



NSSEO Governing Board Brief February 2023 - The Heart of our Why

From the Heart Message - Dr. Judy Hackett

In a month focused on love, random acts of kindness, and a reminder to embrace the gratitude of relationships with family, friends, colleagues, and community, this message conveys a simple and sincere message and was shared on Valentine's Day.

Not Just Another Valentine.



The celebration of February 14th, Valentine's Day has evolved significantly over the years and is currently a multi-billion dollar holiday that includes almost 2 billion dollars spent just on gifts for family pets. While the holiday has become increasingly commercialized, showing love and appreciation in its purest form carries great sentimental value.

This message is NOT just another Valentine. It does not contain Hallmark verses, quotes or the updated version of the conversation heart messages that have existed for over 100 years. This is quite simply a message of the heart - a sincere note of thanks.

Heart and compassion are synonymous with NSSEO. They drive our work every day and are reflected in the work you do and the kind, understanding and special ways you work with every student, parent, visitor, district and issue, big or small. The priceless value of your gifts of the heart are worth more than words can adequately capture and the ongoing impact of your dedication continues into years to come.

So today, in this heartfelt message of appreciation, I am truly blessed to work with such amazing NSSEO stars who are driven by what matters most and emulate our mission of guiding students with special needs to build a promising future.

Thank you for the impact you have had on my life and the lives of the students and families we serve. Enjoy a special day of love and appreciation.

Best,
Judy



February Shining Stars - Cole Corodic (D25) and Jaylen Humphrey-Georges (D59)



This month NSSEO recognized two dynamic students, **Cole Borodic**, an eighth-grade student from District 25, and **Jaylen Humphrey-Georges**, a fifth-grade student from District 59. Both students began their journey at Timber Ridge during the fall of 2019 and have attended for a little over 3 years. Cole was celebrated for his recent full integration back into his home school, while Jaylen was honored for successfully maintaining the highest level in his individualized educational plan. It was wonderful and inspiring to hear about the incredible journeys of these two students and see their pride and growth as they continue to succeed in their educational plans. The students shared thoughts and appreciation for their families and school communities.

Congratulations to Cole and Jaylen for their great achievements and for taking their next big step toward strengthening their independence and self-confidence.

NSSEO Continuous Improvement Plan Goal #2: Social-Emotional Learning

Timber Ridge Principal, Mike Wagrowski and Assistant Principal, Nancy Milne shared continuous improvement updates related to Timber Ridge School's progress toward supporting the whole child and efforts to enhance SEL components throughout their programming.

The presentation highlighted how improving the independent functioning of Timber Ridge students demonstrates their readiness to begin integrating back into their home school district. The addition of new curricular resources, SEL taught in special classes, candor and trauma-informed practice training for staff, and work being done to provide family therapy through the therapist team at Timber Ridge were showcased to the Governing Board.

NSSEO Highlights - Kirk Karaoke



Students and staff participated in the first annual “Kirk Karaoke” in the last week of January. Music and dancing filled the gym as participants in the karaoke event belted out their favorite tunes and for several students, it was a great way to ‘find their voice’ and share their creative interpretations of crowd favorites. Kirk Karaoke will be a returning ‘hit’ for the Kirk team who love to celebrate students’ talents in every way.

NSSEO Updates

This month NSSEO is continuing to prioritize a number of focus areas throughout NSSEO that include training, planning, and sharing with staff, districts, and colleagues in the educational field. These efforts emulate the goals in the NSSEO Continuous Improvement Plan with a strong emphasis on cultivating partnerships, professional development, parent training, and legislative efforts.

Planning for upcoming presentations at state and national conferences that reflect insights and growth from collective efforts at NSSEO spans across several departments. It is with great pride that the depth of knowledge and experience across our leadership team and staff are shared in many ways with the goal of conveying positive opportunities with others.

On the legislative front, state-level efforts connecting with local, regional, and NSSEO priorities are serving as a springboard at the upcoming NSSEO Annual Legislative Roundtable on Friday, March 3rd. This Roundtable is focused on 2 of the main priorities identified for this group in previous roundtables - advancing transition efforts into post-secondary options and mental health support of students in need through a positive pathway forward theme.

Superintendent Search Update

The NSSEO Governing Board met with the HYA Search Firm on February 1st and completed the final rounds of interviews during the month of February. The upcoming Board meeting will include a recommendation for the next Superintendent of NSSEO and plans for transition.

Continued Focus on Recruitment and Hiring

NSSEO has started reviewing hiring needs throughout the district by strategically meeting with leaders throughout the cooperative. This winter and spring will be another busy hiring season as NSSEO will be attending multiple university/college fairs and online job fairs searching for “one like our next best.” Available positions for the upcoming year are posted for the upcoming 2023-24 school year. [Click this link to check out any job vacancies.](#)

The Wonders of Winter - Highlights from Winter Wonderland 2023



The weather for this year's Winter Wonderland at SLOEC had a beautiful snow globe effect - inches of fresh snow piling up on the ground, our hats, and the hills making all the outdoor activities that much more exciting and exhausting, especially if you were pulling the sled or playing broomball! Winter Wonderland had everything the 150 attendees

could hope for in a special family event - snow everywhere, chili and cornbread to warm up with, fresh popcorn, crafts, a diverse array of SLOEC animals, and Greg and Barb selling Kirk micro-business products made by students. Dave Jefferson played the SLOEC classics accompanied by little musicians and ended with a crowd favorite, the sentimental song, "We'll meet again someday soon."

Upcoming NSSEO Events:

Institute Day	Friday, February 24th - Students Not in Attendance
Amy Rudolph Basketball Game	Friday, February 24th (6 PM) Hoffman Est. HS 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Miner PTA Bowling Event	Saturday, February 25th (2-4 PM) @ Arlington Lanes
NSSEO Governing Board Meeting	Wednesday, March 1st (7:00 PM) @ Timber Ridge Gym
NSSEO Legislative Roundtable	Friday, March 3rd (9:30-11:30 AM) @ Timber Ridge Gym
End of Third Quarter	Friday, March 3rd
Parent/Teacher Conferences	Monday, March 13 (5:30-8:30 PM)

Making a Difference

NSSEO is continually looking for ways to expand partnerships with parents, districts, community leaders, and legislators to join together as a community committed to deepening understanding and positively impacting NSSEO students and families. To learn more about how to make a difference visit us at [Make A Difference](#) as well as on our social media platforms:

Twitter @NSSEO_org
Facebook @NSSEO
Instagram NSSEO_org