

Opening Message from Assistant Superintendent Patti Camper

Welcome Back to a New School Year!

As we begin a new year, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of our families. The Program for Students with Exceptionalities (PSE) remains committed to providing high-quality, individualized supports that ensure every student has the opportunity to thrive.

We greatly appreciate your continued support and collaboration, as the partnership between families and schools is essential to student success. Together, we look forward to a year filled with growth, achievement, and new opportunities for all students.

Sincerely,

Patti Camper
Assistant Superintendent
Program for Students with Exceptionalities (PSE)
pcamper1@pghschools.org



**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.

In This Issue:	
Page 1	• Opening message
Page 2	• Training Opportunities & Resources
Pages 3	• Keeping You Up to Date
Page 4	• Summer Highlights
Pages 5 and 6	• Additional Resources



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: Virtual session on 10/20/25 from 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

*Registration will close on 10/17/25



Exploring Universal Designs for Learning (UDLs) with the Assistive Technology Department

Does your child have an IEP or a 504 and struggle with different aspects of reading writing, or organization? If yes, please join us for a session to discover how the AT department can help, who we are, and what the AT process entails here in PPS. Part of this session will also be devoted to reviewing different Universal Designs for Learning, (UDLs), including Read & Write and OrbitNote, Microsoft OneNote, and Apple Accessibility. Join us to discover how features in these programs, accessible to all learners in PPS, can help a struggling student to succeed.

Date & Time: Virtual session on 10/22/25 from 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

*Registration will close on 10/17/25



Supporting Calm: How We Help Students Through Challenging Moments

Join us for an informative session where we’ll share how our district supports students during times of emotional or behavioral distress. Learn about the proactive, relationship-based strategies staff use to create a safe and supportive environment for all students. We'll discuss how we recognize early signs of escalation, prioritize de-escalation techniques that are respectful and trauma-informed, and ensure safety through compassionate and non-restrictive approaches. This session will also offer guidance on how families can reinforce these strategies at home and collaborate with school teams to support student success.

Date & Time: Virtual session on October 6, 2025, from 6:00 PM - 7:00PM

*Registration will close on 10/2/25



Additional Fall Events



Keeping You Up to Date:

A Message from Dr. Maria Paul:

Fall Covid Compensatory Services (CCS) 2025

- 🍂 PPS continues to offer CCS opportunities for in-district, out-of-district, and graduate students owed CCS hours.
- 🍂 A Fall flyer was sent home with current students. This flyer was emailed and mailed to out-of-district and graduate families.
- 🍂 Your child’s school may also provide on-site CCS opportunities during the school year. Please watch for upcoming details, which will be shared directly by the school.
- 🍂 Please reach out to Dr. Maria Paul if you have not received the flyer and are interested in summer opportunities.

Dr. Maria Paul, mpaull@pghschools.org



Did Know the PSE Family Has Expanded?



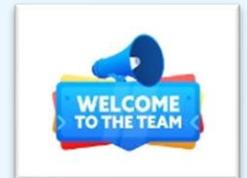
Welcome, Ann McKetta!

Pittsburgh Public Schools is pleased to welcome Ann McKetta as the District’s new Senior Program Officer for PSE.

Ann began her career as a special education teacher before serving as a school leader and district administrator in Philadelphia for nearly two decades. She is deeply committed to equity, rigorous instruction, and

strong school-family partnerships, and she looks forward to working with the Pittsburgh community to ensure every student thrives.

Ann is excited to get started, meet families, and connect with the Pittsburgh community to ensure every student thrives.



Welcome, Dr. Jessica Webster!

Dr. Jessica Webster is a seasoned educator and leader with over 25 years of experience in public and private education. She has served as a classroom teacher, District Inclusion Specialist, Assistant Middle School Principal, and Head of School at Carlow University’s Campus Laboratory School. Her career has centered around supporting and sustaining inclusive practices, family engagement, and educational equity. She previously served as a Senior Family Engagement Specialist for MAEC’s Statewide Family Engagement Center (CAFE), supporting partnerships between families and schools. Currently, she serves as a School Director in her local district. Dr. Webster holds an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership with her Superintendent Letter of Eligibility from the University of Pittsburgh. She also holds M.Ed. degrees in Educational Leadership and Literacy. Dr. Webster is thrilled to be a Program Officer supporting the educational communities of: Arsenal K-5 and 6-8, Miller, SAC, Sunnyside, Weil and Woolslair.

We are so excited to welcome both Ann McKetta and Dr. Jessica Webster to the Team!

Summer Highlights: Celebrating Another Year of Our Extended School Year (ESY) Adventures!

Elementary ESY Program Overview 2025



This summer, students in Kindergarten through 5th grade enjoyed a fun and enriching Extended School Year (ESY) experience.

Our theme was camping, and students participated in a variety of activities including reading themed stories, making crafts, and—of course—enjoying plenty of s'mores!

We were fortunate to welcome many community partners who brought learning to life. Special thanks to RIF, Brookline Fire Company 26, Carnegie Library, Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium, National Aviary, Open Up Yoga, Playnotes, Attack Theater, and Dr. Nelson, who introduced us to her turtle, Elliot.



Our 4th and 5th graders had some extra adventures. They practiced cooking simple snacks and took community outings to bakeries, convenience stores, the fire department, and local parks. Along the way, they also learned how to navigate public transportation.

It was truly a fun and successful ESY program for our elementary students—full of learning, exploration, and lasting memories!



Secondary ESY Program Overview 2025

This summer, students in the Secondary Extended School Year (ESY) program, at South Brook, participated in an exciting and enriching experience that blended fun with meaningful educational growth. The program featured a dynamic mix of hands-on learning, skill-building activities, and engaging community outings.



Students explored Pittsburgh through community-based instruction (CBI), visiting local landmarks and businesses, where they practiced real-world social and life skills. In addition, they took part in community-based vocational education (CBVE) work experiences, gaining valuable job training at local employers, developing responsibility, teamwork, and independence.

Whether helping volunteer organizations take inventory, visiting local Universities, stocking shelves, or navigating public transportation, students embraced each opportunity with enthusiasm, making ESY both fun and impactful.

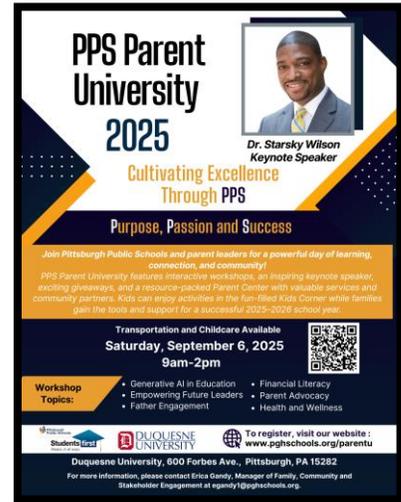


Additional Resources

In Case You Missed It:

Parent University

Join Pittsburgh Public Schools, parent leaders, and families for an inspiring and empowering day of learning, connection, and community at Parent University 2025, taking place on Saturday, September 6, 2025, at Duquesne University. Centered around the theme “Cultivating Excellence through PPS: Purpose, Passion, and Success,” this event brings together parents, caregivers, educators, and community partners to prepare and empower families for the 2025–2026 school year.



[Click Here for More Information & to Register!](#)

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



Join us for the following sessions which are held on Tuesdays at 12pm.

- 9/9 - Benefits Counseling Overview
- 10/14 - Person Centered Planning
- 11/11 - Employment Supports
- 12/9 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

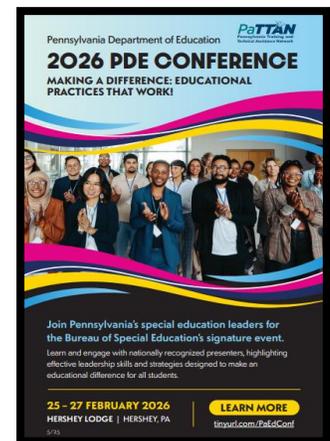


Mark Your Calanders:

Join Pennsylvania’s special education leaders for the Bureau of Special Education’s signature event.

Learn and engage with nationally recognized presenters, highlighting effective leadership skills and strategies designed to make an educational difference for all students.

#MakingADifferenceInPA



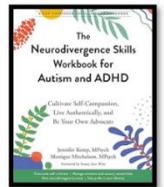
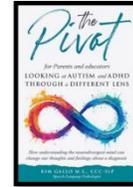
Additional Resources (Continued):



A Note from Dr. Bresnahan & the School Psychologists:



- ❖ Google AuDHD and you will be able to see the diverse nature of opinions on whether having ADHD and Autism is a unique condition. No matter how you feel, it's a hot topic! For a good introduction to the combination of needs for those with both conditions, consider viewing Dr. Khurram Sadiq's Ted Talk: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8V_IWVBrFxU.
- ❖ Speech pathologist Kim Gallo has also put together a thoughtful consideration of the needs for AuDHD individuals. A self-help workbook geared specifically to those with both Autism and ADHD is also available.



The Parents as Coaches Series

Join us on **October 16, 2025, at 6:00 PM** for the next Parents as Coaches training virtually offered by Psychological Services surrounding specific accommodations and interventions for those experiencing AuDHD.



**Looking
to the
Future:**

The next 2025-2026 School Year, Parent & Guardian Newsletters will be available at the beginning of the following months, so please check out the PSE webpage!

- January 2026
- March 2026
- June 2026