

# Perkins News

A C H A N C E T O B L O S S O M

Doctor Franklin Perkins School • Perkins Adult Services • Davis Manor  
Perkins Behavioral Health • Perkins Child Development Center • Rein in a Dream

Fall 2013

## A First: iPads Roll Out in September

The Doctor Franklin Perkins School became the first special education school in Massachusetts to equip all students with a personal iPad for use when the fall semester of school began in September. While many public schools have been piloting iPads – and in those cases, usually in select grades and classrooms, not school-wide – Perkins took the bold step of supplying every student with an iPad, demonstrating confidence in tablet technology as a teaching instrument. Approximately 130 students kicked off the new school year with an Apple iPad.

“With one device, we are able to provide our students with academic, social, technological, and life skills tools that will help move them forward in academics and in daily activity,” said Executive Director, Dr. Charles P. Conroy. “It’s really the perfect vehicle to deliver exactly what our students need.”

The iPad initiative allows Perkins to enhance its educational curriculum with highly regarded educational applications or “apps” including “Khan Academy” and “Brainpop,” which are only available through tablet technology. “I am really looking forward to working with the iPad at school and being responsible enough to have my own. I love science and there will be so many more chances for me to explore things rather than find books in the library,” said 9th grade student Andrew. When comparing the iPad to traditional methods of instruction, he said “I feel more interested, and I think I pay attention better.”

The entire Perkins campus became wireless-accessible last spring. Students and staff can now access educational programs and thousands of books throughout all buildings and residences and across the campus, regardless of where an activity or lesson may take them. “It’s now within our ability to take the classroom outside, beyond the walls of school, and into the natural environment,” said David Cook, Director of Education. Continuing with the analogy, he said, “and the opportunities that iPads offer our students are boundless, too.”



Ninth grader, Andrew, enjoys exploring the universe on his new iPad..

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## Rein in a Dream Program Offers a Summer of Great Lessons

This summer, over 80 students enjoyed weekly participation in Rein in a Dream, the Perkins therapeutic riding and small animal care program. Whether it was a Perkins student, a child from the community, or a high school student from the Groton-Dunstable School District, participants enjoyed the barn setting and all the noises, activities, and life lessons that a carefully-designed program like Rein in a Dream offers. One of the many summer highlights is watching children from the Perkins Child Development Center groom, lead, and drive the mini horses through the obstacle courses with their instructors. This summer, Rein in a Dream supported the summer school theme “Across the Universe” by incorporating activities about the planets in student riding lessons. It’s not just about riding or feeding the animals at Rein in a Dream. It’s about building relationships, teamwork, communication skills, and building self-confidence. Rein in a Dream is accepting applications for fall registration. Please contact Cherie Ansin at [cansin@perkinschool.org](mailto:cansin@perkinschool.org) or 978-368-4804.



Benjamin and Cate enjoy a walk with one of our Rein in a Dream mini horses.

## Taste of Wachusett Event to Benefit Perkins Students

On Wednesday, October 23, from 5 p.m. until 8 p.m., Perkins will host the longest-running food and beverage tasting event in the region: The 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Taste of Wachusett. “Bring your robust appetites and feel good about eating well because all proceeds from the Taste of Wachusett directly benefit the students at Perkins,” said event chair and Director of Organizational Advancement, Kerry A. Flathers. This will be the second year Perkins has operated the popular tasting event, at the Boxborough Holiday Inn, directly off route 495 in Boxborough, MA. According to Flathers, the event this year will be enhanced with a broad assortment of silent auction items and live entertainment. “We’re excited to build on the incredible, first-time event we hosted last year,” she said. “At \$25 per ticket (\$30 at the door), attendees enjoy a variety of fine dining offerings, a fun social experience and help support our students. It’s really a terrific value.” Tickets for the event can be purchased on-line at [tasteofwachusett.com](http://tasteofwachusett.com) or here at Perkins. Hope to see you there!

Focus on  
Fundraising



Chef Siders from the Hopkinton Country Club prepares the 2012 winning scallop entrée.

## Director of Education Reflects on a Great First Year at Perkins

David Cook marked his one-year anniversary as Director of Education at the Doctor Franklin Perkins School on July 30. Looking back on his busy year at the helm of the school, David emphasized the accomplishments of Perkins students during the 2012-2013 school year. "We saw a dramatic increase in MCAS scores at the high school level," he said. "Currently, 97 percent of all our Grade 10 – 12 students have successfully completed English Language Arts, Math and Science MCAS requirements and 95 percent of Grade 10 students passed the ELA requirement on their first attempt. That is testament to our fine educators and the hard work put in by our students," he said.

Several student-led programs that were especially enjoyable for the students were introduced this year, including Poetry Jam, "Arts in Bloom" celebration, and a Veterans Day recognition ceremony. Student council speeches and elections, held in the school auditorium, were a first for the school and students. Students and staff were given an opportunity to provide ideas to enhance the school environment. Morning announcements, as well as other new and welcomed traditions have all contributed to an active and engaged school culture. Our students continued to be good community members through their various fundraising efforts to help those in need.

Doctor Franklin Perkins School received full accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), the nation's oldest accrediting association.

Other events that took place during the year included the inception of a Senior Yearbook Committee, culminating in the production of a brilliant piece; the re-launch of parent/teacher conferences; the expansion of the pre-vocational program to include Grade 9 students; and the BESTT (Building Educational Success Through Transitions) program. "I couldn't be prouder of our students, more grateful to our team of educators and staff, and more inspired by the work that we've all done together during my first year," Cook noted. "I'm energized to see that great work continue. The upcoming year with our new iPad initiative should be quite exciting."



Director of Education David Cook (right) presents art teacher Peter Curran with a service award at Recognition Day.

## Perkins to Provide Intensive Foster Care (IFC) Services

In Massachusetts there continues to be a shortage of foster homes available to provide the stable, supportive, and predictable home environment necessary for children with mental health and learning needs to flourish. Recognizing that a healthy home environment can make all the difference for a child with difficult mental health and familial circumstances, Perkins has stepped up to provide such services. In a move to help match children in need of intensive foster care homes with potential foster parents, Perkins earned approval by the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families to serve as a provider of Intensive Foster Care (IFC) services.

"Our focus now is to connect with people from the area who might be interested in learning what is involved in welcoming an Intensive Foster Care child into their home," said Timothy R. Hammond, Assistant Executive Director for Programs at Perkins and director of its Intensive Foster Care Services. "Individuals who are skilled at parenting, can provide a high level of supervision, and offer unconditional

support are key IFC parent candidates," he continued. The Perkins Intensive Foster Care program will provide intensive training to foster parents and will serve as an on-going support to families.

### Do you have room in your heart and in your home for a child in need of specialized foster care?

Perkins encourages anyone who is interested in learning more about IFC parenting, or would like more information to contact Tim Hammond, M.S., Director of Perkins Intensive Foster Care Services at 978-368-6545 or through email at [thammond@perkinschool.org](mailto:thammond@perkinschool.org).

# Another Feather in Our Cap!

Doctor Franklin Perkins School recently received notification of its accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) which provides accreditation services for more than 2,000 public and private institutions in the six-state region, pre-K through university level. "We are very excited to be awarded this accreditation as it represents the high standards and quality of the programs offered to our students," said David Cook, Director of Education.



This notification comes at the close of a year of licensing and accreditation activities that Perkins has successfully completed. The Joint Commission, which has rigorous standards related to medical, clinical, and residential services, reaccredited Perkins in November 2012. In October 2012, Perkins received re-approval from the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Perkins Child Development Center, a day care center for typically-developing infants, toddlers and preschoolers, is currently undergoing accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

"We are the only private special education school in Massachusetts that is accredited by NEASC and The Joint Commission," remarked Dr. Charles P. Conroy, Executive Director. "That's quite a distinction," he added.

## WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT!

PERKINS APPRECIATES THE GENEROSITY OF BENEFACTORS interested in furthering our work. If you would like to join the "Friends of Perkins," or continue your support of Perkins, please complete and return this section.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I would like to support the Friends of Perkins. Enclosed is my contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.  
\_\_\_\_\_ I would like information on planned giving.

*All contributions are tax deductible.*

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