



NSSEO Governing Board Brief

April 4, 2018

Engage. Connect. Grow.

NSSEO Shining Star:

Infinitec North Technology Achievement Award Winner, Peter Vlachos



The NSSEO Governing Board recognized Peter Vlachos, a District 214 student and sophomore at Kirk School. Peter is a well-deserving recipient of the 2017-2018 Infinitec North Outstanding Student Technology Achievement Award. Peter will receive the prestigious Infinitec Award for his use of augmentative and alternative communication at the annual Infinitec Awards Dinner on April 19, 2018.

Peter has a contagious laugh and smile paired with an amazing sense of humor. Peter has a desire to socially interact with everyone he meets. He is a bright young man who enjoys academics. Peter communicates in a variety of ways to participate in his academic and vocational tasks throughout his day. He uses eye gaze, facial expressions, gestures, physical acts, picture/photo symbols, vocalizations, and voice output devices as modes of his communication. Peter uses a dedicated communication system, a Tobii Dynavox I Series with Eye Gaze navigation.

Assistive technology provides Peter with a strong voice to communicate his creative thoughts. Peter is able to express his goals and help plan for his future. Mrs. Vlachos shared heartfelt appreciation to the Kirk team, Peter's ability to utilize his device to communicate and what it means to be his mother. She also shared that, "The first time I heard, 'hi mom,' was three years ago and it was amazing." Peter is a young man who exemplifies using his

language with the assistance of state-of-the-art eye gaze technology to engage and connect with others as well as learn skills that will transcend into a successful life post school.

Special Recognition - NSSEO Foundation President



Retiring NSSEO Foundation Board President, Ms. Lynn Davis was recognized and honored for her passion and service to both NSSEO and the NSSEO Foundation. Lynn was an NSSEO Governing Board member from 2009 to 2011 representing District 211 where she also served as a Board member. Lynn has been active on the

NSSEO Foundation Board since 2011, serving as the President of the Foundation since 2015. Lynn has accomplished a great deal in tenure as the Foundation President. Under Lynn's leadership, fundraising efforts increased significantly enabling the Foundation to award 21 mini-grants totalling \$30,000 to NSSEO educational staff during the this school year. These mini-grants provide creative and exciting in-school and after-school opportunities for NSSEO students. Lynn has also been paramount in establishing a name for the NSSEO Foundation on all social media venues including Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest. On behalf of all students, staff and administrators at NSSEO, we thank Lynn for her steadfast support and eye on fundraising efforts to provide NSSEO with the resources that have improved learning and enhanced our classrooms and schools.

NSSEO Leadership Announcements

Three new administrators were approved by the NSSEO Governing Board for the 2018-2019 school year.



Ms. Christy Crabtree assumes the role of Director of Innovative Learning and Technology following Mary Ann McGuinn, who currently serves as the part time Technology Coordinator. Mary Ann has given 40 years of incredibly dedicated service to NSSEO. As part of the refining of the NSSEO infrastructure to best align to ongoing needs, the leadership team felt the critical aspects of this evolving position required a return to a full time status.

Christy emerged as a finalist from a candidate pool of 30 applicants and an interview process that included various stakeholders from across NSSEO. Christy has extensive leadership experience in special education in both general education districts and special education cooperatives.

Christy's collaborative nature, excellent communication skills and passion for systems work closely align with the job responsibilities. Christy is a licensed school psychologist by training, serving as the student services coordinator in Glenview District 34 for four years. She has spent the last two years as the Administrator for the Early Childhood Program on the North Shore, focusing on the coordination of effective instruction for all students, facilitating parent partnerships and parent education efforts, as well as providing networking and professional development opportunities for all early childhood educators.



Mr. Gavin McGuinn was approved as the new Director of Business Services. The position was posted in January 2018 to fill the position resulting from the upcoming retirement of Cathy Williams. Cathy has worked for NSSEO for 29 years with amazing insight, talent and dedication that has been invaluable to both NSSEO and its member districts. The quest to replace Mrs. Williams was a very thorough and comprehensive process. Twenty-seven applicants were screened and narrowed to two in-person interviews based on experiences and qualifications. The finalist interviewed with the Superintendent and shared his passion for his work in the field of school business management along with a special focus on working with students with special needs.

Mr. Gavin McGinn currently works in Mt. Prospect District 57 as an Accounting Coordinator. Prior to that role, Gavin was a Payroll/Benefits Coordinator in District 74. He began his career in special education as a paraprofessional and conveyed a strong interest in continuing his work in school business with a focus on special education. Gavin has been a valued member of the District 57 business department team where his primary focus has included conducting day-to-day district accounting/financial transactions, creating financial reports for the Board of Education, and overseeing the district's payroll specialist and purchasing agent. Additionally, Gavin serves on the Suburban Young Professional Board for Special Olympics of Illinois and regularly donates his time at events and fundraisers for special education students. Gavin brings strong technical knowledge along with excellent communication and interpersonal skills.



Ms. Christine Pasquesi will be the Assistant Principal at Kirk School. This position recently became available after Jill Anderson, current Assistant Principal at Kirk School resigned to take on the role of Principal of Park School in Evanston Elementary School District 65. As NSSEO Administration moved through the hiring of Instructional Coordinator of Kirk School, Christine Pasquesi surfaced as another front runner in the interview process.

Earlier in her career, Christine served as a speech and language pathologist and assistive technology facilitator in a life skills program. For the last five years, Christine has served as Assistant Director of Pupil Services in Glencoe School District 35. Through the interview process, Christine demonstrated her passion for working closely with students and families. She brings extensive leadership and communication experience with students with complex learning needs. We look forward to Christine joining the NSSEO and Kirk team.

FY 19 NSSEO Budget

The proposed 2018-2019 NSSEO Budget was presented to the Board after a collaborative process with the NSSEO Finance Advisory Committee, comprised of member district special education leadership, business managers, NSSEO board representatives and leadership. The proposed NSSEO FY19 Budget reflects decreases in program tuition rates (-.35% to -20%) with the exception of a slight increase in Kirk tuition (2%). It also reflects decreases in the cost of services (-.57% to -15%) with the exception of a minimal increase in Technology Central services (1.64%) and technical assistance to districts (1.25%). The NSSEO Governing Board unanimously voted to transmit the FY19 proposed budget to NSSEO member districts for review and action. It is anticipated that a directed vote on the FY 19 NSSEO Budget will take place at the June 6th NSSEO Governing Board meeting.

Kirk Spotlight- 31 Staff Shaved Their Heads to Raise \$36,000 for Cancer

The first Kirk St. Baldrick's and Lifesource blood drive and fundraiser took place at Kirk School on Thursday, April 5th. It was a an incredible success with over 200 in attendance, 31 staff members who shaved their heads to raise money for St. Baldricks and 47 who donated blood. This event began with an idea and hope to support research for childhood cancer by Principal Kim Dungan, Ms. Allie Vitale, Kirk Teacher and Ms. Julie Hollamby, Kirk OT and organizers of the event. Dr. Judy Hackett attended the event and shared appreciation on behalf of NSSEO, "What beautiful heads and more importantly, the giving hearts behind those 31 who shaved their heads for the cause!" Coupled with a Life Source blood drive, the positive impact of this fund-raising effort is immeasurable and countless others will benefit from the over \$36,000 raised. It was an infectiously positive and proud day for the NSSEO community.



Upcoming NSSEO Events

- NSSEO STEM Science Fair: April 30th, 12:30 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. at Miner School
- NSSEO Retirement Reception: May 17th, 4:00 p.m. at Miner School
- Miner Stride-for-Pride: May 19th, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
- Kirk Walk and Wheel-A-Thon: May 20th, 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- Timber Ridge Graduation: May 22nd, 7:00 p.m.
- Kirk High School Graduation: May 23rd, 7:00 p.m.
- Kirk Junior High Graduation: May 24th, 1:30 p.m.
- Miner Graduation: May 24th, 7:00 p.m.
- Kirk Transition Graduation: May 29th, 7:00 p.m.