

A Publication of the Board of the Special Services School District and the Vocational Technical School District of the County of Salem



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Board Merger Creates More Opportunities for Students

Since the merger in July of the Board of Education of the Special Services School District and the Vocational Technical School District, officials from both sides have been working together to provide more opportunities for the students they serve.

According to Superintendent Loren Thomas, both districts will continue to provide the services they currently offer but there will be some new additions.

For the new school year, the Special Services School District will offer a pre-vocational program at the Cumberland Campus for students with autism or multiple disabilities. This program will train students in different areas in preparation for them to go out into society and function on their own.

The vocational technical school will offer an auto service shop as well as a graphics production shop for special needs students throughout the county. Currently students from the Daretown campus and the Regional Day School are enrolled in this new program. There are spots still open for students to enroll.

Lindsay Nestor, a board certified music therapist, will provide services to students enrolled at the New Jersey Regional Day School. Miss Nestor already serves in that capacity for the Special Services School District.

Additional services include the sharing of a guidance counselor from the vocational school district to the Alternative High School to prepare the students for college applications and job placement; and the Vo-tech will offer the services of a child study team to parents and students through the assistance of special services. Students at the Regional Day School and the Special Services School District will have a greater opportunity to take joint field trips.

Incidentally, all of these services are added to each district at no additional cost to the school districts.



Message from the Superintendent

A New Joint Journey Begins

During their June meeting, the Salem County Board of Chosen Freeholders voted unanimously to create a new board of education that would oversee both the Salem County Special Services School District and the Salem County Vocational Technical School District. That new Board, by law, is called "The Board of Education for the Special Services School District and the Vocational School District of the County of Salem." As of July 1, there was one new board and one central administration.



So far, everything has gone exceptionally well. The new board consists of two members of the former Vocational-Technical Board, two members of the former Special Services Board and two members who are new to education, one with a background in mental health and disabilities and one with a background in industry. The Executive County Superintendent is also a member, ex officio. And, there is also an ex officio and non-voting member from the Mental Health Board. It has been wonderful to see this newly formed board already working as a cohesive unit. There are no personal agendas. Every member has as his or her only interest the well being of our students and the quality of our programs.

On July 2 the 12-month staff of the Vocational Technical School gathered to meet the new superintendent and discuss the district. Literally every one was supportive and positive about the changes and was anxious to continue in the positive direction that had been set under the leadership of the Interim Superintendent, Frank Maurer, who now continues as the Principal of the Regional Day School and also serves as the Lead Administrator of the district. The transition has been seamless.

The administrations of both districts met together for the first time on July 7. That was a very exciting meeting. The administration discussed how we can better meet the needs of our students by sharing resources. We also discussed possible new programs.

Several great ideas grew out of that first meeting. The

Career and Technical High School will now have a Child Study Team on location to support special education students and also support teachers as they learn to modify their curriculum and instructional techniques to better meet the needs of these students. The Alternative High School will have a guidance counselor who will provide career and college counseling to students who are in the alternative education program. Students from both districts will participate in the pre-vocational career orientation programs at the Vocational Technical School.

As the summer progressed the joint administration has continued to share resources. For example, the staff from Regional Day School and two Special Services Schools participated in Crisis Prevention & Intervention Training that was led by a certified trainer from the Special Services District. Teachers from both districts will be attending in-service training together this October. Together they will form "Professional Learning Communities" to support each other in their professional growth.

It is indeed a privilege and honor to serve as the superintendent of these two wonderful school districts. They have many things in common—both are county districts, both receive students from districts of residence, both have a wide variety of programs. And, both are distinguished by committed professional staff and by high quality programs. We are committed to maintain the high quality of programs, foster collaboration and sharing among our staff and in our educational community, create new programs as needed, and to support the professional growth of our staff. At the same time the Board is committed to absolute transparency and fiscal responsibility. Most of all we are committed to all of those students who are entrusted to us.

This is indeed an exciting time! We are off to a great start of what promises to be a wonderful new journey, and one that will provide unlimited opportunities for students in Salem County and the surrounding areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Loren Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Loren Thomas
Superintendent of Schools

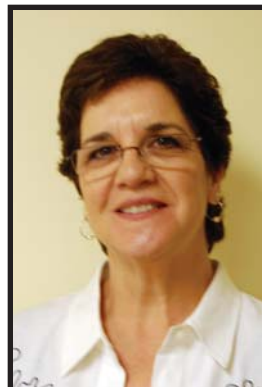
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Joint Board of Education for Salem County Special Services and Vo-Tech Districts Working Together to Provide Best Education in County

In what has been described as an historic merger, members of the board of education overseeing the Special Services and Vocational-Technical School districts are working together to provide opportunities and a quality education for students enrolled in both districts.

Executive County Superintendent Robert Bumpus explained at the organization meeting in July that the occasion set a precedent statewide.

"This is a very momentous occasion in Salem County. We are the first county in the State of New Jersey to do this as we've done it," Bumpus said. "Gloucester County has done it, but it took them about 10 years to merge."

Freeholders, who unanimously approved the joint board in June, said the move could immediately reap an estimated \$200,000 savings through sharing expenses, namely a superintendent and associated costs.

Dr. James Field serves as the president of the combined board, while David Moffett serves as vice president. Both Dr. Field and Mr. Moffett served on the Special Services School Board.

"I am really very happy and excited to be working with these members of this board of education. I have worked with many of them in the past. I know all of them," Field said. "I'm confident that their main thrust is to provide the best education for the people of Salem County."

Other board members serving include Patricia Bomba, Mary Cummings, James Davis, Earl Ransome, Robert Bumpus, and Mental Health Board non-voting member Nicole Stemberger.

The board meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at the Salem County Vocational Technical School District on Route 45 in Mannington Township.

Special Services School District and Salem Community College Join to Help Students Stay in College

The Salem County Special Services School District and Salem Community College are joining forces to assist special-needs students' transition from high school to college.

A full-time professional school psychologist or Learning Disabilities Teacher/Consultant will be employed to focus on students working through issues that may prevent them from succeeding in college and earning a degree. The staff member will also provide support and professional development opportunities for College employees. The position, based in the College's Center for Student Success, will be funded by the Special Services School District.

"While there may be several factors that lead someone to drop out of school, we want to address and assist those students who are academically and emotionally under-prepared for college life," said Loren Thomas, Superintendent of the Special Services and Vocational Technical School Districts. "Many students completing high school and entering college lack the skills, discipline and support needed to succeed as first-time college students."

"We are especially pleased to collaborate with the Salem County Special Services School District, under the leadership of Loren Thomas, to provide the very best assistance possible for students transitioning to the College," said SCC President Dr. Peter B. Contini. "This professional will offer ongoing support for students to help ensure their academic success at the collegiate-level and, at the same time, work closely with faculty and staff."

Thomas said that the position was initiated in part by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which includes a component to aid students transitioning from high school to college or a career. In addition, the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act specify that no one with a disability can be excluded from participating in federally funded programs or activities, including elementary, secondary or post-secondary schooling.

Students enrolled at Salem Community College who need assistance should contact Salem Community College's Dean of Student Affairs at (856) 351-2610.

SCVTS Students Win National Awards and Recognition

Ten students from the Salem County Career and Technical High School recently had the opportunity to attend the National Leadership Conference in Nashville for the Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) program. Jessica Johnston, a shared time junior from Pennsville, won a gold medal in Personal Care; Linwood Donelson, a full-time senior from Lower Alloway Creek, placed fifth in Extemporaneous Speaking and was awarded the Outstanding State Leader Award; Domenic Merendino, a full-time senior from Carneys Point, was awarded a certificate for the Kaiser Permanente Healthcare Issues Exam; and Nicole Bea, a shared time senior from Pilesgrove, was awarded the Barbara James Service Award and the Presidential Service Award for completing 250 hours of community service. Merendino along with Ashley Phrampus, a full-time student were also selected as state voting delegates at the conference.



Ten students recently had the opportunity to attend the National HOSA Leadership Conference in Nashville, TN. Also pictured are Allied Health instructor and club advisor, Johanna Herman and Parent Group President, Nancy Bea.

The National Conference was held at the Gaylord Resort in Nashville, TN on June 24-27 where over 6,300 participants from all 50 states and Puerto Rico competed in 53 different healthcare related events.

"Our students did a remarkable job in their competitions," said Jason Helder, assistant principal. "These results are a measure of the quality of training that the students receive from their dedicated instructor, Mrs. Johanna Herman at the Career and Technical High School. We commend them all."



Jessica Johnston, a shared time junior from Pennsville, won a gold medal in Personal Care.

Young Students Go Hands-On for Classes Offered by Salem Vo-Tech

By Shabria Davis, Today's Sunbeam (used with permission)

MANNINGTON TWP. - The Salem County Vocational-Technical School District held its 10th annual summer program here recently.



Students were given the opportunity to take two programs. Here students learn some dance moves. Pictured from left to right, back row: Yocelin Galvis, Kyra Urion, and Morgan Skinner; front row: Victoria Knopka, Casey Urion and Sarah McGoldrick.

The program, funded by PSEG Nuclear, was offered free of charge (all costs that were not covered by PSEG were paid by the district) to Salem County sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-gradestudents. In the past, the program has been funded through state grants, but SCVTS was not awarded a grant this year.

“When we didn’t receive any funding we reached out to PSEG, and out of the kindness of their hearts, they decided to help us with funding,” said Bonnie Baker, SCVTS Supervisor of Community Information and Business Partnerships.



Students put the finishing touches on chocolate-covered strawberries. Pictured from left to right: Lexy Sparks, Jenna Griscom and Hannah Mann.

A total of 195 students attended the week-long program titled “The Energy Exploration Summer Program.” Attendees were given a choice of 14 vocational programs to participate in including culinary arts, pastry arts, dance, and auto repair. Each child took two different courses, depending on their specific interests.

SCVTS also offered a welding course for the first time in the program’s 10-year history.

“I think it’s a great opportunity for students to get hands-on experience in ... different careers,” said Assistant Principal of Student Services Jason Helder. “A lot of children are thinking about their career path early. This program gives them first-hand experience.”

Kevin O’Brien, a full-time senior at SCVTS and assistant pastry arts instructor for the summer program, is proof that what the children learn during their week at SCVTS could play a major role in helping them choose a career.

“I took a tour of the program when I was in eighth grade because I was really interested in cooking,” said O’Brien. “I decided to come to this school for pastry arts because I enjoy cooking.”

Pennsville Middle School student Tyler Goslin, 11, also used his time in the program as a learning experience and guide for the future. Goslin took the auto repair course and believes that he will use what he learned throughout life.

“I like this class because you learn how to do stuff like open the car doors in case you lock your keys in the car and align tires,” he said. “Now when I get older I won’t have to take my car to a shop. I can fix it myself.”



Benito Velez (left) and Dylan Weiss learn how to change a tire during the Energy Exploration Summer Program held at the Salem County Vo-Tech. Close to 200 students attended.

Students were taught by SCVTS instructors and several SCVTS students were on site acting as assistants. Many instructors focused on ways to make their courses both educational and fun for the kids.

“I try to do things they are going to like,” said culinary chef Michael Aliberti, who taught his students how to make food like pizza and tacos. “I never met a kid that didn’t like chicken fingers.”

Instructors also noted a key difference between their teenager pupils and preteen students.

“The younger kids have more of a hunger to learn,” said pastry chef Kendall Elliott.

Upcoming Events

October 13-15

HSPA make-up testing

October 13-16

Violence and Vandalism Awareness Week

October 14

PSAT Testing

October 15

RDS Fall Open House 3 – 6 p.m.

October 20

BOE Meeting 7 p.m. District Offices

October 23

CTHS Halloween Dance 7-10 p.m.

October 26

County-Wide In-Service for Teachers

SCSSSD Partnering with Tri-County Head Start

Salem County Special Services School District (SCSSSD) is partnering with the Tri-County Community Action Partnership to bring a comprehensive multi-cultural and service-oriented Head Start Program to the preschool children at the Cumberland Campus.

This school year, Tri-County will house a Preschool Head Start classroom with 13 -15 non-classified students. The collaborative partnership provides the full range of Head Start services to parents whose children are already enrolled in a partner location along with a unique opportunity for our students to share in inclusive activities on a regular basis.

The Cumberland Campus' Preschool Disabled class of 6 students will share field trips, lunch activities and many other coordinated learning activities with the Head Start students.

Head Start offers affordable, full-year, full-day child care for children ages 0-5 at locations throughout Cumberland, Salem and Gloucester Counties. Transportation is available at many sites. Services may be free to eligible families.

"We are excited about this partnership and look forward to the expansion of possibilities for inclusion as our relationship grows," said EvaMarie Raleigh, principal of the Cumberland Campus. "The more services we can provide for our students, the more opportunities exist for success in the classroom and beyond. We certainly look forward to a successful partnership."

Tri-County Community Action Partnership is the federally-designated Community Action Program (CAP) for Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem counties in southern New Jersey. The agency's mission is to provide services that improve the quality of life and promote self-sufficiency.

Board Approves Interim Principal

The Board of the Special Services School District and the Vocational Technical School District of the County of Salem recently approved the hiring of William Jolley as Interim Principal of the Career and Technical High School. Jolley will serve as the Interim Principal for the 2009-10 school year. He most recently served as the Interim Principal at Schalick High School for the past 17 months.



William Jolley brings more than 42 years experience in education to his most recent position as Interim Principal at the Salem County Vo-Tech.

Autistic High School Pre-Vocational Program

This School year, the Salem County Special Services School District will embark upon developing unique career cluster programs designed specifically for students in the High School Autistic class located at the Cumberland Campus. The programs will provide an opportunity for handicapped students to be successful academically and prepared as contributing members of society through career-technical education in a non-traditional settings.

Each marking period, students will be exposed to two different career clusters. Office Technologies, Auto Detailing, Housekeeping, Janitorial, Farming/Gardening are just a few of the proposed clusters. As student interest increases and Individual Educational Plan (IEP) goals are expanded, additional career clusters will be developed and implemented. Students will also be job shadowing and working within the community to obtain experience and confidence for future career placement.

In addition to career clusters, students will be working on IEP goals and objectives in Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education and will be working on life skills in our newly designed Life Skills Lab. Students, Staff and Parents are excited about the endless possibilities that exist.

Finally, Salem County Special Services School District is excited about working closely with The Salem County Vo-Tech School District and The Regional Day School to coordinate efforts to help create exciting and effective program outcomes.

Jolley brings more than 42 years experience in education. His background includes teaching science and math at Clearview Regional before serving as vice principal at Clearview. He then served as vice principal at Schalick High School before becoming principal where he served for 20 years. He retired in 2001.

Since his retirement, Jolley has taught the teacher certification program at Rowan as an adjunct professor and has served in numerous interim positions. His interim positions include vice principal at Woodstown High School, Woodstown Middle School and Penns Grove High School; principal at Woodstown High School, the Salem County Vo-Tech, Regional Day School, and the Promise Charter School in Camden. Jolley also held interim positions as the administrative consultant at Brandywine School District and Bellmawr School District and as guidance director at Penns Grove High School.

He has two children; a daughter, Kristi, special education teacher in Vineland; and a son, Jonathan, a landscape architect. Jolley resides in West Deptford.

Extended School Year School program helps students with disabilities

By Shabria Davis, Today's Sunbeam (used with permission)

MANNINGTON TWP. - Among the first ventures since combining boards of education, the Salem County Special Services and Salem County Vocational Technical School districts was offering Extended School Year programs for disabled students at three area schools, the Regional Day School at Mannington, Daretown School, and the Cumberland Campus.



Alyssa Allen pets a goat at the Salem County Fair with the help of RDS instructor Sharon Weldon.

The programs had 22, 12, and 71 students respectively.

Each program lasted six weeks, ending in mid-August, and was geared toward helping students avoid academic regression during the summer months.



Christopher Brooks shakes hands with Rocky Raccoon. Rocky came to the Regional Day School to teach the students about the importance of recycling.

"I definitely see a difference between the children that attend the summer program and those who do not," said Regional Day School Principal Frank Maurer. "The program really seems to help the students."

All three programs were for students five through 21 years old who have a disability. The Regional

Day School program had a summer camp vibe with days like Fiesta Friday and Swimming Thursday. The program also offered students occupational, physical, and speech therapy.

In Daretown, the focus was on behavioral support with instructors teaching students socialization skills. At the Cumberland Campus, autistic children and those with multiple disabilities



Alexander Davila and Roger Harmon have fun during the Regional Day School's "Water Park" during the Summer Program.

learned the basics of surviving in society. Throughout the six weeks, the children did things like visit the Gloucester County Dream Park and learned the proper way to order a meal.

Although this is not the first year the schools (with the exception of the Cumberland Campus) have run the programs, Superintendent Loren Thomas credits the sharing of ideas to the newly-created board of education for this year's success.

"The success of these programs show that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts," said Thomas. "(These programs) highlight the two districts cooperating and are hopefully the beginning of good things to come."

He added that the extended school year programs are just the beginning for the newly-combined board.

SCVTS Highlights Programs at the Salem County Fair

SCVTS staff, students and parents were on hand for the annual Salem County Fair to discuss programs and review services with potential students and their parents. The fair was held August 4-7. Fair organizers estimated that more than 15,000 people attended this year. SCVTS administration, staff and faculty answered questions about programs, admissions, and apprenticeship opportunities. The district had three booths at the fair. Students from FFA, HOSA and Air Force Junior ROTC staffed the booths. Residents who would like more information about programs at the Career and Technical High School should call Mark Kasubinski, supervisor of Student Information Services at (856) 769-0101, ext. 370, or email mkasubinski@scvts.org.



Adult Basic Skills and GED Classes Available at Vo-Tech

Funded by a grant from the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development, SCVTS hosts Adult Basic Skills classes and GED Preparation on Wednesday evenings from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. For students seeking to increase their writing and math skills or prepare for the GED, the class is self paced and individualized so you may take as long or short a time as you need to meet your educational goals. To register for classes or for more information please call 856-769-0101, ext 336.

Salem County Vocational Technical Schools (SCVTS) serves as the only approved New Jersey Salem County GED test center. Both day and evening test times are available. All test dates can accommodate up to 20 students and participants must arrive before the test begins at 8:30 a.m. or 4 p.m. in the evening.

GED testing will be conducted during the day on 9/14, 9/15, 10/5, 10/6, 11/16, 11/17, 12/7, 12/8, 1/4, 1/5, 2/1, 2/2, 3/1, 3/2, 4/12, 4/13, 5/3, 5/4, 6/7, 6/8. GED testing will be conducted in the evenings on 9/21, 9/22, 10/19, 10/20, 11/2, 11/3, 12/14, 12/15, 1/11, 1/12, 2/8, 2/9, 3/8, 3/9, 4/19, 4/20, 5/10, 5/11, 6/14, 6/15.

If you are interested in signing up for the GED test you will need to register at SCVTS and you must bring two forms of ID (one must be a photo ID) and a money order for \$50.00.

For more information about GED Testing, call 856-769-0101 ext. 371.

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*Liaison to SCVTS BOE

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