately many people believe whatever they read, forgetting that information can be inaccurate or biased. Librarians need to focus on educating appropriate use, how to sift fact from fiction and be mindful that words can be misconstrued depending on context in which they are being presented.

4. What do most people not realize about your job (that you would like them to know)?

The elementary library is a very busy place! Classes take place all day to supplement curriculum, and students come in all morning to exchange books. It is not uncommon to have 50 – 60 students in the library at any given time or to check out 600-750 books each day.

5. New Trends: The convenience of electronic resources and connectedness is not to be diminished, however there is nothing like forming your own understanding through experiences.

Mrs. Suzanne Piorkowski

Education: I graduated from Owen J. Roberts High School in Chester County. #OJRBetterbyfar. I went to Marywood College, earning a BA in Communication Arts with a Minor in English. After working for 10 years in TV News (WYOU, WTOG, WPMT, WBAL & WNEP) went back to Marywood University and earned an MS in Information Science, and School Library Certification. I spent time at St. Paul's in Scranton, Blue Ridge Elementary and Coolbaugh Elementary Center in the Pocono Mountain School District, before joining the faculty at Mid Valley.



Favorite Author or Book: I cannot just pick just ONE favorite author. Elin Hildebrand, J. Courtney Sullivan, Steve Berry, Margaret Mitchell, John Berendt, Sophie Kinsella are all among my favorites. There are too many authors to list at the primary, middle grade and YA levels.

How has the role of librarian changed? Well, there are still great books being published and so many stories to share and get in the hands of our students. When I travel to publisher book talks, for nearly every title described I can think of a student, or teacher who would enjoy it, or a

class where the item fits the curriculum. While some aspects of online research has become easier for students, and all of us, finding quality information is a skill that is lacking. Getting students to go beyond Google is a challenge. I spend time evaluating online materials, seeking discounts and working with several database companies. If you have a project, I can find, or get access to, the best materials for you and your students. Let me know.

What most people do not know about Teacher Librarians?

We don't read all the time. I talk about books, think about books, I read about books and try to get the right books to the right student, but I cannot do all the reading I would like to do. If you need books, eBooks or database for your class, ask me. I order every year, and I like it when items fit a need in your classroom.

What are new trends? Information is everywhere, and not being overwhelmed by it all is a constant struggle. Our phones make it possible to look up almost anything we want to know, anytime. Strong reading and good research skills are still necessary for life-long consuming of information.

HOMEWORK: Board Policy and Best Practices

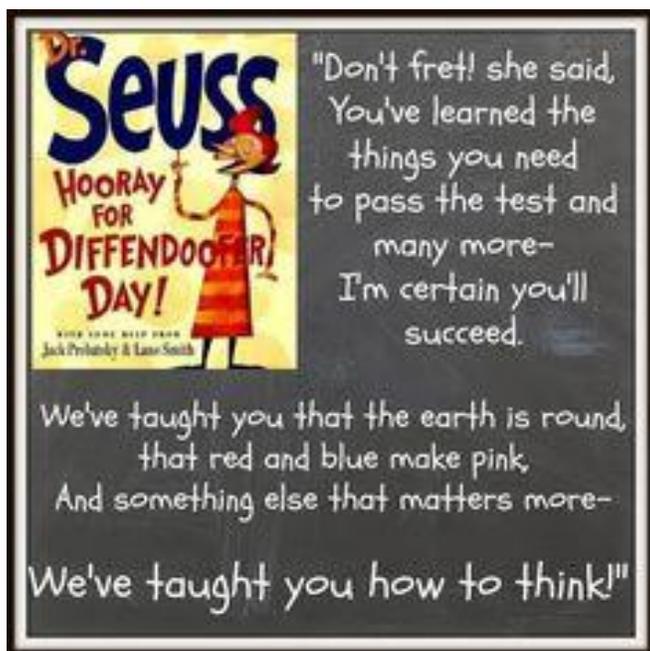
Developing effective and meaningful homework assignments can be very challenging. We are working on developing a set of homework guidelines for the 2017 – 2018 school year based on our district's board policy on homework and research-based best practices. Once the draft guidelines are distributed, teachers should offer feedback and suggestions. In the meantime, teachers who choose to assign homework should review and reflect upon Mid Valley School District's Board Policy #130 and the research-based best practices provided to you in this and previous curriculum newsletters.

Our district homework policy (MVSD, 2015) states in part that "homework assignments should take into consideration individual differences of students such as health, ability, conditions at home, and educational resources at home" (p. 1). It further adds that "homework assignments should be coordinated among teachers and should be within the limit of expected probability for accomplishment by the student. Homework is not to be used as a form of punishment under any circumstances" (p. 2).

Homework: Best Practices

- **Teach students self-regulation skills (i.e. how to do homework):** setting an appropriate work environment, managing time, handling distractions, monitoring motivation, and controlling negative emotions. (Xu, 2008)
- **Vatterott (2010) identified five characteristics of good homework: purpose, efficiency, ownership, competence, and aesthetic appeal.**
 - Purpose = meaningful
 - Efficiency = does not take a long time but requires thinking
 - Ownership = give students choices and connect homework to their interests
 - Competence = differentiate homework so it is the appropriate level of difficulty
 - Aesthetic appeal = visually pleasing and uncluttered (less information on the page, plenty of room to write answers, and use of graphics or clip art) = make it look appealing

Board Policy #130: Retrieved from <http://www.boarddocs.com/pa/mvley/Board.nsf/Public?open&id=policies#>

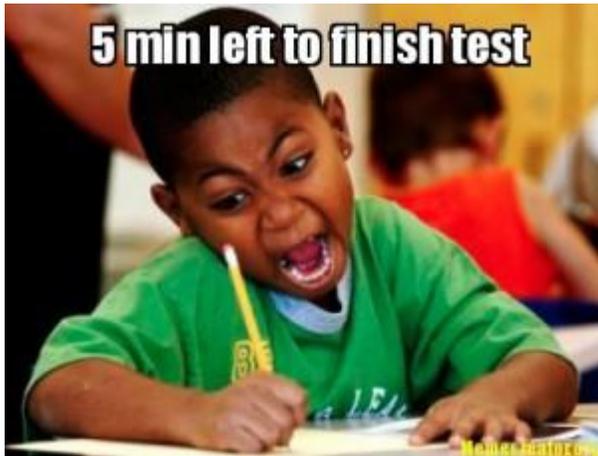


Hooray Dr. Seuss!

The Mid Valley Elementary Center celebrated Dr. Seuss Week during the first week in March. The words and wisdom of Dr. Seuss were there for everyone to enjoy.

The PSSAs, Keystones, PASAs, and AP exams are coming!

These standardized tests are important components of our state's school accountability system, and we must ensure our students are prepared to meet or exceed the state's grade level expectations for the various tested subjects. However, we must not let the testing pressure and stress take over our daily lives as educators and those of our students. You have prepared our students well, and I applaud your hard work and dedication to promoting learning experiences that are engaging and meaningful.



Here is a PDE link with important test administration information: <http://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/Assessment%20and%20Accountability/PSSA/Pages/Test-Administrators-Materials.aspx#tab-1>

Comprehensive Planning: Setting a Vision for the Future!

All members of our school community have been invited to participate in the on-going Comprehensive Planning process. Students, parents, teachers, and administrators have completed online surveys. Mr. Antonetti met with the middle school and high school Student Councils to explain the process, and student officers from each council participated in a committee meeting that also included parents, business leaders, and members of the community. Our committee will distribute proposed vision and mission statements for consideration. Thank you for supporting this process!



(Above: Middle School Student Council)

"The human race has one really effective weapon, and that is laughter."

Mark Twain