

Special Services Department

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



January 2018

A Message from Paul Vine - Happy New Year!

Happy New Year to all of our families! As we embark on this new year, we hope you had a relaxing and pleasurable holiday break with family and friends. We are heading into a very busy spring with our planning for student promotion, recruiting and hiring of new staff, and continuing our ongoing Strategic Plan advisory work with our parents, community members and staff. We greatly appreciate your continued support, commitment and input on these advisories.



We have a couple of highlights for this month's newsletter:

- This is the time of year that our weather can be unpredictable and can sometimes result in school closures and late starts or an early release. Use the [Bad Weather Bus Information](#) tool when buses are on snow routes. Some snow route bus stops are the same as regular route bus stops.
- Preschool to Kindergarten Promotion Meeting in January. LWSD preschool parents are invited to an informational meeting on January 23 (Spanish meeting) or January 24 (English meeting) from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Resource Center in the Board Room.
- Lake Washington School District (LWSD) is planning for three ballot measures to go before voters in the district on February 13: a bond and two replacement levies to fund important needs not funded by the state. Learn more about each of the measures [during four community open house events](#).

Sincerely,
Paul Vine

Parent & Family Advisory Opportunity (You still have time to participate)

We are looking for parent volunteers for our new Parent & Family Advisory. This group will focus on our Special Services Strategic Planning work this spring to increase parent and family engagement. (See Parent and Family Engagement Strategic Plan below). We expect to meet once a month.

Our agenda is based on the Strategic Planning Goals, as well as parent input on emerging topics or interests. If you are interested in participating in this advisory, please email Mary Geil at: mgeil@lwsd.org.

Special Services Strategic Plan
[Parent and Family Engagement](#)

- Publish communication resources and tools for students, families, and staff.
- Increase parent engagement at the district level.
- Survey and provide venues for feedback regarding Special Education and Section 504 program and Services for parents and families annually.
- Parent education resources and opportunities on an ongoing basis.
- Increase community partnerships.

Special Services Program Review - 5 Year Action Plan

Collaboration with Accelerated Programs to provide professional development on twice exceptional students and required supports

Quest staff chose Social and Emotional Learning as the focus of their professional development for the 2017-18 school year. Jeremy Erickson, Ph.D., and Patti Cromar, Autism Specialist and Special Education Para Support Specialist, provided trainings to all teachers of Quest students in elementary and middle school. Groups taught included 2/3, K-3HC, pull-out Quest teachers; 4/5 Quest teachers and middle school Quest teachers.

A Survey of Needs was used for all teachers to assess specific needs. Based on those needs, all groups received training on the characteristics and needs of Twice Exceptional students (those identified as gifted and with the need for Special Services). Special attention was given to needs and strategies for social/emotional growth and executive functioning impacts in the classroom.

Elementary teachers and middle school teachers also met as separate groups with Jeremy and Patti to learn about the escalation cycle. They learned de-escalation strategies from the Crisis Prevention Institute appropriate for the age groups they are teaching.

Expand 18-21 programs and services

The new Kirkland Transition Academy opened its doors for the first time on September 5, 2017 to eight students. Mark Tornquist is the lead teacher for the Kirkland program, which is currently located at Kamiakin Middle School. The new program was created based on the work that the 18-21 Advisory Committee did last year and continues to do this year.

The Redmond Transition Academy is going strong with 33 students. Richard Haines retired in June and Mark Tornquist moved to the Kirkland TA location. Cynthia Roberts and Sean Egan are the two new teachers at the Redmond TA and our returning Coordinator/Lead Teacher is Taylor Phu.

The students at the Kirkland location are on a longer pathway to paid employment due to the students needing additional employment supports. Volunteer internships are designed to assess their skill sets, build their resumes and to obtain meaningful pre-vocational experiences. Eligible students and families enter into a partnership with the School to Work (S2W) and the embedded vendor is Northwest Center for the students' last two years of enrollment. The Kirkland students will require ongoing support after being placed in their customized part-time paid jobs.

The Redmond program also participates in the School to Work (S2W) for the last year of their enrollment and the embedded vendor is ProVail.

Quick Reference for Families and IEP Teams for Decision Making

Redmond- TA	Kirkland-TA
Vocational Training to Competitive Employment	Vocational Training to Customized Employment with Ongoing Support
Public Transportation Training to Independence	Individualized Public Transportation Training (i.e., DART, ACCESS, Specific Route Training)
<i>Independence</i> in Planning for and Accessing Community Based Opportunities	Community Skills <i>Development</i> Through Participation in Community Based Recreation and Leisure Opportunities
<i>Application</i> of Interpersonal Skills in Work and Social Environments	Social Skills <i>Instruction</i> and Individual Communication Development in Work and Social Environments
Awareness of steps to take for contacting emergency services when needed.	Awareness of community safety signs and recognizing possible dangerous situations

The 18-21 Advisory Team is reconvening to review the recommendation and work from last year and begin to plan for future additional pathways for transition services for our 18-21 eligible students.

Resources for Parents of Students with Disabilities

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

Featured Article: "Bakery's secret ingredient is uplifting people with special needs" in USA Today

A family in Georgia decided to open a bakery after their son aged out of county-supported programs, to create a place for him to work. The bakery, named "Special Kneads and Treats, Inc.," started out as a small family-run business, but has grown to include 16 special needs adults on staff, along with additional staff and volunteers. The bakery creates opportunity for these young adults and a chance to be self-sufficient. Read more and watch the video, "[Bakery's secret ingredient is uplifting people with special needs](#)" in *USA Today*.

Upcoming LWPTSA Council Special Needs Group Meeting

Date: January 16, 2018

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

Location:

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

Guest speaker:

Dr. Ilene Schwartz of the Haring Center, UW will discuss full and meaningful inclusion: strategies, value and implementation.

Save the Date: PTSA Special Needs Group Meetings

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

- 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 2017-18 School Year!
- No Meeting in June!

