

# *Student Services Snapshot*

Spring Edition 2020

## Important Information From the Director of Student Services

03/26/2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As the Director of Student Services for the district's 250+ students with IEPs, I am very much aware that your child's needs may be very different than that of a non-disabled student or more typical learner. This unprecedented health event is challenging us, the educators, in ways that we never imagined; however, I recognize that it is challenging you, the parents, in many more ways.

As of this week, we have learned that the federal and state-mandated Special Education timelines will not be waived. Therefore, here are the steps the district is taking during the closure.

1) We are going to make every attempt to keep your child's special education paperwork (annual IEPs or Reevaluations) up-to-date and compliant with special education timelines. Your child's IEP will be provided to you by email, or by US mail. Please let your child's special education teacher know your preference. You should expect to hear from your child's principal or teacher regarding meetings that are already scheduled or need to be during this time.

2) We will hold virtual and phone IEP meetings with you during this time. We will ask that you recognize that not all school participants may be in attendance. These IEP meetings will include your special education teacher, and your principal or me, if needed, and your child if they are 14 or older. To have you participate, we will make use of Google Meet, conferencing calling, email, or other means. We have had several successful virtual meetings already. Please know that if needed, we will reconvene the IEP team and include those individuals who were unable to attend when school resumes.

3) Supporting your children is of the utmost importance to us. Your child's teacher will be reaching out to you soon to touch base. Since the school closures have been extended by the Governor, and Upper Adams will be closed until at least April 14th, the professionals who work with your child will be preparing to offer some type of remote learning opportunities. This includes finding out your child's ability and access to connect to a device, such as an iPad or computer.

4) Finally, when school does resume, whether at the end of this closure or when brick and mortar school reopens, the IEP team will reconvene for a meeting to assess the impact of this closure on your child's progress with the knowledge that certain groups of students have more needs than others.

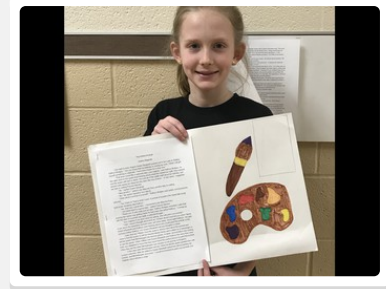
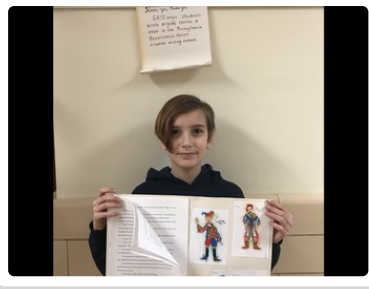
When school resumes, we are more than happy to reschedule a meeting in which you can meet face to face with your child's special education teacher and regular education teacher, even if we decide that the impact of the closure has been minimal.

The purpose of this letter is to address what we are doing during this initial closure. Should the district remain closed an additional amount of time, you should expect future communications from me regarding your child in their special education needs.

Sincerely,  
Anne K. Corwell, Ed. D.  
Director of Student Services  
Upper Adams School District

## Writing Contest Winners

Mrs. Donna Johnson-Short's students at both Arendtsville and Bendersville took a field trip to the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire in October. As a follow-up to their learning, they submitted stories to the creative writing contest. Judging is complete and we have a winner from each school. From Arendtsville, Audrey Regentin won 3rd place in the grade 3-5 category with her story "The Perfect Portrait". From Bendersville, Natalie Keeran earned 3rd place in the 6th grade category by writing "From Jester to Cook". Congratulations to Audrey and Natalie for their hard work!



## Heartfelt Thanks!

Students in Mrs. Erin Rodgers' classroom created Valentine Heart Sculpey Magnets/Notes to place on Unified Gym Mentors Lockers during the month of February to thank them for "Helping to Sculpt their bodies & hearts" during Unified Physical Education Class. Two mentors shared their thoughts below with the students after seeing them.

"The Magnets/Notes on our lockers were so cute! We loved them!"

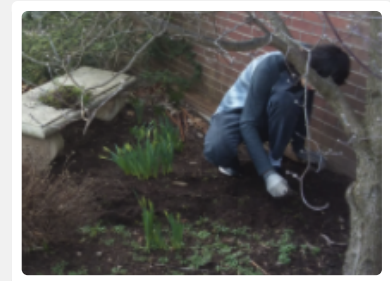
&

"Noone better mess with my Magnet or Note on My locker! They are the cutest thing ever! Thank you so much!"



## Spring Is Here!

**Spring is here!** Students in Mrs. Pam Carrera's class work to clean up the flowerbed outside the Preschool room on the secondary campus. Bulbs planted in the fall by students are now blooming. Students are motivated and excited about the transformation from the fall to what is now taking place. We plan to weed, rake, and add a couple of perennials. We also envision a "Welcome" sign to be added to the flowerbed.



## Making Memories and Pizza!

Mrs. Erin Rodgers' classroom visited Divino's Pizzeria in Hanover! The students were greeted and inspired by Jason Eckenrode, owner of the pizzeria. Jason shared with the students the hardships he faced as a young child/teenager, his determination in the establishment of his restaurant and he taught them how to make a pizza after a tour of the business.

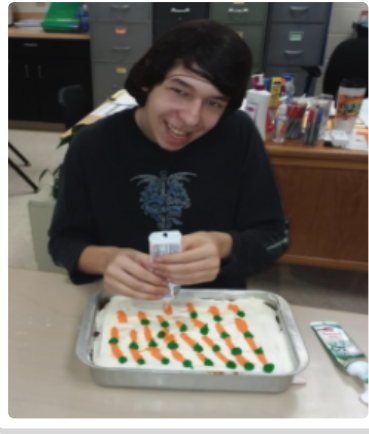
The class then visited the Greater Hanover Fire Museum, in which, the students learned about the history of the building and all of the artifacts housed within it. Questions were asked of the students, they had opportunities to share their knowledge and they even got to participate in sounding the alarm if they chose to.

It was a great day filled with many educational, social, and transitional opportunities! Oh & yummy pizza!



## Hope & Dreams

All of our students have hopes and dreams about their future. Everyday they work in some way in pursuit of their goals whether it be pre-vocation or independent skills.



### Baking Up Success

Aaron wants to be a baker and someday work in a bakery or a restaurant. Here he is putting the final touches on a carrot cake he made. It was delicious!



### Recycling Practice

Sereck is working on his independent living skills. Here he is working to identify types of recyclable materials - glass, metal, paper, and plastic.



### Pottery Fun

Emma is currently taking Pottery 1. She is learning a new skill for which someday she can further develop into a hobby if she chooses to do so.

## Rabbittransit

Students had the opportunity to participate in group Paratransit Travel Training offered by Rabbittransit.

Each student received information on how to access paratransit services through Rabbit, an application for services and a short ride on the Rabbit bus.

Rabbit provides door to door paratransit services for individuals from the ages of 18-64. Once an individual's application is approved, transportation is available to meet the needs of getting to work, going to the movies, running errands, etc.

If your student is 18 or above, please make sure you take advantage of this great opportunity. Applications are available on Rabbittransit's website. <https://www.rabbittransit.org/>

Contact your student's classroom teacher if you have any questions.



## Student Standout!

Congratulations to Brianna, a BHS Junior! She recently received the Junior Firefighter of the Year award from the Bendersville Fire Department. Keep up the great work!

## Insight from the School Psychologist

### Talking to Your Child about COVID-19

As much as adults may try to avoid difficult topics, children often learn or know when something sad or scary happens. If adults don't talk to them about it, a child may overestimate what is wrong or misunderstand adults' silence. So, be the first to bring up the difficult topic. When parents tackle difficult conversations, they let their children know that they are available and supportive. The conversation may not seem easy, but taking a proactive stance, discussing difficult events in age-appropriate language can help a child feel safer and more secure.

I hope these resources help you navigate this unique time with your child.

[https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource) – This handout contains guidelines on how to talk to your child about COVID-19 (Coronavirus).

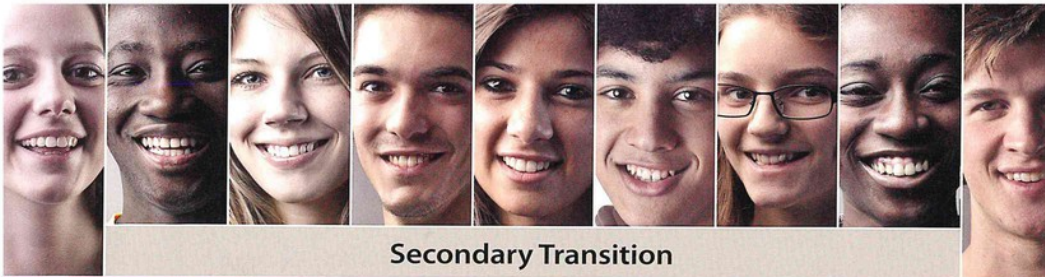
[Coronavirus video](#) – This Brain POP video explains the Coronavirus using kid-friendly pictures and terms.

*In Partnership,*

*Melissa McLean*

*School Psychologist*

*Upper Adams School District*



## Secondary Transition

# The Importance of Employment: Why Work?

Discuss the following with your son or daughter:

Work is an important part of people's lives. It means more than just getting paid. It means being able to make your own choices about how you want to live your life.

At work, it's what people *can* do that matters. If you are a young person with a disability, only you can decide your limits. You can work in a wide variety of jobs and play an important role in America's economy. In fact, experience with a disability can help in a job or in starting a business.

Today more than ever, businesses need people who can think differently about how to solve problems and get the job done. People with disabilities do this in America's workplaces every day – and so can you.

It's not just about the paycheck. Work makes people happier. Whether a job is paid or unpaid, people who work tend to:

- **Meet people and expand their social networks.** Work acts as a training opportunity to develop

and improve social skills and develop friendly and supportive relationships. The support provided by co-workers can change someone's life experience from one of isolation to one of feeling part of a community.

- **Feel productive and valued**, knowing that they are making important contributions.
- **Develop new skills**, both work and nonwork related. For example, some individuals with disabilities become comfortable with traveling independently, once learning to travel to and from their job.
- **Transfer learned skills** into employment, volunteering, and community-based experiences.
- **Build a solid foundation** to advance their goals and their future.
- **Be healthier and happier** than people who are unemployed.

**Set your sights high!** Along the way, remember that resources are available to help you seek employment, succeed on the job, and understand your right to be judged on your ability, not disability.

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## What Can You Do? The Campaign for Disability Employment

<http://www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org/index.php>

Work helps you gain a sense of pride and self-satisfaction by reaffirming that you can support yourself. With work, you earn money to cover bills and pay for activities in your leisure time.

It's becoming more common to see people with disabilities in a wide range of jobs throughout the

community. Significant barriers to employment still exist, but progress is being made. Individuals with even the most severe disabilities have shown that they can be successful at work, changing their lives and changing the way people with disabilities are viewed in society.

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## Pennsylvania Work Incentives Planning Assistance

Most people don't know that when a person qualifies for disability-related benefits from the Social Security Administration (Social Security), such as Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), it does not mean they cannot work. For transition-aged youth, Social Security offers specific work incentives that might help them while in high school or college.

Work Incentives Planning Assistance (WIPA), sponsored by Social Security, is a free service provided to the student or family. Community Work Incentives Coordinators (CWIC) undergo national certification and must also meet federal security clearance to ensure that this service is provided by trained and trustworthy professionals. The goal of the WIPA program is to enable beneficiaries with disabilities to make informed choices about work, and to support working beneficiaries to make a successful transition to financial independence.

### Each WIPA project has CWICs who will:

- Provide in-depth counseling about benefits and the effect of work on those benefits
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- Work in cooperation with federal, state, and private agencies and nonprofit organizations that serve SSI and SSDI beneficiaries with disabilities.

### For more information:

**Western Pennsylvania**  
AHEDD: 866-902-4333 x62001

**Central Pennsylvania**  
Goodwill Keystone: 888-960-9675

**Eastern Pennsylvania**  
Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania:  
800-692-7443 x309

**Or contact**  
Social Security:  
<http://www.ssa.gov/work/WIPA.html>

### Ticket to Work

Ticket to Work is a free and voluntary program offered by the Social Security Administration that can help people age 18 through 64 who receive Social Security disability benefits and are interested in returning to work or working for the first time. By participating, you or someone you know who is interested in working receives support throughout your journey to financial independence. You can participate in the Ticket to Work through the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and/or approved Employment Networks. For more information about the Ticket, call the Help Line at 1-866-968-7842.



revised 1/19

Upper Adams School District Vision:

All students  
college and career  
ready

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