

# Special Education NEWS

Volume 1

Issue 1

## Change

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### ...In Location

In the spring of 2016, the FBISD School Board approved repurposing the historic M.R. Wood Center for Learning into an education support center. This great undertaking called for the effective collaboration amongst multiple departments to effectively and efficiently relocate over 150 personnel from over 10 different FBISD sites. The Special Education and Learning Support Services Departments are now housed at the location.

The M.R. Wood Education Center will allow for both professional collaboration opportunities amongst staff members and also serve as a parent resource and development center to help us build stronger partnerships with our parents.

Currently under construction are the “Intake Center” and “Parent Resource Center”. Opening this fall, the Intake Center will provide a centralized location for FBISD special education evaluations of children ages 3—5 suspected of having a disability. The evaluations will continue to be provided free of charge to all those residing within the FBISD attendance zone.

The Parent Resource Center is projected to open this fall as well. This center will provide a centralized location for parents to hear relevant information pertaining to a wide

range of topics specific to children with exceptionalities. Additional learning opportunities will be provided where parents will be able to instantly put the new learning into practical use through on-site parent/child trainings, possible make-and-take, and online research / access to information.

M. R. Wood Education Center has a long tradition of supporting and investing true value in our community. The FBISD Special Education and Learning Support Services Departments are excited to carry on the high standards of excellence established by our predecessors of this great facility as we continue to strive to develop the best in every student.



## Change

### ...In Our Organization

Starting in February, 2016, a comprehensive plan was developed to redesign the special education program in FBISD. The purpose of this redesign was to better meet the needs of our special education programs by selecting qualified and experienced professionals to make a significant contribution to the direction of their specific program based upon their experience, expertise and educational focus.

The new organizational chart allows for a more strategic program development for the future.

**Deena Hill**  
Executive Director

**Michelle LeBleu**  
Director

**Jennifer Byrne**  
Evaluation Program Manager

**Stephanie Burns**  
Program Improvement Manager

**Amruta Kulkarni**  
Instructional/Related Services Program Manager

**Nicole Roberts**  
Assistant Director Elementary

**Caroline Faison**  
SAILS Program Manager—  
Elementary

**Alexis Greer**  
Autism Support Service Program  
Manager

**Dominion Southall**  
Behavior Support Services Program  
Manager

**Christina Ritter**  
Assistant Director Secondary

**Tresha Hattar**  
SAILS / ATS1,2,3 Program  
Manager—Secondary

**Tamera Walker**  
Resource/Inclusive Services Program  
Manager—Secondary

**Dena Thompson**  
RDSPD Coordinator

# Department Highlights...



Photo courtesy of FBISD's David Hernandez ~ June 2016

2016/17

## Program/Services *Changes...*

We are committed to the philosophy that Special Education is viewed as a system of services and not a place. Below are the name "changes" you will hear throughout the year to better reflect the instructional intent of these specialized services.

|                       |   |   |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| <b>FLITe</b>          | → | <b>FLaSH</b> (Functional Living and School Health Services)       |
| <b>BIC</b>            | → | <b>BSS</b> (Behavior Support Services)                            |
| <b>ABC</b>            | → | <b>ABC</b> (Academic, Behavior, and Communication services)       |
|                       |   | <b>CLaSS</b> (Communication, Language, and Social Skills)         |
| <b>Life Skills</b>    | → | <b>SAILS</b> (Succeeding in Academic & Independent Living Skills) |
| <b>Project SEARCH</b> | → | <b>ATS 1</b> (Adult Transition Services)                          |
| <b>ATP</b>            | → | <b>ATS 2</b> (Adult Transition Services)                          |
| <b>ACAP</b>           | → | <b>ATS 3</b> (Adult Transition Services)                          |

**Congratulations** to our very own Nicole Roberts, Assistant Director of Elementary Services. Nicole was honored June 27th by the ARC of Fort Bend as an Outstanding Educator in the "Fort Bend County Awards Ceremony". She was nominated by FBISD's Kong Family for her continued hard work, commitment, dedication and support of students with disabilities.

Nicole began her educational career as an elementary special education teacher in FBISD. She then worked as an educational diagnostician where she not only led the district in quality assessments but served as a mentor / leader for other diagnosticians. Nicole then moved into the role of Special Education Coordinator and is currently serving as the Assistant Director of Elementary Services. Through all of her roles in FBISD, Nicole has maintained a consistent level of excellence as she strives to provide all students with a high quality educational experience. We are very fortunate to have someone of Nicole's character and leadership representing FBISD in such an impactful way.

## C O - T E A C H



As educational personnel strive to meet state and federal accountability mandates to improve the achievement of students with disabilities, schools are exploring various inclusive service

delivery models to fulfill the needs of diverse learners. The co-teach model is one effective model allowing 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. As a team, these professionals share the same physical classroom space, collaboratively make instructional decisions, and share the responsibility of student accountability.

While FBISD has inclusion services as part of our continuum of special education services, we now have co-teaching as another inclusive service delivery model. Each campus has carefully reviewed the needs of their students and targeted classes / content areas that will have the largest impact on their student population.



## C L A S S

Communication, Language, and Social Skills Services (CLASS) provides social and/or behavioral services for students who are able to function academically in the general education or resource setting, but require social or behavioral support from a specially-trained staff member in order to facilitate the development of socially appropriate behaviors. CLASS services are determined by an ARD committee.

Students who receive CLASS services typically receive their core subject instruction in the general education setting with needed supports. Students receiving CLASS services may also require direct, explicit, instruction in social skills development to address specific social skills deficits and/or behavior challenges. These services are offered at SES, FCMS, CHS, DHS, and THS.

# Take Home Tip...



## Preparing for the

### “Back-To-School CHANGE”

With the close of summer break right around the corner, you may need additional tips for assisting your child in preparing for this new change in their daily routine. Research shows that children with an autism spectrum disorder benefit from structured environments. Without structure, your child may have increased anxiety and exhibit undesirable behaviors. Not only children with ASD but all children benefit from both structure and being adequately prepared for what is to come. You may not be able to prepare your child for every change, but you should prepare them for as much change as possible. Below are some tips to help make the transition back to school successful for everyone.

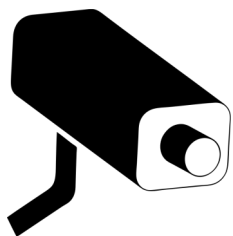
- You can display items that are going to change on their schedule, on your family calendar or through the use of social narratives. These changes should include their school, new daily routines (morning and evening), as well as new teachers / friends they are going to meet.
- Some students might use a countdown system on the calendar to countdown how many days are left of summer break or pictures on the calendar that represent days at home and days at school.

- Start adjusting bed time and wake up times now so that it is inline with the new school schedule.
- Parents need to model a positive attitude about school. Always take the time to listen and address any concerns your child may vocalize. Reinforce the positive by focusing on things your child can look forward to in the upcoming year.
- Prepare your child for situations that are unstructured (recess, lunch, free time...) or when things may not go as planned (which is very common with first week of school activities). Talk about ways to introduce themselves to new people, conversation starters with other students they have not seen in a while, or even ways to ask the teacher questions.
- Organizational skills are often delayed in many students. According to “ADDitude” editors, parents should consider themselves their child’s “organization consultant” and spend time teaching their children the basics of planning and organizing. Be sure to involve your child when setting up any organization system so they are offered choices and the opportunity to make their own decisions which leads to higher motivation / follow-through.

Remember; with planning, structure and increasing your child’s individual supports, returning to school can be a pleasant experience for all!

## Change for this year...

### Senate Bill 507



#### Update on Video Surveillance of Special Education Settings

On the appropriate request of a parent, trustee, or staff member, the District must provide video equipment, including video cameras with audio recording capabilities, to campuses in accordance with Section 29.002, Texas Education Code, and 19 T.A.C. § 103.1301. Campuses that receive equipment must place, operate, and maintain video cameras in certain self-contained classrooms or other special education settings. Video recordings are confidential and may only be released for viewing to certain individuals as defined by the Texas Education Code. Video surveillance may only be placed in a self-contained classroom or other special education setting and only upon an appropriate request from a member of the District’s Board of Trustees, a parent, or a staff member. Procedures related to SB507 will be posted on the [FBISD Special Education Website](#) on August 22, 2016.

## Parent Perspective:

### Change is Good!

Below is a note from a wonderful parent about her experience with recent changes at her children’s school that have resulted in positive outcomes for her family.

*“A couple of school years ago, we were fortunate to have received new administration (CCC, principal, and assistant principal) for Sugar Mill Elementary. This, in my opinion, has been the best thing I’ve seen FBISD do in a long time. The new admin has been very open to working with myself, and my children exactly where they’re at. I’m super grateful to the special education teachers as well as the general education teachers that work patiently with my children. The other faculty cannot be excluded as they work so well with the kids and the teachers in keeping every one safe and highly esteemed. The ARD process has been strengthened and tweaked to where they (ARD meetings) are pleasant and informative to attend. Everyone takes an active, positive role in recommending, trouble-shooting, and accommodating for our children. For this I’m very thankful!”*

Sugar Mill Elementary Parent

# Around Town...

## Activities

If you are looking for fun family activities to do that tailor to your exceptional child, you may consider the following:

### The River Performing and Visual Arts Center [Website](#)

The center provides an arts enrichment program for children with special needs ages 2-19. A Saturday Morning Program is offered each Saturday. People trained to work with students with special needs work with children through the arts including dance, art, music, theatre, and photography, to develop social skills and learning readiness skills.

Phone: 713-520-1220

### Mikey's Place @ Santikos Palladium [Website](#)

Mikey's Place is a specially designed movie experience in Houston. Mikey's Place creates a welcoming and comfortable environment with lower sound and brighter lighting every first Saturday of the month. This special ambiance enables families with children who need special accommodations to share the experience of watching a family friendly film at a theatre.

The following are the Fall 2016 movies featured at the Palladium:

09/03/16 Pete's Dragon  
10/01/16 Storks  
11/05/16 A Monster Calls  
12/03/16 Moana

# Save the Date.

## 2016 FALL Parent Education Meetings

Each month we will focus on a particular topic or intervention to assist parents of children with disabilities.

All presentations pertain to a wide range of ages and levels of functioning. The locations of the meetings will be our own M. R. Wood Education Center. The meetings will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. New this year, child care will be provided. Additional information regarding child care for the October meeting will be available on the Special Education Website as RSVP for childcare will be required.

### Fall 2016 Parent Education Meeting Schedule:

1. October 4th - Special Education "Gallery Walk" where parents will have the opportunity to voice specific topics of interest or need to help strategically drive the focus of our upcoming Parent Education Meetings for the 2016-17 school year.
2. November 1st—topic to be determined after Special Education "Gallery Walk".

**\*\* Additional Parent Trainings will be added as soon as the Intake Center construction is complete.**

## 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](#)

#### 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](#)

#### Tourett Texas

[Contact](#)

#### Family to Family Network at Eldridge

Local: 713-466-6304



## Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC)

Monthly Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC) meetings are held to continue to build the bridge in relationships between the special education department and families of students receiving special education and related services in FBISD. These meetings are by invitation only to campus representatives who are appointed to serve for a two-year term. The locations of the meetings will be at our very own M. R. Wood Education Center. The meetings will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on the designated days. SEPAC meetings are intended for our parents and special education department personnel and we do not provide childcare at this time.

SEPAC members, please place the following dates on your calendars.

### 2016 SEPAC Meeting Dates :

1. September 27th—M. R. Wood Education Center / 6:00 pm—8:00 pm
2. October 25th—M. R. Wood Education Center / 6:00 pm—8:00 pm
3. November 29th—M. R. Wood Education Center / 6:00 pm—8:00 pm