

Special Services Department

Newsletter for Parents & Families
(Special Education, Health & 504 Services)



November 2017

A Message from Paul Vine



I would like to thank you all for your support and collaboration in helping us have another successful start to the school year. Our partnership with our families is crucial to our success and the success of our students. This school year, we will be reaching out to you, as volunteers, to participate on several advisories. We will be initiating two new advisories that we announced at our LWPTSA Council Special Needs Group meeting in September. The first is a Parent and Family Engagement Advisory. This Advisory will focus on our 5-Year Special Services Strategic Plan goals. We will be sending out information and an invitation for this advisory very soon. We are also initiating an Inclusion Framework Advisory, which we are looking at starting this spring.

We are updating our newsletter this school year to highlight any new federal and/or state guidance and information that is pertinent to our support of students with disabilities and their families. We will also include ongoing highlights of students, promising practices within our district, and our work on the Strategic Plan goals and objectives.

I wanted to also remind you about our monthly LWPTSA Council Special Needs Group (SNG) meeting (see schedule below). This is a great time to network with other parents, learn more about resources in our community, and learn more about strategies and supports for students with disabilities. We are now offering student care during these meetings, to assist you in being able to access this wonderful opportunity to meet with parents. Please RSVP, each month, by emailing smcenroe@lwsd.org. In your email, please include the age of your child so we can ensure we have enough staff to cover all the students. Our Associate Directors, and myself, participate in a meet and greet before each meeting at 6:30 p.m. We look forward to seeing you all there.

Sincerely,

Paul Vine

OSPI News - Rescinding of Federal Guidance Regarding IDEA



OSPI | Chris Reykdal
State Superintendent

Sent on behalf of Glenna Gallo, M.S., MB.B.A., Assistant Superintendent of Special Education

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) supports the needs of district staff and families regarding the educational needs of students eligible for special education services. These efforts are required by law under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and State statutes and administrative codes and ensure that the rights of students and their parents are protected, and that students have available a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

On Friday, October 20, 2017, the [U.S. Department of Education reported](#) that it had rescinded 72 documents previously used to clarify special education laws and policies under the IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act of 1972. The manner of the announcement, and the limited information provided at that time from the U.S. Department of Education resulted in uncertainty in the disability community and concern regarding the potential impact on students.

Staff at OSPI have reviewed the listing of rescinded documents, as well as those documents available online. We are confident that the guidance documents were out-of-date or were no longer applicable or had been replaced with newer guidance. No regulations under IDEA were rescinded, and there were no changes to any federal or state laws. The rescinding of these documents will not impact services or regulations that support the education of students with disabilities in Washington State, nor does it demonstrate any change in OSPI policy or provision of technical assistance. We will continue, as you will, to work on behalf all Washington state students.

Spotlight and Highlights

Eastlake High School's Homecoming Dance was extra special for freshman Matthew, and his classmates. His Special Education Case Manager, Helly Harel, spent the week leading up to the big dance prepping her students. They practiced dancing in the classroom and discussed expected and unexpected behaviors. On the evening of the event, Mrs. Harel was unable to attend, but two Eastlake teachers, Noelle Hilgesen and Shila Hodgins, stepped up to ensure the inclusion of Mrs. Harel's students. Throughout the evening, Matthew and his classmates danced, snacked and hung out with their friends along with the rest of the high school students.

For Matthew, an LWSD student with very limited verbal communication and autism, this has been a long but meaningful process. Throughout his years in LWSD, his teachers have seen beyond his limitations and encouraged him to participate in mainstream activities.

Special Services Program Review - 5 Year Action Plan (Assistive Technology Objectives Update)

The Assistive Technology Team, which consists of two certificated staff (one full-time Special Education teacher and two half-time Speech & Language Pathologists), has expanded their role in providing communication to staff through professional development trainings during Special Education modules for our Elementary and Secondary Special Education Teachers this past school year. They have also provided Professional Development trainings to our Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists and Speech & Language Pathologists during in-service trainings (on non-student LEAP Days). These trainings have focused on understanding the purpose for Assistive Technology, when Assistive Technology should be considered for students, the process staff follow to request Assistive Technology consideration for students, and how to access this information.

Along with gaining a better understanding of accessing Assistive Technology, these trainings also provided professional development to instruct staff in how to access and use Assistive Technology tools available to students, including Snap & Read, and Read, Write & Gold. As a follow up to this

professional development, the Assistive Technology Team responded to requests from individual buildings, to extend their understanding of these software tools.

The Assistive Technology Team has also been reviewing received information for the [Special Services Program Review](#), parent feedback for the Linkage Session, and researching different websites from school districts locally and throughout the country to assist in identifying needed information that should be included on the district webpage for Assistive Technology.

New LWSD Website: Special Services

Have you gotten a chance to check out our new LWSD website? There is an opportunity for you to provide "Site Feedback" at the footer of the new site. If you haven't done so already, you should check out the new website at <http://www.lwsd.org/programs-and-services/special-services>. If there is content and information you feel would be helpful for our families and community, please let us know.

Resources for Parents of Students with Disabilities

The Lake Washington PTSA (LWPTSA) Council Special Needs Group and the Special Services Department have updated the Special Needs Resource Flier, [available here](#). You can also pick up a hard copy at your child's school, from your child's 504 or Special Education Case Manager at your annual review meeting, and/or at our LWPTSA Council Special Needs Group Meetings.

PTSA Special Needs Liaisons

It is our goal that every campus in Lake Washington School District have a PTSA Special Needs Liaison. The liaison keeps the families of that school informed of the PTSA Special Needs Group's upcoming monthly meetings. They can often answer a family's questions about Special Education. To find out the name of your campus PTSA Special Needs Liaison, contact your school PTSA. If your campus does not have a liaison to answer your questions, and/or you would like to learn more about becoming a liaison, please contact [Laurel Spaeth](#).

Upcoming LWPTSA Council Special Needs Group Meeting

Date: November 21, 2017

Time: 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Location:

LWSD Resource Center – Board Room (1st Floor)
16250 NE 74th St
Redmond, WA 98052

Guest speaker:

Amy Patterson serves on the Governing Board of Washington State's Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) program. Amy will discuss the ABLE program, the rollout in Washington state, and what it means for families. The State's ABLE program was achieved during the 2016 Legislative Session following passage of the Federal ABLE Act in 2014.

In 2014, the U.S. Congress approved and then-President Obama, signed the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act. It set out a way for states to help disabled individuals maintain their financial eligibility for Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and other key federal benefits – while also setting aside, in tax-sheltered accounts, up to \$14,000 per year of their personal funds for

education, job training, assistive technology, transportation, and more.

Save the Date: PTSA Special Needs Group Meetings

Mark your calendar for the 2017-18 PTSA Special Needs Group Meetings:

- No Meeting in December!
- January 16, 2018 – (Resource Center, Board Room)
- February 20, 2018 – (Resource Center, Board Room)
- March 20, 2018 – (Resource Center, Board Room)
- April 17, 2018 – (Resource Center, Board Room)
- May 15, 2018 – (Resource Center, Board Room) – Last Meeting of 2017-2018 School Year!
- No Meeting in June!

