



Dear Educational and Life Skills Families:

I hope this email finds you enjoying the beautiful, yet incredibly hot, summer weather. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the 2012-2013 school year. In an effort to increase efficiency and ease for you, all of the forms to be completed for your son or daughter will be on the ELS website. Follow the link <http://www.nssed.org/programs-and-services/educational-and-life-skills> then click on *2012-2013 ELS Forms* at the bottom left side of the page to find the forms. Please submit the following forms by **August 15, 2012**:

- Authorization to Release/Exchange Information
- Community Training Permission Form
- Photo Permission Form

After completing each form, click on “submit” and the forms will be routed to the ELS Program at NSSED. There are several other links listed which contain very useful information for the upcoming year.

The ELS Program is engaged in curriculum work groups that identified the essential components of our program: academics, life skills, vocational and communication/social. The work groups created a scope and sequence of skills to be taught throughout the continuum of the program (kindergarten through transition). The curriculum committee identified the subject of study to be literacy for the fall of 2012. Math and life skills are identified for the spring and summer of 2013.

NSSED launched its volunteer program named VIP-Volunteers Inspiring Partnership. The volunteers will spend their time in areas identified by NSSED staff. Some VIPs may volunteer in classrooms while others may spend time in the community. Please contact the volunteer coordinator, Teri Rosenberg, for additional information on VIP at 847-831-5100 ext. 2161 or visit the website at volunteer@nssed.org to complete the application and view the available volunteer opportunities.

We are pleased to report the creation of ELS Action Teams for Partnership (ATP), which include members of school staff, families and community members to take an initiative from “seed to sale”. One of the ATPs in ELS is the partnership between Wagner Farm in Glenview and NSSED. Currently Transition Program students spend time at the farm learning about agriculture as well as acquiring skills that will span into their adult life in the form of vocation or recreation. The second ATP will bring parents, school members and the community to the table to discuss ways to incorporate recreational education into the school day, for example, yoga instruction.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the resources you as a family have within NSSED and your community:

1. General NSSED information. Please visit www.nssed.org to access general information about NSSED including information regarding programs and services to district initiatives.
2. The ELS webpage. The program pages will be updated weekly this year. The ELS website will inform you of initiatives within the program as well as celebrate successes of students and staff, highlight partnerships and provide information in regards to funding and other parent resources. Please visit <http://www.nssed.org/programs-and-services/educational-and-life-skills>.

3. Association of Parents and Staff (APS). APS is a board of parents and staff from NSSSED's eighteen member districts. The Board's mission is to provide ongoing training and education, and offer support and connections. Please visit the APS website at <http://web.nssed.org/APS/Pages/default.aspx> for information regarding workshops, Illinois State Board of Education updates and more.
4. NSSSED Parent Mentor. Susan Hans is the Parent Mentor for NSSSED programs. She provides educational opportunities for parents and staff to learn effective communication skills as they work together to design and deliver programs for children with special needs. Susan can be reached at shans@nssed.org or (847) 831-5100 ext.2228.
5. Parents Educating and Learning (PELS). PELS is a monthly meeting for parents of students with varying abilities to come together and learn, network and partner for their children. Pamela Spadino is the PELS president. The meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month in Pamela's home from 9:00-11:00 a.m. Please contact Pamela to learn more about PELS at Pamela@windycityhome.com.
6. ELS Parent Team. The ELS Program has a volunteer parent team to assist in the development of ELS Open Houses, staff appreciation activities as well as to organize ongoing parent education regarding various topics in special education. Please feel free to contact the parent team member as they are resources to you.

The parent team is comprised of four parents from the ELS Program:

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|---------------------|------------------|--|
| ▪ Ingrid Martinez | Hickory Point | iocanal@yahoo.com |
| ▪ Randi Gillespie | Westmoor | rgillespie@nads.org |
| ▪ Patty Baeckelandt | Attea | baeckelandt@gmail.com |
| ▪ Nora Donoghue | Highland Park HS | norajd@comcast.net |

I hope the above-mentioned resources are meaningful for you as parents and family members.

I look forward to another excellent school year filled with learning, family engagement, community partnerships and much more.

If you have questions or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at dcarter@nssed.org or via phone at 847-831-5100 ext. 2494. The ELS Program has a new fax number: 847-278-0087.

Enjoy the remainder of your summer!

Sincerely,



Danielle Carter
ELS Program Administrator