

SPecial EDition

SWEETWATER UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT—SPECIAL SERVICES

Volume 1, Issue 2

November, 2013



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

This Fall Quarter always seems to fly by. It includes several holidays that bring friends and family together. This is a wonderful time to reflect on our blessings and renew our commitment to those things that are truly important to us.

We recently had an opportunity to reflect on the services our department provides. An outside agency, FCMAT, was contracted to conduct a fiscal review of Special Services. Several of you volunteered to be interviewed—thanks again! The FCMAT team had several cost-savings recommendations but, more important, the reviewers concurred that the special education staff in our district—management, certificated and classified--appear uniformly committed to their service and take pride in the work they do. I certainly see this when I visit school campuses but am thrilled that the review team walked away with this impression as well.

These are some of the things the FCMAT team cited as cost-effective:

- * Providing alternative supports and placements, including the Autism Team and our specialized academies (East Hills and Alta Vista)
- * Clear criteria exists to determine student eligibility for Extended School Year
- * Transportation routes are efficiently established
- * Increase the involvement of non-special education staff (specifically administrators and counselors) with the students with disabilities on their campus

Here are some of the areas we are encouraged to address:

- * Establish a formal procedure to determine the need for extra paraprofessional staff, especially one-to-one assistants, with fading plans
- * Establish a formal procedure to determine the need for curb-to-curb transportation
- * Continue to expand alternatives to non-public schools

We have begun addressing the issues above, including beginning to review the Special Circumstances Instructional Assistance (SCIA) process, investigating the expansion of East Hills Academy, and training non-special education staff in special education law and non-violent crisis response. I'll keep you posted as things develop.

Please enjoy the upcoming Thanksgiving break.



Inside this issue:

Common Core	2
TPP / DOR	3
Canvas	4
SEIS	5
Self Determination	6
Mod/Sev Teacher Spotlight	6
Speech Corner	6
Surviving the Holiday Season	7
Autism Team	8
Puzzle Award	8
Spotlight on Inclusion	9





Universal Design for Learning: Web-Based Tools for Helping Students with Disabilities Access the Common Core

With the approach of Common Core upon us, many are asking, “How will our students with disabilities be accounted for?” or “Will all students be held to the same rigorous expectations articulated in the Common Core State Standards?” These and many other questions are beginning to be addressed by a few documents recently released by the state and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, aka SBAC (the organization writing our new common state assessments). The first is the “[Application to Students with Disabilities](#)” and the second is the “[SBAC: Usability, Accessibility and Accommodations Guidelines](#)”. What both documents have in common is the focus on the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

Universal Design for Learning provides guidelines for the creation of instructional materials, activities and resources that work for everyone, not just a select few. The principles are based on the architectural model of Universal Design which include curb cuts designed not just for individuals who use wheelchairs, but also for those that ride bikes, push a stroller, or for the elderly. UDL promotes flexible approaches to learning that can be adjusted to meet the individual needs of each student.

There are three principles:

[Provide Multiple Means of Representation](#)

[Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression](#)

[Provide Multiple Means of Engagement](#)

For more information, the following websites are recommended:

www.cast.org The Center for Applied Special Technologies, or CAST, is a leader in researching, forwarding, and designing resources for UDL. Be sure to check out their free, innovative, multi-media learning tools such as Science Writer, UDL Curriculum Self Check, and UDL Online Modules.

www.udlcenter.org The National UDL Center supports the effective implementation of UDL. This site has examples and resources for teachers as well as free professional development and support.



Submitted by Carla Jacobs



TRANSITION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

The Special Services Department completed their fourth bi-annual Student Interview Workshop in October. The goal of the workshop is to provide an opportunity for graduating seniors to prepare for future employment by

practicing skills they have acquired in the classroom. Fundamentals Transitions 12 teachers prepare students for these mock interviews by having students create resumes, cover letters, and business cards.

During the interview, students are asked common interview questions by community volunteers who also provide feedback on the student's responses, appearance, and professional documents. This is not only a rewarding experience for the seniors, but for the volunteers as well.

With the support of volunteers from local businesses and community organizations such as San Diego Pretzel Company, United States University, The City Of Chula Vista, and many others, hundreds of students have been able to gain valuable experience and feedback before entering the workforce. Many companies/agencies such as Regal Theaters Rancho Del Rey and South Bay YMCA thoroughly enjoy the experience and return for each workshop.

We would like to thank everyone involved for making this event such a huge success.

The second workshop of the year will take place in May and provide a platform for our graduating seniors to really prove they are ready for the rigors of the work force. Some students have even secured summer employment through these workshops.

We are hoping to gain more and more community support each year so if you or someone you know would like to support this great event please contact Joe Prosapio at (619) 796-7526.


Submitted by Joe Prosapio

Special Services CANVAS Page

Canvas is our district learning management system. The Special Services Canvas page is full of valuable resources! If you haven't already done so, check it out at <https://sweetwaterschools.instructure.com/courses/1028949>

Resources are available under each of the following categories:

- Mild/Moderate (IEP/ITP Support, Gen. Ed. IEP Resources)
- Inclusion
- Fundamentals Classes
- Moderate/Severe
- DIS Services
- Autism Support/Social Communication
- Gen. Special Services Information/District Links



Sweetwater Special Services
Education for ALL

Welcome to Sweetwater Special Services! We hope you will come here to find resources, gain insights, and join in our dialogue for "Education for ALL". Please click on a topic below. Be aware that this course will be updated regularly with events and current resources. Be sure to check back often and adjust your personal settings to receive updates of changes.

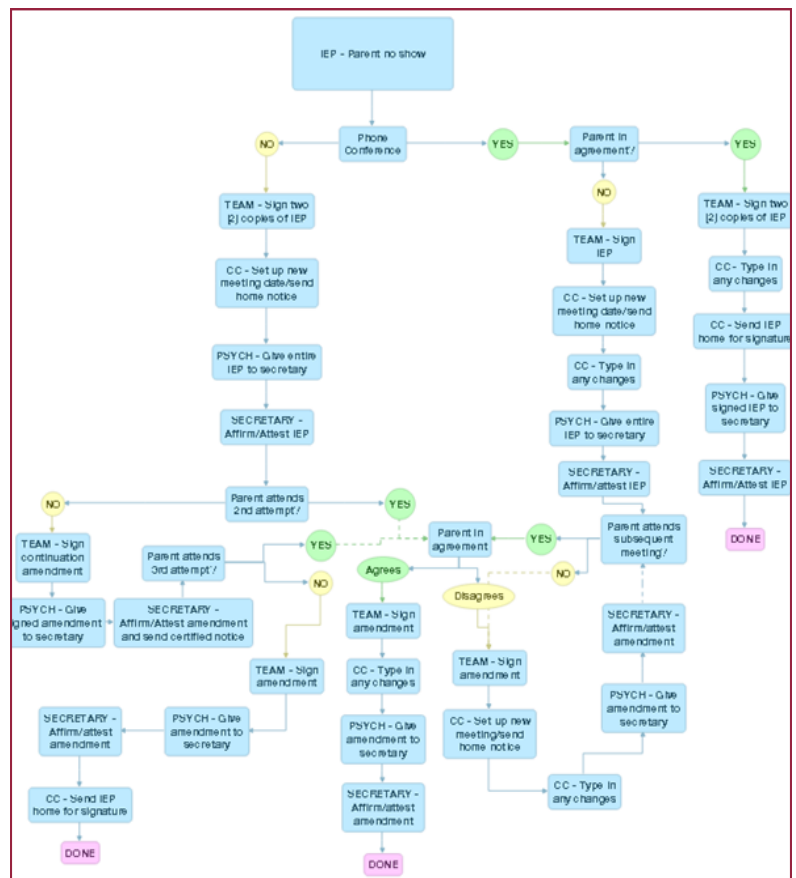
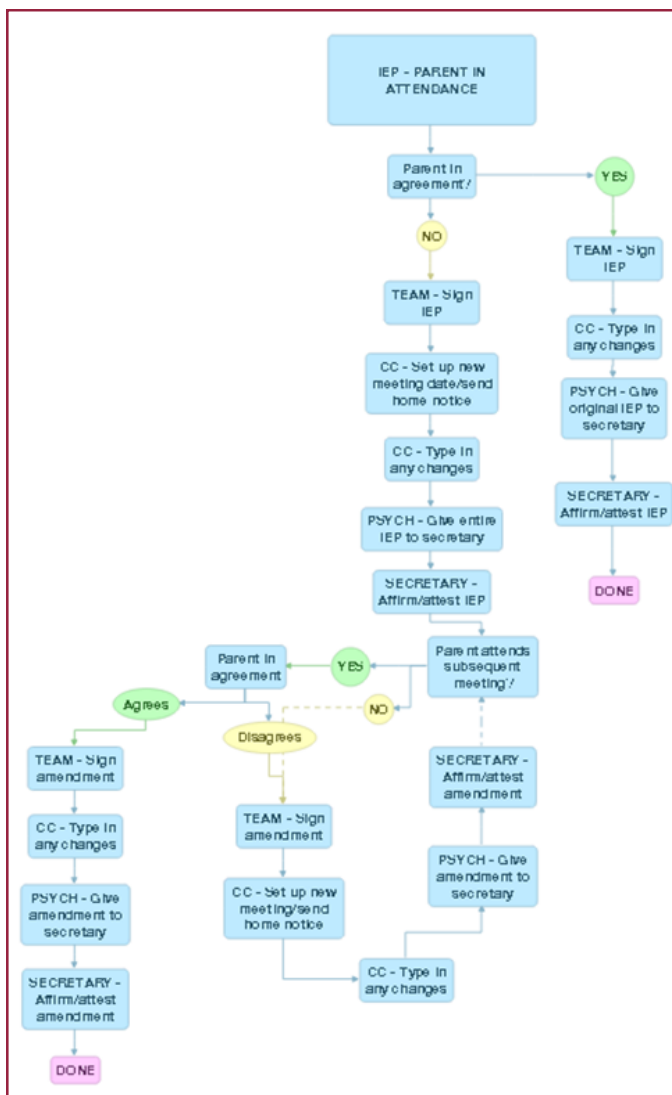
Mild/Moderate:	IEP Support	ITP Support	General Education IEP Resources		
INCLUSION:	Collaboration	Co-Teaching	Study Skills	Common Core Universal Design for Learning/Accommodations	
FUNDAMENTALS CLASSES:	English/Read 180	Math	Social Science	Science	Transition
Moderate/Severe:	Moderate/Severe Classroom	Moderate Classroom	Moderate/Severe Transition		
D.I.S. SERVICES:	Speech & Language	Assistive Technology	Adapted PE	Visual Impairments	Orientation & Mobility
Autism Support	Social Communication Class				
General Special Services Information	District Links				

SEIS UPDATE: Flowcharts resource available!

SEIS TIPS: Flowchart resources available

We would like to showcase a few resources for case carriers. Kathryn Kinslow has created two SUHSD Flowcharts. These helpful flowcharts inform case carriers as to what steps to take when a parent **is** or **is not** in attendance at an IEP meeting. To find these flowcharts in SEIS follow these steps:

- Go to your SEIS homepage
- Go to "Reference Materials"
- Go to "Document Library"
- Go to "SUHSD Flowcharts"



Self-Determination in Students with Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities

Research shows that youth who are self-determined achieve more positive adult outcomes, including improving leisure skill acquisition and vocational outcomes. Teaching the following skills in your classroom will help your students move toward independence and be responsible for their own lives:

- Choice-making
- Decision-making
- Problem-solving
- Goal-setting
- Independence and safety
- Self-regulation
- Self-instruction skills
- Self-advocacy and leadership skills

Promoting Self-Determination Students with Developmental Disabilities

Submitted by Rosanna Santos



Kudos to Eastlake High School's Moderate and Mod/Severe staff for hosting a fun-filled Halloween Dance. Thank you Mr. Riiff, Mr. Kerr, Mrs. Noyes, Mr. Ortega, Mr. Schmidt, and Mr. Gustafson!!!

Boardmaker Achieve™

Why reinvent the wheel? Get access to hundreds of teacher-created activities at Boardmaker Achieve.

Visit <http://boardmakerachieve.com> and use your Boardmaker CD to start downloading activities now.

Submitted by Rosanna

Speech Corner

Students who Stutter



Stuttering is a common speech disorder that is easily recognized but often poorly understood. It has primarily a genetic cause, although its development can be affected by the environment and an individual's reaction to it. Parents will often try to identify the cause of their child's stuttering, but they need look no further than the genetic code they passed on to their child at conception. People who stutter are overwhelmingly male (80%) and they make up about 1% of the population, so most teachers will encounter several over the course of their careers. As many as 5% of children go through a stuttering phase, but in most cases this passes due to spontaneous recovery, which also occurs less frequently at later ages. Apart from spontaneous recovery, there is no cure for stuttering, so therapy focuses on treatment and management.

Stuttering is not related to intelligence, but many listeners mistakenly assume it is, and this is one of the most difficult obstacles students who stutter have to face. In addition, many students who stutter feel ashamed to speak in class or in social situations, and they often face mockery and discrimination. It is important for educators to work with students who stutter to create a safe environment for them and understand their needs. In some cases this may involve adapting oral assignments or adjusting participation grades. Some teachers are unaware that a particular student stutters because the student rarely speaks in class. Keep in mind that people who stutter are capable of getting their message out even if it takes some extra time, so being patient is one of the best things listeners can do.

Last year Rochelle Braithwaite and Aaron Ferguson started a stuttering support group for students in the district. Rochelle is a speech therapist and Aaron is a substitute teacher and a person who stutters. The Stuttering Support Group has been meeting on a monthly basis at the Special Services office on L Street, and the next meeting is scheduled for December 10 at 6:00 p.m. Students from the district who stutter are encouraged to come out to share their thoughts and learn from their peers. They should contact the speech therapist at their site for more information.

Submitted by Bob McKinney



Surviving the Holiday Season

The quickly approaching holiday season is a busy season full of fun, togetherness and lots of activities. For our students on the autism spectrum, it is also a time when routines are changed and schedules are disrupted. This may cause students in your class to have difficulties you haven't seen before. Below are a couple of tips to help your students on the autism spectrum maintain their performance in your classroom.

Preparation is key. Let the student know in advance about upcoming assemblies, activities and changes in the regular schedule. In addition to telling the student, write down the upcoming changes and have him note it in his calendar.

An increase in unusual or difficult behaviors probably indicates an increase in stress. Sometimes stress is caused by feeling a loss of control, unexpected changes in the daily routine or not getting enough sleep. When this occurs, allow the student to go and talk with his counselor, speech therapist or anyone he feels comfortable speaking with. Many times the stress will only be alleviated when the student physically removes himself from the stressful event or situation.

As academic demands increase toward the end of the semester, students with high functioning autism often become obsessed with checking their grades online. The impact missing assignments and poor test grades have on final grades becomes very apparent. This causes stress for our students which is often multiplied by their difficulty in asking for help. Be proactive and sit down with the student to review what's missing and create a plan that will help bring grades up.

Submitted by Janet Dudley





MARCH 22, 2014

Join the Sweetwater District Autism Team in the San Diego Race for Autism. NFAR has been a wonderful support for our students and staff. Opportunities for participating include: a 5K Run/Walk, 1 Mile Family Walk, Race from Home Participant, or making a donation.

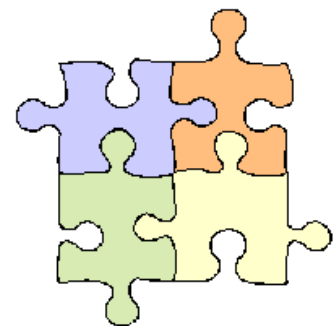
To Register go to the NFAR.org and click the San Diego Race for Autism logo. Be sure to register as part of the Sweetwater District Autism Team.

If you have any questions, e-mail lorna.mcmurray@sweetwaterschools.org.

SEE YOU THERE!!!

PUZZLE PIECE AWARD!

Congratulations to the October Recipients of the Autism Team "Puzzle Piece Award" This award is given to recognize staff who have gone above and beyond in meeting the needs of students with Autism. October Recipients are coaches of this year's PEERs Program – Diane Cabe, Kevin Costa, Sonja Forsstrom, Angie Foust, Sharon Marconi, Susie Robinson, and Roseanne Stevens. They have volunteered to coach the PEERs program (a social skills program for our students with Autism) one night a week for 16 weeks. You are awesome!



Submitted by Lorna McMurray



Spotlight on Inclusion: Co-Teaching Done Right!!

Special Services is proud to shine a spotlight on Leana Dillon and Estela Garza from Chula Vista Middle. In their second year of co-teaching, they have formed a strong bond that translates into high quality teaching and student achievement. A key factor in their success is in their approach to co-teaching. Both feel equally responsible for planning, teaching, grading and all other duties. In fact, neither teacher wants to take full control of the class because they both feel responsible for it. This is especially significant to Leana, the Special Ed teacher. "I feel like I really teach the class. I don't feel like a glorified assistant," says Dillon. It also helps that personality wise, they balance each other out and both are willing to compromise. The experience has had a positive impact on Estela, whose background is in ELD. "I am learning to be more patient," she stated. "I am more aware of the impact a disability has on a student." She also has a newfound respect for Special Ed teachers. "I had no idea of all the work Special Ed teachers have to do." It hasn't always been easy for this pair. Despite having a common prep to plan and attending PLC's together, they struggle with meeting all student needs. They have figured out a way to revisit issues and ask for help when they need it, including seeking assistance from their Special Services Resource Teacher. More importantly, when there is a problem, they don't blame each other. They focus on solutions and interventions. They truly work as a team.

San Ysidro High School is home to another outstanding co-teach pair. They are Diana Cintron and Melissa Hernandez. Even though only in their third year as a team, they conduct business like they've been working together for a lot longer. Any observer would be hard-pressed to identify which one is the general ed teacher, and which the Special Ed. In true team form, these ladies primarily employ the team-teaching and parallel teaching approach to instruction. A key to their success is the strong commitment they have to planning. Each is aware of her strengths and they capitalize on them. They regard each other as equals, which allows them to view each other as equally responsible for all aspects of their teaching assignment. "Professional development is essential for any teacher in order to stay up to date and current on research and effective teaching practices, especially for your special education students. Set aside some time to read professional journals and websites that will help you develop that additional lens from which you can plan inclusive first best lessons," advises Diana. Effective communication is also essential. "Open communication has been instrumental in our successful partnership. If you start with the understanding that expressing your ideas, thoughts, and concerns is always acceptable, then you will maintain an active and amicable working relationship. You're both professionals; you know that when it comes to working together for your students, you check your egos at the door," stated Melissa.

SEAST TEAM
Mabelle Glithero
Christine Fax-Huckaby
Carla Jacobs
Shiela Feranndez
Michelle Sturm-Gonzalez

