

Opening Message from Assistant Superintendent Patti Camper

Dear Parents & Guardians,

As we welcome March, I want to take a moment to thank you for your continued support of your child's education. Your dedication and involvement make a lasting impact, and I truly appreciate all that you do.

This month's newsletter is packed with opportunities designed with you in mind. We've planned several parent training sessions to help you feel more confident and informed – whether it's understanding your child's evaluation process, learning more about Autism Spectrum Disorder, or collaborating on their IEP and Reevaluation. Your voice and involvement are so important, and these sessions are here to empower you every step of the way.

I'm also excited to share information about Summer CCS 2025 and Extended School Year (ESY) services. These programs are designed to provide continuity, enrichment, and the support your child needs to thrive beyond the regular school year. I encourage you to take a look and reach out if you have any questions – we are here to help make this process smooth and positive for your family.

As always, your feedback is invaluable. Please don't hesitate to let us know how we can better support you and your child. We are in this together, and I am so grateful to be part of this journey with you.

With gratitude and warm wishes,

Patti Camper

Assistant Superintendent

Program for Students with Exceptionalities (PSE)

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When You Speak, We Listen!

If you have feedback on this issue of the Newsletter or have suggestions for the future Newsletters, please let us know. Scan or click on the QR code below to give us feedback.



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Parent & Guardian Training Opportunities

Quarterly Update on Training Opportunities

Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder: Insights for Parents

This session is designed to empower parents with knowledge and tools to better support their children's educational journey. Together we will gain a deeper understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and its impact on children in the classroom. We will cover:

- What Autism Spectrum Disorder is and its characteristics.
- How ASD may present in a school setting, including common behaviors and challenges.
- Effective strategies used by schools to support children with autism and how parents can collaborate with educators for their child's success.

Date & Time: 3/12/25 from 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

*Registration will close on 3/10/25



Understanding Your Child's Journey: Exploring the Evaluation Process Together

Join us for an informational session where we will unravel the journey that led to the evaluation process for your child. In this session, we will explore milestones, concerns, and collaborative efforts that brought us to the evaluation, as well as provide clarity to each step in the process. By the end of our session, you will feel equipped with the knowledge and confidence to navigate this process effectively, ensuring the best outcomes for your child's education and development. Let's embark on this journey together!

Date & Time: 3/13/25 from 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM

*Registration will close on 3/10/25



Interagency Collaboration

Interagency collaboration in the context of parent Professional Learning refers to the cooperative effort between multiple agencies, organizations, or departments that work together to provide resources, training, and support for parents and guardians. The goal of such collaboration is to enhance the skills and knowledge that parents and guardians need to support their children's development and educational success. Please join us for this session to learn about additional resources that may support you and your children.

Date & Time: 3/19/25 from 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

*Registration will close on 3/14/25



Summer 2025 CCS - 101

Join us for an informative Parent & Guardian session on **Summer CCS 2025**. This session will provide an overview of the CCS program, designed to support students who require additional services due to learning disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

During this session, we will discuss:

- ✓ The purpose, goals, eligibility and enrollment process of the Summer CCS program
- ✓ Program structure, schedule, and service delivery
- ✓ Expectations for students, parents, and staff

We look forward to partnering with you to ensure every student gets the support they need for a successful learning experience!

Date & Time: 3/17/25 from 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM

*Registration will close on 3/14/25



Empowering Parents & Guardians: Collaborating on Your Child's Learning Journey – Providing Parent Input for the Reevaluation & Individualized Education Plan

Join us for an interactive session where we will explore how parents and guardians can play an essential role in shaping their child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and Reevaluation (RR). Learn practical strategies for providing valuable input, advocating effectively, and collaborating with other members of the IEP Team to ensure your child receives the support they need to thrive academically and beyond.

Date & Time: 4/10/25 from 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM

*Registration will close on 4/7/25



Did You Know that March is Recognized as Developmental Disability Awareness Month?

What is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month?

March was officially designated as **Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month (DDAM)** in 1987 by President Ronald Reagan. This month aims to raise public awareness about individuals with developmental disabilities, highlight their contributions, and promote inclusion in all aspects of society—education, employment, community activities, and social life.

Understanding Developmental Disabilities

Developmental disabilities are a group of conditions caused by impairments in physical, learning, language, or behavior development. These conditions begin during childhood and often last throughout a person's lifetime. Some of the most common developmental disabilities include:

- **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)** - Affects social interaction, communication, and behavior.
- **Intellectual Disabilities** - Limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior.
- **Cerebral Palsy** - Affects movement, posture, and coordination.
- **Down Syndrome** - A genetic condition that causes developmental and intellectual delays.
- **Learning Disabilities** (e.g., Dyslexia, Dyscalculia) - Impact reading, math, and other academic skills.

Why Awareness Matters

1. **Reducing Stigma:** Many people still have misconceptions about developmental disabilities. DDAM helps educate the public and promote acceptance.
2. **Advocating for Inclusion:** Awareness encourages schools, workplaces, and communities to provide equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
3. **Supporting Families:** Families of children with developmental disabilities need resources, guidance, and support networks.
4. **Promoting Accessibility:** From accessible playgrounds to workplace accommodations, creating an inclusive world benefits everyone.



Ways Families Can Get Involved

- ✓ **Start a Conversation** - Teach children about inclusion and kindness.
- ✓ **Attend Local Events** - Many organizations host DDAM events to spread awareness.
- ✓ **Support Disability Advocacy Groups** - Groups like The Arc, Special Olympics, and local disability councils work to improve policies and resources.
- ✓ **Encourage Inclusion in Schools** - Partner with educators to promote inclusive classrooms.
- ✓ **Use Social Media for Awareness** - Share stories, facts, and positive messages using hashtags like #DDawareness2025 and #InclusionMatters.

Helpful Resources for Parents

- ✦ **The Arc** (www.thearc.org) - Advocacy and education for individuals with disabilities.
- ✦ **National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD)** (www.nacdd.org) - Resources and awareness campaigns.
- ✦ **Center for Parent Information & Resources (CPiR)** (www.parentcenterhub.org) - Provides guides and legal resources for parents.

Keeping You Up to Date:

A Message from Dr. Maria Paul:

Summer CCS 2025

We are excited to announce that Summer CCS programs are open for enrollment. The CCS flyer of summer options is linked in the picture to the right. Your child may enroll in as many programs as you wish within the number of hours they are owed. Space may be limited in some programs. Transportation will be provided to elementary students and middle/high school students with specialized transportation listed in their IEP. Registration via the survey link ends 3/28/25. After that, please reach out to Dr. Paul directly at mpaul1@pghschools.org or 412-529-3156 to register.

CCS Registration link:

<https://forms.office.com/r/jAb4em96e9>

We hope that PPS families will take advantage of these amazing summer experiences for their children!

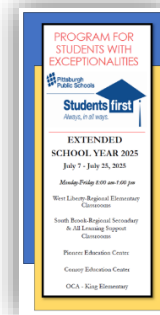


Extended School Year (ESY) 2025

Determining Extended School Year (ESY) Services for Students with Disabilities
Extended School Year (ESY) services are determined by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, which includes educators, special education staff, related service providers, and the student's parents or guardians.

ESY is designed to provide continued support during breaks from regular schooling to prevent significant regression of academic or functional skills. The determination of ESY eligibility is based on several factors that can be found in the linked publication. The ESY decision is individualized and based on the student's unique circumstances, ensuring that students with disabilities receive the support they need to continue making educational progress throughout the year. For students in the Armstrong Target Group with severe disabilities (such as Autism, Serious Emotional Disturbance, Severe Intellectual Disability, Degenerative Impairments, or Multiple Disabilities), ESY (Extended School Year) decisions must be made by February 28th each year. For other students, ESY determinations can be made anytime during the school year, but should allow enough time for discussion of concerns and disagreements before the start of ESY.

[PaTTAN publication regarding ESY](#)



Did Know the PSE Family Has Expanded?

Welcome, Dr. Alexander Novickoff

We're excited to announce that Dr. Novickoff has joined our PSE family as a Program Officer. In this role, he will focus on special education programming, IDEA compliance, and family engagement, ensuring that students and staff receive the support and resources they need.

Dr. Novickoff returns to PPS after 7 years in various suburban districts serving a variety of administrative roles. With a background in special education leadership, he is dedicated to student advocacy, inclusive education, and program development.

Beyond professional life, Alex enjoys spending time with his wife, Sarah and four kids: Mila (11), Natalya (7), Arkadie (5), and Aleksander (3), coaching youth sports, golfing and traveling. He looks forward to making a meaningful impact in this new role and collaborating with families, educators, and the PSE and PPS community.

We are excited to welcome Dr. Novickoff to the team!

Additional Resources

Join the Include Me team for an online series on transition!



Learn about the steps to take after your student turns 14 and how to be engaged in their education and transition plans as a parent or guardian. Sessions will be held on zoom and recordings will be posted online.

Session information

All sessions will be on Tuesdays at 12pm and again at 6pm on the following dates:

- **March 11th** - Self Advocacy - How can families build self-advocacy skills?
- **April 8th** - Higher Ed/Employment - How do colleges support students with disabilities in achieving academic success?
- **May 13th** - Able Accounts - What are the benefits of ABLE accounts, and how can they help my child gain financial independence?

REGISTER



Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh & Developmental Disability Awareness Month Connection:

According to the Carnegie Library, reading books with our children featuring characters with disabilities has many benefits for our young ones. Some such benefits include:

- Ability to identify themselves in the books they read.
- Allow children to learn about lives and stories different from their own.
- Exploring diverse stories encourages empathy towards oneself and others.

Please take a few moments to click in the Carnegie Libraries [link](#) to view the books they are spotlighting for this awareness month.



The Best Buddies Friendship Walk is the leading event in the country supporting inclusion for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Join 50,000 participants at 70+ Walks across the globe to support the Best Buddies programs in schools, workplaces, and communities. You'll be making the world more welcoming to people with IDD – one friendship, one job, and one life-changing connection at a time.

Pittsburgh
April 27, 2025

> REGISTER / DETAILS

Additional Events:



Tips from Dr. Bresnahan & the School Psychologists:



Parents of children experiencing dyslexia often feel pressured to provide intensive instruction for reading at home. However, if your child is receiving systematic and intensive interventions in school, most reading researchers suggest you just read! Read with them. Make it fun. The National Education Association offers some easy tips on how to promote home reading routines that can be accessed by clicking on their logo below.



If your child is elementary age and struggling with fluency, consider repeated readings. Find short, easy reads online about topics of their interest. Read it to them. Read it with them. Have them read it to you. Levittown Public Schools has some wonderful suggestions you can view by [Clicking Here](#).

Want more information on how to support your child's reading at home?

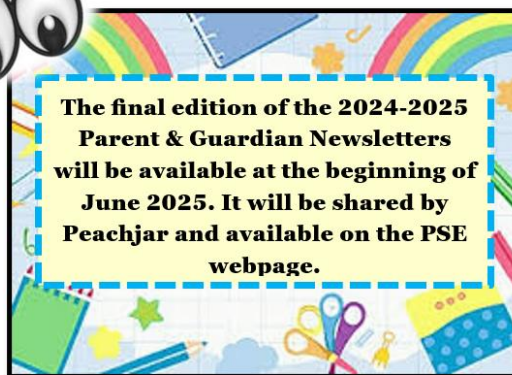


Join us for our next Parents as Coaches series:
Being a reading coach at home on March 27, 2025, at
5:30 PM - 6:30 PM.



If you are interested in attending the session, please use the following link to join:
If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Bresnahan at bbresnahan1@pghschools.org

Looking to the Future:



The final edition of the 2024-2025
Parent & Guardian Newsletters
will be available at the beginning of
June 2025. It will be shared by
Peachjar and available on the PSE
webpage.