

Inspiring. Educating. Advancing.



The Coatesville Area School District 2016-2017 Annual Report

Coatesville Area School District Community:

To know where one is headed in the **future**, it is important to reflect on the path that has led to the present. For the Coatesville Area School District, that path has been one based on our commitment to inspiring, educating and advancing each and every student who enters our schools.

Our 2016-2017 annual report, therefore, reflects this theme and showcases some of the significant milestones that have occurred in the areas of curriculum, communication, operations, facilities and so much more. There has never been a more exciting time to be in the Coatesville Area School District. Read on and I am sure you will agree!

Have a great 2017-2018 school year, and if you see me out and about at school events, please come up and say hello.

Sincerely,
Dr. Cathy Taschner
Superintendent

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Inspiring

District Partners with University of Pennsylvania to Deliver Rigorous Writing Instruction

Writing well is the gateway to success in high school, college and in life. With this in mind, the District entered into a partnership with the University of Pennsylvania to provide instruction in the Collins Writing Program. The program is designed to improve students' thinking and writing skills simultaneously. It's based on the educational assertion that thinking and writing skills develop with frequent, meaningful practice.

Teachers were the first to receive the introduction and the training in the Collins Writing Program. The work with teachers and administrators was focused on developing a more meaningful way of assessing student work products. In preparation, teachers participated in a series of professional development sessions during the 2016-2017 school year that were led by Dr. Joseph Ginotti, Director of the Graduate School of Education and an associate professor at the University of Pennsylvania. Teachers will continue in professional development with Dr. Ginotti throughout the 2017-2018 school year.

The program incorporates daily writing opportunities, consistent structures and processes, appropriate and focused feedback and support, and authentic modes of response that impact both content learning and refinement of the craft of writing. It is designed to shift the focus to more argumentative, informational and narrative writing. This occurs, not only in English class, but in all classes. Students are gaining skills in context, variety of response, content connected composition and evidence based argument as a part of the foundational skills taught in the program. Armed with these skills, students will continue their writing success long after high school. Associate Professor Dr. Ginotti noted, "The program shows teachers and students how to see writing in a different way by focusing on the process of writing and the idea that not every piece of writing needs to be collected and graded."

The Collins Writing Program is structured so that students receive five types of writing assignments each designed to help

them develop the quality of their writing through repeated writings over time. The end result is writing that is ready and able to be published. For example,



of the five types of writing, type one writing involves brainstorming and requires students to reflect, remember and record ideas onto paper to revisit later. Type two writing requires students to respond to a prompt with correct and accurate information that demonstrates their understanding and mastery of content material. This is a skill that is used not only in college, but in almost every career. Type three writing teaches students the importance of the editing process. Type four writing introduces the power of peer revisions and the process of writing for a specific audience. The final assignment, or type five writing, is one in which the students can expect to be widely read and scrutinized by others and is intended for publication. The assignments all go through multiple drafts and edits until the product is error free.

The Coatesville Area School District has been pleased to be a part of the Penn Literacy Network. Students leave our schools ready to take on and solve the challenges in the world that awaits them.

"Working with the University of Pennsylvania and Dr. Ginotti is but one demonstration of the commitment the District has to making sure that instruction is changing at a pace commensurate with the rapidly evolving global environment of which District students are a part," said Dr. Cathy Taschner, Superintendent. "Because of technology, writing can be widely published globally, in the matter of an instant. This instruction will ensure the Coatesville schools continue to add to the very distinguished group of alumni that represent so well the Coatesville Area School District."





Words Their Way Strengthens Student Vocabulary Usage

The Coatesville Area School District understands that literacy is the foundation for success. To that end, the District has embarked on a commitment to ensuring that every single student is reading on grade level by the end of third grade. This commitment means providing students with exceptional instruction in phonemic awareness, decoding, vocabulary, decoding, and comprehension. Word Study takes its place in literacy development by exposing the logic and patterns within our written language system, and by helping our students master how to spell, define and use words. Words Their Way provides teachers with a new way to teach spelling, phonics, and vocabulary.

“You’re finding out where the kids’ skill sets are,” said Dr. Kevin Flanigan, Professor of Literacy Education at West Chester University (WCU) and Graduate Coordinator for the WCU Literacy Department. The District brought Dr. Flanigan in to help implement the Words Their Way program. “If a student is already a great speller, for example, he or she would be moved ahead that week. If a kid is missing a few concepts, he or she would be put with a group with similar needs.”

Last year, Flanigan conducted a series of four, half-day professional development sessions designed to provide teachers with the foundational knowledge and philosophy of the program, which focuses on teaching words not through memorization, but through an understanding of how words work.

To accomplish this new way of learning, students are engaged in hands-on games and activities throughout the week. One of the activities requires students to place words into different categories according to sound. Another of the games calls for a student to guess a word based on clues other students are providing. Dr. Flanigan calls this, “high-level questions that require high-level processing of words.” The games are so engaging, Dr. Flanigan said students “don’t even realize they’re learning.”

“Our students and teachers are getting so excited about words. I’ve watched elementary students light up when they recognize a pattern or master a new sound, and have watched equal excitement in middle school students who have started to explore advanced Greek and Latin root words and other elements that will extend through high school and beyond,” said Dr. Kimberly Donahue, Assistant to the Superintendent for Curriculum and Learning.

Next year, Dr. Flanigan will begin visiting classrooms to provide teachers with additional support and coaching that will help fine tune the approach. “I commend the District,” Dr. Flanigan said. “I’ve visited them multiple times – it hasn’t just been a one-shot deal. I think that demonstrates great commitment to sustained professional development over time, which is, of course, in the best interest of the students.”

Educating

Expansion of AP Program, Coupled with Professional Development, Yields Continued Increases

The District's Advanced Placement (AP) program saw significant growth during the 2016-2017 school year. For the third consecutive year, the program provided additional opportunities and experienced increased student participation, with students scoring higher on the AP exams.

Computer Science was added to the slate of AP courses – bringing the total number of classes available to 18 – and sections were added for Human Geography, World History, and Psychology. In addition, World History, Human Geography and Music Theory were made available to 9th and 10th graders for the first time this year.

“By adding to and expanding the program,” explained Intermediate High School Principal Brian Chenger, “we’re encouraging students to step outside their comfort zones and challenge themselves.”

Dr. Kim Donahue, Assistant to the Superintendent for Curriculum and Learning, credits the increase in AP enrollment to the commitment that teachers and advisers have made toward spending more time evaluating individual students to determine if they are capable of succeeding in an AP course and then encouraging them to enroll.

“And by making these courses available to 9th and 10th graders, it allows them to take on that challenge earlier in their high school careers, which we think is important,” Chenger continued. “By at least attempting an AP course, students become better prepared for post-secondary opportunities.”

See the chart below for an overview of student participation and AP exam data.

Professional Development for Faculty Yields Test Result Increase

District-wide professional development efforts, combined with AP training for faculty, is credited with the increase in students’ scores on the AP exams, said Chenger and Donahue. The training was provided by The College Board – the entity which administers AP course requirements and exams – at the District’s expense. (see chart below)

The District has been encouraging teachers of all grade levels to take AP training, with the goal of having as many teachers AP-trained as possible. Having additional AP-trained teachers on staff allows the District to open new sections of AP courses, knowing there will be faculty ready to teach them. Further, even if instructors are not teaching AP courses, they can apply the strategies they learn in the training to non-AP courses they are teaching, thereby raising the quality of instruction across the board.

“With teachers getting this training at all levels,” said Chenger, “it’s an exciting time for our District, especially with the results we are seeing.”

Pre-AP Courses Get Students Involved in Program Earlier

High schoolers are not the only District students benefiting from AP opportunities. In 2016-2017, the District added Pre-AP courses in English Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies for middle school students.

“We wanted to be able to offer options to high-achieving middle school students who want to be challenged, who we think have the grit and the heart to take on that challenge,” said Donahue.

“And success breeds success,” she continued. “When they do well in these courses, they gain confidence in their abilities and it will motivate them to take on the challenge of taking AP courses when they get to the high school.”

AP CLASSES OFFERED IN CASD

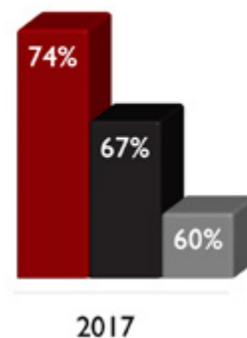
- Biology
- Calculus AB
- Calculus BC
- Chemistry
- Computer Science Principles
- English Language and Composition
- English Literature and Composition
- Environmental Science
- European History
- Human Geography
- Music Theory
- Physics I
- Psychology
- Statistics
- Studio Art: 2-D Design Portfolio
- United States Government and Politics
- United States History
- World History

“Success” on an AP Exam is defined as an exam score of 3 or higher, which represents the score point that research finds predictive of college success and college graduation. These findings have held consistent across the decades. One example of such a study comes from the National Center for Educational Accountability, which found that an AP Exam score, and a score of 3 or higher in particular, is a strong predictor of a student’s ability to persist in college and earn a bachelor’s degree.

| COATESVILLE AREA HIGH SCHOOL AP SCORES | | | |
|--|------|------|------|
| CASD High School | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
| Total AP Students | 146 | 208 | 219 |
| Number of Exams | 243 | 382 | 393 |
| AP Students with Scores 3+ | 113 | 155 | 163 |

% of Total AP Students with Scores 3+

■ CASD ■ State ■ Global





Hats Off to the Class of 2017!



The District congratulates the graduating Class of 2017 on its achievements, accomplishments and contributions. We wish these students every success and happiness.

GRADUATES: 475
Going to 2-year or 4-year college or university: 63%
Going into military: 3%
Going straight to work: 8%

Sample of Colleges and Universities CASD Graduates Will Attend:

- Franklin and Marshall
- Purdue
- St. John's
- Immaculata
- West Chester University
- LaSalle University
- Millersville University
- Kutztown University



Advancing

Three New Schools, Renovations to Provide an Optimal Learning Environment

Two new elementary schools and a new middle school are coming to the Coatesville Area School District. Other buildings will be renovated, and three inadequate elementary buildings will be closed under the facilities plan that the school board approved in June.

After 15 months of studying every District building's ability to serve current and projected enrollment and provide a 21st Century learning environment, the School Board concluded this plan was the best way to meet students' educational needs while spending resources wisely.

Under the plan:

- The current King's Highway Elementary School will be replaced with a new building at the same location.
- A new elementary school will be built at the South Brandywine campus.
- Major renovations will be made to Reeceville Elementary School. Rainbow Elementary will receive less extensive renovations.
- Caln, East Fallowfield, and Friendship elementary schools will be closed.

- The existing Scott Middle School will become a 6th grade center and also will also receive some renovations.
- A new consolidated middle school will be built.
- Both Coatesville Senior High School buildings would also receive minor improvements.

This \$198.9 million plan takes the budget-friendly step of reducing the total number of operating district schools from 11 to eight. It eliminates temporary modular classrooms, eliminates classrooms and support rooms from school basements, and provides the necessary support spaces in adequately sized rooms. Elementary schools will all be of similar size, and all students will matriculate together from grades 6 through 12.



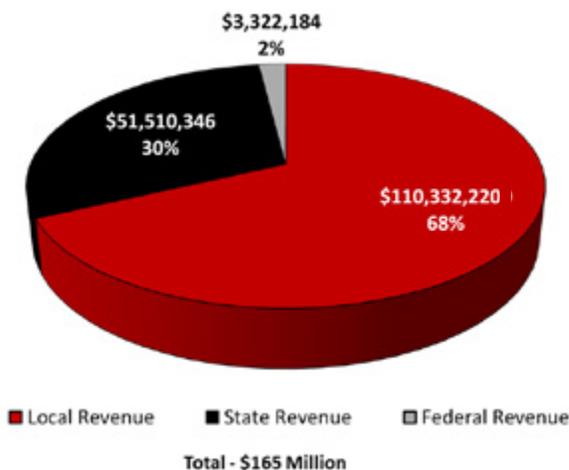
The Pathway to Fiscal Balance

Few realize that preparation of the 2017-2018 budget actually starts early in the 2016-2017 school year, in order to adhere to a series of deadlines set by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. In developing the 2017-2018 budget, the District continued its commitment to stringent fiscal accountability measures and identifying expense reduction options that did not impact the educational programs available to our students.

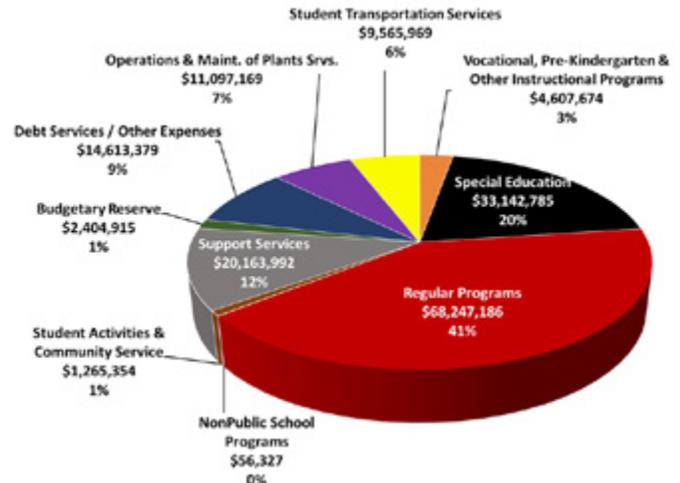
Most notably, the District worked to transform a negative fund balance, thus improving the District's bond rating from BBB+ \ Negative to A- / Positive. That change in bond rating enabled the district to take action on a bond refinancing plan in the spring of 2017, which resulted in a gross saving of \$7.1 million or 11.23%

Budget 2017-2018

Where the Money Comes From



Where the Money Goes



CASD Strengthens Community Outreach and Engagement

In 2016-2017, the District made its goal of increasing public awareness about Coatesville Area School District's accomplishments a priority.

First, a brand-new District-wide newsletter, *The Achiever*, was published and mailed or emailed to residents throughout the District. *The Achiever* included news on curriculum developments and updates on SAT and PSAT testing. The publication also featured updates on new AP courses and the dual enrollment program, a sports-wrap, and a recap of accomplishments.

Then, the District set its sights on revitalizing the image people have associated with it in the past. In an effort to establish a new brand that would more accurately reflect who the District is and the message it wants to convey moving forward, five Visioning Sessions were held this summer. Parents of current and former students, alumni, current District students, parents of charter or private school students, Board members, faculty, staff, and members of the community were all invited to attend the Visioning Sessions. Honesty and a free exchange of ideas was the order of the day for each session and there were no wrong answers as participants shared their thoughts and opinions on the District's strengths, weaknesses, and the direction it should take moving forward.

The unveiling of the District's rebranding will occur in the next issue of *The Achiever*.



Updating the Words that Guide Us

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Coatesville Area School District, rich in diversity and committed to excellence, is to create innovative educational experiences which are funded by the taxpayers, supported by the community, delivered by dedicated teachers and administrators, to ensure all students will become responsible, contributing global citizens.

Thanks to the School Board Policy Committee, the Coatesville Area School District devoted the 2016-2017 school year to creating an updated mission statement and will soon have policies that match both the ever-changing School Code and modern life.

The new mission statement retains our commitment to educating all students and preparing them for success in a global society, and continues to reflect pride in the District's diversity. It now acknowledges that meeting these goals requires the support and commitment of many groups: taxpayers, the community, teachers, and administrators.

The Policy Committee has also been working at a more granular level to review and update about 2,000 district policies, which govern everything from students' right to learn to discipline. Some of these policies have not been reviewed since the 1990s, or even the 1980s – decades before the internet and smart phones became ubiquitous.

The committee is working with the Pennsylvania School Board Association on the policy review, a step that has shaved years off of the estimated review time.



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Get to Know Your School Board

The Coatesville Area School Board is composed of nine residents who serve overlapping, unpaid terms of four years each. They are elected by the citizens of the District.

A school board is a legislative body. Although locally elected, school board directors are state officials who co-partner with the legislature and are designated by school law to oversee a district's school system. The superintendent serves as the tenth non-voting member of the school board and, along with an administrative team, acts as the professional resource for educational actions taken by the school board.

Our School Board sets the policies and engages in planning within the guidelines of the Pennsylvania School Code. Our School Board's responsibility to provide a free public education essentially includes three major functions: planning, setting policy, and evaluating results.

REGION I

Valley Township & Coatesville

Bashera Grove
James Hills
Deborah L. Thompson

REGION II

Caln Township & West Brandywine Township

Dean A. Snyder
Ann M. Wuertz
Stuart C.N. Deets

REGION III

East Fallowfield Township, Sadsbury, Modena, West Caln Township, South Coatesville

Laurie C. Knecht
Brenda L. Geist
Tom Siedenbuehl

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