

# BEARCAT BULLETIN

*Newsletter of the School District of the City of York*

## Social workers complete the Bearcat team

For the first time in its history, the School District of the City of York hired and assigned a licensed social worker to every school in the district for the 2016-17 school year.

With half of the student population living in acute poverty, the need for the services of these professionals is significant. Now more than two years into the program, the district's social workers have become integral members of the team at each school. They make it possible for the district to fulfill its mission to "educate the whole child."

"Social workers are trained differently than educators. It is important for each to provide different perspectives in an attempt to get a well-rounded and holistic understanding of student needs," said Jessica MacIntire, social worker at Devers K-8 since January of 2018.

In just the first half of the 2018-19 school year, district social workers provided more than 12,300 documented services to district students and their families. Those services include individual counseling sessions, home visits, referrals, consultation with educators and crisis management -- among many others.

Read on for some insights from members of the team on Pages 4 and 5. For more data about the socioeconomic challenges of the school district, please flip to the back page of this newsletter.

### Licensed Social Worker Services Provided August 2018 - January 2019

Individual Counseling	2,089
Group Counseling	295
Mediations	289
PBIS (Positive Behavior Incentives)	623
Home Visits	389
Truancy Phone Calls	885
Truancy Meetings	185
Referrals	537
Crisis Management	174
Staff Development Activities	149
Student Behavior Observations	175
Consultation with Educators	2,438
Consultation with Community Agencies	956
Parent/Guardian Contacts	1,585
Other Supports	1,553
<b>Total Services</b>	<b>12,322</b>





Edgar Fahs Smith STEAM Academy  
*presents...*

# CONFLICT & CHANGE

ATTENTION: PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT



**MARKETVIEW ARTS  
2ND FLOOR, CONI WOLF GALLERY  
37 WEST PHILADELPHIA STREET  
FRIDAY, APRIL 5TH, 2019  
FROM 5:00-7:00 P.M.**



For the past two months, 5th and 6th grade students at the STEAM Academy have been busy creating public service announcements to enact positive change in the York City community. Their journey started Jan. 18, 2019 with a trip to the MarketView Arts gallery downtown, where their teachers had planned a series of challenges to get students thinking about tough concepts like fear and perception. (photos on right)

We are excited to share that these students will return to MarketView Arts to publicly share their project-based learning products during an exhibition, which has been titled "Conflict & Change." This event is a pivotal step in implementing their plans.

The Edgar Fahs Smith STEAM Academy is pioneering the teaching method of project-based learning, or PBL, as part of the School District of the City of York. Our unit on the connection between conflict and change has given students the opportunity to apply the skills they have learned through research and experience to develop responses to personally relevant and real-world concerns. Students interviewed community members, prepared presentations, and created public service announcements using various technologies.

Students are currently finalizing their work to share it with our community at York City's First Friday in April. This event will take place at Marketview Arts on Friday, April 5. We hope that you and everyone you know will attend this exciting evening that celebrates our students' success!

The students' work will remain on display through Sunday, April 28.



# District social workers: In their words

## **Briefly, how would you describe your job?**

It is my job to try to meet student and parent needs as best I can, regardless of what they are. Some days I am a listening ear, a mediator, an encourager or an advocate.

## **What types of services/resources do you find most helpful for your students and their families?**

Mental health services and therapeutic after-school and over-the-summer programs are most helpful. There are not enough mental health practitioners in York County, so students and parents are often waiting weeks and months to receive services they desperately need. Additionally, parents need support with appropriate programs that provide supervision for their children while they are working after school or over the summer.



**JESSICA MACINTIRE**

Devers K-8

## **At Devers, how do you work with your colleagues to serve your students and their families?**

I work very closely with teachers and administrators in my building. Many teachers will call me or email me directly asking me to meet with a student or follow up with a parent. We try to attend meetings regarding student needs and student services as a complete multi-disciplinary team to keep everyone in the loop and allow opportunity for all team members to give input on supports that can be provided.

## **Tell us about a success story.**

A kindergarten student was really struggling in class. His mother was working and exasperated that we continued to have to call her to come into the building for him. It took the whole team of administrators, the behavior specialist, the teacher and myself to come up with a plan to help this student be successful. It took a few months, but the child finally received a psychiatric evaluation and an intake into appropriate level of mental health treatment to begin the process of meeting his needs.

## **What do you wish the broader community understood better about York City students and their families?**

Students want to do well and be successful, and the majority of families want that for them. But they are burdened by homelessness, joblessness, trauma and other obstacles. In most cases, it is not because a student does not want to do well that he or she is struggling; it is because he or she is not able to due to unfortunate outside circumstances that we can hopefully help to resolve.

### **Briefly, how would you describe your job?**

School social work is rewarding. We may not see the results of our work right away, but we know we are making a difference in someone's life. My job is also very inspiring. You come in thinking you're going to save everyone not fully being aware of how much our students inspire us every day through their love, resiliency and determination.

### **Why is it important to have social workers like yourself work alongside educators in schools?**

It takes a village. We all play an important role in our students' lives. Without the help of each other it would be challenging to meet all the needs of every student.

### **If a student or parent/guardian decides they would like the assistance of a school social worker, what should they do?**

Parents can call or visit the school and ask to speak with a social worker any time during school hours. Students at York High can always stop by our offices in Student Services.



**MACTAVIA BOSTICK**

William Penn  
Senior High School

### **Briefly, how would you describe your job?**

It looks different every day! However, there is always an opportunity to serve. Meeting students, families and the community right where they are and coming alongside them to support them in their journeys. Experiencing the peaks and valleys and cheering them on!

### **How would you characterize the needs of the students you serve, and how do you help them?**

Each child is unique, so support looks different for all of them. Sometimes it is suicide prevention; sometimes it is linking them up with a community resource or after-school program; sometimes it is addressing poverty, mental health, grief, substance abuse, gun violence, housing issues or truancy. We support the WHOLE student -- from the classroom to their homes in an attempt to address all of their needs.



**VICTORIA VALDES**

William Penn  
Senior High School

### **Why is it important to have social workers like yourself work alongside educators in schools?**

Social workers fill in the gaps so our teachers can teach. We are problem solvers, problem preventers and advocates. We serve as a liaison between home, school and the greater community. We help families navigate larger systems and often work alongside them in their most difficult times. We are change agents and cheerleaders!



# McKinley students make history in regional science competition

For the first time in its history, the School District of the City of York sent students to compete at Millersville University in the Regional Science Olympiad on March 2.

Twelve students from McKinley K-8 and their coaches, Alicia Teal and Jen Heasley, prepared diligently by staying after school many nights to perform experiments, conduct research, prepare study guides and build and test projects like gliders and rollercoasters so that they would be competitive against 21 other schools from the Susquehanna Valley.

Science Olympiad competitions are similar to academic track meets, consisting of team events in each division. Each year, a portion of the events are rotated to reflect the ever-changing nature of genetics, earth science, chemistry, anatomy, physics, geology, mechanical engineering and technology.

By combining events from all disciplines, Science Olympiad encourages a wide cross-section of students to get involved. Emphasis is placed on active, hands-on group participation. Through Science Olympiad, students, teachers, parents, principals and business leaders bond together and work toward a shared goal.

Over the course of the long day, teams of students pair up to tackle 23 events, which last 50 minutes. Each one encourages collaboration, teamwork and cross-training.

Some of the events include Anatomy and Physiology, Experimental Design, Mystery Architecture, Write-it Do-it, Crime Busters, Potions and Poisons, Elastic Launch Glider, Battery Powered Buggy and Disease Detectives.

Alijah Barnes and Daevon Woodyard placed 6th in the Mystery Architecture event and 11th in the Anatomy and Physiology event, while Antonio Ortiz and Kimberly DeJesus Alvarez placed 11th in Circuit Lab.

Out of the 22 schools that competed on that snowy Saturday in March, the McKinley K-8 team placed 15th overall, giving all students a reason to celebrate and the drive to continue to compete in the coming years!

Congratulations to Alijah Barnes, Daevon Woodyard, Te'Miah Dixon, Tierra Weedon, Ra'Niya Sexton, Antonio Ortiz, Cesar Vasquez, Richard Morel, Marissa Alexander, Kimberly DeJesus-Alvarez, Mayahleze Miller-Brown and Sumiyah Potts!

# Davis teachers, local artist partner to inspire students

A recently completed cross-curricular project at Davis K-8 challenged 8th graders to create both a mural and a book that celebrate inspiring people they know.

Through an artist residency program, local artist Rita Whitney worked with students and installed the permanent mural in the school.

*"My hope is that it acts as a reminder of what they can accomplish if they stick with it, what they have to contribute to their school and community, and that what they create, and what they have to say, matters."*

-- Rita Whitney

We asked Alice Klugh, the art teacher at Davis, about the project.

## **What inspired the idea to partner with a local artist on a student project?**

Ms. Whitney contacted me in the spring of 2018 to see if we would be interested in doing an Artist Residency Project during the 2018-19 school year. I jumped at the chance to partner with a local artist and create a permanent piece of art in our school!

## **Could you share some examples of inspiring people that students chose to feature in their project?**

Our emphasis to students during this project was that they know inspiring people. We dissuaded them from choosing a famous singer or athlete. Instead, we encouraged them to choose someone they know or knew personally and truly reflect on what their relationship with that person meant to them. Most students chose someone in their family. Our students made a legacy project that shows their inspiring perspective on their community and families.

## **As an educator, what did you gain or learn from this experience?**

As educators, it can be difficult to loosen control and share the leadership role in our classrooms. However, working with Ms. Whitney, I learned to trust in the common vision and let her take the lead in some aspects of teaching in the art room. It was such a positive experience to work with someone in tandem who was experienced in teaching art, as well as purchasing supplies, and thinking through the artistic process.



From left, Davis art teacher Alice Klugh, local artist Rita Whitney and Davis English teacher Madeleine Robbins pose next to the permanent mural created by their students.

## **Where did the idea for a 'legacy project' combining art and ELA come from?**

We gathered a team to brainstorm, and the idea of empowering students to make a collaborative piece that celebrated their community was inspiring for all of us. We were drawn to the open-ended nature of the theme "My Inspiration" and the inherent connection it has to our students' individual experiences, community and families, as well as a feeling of empowerment for their future beyond Davis.

## **How have other students, staff and community members reacted to the mural and student writings?**

We've had a very positive reaction to the project. Everyone who has had a chance to view the book has given very positive feedback regarding the quality of the actual book and its binding as well as the student work. One of the most inspiring parts of the project, for me as a teacher, is the positive reaction from our 7th graders. They are hoping to be involved in something similar next school year!

## **Do you have any future plans for this project, or the artist in residency program?**

Our vision is still taking form, but we hope to build on the theme of "My Inspiration" in the direction of empowering students to change their community through respect.

# IN BRIEF

## Two-hour delay in effect during PSSA week for youngest grades

To provide maximum accommodation and support to students during the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), the School District of the City of York has announced a delayed daily start time for the youngest students during the testing weeks.

All students in Pre-K, Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades will have a two-hour delayed start on:

Monday, April 15  
Tuesday, April 16  
Wednesday, April 17  
Thursday, April 18  
Monday, April 29  
Tuesday, April 30  
Wednesday, May 1  
Thursday, May 2  
Friday, May 3

On the days listed above, students in Pre-K, Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades should report to school at 10 a.m. Please note that breakfast will not be served for students for students in Pre-K, Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades on these dates.

Students in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 should report to school at their regular start time and be prepared for PSSA testing. Breakfast will be served to students in grades 3 through 8.

Student schedules at William Penn Senior High School will not be affected by PSSA testing.

Due to the Easter Holiday, all schools in the District are closed on Friday, April 19 and Monday, April 22.

Students who are bused to school will follow a normal full-day schedule unless parents are contacted by the building principal with changes.

## York City families invited to free annual Easter Egg Hunt at Kiwanis Lake on April 13

**YORK CITY PARKS & RECREATION PRESENTS**

**FREE EVENT!**

**AGES 0 to 13 accompanied by an adult**

**ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2019**

**1:00 - 4:00 PM**

**KIWANIS LAKE**  
N. Newberry St. & Madison Ave.

**Free Food**  
**Bounce House**  
**Face Painting**  
**Petting Zoo**  
**Bike Raffle**

**Sponsored By:**  
**City of York**  
**ES3**  
**City View Community Church**

**Information: Diaz Woodard, 717.854.1587 ~ dwoodard@yorkcity.org**  
**www.yorkcity.org**

## Bearcat softball team selling \$12 T-shirts



The Bearcat softball team is selling T-shirts for \$12 each. Double XL sizes are \$15.

To place an order, contact Chawna Griffith at [griffcha@yocs.k12.pa.us](mailto:griffcha@yocs.k12.pa.us).

# IN BRIEF

## Kindergarten registration open to families online and in person

The School District of the City of York is accepting online registrations for 2019-20 kindergarten students.

Children must be 5 years old on or before Aug. 31, 2019 to register for kindergarten during the 2019-20 school year. Online registration is available to parents/guardians by visiting the district website at [www.ycs.k12.pa.us](http://www.ycs.k12.pa.us) and clicking on "Registration."

Parents/guardians can also register their children for kindergarten at the District Administration building, 31 N. Pershing Ave, between 9 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on Monday, April 8 and Friday, April 12. No appointment is necessary.

The following documents must be submitted at Registration:

- Original/legal certificate of birth (child's birth certificate)
- Proof of child's immunizations
- Proof of residency in the York City School District (utility bill, mortgage statement or lease)
- Photo identification of the child's parent/legal guardian

For more information, please contact Central Registration at (717) 845-3571, extension 4029 or 4025.

## Class of 2021 fundraising Friday

Support the Class of 2021 on Friday, April 5 by making a purchase at Panera Bread, 1221 Carlisle Road in York. From 4 to 8 p.m., a portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Class of 2021.

Show the cashier the flyer, which is available on the William Penn website, when you place your order. For online ordering, use the PRFUND promo code.

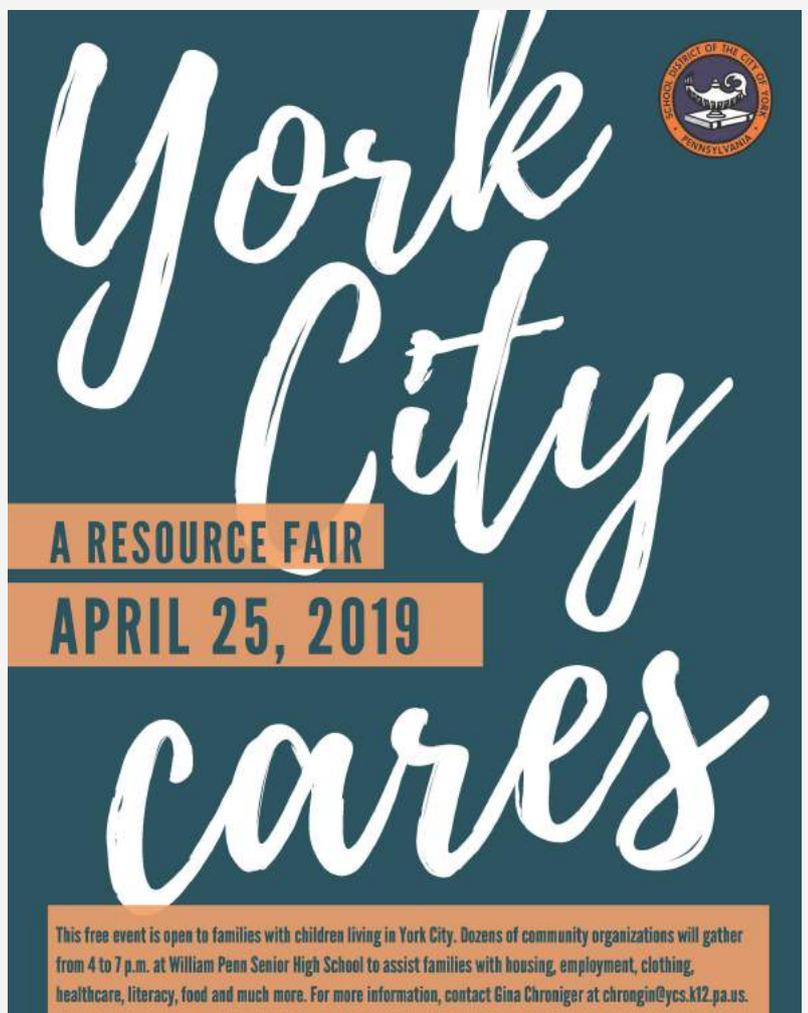
## Second annual York City Cares Resource Fair scheduled for April 25 at William Penn

About a year ago, a group of school district employees and community advocates organized a one-of-a-kind event designed to help York City families find the resources and services they need to thrive. Hundreds of people got some help that day.

With the goal of helping even more families this year, the second annual York City Cares Resource Fair is scheduled for Thursday, April 25.

This free event is open to families with children living in York City. Dozens of community organizations will gather from 4 to 7 p.m. at William Penn Senior High School to assist families with housing, employment, clothing, healthcare, literacy, food and much more.

Mark your calendar and stay tuned for more information!



The poster features a dark teal background with the words "York City" in large, white, cursive script. Below this, "A RESOURCE FAIR" is written in white, sans-serif font on a dark orange rectangular background. Underneath that, "APRIL 25, 2019" is written in the same white, sans-serif font on another dark orange rectangular background. At the bottom, the word "cares" is written in a large, white, cursive script. In the top right corner, there is a circular seal of the York City School District. At the very bottom, a small white box contains the following text: "This free event is open to families with children living in York City. Dozens of community organizations will gather from 4 to 7 p.m. at William Penn Senior High School to assist families with housing, employment, clothing, healthcare, literacy, food and much more. For more information, contact Gina Chroniger at [chronigin@ycs.k12.pa.us](mailto:chronigin@ycs.k12.pa.us)."

# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

## MARYROSE HIGGINBOTHAM RITTER



Class of 2004

After graduating from William Penn Senior High School, Ms. Ritter attended Lycoming College. She has more than a decade's worth of experience as a human resources professional in various industries. Most recently, she is the owner of a human resources consulting company called Leadership Arts Associates. Now 32, Ms. Ritter lives in York.

### HOW DO YOU DEFINE SUCCESS?

For me, success is being able to do what I love and being an active participant in my family's lives.

### WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT SO FAR?

Being able to believe in myself and rely on my support systems to take the leap into entrepreneurship and make it successful these last two years. My son is pretty high up on that list too!

### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM YOUR SCHOOL DAYS IN YORK CITY?

Arriving at the Yorktown for my senior prom riding on a throne in the bed of my dad's pickup truck. It was decorated like a Mardi Gras float. We were playing Zydeco music, and I was throwing Mardi Gras beads to the crowd.

### WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN IN SCHOOL THAT STILL RESONATE IN YOUR LIFE?

Life is what you make of it. If you challenge yourself and take the opportunities that are presented, you will be able to do what you want in life and be your own definition of success.



### WHAT'S ONE PIECE OF ADVICE YOU WOULD SHARE WITH TODAY'S STUDENTS?

Enjoy your time in school. Don't spend your life waiting for the next chapter to start.

# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



## JANE DODSON

Class of 1965

After graduating from William Penn Senior High School, Ms. Dodson attended Western Maryland College and graduated in 1969 with a bachelor's degree in English. She has taught English and journalism courses at four York County schools. She ended her career with a 16-year stint at William Penn. There, she and her students produced the award-winning York Hi-Lites newspaper. Now 71, Ms. Dodson lives in York.

### WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT SO FAR?

My husband and I have raised two sons. They are intelligent, talented, and sensitive men as well as outstanding fathers.

### WHAT IS SOMETHING THAT PEOPLE WOULD BE SURPRISED TO LEARN ABOUT YOU?

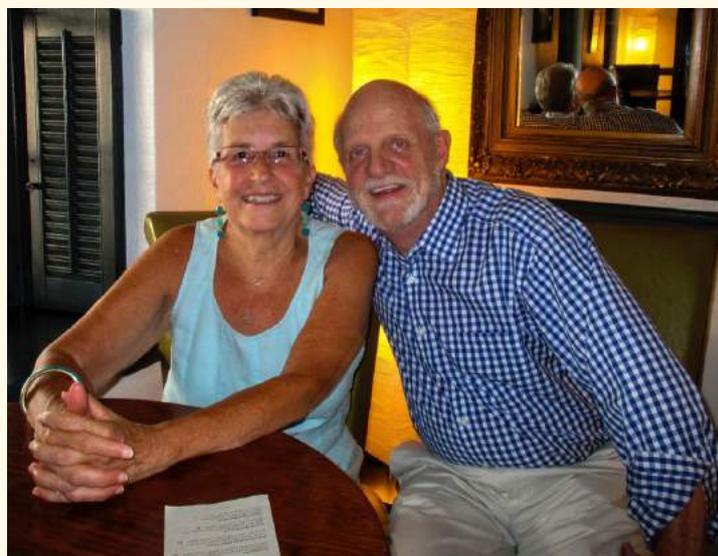
My hobby is ballroom dancing.

### WHO WAS YOUR FAVORITE TEACHER, AND WHY?

Mrs. Rebecca Metzler, journalism teacher at William Penn - I liked her subject, her enthusiasm, her passion for a free press, her high expectations.

### WHY ARE YOU PROUD TO BE A BEARCAT?

I wouldn't give up my experience of growing up in York City for anything. I believe strongly in public education and that the stellar education I received in York City Schools was second to none.



### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM YOUR SCHOOL DAYS IN YORK CITY?

From Madison Elementary School -- May Days, walking home for lunch, kickball at recess.

### WHAT'S ONE PIECE OF ADVICE YOU WOULD SHARE WITH TODAY'S STUDENTS?

Learn to speak and write correctly and well. These two skills will open many doors for you.



Pennsylvania's new Basic Education Funding Formula allocates money based on need, using factors such as poverty rates. But it only applies to new money approved by the Legislature. As a result, the School District of the City of York is under-funded by \$52 million.

# \$6,565

If the new formula was applied to all state education funding, York City would receive an additional \$6,565 per student -- more money per student than any other Pennsylvania school district.



Despite having the highest local tax effort in Pennsylvania, the School District of the City of York has balanced its budgets without a tax increase since 2012. Local property taxes generated about \$26.9 million for the district in 2018-19 -- less than 20 percent of annual revenues. That is why the district remains dependent on state funding for 68 percent of its revenue.

Diligent implementation of a Recovery Plan since 2013 has financially stabilized the School District of the City of York and produced two consecutive years' worth of significant academic growth data.

To continue making progress, we must confront the context of the many challenges that remain.



Half of all York City students live in acute poverty, which means they live below the federal poverty line of \$24,600 annually for a family of four. Only six out of 500 Pennsylvania school districts have a higher percentage of students living in acute poverty.

**To confront this challenge**, the School District of the City of York has added significant resources that serve our students' health and safety needs: social workers and behavior specialists in every building; a partnership with Communities in Schools; and a free after-school program, to name a few.



Urban school districts tend to have higher rates of English Language Learners, who require more resources to educate equitably. With more than a quarter of York City students learning English as a second language, the School District of the City of York is among Pennsylvania school districts with the highest percentages of EL students.

**To confront this challenge**, the district operates a robust English Language Learners program designed to help all students gain the language skills they need to be successful. Teachers certified in the specialized skill of educating EL students work in every district building, including some who work exclusively with students in small groups or one-on-one.

Socioeconomic factors have a tremendous impact on student transiency rates. Housing insecurity and homelessness cause students to withdraw from and transfer between schools at an alarming rate. Between August 2017 and June 2018, about 1,400 students had withdrawn from the district and nearly the same number enrolled -- a 23 percent turnover in a single school year.

**To confront this challenge**, the district has implemented programs designed to establish stability for students wherever possible. For example, teachers at the elementary level "loop" with their students for two years -- making it more likely that students who leave the district and then return can rejoin a classroom where they already know their teacher and classmates. Major curriculum overhauls have ensured consistency among district buildings, and a centralized registration system maximizes the district's ability to meet the needs of individual families.



More than 60 percent of the district's kindergarten students tested below benchmark at the start of the 2017-18 school year. In other words, most York City students start school already academically behind.

**To confront this challenge**, the district operates one of Pennsylvania's most celebrated Pre-K programs. This free program serves 265 students in 14 classrooms annually.