

STUDENT SERVICES NEWSLETTER



SPECIAL EDUCATION AND PUPIL SERVICES



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- A word from the Director of the Student Services
- PFSA Blue Ribbon Champion For Safe Kids Award – 2026
Recipient: MUASD Director of Student Services
- Welcome : Introduction to the new Superintendent
- Autism Awareness Month
- Extended School Year (ESY)

From the Desk of the Director of Student Services.....

As we approach the conclusion of the 2025–2026 school year, this edition of our newsletter highlights the continued dedication, growth, and collaboration that define our school community. From celebrating student achievements to recognizing the efforts of our staff and families, this time of year provides an opportunity to reflect on the progress we've made together while preparing for a strong finish and a successful transition into the summer months.

April is recognized as Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month, a time to promote understanding, inclusion, and appreciation for individuals on the autism spectrum. This month encourages us to embrace neurodiversity and reaffirm our commitment to creating supportive learning environments for all students. We are also proud to celebrate the recent recognition of the Blue Ribbon Champion for Safe Kids Award—an honor that reflects the meaningful work being done to protect and support children across our community.

In this edition, we are excited to introduce the new Mount Union Area School District Superintendent who brings valuable experience and a shared commitment to student success. You will also find important information regarding Extended School Year (ESY) services, designed to support continued learning and growth for eligible students over the summer. As part of my own journey as a lifelong learner, I am continuing my education to earn my Superintendent Letter of Eligibility and Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Leadership and Administration. This work reflects my deep commitment to growing as an educational leader and to better serving the students, staff, and families of the Mount Union Area School District.

Together, these highlights reflect our ongoing mission to ensure every student feels safe, supported, and empowered to thrive.



Kristen C. Streightiff, M.Ed.
Director of Student Services



PA BLUE RIBBON
CHAMPIONS
for **SAFE KIDS**



Our Blue Ribbon Champions



**Jane
Kim**

Mission Kids
Child Advocacy Center



**Ernie
Morris**

Limerick Township
Police Department



**Shana
Orlic**

Wesley Family Services

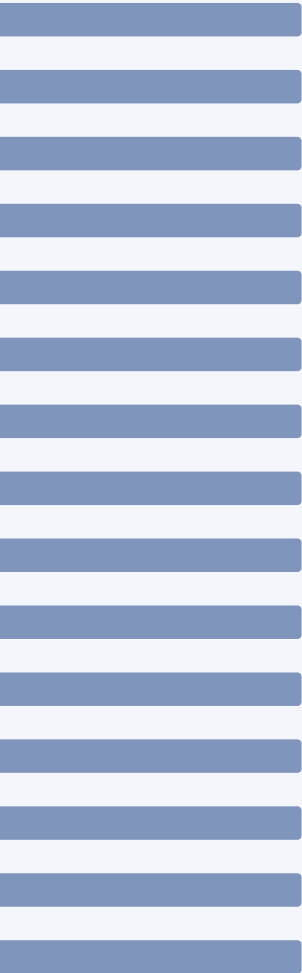


**Kristen C.
Streightiff**

Mount Union Area
School District



Blue Ribbon Champions for Safe Kids ...what is it....




As part of the Blue Ribbon Campaign, PFSA proudly honors Blue Ribbon Champions for Safe Kids. These champions are individuals from across Pennsylvania that go above and beyond the call to prevent abuse and uplift vulnerable children. Blue Ribbon Champions are the heart of this campaign. Their stories inspire, educate, and empower others to act.

Each year, Blue Ribbon Champions are nominated by their peers and selected by an independent panel of judges. Selected champions may include:

- Professionals in education, healthcare, and social work
- Volunteers who give time, care, and resources
- Everyday heroes who step in when it matters most

Every April, PFSA honors the individuals who are selected as Blue Ribbon Champions for Safe Kids with a ceremony at the Harrisburg Capitol. We recognize these individuals because of their exceptional contributions to preventing childhood neglect and abuse.

*Information provided by:
the Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance



Honored to Serve:

A Reflection on Being Named a Blue Ribbon Champion for Safe Kids

By Kristen C. Streightiff, M.Ed.

In April, during National Child Abuse Prevention Month, I will have the honor of being recognized at the Pennsylvania State Capitol as a 2026 Blue Ribbon Champion for Safe Kids, an award presented by the Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA). This recognition is deeply meaningful to me—not as an individual accomplishment, but as a reflection of the work being done every day by educators, community partners, and families who are committed to protecting and supporting children.

The Blue Ribbon Champion designation represents a statewide call to action. It reminds us that protecting children is not the responsibility of a single person or profession—it requires a community-wide commitment. Teachers, school counselors, administrators, law enforcement, healthcare professionals, social service providers, and families all play an important role in ensuring that children grow up in safe, supportive environments where they can learn, heal, and thrive.

In my role as Director of Student Services for the Mount Union Area School District, I have the privilege of working alongside an incredible team of educators and support staff who place students at the center of every decision we make. Every day, our schools strive to meet not only the academic needs of students, but also their social, emotional, and behavioral needs. We understand that learning cannot fully occur unless students feel safe, supported, and valued. Across Mount Union Area School District, we continue to strengthen systems of support that help identify and assist students who may be experiencing adversity or trauma. Our goal is always to ensure that every child has access to the resources, understanding, and care they need to succeed.

This work also extends beyond the walls of our schools. Throughout Huntingdon County, collaboration between public education, law enforcement, human service agencies, and community organizations has created a strong network dedicated to supporting children and families. One example of this partnership is the development of The Handle With Care: Endangered and At-Risk Youth Response Team of Pennsylvania (H.E.A.R.T.), which my husband, Chief Charles T. Streightiff of the Huntingdon Borough Police Department, and I establish. This initiative was designed to improve communication and coordination between schools, law enforcement, and service providers so that children experiencing trauma receive timely support.

Programs like H.E.A.R.T. demonstrate what can happen when communities work together with a shared purpose—to ensure that no child falls through the cracks. While I am deeply honored by this recognition, the truth is that the work of protecting children is ongoing and collective. The Blue Ribbon Champion for Safe Kids award represents the dedication of many people across our schools and community who advocate for children every day.

I am proud to represent Mount Union Area School District, and I am grateful to be part of a community in Huntingdon County that cares deeply about the well-being of its youth. Together, we will continue to build systems of support that ensure every child is safe, valued, and given the opportunity to succeed. Because every child deserves a champion.



Welcome Superintendent Jen Taylor

Jen Taylor’s life and career are a testament to the power of a quality public education and the professionals who provide it. As the product of a school system shaped by educators who believed deeply in their students, she knows firsthand what it looks like when a school truly commits to every child. That experience is the foundation of her work and the driving force behind nearly twenty years of service in public education.

Her lifelong goal is to ensure that educational systems provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and understanding needed to envision and attain their own personal definitions of success and to lead fulfilling lives. At the core of her philosophy is the belief that there is nothing more important, or more rewarding, than learning. When individuals and organizations learn well, there is little beyond their reach. She believes this work must be done together—educators, students, families, and communities learning with and from one another. In that shared commitment, schools build not only achievement, but collective purpose.

Ms. Taylor’s career spans a wide range of educational settings, including secondary English, Career and Technical Education, cyber and online learning, building leadership, and district administration. These experiences have provided her with a comprehensive understanding of the education system and the diverse needs of those it serves. Across each role, she has worked in partnership with teachers, administrators, and staff to strengthen instruction, build leadership capacity, and establish the shared ownership and coherence necessary to move schools forward - together.

Most recently, Ms. Taylor served in a district-level role as Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. Prior to that, she was principal of a school serving more than 1,100 students, which earned its sixth redesignation as a nationally recognized School to Watch. Across these roles, professional learning, both for herself and throughout the system, has remained a central priority and a source of continued growth and fulfillment. She believes the ability to read is the gateway to all learning, and this conviction drives her commitment to literacy as a K–12, cross-disciplinary responsibility to be embraced together.

Ms. Taylor is a National Writing Project Fellow and former member of its leadership team. She holds a Superintendent Letter of Eligibility from Point Park University, a Master of Education in Curriculum and Teaching from Penn State, a PK–12 Administrative Certificate from Cabrini College, and obtained her Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education and English from Clarion University of Pennsylvania. She continues to engage in professional learning through the Penn Learning Network, attending conferences, and ensuring she stays up to date with professional reading - modeling the belief that educators must hold themselves to the same standards of growth they expect from others—and that growth is strongest when it is shared.

Outside of her professional role, she is a proud mother of two and “Gigi” to a 16 month old grandson. She enjoys camping with her family and recharges through good books and strong coffee.

She comes to Mount Union Area ready to listen, learn, and lead - committed to partnering with students, staff, families, and the broader community to build the conditions every child deserves and every educator needs to succeed.

“Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.” — John F. Kennedy

AUTISM AWARENESS & ACCEPTANCE MONTH



Celebrating Differences & Building Understanding

April is recognized nationwide as Autism Awareness Month, also increasingly known as Autism Acceptance Month—a meaningful time dedicated not only to raising awareness, but to fostering true understanding, inclusion, and respect for individuals on the autism spectrum.

Observed annually, this month highlights the importance of embracing neurodiversity and recognizing the unique strengths, perspectives, and contributions of individuals with autism.

While awareness remains important, the focus has evolved—shifting toward acceptance, inclusion, and meaningful support within our schools, workplaces, and communities.

A Day of Global Recognition

Each year on April 2nd, communities around the world observe World Autism Awareness Day. This day serves as a global reminder of the need to promote understanding and advocate for the rights and well-being of individuals with autism.

Moving Forward Together

Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month is a call to action for all of us—to listen, to learn, and to lead with compassion. Whether through education, advocacy, or simple acts of kindness, we each play a role in building a more inclusive and supportive community.

By moving beyond awareness and embracing acceptance, we ensure that individuals with autism are not only seen—but truly valued, heard, and empowered every day.

Additional Information



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MUASD

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**Appointments can be
scheduled**



**“WORKING TOGETHER TO
ACHIEVE STUDENT SUCCESS”**

Extended School Year (ESY) Services Overview

Extended School Year (ESY) services are specialized supports provided to eligible students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) beyond the traditional school year. These services are designed to ensure that students continue to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and maintain progress toward their individualized goals. ESY is not the same as summer school or enrichment programming—it is a continuation of specific special education services based on individual student needs.

ESY services may include targeted instruction or related services such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, or behavioral supports. These services are individualized and may occur during the summer months or other extended breaks in the school calendar. In some cases, ESY may involve a modified schedule or a focus on particular skill areas rather than a full replication of the school-year program.

Eligibility for ESY services is determined annually by a student’s IEP team, which includes educators, specialists, and parents. The decision is based on data and the individual needs of the student—not on disability category or availability of resources. One of the primary considerations is whether a student is likely to experience significant regression (loss of skills) during a break in services and whether the time needed to regain those skills (recoupment) would be substantial. Additional factors may include the student’s progress toward IEP goals, the severity of the disability, emerging or critical skill development, and any behavioral or environmental considerations that may impact learning continuity.

It is important for families to understand that ESY services are provided at no cost and are tailored specifically to support continued growth and skill retention. Transportation and service delivery details are also determined through the IEP process to ensure accessibility and effectiveness. Each year, eligibility is reviewed to ensure that services align with the student’s current needs and educational progress.

ESY services play a critical role in supporting students who require ongoing instruction to maintain meaningful educational benefit. By providing continuity of learning and reinforcing essential skills, ESY helps position students for success as they transition into the next school year.

Information on the MUASD ESY schedule will be provided soon.

**For additional information or questions, please contact:
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