



Special Education Department Highlights:

Well the days are getting longer; spring is just around the corner. Spring brings a new beginning, a time to start fresh and find new moments to celebrate. The special education department continues to bring on new staff members to meet student population needs. These positions are funded by our American Recovery and Reinvestment funds allocated through the Federal Government.

We are in the process of finalizing and welcoming a new member to our team, a K-5 paraprofessional. As soon as this member joins our staff I will provide new information so that the FRCS community may join me in welcoming our new staff member.

Around the state there are many informative conventions and supports for students and families that should be of interest to our district members. I recommend that you find time to attend and take part in those presentations that hold a particular interest to you and your family. I will highlight just a few of the conferences that meet the description of our students with challenges in the twenty school districts that we serve.

The Federation for Children with Special Needs will once again provide useful and helpful information at this year's *Visions of Community* conference which will be held Saturday, March 13, 2010 at the Seaport/World Trade Center-Boston. The keynote speaker is Beth Harry, the professor of Special Education at Miami University. She is also the author of the book, *Melanie: The Bird with a Broken Wing*. This book is a moving mother's story of coming to grips with the loss of a child with cerebral palsy. She will speak to her audience on Saturday using two important views, that of a mother and special education professional. If you have not been to this conference before, I recommend that you try to take time out of your busy weekend to visit this moving convention. This convention is an inspiring model of partnership between professionals and families. The Federation for Children with Special Needs also has many vendors during the convention as well as a list of the presenters on their website. I have included the website for your convenience. <http://fcsn.org>

The Federation is also a wonderful source of information to support parents in their efforts to promote learning within the home setting. This month the Federation newsletter has several helpful hints in motivating children and the topic of homework. I have included the link for your convenience. <http://pplace.org/publications/bulletins/English/ppbulletinv8n3.pdf> Our strong partnership with the May Institute continues and this organization will be hosting a variety of workshops for students, professionals, siblings, and families this year. Please check their website for the featured topic of the month to be presented on Wednesday evenings from

6:30-8:30pm. Some of the featured topics include: **How to Make Good Decisions About the Use of Psychotropic Medications, Meeting Social Needs of Children with Autism, Challenging Behavior, Transition Planning for Adult Placement, Overcoming the Challenges of Community-Based Activities, Supporting Siblings of Children with Autism, and Increasing Motivation in Individuals with Autism.** Professional staff from our district will also be attending some of these workshops as well. The website is provided below for your convenience. http://www.spedchildmass.com/autism_aspergers

The Asperger's Association of New England, AANE will once again host a gala event to support the many groups and additional programs offered by this organization. If you are interested in a night of fun, come laugh with us again on May 1, 2010 at the Marriott Hotel in Newton, MA. A silent and live auction will be followed by a performance from Maine comedian Bob Marley. I have included the website for all of the important details you will need. <http://www.aane.org>

Once again our students will participate in the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System. Please know that a letter will be sent home through our Red Folder system online. If you have any questions regarding your child's accommodations for this assessment, please contact your child's liaison. The tests will be administered to students in grades 3-10. I have provided the liaisons and their extensions for your convenience.

Michelle Brown, extension 331, Lynsi Keene, extension 331, Laura Whalen-Bratsis, extension 333, Carrie Ruggiero extension 305, and Christine Davidson extension 305. Please let me know if you have questions or would like more information regarding specific topics for our FRCS Spirit. You may contact me at sasicot@foxboroughrcs.org