



SPECIAL SERVICES MONTHLY

908.436.5200



DIVISION OF SPECIAL SERVICES



EPSNJ.ORG

Professional Spotlight

MEET THE HALSEY CHILD STUDY TEAM



Sandra Stuart, Nalin Beaumont & Anabella Carter

The Child Study Team (CST) at Halsey Academy works collaboratively to support students' academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs. As part of this work, the CST partners with the **Youth Enrichment Services (YES) Program**, a school-based youth services program funded by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families in partnership with RWJBH Trinitas Regional Medical Center and the Elizabeth Board of Education.

This year, the CST and YES Program will implement a four-week social-emotional learning workshop series for 9th- and 10th-grade students in the LLD/M-M program, focusing on self-awareness, emotional regulation, social skills, and building a sense of belonging through interactive and creative activities. The CST extends its appreciation to the YES Program team—led by Kelsey Devery, LCSW, and including Alma Campos, MSW, Glaviera Trana, MSW, Andre Snead, and Ivonne Rivero—for their continued collaboration. Workshops will be facilitated by MSW interns Allyson McCann and Lucy Gilch, with clinical support provided by Alma Campos, MSW.



KNOW YOUR IEP

Behavior Supports & BIPs



When a student's behavior impacts education, the IEP team may determine that additional behavior supports are appropriate. These supports are designed to help students learn positive, appropriate behaviors—not to punish them. The Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) is a special education term used to describe the written plan used to address challenging behavior that includes positive behavioral interventions, strategies and support. A BIP may include program modifications and supplementary aids and services, and is contingent on the needs of the student.

Behavior planning begins by identifying specific target behaviors, such as verbal aggression, elopement, or exaggerated reactions to situations. The team also reviews interventions already in place, such as school-based counseling or support from a personal aide, and evaluates how the student has responded to those supports.

If needed, the team may develop a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) based on information obtained from a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA). A BIP clearly outlines:

- The positive supports and strategies staff will use throughout the school day
- The conditions under which supports are provided, such as reminders of goals, structured check-ins, or adult monitoring
- How adults will reinforce appropriate behavior to promote self-regulation

Progress is monitored through ongoing data collection, which may include self-monitoring checklists, daily reflections, staff observations, and regular check-ins with the Child Study Team. This data helps the team determine whether the plan is effective and if adjustments are needed.

Behavior supports are reviewed regularly and may be adjusted or faded as a student demonstrates improvement. Supports may be reduced when targeted behaviors decrease and the student is able to maintain positive behaviors independently. Families are kept informed and are important partners throughout the process.

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL SERVICES

Dear Special Education Community Members,

Your involvement is at the heart of our students' growth. We invite you to explore opportunities available for connecting with our special education community and supporting our students' learning. On March 14th we connected over 30 community service providers, who shared valuable resources with our families. We appreciate everyone who participated.

Ongoing communication between our staff and families is essential for fostering educational success. Our educators are devoted to guiding and empowering students with disabilities, helping them reach their fullest potential. The partnership between home and school forms the foundation for meaningful progress and lasting achievement.

As spring recess approaches, we encourage you to review our special section on screen time. This section offers creative, inclusive family activities that strengthen bonds and enrich your time together, providing alternatives to digital devices.

Unexpected changes may feel overwhelming. Yet, it is often through these challenges that we find resilience and build stronger relationships. With mutual support within our educational community, we can create new pathways for growth. Please reach out to teachers, CST members, related service providers, or any staff member who plays a vital role in your students' special education journeys. Together, we celebrate every milestone and nurture growth.

With deepest gratitude,

Director Morales-Frigoletto



Nancy Morales-Frigoletto,
Director

Thelusma Cadet, Scott Cohen, Myraida Conceicao,
Cheryl Ferry, Maria Dolores Garcia, Julia Krisanits
Lehman,
Ali Abdul Malik
Supervisors



IEP BUZZ Words

Annual Review

The Annual Review meeting is held once a year and brings the IEP team together, providing an opportunity for everyone involved to review a student’s progress, share updates about a student’s needs and progress. During the meeting, the IEP team reviews the student’s achievements toward established goals and examines new information, such as recent work samples, present levels and progress towards IEP goals. This collaborative approach ensures every member stays informed and helps shape the next steps in supporting the student’s educational journey. Annual goals are updated and services or supports are adjusted as needed. The IEP team considers progress monitoring data, teacher input, progress in related services, and family feedback to plan for the upcoming year, as required under NJAC 6A:14.

Triennial Review or Reevaluation

Every three years, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team conducts a comprehensive review of a student’s eligibility and need for special education services. This reevaluation ensures that the educational supports a student receives are still appropriate and effective. In some cases, the team may decide to reevaluate sooner if new concerns arise or if updated information is needed to better meet the student’s needs.

The reevaluation process involves gathering updated assessments, conducting classroom observations, and collecting input from educators and related service providers. All procedures follow NJAC 6A:14-3.8 regulations. Parents play a crucial role, beginning with a planning meeting where their consent is requested. Families receive written notice outlining which evaluations will be carried out, how they will assess the student’s strengths and areas for growth to identify the educational programming and services that will best support educational progress. Once parental consent is obtained, the IEP team has 60 days to complete the evaluation. This timeline helps ensure timely decisions and continued support for the student’s learning journey.

Why the difference matters:

Both meetings involve the IEP team, but they serve different purposes. An annual review focuses on goals, services, and supports, while a reevaluation focuses on eligibility and updated evaluation data.

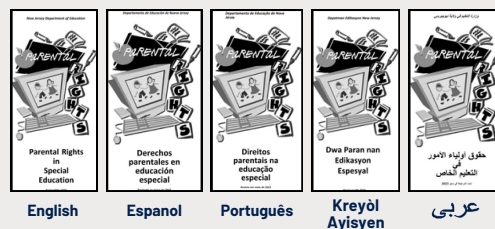
Featured Community Resource



Family and Community Together (FACT) is New Jersey’s federally funded Parent Training and Information Center, serving families of children and young adults with disabilities from birth through age 26. FACT NJ provides free workshops, webinars, and individualized support focused on special education rights, the IEP process, transition planning, and navigating community and state resources. Through family-centered guidance and advocacy, FACT NJ partners with parents and caregivers to build knowledge, confidence, and meaningful collaboration with schools and service providers—helping families make informed decisions that support student success.

In addition, Family and Community Together (FACT) offers multilingual resources and culturally responsive support to ensure families from diverse backgrounds can fully access information and services. FACT NJ also collaborates with school districts, community agencies, and state partners to strengthen family-school partnerships and promote inclusive practices, making it a valuable ongoing resource for families seeking guidance, connection, and advocacy across all stages of their child’s educational journey.

PARENTAL RIGHTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION



English

Espanol

Português

Kreyòl Ayisyen

عربي



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT TEACHERS

Instructional Support Teachers play an essential role in helping our special educators provide high-quality teaching and learning. They assist classroom teachers after school hours to offer guidance and resources. These teachers also provide professional trainings to help staff strengthen instructional practices. They graciously take on this role while also fulfilling their responsibilities as full time special educators during the day. They are dedicated to help ensure our students receive the best learning experience possible.



I am a K-2 Autism teacher at Dr. Orlando Edreira Academy School No. 26. I have been teaching for 12 years, but my journey into the profession began long before that, when I was a Kindergarten student. At 5 years old I decided that I wanted to teach and never looked back. I credit my Kindergarten and 1st Grade teachers with inspiring me to go into education and giving me a love for learning that I still have to this day. While teaching self-contained special education was not in my initial plan, spending time in a friend's classroom with her students sparked an interest in me to learn more about Autism and the specialized instruction that goes into their education. I believe this is what I was meant to do, and I love celebrating all of their big and small victories.

In addition to being a classroom teacher, I am also an Instructional Support Teacher for the Special Services department. In this role I am able to use what I have learned over the years to guide teachers across the district, especially those who are new or have stepped into a new role. This position has allowed me to "teach" beyond the bubble of Early Childhood that I have lived in for so long, and to develop relationships with teachers that I might otherwise not have a chance to work with. I'm thankful to my 5-year-old self for making a decision that has led me to where I am today.

-Alexa Wyckoff

Educating – that's my verb, it's what I do. I have had moments within my life where I have thought I would be something else, though those thoughts didn't stick. The field of education is always changing, whether it's policy, leadership, students, curriculum, or even materials. As an educator I find that often these changes build us, we learn to adapt, to grow, to challenge ourselves, at least this is what I have chosen to do. I chose it because it is for the kids, all the work; it's for their benefit. The reward is their progress, and as a special education teacher there are times when the progress is moving at a snail's pace or sadly in the opposite direction, but we don't quit. I monitor and adjust; I use the tools and strategies I have gathered and find ways to turn it around. Anyone who knows me knows I don't quit; I never stop working (it's unhealthy – I know!), but I do this to make a change.

As one of the Instructional Support Teachers for the department I have simply just continued my "verb". Providing support and guidance to fellow educators has also been rewarding. Working with different individuals and having the opportunity to share ideas, practices and strategies has further strengthened my future aspirations of Educational Leadership. Connecting supporting teachers to in turn support students.

-Phil Mavety



ESEPAC

ESEPAC Executive Officers

President: Emily Gonzalez

Vice President: Gilda Rodriguez

Secretary: Denise Olivera



Contact Information:
ESEPAC@epsnj.org



ESEPAC will be hosting a parent workshop on
May 14, 2026

Please utilize either link below to share your ideas!

ESEPAC Workshop Topics of
Interest

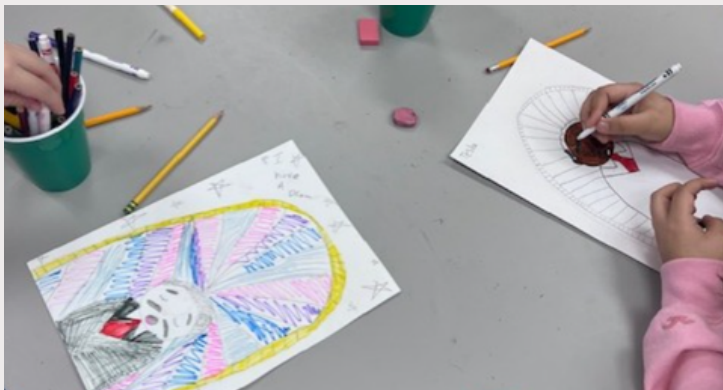
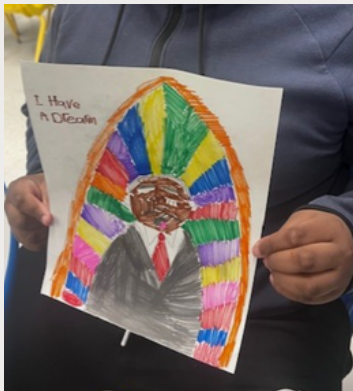


ESEPAC Temas de interés del taller
(Spanish)



FAMILY CONNECTIONS

SATURDAY RECREATION/INSTRUCTION PROGRAM



The Saturday Special Needs Recreation Program, offered in collaboration with the City of Elizabeth, provides students with meaningful opportunities to connect, create, and celebrate. This session highlighted student artwork honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., showcasing creativity, self-expression, and the program's commitment to inclusion and community



SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMUNITY

RESOURCE FAIR



On Saturday, March 14, 2026, the Division of Special Services hosted the Elizabeth Public School District's annual Special Education Community Resource Fair at The Juan Pablo Duarte-Jose Julian Marti School No. 28 gymnasium. The event held from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, brought together more than 30 community service organizations dedicated to supporting families and enriching the well-being of our students.

FOR MORE PHOTOS, [CLICK HERE!](#)



HEARTFELT APPRECIATION



Natasha Carter, Special Services Guidance Counselor

We are deeply grateful to everyone who generously contributed their time and talents. Your efforts have helped us strengthen our community and create a lasting positive impact.

The Division of Special Services would like to formally express our sincere gratitude to Ms. Natasha Carter, our dedicated guidance counselor, for her outstanding leadership and commitment in orchestrating the Division of Special Services' Special Needs Resource Fair held on Saturday, March 14. Ms. Carter's meticulous planning, compassionate approach, and unwavering attention to detail ensured the event's resounding success. Through her extensive outreach, she secured participation from more than 30 community service providers, connecting families with essential resources and fostering a supportive network for all attendees. Her dedication to inclusivity and her tireless efforts made the fair a truly memorable and impactful experience for everyone involved.

We also wish to extend our heartfelt appreciation to the many individuals whose contributions were vital to the event's success. Special thanks to Mr. Luis Milanes, Director of Plant and Property, and his staff; members of the Child Study Team; teachers; Principal Mrs. Evelyn Salcedo-Rodriguez; Supervisors of Special Services; administrative support staff; Technology Department staff; EPS Board of Education members; Councilman Carlos Torres; Central Office Administrators; and all others who worked behind the scenes. Your collective dedication and collaborative spirit were instrumental in bringing our vision to life.



FAMILY TIPS

Supporting Healthy Screen Time Habits

Screens are a part of daily life, but setting healthy limits helps support children's learning, sleep, behavior, and overall well-being. The tips below are aligned with guidance from pediatric experts, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, and are intended to help families make informed choices around screen use at home.

Recommended Screen Time Guidelines

Doctors recommend the following general limits for recreational screen time (outside of schoolwork):

- Under 2 years old: Avoid screen time, except for video chatting with family
- Ages 2-5: Limit to 1 hour per day of high-quality, supervised content
- Ages 6 and up: Place consistent limits to ensure screens do not interfere with sleep, physical activity, homework, or family time

Screens should be turned off at least 1 hour before bedtime to support healthy sleep routines.

Tips for Reducing Screen Time at Home

- Create screen-free times (meals, bedtime, family activities)
- Use visual timers or clear schedules to set expectations
- Encourage alternatives such as reading, outdoor play, art, or board games
- Keep screens out of bedrooms when possible
- Model healthy screen habits as adults



Focus on Quality, Not Just Quantity

When screens are used, choose age-appropriate, educational content and engage with your child by asking questions or watching together. Co-viewing helps children better understand and learn from what they see.

Partnering With Your Child's School

Consistent expectations between home and school support self-regulation and focus. If you have questions about screen use related to learning or behavior, reach out to your child's teacher or support team.

Alternatives to Screen Time

Arts and crafts provide a screen-free way for children to express themselves while building fine motor skills and encourage creativity. Games and puzzles help develop problem-solving, turn-taking, and social skills, making them great options for independent or group play. Reading supports language development and imagination. Create a cozy space and let children choose books that interest them. For added engagement, try storytelling, acting out scenes, or listening to audiobooks. Regular family activities like craft or game nights can also strengthen routines, connection, and learning without digital screens.



UPCOMING EVENTS

SAVE THE DATE

Autism Acceptance
Celebration

APRIL 25TH
10AM-12P

WARINANCO PARK

Disney
ZOOTOPIA

A Sensory Friendly
Movie Experience

TICKETS \$5

FRI · MARCH 27 · 7 PM

UCPAC'S HAMILTON STAGE 360 HAMILTON STREET RAHWAY, NJ
GENERAL ADMISSION | DOORS OPEN AT 6 PM!

MARCH TEEN PROGRAMS

Visit our calendar at elzrl.org to check out all our events and register! All programs, unless noted, will be held at the Main Library.

Take Home Crafts at the Branches: All month
Drop by the Elmore, E-Port, and LaCorte branches for a take home craft just for yourself! While supplies last.

Will It Pickle?: Monday 2nd (E-Port) & 9th (Elmore), Tuesday 3rd (Main) at 3:30 pm and Tuesday 10th (LaCorte) at 4 pm
Celebrate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution with EPL as we learn about pickling! Try your hand at this method that revolutionized food storage.
Registration required.

Ask a Professional - Doctor: Wednesday 4th at 3:30 pm
Talk to a doctor about their job and the medical field. Earn community service hours!
Registration required.

From Dress Shop: Friday 6th at 3 pm
Find the green dress of your dreams for free! Parents are welcome but must be accompanied by a teen.

Game Day: Saturday 7th at 1 pm
The Teen Department has tons of games to play and today we're letting them all out of the case! Stop by to play any game you want.

Wrapped Vases: Wednesday 11th at 3:30 pm
Use colored paper to make an upcycled vase!
Registration required.

Women's History Month Movie: Friday 13th at 3:30 pm
Join us to watch MEGAN 2.0 (PG-13), a movie about women in STEM and robotics, with plenty of action thrown in!

Anime Club: Monday 16th & 23rd at 3:30 pm
Watch and discuss anime of your choice, play anime bingo on the 16th!

Bring Your Own Book Club: Tuesday 17th at 3:30 pm
Read a book of your choice and discuss it for 3 community service hours!
Registration required.

Book Page Flowers: Thursday 19th at 3:30 pm
Make a flower out of upcycled book pages!
Registration required.

Makers Day: Saturday 21st from 10 am to 2 pm
Join us for all day, all ages, all STEAM-related activities!

Pride Power Hour: Wednesday 25th at 3:30 pm
Join our safe space for LGBTQIA+ teens and allies! We'll hang out, make some crafts, and take a step back from the stress of everyday life.

UNO Tournament: Monday 30th @ 2 pm
Get your UNO on with a fun tournament!

Afternoon Tea Party: Tuesday 31st at @ 2 pm
Join us for our annual spring break tea party!
Registration required.

PREVENTION LINKS
Wellness Wonderland
WARINANCO PARK SKATING RINK

Saturday, May 2nd
11:00 AM - 2:30 PM

Wellness is better together! Bring your bestie and discover fun ways to care for your mental, physical & spiritual health!

Mental Health Resources
Support Fitness
Relaxation Activities
Giveaways & More!

Join us for a feel-good day full of self-care, connection, healing, and community support!

REGISTER HERE:

more information: @NJ4SUNION

Mayor J. Christian Bollwage, The City of Elizabeth and Councilwoman-At-Large Patricia Perkins-Auguste Invites You To The:

4th Annual Autism Flag Raising

Thursday, April 2nd
City Hall Steps
50 Winfield Scott Plaza

Fun Filled Activities Beginning at 4:00 pm
Flag Raising at 4:30pm

I LOVE SOMEONE WITH AUTISM

FREE OF CHARGE

SUICIDE LOSS GRIEF CAMP
Comfort Zone Camp, serves children who have experienced the death of a parent, sibling, primary caregiver, or friend. All programs are offered at no cost to families. CZC provides a safe, nurturing environment where kids can have traditional camp fun, while at the same time acquiring tools to help them cope with their loss. Since 1999, CZC has helped 25,000+ children.

Register Now!

May 16-18, 2025
Camp Johnsonburg & Retreat Center
Johnsonburg, NJ

- Ages 7-25
- w/optional parent/guardian program
- Weekend Sleeper Camp
- For suicide loss

“Every time they have attended Comfort Zone Camp, they have come home having gained a new level of healing and with new lifelong friends.”
- Nick G, Campier Dad

909.377.3430 | info@comfortzonecamp.org | Follow Us @comfortzonecamp



Qualified, Competent Translators

Our schools provide language assistance to limited-English proficient families effectively with appropriate, competent staff-or appropriate and competent outside resources.

Important Document Notice

If a situation arises when the district or schools are unable to translate a document immediately, please note that translation is available upon request.

- Elizabeth Public Schools offers translation accessibility of district communication and materials. For further assistance, please contact 908-436-5200.
- Las Escuelas Públicas de Elizabeth ofrecen accesibilidad de traducción de comunicación y materiales del distrito. Para obtener más ayuda, comuníquese con 908-436-5200.
- As Escolas Públicas de Elizabeth oferecem acessibilidade à tradução de materiais e comunicação do distrito. Para obter mais assistência, entre em contato com 908-436-5200.
- Lekòl Piblik Elizabeth yo ofri tradiksyon aksè nan kominikasyon distri a ak materyèl yo. Pou plis asistans tanpri kontakte 908-436-5200.
- المدارس بمنطقة اليزابيث التعليميه تقدم خدمه الترجمة لجميع اللغات في حاله الحاجه لهذه الخدمة المقدمة اتصل برقم 908-436-5200



We value the thoughts of our community members.

Have a great idea for an upcoming issue or information that you think would be beneficial to others in our community?

Send to: dssnewsletter@epsnj.org