DCIU
Empowering Partnerships For Education

2026








American Education Week

Celebrating Public Education

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AMERICAN Education Week

November 16 - 20, 2026

Celebrating & Advocating for Education Support Professionals

This American Education Week (AEW), families, teachers, and communities are coming together to spotlight education support professionals (ESPs), celebrate their contributions to students' educational experiences, and recognize the important role they play in helping students achieve their dreams.

First observed in 1921, AEW is a time to highlight the power of public education, recognize the achievements within our schools, and honor those who make a meaningful difference in ensuring every student receives a high-quality education. This special edition publication, created by the Delaware County Intermediate Unit (DCIU), highlights the remarkable work happening across our county's public school districts, where excellence in education is a daily commitment. Each district has contributed a unique story, offering a glimpse into the vibrant and inspiring initiatives that exemplify the heart and soul of its schools. These stories reflect only a fraction of the incredible efforts taking place across our districts and DCIU—each deserving of recognition and celebration.

At DCIU, we deeply value our partnerships with administrators, school boards, parents, students, and community members. Together, we are committed to creating safe, just, and equitable learning environments that empower all students to succeed. Through this spirit of collaboration, we find our greatest strength—working side by side to make a positive, lasting impact on the lives of students and families across our communities.

Happy American Education Week!

Chester Upland

Dr. Khalid Sutton, Interim Superintendent

Excellence Through Action: For the Betterment of Our Children

At Chester Upland School District, our commitment to the betterment of our children comes to life through our shared vision of safe, just, and equitable schools. Every child deserves a school where they feel safe, valued, challenged, and supported.



Fulfilling that promise requires us to work together—educators, families, students, and community partners—to remove barriers, uphold fair and consistent practices, and ensure access to meaningful learning opportunities. Through strong relationships, high expectations, and intentional action, we can create schools where every student has the opportunity to learn, lead, and belong.

CUSD hosted its annual Back-to-School Resource Fair, providing resources and support to nearly 4,000 scholars and families. The collective efforts of our staff and community partners, including Hip Hop 4 Peace, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, the Boys & Girls Club of Chester, Jefferson Health, the City of Chester, and others helped make this event possible. Former Philadelphia Eagles defensive back Rodney McLeod also joined the celebration, helping make the day memorable for our scholars and families.

We celebrated National Hispanic Heritage Month by honoring the rich cultures, histories, and contributions of Hispanic and Latino communities. These celebrations provided opportunities to learn from one another, embrace our diversity, and strengthen a sense of belonging.



With support from our Pupil Services Department, every school has formed a multicultural committee that includes staff and students to celebrate the many cultures represented in our community. As we work together for safe, just, and equitable schools, these efforts help ensure every scholar feels seen, valued, and respected, with their heritage recognized as an important part of our district community.

Chester Upland

Dr. Khalid Sutton, Interim Superintendent

We are excited about the house system at Main Street Elementary School and the opportunities it creates to strengthen relationships and build school pride.



By connecting scholars and staff across classrooms and grade levels, the house system encourages teamwork, leadership, positive behavior, and a shared sense of responsibility. It also provides opportunities to celebrate accomplishments and help every scholar feel connected to a supportive school community.

Chester High School, STEM Academy, and Toby Farms Middle School are continuing their restorative justice work through our second year of partnership with Akoben LLC. Together, we are infusing restorative approaches into school communities, with an emphasis on building healthy relationships, strengthening trust, and helping scholars take responsibility for their actions and repair harm.

Homecoming in Chester Upland brings a level of pride, energy, and tradition that rivals any college or university celebration across the nation. Each year, Chester alumni return from near and far to join current scholars, families, and staff in celebrating their shared roots and lasting connections. From homecoming dances and alumni gatherings to recognition assemblies and an exciting varsity football game, the festivities reflect the spirit of our close-knit, family-oriented community.



Across generations, homecoming reminds us that being a Clipper means belonging to something bigger than ourselves.

Through the shared efforts of staff, families, alumni, and community partners, we work to keep every celebration safe and welcoming so everyone can enjoy the traditions that bring us together.

Chichester

Dr. Jeremy Curtis, Superintendent

Chi Pride in Action: Community at the Heart of Learning

In the Chichester School District, learning extends far beyond the classroom. Across every school, students build connections with their classmates, educators, families, and community partners through experiences that encourage service, leadership, exploration, and belonging. From elementary school literacy events to high school career pathways and community service initiatives, a common thread runs throughout the district: a commitment to strengthening community connections while preparing students for success.





That commitment begins at the elementary level, where students are encouraged to see learning as a shared experience. At Marcus Hook Elementary, events such as Reading Under the Stars and Fire Safety programs brought families, students, and local first responders together to promote literacy, safety, and community engagement. At Hilltop Elementary, guest readers and schoolwide literacy initiatives helped foster a love of while strengthening relationships between students and the broader community.

Boothwyn and Linwood Elementary Schools also provided students with opportunities to learn from community members and participate in enrichment experiences that connected classroom learning to the world around them.



As students grow, opportunities to develop leadership skills and serve others continue to expand. Chichester Middle School students demonstrated excellence both inside and outside the classroom through academic competitions, STEM learning experiences, and schoolwide initiatives that promoted a positive school culture.

Whether participating in programs that encouraged collaboration and problem-solving or celebrating achievements through Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), students learned the value of supporting one another and contributing to a positive learning environment.

Chichester

Dr. Jeremy Curtis, Superintendent



At Chichester High School, students embraced numerous opportunities to make a difference in their school and community. Through organizations such as Interact Club, Rho Kappa, and Mini-THON, students dedicated countless hours to supporting important causes and helping those in need.

Service projects throughout the year included collecting donations for military families, assembling care packages for children experiencing homelessness, and coordinating fundraising efforts that benefited children and families facing serious illnesses.

These experiences helped students understand that leadership is not only about achievement but also about compassion, responsibility, and giving back.

Community partnerships also played a significant role in expanding student opportunities.

Collaborations with organizations such as Boeing, local businesses, first responders, and community groups provided valuable real-world learning experiences for students of all ages.

At Chichester High School, the district's growing STEM and drone technology programs continued to open doors for students interested in high-demand career fields.

Through hands-on coursework and industry-recognized certifications, students gained skills that prepare them for future educational and career opportunities.



Across the district, students explored career pathways, engaged in service-learning projects, celebrated academic achievements, and built meaningful relationships with peers and adults who supported their growth. These experiences reflect the district's belief that education is strongest when schools and communities work together.

The accomplishments celebrated throughout the year point to a common goal: creating a school community where every student feels connected, supported, and empowered to succeed. From acts of service and student leadership to academic achievement and community partnerships, these experiences illustrate the meaning of Chi Pride. More than school spirit, Chi Pride represents a shared commitment to supporting one another, celebrating achievements, and making a positive difference while allowing students to learn, lead, serve, and thrive.

Garnet Valley

Dr. Marc Bertrando, Superintendent

Building Community Together: From Shared Rules to a Peaceful School Bus

What does it take to create a school where every child feels safe, known, and connected? At Garnet Valley, we have learned that it begins by bringing people together and making sure students have a voice in the community they help create.

Several years ago, Garnet Valley's elementary schools began implementing Responsive Classroom practices as part of our Safe & Caring goal. As a result, we started thinking differently about school rules. Rather than simply telling students the rules, we wanted students to help define the kind of community they wanted their schools to be.



Creating Our Rules—Together

The process began in classrooms, where students considered their hopes and dreams and the kind of environment they would need to achieve them.

Their ideas moved through grade-level, schoolwide, and elementary-wide discussions involving students, parents, and teachers. The work culminated with four simple but powerful expectations: **Be Responsible. Be Kind. Be Respectful. Be Safe.**



Our Superintendents and School Board President formally ratified the rules, reinforcing that our youngest learners' work mattered beyond their individual schools. Student poster contests then helped bring the shared expectations to life.

The rules weren't something created *for* students. They were created *with* them.

From Shared Rules to Shared Responsibility

Ratifying the rules was never intended to be the end of the work. If we truly believed in being responsible, kind, respectful, and safe, we needed to help students live those values throughout their school experience.

Garnet Valley

Dr. Marc Bertrando, Superintendent

As we examined discipline data and listened to students and staff, we identified areas where students needed additional support. One of those places was the school bus. That led us to the **Peaceful School Bus** program.

The philosophy behind Peaceful School Bus closely aligned with the Responsive Classroom practices already taking root in our schools: build relationships, create community, give students voice, teach expectations, and solve problems together. Rather than approaching bus behavior by creating more rules, we asked, "What if we built community on the bus in the same way we build community in our classrooms?"

Taking Morning Meeting Beyond the Classroom

Each bus community meets with its bus driver and a school staff member throughout the year to build relationships, strengthen community, and revisit shared agreements.

Students gather together, get to know one another, and discuss what the four elementary-wide expectations – kind, safe, respectful, and responsible – look and sound like on their bus. Older students help facilitate conversations and encourage younger riders to participate.

Our bus drivers are essential partners in this work. Just as teachers are central to creating classroom community, our drivers help create the first and last school community many children experience each day.

A Community That Keeps Learning

Perhaps the most important lesson from this work is that creating a safe and caring school is never finished. We continue to study behavioral data, listen to students and adults, and identify areas where our practices need to grow. Most recently, collaborative work groups have worked to strengthen bus and recess experiences.



The work continues to evolve, but the approach remains remarkably consistent: Listen. Build together. Teach. Reflect. Adjust.

Responsive Classroom gave us practices for building relationships and community. Our rules-creation process gave students an authentic voice in defining the community they wanted, and Peaceful School Bus challenged us to carry those values beyond the classroom.

At Garnet Valley, our students helped us define the community they wanted: **responsible, kind, respectful, and safe**. As adults, our responsibility is to keep building it with them.

Stronger Together: Haverford High School Launches Unified Strength and Conditioning Program

Building strength, fostering friendships, and celebrating the power of inclusion, one rep at a time.



At Haverford High School, being a Ford means more than wearing the school colors. It means showing up for one another, embracing opportunities, and building a community where every student has the chance to belong, participate, and succeed. This fall, Haverford Athletics is bringing that commitment to life in a new way with the launch of its **Unified Strength and Conditioning Program**.

The program marks the latest addition to Haverford's Special Olympics Unified Sports offerings, expanding an already meaningful tradition of inclusion through athletics. With Unified Bocce in the winter and Unified Track in the spring, the new fall strength and conditioning program creates another opportunity for students of all abilities to train, compete, and grow together.

As a **Special Olympics Unified Champion School**, Haverford High School is committed to creating a school culture that celebrates differences, builds understanding, and removes barriers to participation. That commitment was on full display last year as Haverford's Unified Bocce team earned state runner-up honors, demonstrating the determination, teamwork, and school pride that define Ford athletics.

Now, the focus shifts to the weight room and fitness floor. The Unified Strength and Conditioning Program introduces students to a competitive strength format featuring events such as bench press and stationary bike. Through shared training and competition, students will have the opportunity to challenge themselves, develop new skills, build confidence, and celebrate one another's accomplishments.



Just as importantly, the program creates space for friendships and connections that extend beyond competition.



Unified Sports is built on a powerful idea: when students practice and compete together, everyone benefits. Athletes learn from one another, teams grow stronger, and school communities become more connected. Success is measured not only by performance, but also by effort, sportsmanship, perseverance, and the relationships developed along the way.



For Haverford Athletics, this initiative represents more than a new sport on the schedule. It reflects a broader philosophy that every student deserves access to the transformative experience of school athletics. By expanding opportunities for students of all abilities to participate meaningfully, Haverford continues to demonstrate that inclusion is not an add-on to its athletic program—it is central to who the Fords are.



As the inaugural Unified Strength and Conditioning team prepares for its upcoming competitions, the Haverford community has plenty of reasons to be excited. Every lift, every pedal, every personal achievement, and every teammate celebrated will be another example of what can happen when a school commits to creating opportunities for all. The message is simple: we are stronger together.

Haverford Athletics is proud to cheer on this newest addition to the Unified Sports family and looks forward to watching these student-athletes thrive. Go Fords!

Interboro

Bernadette Reiley, Superintendent

Fall Fest Celebrates Inclusion, Community, and Friendship



On October 15, the Interboro School District's Special Education team welcomed students and staff to the annual Fall Fest at the South Avenue Sports Complex. The event brought together students from Interboro, Ridley, Marple Newtown, and Springfield school districts for a day focused on fun, friendship, teamwork, and inclusion.

Designed to provide students with special needs opportunities to engage in recreational activities and connect with peers from neighboring communities, Fall Fest embodies the belief that every student deserves opportunities to participate and belong. Interboro's Bucs Buddies from both the high school and elementary schools proudly represented our district.

The festivities began with a performance of the National Anthem by Interboro High School's Bucs Buddies Helpers before students headed to activity stations across the complex.

Participants enjoyed volleyball, soccer, bean bag toss, football, and the rainbow parachute activity, where teamwork was on full display. Following lunch, the excitement continued with carnival-style activities including face painting by Interboro High School art students, a petting zoo, inflatable slides, karaoke, a hayride, and a treat from the Kona Ice truck.



While the activities brought plenty of smiles and laughter, the true impact of Fall Fest extends far beyond a single day. The event creates opportunities for students of all abilities to build relationships and celebrate inclusion. Through events like Fall Fest, Interboro School District continues its commitment to creating experiences that strengthen connections and demonstrate that everyone has a place within the school community.

Interboro

Bernadette Reiley, Superintendent

Building Inclusive Learning Experiences Through Adaptive Specials

In Interboro School District, Adaptive Specials were created from a simple belief: every child deserves opportunities to explore new experiences, build friendships, and feel a sense of belonging.

For some students, traditional specials can present barriers to participation. Adaptive Specials remove those barriers by providing individualized support, accommodations, and modifications that allow students to engage in ways that meet their unique needs and strengths. The focus is on helping students feel successful, included, and valued.

The program reflects our commitment to safe, just, and equitable schools by recognizing that students do not all need the same thing to succeed.



Some need additional support, different materials, or a more personalized approach. By providing those supports, we create opportunities for every student to participate meaningfully.

Financial Literacy Night Builds Skills for a Bright Financial Future

Students and families in grades K-5 recently gathered at Glenolden Elementary School for a Financial Literacy Night designed to teach money-management skills in a fun and meaningful way.



Made possible through a partnership with Vanguard and the Council for Economic Education and organized by District Math Coaches Stephanie D'Alonzo and Kerri Urzillo, the event gave students the opportunity to explore real-world financial concepts. Students used play money to work through real-life scenarios, practicing math skills, distinguishing between wants and needs, managing a budget, and calculating expenses. After budgeting their remaining funds, students visited a store where they could spend their earnings on prizes.

The event brought together students, families, and staff for an evening of learning and collaboration while demonstrating Interboro School District's commitment to providing equitable learning opportunities that prepare students for success both inside and outside the classroom.

Marple Newtown

Dr. Tina Kane, Superintendent

Rethinking the Middle School Day at Paxon Hollow

For more than three decades, the daily schedule at Paxon Hollow Middle School remained largely unchanged. As we prepared for the 2025–2026 school year, we asked one simple question: *How can we do better for our students?* We recognized an opportunity to rethink how we use one of our most valuable resources: time.

Our new schedule emerged from a two-year collaborative process involving teachers, counselors, pupil services, and our Teaching and Learning Department. The goal was not simply to rearrange classes, but to create a more flexible and responsive middle school experience.



One significant change involved how our teachers collaborate. While teachers continue to meet regularly in teams, we have shifted toward grade-level collaboration, allowing educators to examine student needs across an entire grade.



This broader perspective requires us to be more intentional and efficient with our meeting time, focusing conversations on student progress, shared concerns, and coordinated interventions.

As we experience the new schedule firsthand, we continue to evaluate and refine its structure. For example, we are creating additional opportunities for teachers to collaborate within their academic departments. This time allows teachers to examine student performance, discuss instructional practices, and work together to strengthen curriculum and instruction.

Marple Newtown

Dr. Tina Kane, Superintendent

Finding the right balance between grade-level and departmental collaboration is an important part of our ongoing work. Academically, the new schedule provides expanded opportunities for targeted reading and mathematics interventions, additional co-taught classes, smaller class sizes, and individualized support during the school day.



We also introduced courses designed to ease the transition into sixth grade while providing seventh and eighth graders with experiences that better prepare them for high school.

Equally important is our commitment to students' social and emotional well-being. Every Tuesday morning, our intervention team meets to identify students needing additional support and coordinate appropriate responses. Our school counselors play an essential role, providing individual assistance and facilitating small groups based on emerging student needs.

Ultimately, this work is about more than a new schedule.

It represents a shift toward using our time more purposefully, strengthening purposeful collaboration, and responding to students academically, socially, and emotionally. We recognize that meaningful improvement is an ongoing process, and we remain committed to making adjustments as we learn what works best for our students and staff.

At Paxon Hollow, we will continue asking the question that started this process: *How can we do even better for our students?*



Penn-Delco

Dr. George Steinhoff, Superintendent

Penn-Delco Celebrates First-Ever Kindergarten Signing Days

School districts have long celebrated students as they complete their educational journeys, from graduation ceremonies to senior signing days. At Penn-Delco School District, staff wanted to make sure students felt just as celebrated as they began theirs.

This spring, the district introduced its inaugural Kindergarten Signing Days, a new tradition designed to celebrate incoming kindergarten students, encourage early registration, and help families build connections with their school communities before the first day of school.



Incoming kindergartener Hunter Patterson celebrates Pennell Elementary School's Kindergarten Signing Day with family.

"We put so much effort into celebrating our graduating seniors, and we started thinking about how we could bring that same excitement to our incoming kindergarten students," said Allison Gangl, Communications Coordinator for Penn-Delco School District.

"We wanted to create something that would make families excited about starting school while also encouraging them to register early. The signing days were a fun way to bring those two things together."



Incoming kindergartener Paisley Brennan signs her certificate for Aston Elementary School.

Held at all four elementary schools - Aston, Coebourn, Parkside, and Pennell - the events welcomed hundreds of incoming kindergarten students and their families for an evening of excitement, exploration, and connection. Much like a signing day for student-athletes, each future kindergartener had the opportunity to take part in a special signing moment, officially marking the beginning of their educational journey at Penn-Delco.

Families had opportunities to meet kindergarten teachers and school staff, connect with building nurses, learn about before- and after-school care, and explore school transportation, including a chance to see a Penn-Delco school bus up close.

Penn-Delco

Dr. George Steinhoff, Superintendent



Future Parkside Elementary School student Angelo Anderson-Ortiz proudly shows off his oversized pencil during Kindergarten Signing Day.

The events reflected the district's commitment to building strong relationships with families from the very beginning. By encouraging families to register early and creating a welcoming environment before the first day of school, Penn-Delco aimed to support a smooth transition to kindergarten while helping its newest students feel confident, excited, and Ready for Life.

"We celebrate so many milestones throughout a student's educational journey, but there's something special about celebrating the very beginning," said Penn-Delco Superintendent Dr. George Steinhoff.

"Kindergarten Signing Days gave us an opportunity to welcome our newest students and their families, build relationships, and show them what it means to be part of the Penn-Delco community. We want every child to feel like they belong here from day one."

Thanks to the collaboration of staff across all four elementary schools, Kindergarten Signing Days provided a memorable introduction to the Penn-Delco community for the Class of 2039 and established a tradition the district looks forward to continuing for years to come.



Finnian McNulty celebrates the start of his educational journey alongside his family at Coebourn Elementary School's Kindergarten Signing Day.

A Place to Belong: How RTSD's Resource Fair Connects Multilingual Families to Their Community

"I don't know what I have done to deserve all of this."

At Radnor Township School District's (RTSD) Multilingual Resource Fair, a father from a newly arrived Wayne Elementary School (WES) family looked around at the resources, food, and children's activities and shared these words with a member of the English Language Development (ELD) team. The team had been supporting his family since they arrived in Radnor that summer, helping them find the information and resources they needed to help their children thrive.

His response captured the heart of the event: showing families that they are welcomed, valued, and supported in their new community.



Helping Families Find Their Way

The idea for the Resource Fair grew from conversations with families joining the district. During initial family interviews, ELD staff noticed that parents often had questions extending beyond school. They wanted to understand their new town, find activities for their children, and learn how to access local services and opportunities.

"Moving to a new location can be confusing," explained Sarah Steiner, WES ELD teacher. "We recognized that moving to a new country where you might not speak the same language or understand the community's way of doing things is an additional barrier to belonging."



Finding resources can be difficult when information is scattered across multiple platforms, particularly when systems are available primarily in English. Radnor offers a wealth of resources, and the ELD Department wanted to make sure new families knew how to find them.

By bringing community organizations and district resources together in one place, the fair gave families an opportunity to ask questions, gather information, and make connections.

Turning Welcome Into Belonging

For RTSD, belonging means ensuring that every student and family feels included, regardless of language or background. The Resource Fair advances that commitment by recognizing that a warm welcome is only the beginning. Families also need access to the information and opportunities that let them participate fully in school and community life. That work happens throughout the year through the efforts of the ELD team.



It includes translating information about school events, helping families navigate registration systems, and ensuring multilingual families remain at the forefront of conversations about family engagement.

These efforts communicate an important message: families do not have to navigate their new community alone. Their participation is valued, and their children's success is a shared priority. The Resource Fair extends that message beyond the classroom. By connecting with local organizations and other families, participants begin building relationships that can make an unfamiliar place feel more like home.

Every Connection Counts

For the father from WES, the fair offered a tangible reminder of the support surrounding his family. His gratitude reflected the impact of helping parents find the information and resources they need to feel confident in their new community.

The ELD team looks for signs that the fair is making a lasting difference. When families return to reconnect with friends, support the ELD team, or confidently access resources on their own, it reflects the event's success.

The department hopes every family leaves with at least one new piece of information about local programs or community services. Most importantly, families should leave knowing that Radnor wants them to feel at home.



As RTSD continues strengthening community partnerships, the Resource Fair demonstrates how belonging grows through support, connection, and opportunities to participate. As Steiner shared, "If two families come to the event, all of the work to make it happen is worth it."

Ridley
Charles Maiers, Superintendent

Ridley Homecoming: Rooted in Tradition and Growing Together

At Ridley School District, tradition is more than a connection to the past; it is a reflection of who we are and what brings us together. This year's Homecoming theme, "Rooted in Tradition & Growing Together," captures that spirit, celebrating the shared experiences and generations of memories that make Ridley such a special place.

Over the years, Homecoming has grown into much more than a school celebration. It has become a beloved districtwide tradition that welcomes students, staff, families, alumni, and neighbors to take part in something bigger than themselves.



There are themed days throughout the school week, an exciting Friday night football game with the crowning of the king and queen, the annual parade, and a school dance to top it all off. Homecoming brings the Ridley community together to celebrate its history, recognize those who make a difference, and create new memories for generations to come.



Dining Under the R's

One favorite Homecoming Week tradition is Dining Under the R's, Ridley High School's playful twist on "Dining Under the Stars." This event brings the community together for an evening of food trucks, music, games, and fun. It's an opportunity to enjoy time, connect with the people around the community, and celebrate Raider pride.

Parade of Inclusion

A highlight of the celebration is the Homecoming parade, which showcases the many groups that contribute to the spirit and character of Ridley. School clubs, athletic teams, extracurricular activities, and local community organizations come together, each representing a unique part of the district's identity.

Ridley

Charles Maiers, Superintendent



As students share their interests and accomplishments alongside organizations that serve and support local families, the parade reflects the many ways people contribute to the place they call home. It is a reminder that Ridley's strength comes from the collective efforts of its schools and community.

Legacy Award

The parade also offers a meaningful opportunity to recognize those whose contributions have left a lasting mark on Ridley.



Through the presentation of the Legacy Award, the district honors an individual whose influence extends beyond the classroom and into the community as a whole. The award celebrates the dedication and service of someone who has made a meaningful difference in the lives of others through the community. By recognizing these individuals, Ridley celebrates the people who have invested their time, talents, and hearts in making the community a better place.

Sense of Belonging

At its heart, Homecoming reflects the value of belonging. It creates opportunities for people of different ages and backgrounds to celebrate one another's contributions and strengthen the relationships that support a thriving school community. These connections extend beyond a single week of festivities, reinforcing the importance of welcoming environments where students feel valued, supported, and part of something meaningful.

The Future of Tradition

Being rooted in tradition does not mean standing still. It means carrying forward the values and experiences that define Ridley while making room for new voices and new memories for future generations. Every student who participates, every organization that joins the parade, every alumnus who returns, and every community member who celebrates alongside us adds another chapter to Ridley's story.

Together we Inspire, Trust, and Unite.

Rose Tree Media

Dr. Joseph Meloche, Superintendent

Rose Tree Media School District: Linking Learning to Life

The Rose Tree Media School District is proud of its multi-faceted commitment to a safe, just and equitable educational environment within the district credo, “Children first, always.”



Cultivating and supporting an inclusive culture where everyone belongs and each person’s dignity is honored is at the core of our daily practice. The foundation of this practice is composed of what we call the 4 Dispositions of Dignity:

- Patience
- Openness
- Empathy
- Listening to Understand

Our social, emotional, and ethical learning, along with restorative practices, allow us to:

- Build Partnerships & Community with trauma-informed instruction
- Presume Competence & Positive Intent while differentiating instruction
- Repair Harm & Restore Relationships through our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Appreciate Differences & Uniqueness through Cultural Proficiency

To help establish inclusion as the norm in our schools, the Rose Tree Media School District celebrates student differences with its annual “Inclusion Week.”



Inspired by the “Spirit Weeks” celebrated in our schools throughout the school year, Inclusion Week is a district-wide celebration held in March, with specific daily themes related to embracing our differences, valuing others and helping all people feel connected. Our Inclusion Week encompasses World Down Syndrome Day (3/21 each year) and recognizes the contributions made by *everyone* in our community.

Rose Tree Media

Dr. Joseph Meloche, Superintendent

Beyond Inclusion Week, our year-round commitment to inclusivity is reflected in our Linking Learning to Life program.

Since 2014, the program has supported students in our Life Skills and Autistic Support programs by providing age-appropriate learning experiences while building the skills needed for successful adult lives.

Linking Learning to Life offers individualized programming guided by each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), with a focus on transition goals including independent living, postsecondary education, and employment. The program serves transition-aged students who continue receiving educational services through age 21 under IDEA and Pennsylvania Chapter 14.

Transition services begin with our earliest learners through age-appropriate vocational experiences embedded into the school day. Structured classroom vocational stations and a soft skills class provide instruction in employability skills such as communication, independence, responsibility, and workplace routines. High school students also have access to our Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES) Lab.

The program is supported by trained paraprofessionals and partnerships with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), the RTMSD Food Services Department, community businesses, and the RTMS TOPS (Transition Opportunities for Post-Secondary Success) Shop. Together, these experiences provide authentic opportunities to develop workplace, communication, and independence skills.



The Linking Learning to Life program has consistently produced meaningful results. Most recently, eight former participants have been hired by the Rose Tree Media School District and currently work in food service, athletics, reception, and transportation. These employees serve as positive role models, demonstrating the abilities, strengths, and contributions of neurodiverse individuals throughout our schools and communities. We are proud of their accomplishments and look forward to welcoming more Linking Learning to Life alumni as colleagues in the future.

Southeast Delco

Dr. Jeffrey Ryan, Superintendent

Southeast Delco School District: Building Connections, Inspiring Growth, and Celebrating Success

At Southeast Delco School District, student success extends beyond the classroom. Through community partnerships, engaging learning opportunities, and a commitment to positive school environments, the district works to ensure every student has the support needed to thrive. From strengthening family engagement to enhancing instruction, Southeast Delco continues to invest in initiatives that support the whole child and build a stronger school community.



Bringing the Community Together: 2nd Annual Back-to-School Event

Southeast Delco's Family and Community Engagement (FaCE) team kicked off the school year with its 2nd Annual District-Wide Back-to-School Event, bringing students, families, and community partners together for a day centered on preparation, connection, and school readiness.

The event provided registered students with free backpacks, school supplies, haircuts, and hairstyles, helping them begin the year feeling confident and prepared.

Community organizations, local barbers and stylists, and other supporters contributed essential supplies, services, and resources.

This initiative reflects Southeast Delco's commitment to removing barriers to student success and demonstrates the impact of collaboration among schools, families, businesses, and community organizations.

Enhancing Instruction and Supporting the Whole Child

Southeast Delco is strengthening teaching and learning through curricular enhancements designed to increase engagement and provide meaningful experiences for diverse learners. Alongside its academic priorities, the district continues emphasizing positive relationships and supportive classroom environments through Restorative Practices and Responsive Classroom approaches.

These approaches encourage student voice, strengthen relationships, promote social-emotional development, and foster a sense of belonging. By combining high-quality instruction with intentional support for student well-being, the district is creating learning environments where students feel connected, valued, and prepared to succeed.

Southeast Delco

Dr. Jeffrey Ryan, Superintendent

Learning Beyond the Bell: 21st Century Community Learning Centers

Through its 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) grant, Southeast Delco extends learning beyond the traditional school day by providing after-school and summer enrichment opportunities for students in grades 1–5 at Darby Township, Delcroft, Harris, and Sharon Hill schools.



Students engage in academic enrichment, hands-on STEM activities, creative arts, and experiences that encourage exploration and personal growth. The program also includes family engagement opportunities that invite parents and caregivers to participate alongside their children.

By combining enrichment with family involvement, 21st CCLC helps students build skills, explore new interests, develop positive relationships, and discover new possibilities for learning.

A District-Wide Achievement: Bronze Level PBIS Recognition

Southeast Delco is proud to have been recognized by the Northeast Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Network as a Bronze Level District of Distinction.

This recognition honors the district's commitment to implementing PBIS with fidelity across its schools.

The achievement reflects the efforts of school leaders, educators, and staff who work to establish consistent practices that promote positive behavior and supportive learning environments. Through PBIS, the district continues to encourage positive relationships, behavioral growth, and meaningful student engagement.

For Southeast Delco, this recognition is an opportunity to celebrate the people behind the work while continuing to strengthen practices that support student success.



Moving Forward with Purpose

Southeast Delco's work reflects a commitment to educating the whole child through strong instruction, meaningful enrichment, positive school climates, and collaborative community partnerships. By bringing families and community organizations into the work of supporting students, the district continues to build a foundation for lasting growth and achievement.

Springfield

Dr. Anthony Barber, Superintendent

The Four Pillars of Springfield School District

At the Springfield School District, the student experience is shaped by opportunities that extend beyond any one classroom, activity, or program. Academics, Arts, Athletics, and Service represent four pillars that help students discover their strengths, build relationships, and become active members of their community. Together, these experiences reflect Springfield's commitment to developing well-rounded students who are prepared to learn, lead, create, compete, and serve.



Go Blue Reading: Academics Pillar

Springfield's commitment to academics begins with building strong literacy habits at an early age. At the Springfield Literacy Center, the Go Blue Kick Off brings students, teachers, football players, and cheerleaders together to celebrate reading.

Through an energetic morning on the field, students are encouraged to make reading part of their everyday routine while reinforcing the importance of literacy in a fun and memorable way.



AP Research: Academics Pillar

Springfield High School's AP Research course expands opportunities for students to strengthen the critical thinking, writing, and presentation skills they will use in college and future careers.

Students conduct a yearlong investigation into a topic of personal interest while learning research methodology, source evaluation, and data analysis. The course culminates in a 20-page academic paper and a presentation and oral defense before a panel of evaluators.

Survey of Building Trades: Academics Pillar

Springfield High School's Survey of Building Trades course introduces students to carpentry, electrical work, masonry, and construction through hands-on learning.

A major project challenges students to construct a scaled-down model of a house, helping them apply classroom concepts while developing practical skills and exploring potential career pathways in the skilled trades.

Springfield

Dr. Anthony Barber, Superintendent



Springfield Theatre Workshop: Arts Pillar

Springfield Theatre Workshop (STW) gives students hands-on experience in all aspects of theatrical production, from acting to stage management, scenic design, costumes, lighting, sound, and marketing.

Through each production, students strengthen their artistic abilities while developing confidence, leadership, communication, collaboration, and responsibility. The 2026-27 season features Little Women and Rodgers and Hammerstein's Oklahoma!, continuing to provide meaningful opportunities on and off the stage.



Springfield Cross Country: Athletics Pillar

Springfield High School cross country continues to grow as a program built on perseverance, teamwork, and steady improvement.

The boys and girls teams train together and have developed a strong culture centered on accountability and support. This season, the girls earned a third-place finish at the Delco Championships and are pursuing a team berth at the PIAA State Championships, while the boys continue to improve their performances at major invitationals and prepare for the District 1 Championships.

Gold Pass Academy: Service Pillar

Service at Springfield is rooted in building relationships and strengthening the community.



The SSD Gold Pass Academy brings senior community members into Springfield High School for opportunities in arts, music, academics, and personal growth while creating meaningful connections between generations. Students help welcome participants, guide them through the school, and interact with them throughout the program. These relationships benefit everyone involved, fostering learning, connection, communication skills, and a greater appreciation for the impact kindness can have on others. Through Gold Pass Academy, Springfield students learn that making a difference can begin with making another person feel welcomed and valued.

Upper Darby

Dr. Daniel McGarry, Superintendent

Growing Leaders, Building Community in Upper Darby School District

Across Upper Darby School District, students are encouraged to do more than succeed academically. Through clubs, leadership opportunities, and schoolwide initiatives, they are developing confidence, building relationships, and learning how their actions can positively impact those around them. From elementary school through middle school, students are discovering new interests, exercising their voices, and helping strengthen their school communities.



Getting Involved at Aronimink Elementary School

At Aronimink Elementary School, students have opportunities to explore their interests through clubs and activities that extend learning beyond the classroom.

Programs such as Running Club, Brain Builders (a game club), Brick Masters (a Lego club), and Dance Club help students connect with peers, learn new skills, and build confidence.

Whether they are mastering chess strategies, tackling Lego challenges, training for a 5K, or preparing for a performance, each activity encourages teamwork and perseverance.

Students say these experiences help them grow both in and out of school. One Brain Builders participant shared, “I have improved a lot at chess and checkers because I learn moves that I practice at home and I also test my skills in the club.”

For Learning Support Teacher Alyson Cohen, the impact goes beyond the activities themselves. “It’s so important to offer these after-school activities so these kids can find their people, and they can find their lifelong hobbies or interests.”

Student Voice in Action

At both Stonehurst Hills Elementary School and Hillcrest Elementary School, Student Council gives students a meaningful opportunity to exercise their voices and develop leadership skills.

At Stonehurst Hills, students participate in a democratic election process by delivering speeches, campaigning, and presenting ideas to classmates. Student Council Supervisor Jules Conti believes the experience teaches students that “their voice matters and if they want to make a difference, they can.”



At Hillcrest, Student Council members organize service projects, gather input from classmates, and work alongside teachers and administrators to improve their school community. One student explained, “It’s not just the teachers and the School Board making decisions, the kids have an opinion on it, too.”

Whether advocating for new ideas or helping classmates, students learn that leadership is rooted in collaboration, responsibility, and service.



Small Steps, Big Impact at Drexel Hill Middle School

At Drexel Hill Middle School, the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program helps students recognize that growth often happens one step at a time.

Each month, students are recognized for demonstrating character traits such as trustworthiness, respect, and kindness. In addition to Student of the Month and Kindness Awards, the school's "Small Steps, Big Impact" Award celebrates students who have shown meaningful improvement over time.

The program is built on the idea that positive habits develop gradually, and that even small changes can lead to significant growth. Students also earn “DH Dollars” for positive choices and responsible behavior, which can be redeemed through the school store and special activities.

By celebrating effort, improvement, and positive decision-making, PBIS helps students build confidence, develop responsibility, and contribute to a positive school culture. As one student shared, PBIS “gives everyone a way to look forward to school and encourages people to become better people and grow.”

Together, these programs reflect Upper Darby School District's commitment to developing well-rounded students. Whether participating in a club, serving as a student leader, or working toward personal growth, students are learning valuable skills that help them become engaged learners, confident leaders, and active members of their communities.





Wallingford-Swarthmore

Dr. Russell Johnston, Superintendent

Four Priorities, One Purpose: Strengthening Wallingford-Swarthmore Schools

When members of the Wallingford-Swarthmore Superintendent's Student Advisory Council gathered to discuss the potential use of AI in classrooms, they shared perspectives on technology that could shape how students learn. The dialogue reflected a broader effort to bolster student learning, support staff, and make schools where each student feels valued.

For the 2026-27 school year, the district identified four strategic priorities: Elevated Human Capital, Integrated Academic and Social-Emotional Supports, Fiscal Responsibility, and Safe and Inclusive School Environments.



Supporting the People Who Support Students

Under its Elevated Human Capital priority, the district is working to strengthen the professional growth and effectiveness of its employees. During a two-day summer leadership retreat, administrators began developing a shared instructional vision to establish consistent expectations for teaching and learning.

WSSD is also creating a Teacher Effectiveness Guidebook aligned with Pennsylvania Department of Education expectations and the Danielson Framework to support evaluation, feedback, and professional development. Furthermore, WSSD recently received a $47,084 state grant to help recruit and train school bus drivers.

Meeting Students' Academic and Social-Emotional Needs

WSSD's second priority focuses on providing students the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports they need to succeed. To that end, all five district schools recently met Pennsylvania's criteria for implementing schoolwide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Northeast Positive Behavior Supports also recognized WSSD as a District of Distinction, awarding Bronze Level Recognition for the 2025-26 school year.



Additionally, the Pennsylvania Art Education Association named WSSD an Outstanding Visual Arts Community for 2025-26.

Wallingford-Swarthmore

Dr. Russell Johnston, Superintendent

WSSD is also refining its approach to instructional technology. A new Technology Advisory Council will provide feedback as the district evaluates instructional practices.

Planning Responsibly for the Future

WSSD published its first annual budget book for fiscal year 2027, giving families, staff, and community members a detailed look at district finances and long-term plans.

In August, the board approved an updated 10-year capital plan totaling $132 million, with renovation of Strath Haven High School identified as its highest priority. Proposed improvements include a permanent science addition and creating life skills and small-group instructional spaces, among others. These efforts are intended to address facility needs while creating learning spaces that better support students.



Strengthening Student Voice & Belonging

WSSD's fourth priority, Safe and Inclusive School Environments, emphasizes student participation, school connectedness, and chances for every student to feel included.

At the first Student Advisory Council meeting of the school year, students shared their thoughts on the use of AI in classrooms. Their feedback will help inform ongoing district discussions about proposed AI tools.

Student interest in leadership opportunities is strong. WSSD received approximately 60 applications for just 16 positions on the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council.

District administrators are also reviewing school climate and social-emotional learning data to identify opportunities to strengthen student relationships, inclusion, and safety.



A Shared Commitment to Student Success

Although WSSD's four priorities address different aspects of the district's work, they share a common purpose: creating the conditions for all students to learn, grow, and succeed. From supporting educators to improving learning spaces and giving students a greater voice, each initiative contributes to that goal.

As communities celebrate American Education Week, WSSD's work highlights the many ways staff, students, families, and community members contribute to strong public schools. Through thoughtful planning and a continued focus on student needs, the district is working to build a stronger educational experience for every student.

WILLIAM PENN SCHOOL DISTRICT

William Penn

Dr. Eric Becoats, Superintendent

William Penn School District: Growing Together, Rising Together

The William Penn School District's recognition as a national "District on the Rise" in mathematics growth reflects the intentional work taking place across our schools and the belief that every student can continue to grow and achieve.

The recognition is based on the Education Recovery Scorecard, which uses nationally comparable data to examine student learning. From 2022 to 2025, William Penn students made academic gains at a rate that outpaced comparable districts.



The district ranked in the 88th percentile nationally for student learning rates, measured across math and reading.
This progress grows from a districtwide effort, with the Academic Services team helping guide and support the work.

Together with teachers, school leaders, instructional facilitators, and teacher leaders, the team helps ensure that curriculum, instruction, assessment, and student supports work toward shared goals.



Educators use assessment data to identify student needs, adjust instruction, and provide targeted support. Regular collaboration gives teams time to plan, share strategies, and respond to what students are learning.

The work is closely aligned with WPSD's strategic plan. Focus Forward 2025 established priorities for academic excellence, cohesive systems, and operational effectiveness.

WILLIAM PENN SCHOOL DISTRICT

William Penn

Dr. Eric Becoats, Superintendent

In 2025, the district launched Focus Forward and Beyond, continuing that direction while building on progress and evolving to meet students' changing needs.

The plan provides a shared framework for making decisions, setting priorities, and connecting district investments to the supports students and staff need.



That includes investing in educators and strengthening the systems around them. Professional learning, instructional collaboration, student support services, and opportunities for staff to grow in their careers all contribute to stronger teaching and learning. When educators have useful information, time to work together, and access to the right resources, they are better positioned to help students build skills and confidence.

American Education Week is a time to recognize everyone who contributes to students' education. Across William Penn, that work happens in classrooms, offices, cafeterias, libraries, hallways, and throughout the community. Students, educators, support staff, families, and community partners each play a part in creating conditions where young people can learn and thrive.

We are proud of the progress our students and staff have made, and grateful to the Academic Services team and all who help move this work forward. The "District on the Rise" recognition honors their collective effort and strengthens our commitment to keep learning, improving, and supporting every student's potential.



DCIU

Empowering Partnerships For Education

Delaware County Intermediate Unit

Dr. Jim Scanlon, Interim Executive Director

Building Spaces That Support Learning

At DCIU, investing in our facilities is about much more than buildings. It is about investing in students, expanding opportunities, and creating learning environments where every student has the resources, support, and experiences needed to reach their full potential.

Throughout the 2025–2026 school year, DCIU continued making significant investments in facilities and infrastructure to meet the evolving needs of students, families, educators, and our communities. Across our Marple, Aston, and Folcroft campuses, expansion and renovation projects are transforming educational spaces, strengthening career and technical education, enhancing specialized services, and creating new opportunities for hands-on learning, independence, and personal growth.

These improvements reflect DCIU's commitment to providing innovative, inclusive, and high-quality educational programs and services.





Marple Education Center Renovation

The major expansion and renovation of DCIU's Marple Education Center was a significant milestone in our commitment to expanding educational opportunities and enhancing the services we provide to students and families across Delaware County.

The transformed facility features modern classrooms, advanced nursing simulation labs, enhanced early childhood and special education learning environments, and dedicated spaces designed to support students with diverse learning needs.

More than a building renovation, this investment reflects DCIU's mission to create inclusive, innovative, and supportive environments where students of all ages and abilities can develop essential skills, gain independence, and reach their fullest potential.

DCIU's Early Intervention program has experienced sustained growth, along with an increase in referrals for children requiring autism-related, behavioral, communication, sensory, and other specialized supports. During the 2025–2026 school year, DCIU served more than 4,000 children through its Early Childhood Education programs, making expanded learning and therapy spaces an essential investment. To meet these growing needs, the Marple expansion created additional Early Intervention classrooms, therapy and evaluation spaces, and family-centered areas designed to better support young learners and their families.

DCIU's School Age programs also gained significant new capacity through the renovation. Four additional classrooms were created, allowing DCIU to serve more students from Delaware County school districts who require specialized supports. Across DCIU's Student Services programs, more than 4,100 students received educational and therapeutic services during the 2025–2026 school year. Existing School Age classrooms, hallways, and therapy spaces were refreshed with new flooring and paint, while a new playground provides additional opportunities for outdoor activity, social development, and physical activity.



The renovation also introduced a new Transition Support Lab, where students gain hands-on experience developing vocational, transition, and entrepreneurial skills. Using tools such as a laser cutter, Cricut, and T-shirt press, students move through the full entrepreneurial process, from idea development and production to customer service and sales. These experiences help students build confidence, independence, and real-world skills that support future employment and lifelong success.



Practical Nursing Program

In January 2026, DCIU's Practical Nursing Program (PNP) moved into a new, state-of-the-art facility designed specifically for the program's growing needs.

The new facility includes additional classrooms, expanded simulation labs, and flexible instructional spaces that mirror real-world healthcare environments. These enhancements increase enrollment capacity while supporting future expansion opportunities, including the exploration of evening and weekend programming.



Demand for the program remains exceptionally strong. Practical Nursing cohorts are currently filled more than a year in advance, reflecting both the reputation of the program and the growing demand for healthcare professionals throughout the region.

Since October 2023, graduates have exceeded both Pennsylvania and national average pass rates on the National Council Licensure Examination for Practical Nurses (NCLEX-PN).

Founded in 1990, the Practical Nursing Program has trained thousands of nurses.

Partnerships with Main Line Health, Trinity Hospital, Pennsylvania Hospital, Penn Presbyterian Hospital, and other healthcare providers continue to provide valuable clinical and career exploration experiences. DCIU also explored additional partnerships designed to expand student access to hands-on learning opportunities and emerging career pathways.

Together, DCTS healthcare programs and the Practical Nursing Program create a robust workforce pipeline that helps meet growing healthcare needs throughout Delaware County and the surrounding region.



DELAWARE COUNTY DCTS TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOLS

Expanding Opportunity at Aston and Folcroft

Facility improvements at DCIU's Aston and Folcroft campuses focused on creating the space and infrastructure needed to support high-demand educational and workforce programs at Delaware County Technical Schools.



DCIU continues to strengthen career pathways through the Delaware County Technical Schools (DCTS), which served approximately 1,400 students preparing for postsecondary education, apprenticeships, and direct entry into the workforce. Across both campuses, students developed technical expertise while earning industry-recognized credentials that prepare them for long-term success.



To meet growing demand, DCTS expanded programming in several high-interest career areas. The Aston campus increased capacity in its Welding program, while the Folcroft campus launched a new Carpentry program for the 2026–2027 school year.
The Folcroft expansion provided additional space for Carpentry and Logistics classes, as well as expanded labs for the Cosmetology, Engineering, Health Sciences, and Medical Careers programs. These enhancements provide more students with opportunities to gain hands-on training, develop industry-relevant skills, and prepare for careers in fields experiencing strong workforce demand.





The facility improvements also support learning environments that reflect current industry standards. By providing students with access to modern equipment, advanced technology, and hands-on training spaces, DCTS helps bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world career experiences.



Whether students are exploring careers in construction, engineering, healthcare, information technology, culinary arts, or other skilled trades, DCIU is committed to providing meaningful opportunities for career exploration, hands-on learning, and industry-recognized credentials. These experiences equip students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to pursue their goals and successfully transition to the next stage of their educational and professional journeys.

Together, these projects represent more than investments in buildings and infrastructure. They reflect DCIU's ongoing commitment to innovation, accessibility, and expanding opportunities for students of all ages and abilities across Delaware County. From specialized classrooms and therapeutic spaces to advanced healthcare simulation labs and career and technical education facilities, every improvement is designed with a greater purpose: to remove barriers, create opportunities, and empower students to reach their fullest potential.

As the needs of students, families, and communities continue to evolve, DCIU remains focused on building learning environments that inspire exploration, foster independence, and support achievement. By investing in modern, inclusive, and purpose-built spaces, DCIU is not only strengthening the programs and services it provides today but also laying the foundation for generations of students to learn, grow, and thrive.

AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK 2026








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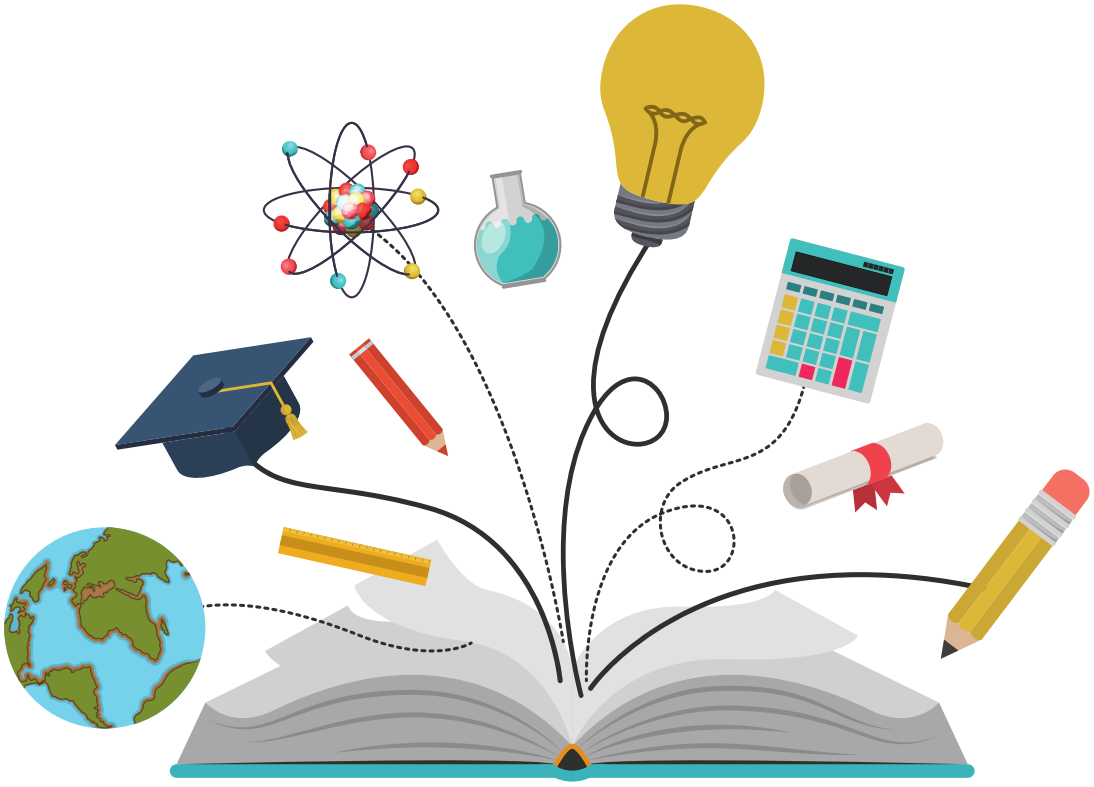

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Thank you for joining us in celebrating

American Education Week!



DCIU

Empowering Partnerships For Education