



# Scranton Attendance Center

## Board of Education Report

### October 2013

To: Dr. Steve Pegram, Superintendent  
From: Mrs. Jennifer Hanni, Principal  
Date: 4 November 2013  
Re: November BOE Report

The following is a summary of the activities and news at the Scranton Attendance Center for the month of October, as well as a look ahead to events during the month of November.

#### **Halloween Parade**

Students and staff enjoyed the annual Halloween Parade the morning of October 31. While Mother Nature had us change our plans of parading through downtown Scranton, we did still parade through the halls and classrooms of SAC and several generous businesses and organizations handed out goodies in our gym. After parading through the school, students continued the fun with a few Halloween activities and then we resumed regular classes for the remainder of the day. We thank all who participated in this fun event.

#### **Grading Policy**

Teachers have been utilizing and communicating a variety of data with parents and students this year in hopes to help make student skill and progress clear. We have discussed and carefully chosen what we will use to help students learn the material, as well as how we will measure their progress. This has meant, in many cases, fewer scores being entered in to PowerSchool, but more meaningful data, such as progress toward grade-level goals and standards, to be included. We've also started using reports and charts for both reading and math to clearly show a student's abilities and skills in each subject. Our focus has shifted away from grades to skills, and now emphasizes the idea of growth with our students and parents. With this in mind, we also changed scores in PowerSchool lower than 70% to "N" that stands for "Needs Improvement." We like the message of this marking and feel it communicates our idea of growth more effectively than a more traditional system. We had very positive response to these changes during Parent/Teacher Conferences. Many thanked the teachers for supporting their comments with data and the teachers feel more confident than ever that they know what each student needs.

#### **Bullying Assembly**

On November 8, SAC students will join OAC students for an assembly featuring KC Wolf, the Kansas City Chiefs mascot, as he delivers an anti-bullying message. Following the assembly, students who earned the required points for our Fuel up to Play 60 program will receive their award.

#### **STUCO**

Mr. Payne, our counselor, and I have begun a Student Council program at SAC this year. Classroom teachers nominate one student each quarter to represent their class at our bi-monthly lunch meetings. During these meetings, we have begun writing a SAC "Code of Conduct," organized recycling help, created character education posters, and planned holiday support drives. We love the leadership these young people have exhibited and look forward to future meetings and tasks.

#### **Veteran's Day Activities**

SAC has decided to switch it up a little this year for Veteran's Day. To avoid conflicts with other school's events, we are instead going to contribute to their event by writing letters of appreciate to each community's veterans. This activity will help accomplish covering some standards of writing, as well as boost knowledge and involvement in our community and civic duty.

### **Building Climate Plans**

To establish a positive and focused environment, SAC is implementing several positive behavior programs. We established an Academically Productive policy that gives all students the right to stay academically productive and remove any distractions that may hinder that success, as well as rewarding students for exhibiting this focused behavior. Many classrooms have also begun using a system that gives positive “marks” for successful behaviors that can be turned in for rewards at the end of each week. We’ve found that simply changing our mindset from punitive to rewarding positive behavior has really helped our building climate and decrease behavior problems.

In addition to these behavior plans, we’ve also begun a “Students to CHARGE Up” campaign, where I have divided our entire staff (teachers, paras, cooks, and all) into 5 groups. Each week I assign students to each staff group to find at least one opportunity to talk to this student about something not school related to help build those relationships and connection to our building. Students are chosen based on needs, but staff assigned to talk with them may or may not be even in the same grade level. We’re finding these very brief chats an easy way to give some positive, non-contingent attention to students, and provide staff with a great opportunity to learn more about all SAC students.

### **District Initiatives**

In our scheduled professional development days, our collaboration sessions, and individual teacher meetings, we’ve been hard at work on the district initiatives of BYOC, Marzano’s instructional strategies, and the McRel evaluation system. Both grade levels have progressed through the planning stages of BYOC, looking through standards and our curriculum, and have begun entering our unit maps. We’ve appreciated the extra work days to help with this process and have found those half days fantastic opportunities for professional discussions and learning about our resources and standards. Well-thought out objectives are posted daily in our classrooms, and our positive behavior programs feed directly in to the idea of reinforcing effort. We look forward to working with additional strategies throughout the rest of this year. Finally, we’ve continued studying and reflecting upon our performance as educators through the McRel system. I’ve worked individually with each staff member to create specific and unique professional development plans based on what they felt to be some of their weaker areas through their self-reflection. During my weekly walk throughs, I’ve been able to start some good professional conversations and acknowledge many good things happening in each classroom. I look forward to checking progress on goals mid-year.

### **Cooks Earn Award**

Our cooks, Pat Barr and Mindy Strohm, earned a plaque from the state of Kansas for their efforts to promote healthy eating with students. For the last two years, they have entered a float in the Homecoming parade and handed out carrots, raisins, and pretzels, as well as had posters to promote eating their fruits and veggies. This year, they’ve also sponsored a poster contest, where our students designed their own poster promoting healthy eating. Our cafeteria looks great with these decorations!