

Special Education Services Newsletter

New Buffalo Area
Schools

Volume I, Issue I
November 2008

Parents' Information Night

Please save time in your busy calendars for the evening of December 2nd at 6:30 PM. We will be holding our first Parents' Information Night at the New Buffalo Elementary School Cafeteria. This first gathering is intended for parents of elementary aged students, but parents of older students are also welcome to attend.

The focus of this first meeting will be the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process. Our featured speaker will be Michelle Miller, a regional parent mentor for the Michigan Alliance for Families. Through her presentation, Michelle will take us through the IEP process, answering questions and concerns you may have regarding the complex world of the IEP and what parents should expect and look for throughout the IEP process.

Michelle will also be available to answer other questions you may have concerning your special

needs child.

The Michigan Alliance for Families provides information on all disability and education issues involving children and young adults from birth to age 26. Their staff includes parents of individuals with disabilities who can provide first-hand knowledge of all aspects of the educational system.

At this same meeting, we will attempt to familiarize the NBAS parents with our staff and what services we have available to us both locally and through the Berrien County Regional Education Service Agency (formerly the Intermediate School District).

We anticipate a good turnout and look forward to launching a new support mechanism to and for our parents!



Excellence in Education Award

By now you should have received a brochure in the mail to nominate an extraordinary person working on behalf of students with impairments. If you know someone deserving of such recognition and would like another copy of the brochure, please call the Special Education Office or stop by the school office and they will make a form available to you! Nominations are due no later than December 18, 2008.

Meet Our New Coordinator!

Someone you should meet is our new Special Education Coordinator, Mrs. Cheryl Warner! "Che" comes to New Buffalo with 9 years of teaching experience, 5 of them in special education and was most recently at Eau Claire Public Schools. A graduate of the University of Notre Dame and Andrews University, Che has taught grades 3 through 12

and is bringing many innovative ideas to her new position. As December approaches, you will be interested to know that she will also be in the same capacity at Bridgman Public Schools in a joint venture that has been established with the cooperation of both schools. Mrs. Warner is in the process of establishing a schedule between the two dis-

tricts, but is available by calling 469-6062 or contacting the Special Education department at 469-6068. She may also be reached via email at cwarner@remc11.k12.mi.us.

Che looks forward to meeting with all of the New Buffalo parents as time permits.

Meet the New Buffalo Special Education Staff

High School

Janet Ackerson, teacher
Elizabeth Hays, teacher
Linda Magro, teacher

Middle School

Jennifer Bauer, teacher
Shirley Hoag, teacher
Laura Hauch, aide
Kay Kennedy-Gutzman, aide

Elementary School

Kim Magro, teacher
Kris Sieko, teacher
Carolyn Selby, aide
Emily Taylor, aide

District-wide

Nancy Mrozek, Speech
& Language Pathologist

Administrative

Cheryl Warner, coordinator
Patty Daniel, secretary

Upcoming Dates:

- PAC meeting, Tues., Nov. 18th, 7:00 PM at Berrien RESA
- Thanksgiving Break, Nov. 26—28
- Parents' Information Night, Dec. 2nd, 6:30 PM, see article



Read to your child. It will open the lines of communication as well as open new doors!

Special Education Terms and Common Acronyms

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder		
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder	IEE	Independent Education Evaluation
BIP	Behavior Intervention Plan		
CI	Cognitive Impairment	IEP	Individualized Education Program
CMH	Community Mental Health	IEPT	Individualized Education Program Team (Note: "IEPC" is an outdated term)
CP	Cerebral Palsy		
ECDD	Early Childhood Developmental Delay	LD	Learning Disability (same as SLD)
EI	Emotional Impairment	MET	Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team
ESY	Extended School Year	OHI	Other Health Impairment

As space permits, we will try to familiarize our readers with commonly used terms and acronyms in order to "de-mystify" the language used in the IEP process.

If you would ever like more information on a particular topic, please contact the Special Education Office at 469-6068 and we will be happy to make the needed information available!



Encourage your child to express his or herself by drawing pictures, painting or writing in a journal. Sometimes "a picture is worth a thousand words!"

Let's Talk About... General Education Interventions

The Berrien RESA recommends a pre-referral process to be implemented as an integral part of the referral procedures. The purpose of this process is to identify a problem, identify a student's strengths and needs, identify potential diagnostic and/or prescriptive techniques and to implement those techniques with the anticipated outcome of resolving a student's academic or behavioral problems in the general education setting.

What this means is that the student will be educated in the least restrictive environment as required by law. After interventions have been tried, it may be the decision of the Child Study Team to refer the student for testing to determine whether or not the student is eligible to receive special education services. It is important that appropriate educational techniques and alternatives are attempted and documented prior to referring a child for testing.

This process can also include ascertaining whether or not there may be a need for a physical intervention such as having one's eyes tested for glasses.

At NBAS, the Child Study Teams include general and special education teachers, parents, counselors and building principals, all of whom want success for your child!

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Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) is a group of parents who have children in special education programs or who receive services within the Regional Education Service Agency (RESA). In Berrien County, each local school district designates two parents to represent them on this committee. Currently, New Buffalo has one representative, Patty Daniel.

PAC members serve as liaisons between parents, their local school districts, and the RESA, helping all parties to collaborate in the best interests of students with impairments. The primary function of the PAC is to review the RESA plan, which is a written document describing how special education services will be implemented to meet the needs of students throughout Berrien County. The PAC meets every

third Tuesday of the month (except December, June, July and August) at 7:00 PM in the Berrien RESA building in Berrien Springs. Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend. For more information or to contact our local PAC rep, call the Special Education Office at 469-6068 or email Patty at pdaniel@remc1.l.k12.mi.us.



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