



NSSEO Governing Board Brief

November 7, 2018



NSSEO Shining Star: Highlighting Student Independence in District 25 - “Keep Calm it’s Just a Cane”.

District 25 students, Louise Morrison and Vivaan Kanio were recognized by the NSSEO Governing Board for their inspirational lesson during the National White Cane Day Celebration at Westgate School. This nationally recognized day originated in 1963 when the

National Federation for the Blind called upon governors to create a law to honor and recognize the visually impaired community. Louise and Vivaan were acknowledged and praised for their independence in school and in their community. Louise (pictured above) is a first grader with a knack for self-advocacy and teaching her peers about how to support other visually impaired students. Click [here](#) to see Louise and Vivaan educate their peers and the community to “keep calm, it’s just a cane”. Louise shared her words of appreciation to the NSSEO Governing Board, her family and her teacher, Ms. Casey Burns, for “making this video and for teaching me braille.” Ms. Casey Burns was also recognized for her distinguished honor of being awarded the 2018 National Federation of the Blind of Illinois’ Teaching Excellence Award. The Morrison Family nominated Ms. Burns for this award and were present that evening to see her recognition.



ED-RED Legislative Update

Ms. Sarah Hartwick, who was hired as ED -RED Executive Director in July, 2018, presented a timely state legislative update the day after the elections. Sarah also shared important highlights of the priorities and the ongoing partnership with NSSEO.

Sarah's previous roles have included working as the ISBE legislative director with a focus on the policy side of education. Sarah shared ED RED priorities

includes “highlighting the work happening in schools and take the best practices and share them at the state level.” She encouraged all of us “to reach out to local elected officials and build those relationships” and underscored the importance of building bridges and relationships on behalf of students and families. Keep up with ED-RED and Sarah Hartwick on Twitter [@edrednews](https://twitter.com/edrednews).

Continuous Improvement Plan, Goal 1: Foster development, ongoing growth and positive outcomes for all students

At each NSSEO Governing Board meeting, one of the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) goals is emphasized and updated with a specific growth area. The NSSEO CIP for the 2018-2019 school year also includes dashboard indicators aligned to each objective. These dashboard indicators are intended to provide measures of growth in a range of areas matched to organizational goals. This month's focus was on CIP Goal 1: Foster development, ongoing growth and positive outcomes for all students. Ms. Molly Dunne shared the connection between the two shining star students, Louise and Vivaan and their independence goals, reflected on the dashboard indicator of Student Independence - measuring the percentage of students displaying increased independence across various settings.

Ms. Molly Dunne highlighted the three core values of the NSSEO Vision Department. First, all students have the ability to be contributing members to their communities. The Vision Team values creating partnerships with parents and school staff to improve student growth that ultimately help them to achieve increasing levels of independence in school and in transitioning to adult life. In addition, Ms. Dunne reviewed the three services that the Vision Department provides to students and member districts - direct services, consult services and problem solving & teaming. She spoke specifically about the components within the Vision Program's expanded

core curriculum. These are areas and skills that are explicitly taught in addition to the core academic curriculum. The expanded core curriculum includes areas such as assistive technology, orientation & mobility, and self-determination. A highlights of what orientation and mobility services includes was shared. This service teaches students to safely travel throughout their school and community with increased independence. Ms. Dunne also emphasized the importance of community-based education which focuses on the generalization of skills from the classroom to real-world application. Ms. Dunne concluded the presentation by sharing various assessment tools utilized within the school and community to assess student progress and identify areas that enhance further growth and independence.

Responsiveness to Student Needs:

Enrollment has increased in a few of the NSSEO programs this fall. The Deaf/ Hard of Hearing Program at Forest School has seen an increase of three students this fall and another six students at Miner School. The NSSEO Governing Board unanimously approved additional classroom assistant support for both programs based on increased student needs. Approval for seven non-resident students was also provided by the NSSEO Governing Board.

Ms. Julie Jilek, Assistant Superintendent, reviewed several areas of focus related to NSSEO finances. Mr. Kevin Smith summarized the FY18 Audit completed by Eder, Casella and Co. and highlighted a successful comprehensive audit with no findings and no deficiencies in internal controls identified. The Board approved the FY 20 Budget resolution and Ms. Jilek reported that the NSSEO Finance Advisory Committee will meet in January, 2019 to begin the FY 20 budget process.

Ms. Jilek summarized the recommendations for the use of NSSEO unreserved fund balance. Annually, once the NSSEO audit has been reviewed and approved by the Board, NSSEO reviews its program and capital improvement needs in relation to unspent funds from the previous school year. The process helps to maintain stable tuitions and avoids the need to conduct special assessments to member districts for larger projects. The NSSEO Governing Board approved motions to retain dollars to support expanded curriculum, the continued upgrading of classroom furniture, and the retention of funds earmarked for Timber Ridge Gym/Elevator project. All recommendations were aligned to the 2018-2019 Continuous Improvement Plan and targeted to the identified goals and objectives of NSSEO. The Governing Board also approved refunds to the member districts for the FY18 unreserved fund balance. Recommendations from the NSSEO Facility Planning Committee were also shared which included finalizing construction documents, updating budget costs, initiating the review process with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD), updating the zoning review process with the Village of Arlington Heights, and the beginning of the preparation of associated bid documents.



Deaf Academic Bowl Winners:

Congratulations to the Deaf Academic Bowl team

who

won their first competition of the school year. We

wish

them luck as they prepare to compete in the qualifier for the Midwest Regional competition. We are so proud of Sergio Cortes, Winter Ly, Yael Lengua, and their coach, Maureen Alvarado and wish them continued success in the next round of competition.

Please click [here](#) to show your support to NSSEO