

Special Education NEWS

Volume 1

Issue 5

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The Inclusive Schools Network has identified December to celebrate inclusive schools by using the Super Hero theme. This is particularly fitting because the definition of a hero, a person noted for courageous acts of nobility of character, resonates with all of the students, parents, teachers, principals and community leaders who take courageous steps forward each day to promote acceptance for all.

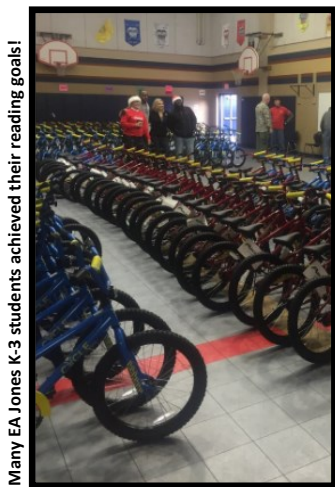
Through the Special Education Department's reorganization, FBISD has more emphasis on developing quality programs and services so all students have access to the general curriculum. The Co-Teach model is an effective instructional model that allows general and special educators to differentiate and deliver instruction with assurances that all students have full access to the grade-level expectations of the general curriculum. While FBISD has had inclusion services as part of our continuum of special education services, we now have Co-Teaching as another inclusive service delivery model. This month, we are celebrating the progress we are making in providing and supporting quality educational experiences to our increasingly diverse student population.

A Well Earned Gift!

CYCLE comes to FBISD

CYCLE is a children's charity that rewards students with new bicycles for achieving better academic performance in the classroom. CYCLE is dedicated to improving literacy for students in grades K—3 at Title I schools within the Greater Houston area. They give students the opportunity to earn a brand new bicycle for achieving their individualized set goals, and in return, the students learn that hard work equals reward. This valuable life lesson can put students on the path to a brighter future as they build their literacy skills which can empower them to reach their full potential in school and life.

The students at Blue Ridge Elementary, E.A. Jones Elementary, and Mission West Elementary collaborated with their teachers and parents to develop a personal goal which focused on advancing their skills by reading both in and out of school. These committed students also had to maintain the daily classroom expectations in regards to behavior and classroom participation. With each goal being individualized, all students on these campuses were able to participate in this amazing program. Students with behavior, social, communication or even learning challenges took ownership of their performance and worked hard to improve their literacy skills. CYCLE allows all students on these campuses the opportunity to overcome their daily challenges by rewarding them with new bicycles and helmets. Congratulations to all the students who participated in the CYCLE



Many EA Jones K-3 students achieved their reading goals!



MWE preparing to reward their students!



BRE Staff were ready to pass out bikes to students that achieved their reading goal!

The Fort Bend Independent School District, an Equal Opportunity Educational Provider and Employer, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sex, national origin, disability and/or age, military status, genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by law in educational programs or activities that it operates or in employment decisions. Additionally, the District does not discriminate against an employee or applicant who acts to oppose such discrimination or participates in the investigation of a complaint related to a discriminatory employment practice. Employment decisions will be made on the basis of each applicant's job qualifications, experience, and abilities. Policies DAA, DIA

Co-Teach



General Education & Special Education Teachers

The Department of Innovation and Continuous Improvement is partnering with the Special Education Department and Teacher Development to conduct a brief teacher survey. We are gathering information to determine the level of collaboration between current Co-Teach partnerships on every campus as well as the level of awareness and use of various content specific resources to provide rigorous daily instruction to our students. The information collected will be used to determine PD offerings in Spring and Summer of 2017. The survey has been specifically designed for current FBISD Co-Teach partnerships and Special Education Resource teachers. All responses are and will remain confidential. We are excited to get the results of our first survey so that we can better support our Co-Teach partnerships in developing stronger collaboration.

Parent Resources:

Reading for meaning is the ultimate goal. Many students with word reading challenges become overwhelmed with the act of reading the words which distracts the brain from comprehension, the ultimate goal. Removing the barrier of word reading challenges can be a powerful tool to support comprehension, build vocabulary, boost confidence, and ultimately lead to better outcomes. Text-to-Speech tools are an effective way to help students who are struggling readers while encouraging independence and don't require an adult reading over a student's shoulder. Here are some free text readers you can try at home over the holidays:

www.naturalreaders.com
(open using Chrome)

www.text2speech.org

Co-Teach Corner

Sienna Crossing Elementary

At Sienna Crossing Elementary, collaborative partnerships are not a new concept. Special ed and general ed have been planning and teaching together for three years and are now taking the concept to a whole new level. With the leadership and support of their principal, Mrs. Jeanna Sniffen, the teachers at SCE have worked hard to develop co-teach classes that provide an effective inclusive environment. Ms. Dawn Clem and Mrs. Jana Roberds co-teach 5th grade ELA and have no trouble selecting the most appropriate co-teach strategy to work with the content they are presenting. For example, when presenting a lesson on non-fiction text features, the two teachers move seamlessly from whole group to parallel teaching, which splits the class into two equal halves and allows the same lesson to be taught in a smaller setting within the classroom. Both sets of students receive an identical lesson and are guided through reading strategies, but reducing the whole group size makes it easier for the teachers to monitor attention and identify students who may be struggling with one of the concepts. This means that less students are able to "hide," and teachers are able to provide meaningful feedback and clarify concepts right then and there.

Roberds and Clem spend time planning weekly together for their subject. While Mrs. Roberds remains the content expert for 5th grade ELA curriculum, Ms. Clem lends her accommodation and differentiation expertise and when combined, ensures that each lesson is designed specifically for the needs of all learners in that class. Technology is used to enhance learning, and if students need a particular text read aloud to compensate for a disability, they can do so right there in the classroom through the use of a campus iPad or laptop. The team has also incorporated some elements of blended learning into their daily instruction;

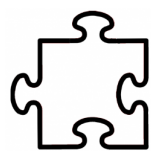


Co-teach partners Dawn Clem (left) and Jana Roberds (right)

Student computers and laptops are used to reinforce and enhance instruction and are often used as a part of station teaching. This method allows students to rotate through the class in a small group and for each of the teachers to provide specific, differentiated instruction as well as meaningful feedback and monitoring on a more personal level. Together they have created a safe and exciting environment where students' potential is maximized, regardless of disability.

Beyond just having curriculum and special education knowledge, effective collaborative teaching partnerships require a recipe of commitment, dedication, and willingness to see classroom instruction from an entirely new perspective. Roberds and Clem have painstakingly measured out each ingredient with love and have worked together to create a five star, four course meal for the students in their classroom.





Teach Piece

Helping our children say..



Parents have been prompting, encouraging and reminding kids to say thank you for ages. With all the gifting this time of year, there is much for children to be grateful for. Even without material gifts, this time of year highlights the many good things we have to be grateful for. It's also a great opportunity to teach children the importance of saying thank you. Research now links gratitude to many benefits, including better grades, relationships and even health. Researchers also say gratitude can be taught; even to kids who seem less positive. These children may actually see the greatest improvement! Experts advise parents to:

- **Be role models.** Whether out in the community or at your home, when someone does something kind, show your appreciation. If your child completes a task in your home without being told, take note. "You really helped by taking the garbage out today without being asked. Thank you!" This simple acknowledgment on your part demonstrates to your child how to be thankful.
- **Make gratitude lists.** Help your child be reflective and focus on what they have. He may not have the new sneakers, gaming system, cell phone or video game they want, but there is always something for which to be thankful. Remind your child that many of people's most treasured "things" aren't things at all like: people, friendships, abilities and accomplishments. Make a list of those things that are important in your family. Keep it in a common, easily accessible place (e.g., on the refrigerator) and review / update that list together throughout the year.
- **Shift your focus.** This winter, turn your attention to family time and helping others. What do you have that others might need or want? How can you share? Your family might donate items, volunteer or find small ways to be kind to others this holiday season.

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GRACIAS 谢谢
THANK YOU
ありがとうございます MERCI
DANKE धन्यवाद
شُكراً OBRIGADO

Remember, "Thank you" can be said in any language, at any age, anywhere and for many reasons this holiday season!

Source: C. Butler, "Teaching kids to be grateful may have long-term benefits even though it's not easy,"

Holidays & Traditions

Bowie Middle School SAILS

Unique Learning System is a dynamic, standards-based curriculum that is used in the SAILS classrooms. Unique encompasses English Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Social Skills as well as current events of national and international news and has an icon symbol system to utilize in each unit of study.

In December, students learn the importance of family and community beliefs, customs, language and traditions in our community. Jodie Moore, the SAILS teacher at Bowie Middle School, was able to draw upon her personal family memories as the class read about "Abby's Traditions" which highlights the customs and celebrations associated with Hanukkah. Ms. Moore shared stories from her childhood about the food, games, and traditions she experienced when celebrating Hanukkah with her family. The class played with her dreidels during math and even made potato latkes for snack. While her students are excited about celebrating their own family traditions this upcoming winter break, they were given a "Unique" learning experience into new and diverse cultures and celebrations from their teacher as she brought the Festival of Lights into their classroom.



The following books may be helpful if your family is interested in learning about diverse holiday celebrations this season.

Las Navidades: Christmas by Lulu Delacre is a bilingual collection of songs highlighting seasonal traditions.

Light the Lights! : A Story About Celebrating Hanukkah and Christmas by Margaret Moorman invites you to join Emma and her family as they celebrate two holidays, Hanukkah and Christmas.

The Night Before Christmas by Clement C. Moore, illustrated by Bruce Whatley is a traditional retelling of this Christmas classic.

Seven Candles for Kwanzaa by Andrea Davis Pinkney; illustrated by Brian Pinkney is a beautifully designed picture book detailing the seven-day African-American holiday.

Department Highlights...

2017-18 Project SEARCH Application

Project SEARCH is a one-year, school-to-work internship program that prepares students with disabilities for competitive, integrated employment. Selected student interns receive training in social and independent living skills while acquiring real-life work experience. Additionally throughout the internship, those selected participate in job coaching, career exploration and employment planning in preparation for job placement at the conclusion of the internship. For additional information about Project SEARCH, visit their [website](#)).

FBISD is accepting applications for the 2017 - 2018 Project SEARCH internship January 9th through January 30th 2017.

[Application Download](#)

Project SEARCH Open House
January 9, 2017 at 6:00 pm
United Healthcare
14141 Southwest Freeway
Sugar Land



Parent Education Workshop

Please join us on January 17, 2017 at the MR Wood Center for Learning from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. to learn more about FBISD's services. We will have a Services Open House with several of our direct and related service personnel. Parents will hear a brief description of the service and a small sample lesson from:

- Occupational Therapy**
- Physical Therapy**
- Adapted Physical Education**
- Vision – Orientation & Mobility**
- Music Therapy**



Child care is available to those that register in advance. Click on the Child Care link to the left or call 281-643-1143.

Employee Spotlight

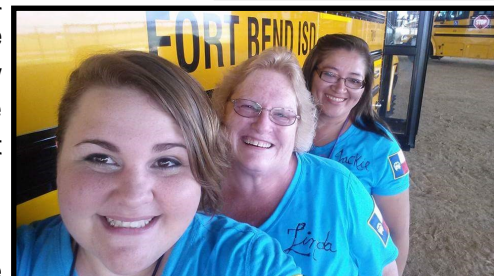
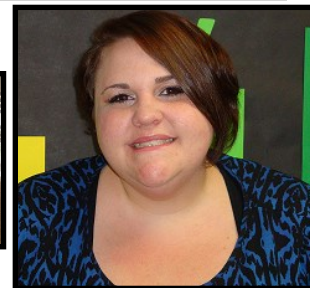
Megan Elsberry has been the Special Needs Transportation Supervisor at the Hodges Bend Terminal since 2015. While she may be young years, she has years of training and experience that make her a leader in her field. Megan is originally from Arizona where she learned about transportation systems from her mother who is a transportation director. At just 21, Megan earned her commercial driver's license (CDL) and began driving a special needs bus. After moving to Texas, she joined New Caney ISD as a special needs bus driver. She has strong passion for learning and continues to challenge herself professionally. She is Nationally Certified as a Car Seat Technician through Safe Kids of National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). She is also an instructor for Child Passenger Safety Restraint Systems on school buses through our local Regional Service Center.

Because of Megan, FBISD entered a special needs team into the State School Bus "Rodeo". The team effectively handled the driving obstacle course while simultaneously dealing with emergency scenarios that may arise while transporting students with special needs. The FBISD team won 6th place out of 22 teams. Her fellow team members are looking forward to showing off their skills when they all return to the "Rodeo" in June 2017.

Megan is passionate about safe travel systems for special needs children and works with both district employees as well as parents to ensure all students are safely transported in any motor vehicle. One elementary parent indicated that Megan invited the entire family to the bus barn and let them personally try the safety system the bus was using. Megan took the time to show the parents how to install the device into their car and then how to properly fit the device on their child. Without her efforts, the family would not have known of this unique system to keep their child from unbuckling his seat belt when the car is moving.

Megan's number one goal is for every student to have a safe ride to and from their intended destination. When issues arise, she is quick to serve as the mediator and problem solver between the bus team, the student, the parents and school staff to ensure our student's safety at all times during transport. When not at work, you can find Megan volunteering at the Conroe Fire Department promoting safe travels where she helps parents properly install car seats, boosters, and any other vehicle child safety device. Megan takes great care and time getting our kids safely to and from school while making parents feel secure that their child is being transported safely. We are very grateful for the knowledge and expertise Megan has brought to FBISD and look forward to seeing her expand her impact through her teaching and community service endeavors.

Photo below courtesy of David Hernandez



2016 "Rodeo" Team



Around Town...

Texana Center is a 501(c)3 public, not for profit, organization that provides behavioral healthcare and developmental disabilities services to residents living in Fort Bend County. They offer free parent trainings as one of the many services they provide to families. Mark your calendars for the winter 2017 trainings highlighted below!

Texana Applied Behavior Analysis Training Series

Food Expansion

Learn how to increase the variety of foods and textures your child eats and how to decrease food selectivity.

Saturday, January 14 from 9:00 a.m. to noon at the Sugar Land location.

130 Industrial Boulevard
Suite 200
Sugar Land, Texas 77478
(entrance at back of building)

To attend, please RSVP by phone, 281-239-1478, or by [e-mail](#) at least two days prior to the training. Childcare is not provided.



Texana Children's Center for Autism "Speaker Series"

Texana Center Main Campus
4910 Airport Avenue Building G ~ Rosenberg, 77471

<p>Saturday, January 21 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.</p>	<p>The ABCs of ABA</p> <p>Learn the basic principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA) and how these principles can be used to promote learning and independence in any child's environment.</p> <p>Presenter: Julia Emery, BA, BCaBA</p>
<p>Saturday, February 11 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.</p>	<p>Antecedent Interventions</p> <p>Learn different methods to reduce inappropriate behaviors and increase appropriate behaviors.</p> <p>Presenter: Teah Dennis, BS</p>

To attend, please RSVP by phone, 281-239-1435, or by [e-mail](#) at least two days prior to the training.

Community Resources

Non-Profits

Texana—Child Services

Local: (281) 239-1300

[Website](#)

The Arc of Fort Bend County

Local: (281) 494-5959

[Website](#)

Hope for Three—Autism

Local: (281) 245-0640

[Website](#)

Family to Family Network at

Eldridge

Local: (713) 466-6304

Bo's Place

[Website](#)

Gi Gi's Playhouse—Sugar Land

Local: (832) 939-9919

[Website](#)

FEAT—Houston

Local: (281) 361-3328

[Website](#)

Mental Health America of Fort Bend County

Local: (281) 207-2480

[Website](#)

Tourette Texas

Support Group 2nd Wednesday of the month

[Website](#)

[Contact](#)



May warm wishes, happy thoughts and friendly greetings come this holiday season and stay with your family all the year through.

The Special Education Department

MR Wood Center for Learning as well as the FBISD Administration offices will be closed beginning December 16th at 2:00 p.m. . Offices will reopen on January 2nd.