

NSSEO Highlights 2019-2020
District 59 Board Update
4.13.20

During these unique and challenging times, we truly appreciate the shared focus and collaborative spirit across NSSEO and member districts. This written summary is provided in lieu of a preferred more detailed Board presentation for the upcoming District 59 Board meeting. The ongoing partnership between NSSEO and District 59, focused on supporting students and professional staff, has continued to grow in depth and positive impact for both the district and the cooperative. NSSEO's comprehensive approach to provision of special services include an extensive range of supports from professional learning opportunities, parent training, and significant student, staff and leadership teaming, and experiential learning opportunities at Sunrise Lake Outdoor Education Center (SLOEC) to district-based supports, coaching, staffing, and programming for students with more intense educational needs at Miner School and Timber Ridge Therapeutic School in Arlington Heights. The following NSSEO overview provides further details regarding the organization.

Northwest Suburban Special Education Organization (NSSEO) was legally formed as a district in 1968 and has evolved dramatically and progressively for the past fifty years in the scope and depth of programming, services, and support for students with special needs. This year, NSSEO is celebrating its 51st year by intensifying its efforts through establishing customized indicators of growth, advancing instructional and social-emotional efforts, and implementing a Kirk/Miner program redesign aligned to the goals identified in the NSSEO Continuous Improvement Plan.

NSSEO serves students in programs designed through a person-centered approach to address a range of intense, significant needs as well as providing services and support to students and staff in member districts ranging from itinerant student services, to embedded coaching, technical supports, professional learning, and monthly parent training across the eight member districts. NSSEO's success reflects an ongoing, engaged partnership that propels progressive educational practices and keeps the focus on what best prepares students to become successful, contributing citizens. The customization of services and programs reflects a responsiveness to individual district needs, driven by the critical focus on the future and the career/college and life plans of students. NSSEO includes six elementary districts (Wheeling District 21, Mount Prospect School District 57, Community Consolidated School District 59, River Trails

School District 26, Prospect Heights School District 23, Arlington Heights School District 25) and two community high school member districts (Township High School District 211 and Township High School District 214), that collectively encompass approximately 50,000 students across the area. Professional learning and embedded coaching, specially aligned and designed to address district needs, reflect the range of effectiveness and creativity of various educational systems and the importance of delivering the services and supports needed to maximize learning potential for every student served.

NSSEO comprehensive programs, services, and supports address the continuum of student needs as they vary in intensity. Kirk School serves students at the secondary and transition level with more significant disabilities, ranging in age from 14 - 22. In September, 2017 NSSEO opened the new adapted Tobler-PATHS Athletic field on the Kirk campus, designed to provide a Special Olympic field to enhance recreational opportunities and sports activities. Miner School is a customized person-centered program currently serving the needs of students from EC - 14 with more significant needs that require an intensive array of well-coordinated support services. These two programs have recently been redesigned to intensify the depth and scope of each program, by reducing the age ranges to focus on the elementary/middle school age range at Miner and the secondary school age range at Kirk. Timber Ridge School is an alternative therapeutic day program for students in K – 8, whose social-emotional and academic needs require a specialized school design with a focus on intense social-emotional therapy and skill development. Timber Ridge has an ongoing focus on successfully transitioning students back to their home schools.

Other satellite programs, housed at Wheeling District 21, River Trails District 26, Des Plaines District 62, and Hersey High School D214, provide opportunities in school settings with typical peers, and with individualized program designs to address student needs. Students with hearing impairments across the 45 districts that span the north and northwest suburbs are served through a continuum of services provided by NSSEO. Students with a range of visual impairments are also served through itinerant services and associated training.

An extensive continuum of services include professional development, technical supports, embedded coaching, diagnostic services and a very unique, specialized outdoor education center, Sunrise Lake Outdoor Education Center, located in Bartlett that services thousands annually, ranging from school teams to corporate team-building events and offers expansive and customized experiential learning. NSSEO opened a

Parent Education Resource Center (PERC) in November, 2017, on the Kirk Campus to focus on networking, parent education, and providing ongoing opportunities and resources to support families' needs as they navigate the challenges and transitions throughout their child's educational career.

NSSEO's vision statement, *Enhancing students' talents and dreams for a promising future* emulates the importance of partnerships with families, community leaders, legislators, and state and federal leaders to provide progressive practices uniquely designed to meet the needs of our most diverse learners. One of the core values of NSSEO captures the passion of our work "Looking beyond what is, to what is possible". It is that student-centered belief that compels us to do our best every day to enhance and advance greater opportunities and create possibilities that positively transform the life plans of students with special needs.

Beyond providing a broader context of understanding of NSSEO, this summary highlights a few of the important areas of emphasis in our ongoing partnership with D59.

Professional Learning Focus:

Throughout the course of the school year, NSSEO provides a multitude of various high-quality, professional development programs that are grounded in research and designed to facilitate changes in educator practices to improve student outcomes. Professional learning opportunities are designed to develop skills and knowledge through a variety of formats that include: large and small group training, professional learning networks, and job-embedded coaching, to support the application of practices. These diverse learning opportunities are attended by licensed staff, administrators, paraprofessionals, and parents within NSSEO member programs and districts . Professional learning sessions are collaboratively planned following a continuous improvement process. Focus areas are driven by the annual needs assessment results, NSSEO Professional Development Committee, NSSEO Parent Advisory Committee, feedback from session evaluations, and on-going collaboration with member district staff, administrators and parents.

Specific professional learning events attended by D59 staff include:

Global Autism Series	Recommended Practices for School Based Therapists	DBT in Schools	The Language and Learning Connection
----------------------	---	----------------	--------------------------------------

Raising Resilient Children	SLP: Moving Forward with Implementation of MTSS	Facilitated IEP Training	Interprofessional Collaborative Services
Huh? What Did you Say?! Communication Repair Strategies for AAC Users	SLP: Moving Forward with Implementation of MTSS	Parenting in the Kitchen	Non-violent Crisis Intervention Training
A 5 Is Against the Law	Best Practices in Autism Evaluation	New OT/PT Guidelines	New SLP Best Practices

NSSEO coaches, in partnership with District 59 provide on-site coaching support to district staff regarding a specific student, program, or school-wide initiative aligned to agreed-upon agreed-upon continuous improvement goals.. Coaching may include consultation and technical assistance, modeling and feedback of strategies and supports, training, assessment and evaluation, and collaborative problem solving. Coaches provide progress updates to coaching goals through mid-point and year-end review meetings. Coaches work to build capacity for sustainable evidence-based practice with a focus on mindful role release. Coaching impact is measured through the Coaching Innovations Configuration Map which evaluates progress toward implementation and assesses, and recalibrates, if necessary the level of coaching support needed by staff to apply practice. The goal is to build local capacity to implement evidence-based practices while fading coaching supports through role release. During the 2019-2020 school year, CCSD59 received 0.7 FTE coaching.

Autism Coaching (.2 FTE)	Teams will demonstrate an understanding of foundational knowledge and skills to implement evidence based practice as a tier 1 strategy to guide Autism Considerations for student IEPs.
Behavior Coaching (.5 FTE)	Targeted building SSTs will build capacity in problem solving components in the FBA/BIP process for students with IEPs.

Budgeting Planning Process

NSSEO budget development continues to be a very transparent, and detailed process that reflects the collaborative efforts of the NSSEO Finance Advisory Committee and aligns to the evidenced-based model in Illinois. The committee is composed of the member district's special education leaders, school business officials, board representatives, and NSSEO leadership team members. The proposed NSSEO FY21 Budget reflects an overall increase of 1.3% based on stable student enrollment projections for the FY21 school year. Program tuition rate increases range from +3.07% to +4.03% with services costs ranging from 0% to 3.75%. The main factors influencing NSSEO's FY21 Budget are attributed to the increase in the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) rates along with NSSEO collective bargaining salary increases of 3.25%.

NSSEO continues to focus on reducing transportation costs for our member districts. This year, NSSEO continued to redefine the structure of our Community-based instruction with a focus on using NSSEO vehicles and NSSEO licensed drivers whenever possible, which reduces the need to contract for buses during the school day. This year, NSSEO expanded this program by purchasing a wheelchair accessible bus which at \$70,000 was funded totally from donations to the NSSEO Foundation.

Collaborative District Partnerships

NSSEO and the NSSEO Foundation continue to assertively explore numerous avenues to increase donations, grant opportunities, and partnerships to support NSSEO goals. This year in collaborative efforts between NSSEO Governing Board President Krinsky, NSSEO leadership, and Senator Ann Gillespie and Representative Mark Walker, NSSEO was thrilled to receive a \$410,000 grant through the State of Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to build a new accessible playground at Miner School. The playground is near completion and will provide inclusive opportunities in Arlington Heights with very unique and engaging design features that provide innovative recreational opportunities. The Fall NSSEO Foundation Bingo Fund-raiser in Arlington Heights raised additional funds for sensory equipment, expanded job development and opportunities for our students, and advanced progress on the Miner School's greenhouse project.

NSSEO leadership continues to present workshops across Illinois on special education funding and changes at the federal and state levels - providing insight, helpful tips to navigate the changes, and advocacy efforts on supporting the needs of our most

complex learners. Working closely with ISBE, and other professional agencies with a focus on funding for students with significant needs, continues to be an important legislative focus for NSSEO. Additionally, NSSEO continues to intensify legislative efforts to increase the understanding and need for increased funding for students with significant disabilities at the state and national levels. NSSEO has presented at budget hearings, participated in legislative stakeholder meetings, and is involved in several leadership organizations that advocates for students with special needs and for appropriate levels of district support and funding.

NSSEO's person-centered IEP practices were featured in the School Administrator Magazine this January, 2020 and emphasized the importance of a mindset that focuses on student advocacy, awareness, and engagement. This practice has evolved and been expanded throughout NSSEO programs, leading to a stronger school/home partnership supporting a very personalized learning platform for educational planning across a wide range of individual student needs.

NSSEO's Outdoor Education Center - Sunrise Lake (SLOEC)

A special aspect of NSSEO extends learning to educational environments that include extensive outdoor experiences for all who come to SLOEC. Daily schedules for schools/programs/classrooms are created in partnership with District 59 teaching staff and reflect learning goals that extend learning beyond the classroom. The following examples are Friendship Junior High's program schedules over two days.

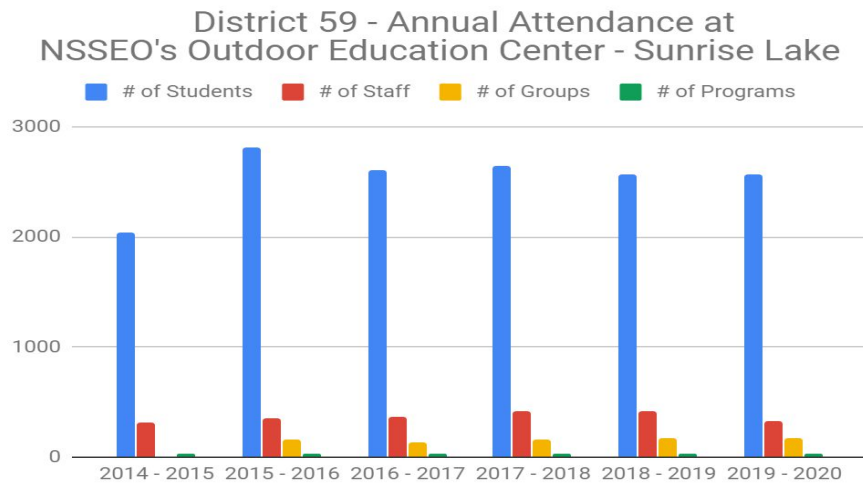
Day 1

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/11W4bZNeJzmpo5LKs9ZRlbSTbzMbSuJ7r28pIHj7pAlg/edit?usp=sharing>

Day 2

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LB-INBtxktcdKeCHMhaOS7o-ux1_0Q7ibkOnfE_pXOA/edit?usp=sharing

Scheduled attendance for District 59 programs during the 2019-20 school year is similar to years past, for the period in which schools were still open. Two additional large programs were waiting to be scheduled (and are not included in the data) which would have increased attendance beyond last year's totals, see graph below.



Here are links to pictures of student learning in action:

Friendship Junior High:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1olwfInJUbf191ZIHJ63JxkxR2LzP6Kk?usp=sharing>

Grove Junior High:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1NH1uLLfMxUe9bMUQn4sEeC99-xRT-efg?usp=sharing>

Rupley Elementary School:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1slps_OVZKEbwmmhulbKuBOYPI6irwLt?usp=sharing

Friendship Junior High:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1B0cyxfKGaR08o20-vxMcr0f-EaOChvTW?usp=sharing>

After a program is complete, visiting staff receive an electronic evaluation. The feedback is reviewed to reflect and adjust future lessons to improve student learning experiences. Here are two examples from Rupley's day at Sunrise in November, 2019.

Evaluation 1: [Juliette Low District 59 Evaluation 1](#)

Evaluation 2: [Rupley District 59 Evaluation 2](#)

These evaluations summarize the positive learning experiences students and staff enjoy at Sunrise Lake.

2020-2021 Focus Areas

As we continue our focus on the upcoming school year and the many important priorities for NSSEO and member districts, there are several goals in designated areas we will expand and build upon in robust and supportive ways as we transition from on-line learning to in-person services. In previous planning with each of our member district special education leaders and shared at our most recent NSSEO Finance Committee meetings, the following areas were identified. NSSEO will continue to expand on these areas as our current remote learning plans and concomitant programming may require revisions in focus and intensity over the next few months.

The following areas were identified in late February/March in district discussions and we will continue to work collaboratively on these areas:

- Inclusive practices in general education settings
- Mental health supports and strategies
- Advancing efforts on SEL across programs, services and supports
- Expanded customized training for teaching assistants
- Expanded parent education and networking opportunities on identified areas
- Professional development on IEP goal writing, aligned multiple measures
- Cultural Competency
- Expanded coaching supports and coaching impact evidence
- Trauma responsive practices
- Innovative service delivery for students with EL and special educational needs
- Additional opportunities for online learning for staff and students

In closing, we are very proud and appreciative of the strong collaborative partnership between D59 and NSSEO. Our NSSEO Governing Board, led by President Krinsky, focuses on innovation, best practices and an inclusive and personalized mindset through a very compassionate, engaging focus. Across our educational districts, we share great respect and professional growth by working together with a shared purpose driven by what is best for students. Our positive working relationships with Dr. Fessler, Vickie Nissen, Elizabeth DeGruy, D59 coordinators, staff and school board members

reflect the mutual focus and commitment to supporting D59 students with special needs and their families that we have the privilege to serve.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Hackett, EdD
Superintendent

Julie Jilek, CSBO
Assistant Superintendent
Chief School Business Official