



Of Special Interest

Rocky Point School District Special Education Newsletter



A Message from Special Education Director

Andrea Moscatiello

As the 2013-14 school year is behind us, I hope you are now enjoying the summer vacation with your family and friends.

As we enter a new and exciting school year, I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone of the goal of the special education department – to ensure equal access to a free and appropriate education for all students in Rocky Point with disabilities. Our department, along with the general education staff, fully embraces this mission and has been working collaboratively to implement inclusion opportunities and incorporate new strategies into their classrooms. To further our programs, several workshops are planned for the months ahead and a few occurred at the end of the school year. Differentiated instruction and co-teaching workshops will take place throughout the summer for our staff. CPI, as well as autism awareness, training occurred at the end of the school year for our teacher aides. It is our belief that by engaging in these types of professional development programs, we can strengthen our robust program and work to better serve our students' individual and collective needs. As we continue to work collaboratively, I am proud to welcome new special education teacher Jacqueline Hawson to our department.

As the home-to-school connection is an integral part of ensuring our students' success in and outside the classroom, I encourage you to remain connected with your child's sponsor teachers on the middle and secondary level as well as their classroom teachers on the primary and intermediate level.

I am looking forward to another busy and successful year.

Special Education Terms and Definitions

Explanations of commonly used words and phrases in the special education program

Terms and Definitions

ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act

Civil rights law that protects people with disabilities from discrimination.

DDD – Division of Developmental Disabilities

Public agency that offers various services to qualified individuals with disabilities.

ESY – Extended School Year Services

ESY is the special education and related services provided to students beyond the regular 180-day school year to maintain a student's learned skills/behavior, not the teaching of new skills/behaviors. The IEP team decides whether or not the student requires ESY services and the location of these services.

FAPE – Free Appropriate Public Education

Legal requirement for school districts to provide free appropriate public education to qualified students with disabilities, regardless of disability.

IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Federal law ensuring services to children with disabilities. Governs how states and public agencies provide education to youth with disabilities.

IEP – Individual Education Program

Personalized education program for students with disabilities.

LRE – Least Restrictive Environment

Requirement to educate special needs children with children who are not disabled, to the extent appropriate.

OT – Occupational Therapy

Focuses on daily living, fine motor skills and sensory integration.

PT – Physical Therapy

Evaluation and treatment of physical disabilities to improve the use of bones, muscles, joints and nerves through exercise.

PTA – Parent Teacher Association

Advocacy organization that promotes the improvement of health, welfare and education of children.

Related Services

Specialized services provided by the district for qualified students, such as physical therapy (PT) and occupational therapy (OT).

SDI – Specially Designed Instruction

Appropriate instructional adaptations that meet the needs of eligible students.

Section 504 – Part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that protects qualified individuals from discrimination based on their disability. Allows for accommodations and/or modifications so that children with disabilities can participate in the general education classroom with access to general education curriculum.

SLP – Speech Language Pathology

Therapy that focuses on improvement of communication problems.

SPECIAL EDUCATION RESOURCE COMMITTEE (SERC) MEETINGS

October 15, 2014
November 5, 2014
January 7, 2015
February 4, 2015

March 4, 2015
April 15, 2015
May 20, 2015
June 10, 2015

Jenny Andersson – Chairperson
www.rockypointnypta.com

DIRECTOR'S ROUNDTABLE MEETINGS

October 9 – 4:30 p.m.
December 18 – 4:30 p.m.
February 12 – 4:30 p.m.
April 16 – 4:30 p.m.
June 11 – 4:30 p.m.

Understanding ADHD

According to the American Psychiatric Association, 5% of children are affected by Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder or ADHD. Below are some key facts to note about this diagnosis:

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Easily distracted
- Difficulty paying attention
- Very forgetful
- Fails to finish things
- Restless or fidgety
- Talks excessively
- Trouble taking turns

CONDUCT PROBLEM BEHAVIORS TO LOOK FOR...

- Doesn't follow directions/refuses to follow the rules
- Gets into fights/argues a lot
- Loses temper easily
- Blames others for own mistakes
- Angry much of the time
- Irritable mood

Parent Road to Resources

NATIONAL SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCES

Information for individuals with disabilities and their families

2-1-1 CALL CENTER

www.211.org

A national help line that connects people with community services and volunteer opportunities

Phone: 2-1-1

COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN (CEC)

www.cec.sped.org

Organization dedicated to improving educational outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities, including disabilities

Phone: 703-620-3660

- 17 divisions for specialized information
- Special education publications, conferences and conventions

NATIONAL CENTER FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES IEP HEADQUARTERS

www.nclld.org/students-disabilities/iep-504-plan/individualized-education-program-headquarters

NCLD's Information Center on Individualized Education Programs provides extensive information on IEPs.

Phone: 888-575-7373

- IEP eligibility
- What an IEP is
- What an IEP contains
- The parents' role in an IEP
- The IEP meeting and IEP team
- 504 plans and related Info

NATIONAL DISSEMINATION CENTER FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES (NICHCY)

www.nichcy.org

National organization with disability information for all ages

Phone: 800-695-0285

- Resource information, publications
- Resources to help locate organizations and agencies that address disability-related issues

- IDEA and No Child Left Behind information, as related to children with disabilities
- Research-based information on effective educational practices

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION ON DISABILITY (NOD)

www.nod.org

National organization that raises disability awareness through numerous programs

Phone: 800-293-5960

- Community involvement programs
- Economic participation and access to independence information

PARENT ADVOCACY COALITION FOR EDUCATION RIGHTS (PACER) CENTER

www.pacer.org

National organization that helps to expand opportunities and enhance quality of life for children and young adults with disabilities and their families

Phone: 952-838-9000

WRIGHTSLAW

www.wrightslaw.com

Leading website about special education law and advocacy

- Advocacy, federal laws, No Child Left Behind, IDEA 2004
- Thousands of articles and free resources
- Trainings and seminars
- Section 504 and IEP information

Student Assistance Counselor for Transition Support

NEW
for 2014-15

In addition to her current transitional responsibilities, Samantha Caputo will now assist and support students and families with transition options for after graduation. Ms. Caputo will be reaching out to families at the start of the school year to discuss the process.

Best Wishes

After 32 years in the district, special education teacher David Comando retired from Rocky Point this June. During his tenure, Mr. Comando was primarily assigned to Joseph A. Edgar Intermediate School as a grade 4-6 resource room and self-contained teacher. He also worked at Frank J. Carasiti Elementary School for 14 years as a 15:1 kindergarten teacher.

Upon his retirement, Mr. Comando reflected on his time in the district and his work with countless students. "I hope the students I taught have realized they all have strengths, and to use these to overcome obstacles they may face," he said. "It takes perseverance, the ability to take risks and at times fail, but to come back even stronger."

His plans for the months ahead include enjoying life on his sailboat and spending quality time with his family.



Office Staff Member Begins New Chapter



Special education department secretary Pat Williamson will retire this September after working in the district since 1986. Ms. Williamson began her career in the district as a clerk typist in the high school library before working in both the high school guidance and main offices. Reflecting on her time in district, Ms. Williamson said, "I have met many people, made many friends over the years and am glad I chose Rocky Point as my 'second home.'"

Her retirement plans include spending time with family, traveling and enjoying time outdoors.

Words of Gratitude

Many letters have been received acknowledging the staff at Rocky Point for their commitment and dedication. The following excerpt was printed with the individuals' permission:

“You are all magnificent! I so appreciate all that you have done and are doing for Cory and other students throughout the Rocky Point School District. You made Cory a very comfortable, more confident student. You deserve to be highly commended for that.”

- Donna Gestone

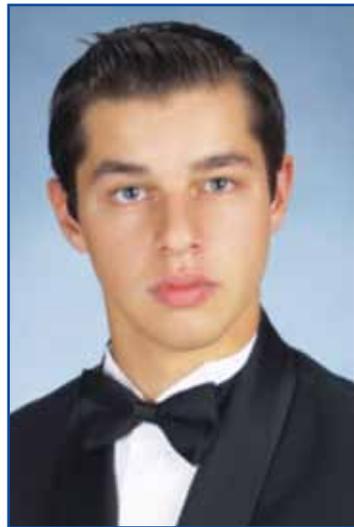
“The Down Syndrome Advocacy Foundation would like to thank you for your participation and coordination of our Dress Down for Down Syndrome fundraiser in celebration of World Down Syndrome Day. You contributed to a wonderful cause to increase the public's awareness of the needs and strengths of individuals with Down syndrome. Your participation in this fundraiser has contributed to our mission to enhance the lives of individuals with Down syndrome through advocacy support.”

- Mike Hoffman, president of the Down Syndrome Advocacy Foundation

NEWS AROUND

Autism Awareness Celebrated

In honor of Autism Awareness month, students and teachers worked to promote understanding of this condition. Through individual and collective projects, the schools celebrated students' diversity and worked to create a culture of acceptance and support. At the secondary level, students showed their support by signing paper puzzle pieces – the traditional symbol of autism awareness – and creating a display of the items.



Student of the Year Award

Rocky Point student Charles Noto was selected for the Student of the Year Award by the executive board of the Long Island Association for Special Education Administrators, Inc. Charles was nominated for this honor by special education teacher Cynthia Nardiello and was commended during a special luncheon at the Milleridge Inn. At the event, he was recognized for his achievements and presented with the award, along with a \$500 scholarship. This award was established to recognize students who have successfully moved from a more restrictive special education setting to a less restrictive setting, met the requirements for completion, exited the district in June 2014 and have been receiving services for the past four years.

Kindness Commended

Rocky Point senior Antonia Aloizos was selected to receive the third annual Live Like Susie Kindness Award. The Be a Nicer Neighbor Club created this award to honor the life of former member Susie Facini and to recognize students for their kindness. Antonia is described by her teachers as having a sincere concern for everyone she comes in contact with and bringing sunshine into the classroom each day.



THE SCHOOLS

In the Workforce

Joseph A. Edgar Intermediate School students in Michele Maggio's and Christine Kistner's classes learned about the working world through an in-class initiative. The students were responsible for completing daily tasks and were compensated with "earnings." To reinforce their mathematics skills, as well as their independent living skills, the students then had the option to deposit their money in the "bank" or to spend it at the "store." The project focused on many instructional concepts, including telling time, proper language when interacting with adults and peers, cooperation and collaboration, responsibility and math skills.



Spa Day

As part of their World of Work program, the district's Life Skills students enjoyed visiting the cosmetology class at Rocky Point High School to learn about the profession of beauticians. During the workshop, the cosmetology students shared and demonstrated what they have learned by providing the Life Skills students with free washes, cuts, blow dries, manicures and waxing services.

Performing Annual Play



Kindergarten students in Karen Nicholson and Jessica Lukas' class at Frank J. Carasiti performed their annual play before family and friends this June. The production, "Peep Lost Her Sheep," was written by Ms. Nicholson and allowed

the students time to showcase their public speaking and literacy skills.

Cleaning Up Local Camp

District students and administrators teamed up to help beautify the grounds at Camp Pa-Qua-Tuck. During the spring cleanup program, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael Ring, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Deb De Luca, Business Official Greg Hilton and Executive Director for Educational Services Susan Wilson, all members of the Rocky Point Rotary, worked with Rocky Point High School's Interact Service Club and their adviser Margaret Messinetti to clean the grounds of the location. The group raked leaves, weeded flowerbeds, laid down mulch, painted and completed general cleanup duties.



Office Staff, There to Help

The special education office staff members work hard each day to support students, parents and other staff. If you have any questions regarding any correspondence you receive or need to ask a question, please reach out to these professionals who will be more than happy to assist you.



Mary Caccavale
631-744-1600,
ext. 7532



Bettie Manger
631-744-1600,
ext. 7105



Barbara Vecchio
631-744-1600,
ext. 7508



Kari O'Connor
631-744-1600,
ext. 7560

Ladders of Support

Who to contact when you have a problem

Start with the special education teacher and/or sponsor teacher, general education teacher or support personnel.

Frank J. Carasiti Elementary School
631-744-1600, ext. 7200
Joseph A. Edgar Intermediate School
631-744-1600, ext. 7400
Rocky Point Middle School
631-744-1600, ext. 6020
Rocky Point High School
631-744-1600, ext. 6030

Building Principals

Frank J. Carasiti Elementary School
Virginia Gibbons
vgibbons@rockypoint.k12.ny.us

Joseph A. Edgar Intermediate School
Linda Towlen
ltowlen@rockypoint.k12.ny.us

Rocky Point Middle School
Dr. Scott O'Brien
sobrien@rockypoint.k12.ny.us

Rocky Point High School
John DeBenedetto
jdebenedetto@rockypoint.k12.ny.us

Special Education Coordinator

Paul Walia
631-744-1600, ext. 7589
pwalia@rockypoint.k12.ny.us

CSE/CPSE Administrator

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treilly@rockypoint.k12.ny.us

CSE/CPSE Administrator

Beth Apostoli
631-744-1600, ext. 6421
bapostoli@rockypoint.k12.ny.us

Director of Special Education

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amoscatiello@rockypoint.k12.ny.us

Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Deborah De Luca
631-849-7568
ddeluca@rockypoint.k12.ny.us

Superintendent

Dr. Michael F. Ring
631-849-7561
supt@rockypoint.k12.ny.us

Board of Education

Email on BOE web page
Write to: Rocky Point District Office
90 Rocky Point-Yaphank Road
Rocky Point, NY 11778

New York State Education Department Special Education Division

www.nysed.gov

What Is a Sponsor Teacher?

The responsibility of the sponsor teachers at the middle and secondary levels is to maintain and monitor each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Parents are strongly encouraged to contact the sponsor teacher as the first line of communication in a system of assurances that their child's IEP is properly implemented. The sponsor teacher will contact the parents of his or her assigned students early in the school year. If you are unsure of who your child's sponsor teacher is, call the Special Education Department.



www.rockypointschools.org

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SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Dr. Michael F. Ring

District Mission Statement

The mission of the Rocky Point Union Free School District is to develop each child's full potential in a nurturing and supportive student-centered environment that will promote a foundation for lifelong learning.