



THE BEACON SCHOOL

Fall 2006

THE NEW BEACON SCHOOL OPENS ITS DOORS!

Many months of planning and preparation occurred prior to the beginning of the 2006 – 2007 academic year. As a result of the suggestions and insight of the Monroe County School District Advisory Group, a group made up of county assistant superintendents, secondary school principals, and other regional school officials, along with administrators from The Day School at Shawnee Academy, big changes have happened on the grounds of Shawnee Academy.

“We listened to the needs and suggestions of our participating school districts”

“The most notable change is our new name!” remarked Dr. Koberlein, Director of Education. No longer sharing the name of Shawnee Academy, The Beacon School opened its doors on August 28th with a new program structure. “We listened to the needs and suggestions of our

participating school districts,” explained Dr. Koberlein. “After much discussion it was decided that our day education program, a positive alternative to students experiencing unsuccessful school career paths within their local school system, would reach the needs of our community better with a name change to go along with a re-organized educational format.” As a result “The Beacon School” was formed with a logo design that includes the mountains and river, representative of our area, and a beacon of light that portrays strength, compassion, and opportunity.

Shawnee Academy will continue to provide residential treatment facility services in its own area of the spacious rural 40-acre campus. Separately, The Beacon School will provide day and alternative education for grades 3 – 12 to children and adolescents from area school districts. “We are essentially two separate schools,” described Aldo Cavalli, President of Shawnee

Academy, “classes and facilities continue to be completely separated between the two groups of students on campus.”

In addition to classes in computers, music, art, and physical education, new courses have been added in health education



and career counseling. A certified addictions counselor supports the educational staff, servicing students in grades 9 – 12. New curriculum plans include parent networking, employment training and community service and work programs.

Providing day and alternative education classes for grades 3–12

PASS, or Positive Alternative to School Suspension, is a program that began during Spring 2006 allowing students who are suspended from their home schools to continue their academic learning in a safe, structured and supportive academic environment. Short and long-term placement in The Beacon School’s regular, special or PASS programs are made through a student’s home school district.



The Beacon School

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East Stroudsburg University Partnership

East Stroudsburg University and the Beacon School recently signed articles of agreement forming a partnership that promises to support the staff and students at both schools. Assistant Professor, Dr. Angelo R. Senese, worked with University and Beacon School officials to develop the partnership. "We have a great opportunity to have ESU students intern and tutor local children from surrounding

school districts who attend The Beacon School," commented Dr. Senese. "These opportunities will allow Special Education Majors a chance to work with area youth who need extra assistance and at the same time provide valuable hands-on experiences."

The partnership with ESU and The Beacon School began this summer with a year-round internship program. Junior year Special Education majors will perform field observations, and be involved in five hours of training and five hours of classroom observation. The student teacher program for senior year Special Education majors may include an 18-week program of training and observations. ESU staff will engage in additional training

for supervisors of the student teachers.

This training includes:

- An overview of The Beacon School's policies and procedures.
- Expectations of the student teachers and their role at The Beacon School.
- Demonstration of emergency safety intervention, verbal de-escalation and least intrusive and restrictive behavioral management.
- Review of types of children The Beacon School services and their needs.

Opportunities for staff development will continue to be discussed as both schools seek ways to share best practices to support its students.

Students Explore Careers

Career Explorations is the newest course offering for high school students attending the Beacon School. All students in grades 9-12 will be required to complete the course, which emphasizes skills needed for employment, types of vocations and careers, and the entry requirements and benefits in the world of work.

Students complete self-assessments to learn their interests and to develop short-term goals. When students learn critical employment skills (job seeking, punctuality, communications, service, task completion) they will begin to participate in shadowing / observation of adults at work sites, and to be involved in actual work experiences in the community.

"We are excited about this opportunity for students," states Director of Education, Dr. Kenneth Koberlein. "All students need to be prepared for work throughout life and we are pleased to have this program, with an approved curriculum and experienced certified teacher, for students at the Beacon School," added Koberlein.

Gang Awareness Training

Officer Michael Leonard was featured as part of a dynamic half-day program for professional development at the start of the school year for The Beacon School and for Shawnee Academy. Officer Leonard's extensive background as an Investigator and Supervision Officer with the New York City Probation Department for juvenile offenders has led to his current assignment as a Performance Developer.

His visit focused on gang awareness. "Saving lives" is Officer Leonard's mission and one way to interrupt the direction of gang-involved youths is to provide knowledge to those working directly with our community's children and adolescents.

As a Criminal Justice Consultant with Monroe County for many years, Officer Leonard noted the increasing population of our area as well as the sometimes un-noticed growing

development of gangs and how youth are drawn to these organizations. Officer Leonard spoke about gang identifiers, explaining gang characteristics, nation sets, group symbols, gang allies/enemies, and inception behaviors. As one teacher noted, "Officer Leonard opened our eyes to the reality of what can surround our youth and helped us become aware of the dangers our students can be exposed to."

"Turning around young people starts with one-on-one intervention," stated Officer Leonard, "Parents, relatives and teachers who get involved with their kid's lives, have the chance to identify the good consequences that occur from not being involved with a gang." With individual attention and through mutual respect, barriers can be overcome and all youth have the opportunity to achieve positive outcomes.

Our Purpose

To provide our educators and community partners with information on the latest services of the Beacon School. For further information please contact:

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