



Spring  
Quarterly  
April  
2015

# THE PMSD ESL CONNECTION

## A Message from Dr. Catherine Sweeney

Pocono Mountain School District Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

### Developing Writing and Spelling at Home

Writing is a terrific way for children to express their thoughts, creativity, and uniqueness. It is also a fundamental way in which children learn to organize ideas. And learning to write well helps children to be better readers. When engaging in writing, young children often mirror what they see around them; adults and older children writing lists, notes, text messaging. They are observing the way writing is used in our everyday lives.

#### **Writing at home**

Here are some suggestions that engage your child in the writing process:

- Have your child write instructions for taking care of the family pet. These will be useful as you plan your summer vacations!
- Write a letter or thank you note to a relative. Talk through what your child wants to say before writing begins.
- Make a shopping list before going to the grocery store.
- Write an online review of a book or an item you recently purchased ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)) or a recipe you tried ([www.allrecipes.com](http://www.allrecipes.com)).
- Talk about the presidential election and write a description of the kind of president you want.
- Find a picture in the newspaper and write an article to accompany it.

**Start keeping a personal diary, a household guestbook, or a baby book for a younger sibling**

#### **Does spelling count?**

Early attempts at spelling are not the random swings they sometimes appear. Children's "invented spelling" gives us a window into what they understand about written language. A good teacher will be able to tell the difference between the misspellings that indicate normal literacy development and those that suggest a possible learning disability. If you have

questions, talk to your child's teacher.

#### **What should I write about?**

Help your child get their thoughts together in an organized way. Especially when a child starts writing, he/she may need assistance with planning out what he wants to say.

Use sticky notes to help organize ideas. Put each idea or important word on a note, and lay the notes out on the table for easy rearranging. This helps with planning and organization.

#### **Writer's strike**

If your child avoids writing, use materials and tools that support both the thinking process and the physical act of writing:

- Use wide lined paper which helps kids line up and space their letters.
- Use a whiteboard, which allows them to easily erase and try again.
- Use a keyboard, which also allows kids to easily edit.

### **DATES TO REMEMBER**



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|---|--|
| ☺ Ongoing: Kindergarten Registration                | ☺ May 25th: Memorial Day: NO SCHOOL  |
| ☺ May 6th; Act 80 Day: 3 hour early dismissal       | ☺ May 28th: Home School Connection: watch for more details from your child's ESL teacher |
| ☺ May 4th -8th: Science PSSA for 4th and 8th grades |  |
| ☺ May 20th-June 8th: Spring Keystones               | ☺ June 19th: Last day of school  |



# A Glance at ESL Around PMSD

## SECONDARY NEWS

**WJHS:** Spring is in the air and so is novel reading! 7th grade is reading "Seedfolks" and 8th grade is reading "Romeo & Juliet". Students are enjoying these stories. We are all looking forward to the 4th marking period and warmer weather!

**PMWHS:** Seniors in Ms. Colyer's class are excited as they look forward to prom and graduation. The magical play, "A Midsummer Night's Dream," by William Shakespeare, brought laughs and revealed acting talents as it was read orally in class. Spring sports seem to be a favorite among students in our ESL groups since many have joined teams this year. Peace to all!



**EJHS:** EJRH is reading different books: period 3 just finished Moby Dick. Period 7 just finished Frankenstein. 8th grade just finished The Outsiders. We are preparing for PSSAs by completing different essays to improve our writing skills. Fourth Quarter will begin with new novels.

**PMEHS:** EHS is a mixed bag of different focus skills at this time. While everyone is working on writing, the 2nd period students are completing their research projects and 1st period is working on stretching sentences into paragraphs then into essays. Different books are being read, too. Pd 1 just finished an informative story based on the sinking of the Titanic. Period 2 is reading about WWII and Saving Private Ryan.

## ELEMENTARY NEWS

**SIS:** At SIS, we are anticipating the arrival of more sunny, warm days! Our students have been busy with their academic subjects and also participating in many school activities such as, the end of the year music concerts, and our school play, High School Musical. Mrs. Malinowski sends a special thank you to our parents who have visited our classrooms to share a bit of their family's culture with us. We look forward to more parent visits this year. Mrs. Malinowski and Ms. Menendez wish you all a wonderful spring.

**CRIS:** ESL students at CRIS have been busy preparing for the PSSAs. They also recently resumed the afterschool ESL club in March. The club's focus this spring is social development. The students are extremely excited to be a part of the club. The club will run through the middle of May.

**CREC:** Kindergarten will be exploring spring through the hatching of butterflies and studying life cycle. First grade will be studying poetry month and life cycles including hatching chicks from eggs. Finally, second grade will be celebrating poetry month and spring as well.

**TEC:** The ESL students at Tobyhanna Elementary Center continue to improve on their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. All of the students wrote what they like to do in the spring. We brainstormed many ideas and activities and even used a bubble map to help organize our ideas. All of the students added creative details to their main idea and did a fantastic job. The 3rd-6th grade ESL students are preparing for the PSSA's and I wish them good luck on the test. Remember to do your best. Happy Spring!

**SEC:** Happy spring to all...finally! Cooper's 1st and 3rd grade ESL classes are blooming with their writing. First grade has written friendly letters to Leprechauns, interviewed and written about their relatives, wrote an imaginative piece about a robot they wished they had, and wrote a want ad for the perfect neighbor. Third grade has written limericks, a describing poem about an animal, and a research report about an ovipator (an egg laying animal). We love writing!

## ESL STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

A slight twist on the "ESL Parent Spotlight" section from the previous quarter's newsletter is this quarter's "STUDENT SPOTLIGHT CORNER." In this Issue, a secondary student from PMSD's East Campus, Ahmed Abuolba, chose to write a letter about his experience with ESL in Pocono Mountain School District.

"When it comes to the English as a second language class or ESL as it is referred to, everybody thinks it is a special education class. Parents may feel insecure or afraid that their children would be different than everybody else and school is going to be very hard for them. ESL is an instructional program for students whose first language is not English. The purpose of the program is to increase the English language proficiency for students so they can attain academic standards and achieve success in the classroom or anywhere else. When studying abroad, actually living in an English-speaking country and participating in that country's native culture, students can greatly improve language skills in a comparatively shorter period of time. ESL was the best class I have ever had in my life. I thought I was going to struggle in my life when I came to the United States especially when I couldn't speak any English, and how hard it's going to be. But after my first year in ESL I started to feel a little better, and I became a little comfortable with the language. By the second year, I felt like I could speak English fluently, and I really liked and how much progress I made during those years. Outside of this class, all the other students were treating me just like any other kid who speaks English. They even helped me out with all the words I couldn't pronounce or spell, which made me feel a lot better and from that time I knew it was going to get easier. Also my siblings, which I have five, all entered ESL, two of them are in college and the other three are still in school. But they are all out of ESL now since they made progress so fast and learned the English language easily. It all goes back to the teachers who help every student in their class by working with them on the skills they need. Sometimes teachers could work individually with the student to make sure they get what they need. ESL classes help people to become better at speaking, reading, writing, and listening in English. There are ESL classes everywhere in schools from pre-k to high school, universities, public and private classes for older people who are not in school or college, even in some countries whose first language is not English. When it comes to my personal experience, ESL saved my life and it made me who I am today... about to leave high school and go to college. Without this class, I would not have been here or lived my normal life."

-Ahmed Abuolba



## KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

**Calling all 2015-2016 Kindergarten students!**

We need you to schedule your appointment to register your child!

**NEW PROCEDURES ARE IN PLACE FOR KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION:**

If you have a child who meets the eligibility for the 2015-2016 school year Kindergarten class, please contact the Pocono Mountain School District Central Registration Office at 839-7121 ext. 40400 to schedule an appointment. The child must be five (5) years of age or more, on or before September 1, 2015.

After the registration process has been completed, your child will be scheduled for a Kindergarten orientation session sometime in the spring at their respective school building.

The required documents are available on-line at [www.pmsd.org](http://www.pmsd.org)

It is strongly recommended that you complete all required documents prior to your scheduled appointment.



# ESL STAFF SPOTLIGHT

We continue the newest feature to debut in the quarterly newsletter this school year, an interview of one of the ESL teachers around the district. Ms. Irene Colyer is featured in this issue. Ms. Colyer is an ESL Program Specialist at Pocono Mountain West High School. Read all about her below!



Ms. Colyer Interview

Pocono Mountain West High School

**Are you married? Do you have children?** Yes, I'm married, and I have one child.

**Where were you born? Where do you live now?** I was born in New Jersey and currently live in Tobyhanna.

**Do you have any pets?** Yes, I have many pets.

**Do you have a best friend?** No, I don't have a best friend.

**What is your favorite cereal?** I don't like cereal.

**Do you untie your shoes when you take them off?** Yes, I do.

**What is your favorite ice cream?** Haagan Dazs Vanilla is my favorite ice cream.

**What is the first thing you notice about people?** The first thing I notice about people when I see them is their teeth.

**Who do you miss the most?** My grandmother is the person I miss the most.

**What is your favorite smell?** Lavender is one of my favorite scents.

**What color is your hair?** My hair color is reddish brown.

**What color are your eyes?** I have gray eyes.

**Do you wear contact lenses, glasses, or both?** I wear both contact lenses and glasses.

**What is your favorite food?** My favorite food is chicken.

**Do you like movies that are scary or have happy endings?** I prefer scary movies.

**What is the last movie you watched?** The last movie I watched was The Hunger Games.

**If you had to choose to use the computer or watch television, which would you pick?** I would rather watch television over using the computer.

**What is your favorite tv show?** My favorite television show is Dead Files.

**What is your favorite season?** My favorite season is fall.

**What is your favorite sport to watch or play?** I enjoy hockey.

**Do you enjoy strength training or cardio workouts?** I prefer to do cardio workouts when I exercise.

**What is your favorite dessert?** Ice cream is my favorite dessert.

**What is your favorite sound?** Running water in a brook is one of my favorite sounds.

**What is your favorite band/musician?** The Rolling Stones is one of my favorite groups.

**What is the farthest you have been from home?** The farthest I've travelled from home was to Europe.



## Home/School Connection

On Thursday, March 16th, ESL families from around the Pocono Mountain School district came together for "Bedtime Stories from Around the World." Professional storyteller Lisa Facciponti was invited to share her gift of storytelling with the ESL students and their families. The families came to hear cultural bedtime stories. The children relaxed comfortably on the floor with their blankets and stuffed animals. They even played an interactive game with their parents. Afterward, the families enjoyed hot chocolate with toppings and a variety of cookies. To top the evening off, student work was displayed for the parents to view while they enjoyed the refreshments. Everyone enjoyed vibrant stories of the professional storyteller. Her energy and enthusiasm kept everyone's attention! Below are some photos of the evening.

Stay tuned for more information about our final home/school connection event of this school year! We look forward to seeing you there!



## Adult ESL

Currently the PMSD Adult ESL classes are on hold. We will try again next year to see if there is a large enough group of people interested in practicing English. If you want information on other English programs in the area, please email Mrs. Mascia at [mmascia@pmsd.org](mailto:mmascia@pmsd.org)

# SAVE THE DATE: Home School Connection

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## "Summer Readiness"

We are planning our last HSC night for 2014-2015 on May 28th.

The theme for this night: Summer Readiness!!!

Information will include ways to continue English language learning during the summer months!

Also, we're getting ready for the beach! We plan to have an exercise expert with us to help get us moving and prepare us for bathing suit season!!!

Date: May 28, 2015

Place: STAY TUNED!!

Time: 6-8pm



### **Pocono Mountain School District**

#### **Mission & Vision Statement**

*\*To prepare all students for tomorrow's challenges and opportunities.*

*\*To create a culture of achievement, improve student performance, maintain safe schools, and promote strong character.*



### **Home Help Tips for Parents of ESL Students**

- Establish specific routines for your child to follow.
- Practice vocabulary daily with your child using household objects.
- Read to your child daily in your native language or English.
- Practice good study habits daily. Set aside a time for your child to study on a regular basis.
- Have family meetings where your child is the leader of the discussions. Allow your child to speak in either English or the native language.
- Visit the ESL resource site at the PMSD main web page. Plentiful resources for parents to use at home are available.
- [www.pmsd.org](http://www.pmsd.org)

*The Pocono Mountain School District's ESL Program is a regular education program that is aligned with the Pennsylvania Department of Education's ESL standards.*

*A specialized, certified ESL teacher works with students in large or small groups.*

*A program designed to assist students with the reading, speaking, listening, and writing of the English language.*

*ESL is NOT a bilingual program.*

