



SPECIAL EDITION



Issue 5, 2018

Arts Education Benefits Students

For many students, studying the arts can provide a unique lens on the learning process.

This is especially true for students who receive special education services, said Jason Betancourt, who teaches art at SSD's Ackerman School and Litzsinger School. He intertwines math, science and history in most of his art lessons.

"When a student has an individualized education program (IEP), in my opinion, it is so helpful for information to be delivered in multiple formats because no student learns just one way," he said. "If I can take content they learned in science class, for example, and add a visual layer to that, the learning increases."

The start of the school year presents a great opportunity to reflect on how art is used to help students meet goals.

"Art can help students who have IEPs in many ways," said Stephanie McCoy, art teacher at Litzsinger and SSD's Southview School. "We utilize speech-language pathologists and occupational therapists to assist with and encourage IEP goals in these areas including effective communication and fine-motor skills."

McCoy added that for students with emotional needs, art can reduce anxiety and help them learn to regulate emotions in a positive way.

At Ackerman, art is celebrated throughout the year. Two gallery installments coincide with the school's winter program and graduation.

"This allows for the highest amount of parent interactions," said Betancourt. "Students love to show off their artwork to their families and guardians," he added. "We create a collection of artwork that the students choose to best depict their personalities."

Betancourt said not all art projects look the same because people learn in different ways. "Trial and error is a great tool



A student at SSD's Ackerman School works on an art project.

in education," said Betancourt. "Sometimes the failures are great and you have to deal with behaviors, but usually it's a learning experience.

Art is important in all schools because it teaches children that it is okay to fail. It's okay if you can't do something the very first time you try it," said Betancourt.

At Southview, art is celebrated with a spring art show in which families and friends can view students' artwork in person. "This helps students build confidence and pride by allowing others to see and comment on their work," said McCoy.

DeMarco, a sixth-grader at Southview, said he really enjoys making three-dimensional art. Deion, an eighth-grader, said, "I like making sculptures outside."

"Art gives students the opportunity to express themselves using a variety of mediums," said McCoy. "Through the study of world art and art history, students learn the importance of diversity and cultural awareness. Art encourages fine motor skills, neural development, and problem-solving abilities, as well as sensory exploration and tolerance." ■

Honor SSD Staff or Community Members for Making a Difference in Your Child's Education

NOMINATION DEADLINE IS DEC. 5, 2018

SSD has developed a wide range of award programs to recognize staff and community members for their work to benefit students. Recipients are honored annually at the SSD Salutes Banquet.

Visit <http://bit.ly/ssdawards> to download nomination forms. For more information, contact Wes Buchek at wbuchek@ssdmo.org or 314.989.8102.



Building Block Award

The SSD Building Block Award honors outstanding paraprofessionals from around the district. Nominees for the Building Block Award are judged on their skills and on their dedication to students.

Key to the Classroom Award

With more than 2,700 teachers, SSD boasts a remarkable wealth of excellent educators. The Key to the Classroom/Teacher of the Year Award recognizes the achievements of these dedicated individuals. One Key to the Classroom recipient will be selected as the district's Teacher of the Year. Nominees for the award must be classroom teachers who are employed during the current school year.

Lasting Impression Award

The Lasting Impression Award recognizes the achievements of dedicated individuals, working both in and outside of the classroom, who stand out in their role at SSD. The Lasting Impression Award is open to all SSD staff except teachers or paraprofessionals.

Special Ambassador Award

The Special Ambassador Award is the highest recognition given by SSD. The award is presented to individuals or groups who demonstrate an extraordinary commitment to the students and/or staff of SSD. ■

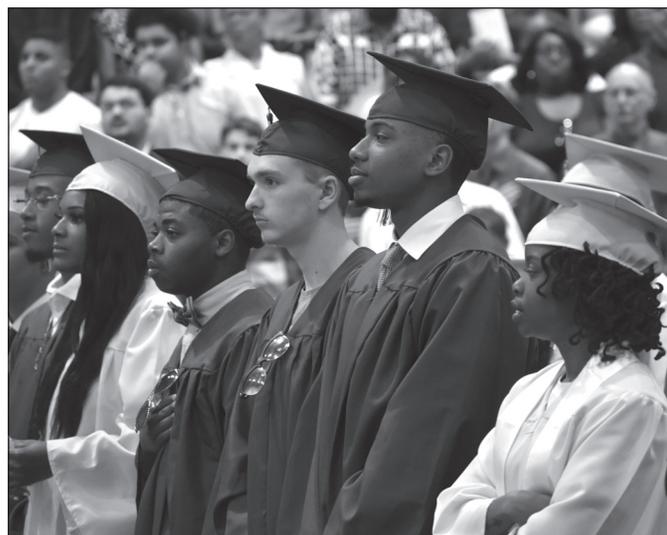
Student Scholarship Opportunities

The SSD Board of Education, as well as other organizations, provide multiple opportunities for graduating seniors to earn scholarships for their post-secondary education. Any senior receiving SSD services or attending an SSD technical high school is eligible to apply for these scholarships.

Each scholarship is unique, and has its own history and specific requirements. Visit www.ssdmo.org/student_scholarships.htm for applications.

Application deadlines for each scholarship are listed below.

- James E. Westbury Memorial Board of Education Scholarships – Jan. 11, 2019
- Bonhomme Lions Scholarships – Jan. 11, 2019
- Allison M. Haake Memorial Scholarship – Jan. 11, 2019
- Special Education Foundation John Cary Scholarships – Jan. 11, 2019



Special Education Foundation

Success Beyond the Classroom

Teacher Mini-Grants Make a Difference

Since 1992, the Special Education Foundation's Dana Brown Teacher Mini-Grant program has provided support for innovative initiatives created by SSD teachers to benefit students. The mini-grants fund more than 100 programs each year — reaching well over 1,000 students — making this one of the SEF's programs with the broadest impact on students served by SSD.

In 2018, \$77,000 in mini-grants funded programs as diverse as a sensory garden, a pinewood derby, museum visits, musical instruments, a school store and character education.

Among the initiatives supported by a Dana Brown Teacher Mini-Grant is Manners Matter, a program developed and delivered by Tom Bamvakais, a teacher in SSD's Vocational Skills Program at Jefferson Barracks Medical Center. It helps students with disabilities develop better social skills. Six years ago, the first class included seven students. Today, Bamvakais teaches 10 classes, reaching 75 students. Visit www.sef-stl.org/manners-matter to read more about this mini-grant in action.



Dave Baker, SSD's assistant superintendent for college and career readiness, meets with students in the Manners Matter program at a picnic in Kirkwood Park.

Bid Online for Golf Tournament Silent Auction Items

The 16th annual Dan McLaughlin Golf Tournament to Benefit Special Education Foundation will be held on Oct. 8 at Norwood Hills Country Club. The event is the largest source of funding for the SEF and its programs, which help students with disabilities. Even if you can't attend the tournament or dinner, you can bid on silent auction items online at sef2018.givesmart.com. More items will be added right up to the tournament, so visit often. For more information about the tournament, visit www.sef-stl.org/events/dan-mclaughlin-golf-tournament. To volunteer, contact Mary Lee Burlemann at 314.941.9290 or mburlemann@ssdmo.org.

Racing for Kids

Thanks to SSD employee Barb Nash, who raised \$820 to send kids with disabilities to camp in conjunction with running her first full marathon in Iceland on Aug. 18. And it's not too late to support her effort. Visit www.sef-stl.org/donate to make your gift and put "Barb Nash" in the tribute line. Read more at www.sef-stl.org/race-for-kids. ■

SSD Parent Advisory Council

The SSD Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is comprised of families advising and collaborating to improve the education, confidence and social outcomes of each student served by SSD.

The PAC consists of five parents or guardians — one member and four alternates — from each of the 22 St. Louis County school districts and from each of the five SSD special education schools. The parents or guardians of students receiving special education services in that district or school elect SSD PAC members.

For more information, visit the PAC's website at tinyurl.com/SSDPAC, email pac@ssdmo.org or call 314.989.8448 ext. 6650. ■

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ASK QUESTIONS • MAKE COMMENTS • GIVE COMPLIMENTS

Let's Talk!™ **Get started at ssdmo.org**



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www.ssdmo.org

MISSION: In collaboration with partner districts, we provide technical education and a wide variety of individualized educational and support services designed for each student's successful contribution to our community.

VISION: Partners for each student's success

VALUES: student success • collaboration • integrity • stewardship • continuous improvement • equity • accountability

Special School District Notice of Non-Discrimination and Accommodation: Special School District does not discriminate or tolerate discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation against an individual based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation, ancestry, disability, veteran status, age, or activity protected by federal or state law in its programs, activities and employment and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Direct inquiries and complaints under this policy to Special School District's Director – Compliance Liaison, 12110 Clayton Road, St. Louis, Missouri 63131, telephone (314) 989-8100 or to the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, One Peticcoat Lane, 1010 Walnut Street, 3rd Floor, Suite 320, Kansas City, Missouri 64106, telephone (816) 268-0550, fax (816) 268-0599, TDD (800) 877-8339, email OCR.KansasCity@ed.gov. Information about the existence and location of services, activities, and facilities accessible to impaired persons can be obtained from the Special School District's Director – Compliance Liaison at the phone number and address listed above.

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NEWS FROM SSD



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Let's Talk — Tell Us What's on Your Mind

Let's Talk is an online tool that allows you to submit feedback at your convenience directly to the SSD staff member who can help. Just visit the SSD website at www.ssdmo.org and look for the Let's Talk button on the homepage.



Once you click on the Let's Talk link, you'll be able to choose an interest area related to the message that you want to submit. Let us know what's going well, offer suggestions, submit a concern or make a general comment.

As we work to continuously improve the District's communication with stakeholders, we look forward to starting a conversation with you. ■