



NSSEO Governing Board Brief

March 6, 2019

March Shining Star: Meghana Ramachandran, D211 Student, Recognized for Outstanding Growth in Pre-Employment Skills



"I never thought this day would come; it is places like this and people like this that help children like mine."
-Ms. Ramachandran

The NSSEO Governing Board honored Meghana Ramachandran, a District 211 Student at Connections Center at Kirk School as well as an NSSEO veteran employee, Gloria Castro, as March Shining Stars. Meghana was recognized for her increased independence in her pre-employment routine. At the beginning of the year, Meghana was explicitly taught the steps within the sequence and required significant levels of prompting and support to complete the task. Over the course of the Fall, with Gloria's support, guidance and intentional coaching and instruction, Meghana grew to be completely independent in her work task. Meghana, her family and the Kirk School staff are so proud of her achievements. Mrs. Ramachandran expressed heartfelt words of appreciation to the NSSEO Governing Board, sharing her gratitude for the Kirk team and NSSEO.

The gains Meghana has achieved in the area of pre-employment reflect her hard work and dedication. Meghana has shown growth because of the guidance, positive support, coaching and explicit teaching provided by Gloria Castro. Gloria has been an outstanding employee since beginning her NSSEO career over 20 years ago. She supports the vocational department at Kirk School and sets high expectations for students, working in partnership with them to reach their individualized vocational goals. Gloria uses the prompt hierarchy with fidelity to support students in reaching their goal of independence. Gloria goes above and beyond in her efforts with students to ensure their success and takes great pride in their growth. Meghana and Gloria are two incredible shining stars recognized for their positive attitudes, perseverance, independence and creativity. Gloria shared her special moment with a surprise addition - her son who traveled to Mt. Prospect from Columbia to join in the celebration.

Continuous Improvement Plan, Goal 3:

One of the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) goals is highlighted monthly with a NSSEO Governing Board presentation and reflects an update on the aligned dashboard indicators. The March Board update focused on CIP Goal 3, Transition. Members of the Transition Leadership Team shared information and updates with the NSSEO Governing Board on the progress made toward several dashboard indicators along with accomplishments at both Kirk and Miner School, specifically targeting the vocational process and opportunities students receive to hone their employment skills.

Principal of Kirk School, Ms. Cathi Ivack, began by sharing with the Board a visual crosswalk of the accomplishments from the 17-18 school year to present day. Some of the highlights include an emphasis on professional development in the areas of data collection and assessment along with additional opportunities for IEP teams to join together to problem solve and plan to achieve the evolving plans of the young adults in the High School and Connections Center classrooms. Ms. Ivack shared data that 89% of High School and Connection Center students at Kirk and 74% of High School and Connection Center students at Miner are participating in both in school and out of school jobs.

Assistant Principal, Mrs. Jennifer Browning showed student videos that highlighted the advancement of job progress and skill acquisition. In the beginning stages of instruction, the staff member is explicitly teaching the steps within the job sequence and teaching how to move from one task to the next. With intention, the support shifts from teaching to coaching and then to supporting, with the end goal being independence in the sequence. Given explicit instruction, support and coaching, our students learn the skills and the independence needed to secure and maintain employment in the community.



Mr. Erik Brekke, Program Administrator at Miner School, along with Ms. Barb Vasquez, Employment Specialist for NSSEO, spoke to the Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES) lab housed at Miner School. This employment lab offers five employment categories with 264 job experiences. The PAES lab has a rigorous assessment component to track time norms along with progress monitoring tools for data collection. This data is then synthesized and used in developing IEP goals and communicated to potential employers. The leadership and staff partnered with the PTO at Miner School who purchased furniture for the PAES lab that replicates community based work environments.

The overview of CIP Goal 3, Transition, concluded with a summary of next steps targeted toward curricular alignment, professional development for staff as well as data collection and assessment practices. Students have gained exceptional experiences and opportunities with a laser focus on pre-employment, employment and post school goals because of the intentional planning, strong implementation practices and a thoughtful process of evaluation and review by the talented staff at Kirk and Miner Schools.

NSSEO Extended School Year Proposal:

The ESY proposal was taken forth to the NSSEO Governing Board outlining the offerings, dates and times for students and staff along with staff rates of pay.

Staff Dates:	June 4 - June 24	Kirk, Miner and Timber Ridge Schools (M-F)
	June 13 - July 11	Riley/RTMS, DHH/Elementary & Middle School (M-Th)
	June 10 - June 27	DHH/Hersey High School (M-TH)
Student Dates:	June 5 - June 24	Kirk, Miner and Timber Ridge Schools (M-F)

June 17 – July 11
June 10 - June 27

Riley/RTMS, DHH/Elementary & Middle School (M-Th)
DHH/Hersey High School (M-Th)

The NSSEO Governing Board members supported the 2019 ESY proposal. Available ESY job opportunities were posted for staff last week. We are anticipating strong student enrollment and an engaging summer school experience for all participants. Tuition rates for ESY will be brought forth to the April 3rd Governing Board Meeting.

Board Approval of 12 Month Extension for IDEA Procedural Change:

Ms. Julie Jilek, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services recommended to the NSSEO Governing Board to approve NSSEO's request for a 12-month extension in the Implementation of the IDEA Procedural Change to begin July 1, 2020 and authorize the administration to complete and submit the IDEA Procedural Change Acknowledgment and Extension Application to ISBE. The Board unanimously approved for NSSEO to move forward.

Upcoming NSSEO Events:

April

4/5

4/11- 6:00pm

Spring Fling Dance @ Kirk

Family Literacy Night @ Timber Ridge

May

5/2

5/19 - 1:00 pm

5/20

5/28 - 7:00 pm

5/29 - 7:00 pm

5/30 - 1:00 pm

5/30 - 7:00 pm

Crosstown Prom @ Kirk

Walk & Wheel-a-thon @ Kirk

PBIS Student Celebration @ Kirk

Timber Ridge Graduation

Kirk High School & Transition Graduation

Kirk Jr High Graduation

Miner Graduation

Join NSSEO in Making a Difference:

NSSEO is working to actively partner with parents, community partners, and legislators to identify and enact ways we can come together as a community to deepen our understanding and impact in the lives of NSSEO students and families. To learn more about how to you make a difference visit us at <http://www.nsseo.org/MAKEADIFFERENCE/> as well as on our social media platforms:

Twitter @NSSEO_org
Facebook @NSSEO
Instagram NSSEO_org