

EXCELLENCE IS OUR STANDARD...ACHIEVEMENT IS THE RESULT

Another Great Year! "Triple Crown" Awards...Again! This time – staff awards!

Dr. Amy Sichel
2010 Pennsylvania
Superintendent of the Year

Mr. Jeffrey Chou
2011 Pennsylvania
Teacher of the Year

Mrs. Cynthia Begley
2010 Pennsylvania Education
ParaProfessional of the Year

As far as we can determine, no other school district in Pennsylvania has achieved these three awards in a given year.



Dr. Amy Sichel was selected among all 500 school districts in Pennsylvania as the 2010 Pennsylvania Superintendent of the Year.

This is quite an honor. The Superintendent of the Year program pays tribute to the talent and vision of the superintendents who lead their school district public schools in an exemplary fashion. Only one superintendent is selected in Pennsylvania from the 500 school districts by the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA).

The announcement was made at a press conference by the Executive Director of PASA. The extensive nomination application for Dr. Sichel was supported by documents from Dr. Donald Clark (President of the NAACP – Willow Grove Branch); Dr. Candy Lee (Vice President of the *Washington Post* and doctoral student at the

continued on p. 2



Mr. Jeffrey Chou, sixth grade teacher at Highland Elementary School, was named the 2011 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year at ceremonies in Harrisburg at the Teacher of the Year Conference.

Following the conference, Pennsylvania Representative Josh Shapiro announced the award with Mr. Chou present at the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and at a briefing with Governor Ed Rendell.

Mr. Chou is an exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable, and skilled teacher. He incorporates effective and innovative instructional strategies and technology into his lessons. He inspires students of all backgrounds to learn. When his award was a news segment on Fox29, the reporter was particularly impressed – and featured – comments by his students, past and present, about how he inspires his students. His teaching technique challenges bright children to explore new areas of

continued on p. 2



Mrs. Cynthia Begley, an instructional education paraprofessional at Roslyn Elementary School, was named 2010 Pennsylvania Support Professional of the Year.

Mrs. Christine Darrah, a special education teacher at Roslyn Elementary School, nominated Mrs. Begley for the award. Dr. Kevin Osborne, principal at Roslyn, described how special Mrs. Begley is in all that she does for the students at Roslyn and for the school district. She has been a learning support professional for the past ten years. She volunteers for many activities at Roslyn, including being the lead producer for the school's Rocket Vision TV programming. She spends countless hours in support of Abington students.

Among her many activities, Mrs. Begley has served on the Opportunities to Learn Initiative Committee, has been a PTO president, has been a volunteer for

continued on p. 4

Briefly noted ... other noteworthy accomplishments



Savings through bond re-financing and budgetary controls.

Through diligent bond re-financing efforts, the district has saved taxpayers nearly \$1,225,000 in interest. And through careful planning, financial prudence, and cost controls, our bond rating was upgraded by Standard and Poors rating service to an "AA" rating, saving tens of thousands of dollars in bond issuance costs.

Through prudent and strict budgetary controls, we constructed the 2010-2011 budget with one of the smallest millage rate increases in the area while maintaining all programs, staffing, and advantageous class sizes.

We continue to have exemplary audits of the school district.

Competitive grant successes. Over the past year, we have applied for and received over \$150,000 in competitive and other grants, bringing programs and services to Abington students at no cost to taxpayers.

Board Policies & Superintendent's Administrative Procedures now on-line. We launched an addition to our website that provides School Board Policies and Superintendent's Administrative Procedures on-line – not only keeping these documents current, but staff and community members find it very beneficial to have this information easily available.



The Abington Educational Foundation completed its \$100,000 donation to help fund digital whiteboards for all classrooms.

Dr. Sichel

continued from p.1

University of Pennsylvania where Dr. Sichel was her dissertation advisor); and Jeffrey Bates, Esq. (of the Philadelphia law firm of Marshall, Dennehey, Warner, Coleman & Goggin and an Abington School Board Director and vice president of the Board).

Dr. Sichel's achievements, initiatives, and honors are impressive. She was nominated, elected, and is now serving as the president of the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators. She was named *e-News* Tech Savvy Superintendent of the Year, one of only ten in the U.S. She was nominated and is serving on the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) Board of Governors – a group of superintendents from across the country.

Dr. Sichel has been a presenter, panelist, and participant in many conferences and professional meetings, including conferences where she has presented our Opportunities to Learn initiative. She was invited by The College Board and Hanban Institute to visit China to consider the Chinese Bridge for American Schools – immersion programs in Chinese culture and language. She was invited by the American Association of School Administrators recently to participate in the America-Israel Friendship

League Superintendent Delegation to Israel.

Dr. Sichel's recent Superintendent's Committees have been working on reviews of and recommendations for gifted education, environmental and resource conservation, teaching Mandarin Chinese, technology for data warehouse, improving school climate, and marching band uniforms. Dr. Sichel's new committees for 2010-2011 will examine and assess the secondary curriculum for the 21st century, teaching and learning with 21st century technology, and elementary science.

Dr. Sichel has been Superintendent of Schools since February 2001. Prior to that she was Assistant Superintendent, Director of Pupil Services, Chairperson of the Guidance Department at the junior high school, and a school psychologist and counselor. She is also an Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education.

NEWS FLASH!!

As we go to press, we learned that Dr. Sichel was the recipient of another award for her leadership in Abington School District and in the educational community – the Women in School Leadership Award. She was recognized in Washington, D.C. with 49 other women administrators from across the country.

Mr Chou

continued from p.1

learning, encourages reluctant learners, and addresses the needs of children with learning differences. As one parent so aptly stated, "Mr. Chou teaches the whole child." And he puts the needs of his students first.

Mr. Chou has the respect and admiration of students, parents, and colleagues. His leadership as a technology mentor has positively impacted the staff and faculty of Highland Elementary School as well as the entire school district. He plays an active role in the school and community, working with many district committees and community organizations. He is a life-long learner and is poised, articulate, and has excellent communications skills. He is a positive role model not only to his students but to the successful student teachers he has mentored and to his colleagues. He goes to great lengths to support students – including sending encouraging, congratulatory letters to his students when they enter high school and when they graduate. Dr. Marianne Kaemmer, principal of Highland Elementary School, who wrote three pages about Mr. Chou for his application as Teacher of the Year, summed up Mr. Chou best when she stated, "Mr. Chou is an excellent example of all that an outstanding teacher should be."

Abington students continue to improve in academic achievement

All Abington schools and the district achieved No Child Left Behind Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Some of the highlights of student achievement demonstrated on the 2010 administration of the PSSA include:

- All elementary schools made AYP for the eighth consecutive year
- Both the junior high school and the senior high school made AYP for the second consecutive year
- All schools, including each of the disaggregated groups, achieved the state-required target in mathematics
- Improvement was seen at several schools including increases of 10 percentage points or more by several schools and disaggregated groups

The “All Students” test results for the district and for each grade span exceeded the state’s performance targets for mathematics and reading.



We’ve been going “Green” and “Greener” Savings already exceed \$300,000



GEOTHERMAL HVAC SYSTEM AT HIGHLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Abington schools have a strong energy-conscious and environmental-conservation philosophy and outlook. Where it was practical and beneficial, several of our new elementary schools have geothermal heating-ventilating air-conditioning (HVAC) systems to reduce fuel consumption. Several schools employ dual fuel systems where they can be heated with the lower cost fuel at any particular time – natural gas or fuel oil.

We approved a long-term contract with Johnson Controls to evaluate and implement energy cost savings throughout the school district – an investment

that is expected to generate savings in energy costs for years to come. This performance contract system for facilities projects and purchases has already resulted in energy-saving fuel and lighting system modifications and water conservation changes. In the past year, the district has used one million fewer gallons of water due to changes in plumbing systems, a reduction of 8%. Electricity and fossil fuel consumption has been reduced 11% from last year. Cost avoidance due to savings in electricity and water last year has been over \$300,000 – which exceeded original estimates by nearly \$120,000.

Once again, America’s Promise Names Abington One of the “100 Best Communities for Young People”



Abington has been named one of the 100 Best Communities for Young People for the fourth time by General Colin Powell’s America’s Promise Alliance. We are the only community in Pennsylvania to be a winner for four years – every year since the inception of the competition. The extensive application was co-authored again this year by Dr. Leigh Altadonna and Mr. Byron Goldstein.

Money Magazine Selects Abington as One of “100 Best Towns to Live in America”



Abington was selected again by *Money Magazine* as one of the 100 Best Towns to Live in America, the only community in Pennsylvania so named. We are very proud that our schools’ excellence was one of two primary factors in *Money Magazine’s* analysis that led Abington to be selected.

A Sampling of other HONORS AND AWARDS

Philadelphia Magazine Features Abington Senior High School Twice!

Philadelphia Magazine featured Abington Senior High School as one of the best high schools in the multi-county region and was ranked in the top 50 high schools out of 183.

The magazine also ranked Abington Senior High School's Service Learning Program as the best in the area, with an average of over 90,000 hours donated each year by Abington's students.

Opportunities to Learn Presentations

Our Opportunities to Learn initiative has been successful in de-tracking our curriculum, ensuring that students can obtain a college preparatory education. With its continuing successes, Abington representatives have been requested to make presentations at professional conferences and meetings this past year as well as hosting representatives who visit from other schools.

National Merit Scholars

Twenty-eight students attained National Merit, National Achievement, and National Hispanic recognition this past year.

Mathematics Contests

Significant awards were earned by our students in a variety of mathematics competitions this past year including the International Mathematical Olympiad for Elementary Schools and the Atlantic-Pacific contest – where Abington Junior High School took first place in the Pennsylvania/Ohio division, marking the 17th time in the last 19 years that Abington Junior High has placed first in its division. The district had 20 winning entries earning a variety of first, second, third, fourth, and honorable mention awards in the Pennsylvania Statistics Poster Competition.

Scholarship Successes

The Abington Senior High School Class of 2010 earned scholarships totaling upward of over \$5 million.

Mrs. Begley

continued from p.1

Citizens and Police Together (CAPT) activities, TADA, and the post-prom party. Robert Hughes, a Roslyn student, praised her at the School Board meeting, stating that Abington is fortunate to have a dedicated professional such as Mrs. Begley, citing her example as one of the reasons the school and community are best places to live and learn.



Abington's large group of mathematics competition winners were honored by the Board of School Directors.

UPDATE: News About Abington School District

A community newsletter published periodically by Abington School District for residents of the community.

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