

## Early Education Initiatives Poised to Move Forward in 2012 *submitted by Dr. Robin Hooper*

***You can't be too careful what you tell a child because you never know what he'll take hold of and spend the rest of his life remembering you by.***  
**- Frederick Buechner**



Early education initiatives in New York State are poised to move forward in 2012 despite state-wide disappointment in response to last month's announcement that our state was not awarded the Early Learning Challenge Grant. The Early Childhood Advisory Council co-chaired by Bob Frawley, representing the New York State Council on Children and Families and Sherry Cleary, representing the New York City Early Childhood Professional Development Institute, is pursuing the development of a state-wide early childhood program evaluation system and the development of a kindergarten readiness assessment. The Board of Regents during their December meeting adopted a 2012-13 Budget Proposal on State Aid to School Districts calling for an increase of \$53 million to fund early childhood education. Both actions support a continued commitment to the provision of high quality early learning programs in New York State.

In Rochester we are moving forward to strengthen our early education programs with a focus on curriculum, assessment and alignment of our early education programs beginning with early childhood and special education services for children ages 3-8 years. This month we are at the halfway point in the implementation of the High Scope Preschool Curriculum in accordance with our three year implementation plan. We are also embarking on the third year of our pilot of the CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) and will have implemented this assessment of student interaction in all of our prekindergarten classrooms by the end of the year. Our primary classrooms are implementing the Rochester Curriculum for the first time this year. Our early childhood community advocates and partners have supported the purchase of materials needed to implement the curriculum in classrooms and they are also supporting the assessment of our curriculum implementation. Collaboration in the provision of early childhood education services is critical to maintaining our forward momentum.

### Dates to Remember

**January 10 and 12**  
**ECERS-R Training**  
**(through RECAP)**

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**January 4, 11, 18**  
**District-Wide**  
**Professional Development—Emergent**  
**Literacy Skills:**  
**Comprehension/**  
**Expressive and**  
**Receptive**  
**Language**  
**(through avatar)**

### Celebrating Our Success *submitted by Bonnie Evers, RPPP*



The #07 morning preschool had some visitors. Three Junior High students from The Aquinas Institute delivered a blanket and a book for each child. Not only had the teens made the blankets but they also stayed and read the books aloud to the wide-eyed, four-year-olds.

Coordinator of the program "Book and a Blanket" Katherine Mannion, said, "This was a gift for us as well as one for you." The youngsters were thrilled with the visit as they listened intently during the reading time. The room was hushed as all were snuggled within, cuddled up, or laid out on their soft new blankets.

## Family Science Night at #44 PreK *submitted by Sharon Hanson, RPPP*

Students and their families joined together for an evening of science at #44 PreK. Since many of our parents work during the day, this event provided another opportunity for family involvement. Different stations were set up for exploring. In the hallway children experimented with mixing baking soda and vinegar for 'volcanic eruptions', which proved very exciting. Children are asking to continue more of this in class.

Are your hands really clean after you wash them? Children were able to find out using a special black light to see if germs were left behind on their hands. This showed children how important it is to wash between fingers too.



*Children and parents experience the transformation, mixing the glue and liquid starch to make silly putty. Adding color makes it even better!*



*Playing with the silly putty is even more fun than making it. What a wonderful sensory experience!*

Science can be messy too as families explored mixing glue and liquid starch to make silly putty. Color mixing is an activity that children are very familiar with; they were able to show parents what colors they needed to mix to make secondary colors.

Using a balance scale, children were able to experiment with heavy and light items and attempt to get materials to balance. Our last station provided an opportunity to experiment with absorption. A fun time was had by all. Everyone visited stations more than once.

*"Truth is ever to be found in simplicity, and not in the multiplicity and confusion of things.*

*- Sir Issac Newton*

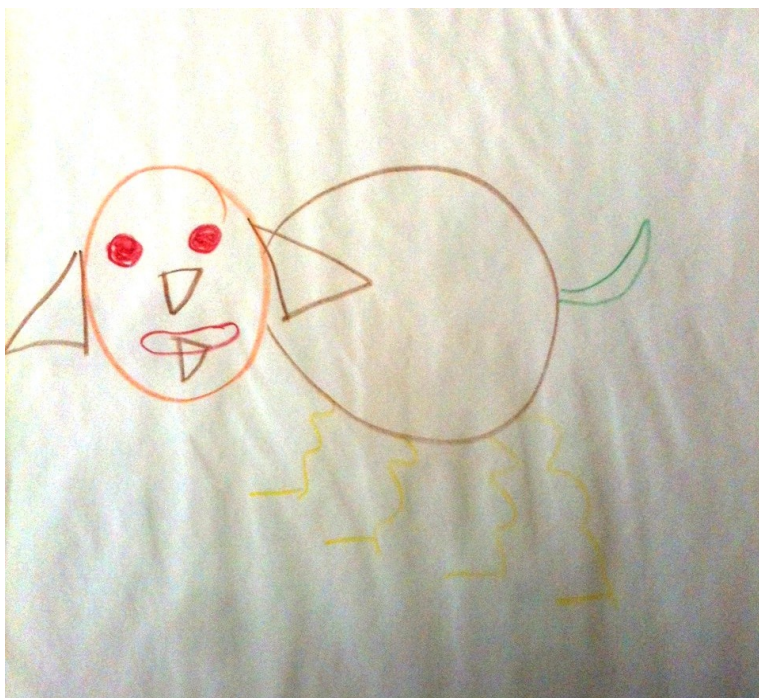
**Large Group Time Activity** *submitted by Jolette (Joie) Markham,  
The Community Place of Greater Rochester*



**Aiken Drum** with children's chosen food body parts

I wanted to share with you a large group I did that turned out to be one of the best large groups I have ever done without music. I have been looking for large group ideas. I came across Activity 16 in High/Scope's Large Group Activity Cards for Active Learners called Aiken Drum. I was not sure how the large group would go with this activity but thought I would give it a try. WOW, it was great. I followed the introduction from the card by telling the children I had been noticing their paintings of people at the art easel. We talked about the different body parts they like to paint and draw. I told them I had a song about a man who lived in the moon and he had food for his body parts. I drew the circle for his head and told them this was Aiken Drum and that he had spaghetti hair! I drew the spaghetti hair on my sheet for the children. I then asked, "I wonder what other body parts he has that are made of food?" The children were very interested and everyone came up with some body part made of food. He ended up having hamburger eyes, a beef nose, a bean mouth, blueberry teeth, pizza ears, french fry arms, ham fingers, ice cream body, chicken legs, and sandwich feet. This large group was a huge success and I am planning to continue by saying "Aiken Drum has a friend or a pet," having the children help create it again! Thanks for letting me share my success with you!

*Follow up Note: We did go on to make a pet for Aiken Drum. We talked about which pet he would have and then we named him **Bacon Drum**. Then we did the same thing we did for Aiken and came up with food for his body parts!*



**Bacon Drum**, the sequel

**Share your success stories with the High/Scope Curriculum**—send to [jeanne.herrick@rcsdk12.org](mailto:jeanne.herrick@rcsdk12.org).

**Please remember** to register on avatar for the District-wide professional Development. These sessions are for all UPK teachers and Education Consultants. Assistant teachers/paras are welcome.



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## Families Are Invited to the School Choice Expo

Take advantage of this opportunity to learn about all of the choices offered in the Rochester City School District. Explore what's available for Pre-K through Adult.

- **Representatives from each school** will be on hand to share unique aspects of their program and answer questions.
- **Representatives from various RCSD departments**, including Food Services, Transportation, Security and Health services, will be available.
- **Kindergarten and Prekindergarten registration** will be available. Please bring birth certificate, immunization record, proof of address, Picture ID (parent or guardian) and Proof of Guardianship (if not parent).
- **Rochester Police Department Operation Safe Child** will provide Child ID's with photo and fingerprints.
- **Free parking** is available in the convention center parking garage. You may enter the garage from South Ave., Broad St., or Stone St. Please bring the ticket for parking into the Expo. There will be a table for parking validation.

School Choice  
**EXPO**  
**Explore. Interact. Decide.**  
Saturday, January 7, 2012  
9:00 am to 3:00 pm  
Rochester Riverside Convention Center  
123 East Main Street

**Explore** options available for learners of all ages, Pre-K to Adult.

**Interact** with students and staff at each school's exhibit to learn more about what they have to offer.

**Decide.** Placement staff will be available to assist with the school selection process, and if you decide, early registration will be available!