

Ken Field

Owner of Slate Belt Energy Services

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Obsolescence

There are few things in the service business that worry me more than parts availability. In simpler times, the number and type of parts and in any given piece of equipment were less and not nearly as specific as they are today. Nothing disappoints me more than having a 7 year old mini split heat pump with a bad circuit board and being told that it is obsolete and parts are not manufactured for it any longer. The manufacturer is still making mini split heat pumps but none of those parts are compatible with the "older" units. You know what that means, junk the whole system and install a new one, for one piece, and not even one with any moving parts. That is insane. How is anyone supposed to know what will be supported in the future and what will be abandoned? I have another unit needing repair that was made by a manufacturer that has been around for 25 years at least and they made a model that was supposed to be the highest efficiency, best system ever. Not even 10 years later they abandoned it and have no parts available. I don't have a crystal ball so I have only so many ways to gauge what may happen to a manufacturer or a line of equipment in the future. I do feel bad for the homeowners because they are left holding the bag and have to make another sizable investment just to stay comfortable. I don't blame them for being angry but because I have been taking care of them for many years, they are not angry with me, just the situation.

There are so many brands of mini split systems out there today that it is incredible. I can think of probably 10 brands right off the top of my head. None are immune to the model changes and discontinuations either. Some of the most inexpensive ones seem to be a nightmare to get technical support and parts for but even the top of the line brands can be difficult. It seems that all the repair parts that were in stock before covid have been exhausted and no more have been made. Now we have to wait and are not even being told how long that wait will be. Central systems seem to be better for long term parts availability and that may be something to consider before choosing a mini split system. No matter which way you go, there is uncertainty about what will be available 10 years from today. All we can do is install exactly by the book and maintain them and hope for no service problems.

Ken Field is the owner of Slate Belt Energy and Field's Service, Inc. As a certified energy rater and contractor, he is qualified to assess every aspect of energy usage and prescribe solutions to save energy. He can be reached at 610-759-6306 or email Ken@FieldsService.com

Boscola Secures \$500,000 State Grant For School Districts To Bolster Math Skills For Students

By Senator Boscola's Office

Bethlehem, August 24, 2022 - - State Senator Lisa Boscola announced today that she secured \$500,000 to provide supplemental learning resources to students in the 18th Senatorial District. The grant funding will provide First In Math services to all K-8 students at every school district in the 18th.

First In Math is a supplemental resource that school districts may utilize to improve a student's fluency in mathematics. First In Math features hundreds of engaging math games designed to strengthen fact fluency, automaticity, computational thinking and other critical skills.

"It's critical that we provide the educational tools necessary for our students to be prepared to succeed in our 21st century world and First in Math has a proven track record of success," Senator Boscola stated. "Funding to bring these services to all the school districts in the 18th District was obtained during this year's budget negotiations because of the results and data that First in Math provides. This is a proven supplemental resource, that not only excites students to learn, but also provides immediate feedback to encourage additional learning."

Founded in 2002, by Bob Sun, First In Math is a nationally renowned resource that brings fun to the forefront of learning because of the immediate feedback and results that students receive.

"Thanks to Senator Boscola, we now have an opportunity to work at a regional level with more than 25,000 students in grades K to 8 over multiple years," stated Robert Sun, 24@ game and First In Math@ Inventor and Founder and Chairman of Suntext International Inc. "Building strong math and problem-solving skills in our children will strengthen our community's future workforce."

Both the Bethlehem Area and Easton Area School Districts have already seen the significant impact that First In Math can have on student achievement. In 2021/2022, EASD and BASD students solved 133 million math problems spending 369,558 hours thinking mathematically – most of this activity was done outside school hours.

"First in Math' is a critical piece of our math curriculum by building math fact skills and mathematical thinking," said Dr. Joseph Roy, Superintendent of the Bethlehem Area School District. "BASD students will continue to benefit from First in Math thanks to Senator Boscola and our long time partner Bob Sun."

"Our students and staff are excited about math and eagerly set aggressive personal, class, and school math achievement goals when working within the First in Math program," stated David Piperato, Superintendent of Easton Area School District. "The number of math problems our students complete annually in First in Math is impressive. We are proud of our students, and we appreciate the support that Mr. Sun provides to the students and staff of the Easton Area School District."



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Please Watch for Children as Schools Open

By Senator Scavello

PEN ARGYL - With children returning to school, it's a good time to revisit the state school bus stopping law.

Motorists must stop at least 10 feet away from school buses that have their red lights flashing and stop arm extended.

Motorists must stop when they are behind a bus, meeting the bus or approaching an intersection where a bus is stopped.

Motorists following or traveling alongside a school bus must also stop until the red lights have stopped flashing, the stop arm is withdrawn and all children have reached safety.

If physical barriers such as grassy medians, guide rails or concrete median barriers separate oncoming traffic from the bus, motorists in the opposing lanes may proceed without stopping.

Do not proceed until all the children have reached a place of safety. The penalties if convicted of violating the law include a \$250 fine, five points on your driving record and a 60-day license suspension. For your sake and that of students and school employees, please be careful around school buses.