

Special Education NEWS

Volume 1

Issue 4

ELECTION 2016

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Se habla español

Muchas escuelas tienen personal bilingüe que con frecuencia ayudan a los padres que hablan poco inglés.

Si necesita ayuda con la traducción para hablar con el grupo de maestros de educación especial de su hijo, favor de comunicarse directamente con su escuela. Si necesita asistencia adicional, póngase en contacto con el Departamento de Educación Especial de FBISD al (281) 634-1143 para ayudar a facilitar la comunicación entre la escuela y el padre.

Active Participation The Election Experience!

With all the talk of the 2016 Presidential Elections, FBISD students were involved in the discussions and activities to learn more about voting, the history of elections, and how people are a vital role in the election process.

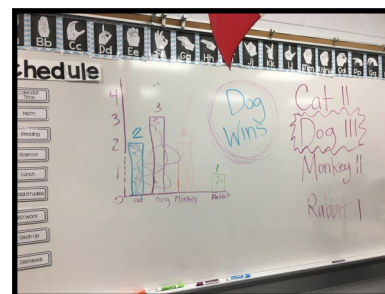
Lesson plans spanning the grade levels covered topics such as the history of the voting process, how votes are counted, the branches of government, and an overview of the offices that people would be voting on in this election. Voting exercises, such as a mock elections and discussions on some campuses were not the only way the students learned about the election process. Across the curriculum students were able to share what they have learned about the elections through their individual writing experiences, viewed polls and compared numbers in their math classes, and read about past elections and historical events that have shaped our country through the election process.

Toni Reeley, a SAILS teacher at Sartartia Middle School, discussed the different positions and the election process using an article from News 2 You, a current events newspaper for varying reading abilities. "We read the article together as a group, discussed the different positions for this elections, and completed questions at the students' level to check for understanding. The students had some great thoughts in their discussions and were excited to share what they had learned with everyone they talked with."

Special education students from Clements High School ABC classroom completed voting activities in their classrooms to assist their students in their understanding of voting. To support the learning process, visuals such as charts and graphs were completed to discuss the impacts of voting on the elections. "Giving students a visual can assist them in understanding the importance of this historic event," said Jim Porter, Special Education Department Chair at Clements High School. The students had a fun day working on election day projects.



Clements High School staff uses visual supports and real world examples to allow students to make connections with the current election process.



To extend the learning to the home, click on the above Scholastic News Election 2016 picture link for child friendly articles, election vocabulary extensions and games / videos about the presidency, political parties, the electoral college, and much more.

Active Participation

The Science Experience!

Hodges Bend Middle School SAILS teachers Angela Johnson and George Hester along with paraprofessionals Monique McCloud, Ella Odom and April Hightower, worked several weeks assisting their students in actively participating in a Science Fair. These students were able to experience the Scientific Method by conducting their very own science experiments.

Conceptually, a science fair project is a very straightforward and hands on learning experience. The classes chose 8 scientific questions they would like to answer. Research on the question gave the students the background information needed to formulate a hypothesis and design the experiments. As a group, the students performed all eight experiments and drew conclusions. Each student was then assigned one experiment to visually display and then presented the results to "judges" from the campus (e.g., PALS, science teachers, admin and staff) using a display board.

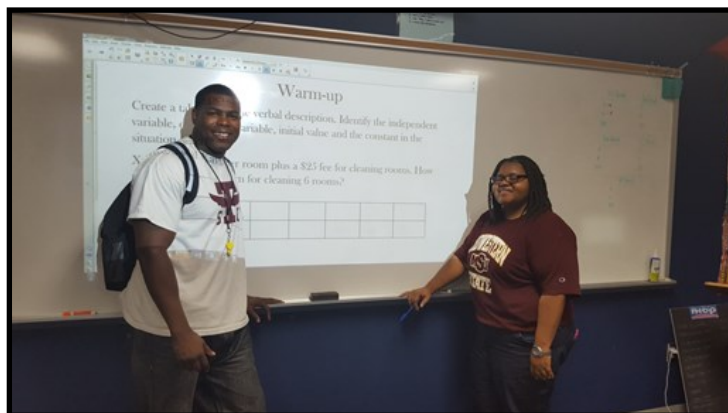


Hodges Bend Middle School SAILS students proudly display their hard work after participating in the "Crazy About Science" Fair.

Co-Teach Corner

Missouri City Middle School

The atmosphere in the 2nd period co-teach classroom of Edward Brown and Rochelle Washington places one in mind of a fun night at a high school football game. Both teachers cheer, coach, strategize, and engage their students for the entire period. The students absolutely love it! No dull moments here. The students actively participate in a range of activities from using the whiteboard to teach class members how to find a unit rate in a math problem to engaging in directed conversations with partner peers or working with Mr. Brown or Ms. Washington on how to graph lines using the slope.



Mr. Edward Brown and Ms. Rochelle Washington are setting the Co-Teach example!

Mr. Brown and Ms. Washington were asked what was unique about their personalities that led to such a successful partnership. Ms. Washington answered: "I believe that my overall personality of being open and honest helps in ensuring a successful co-teaching partnership, regardless of the partner. Specifically speaking, Mr. Brown had prior knowledge of the dynamics of successful co-teaching partnerships. Therefore, it was very easy to blend our personalities and willingly work toward the goal of teaching together. Mr. Brown's expertise in Special Education lends the knowledge of modification, differentiation, and accommodation when needed, even for our general education students.

Mr. Brown followed up by adding, "I believe our partnership works due to my overall understanding that good relationships must work peacefully and progressively. This means that each person must respect the other as a valued person, colleague, and educator. Also, if co-teaching is to be successful, it is important to be open and willing to assist the students and each other. It is important to understand HOW co-teaching is supposed to work, regardless of the partner.

Ms. Washington is sure of herself and is **honest and open** (sharing what she knows and does not know), and is supportive when giving constructive criticism and feedback. Ms. Washington is a very strong teacher and includes real world scenarios in her teaching. She uses a variety of teaching styles at will. Also, Ms. Washington's classroom management style matches mine, along with our personalities. We are both willing to use our energy to meet the goal of teaching students."

As FBISD implements Co-Teach as an additional instructional delivery method for students receiving special education services, exemplar partnerships are being identified like this wonderful team. When asked what advice they would offer new co-teach partnerships, they reiterated, "Co-teachers must introduce themselves as a team to students. Both teachers must demonstrate a consistent shared power in the classroom. This communicates to the students that both teachers have authority in the classroom, not just one. Co-teachers must be willing to support and accommodate one another. Co-teachers must establish a rapport prior to meeting the students and before engaging in classroom instruction. Both teachers must have knowledge of the subject/content that is being taught. Co-teachers must consistently communicate during planning and execution of instruction to confirm each partner's responsibility in the daily delivery of lesson activities (e.g., warm-ups, engaging the lesson, exploring and explaining, guided practice, independent practice, monitoring and lesson closure).



Friendships are important to any person especially for children, and even more so for children with disabilities. Forming a bond with another child—sharing stories, playing make believe, or just hanging out and having fun—can have a great impact on a student struggling with a learning, physical, or cognitive disability.

Below are some tips from PBS.org on helping your child make, develop and keep lasting friendships by strategically expanding their social circle.

Find activities your child enjoys.

By building on your child's strengths, preferences and interests, you can help him make friends with peers who enjoy the same things. Identify and encourage activities that keep your child's attention, bring out the best in her and bring a smile to her face.

Use resources in your community.

Find out what classes or programs are available in your community. Many communities offer a variety of weekend or after-school classes such as swimming, cooking, soccer, horseback riding, yoga, martial arts, theatre, music, dance, or art. Organizations that actively encourage children with disabilities to participate include: the YMCA and the Girl Scouts of America. Other community resources include, libraries, parks, museums and community recreation centers.

Share information and raise awareness.

It is useful to share information about your child with teachers and caregivers, especially if they have not had experience with children with disabilities. This informal sharing might include specific information about your child's strengths and preferences as well as strategies that have been successful in the past.

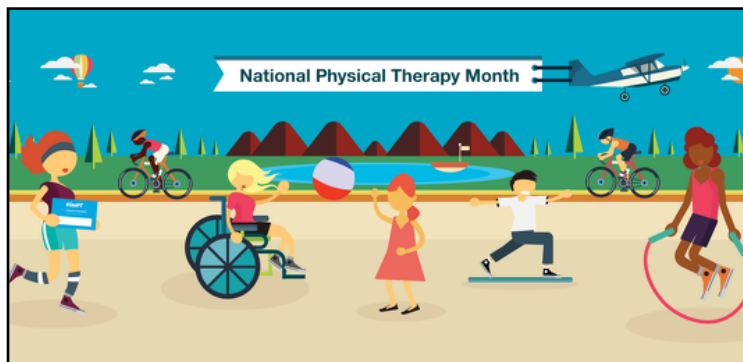
Encourage a variety of social relationships.

Create different opportunities for your child to connect with other children. For example, some parents have found afterschool buddies or school bus pals for their children by identifying responsible or interested peers in the neighborhood.

Adapted from PBS.org "Fostering Friendships"

Visit the [PBS website](http://PBS.org) for more information on this topic.

Acknowledging Our Team

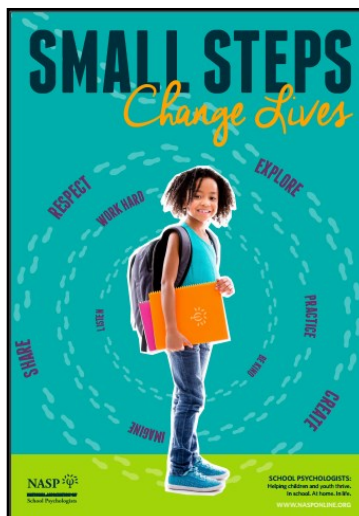


October was Physical Therapy Month

Physical Therapists address the ability of the student to move parts of the body, to assume and maintain postures, and organize movements into functional gross motor skills. Both Federal and State law dictate that educational services concentrate on a child's ability to function in and receive benefit from their education in the school setting, "to attain a free and appropriate education." FBISD Physical Therapists direct their attention toward removing barriers from the qualifying students' school environments and assisting the educational staff to understand the different considerations that must be given to children with disabilities. The Special Education Department would like to thank our Physical Therapists for working diligently to ensure all FBISD students have a safe access to their educational environment tailored to their own unique abilities.

School Psychology Awareness Week (November 14—18)

School psychologists are uniquely qualified members of our special education team that support students' ability to learn and teachers' ability to teach. They apply expertise in mental health, learning, and behavior, so students succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. FBISD School psychologists partner with families, teachers, school administrators, and other professionals to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments that strengthen connections between home, school and the community.



The NASP theme this year is "Small Steps Change Lives" because taking small steps can build greater successes and develops the academic and social-emotional skills students need to promote personal achievement, growth, and resilience, as well as a sense of belonging. The Special Education Department would like to thank each of our LSSPs for promoting and nurturing the wellbeing of our students!

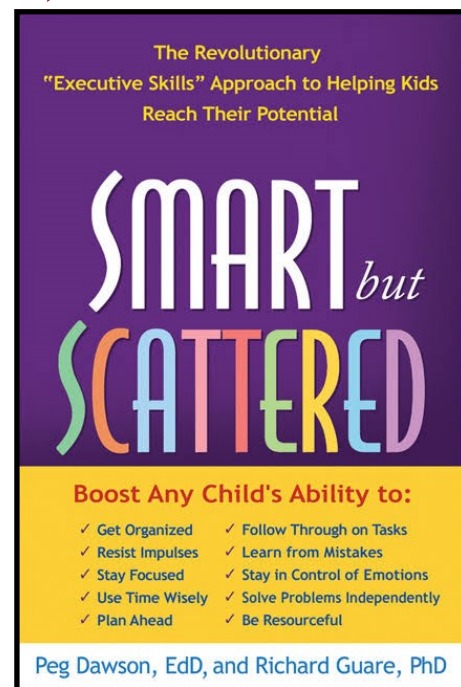
Parent Education Workshop...

On November 1st, a Parent Education Workshop was held at MR Wood Center for Learning. The focus of this informative evening was on Executive Skills development. After hearing a brief overview of Executive Skills Functioning, parents were invited to visit with various Special Education Administrative Team presenters to learn more about Executive Skills as well as hear relevant tips for parenting a child with special needs. The topics discussed were:

- Taking Care of You
- Parent Skills Survey—Identifying Your Executive Skills Strengths & Challenges
- Behavior Vocabulary
- Organization—Using What You Have

All information presented was from the book, *Smart but Scattered* by Peg Dawson and Richard Guare. This is a great book full of information for parents of students with organization and planning concerns. To access the information from this informative evening, the materials and presentations are located on the [Special Education Website](#).

The next Parent Education Workshop will be held on **January 17, 2017**. This meeting will be a **Related / Direct Services Open House** from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at MR Wood Center for Learning. As always, childcare and a light snack will be provided by teen volunteers from Hope For Three's Teen Huddle consisting of Austin High School students and a member of the Special Education Administrative Team. If interested in childcare for the January 17th Parent Education Night, please RSVP [online](#) or by phone at 281-643-1143.



At the conclusion of the November 1st Parent Education Workshop, an excited Rasa Parks Elementary parent walked away with her own copy of Smart But Scattered after winning the evening's door prize drawing!

Department Highlights...



Martha Palacios

Martha (or Paty as her friends and colleagues know her) has been working in FBISD for more than 20 years. She currently serves in the role of Clerk in the Special Education Department where she works diligently to make sure all special education data is correct across multiple data systems. Paty has three children and four grandchildren that she loves to spend time with during her free time on the weekends or after school. She enjoys to travel around the country with her husband taking in the many different sites and experiences on their yearly summer time travels spanning Niagra Falls, to New Mexico, to Colorado, to Florida. When she is not working or spending time with her family, she enjoys sitting outside and relaxing by reading a book by her favorite author, Danielle Steele.



Cindy Arevalo

Cindy has been working in FBISD for more than 15 years as the Administrative Assistant for various programs in the Special Education Department. Cindy cares about her co-workers and always helps out doing whatever is needed to get the job done. She has two daughters and just recently had her first grandchild. Cindy enjoys sharing pictures and videos of her family with her coworkers and friends. She loves to spend time with family and is known in the community as both a wonderful mother and friend.

Thank you to all our employee stars that have been highlighted. It is a true honor to have such valuable team members as part of the FBISD Special Education Department. As we all work together, we are able to achieve more for the students we serve in FBISD.

Photos courtesy of David Hernandez

Around Town...

Activities

If you are looking for fun family activities to do that accommodate to your exceptional child or an informational event for yourself, your and/or your family may consider the following:

1

1st Annual Positive Futures Conference "Best Practices in Transition and Adult Services"

organized by The Arc Greater Houston
Friday, November 18th from 9:00—3:30 (lunch provided)
Houston Food Bank Conference Center
535 Portwall Street
Houston, TX 77029

Limited registration reimbursements are available for self-advocates and family members. [Register online](#) or contact The Arc Greater Houston directly at 713-957-1600 for additional information.

2

Clements High School National Honor Society hosts the 10th Annual Winter Wonderland

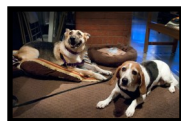
*Designed specifically for families of
children with special needs in FBISD.*

Saturday, December 3rd from 3:00—5:00 pm

Clements High School Commons ([Map / Directions](#))

Each family will be paired with a National Honor Society member upon arrival that will serve as your guide to all the fun! The students have organized several **FREE** games and activities for the whole family (face painting, cookie decorating, gingerbread house making, arts & crafts table, letters to Santa, bowling, bean bag toss, musical chairs, ice fishing, pin-the nose on the reindeer...) Light snacks and drinks will also be provided. To reserve your family's spot, email the [NHS Sponsor](#) or call 281-634-0198.

3



P.A.W.S. Reading Program Houston Museum of Natural Science (Sugar Land Campus)

Fridays & Saturdays @ 10:00 am

[Website](#)

Children of all ages and abilities benefit from the opportunity to practice their reading skills in a safe environment while receiving undivided attention from these furry friends! Bring along your favorite book to read to these specially trained therapy dogs or pick a book from their library.

4

FREE Texana Training Series "Teaching Your Child To Entertain Themselves"

Saturday, December 17 from 9:00—Noon

RSVP at least two days before training by [email](#)
or phone (281)-239-1478.

Community Resources

Government

Texana—Child Services

Local: (281) 239-1300

[Website](#)

Non-Profits

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](#)



November 19-FBISD Night with the Houston Rockets

November 21-25- Thanksgiving Holiday

November 29—SEPAC Meeting (6:00—8:00 pm)

December 12- FBISD Board Meeting

December 13-16-Secondary Semester Exams

December 19-January 2- Winter Holiday

For FBISD Special Education information or questions, please refer to the Special Education Department [website](#) or call 281-634-1143 for general inquiries.

**Check the [FBISD Calendar](#) for
additional upcoming district events.**