



Of Special Interest

Rocky Point School District Special Education Newsletter



A Message from Special Education Director Andrea Moscatiello

I hope the summer vacation is finding everyone well and you have had time to relax and enjoy your family and friends. I am very humbled to have the opportunity to serve as the director of special education and have the honor to work with such a supportive group of parents and an outstanding teaching staff. As we enter a new and exciting school year, I would like to remind everyone that the goal of the special education department is to ensure equal access to a free and appropriate public education for all students in Rocky Point with disabilities.

The special education department along with the general education staff has been working hard to learn about and incorporate the new Common Core State Standards into their daily lessons. Additionally, Crisis Prevention Interventions (CPI) training occurred at the end of the last school year for several of our school psychologists. In turn, they will train additional staff members during the upcoming school year.

I am proud to welcome a new special education coordinator and two new CSE/CPSE chairpersons. Please, remember to reach out to your students' sponsor teachers on the middle and secondary level or to their classroom teachers on the primary and intermediate level.

Director's Roundtables Help to Enhance Communication

Starting this fall, Director of Special Education Andrea Moscatiello will be conducting informal bi-monthly Director's Roundtable meetings. These gatherings will provide parents the opportunity to sit down with the director in a small group setting to discuss topics pertaining to the special education department of the Rocky Point Union Free School District. The department hopes that all parents will have the chance to attend at least one of these events. They will be held on the following dates in room 128 at the FJC Elementary School:

September 20 – 4:30 p.m.
November 20 – 4:30 p.m.
January 17 – 4:30 p.m.
March 14 – 4:30 p.m.
May 16 – 4:30 p.m.



Program Changes for the 2012-2013 School Year...

- **Resource Room** will be provided for supplemental instruction at FJC.
- **Career & Employment Options (CEO)** will be providing an internship program Rocky Point High School Life Skills students. Through on-site monitoring, student feedback and potential employer comments, students will receive individualized instruction on a continuing basis. CEO works with businesses to build bridges for individuals with disabilities to enter the workforce. The internship program includes four employment training classes: Work Experience, World of Works Tours, Community Access Training and Travel Training. We are looking forward to this new career and employment option.

Learning Shines Bright



Proudly displaying their certificates of completion, children in Mrs. Edmonds/Mrs. Lukas' Second Step Program class smile for a picture.

Congratulations to the following classes that have completed the Second Step Program at the FJC Elementary School: Mrs. Birnstein, Mrs. Edmonds/Mrs. Lukas and Mrs. Fasano. Second Step is a social/emotional learning program which focuses on four essential skills: empathy, impulse control, anger management and problem solving. It is nationally recognized and has been taught at FJC for the past five years by Mrs. Jamie Adamski, Student Assistance Counselor. The program utilizes picture cards, video clips, teacher scripts and visual displays to teach valuable lessons in a fun and entertaining way. Each of the three classes did a fantastic job this year and we are all very proud!

The sixth-grade students in the CTD science classes, taught by Dawn Perri and Lori Kuhn, received a first-hand look at space exploration when they launched rockets high into the air in early June. The crafty lesson reinforced the notion that there are no limits when it comes to learning!



The students in Mrs. Rivera and Mrs. Stalters' class were busy at the end of the year working on a study of the world's countries. Students were placed in groups and given books on different countries. After they read the books, each student selected an aspect of that country that they wanted to research. Areas of study included food, language, clothing, education, things to do, history, landforms and holidays. They used books and the Internet to research their chosen area and took notes on the subject, which they turned into well-written, cohesive paragraphs. In the computer lab, using SMART Board notebook software, the students typed up their information and learned how to add pictures to their presentation. Students then practiced the presentations several times before sharing the completed projects with

their parents and families before the end of the school year. After the presentations, the students competed in a Jeopardy-style game against their parents. The game tested the contestants on the knowledge of information that the students had learned throughout third grade. The students emerged victorious and a great time was had by all!



Athletics for the Challenged

At the June Athletics for the Challenged meet, special education students participated in a softball competition with area schools at Longwood High School.



Parents Road to Resources

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

This organization is dedicated to improving the educational outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities, including disabilities.

www.cec.sped.org

North Shore Youth Council

This is a not-for-profit community-based agency dedicated to helping youth and families to cope in today's changing world.

www.nsync.com

Long Island Parent Center for Community Inclusion

Brentwood Campus, Long Island University
100 Second Avenue
Brentwood, N.Y. 11717
516-589-4562

Website: www.liparentscenterliu.org

Parent to Parent

Parent to Parent of NYS, with funding as NYS' Family to Family Health Care Information and Education Center, has developed a guide of points for youth to consider when exploring work and career options. For a young adult with a disability, there are items to consider before building a career, exploring employment opportunities or taking a

job. To achieve success and prepare for the world of work, it is important to ask questions and consider particular strategies.

The booklet is available for download from Parent to Parent of New York State's website:

www.parenttoparentnys.org.

Special Education Resource Committee (SERC)

Chairperson: Jenny Anderson

www.rockypointnypta.com

Wrightslaw

Leading website about special education and advocacy

- Advocacy, federal laws, No Child Left Behind, IDEA 2004

- Thousands of free articles and free resources

- Trainings and seminars

- Section 504 and IEP information

Website: www.wrightslaw.com

Yellow Pages for Kids with Disabilities

A service that assists in finding professionals, programs, organizations and support groups for people with disabilities.

www.yellowpagesforkids.com

Mark Your Calendars

Helene Fallon from the **Long Island Parent Center** will be presenting the following workshops from 7-9 p.m. in the middle school library:

September 27, 2012 Self Determination - Parents, Kids and Transition

November 14, 2012 Determination and Transition - How Do We Get There?

SERC meetings will begin at 7 p.m. in the middle school library, and will be held on the following dates:

October 3, November 7, January 9, February 13, March 6, April 10 and May 29.

Additional Learning About Autism

In 2002 it was reported that one in 10,000 children were affected with autism. This number has progressed significantly since then, and today one in 84 children have symptoms of this disorder.

In order to more effectively serve the district's autistic population, teachers and administrators recently attended two educational training workshops about autism's unique characteristics.

Autism trainer Claudia Bonovita carefully explained the impairments that affect social ability, language and behavior. During her workshop attendees not only developed an increased awareness of the difficulties possessed by students with autism, but learned educational techniques to increase student success in the classroom. The second workshop, which was a two-day program conducted by Dr. Eric Shyman, focused on methods for addressing challenging behaviors in a public school environment.

Dr. Michael F. Ring, Superintendent of Schools, who, along with numerous teachers and administrators, attended all three days of training, commented, "Given the growing awareness of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and the impact on many of our students, this level of professional development provides a wonderful opportunity for the district's educational professionals to attain a greater breadth and depth of understanding of ASD in order to enhance the outcomes of our students."

During the school year, autism consultation services will be provided to students by district staff members who have been trained by autism consultants. Services will include direct observation of the student in different learning environments (e.g. classroom, special, lunch). The consultants will work with the team members in order to demonstrate various educational and behavioral strategies.

The autism consultant will also be available to provide ongoing support to the staff in the areas of communication and social skills, organizational skills, teaching strategies and understanding of and responding to challenging behaviors.

Team meetings will be conducted to provide opportunities to discuss the needs, strengths and progress of specific learners. Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend the team meetings.



Autism trainer Claudia Bonovita recently conducted a workshop in the district.

Meet Our New Department Staff



Andrea Moscatiello – Director of Special Education

Andrea Moscatiello began her career in the Rocky Point School District in 1998 and later earned tenure as a special education teacher and as the coordinator of special education. In December 2011, Mrs. Moscatiello was appointed interim director of special education and recently developed and published the district's first-ever special education newsletter, "Of Special Interest."

Mrs. Moscatiello earned a Bachelor of Arts in psychology, a Master of Science in special education (K-12) and Professional Diploma in educational administration from Dowling College. She is also certified as an elementary (K-6) and special education (K-12) teacher and possesses a New York State School District Administrator certification.

Paul Walia – Special Education Coordinator

Paul Walia served as a school psychologist at South Side High School in Rockville Center and was most recently the special education coordinator at Lindenhurst Middle School. He is also an adjunct professor at Alfred State University's Downstate Counseling Program.

Mr. Walia acquired a Bachelor of Science in general psychology and a Master of Science in school psychology from Queens College. He also received an Advanced Certificate in School Leadership and Administration from C.W. Post, where he is currently pursuing a Doctorate in educational leadership and administration.



Dr. Terence Reilly – CSE/CPSE Administrator

Dr. Reilly comes to Rocky Point from the Levittown School District, where he worked as a psychologist since September 2005. Prior to his position at Levittown, he served as a school psychologist in the Baldwin School District and as an adjunct professor at Adelphi University's Ruth S. Ammon School of Graduate Education.

Dr. Reilly obtained a Bachelor of Arts in psychology and special education from Marist College and a Master of Science in school psychology and Doctorate in psychology from St. John's University. His postgraduate studies include a Master of Art in educational leadership and technology leadership as well as a certificate of advanced graduate studies in school district leadership at Adelphi University.

Beth Apostoli – CSE/CPSE Administrator

Beth Apostoli has over 25 years of experience in the field of special education. Her previous positions include teaching and administrative responsibilities at the Henry Viscardi School's Long Island Infant Development Program and providing home-based early intervention evaluations and services. She was a consultant to the Committee on Preschool Education (CPSE) for the Suffolk County Department of Health and an adjunct instructor in Hofstra University's graduate education program, where she supervised student teachers in both general and special education settings. Most recently, Ms. Apostoli served as director of educational services/principal of "The Children's Center" at the United Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Suffolk.

Ms. Apostoli earned a Bachelor of Science in elementary education at Adelphi University, a Master of Education in special education from Boston College and a Certificate of Advanced Studies in educational administration from Hofstra University.



SSI Information

Interested in finding out more about Social Security programs and current proposals to make changes to these programs? The consortium of Citizens with Disabilities has posted recordings and slides from two recent webinars on Social Security, featuring The Arc's Marty Ford and other presenters. "Social Security 101" explains the basics of the social insurance safety net that is created by the Social Security retirement, disability and survivors programs. "Current Social Security Reform Proposals: How They Would Affect People with Disabilities" explains the specific reforms that have been proposed by organizations and commissions, and their impact on people with disabilities, the elderly, and families who rely on the Social Security safety net. The link is www.disabilityandsocialsecurity.org/resources.html

Additional Parent Members Needed

The Rocky Point Union Free School District continues to invite parents of students with disabilities to volunteer to sit on Committee for Special Education (CSE) meetings as a parent member. If you are interested, please contact Pat Williamson at 631-849-7536.

Office Staff There to Help

The special education office staff members work hard each day to support the 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 ladies who are more than happy to assist you.



Pat Williamson
631-744-1600,
ext. 7536



Mary Caccavale
631-744-1600,
ext. 7532



Bettie Manger
631-744-1600,
ext. 7508



Evie Gallino
631-744-1600,
ext. 7105



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

Communicating with Sponsor Teachers

The responsibility of sponsor teachers on the middle and secondary level is to maintain and monitor each student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). Parents are encouraged to contact the sponsor teacher as the first line of communication in a system of assurances that your child's IEP is properly implemented. The sponsor teacher will contact the parents of their assigned students early in the school year.

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

Phone: 631-744-1600, ext. 7516;
Email: pwalia@rockypoint.k12.ny.us

CSE/CPSE Administrator Dr. Terence Reilly

Phone: 631-744-1600, ext. 7580;
Email: treilly@rockypoint.k12.ny.us

CSE/CPSE Administrator Beth Apostoli

Phone: 631-744-1699, ext. 6421;
Email: bapostoli@rockypoint.k12.ny.us

Director of Special Education Andrea Moscatiello

Phone: 631-849-7583;
Email: amoscatiello@rockypoint.k12.ny.us

Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Deborah Deluca

Phone: 631-849-7568;
Email: ddeluca@rockypoint.k12.ny.us

Superintendent

Dr. Michael F. Ring

Phone: 631-849-7561;
Email: 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 Department of Education Special Education Division

Email: www.nysed.gov



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.