A Sign of Hope That ‘Our Voices’ Can Make a Difference

At the corner of 8th Street NE and Hamlin Street NE, in Washington, DC, there stands a new traffic sign. Although it reads, “Stop for Pedestrians in the Crosswalk,” it represents much more.

Getting a new stop sign may not seem like a big deal to some people, but to the staff, students, parents, and community of Imagine Hope Tolson, the new sign is a huge step in the right direction.

Jason Knecht, the school’s Athletics and Activities Coordinator, has led a task force to obtain a crossing guard for the busy intersection. He contacted the Department of Transportation, the local councilman, and the mayor’s office in an effort to ensure students and others are safe when walking to and from the school. To no avail — the school would not be issued a crossing guard.

So Mr. Knecht and the Imagine Hope Tolson Student Council officers went to every parent and visitor, during arrival and dismissal, and asked them to sign a petition urging the city to take action in this matter.

The effort paid off, and the school got permission to install a new “Stop for Pedestrians” sign. That is not the only outcome, however.

“Through his diligence and perseverance,” commented Camille Darden, Vice Principal, “Mr. Knecht helped [teach us that] our voices can be heard!”

By petitioning the city, staff and students at Imagine Hope Tolson were able to obtain a new traffic safety sign.

Kudos to ‘Exceptional’ Imagine Penn Hills Staffers

Megan M. Mathieu, Curriculum Coordinator at Imagine Penn Hills Charter School of Entrepreneurship, recently recognized the work of several staff members.

First, she congratulated Dana Wood, 1st Grade Lead Teacher, and Katie Dunbar, 1st Grade Instruction Support Teacher, for helping all of their 30 students score At/Above Benchmark on the STAR Winter Assessment in February. Both Wood and Dunbar work collaboratively in creating success plans that are differentiated and meet the needs of each individual learner. They meet continuously with students, in small groups and one-on-one, to review foundational skills.

“It is apparent that their diligence in instruction is working,” says Mathieu. “We are so proud of their exceptional growth!”

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Campus Kiosk: Brief Notices from the Imagine Mid-Atlantic Public Charter Schools

Academic Growth
Imagine Andrews: We celebrated the 100th day of school during the month of February. The day was filled with exciting activities, including a parade throughout the building. The students celebrated by singing songs, reciting chants, making posters, and decorating hats and clothing in festive ways.

Imagine Leeland: Our students and teachers recently participated in the NEA's Read Across America Day, a nationwide reading celebration that takes place annually on Dr. Seuss's birthday.

Some 5th grade student performed as the Temptations.

Shared Values
Imagine Morningside: Throughout the month of February, students celebrated Black History Month in a variety of ways. Fifth graders participated in a competition that allowed them to take ownership of their learning. First, they self-selected a person, place, or event to study. Then they allowed their curiosity to drive research. Lastly, they followed their passion to create speeches and original prototypes that reflected the impact of the person, place, or event they were paying tribute to. The 4th and 5th graders celebrated by performing a variety of African-American spirituals and civil rights movement songs, as well as song and dance numbers representing the African-American icons of music, such as the Temptations, Diana Ross, Michael Jackson, and Whitney Houston.

Character Development
Imagine Lincoln: Louis Bryant, 6th Grade Reading & Language Arts, helped students conduct mock debates on several topics, including “inaction in the face of injustice leaves a person morally culpable”; “physical education should be required for all middle school and high school

A Note from the Regional Vice-President

It’s a great day at Imagine. I am so proud of all of you, as you have certainly given our Imagine scholars, families, and communities opportunities that will impact them for the rest of their lives. Thank you for being a true team and family. We have come together as the Mid-Atlantic Region in so many ways. Let’s continue to share resources, ideas, and experiences. This will only make us all better!

As you read this month’s edition of ImagiNation, please celebrate and embrace all of the great things that are occurring on all of our campuses. This time of year can be a bit frustrating, as we all are participating in our state-wide assessments. Whether it’s PARCC or PSSA, please note that these assessments are an opportunity to show the world all of the great instruction that our scholars have experienced daily. This is not a time to be anxious or fearful. Rather, it is a time to shine and celebrate. I have the utmost confidence in all of our scholars because you have provided them with great instruction all year long.

I look forward to celebrating our success stories very soon! We are Imagine!

Shawn Toler, Mid-Atlantic Regional Vice-President

Please follow our Regional Vice-President on twitter at shawn.toler@Imagine_schools

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News from the Regional Office

Curiosity Sparks Future Ambition

The phrase, “College and Career Readiness,” is an educational buzzword that has challenged schools across the country to infuse into the curriculum those skills needed to get our students ready for the future. All of our Imagine Mid-Atlantic Region schools have embraced this new found culture as well as encouraged students to be curious about various careers.

Our Imagine Mid-Atlantic Region Character Network was able to develop a “College and Career Readiness” matrix. Adapted from “Definition of College and Career Readiness,” by David Conley, PhD, the matrix connects our national instructional implementations and individual school's character goals (see chart below).

Andria McMichael, EdD, Regional Education Specialist

### College and Career Readiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Think Key Cognitive Strategies</th>
<th>Know Key Content Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus Strategy: Identifying Similarities and Difference</td>
<td>Focus Strategy: Reinforcing Effort and Providing Recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Strategy: Generating and Testing Hypotheses</td>
<td>Focus Strategy: Assigning Homework and Providing Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Performance Character Traits: Curiosity &amp; Creativity</td>
<td>Supporting Performance Character Trait: Perseverance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Order Questioning</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Go Key Transition Knowledge and Skills</th>
<th>Act Key Learning Skills and Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus Strategy: Cooperative Learning Career Day</td>
<td>Focus Strategy: Summarizing and Note-taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Literacy Lessons Parent College Night</td>
<td>Supporting Performance Character Traits: Responsibility &amp; Perseverance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM Night @ Imagine Tolson</td>
<td>Student Goal Setting and Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dare-to-Dream @ Imagine Morningside</td>
<td>Sheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;PayCheck&quot; System @ Imagine Andrews Career Inventory @ Imagine Leeland</td>
<td>Character Report Cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Soar to Success @Imagine Penn Hills</td>
<td>Technology Classes or any use of technology (STAR assessment)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Middle school students worked in cooperative groups to respond to Cranes using a “carousel strategy.”

At Imagine Hope Tolson, CURIOUS middle-schoolers are developing new ways of thinking and learning. Emily Mark, a 6th grade literacy teacher, encourages her students to work in cooperative groups to form their own questions and respond using a “carousel strategy.” Part of our Academic Excellence Framework, this strategy challenges students to be actively involved in the learning process through collaborative discussions, higher-order thinking, decision-making, and investigations with new approaches.

Campus Kiosk continued from page 2

students”; “all parents should be required to attend parenting classes before having a child”; and “year-round education is more beneficial for students.” Students formed teams, with student moderators, for each topic and were given 30 minutes to argue research-based points of support or lack of support. The entire event was facilitated by students, and families and parents were represented in the audience.

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The season of assessing our scholars is upon us! Students in Maryland and the District of Columbia, along with all of the other students in states that have adopted PARCC, will be taking the PARCC Performance Based Assessment (PBA) throughout the month of March.

This assessment is not counted in terms of the data collected by states for school performance. Instead, the PBA is used to determine how students are performing at this point in the year. The PARCC End of Year Assessment, given in April and May, will be used to calculate school and student performance.

To clear up some of the misconceptions and questions about PARCC and the STAR assessment, a webinar for parents has been recorded and will be available online. Please stay tuned to updates from your school leader as to how to access this information.

Kathy Robinson,
Regional Education Specialist

Mathieu also recognized the efforts of Nicole Dickinson, Imagine Penn Hills Social Worker, who organizes monthly community service projects for Imagine Penn Hills students to take part in during the school year. In January, as part of the Character Education program, which emphasizes giving back to the community, Imagine Penn Hills students participated in a program that makes cards for children who have been hospitalized.

“The students really embraced this,” says Mathieu, “and the cards they made were amazing!”

Dickinson also organizes Imagine Penn Hills Student of the Month Luncheon and Awards program, which rewards students for displaying the Imagine character traits.
Learning Effective Read-Aloud Techniques

In February, we introduced our new Professional Development focus, “Effective Read-Alouds,” by examining the types of books in our classroom libraries that we are offering to our students on a daily basis. As they looked through their “Curiosity Lens,” as aligned to our Performance Character Trait for Literacy Focus #5, teachers looked at all of the types of books to satisfy the “Combiners Curiosity,” an article read by the teachers during the PD. The types of books discussed included books with collections of pictures, theme books, books with rhythm and rhyme, books with repetitive and predictable language/text, books that are classics, books with a repetitive theme/ “fun sounding,” books with collections of poems and nursery rhymes, and participatory books.

In addition to examining the types of books in our classroom libraries, teachers had an opportunity to read and discuss guiding questions from the article, “Repeated Interactive Read-Alouds in Preschool and Kindergarten,” by Lea M. McGee and Judith Schickedanz. Teachers learned that an effective read-aloud is a book that has been read at least three times. The article discussed the steps teachers should implement in order to have an “effective” interactive read-aloud. We focused on the 5 Effective Read Aloud Techniques and discussed them in detail, providing examples.

For the next meeting, we will discuss in greater detail the difference between the “first read, second read and third read” during a Repeated Interactive Read-Aloud.

Danah Telfaire,
Regional Education Specialist

Focusing on Literacy continued from page 3

Mrs. Mark opened her lesson by reading the “I Can” statement: “I can analyze the characters and themes in *Cranes* using textual evidence.” Students were then asked to turn to someone sitting next to them and talk about the information they need to know in order to accomplish the “I Can” statement and develop the questions they need to ask.

Devoria Armstead and Amia Johnson,
Regional Education Specialists

Calendar of Events 2015

**MAR**
12  2nd Quarter Honor Roll Assembly, Imagine Lincoln
17  Micro Society Night, Imagine Penn Hills
18  PTO Meeting, 6 pm, Imagine Morningside
19  School Board Meeting, Imagine Penn Hills
31  Skate Party Fundraiser, Imagine Morningside

**APR**
1  End of 3rd Quarter
1  Imagine Lincoln 2nd Annual Cheer Expedition

1  Spring Break begins, Imagine Penn Hills
2  Teacher Grading & Planning, School Closed for Students, Imagine Lincoln
3  Good Friday, Schools Closed

*ImagiNation*, published monthly by the Imagine Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, offers facts and features about our faculty and staff, and shares information about our schools and organization. For more information contact:

ImaginNation
4489 Forbes Blvd.
Lanham, MD 20706
Phone: 301-316-1802

Shawn Toler
Mid-Atlantic Regional Vice-President

Tina Johnson
Human Resource Manager