



# The Communicator

Feb/Mar 2005

Volume 3 Number 5

An official communication from the Superintendent's Office

## ASD Student Honorees 2005

### WILLIAM ALLEN HIGH

**Peter Chomko**, Finalist, 2004 Nat'l Merit Scholarship Program

**Katherine Brobst**, 2004 Governor's School of Excellence, The Arts

**Sarah Oshins**, 2004 Governor's School of Excellence, Int'l Studies

**Lindsay Mehrkam**, 2004 Dwight D. Eisenhower Leadership Award from the West Point Society of the Lehigh Valley

**Ebony Barbosa**, 2004 District XI All Star and Morning Call All Area Girls' Volleyball Teams

**Leslie Fraser**, 2004 LVIAC 1<sup>st</sup> Team, Lehigh Division, Boys' Soccer

**Alberto Chavez**, 2004 LVIAC All Lehigh Division Team, Boys' Soccer

**Michael Wagner**, 2004 LVICA All Conference Team, Boys' Golf

### DIERUFF HIGH

**Michael Kerchusky**, Governor's School of Excellence, Info. Tech.

## Superintendent's Message

The Allentown School District continues to move forward. This edition highlights the many wonderful achievements of our students and staff. There are some brief updates on the comprehensive facilities goal, assessment of student achievement and the middle school initiative on Adolescent Literacy.

As we begin our budget season, we also have been completing a thoughtful analysis of the Act 72, legislation that was enacted with the intent of providing property tax relief to qualifying owners in participating school districts. The ASD Board of Directors must make a decision on whether to participate by May 30, 2005. The District administration has been working with some community members to analyze the legislation, gain background on the impact on the local community and the District, and complete five-year revenue and expenditure projections. Consultant Dave Sallack has been assisting the District in this review. We invite you to attend a community meeting to be held at Dieruff High School Monday, March 21, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Sallack will provide an overview of Act 72 as it pertains to ASD. We will be seeking your questions and comments following his presentation. We will also have additional community meetings during April. Please know that the Administration and Board will be giving very thoughtful review to this legislation. There is a need for continued analysis and discussion before a decision will be made.



Finally, please take time to reflect on the many accomplishments of our staff and students in ASD. We have so much to be proud of. It is important to reflect on our achievements from time to time as it truly motivates us to continue the course of continuous improvement. I want to thank you for your support. Please enjoy this issue of *The Communicator*.

Karen S. Angello, Ph.D., Superintendent

## ACT 72 Community Meeting

**Monday, March 21, 2005**

**Dieruff High School Auditorium**

**7:00 PM – 8:30 PM**

**PLEASE ATTEND**

- **Learn about Act 72** taxation legislation for providing some measure of property tax relief
- **Learn how it impacts the local homeowners, renters and business property owners**
- **Learn how it impacts the District and your schools**
- **Learn of the responsibilities and actions required of the Allentown School District Board of Directors**
- **Gain input from the community and seek your questions and concerns**

**Luisa Morla**, 2004  
Nat'l Young Leaders  
Conference,  
Washington, D.C.

**David Poliner**, 2004  
Dwight D. Eisenhower  
Leadership Award from  
the West Point Society  
of the Lehigh Valley

**Ryan Gaumer**,  
Nominee, 2004 LVIAC  
Scholar Athlete and  
nominee and 2004  
National Hall of Fame  
Scholar Athlete -  
Football

**Miguel Roman**, 2004  
LVIAC All Conference  
Team, Football

**Jared Glass**, 2004  
LVIAC All Lehigh  
Division Team, Football

**Nicholas Davis**, 2004  
LVIAC All Lehigh  
Division and Morning  
Call All Area Teams,  
Football

**Tony Jordan**, 2004  
LVIAC All Lehigh  
Division Team, Football

**Michelle Cernobyl**,  
Nominee, 2004 LVIAC  
Scholar Athlete, Girls'  
Field Hockey

**Mailyn Tran**, 2004  
LVIAC All Lehigh  
Division Team, Girls'  
Field Hockey

**Lauren Pittre**,  
Nominee, 2004 Scholar  
Athlete, Girls' Tennis

**Krista Devine**,  
Nominee, 2004 LVIAC  
Scholar Athlete, Cross  
Country

**Chris Bigatel**,  
Nominee, 2004 LVIAC  
Scholar Athlete, Golf

## New Quarterly Assessments Monitor Student Progress K-12

“Quarterly assessments are a significant way to measure student proficiency at the end of every rating period,” says Diane Holben, ASD’s Director of Research, Planning and Accountability. “They allow teachers and principals to make adjustments based on where students’ strengths lie and what needs must be addressed going forward.” As of now, the weekly check points introduced with Closing the Gap and the annual PSSA results don’t provide quarterly data so critical to teachers during the regular school year. According to Holben, quarterly assessments are cumulative in skill assessment so that teachers can see whether a student retained a skill or forgot it as time passed. The assessment process is efficient because quarterly data is entered into a centralized database to track progress district wide. The centralized database allows both teachers and principals to run reports summarizing the results for any given quarter. This year, the quarterly assessment process was implemented for all grades in the academic areas of reading and writing. For mathematics tracking, the database was implemented for grades 3, 5 and 6-11, and is being piloted in grades 2 and 4. With accountability critical to student success, the quarterly assessments offer teachers another tool for measuring progress.

## Tutoring Programs Reach 1,000 Students

One of the most important tools for improving the performance of underperforming students is tutoring. At ASD, tutoring programs are a patchwork quilt of plans to support instruction where students need it most. Funding for these programs is primarily derived from state funding that is specified for tutoring. Funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, major tutoring program started in 2004. With 5.7 percent of ASD students participating in the Educational Assistance Program, the District is required to monitor progress to sustain the effort. “ASD teachers have been truly dedicated to the importance of offering tutoring to our students who are targeted for services,” says Sally West, Director of Federal Projects. “They are professionally trained in research based strategies and are clearly focused on achieving positive outcomes.” The good news is that in the summer of 2004, all results from the EAP tutoring programs clearly revealed positive results in pre- and post- testing. “We consistently have higher attendance than the 80 percent required in the grant, and the 169 students in grades 6 and 9 tutored during the summer of 2004 showed significant improvement,” stated West. The grant value for the execution of the EAP I program last summer totaled \$630,663. Besides funding the summer program, the allocation provides extended day kindergarten programs at Midway Manor and Lincoln and after school tutoring in 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders during the school year. Funding for the EAP 2 program, which began in December 2004, is \$1,086,114. “This year, the EAP 2 tutoring program has enrolled 627 students in early literacy for first graders, after school tutoring for students in grades 1-4, 6, and extended day Kindergarten at four ASD locations,” says West. “Students are identified through specialized testing for kindergartners and elementary students, and PSSA scores are used to identify 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders who are at below proficient levels of performance. We’ve served about 1,000 students from these two major PDE grants, and we are looking forward to building a systematic tutoring program for more consistency for our students.” Also providing critical direction and support to the program is Katie Gill, who was recently named ASD’s tutoring coordinator. “Our tutoring requires specialized training in the use of materials and related strategies that strengthen performance when the students return to regular classroom work,” stated Gill. “The 6<sup>th</sup> grade ESOL “Soar to Success” program, for instance, uses teaching strategies compatible with the District’s CALLA (Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach) strategies for working with English Language Learners.

**Nasima Rabi**, Nominee,  
2004 LVIAC Scholar  
Athlete, Girls'  
Volleyball

**Youseff Ibrahim**,  
Nominee, 2004 LVIAC  
Scholar Athlete, Boys'  
Soccer

### TREXLER MIDDLE

**Nicholas Lalik**, 2004  
Junior National Young  
Leaders Conference,  
Washington, D.C.

**Samantha Hertzog**, 1<sup>st</sup>  
place, Hershey Cocoa  
Baking Contest, 2004  
Allentown Fair

**Kristen Flick**, 2004  
AAA Safety Patrol of  
the Year Award

### **WAHS' Chomko Named Finalist**

Peter Chomko was  
named one of 8,200  
finalists of the National  
Merit Scholarship  
Program. The honor  
includes a \$2,500  
scholarship, among  
other awards. Finalists  
represent less than half  
of one percent of each  
state's graduating class.  
Congratulations, Peter.

### **Sheridan ES "Makes Change" for Tsunami Victims**



John R. Hughes,  
executive director of the  
Red Cross of the Greater  
Lehigh Valley, is seen  
here accepting a check  
for over \$2,000 to help  
tsunami victims. The

## US DOE Visit March 22

On November 5, 2004, when Pennsylvania's Deputy Secretary of Education, Gerald Zahorchak, publicly announced to a group of Allentown leaders the removal of ASD from the state's list of distressed districts, he said,

*"You have so many children now reaching basic, proficient and advanced levels. The measures of value added here are truly unsurpassed in that entire list of Empowerment districts. There's no (Empowerment) school community that led like your school community. And I don't think there's any school community of the 501 public school districts in the state, or of our many charter schools and others that have led like your school community. The leadership provided from teachers and students and then carrying on through the principals and support staff and superintendents and community leaders is truly unsurpassed."*

On March 22, 2005, Robert Baker, the US DOE Secretary's Regional Representative will be visiting Allentown School District to obtain insights and information on progress in the following areas: High School Academies, NCLB monitoring, community partnerships and communication strategies. A full-day of visits and meetings has been planned, and we hope Mr. Baker responds equally positively to the progress being made by ASD. This will be Mr. Baker's third visit to the District. He has been a great partner and advocate for ASD.

## Adolescent Literacy Program

Once students leave the elementary school they must move from learning how to read to learning how to be literate. Literacy is the ability to read, write, speak, listen and think effectively. Literacy must occur in all subject areas and all subject areas have different ways of being literate. The Middle School Reform Oversight Committee recognized this important distinction between learning to read and learning to be literate when it gave the District and the four middle schools the charge of focusing on Adolescent Literacy during the 2004-2005 school year.

Throughout the 2004-2005 school year, middle school teachers have met and discussed the concept of adolescent literacy. A group of middle school teachers have attended workshops focused on adolescent literacy, and each middle school teacher has received a copy of the book *Reading for Understanding: A Guide to Improving Reading in Middle and High School Classrooms* by Ruth Schoenbach, Cynthia Greenleaf, Christine Cziko and Lori Hurwitz. The book will serve as a basis for structured conversations about adolescent literacy throughout spring. The book shows teachers how they can apprentice students in their content specific areas. The reading apprentice framework focuses on the four dimensions of classroom life: social, personal, cognitive and knowledge building. The framework takes into account the needs of learners in the 12-18 year age bracket and supports them as they move from students to citizens.

The reading apprentice framework will be the focus of two training opportunities this summer. The first will allow 8 middle school teachers and two administrators to attend eight days of intense training to become trainers in the framework. The teachers will implement the framework in their classroom and prepare to train their colleagues. The second opportunity will allow at least 20 middle school teachers to learn about implementing the framework in their classroom.

## Facilities Recommendations Soon

Started in fall 2004, the Comprehensive Facilities Study is being conducted in order for the District to anticipate future space requirements based on the condition of the existing

amount was collected by Sheridan students and staff on a daily basis, as part of "Make a Change" program instituted by second grade teacher Katrina Custance and others.

### Dodd Parents Scrapbook the Night Away



On February 22, Dodd Elementary hosted a parent involvement evening where families came together for a friendly, fun-filled "Scrapbooking Night."

### WAHS Debate Team Reaches Semi-Finals



WAHS Sophomore Christine Saleb

William Allen's Debate team, in only its second

facility structures, a changing and growing demographic picture, and the educational design specifications stipulated for optimal learning. With 16 out of 23 school buildings more than 50 years old, and 12 over 75 years old, it is the responsibility of the District to ensure that they are safe, meet code compliance, provide enough space for a growing enrollment and support learning.

The Pennsylvania Economy League, Wilkes-Barre, PA, recently completed an analysis of demographics in order to project future public school enrollments in ASD schools. The ASD Board of Directors received this report at its Finance Committee-of-the-Whole on February 17. The Board will receive the Educational Specifications report at its March 10, 2005 Education Committee of the Whole. Bonnie Sowers, Architect of the Ray Group, will make this presentation. Educational specifications detail the recommended grade level groupings for each school; key spaces a school needs to support its instructional programs; capacity requirements and compliance/code requirements. These two reports will be integrated with the third study – the feasibility study – in which the physical condition of all buildings has been evaluated. Reports on each of the buildings and options for addressing the identified needs will be brought to the Board in May.

"Much has changed since the schools in ASD were constructed," says Dr. Karen S. Angello, superintendent. "Educational programs have been impacted by state and federal legislations, student needs are broader, and expectations in general have increased for public schools. We have an obligation to make our best recommendation for the future."

On another note, ASD has selected contractor Grace Industries, Nazareth, PA, to repair the sinkhole near the school's boiler. According to Robert Sperling, ASD's director of Facilities Services, work will start the week of March 6 and be completed by month's end.

## Awards, Honors & Achievements

ASD's Civic Education program has been cited for success through an invitation to present and participate in the "Civic Education in Divided Societies" conference to be held March 12-16 in Belfast, Northern Ireland. **Myron Yoder**, ASD curriculum coordinator for social studies, will represent the District.

A thank you goes out to John and Denise Winarchick for their continued support of a scholarship award in their names for \$3,000 to be presented to a **WAHS** graduating senior of high academic standing.

Appreciation goes to Air Products and Chemicals, Inc. for its \$4,500 gift to **Sheridan Elementary School** for support of 2004-2005 programs.

Master Sergeant Jones of **Dieruff High School** reports that the high school's AFJROTC PA-011 Unit won 1<sup>st</sup> place in Female Exhibition Drill Team at the Ohio ROTC Competition with a perfect score in all areas. He notes that no team in the history of the Midwest Championship Drill competition in Ohio has ever accomplished this miraculous feat. The Regulation Drill Team also won 1<sup>st</sup> place in overall uniform appearance, current event knowledge and military knowledge. DHS cadets also won events in other categories. The organization dedicated this year's Midwest Champion Drill Team in memory of Major José A. Troché. DHS cadets received a thirty minute tearing standing ovation.

**LEAPS** grants of \$5,000 each have been awarded to Mosser ES, Raub MS, Trexler MS for a variety of uses, including the mentoring of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders and staff development in the teaching with scientific calculators.

The **ASD science program** has been augmented with a \$337,863 mathematics and science Title II, Part B, partnership grant from PDE for professional development training for

year of existence, reached the semi-finals in the recent LVIAC competition held at Emmaus High School. The team, coached by Biology and Physical Science teacher Elaine Diamond, finished the season with an impressive 12-4 record. The eleven member team was comprised of one freshman, two sophomores, two juniors, and six seniors. The students' dedication and sharp thinking led the team to a great season.



John Dao, WAHS senior with Katie Volpe, junior

**SMMS Teacher Chris Connelly Named 100.7 FM Teacher of the Week**



The week of January 31 was especially special for SMMS music teacher, Chris Connelly, who was named Teacher of the Week by Radio Station 100.7 FM. Congratulations, Chris.

To contribute to The Communicator, please contact Nidia Whiteman at 484.765.4235 or [info@allentownsd.org](mailto:info@allentownsd.org)

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teachers. The District's **English language learners** are fortunate to have been provided with a 2004-2005 Title III PDE grant in the amount of \$550,703 to enhance language and content programs.

**Scholastic Art Awards** were earned by the following students. **WAHS:** Toan Tran, Silver Key & Baum School Award; honorable mentions for Brandon Abel; Robert Daneker; Dru Chunko; Christian Weber; and Katherine Garcia. **DHS:** Alicia Melber, 3 Gold Keys; Krista Devine, Gold Key; Jessica Hoffman, Gold Key. Silver Keys went to DHS students Jessie Hoffman, Nelson Martinez, Alicia Melber, Kimerly Kerchusky and Anna Chau. Honorable mentions were awarded to Jessie Loftus, Amanda Long, Yaqueline Hernandez, Emily Plessl and Alicia Melber. All work was on display in the Allentown Art Museum through mid-February.

## On The Lookout

March 8 – All City Elementary Music Festival, Trexler Middle School Auditorium, 7:00 pm. Open to the public. A 50-year tradition.

March 17-20 – The William Allen Chorale will participate in the New York Music Festival in NYC, under the supervision of Patrick Brady and Alan Heckman.

March 19 – Band in the Round middle school performance. Trexler Middle School Gymnasium, 7:30 pm. \$2.00 per person. Open to the public.

March 21 – Act 72 Community Meeting, Dieruff High School Auditorium, 7:00-8:30 pm. Open to the public.

April 2 – Dieruff High School holds its annual Air Force JROTC Military Ball at the Sheraton Hotel on Airport Road, starting at 6:00 pm. For more information, contact MSgt Willard Jones at 484-765-5563 or [jonesw@allentownsd.org](mailto:jonesw@allentownsd.org).

April 20 – William Allen High School Spring Band Concert in Allen's Auditorium at 7:00PM. Tickets available at the door \$3.00 /students \$2.00.

April 28, 29, & 30 – "Sideshow" William Allen Theatre Company (2004 Freddie winner for Best Musical Production, Best Actress, Best Song) presents the spring musical in William Allen's Auditorium at 7:00Pm. Tickets are \$8.00/ \$5.00 students.

May 11 – William Allen's Pops Concert at 7PM in Milo J. Sowards Gymnasium located at 17<sup>th</sup> & Turner Streets. Tickets are \$5.00.

May 17 – Allentown Academy of the Arts Gala at the Allentown Art Museum, 5<sup>th</sup> & Court Streets. This is the Academy's 10<sup>th</sup> year of showcasing the talents of its students in the Visual Arts, Theatre, Vocal & Instrumental Music, and Dance. 6:30PM – 9:00PM with ongoing performances throughout the Museum- Awards ceremony at 9PM. Admission is free and open to the community.

June 12 – GRADUATIONS. Stabler Athletic and Convocation Center, Lehigh University, Saucon Valley, will stage both William Allen and Dieruff High School graduations. No more than six family members may attend per student, due to limitations of space. Dieruff festivities start at 2:30 pm; William Allen ceremonies begin at 7:00 pm. For directions, go to [www.lehigh.edu](http://www.lehigh.edu).