

Kutztown University and Reading School District Partner to Provide Social Work Support

February 16, 2024

KUTZTOWN, PA – Kutztown University and the Reading School District have strengthened their partnership to provide qualified social workers to the local and regional community. This collaboration aims to strengthen professional development and establish a comprehensive social work program to better serve RSD's students and families.

KU and RSD's existing partnership has successfully placed numerous qualified KU graduates within the district. With over 40 social workers, the Reading School District now has one of the largest social work programs in Pennsylvania, ensuring at least one social worker is available in each school building. The university provides RSD with consultation on structuring newly developed school social work programs and offers training through its doctoral-level students.

"Our partnership with Reading School District and the KU Center for the Study of School Social Work is an organic collaboration that combines academic research and development efforts with the genuine needs of a community organization," said Dr. John Vafeas, department chair of KU Social Work. "This synergy presents a rare opportunity that will benefit our community."

On February 16, KU and RSD hosted Dr. Kevin Tan, professor of social work and associate dean for Engagement, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, in Reading. Dr. Tan provided insights into the national school social work model, aiding in the enhancement of the current program within the district.

"The Reading School District's substantial school social work program is embarking on uncharted territory, and we are grateful for our partnership with Kutztown University," said Dr. Jennifer Murray, RSD Superintendent. "This collaboration facilitates ongoing professional development and the establishment of a comprehensive Social Work program, elevating the level of service provided to our students and families."

Kutztown University's Department of Social Work provides high quality, nationally accredited curricula and program activities that address the diverse and evolving social needs of our rural, suburban, and urban communities, students, employers, and the social work profession. Through focused scholarship, innovative and collaborative practice, and community service, undergraduate social work students are equipped for generalist practice, while MSW graduates are prepared for advanced generalist practice with a Family-in-Environment practice perspective. Doctoral graduates are prepared for organizational leadership and higher education teaching roles.

For more information about KU's Department of Social Work, please visit <https://www.kutztown.edu/academics/colleges-and-departments/liberal-arts-and-sciences/departments/social-work.html>. For inquiries, contact 610-683-4235 or asnyder@kutztown.edu.

To learn more about the Reading School District's Office of Student Services, please visit <https://www.readingsd.org/domain/1398>. For inquiries, contact Anne Fisher at 484-258-7030 or fishera@readingsd.org.

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