



NSSEO Governing Board Brief September 5, 2018

NSSEO Shining Star: Employment Readiness Skills Through Experiential Learning at SLOEC



Jack Ausnehmer, a District 214 student who attends the Connection Center at Miner School, was recognized for his employment readiness skills, in part developed through his ongoing work at NSSEO's Sunrise Lake Outdoor Education Center (SLOEC). Jack has excelled in many areas of his work opportunities at SLOEC. He is detail-oriented and committed to a high standard of excellence when it comes to task completion and thoroughness of projects. Jack has participated in important tasks to ensure SLOEC operates

effectively for its visitors, such as dock construction as well as tending to the garden and ensuring the trails are well kept and safe for SLOEC visitors and staff. Jack is eager to attend SLOEC as he enjoys the jobs and likes being challenged to learn new skills that will advance his employment opportunities in the future. Jack exemplifies a quality employee with his technical skills, ability to take direction from his supervisors and strong interpersonal skills. The building blocks Jack has learned at SLOEC are sure to assist in finding an ideal job match for Jack in the future.

Bridge Builder Award Recipient State Representative Michelle Mussman

Superintendent Hackett and the NSSEO Governing Board presented State Representative Michelle Mussman with the 2018 NSSEO Bridge Builder Award. She was acknowledged for her dedicated legislative partnership with NSSEO and commitment to



“building bridges” that connect students and families with future possibilities. Representative Mussman embodies one of the most important core values of NSSEO; connecting and collaborating through partnerships to expand and advance meaningful opportunities for students.

Representative Mussman has been an active participant at the NSSEO Legislative Roundtable last spring which brought students, families, legislators, NSSEO leaders and Board members together to brainstorm

ideas and action planning in Illinois in the key areas of employment, housing, transportation and funding for adults with disabilities. Representative Mussman also actively engaged in the first NSSEO Parent Advocacy Training held at the PERC in June, which focused on planning with families on ways to advocate for their children with legislators.

Representative Mussman was honored to receive the NSSEO Bridge Builder Award. She shared with the Governing Board and the audience, filled with staff and families of children with special needs, that “we are making progress, albeit glacial, we need to be



partners and you, as families, need to educate me.” Mussman went on to identify the current barriers and concerns within the state and encouraged the audience to be continue to be engaged in this important work, emphasizing the importance of voting. Representative Mussman shared her enthusiasm to continue the NSSEO community conversations to advance the action planning needed for these efforts in Illinois.

NSSEO 2018-2019 Continuous Improvement Plan - Transition Goal

As an important part of the NSSEO board meetings, one of the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) goals will be highlighted, through a presentations, reflected in the recognition of a NSSEO shining star and associated growth measures tools in the NSSEO dashboard. With an extensive plan and a number of indicators aligned to the NSSEO vision, this alignment will provide an ongoing opportunity for the NSSEO educational community to see how the focus and growth measures reflect the scope of needs and work addressed on an ongoing measure.

The featured goal for the September Board meeting was Transition planning. The ultimate goal is for all students to have a person-centered, defined post secondary plan upon exiting from services at NSSEO. Dr. Kathleen McCord, Transition Coordinator, highlighted the necessity of school, families and community members partnering to ensure the success is long standing and sustainable. Dr. McCord stated that “to ensure our students have the futures that reflect their desires and wishes, it takes the advocacy and collaborative planning of staff, families and the community.” She went on to share the emphasis on intentional consistency in staffing, embedded professional learning and training that is occurring across Kirk and Miner Schools. Connections Center is the transition program at Kirk and Miner Schools, focused on building plans to launch young adults into promising life plans after graduation. An emphasis on consistent systems across the transition program will ensure common goals and areas of focus for the 91 students who will graduate from Kirk and Miner in the next three years. Dr. McCord went on to share with the Board that partnerships need to be strong in order to “ensure these students’ individualized life plans will be sustained after graduation”, so that young adults are competitively employed, living in the community in which they choose and have the lives they strive to achieve and most importantly, deserve. The growth indicator reflected on the CIP dashboard will measure the percentage of students working/volunteering a minimum of 20 hours weekly.

Bryan Bolger, SLOEC Coordinator, also presented to the Board and connected the NSSEO CIP Transition goal to the instruction, assessment and methodologies used at both at the Connection Centers at Kirk and Miner as well as at SLOEC. This consistency affords students opportunities to further develop skills that support their vocational interests. The teams work together to identify baseline data regarding the student’s technical and soft skills of employment, track their progress over time and begin to refine an employment focus based on quarterly analysis of progress data.

NSSEO Governing Board Recognizes Tenure Staff and Staff reaching Non-Probationary Status:

Five staff members were approved for tenure or non-probationary status by the NSSEO Governing Board after successful completion of four consecutive positive years of employment at NSSEO. The following staff members are committed to building promising futures for students and recognized for their achievements.

Bridget Anderson	Teacher	River Trails Middle School
Veronica Cornell	Teacher	Kirk School
Thomas Jaslikowski	Teacher	Kirk School
Emma Loos	Teacher	Kirk School
Lauren Olson	Academic Design Specialist	Miner School
Jennifer Reynolds	Audiologist	D/HH Program

Remembering Matthew Ruffalo:



NSSEO and Miner School lost a dear student on Friday, August 31st. Matthew Ruffalo was a freshman at Miner School and was loved by all. His kind spirit, sense of humor and engaging personality has had a great influence on students and staff. Matthew's impact on Miner School/NSSEO through his positive attitude for learning will continue on. The family has asked that donations be made to Miner School in his memory.

Upcoming NSSEO Events

- Friday, Sept. 28 Community Wellness: 5.0 Fun Run/Walk at Tobler-PATHS Field (Kirk Campus)
- Wednesday, Oct. 3 NSSEO Governing Board Meeting (Admin Center)
- **Sunday, Nov. 4 NSSEO 50th Anniversary Bash**
- Saturday, Nov. 10 Harvest Fest at Sunrise Lake (SLOEC)

Donations

If you would like to donate to NSSEO please click [here](#) to do so through the NSSEO Foundation.