



Of Special Interest

Rocky Point School District Special Education Newsletter



Dear Parents and Guardians,

Spring has sprung and I hope you are enjoying the warmer weather with your families!

I am proud to report that our students are continuing to make great strides academically and emotionally this year due in large part to the ongoing support of their families and the dedicated staff in the Rocky Point Union Free School District. To help ensure that our students continue to excel, both in and outside of the classroom, our special education department strives to be clear, proactive and inventive. To support this commitment, our educators work regularly to foster strong home-to-school relationships with those we service. Whether this is your first or one of your last years working with us, I encourage any family with questions about their child's program to reach out to the members of the department.

In tandem with our commitment to establishing strong connections, our educators remain vigilant in their efforts to stay at the forefront of their field by engaging in ongoing professional development opportunities throughout the year. These sessions not only help us keep abreast of new advancements in the field, but also allow us to share best practices with colleagues.

Annual reviews have begun in the elementary schools. I encourage our parents and guardians to take part in these meetings, as it is important for you to be a part of developing your child's educational plan for next year.

Sincerely,
Andrea Moscatiello
Director of Special Education

Special Education Programs and Services 2016-2017

Related Services Only: Some students do not require an academic educational program, but due to the nature of their disability, require services that are "related" to their disability. Related services may be provided in the classroom ("push in") or in a therapy room ("pull out"). The frequency of services is determined by the Committee on Special Education. Related services can include:

- Speech language therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Vision services
- Counseling
- Social skills training
- Parent training (for students with Autism)

Resource Room Program: Offered at each building for supplemental instruction provided by a certified special education teacher.

Learning Labs: Instruction provided by a certified special education teacher every other day or daily to support math, English language arts or study skills.

Integrated Co-teaching (ICT K-5): Program provided within a general education classroom and provides the additional support of a certified special education teacher.

Integrated Co-teaching (ICT 6-12): Program provided within a general education classroom; provides the additional support of a certified special education teacher for the core academic areas.

Special Class (15:1): Program with opportunities for mainstream in the general education setting for lunch and specials.

Life Skills Program (12:1:1, 12:1:2): Provided to some students who present at a level of disability necessitating the administration of the New York State Alternate Assessment for Students with Disabilities. This program provides a curriculum consisting of life skills and functional academics that are intended to assist students in their transition to independent adulthood.

Out-of-District Program Placement (e.g. BOCES): Such programs offer special education classrooms at a staffing ratio determined by the Committee on Special Education as well as any needed related services. Transportation to such programs is provided by the district.

Remember to VOTE

May 17 • 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. • High School Gymnasium

Benefits Realized Through Inclusion

Research shows that the inclusion model for instruction results in numerous benefits for students both with and without disabilities.

For Children with Disabilities:

- Realistic preparation for adult life
- Presence of appropriate role models
- Opportunities to learn in natural settings
- Raised expectations and increased challenges
- Equal opportunities
- Possibilities for diverse friendships
- Access to curricular modifications and instruction supports that meet their individual needs

For Children without Disabilities:

- Increased acceptance of and respect for human diversity
- New skill acquisition
- Access to curricular modifications and instruction supports that meet their individual needs
- Increased variety of settings and opportunities for learning and success
- Possibilities for diverse friendships

NYS Continuum of Services

- Regular Class
- Regular Class with Related Services
- Consulting Teacher
- Resource Room
- Integrative Co-Teaching (option)
- Special Class
- BOCES
- Home/Hospital Setting
- Private Approved School
- Residential School

Understanding Level 1 Career Assessments

What is a Level 1 Career Assessment?

The Level 1 Career Assessment is:

- A structured process that takes place over a two-year period starting in the middle school (age 12).
- The review of existing student information to assess basic skills and determine a student's interests.
- The structured collection of information about the student's interests and abilities outside the school environment that allows the student and family to work with the school in the career decision-making process.

When is the Level 1 Career Assessment performed?

The Level 1 Career Assessment is performed when the student is in the middle school (ages 12-13).

Why perform a Level 1 Career Assessment?

The Level 1 Career Assessment is a process that occurs over time for the purpose of:

- Focusing the student, parents and staff on the realistic positive outcomes available to the student upon completion of his/her secondary education.
- Documenting the decision-making process concerning career programming for the students.

What is a realistic outcome for a career programming decision?

A career programming decision may include, but not be limited to, participation in the following:

- BOCES secondary occupational education programs.
- Secondary special education that includes a vocational component.
- Career internships, mentorships and apprenticeships.
- College preparatory programs that specify supports needed by the student.

- Supported employment.
- Further assessment, including why further assessment is needed.
- U.S. Armed Forces.

Who should be given a Level 1 Career Assessment?

All students classified with a disability that are between the ages of 12 and 14 years of age as of Sept. 1 of a given year will receive a Level 1 Career Assessment. First-time students to special education over the age of 12 will also have a Level 1 performed regardless of their age.

Who should perform the Level 1 Career Assessment?

The Level 1 Career Assessment is a team process. The teacher who writes the IEP for a student manages the Level 1 Career Assessment process and ensures the activities are performed. The teacher is not the one who should be performing all the activities. The actual gathering of information can be performed by other team members. In all cases, the student and family should be communicating with someone with whom they are comfortable.

When is the information due?

Information from the Level 1 Career Assessment should be included in the development of each student's IEP for the following school year.

Student Interview (mandated) Purpose

This one-on-one directed conversation with the student is used to:

- Find out what the student's expectations are of the schooling process and how he/she perceives his/her future.
- Provide a reality check through questions of factual information about the student.

- Give an indication of how the student uses his/her local community and how he/she uses free time outside of the school environment.
- Provide the opportunity for the student to give direct input into the career assessment and decision-making process.

The student interview is the student's perception of what he/she expects as a result of participating in the schooling process. It is also used to learn if there are other factors or resources in the student's life that can be useful in learning about career choices.

The Parent Interview (mandated) Purpose

The parent interview provides the parent, guardian or advocate with the opportunity to:

- Have direct input into the career assessment process and the future direction and outcome of their child's education.
- Confront the reality that their child is growing up and becoming an adult who has choices and decisions to make.
- Talk about non-school issues that may directly affect their child's ability to concentrate and learn in the school setting.
- Provide information to the school about how they see their maturing child interacting with the home environment and the community.
- Become a resource in their child's educational and career determination process.

There is no right or wrong answer to these questions. Any information that helps the school to understand the student's home environment and family's value system is helpful. A parent's refusal to provide information may also prove to be useful if it helps the school district to understand a student better. The career assessment process is meant to be informational, not confrontational.

Parents Becoming Partners

The Family's Role in Specially Designed Reading Instruction

It is important that parents support their child's emerging reading skills and share insight only they may have about their children. Parents are keen experts in what their children like, what they can expect in different situations, how they express their feelings and how they respond to problems. As such, parents can often help relate reading to their child's life experiences.

Information provided by parents is a vital part of a child's evaluation process and is taken into consideration when developing an IEP. Further more, IDEA guidelines specifically note that parents be included as members of the committee.

Throughout the school year, the district works to create environments conducive to fostering active involvement of families by establishing rapport, connecting families with needed services and embracing a strong home-to-school partnership. Schools and teachers are also encouraged to share information about effective strategies and activities for parents to use at home in order to support reading development. These activities can include encouraging families to:

- Read to their child at home using an extensive variety of written materials.
- Discuss books with their children.

This can be structured using "wh" questions: (Who, what, where, when, why? What happened first? What will come next? What if? etc.).

- Use language to express relationships, make connections and observe similarities and differences in everyday conversation.
- Use rhyming, word games, poetry and alliteration to help children hear sounds within words.
- Provide access to books at home or through the public library that are commensurate with their child's reading abilities.
- Communicate with their child's teacher(s) about reading.

Transitional Services

Below are a variety of credible resources for those going through a time of transition.

Adult Career & Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES/VR):
<http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/>

Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism Assoc. (AHA): <http://www.ahany.org/>

Association for Persons in Supported Employment:
<http://www.apse.org/>

Career Zone:
<http://careerzone.ny.gov/views/careerzone/index.jsf>

Cornell University - TransQUAL Online:
<http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/transqual/open-portal.cfm>

Island Drafting & Technical Institute: <http://www.idti.edu/>

New York State Department of Labor:
<http://www.labor.ny.gov/home/>

New York State Office of Children and Family Services: Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped:
<http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/cbvh/>

New York State Office of Mental Health:
<http://www.omh.ny.gov/>

NYSRA: <http://www.nyrehab.org>

Office for People with Developmental Disabilities for New York State: <http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/>

O*NET Online: <http://www.onetonline.org/>

University of the State of New York, State Education Department: <http://www.nysed.gov>

Western Suffolk Counselors Association:
<http://wsuffolkcounselors.org>

Extended School Year (ESY) Services

Extended School Year is a mandatory extension of the special education continuum to learners with a disability over the summer months in order to provide a free and appropriate public education. The need for service arises when it is suspected that the student will suffer a significant loss of critical skill as a result of a lengthy break in instruction. The ESY eligibility determination is based on the student's current status of their goals, and eligibility will be determined through the IEP process.

BOCES will be hosting a regional summer school for our students who are eligible as per their IEP. Summer session will run from July 5 through Aug. 12.

Autism 101

What Exactly Is Autism?

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD), or autism, is a developmental disability considered the result of a neurological condition affecting normal brain function, development and social interactions. Children and adults with autism find it difficult or impossible to relate to other people in a meaningful way and may show restrictive and/or repetitive patterns of behavior or body movements. While great strides are being made, there is no known cause or a known singular effective treatment for autism.

Opening the Door to Autism

There are five developmental disorders that fall under the autism spectrum disorder umbrella and are defined by challenges in three areas: social skills, communication, and behaviors and/or interests.

Autistic Disorder – Occurs in males four times more than females and involves moderate to severe impairments in communication, socialization and behavior.

Asperger's Syndrome – Sometimes considered a milder form of autism, Asperger's is typically diagnosed later in life than other disorders on the spectrum. People with Asperger's syndrome usually function in the average to above average intelligence range and have no delays in language skills, but often struggle with social skills and restrictive and repetitive behavior.

Rett Syndrome – Diagnosed primarily in females who exhibit typical development until approximately 5 to 30 months, when children with Rett syndrome begin to regress, especially in terms of motor skills and loss of abilities in other areas. A key indicator of Rett syndrome is the appearance of repetitive, meaningless movements or gestures.

Childhood Disintegrative Disorder – Involves a significant regression in skills that have previously been acquired, and deficits in communication, socialization and/or restrictive and repetitive behavior.

Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS) – Includes children that do not fully meet the criteria for the other specific disorders or those that do not have the degree of impairment associated with those disorders.

Living with Autism

People with autism have challenges in the areas of communication, socialization and restricted/repetitive behaviors. A few examples are:

Communication

- Development of language is significantly delayed.
- Some do not develop spoken language.
- Experience difficulty with both expressive and receptive language.
- Difficulty initiating or sustaining conversations.
- Robotic, formal speech.
- Repetitive use of language.
- Difficulty with the pragmatic use of language.

Socialization

- Difficulty developing peer relationships.
- Difficulty with give-and-take of social interactions.
- Lack of spontaneous sharing of enjoyment.
- Impairments in use and understanding of body language to regulate social interaction.
- May not be motivated by social reciprocity or shared give-and-take.

Restricted/Repetitive Behavior

- Preoccupations atypical in intensity or focus.
- Inflexibility related to routines and rituals.
- Stereotyped movements.
- Preoccupations with parts of objects.
- Impairments in symbolic play.

Learn About Signs and Symptoms

There is no single behavior that is always typical of autism or any of the autism spectrum disorders.

Autism is a baffling, lifelong disorder. And while there is no cause or cure, nor a known singular effective treatment, it is treatable. People with autism – at any age – can make significant progress through therapy and treatments, and can lead meaningful and productive lives.

However, experts agree that early diagnosis and early intervention are critical, because the earlier people with autism get help, the better their outcomes will be in the future.

Celebrating Diversity

March:

The district once again participated in DSAF Dress Down for Down Syndrome on March 21, a day selected to symbolize the triplication of the 21st chromosome, and raised \$1,558.61 for the cause.

World Down Syndrome Day was first instituted in 2006 and has grown exponentially across the globe.

Down syndrome is a genetic condition that causes delays in physical and intellectual development. It occurs in one in every 691 live births. Individuals with Down syndrome have 47 chromosomes instead of the usual 46. It is the most frequently occurring chromosomal disorder. Down syndrome is not related to race, nationality, religion or socioeconomic status. The most important fact to know about individuals with Down syndrome is that they are more like others than they are different.

May:

May is Better Hearing and Speech Month, which was founded in 1927 by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

The aim of BHSM is to raise awareness about hearing and speech problems, encouraging people to analyze their own hearing and speech, and to take action if they think there might be a problem. Treatment can then be given to improve the quality of life in people with communication problems.

Rocky Point UFSD would like to say a special thank-you to our speech staff who service children each day.

April:

In celebration of April being National Autism Awareness Month, Rocky Point Schools participated in an awareness campaign of the disorder on April 1 by wearing “genes” and the color blue.



Athletics for All

Please consider joining our Athletics for All team as they participate in the following activities this year. The events run on the following Thursdays from approximately 3-4:30 p.m. To the right are pictures from several recent events, including cross country games and a practice that the school's varsity boys basketball team volunteered to run.

Activity	Date	Host School
Field Day	April 14	Mattituck
Fitness	May 5	Bay Shore
Track & Field	May 19	Riverhead
Softball	June 2	Longwood



Classroom News



Cooking with a Firefighter

Rocky Point High School's Life Skills class learned important cooking skills during a recent visit with chef personality Firefighter Ray. The cook spoke with the students about his show, "Firehouse Kitchen," and taught them how to make one of his specialties – Ray's chicken skewers. In addition, they asked the visitor questions about his profession and watched a recent episode of the informational show.

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On the Job

Rocky Point High School's Life Skills students have the chance to experience a myriad of professions as part of their participation in the worksite project with CEO. Most recently, they worked alongside individuals at a local Home Depot and at Spirit's Promise Horse Rescue Program in Riverhead. At both locations, the students learned to perform daily tasks associated with the jobs they were shadowing and asked employees questions about the respective occupations.

In addition, this year, students have also interned at Chick-fil-A in Port Jefferson Station, Friends of Freddie Pet Rescue in Middle Island and Foodtown in Rocky Point.

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Getting Crafty

The fourth- and fifth-grade Crafty Cooks Club provides members with the opportunity to explore their creativity in a fun and social setting at JAE. The group, which meets monthly, welcomes all students who want to be creative and a part of something in the school community. Currently, the club is comprised of four groups of 25 students. Club advisors Michele Maggio and Gina Fabian work with students to create crafty projects each week to take home. Most recently, they created spring wreaths.

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Cave of Learning

The complex subject of animal hibernation and seasons was the center of a winter project in Cathy Conner's class at Frank J. Carasiti Elementary School.

With the help of papier-mache, the students created a classroom cave for several stuffed animals. After fashioning the structure, they painted and decorated the cave before placing the animals inside for the winter. The class discussed the importance of this action and how these animals begin to wake at the first sign of spring.

Online Resources

The Internet has a wealth of information that can be both helpful and overwhelming. There are numerous sites dedicated to providing persons with disabilities, families and professionals with accurate information and support. Below are some websites that provide multiple resources and information on education, disabilities, community services, advocacy and other valuable topics.

Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation

www.acces.nysed.gov/vr

ACCES-VR offers access to a full range of employment and independent living services that may be needed by persons with disabilities throughout their lives. Through its administration of vocational rehabilitation and independent living programs, VR coordinates policy and services relating to transition services for students with disabilities from school to adult services; vocational rehabilitation services for working-age individuals with disabilities; independent living services for people with disabilities of all ages; and business services for hiring a qualified diverse workforce. This website provides information on application procedures, business services, district office contact information, publications and more.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov

The CDC website has information and resources about health and safety, disability and disease-specific information, publications, news and health alerts, fact sheets, and various other information and resources for individuals of all ages and professionals.

LD Online

www.ldonline.com

LD Online provides information about learning disabilities, learning disorders and differences. Parents and teachers of learning disabled children will find resources on attention deficit disorder, ADD/ADHD, dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, dysnomia, reading difficulties, speech and related disorders.

National Center for Learning Disabilities

www.nclld.org

NCLD's website is devoted to learning

disabilities, early literacy, the effective implementation of Response to Intervention in school districts nationwide, and policy and advocacy. The website has interactive programs, webinars, information about learning disabilities or related disorders, and various parent guides and publications, as well as valuable resources for parents, educators and other advocates.

New York State Education Department Office of Special Education

www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed

The Special Education Office provides assistance to parents, advocacy groups and schools related to services and programs for students with disabilities. This site contains many resources, documents and other comprehensive information. Read through the publications and policy memos issued by the Special Education Office at NYSED, which can be found under the "Publications" tab in the center along the top of the website page. Memos can be searched by date or alphabetically by topic. If you have a question about anything relating to special education, see if there is a memo related to the topic in question. The "News" tab on the top left is another good way to stay current on special education policy issues in New York State.

New York State Office of Mental Health

www.omh.ny.gov

OMH operates psychiatric centers across the state and also regulates, certifies and oversees more than 4,500 programs, which are operated by local governments and nonprofit agencies. These programs include various inpatient and outpatient, emergency, community support, residential and family care programs. This website provides information and resources to families, professionals and providers about the mental health system, programs available, contact information for area offices, up-to-date news and much more.

New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities

www.opwdd.ny.gov

OPWDD is responsible for coordinating services for people with developmental disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorders and other neurological impairments. It provides services directly and through a network of nonprofit service providing agencies. This website provides information and resources for individuals, families, professionals, employees and service providers about OPWDD, services and supports available, related regulations and guidance, community connections, contact information and much more.

PACER Center

www.pacer.org

The mission of PACER Center (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights) is to expand opportunities and enhance the quality of life of children and young adults with disabilities and their families, based on the concept of parents helping parents. This website provides multiple tools and resources for parents and professionals across the nation.

Parent Center Network

www.parentcenternetwork.org

The Parent Center Network website features research-based information on special education and related topics for parents and professionals. The site includes a wide selection of news, publications and resources, as well as a directory of the nation's Parent Centers.

Wrightslaw

www.wrightslaw.com

This website provides information about special education law, education law and advocacy for children with disabilities. It presents information developed for parents, educators, advocates and attorneys in lay terms.

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



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



Carol Maier
631-744-1600,
ext. 7508

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
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Rocky Point Middle School
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Rocky Point High School
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Special Education Coordinator

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CSE/CPSE Administrator

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CSE/CPSE Administrator

Reanna Fulton (*As of Jan. 4*)
631-744-1600, ext. 6421

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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 Individualized Education Program (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.