



## **NSSEO Governing Board Brief - November 1, 2017**

### **Engage. Connect. Grow.**



### **Parent Education Resource Center (PERC) Opening**

NSSEO's Parent Education Resource Center officially opened on November 1st with a ribbon-cutting event that welcomed parents, community members, staff, NSSEO Foundation and NSSEO Governing Board members. The event allowed guests to experience the purpose, offerings and resources available at PERC. PERC, with the input of parents and staff, is a gathering place designed for parents to meet for formal trainings and informal discussions, learn from another, share resources, network or

enjoy coffee with friends. The PERC will continue to evolve as a special place of empowerment; where parents can learn together, incorporating the tools and resources that will be helpful in supporting their children. At the Governing Board Meeting, Nan Naranjo, PATHS President and parent of a teenage Kirk student shared this perspective, “PERC is a space for learning together, sharing what we know and how we can help other parents.” PERC was made possible by the support of the NSSEO Foundation and a generous anonymous donor. PERC doors are open to parents, staff and community partners Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and will also host scheduled evening events throughout the year. Please visit the NSSEO website to learn more about PERC.

<http://www.nsseo.org/community/parent-education-resource-center-perc/>

### Timber Ridge Book-A-Ween Literacy Shining Stars



Pictured left to right: Sam Thompson, Timber Ridge Student (D62), NSSEO Governing Board President Janice Krinsky (D59), Jayana Bethel, Timber Ridge Student (D59), Brian Weems, Principal of Timber Ridge School, and Chandler Jordahl, Timber Ridge Teacher

The NSSEO Governing Board recognized two students for their leadership at the 2nd annual Book-O-Ween Literacy Night at Timber Ridge School on Thursday, October 26th. The overall goal of literacy night is to increase the passion and enjoyment for reading. Jayana Bethel, 5<sup>th</sup> grader from District 59, and Sam Thompson, 5th grader from District 62, were recognized as November’s Shining Stars for participation in Literacy Night as well as their significant growth in literacy. Jayana and Sam hosted their own read aloud during one of the event sessions. At the Board meeting, Jayana and Sam read a passage from the book *Hansel and Gretel Ninja Chicks*. Jayana and Sam reflect the true

definition of NSSEO Shining Stars through their leadership, hard work, and many accomplishments.

### Federal/State Legislative Updates

This past month, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, authorized the elimination of 72 guidance documents associated with IDEA spanning the past several decades, citing them as “outdated, unnecessary or ineffective”. Parents, advocates and special education leaders have voiced concern regarding the process for the guidance elimination and speculation of the intent behind this move, emphasizing the lack of a more defined collaborative and well-communicated process which could have mitigated negative reaction. Removing guidance without careful articulation of the changes and updates did not provide important clarity, reassurance and understanding for parents and advocates of students with special needs. It did reinforce the continued need for advocacy and discussions with the Department of Education as it relates to special education.

At the state level, there is an increased focus on understanding and connecting the changes associated with the new Illinois funding model and the recently-approved Illinois ESSA plan with careful considerations for students with special needs. Special education leaders will continue to work with ISBE on the critical implementation of reporting changes, funded aligned to student needs and associated assurances.

### NSSEO FY 2017 Audit

Kevin Smith from Eder, Casella, and Co. provided the Governing Board with an overview of the NSSEO FY17 audit and highlighted that the audit had no findings. The auditors indicated that all documents and procedures were organized, concise and well-prepared for the audit process. NSSEO was commended for its efficient and sound business office practices. Both Cathy Williams and Julie Jilek were recognized for their critical roles in the successful audit process. The Governing Board accepted the FY17 audit as presented.

### Long Term Facility Planning

NSSEO reviewed its program and capital improvement needs in relation to unspent funds from the previous school year. It was highlighted that historically, funds for unbudgeted needs and significant projects are secured from the fund balance of the previous school year once the NSSEO audit has been completed and presented to the

NSSEO Governing Board. The process helps to maintain the NSSEO tuition and eliminates the need for NSSEO to conduct special assessments to member districts for large projects. Current identified needs are the areas of curriculum, classroom furniture, and continued funding for the Timber Ridge gym/elevator project, previously identified as a need by the NSSEO Facility Planning Committee.

The NSSEO Governing Board approved the motion to retain funds to support a revised and expanded curriculum focus for this school year. Funds were also retained for much needed classroom furniture updates. The retention of additional funds for the the Timber Ridge gym/elevator project will be further discussed at the December meeting.

### IEP Best Practices

The NSSEO Staff Institute day on October 16th, was focused on priority three of the NSSEO Continuous Improvement Plan regarding the development of customized training modules of IEP Best Practices. This process is intended to create positive, progressive changes in the IEP process. The 2017-2018 focus for IEP Best Practices is centering on important considerations for Autism, Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) , Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) and an extended, comprehensive approach to Transition planning. At the Institute Day, NSSEO staff teams received additional training in the areas mentioned above. NSSEO coaches will continue to support staff in implementing this new process. We believe that this work is critical to improving our engagement with families and shaping best practices for an improved IEP process in the field of special education.

### NSSEO Governing Board Recognition

November 15th is School Board Members Day. In honor of this day, students from NSSEO programs celebrated the members of the NSSEO Governing Board. NSSEO is fortunate to have a supportive and student-centered Board of Education. Students conveyed words of thanks and gratitude in the following video:

<http://www.nsseo.org/home-2/videos/#!gallery-4-52>.

Students also created handmade thank you cards and homemade cookies. Dr. Hackett recognized the Governing Board for their commitment to serving students and their communities in serving on their district boards and for their additional board role and dedicated time and contributions to NSSEO. This level of time and commitment continually enhance opportunities for students, families and staff to grow.