

Director of Special Education

Board Report

**Jill Mattingly
Special Education Director**

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The beginning of a school year is always an exciting time. We have made a lot of changes to the sped office over the summer. We had new carpet installed and the entire office was deep cleaned. Our goal was to create a space that is clean and inviting. All of the offices were cleaned out to remove the clutter. We have a few small things to finish but I am so pleased at how everything came together. Everything should be done by the end of August, please come by to see the improvements.





The sped department has purchased new curriculum for all of the self-contained classes. These materials will provide students hands on curriculum that will help them develop skills that they will need in order to be successful once they graduate.

This curriculum aligns with the curriculum that regular education students receive, just at a lower level. Over the summer construction was also completed in the self-contained classroom at Napi. The large room was modified so that there is a large area for teaching whole group lessons, two small rooms for individual teaching, an area for taking care of medical needs and diapering, and a kitchen area for teaching life skills. I am hoping that we can have this done in the self-contained classroom at BE and also at the High School.







We are not fully staffed this year. We are short three special education teachers, one school psychologist and two speech pathologists. We should be able to fill the teaching positions with a few staff members from the sped department who have been working on their degrees but aren't quite finished. They would be hired on an emergency authorization qualifying based on their experience in special education. On the other hand, not filling the other

positions is going to greatly affect our department. Speech pathology is a very specialized part of special education, which requires extensive training. Only a speech pathologist can do testing and write IEP's in this area. We have over 200 students currently receiving speech services. They also play a big role in the identification of students at the Head start who need early interventions. As a last result we will have to contract for online therapy, which is not the best model for speech services and testing.

Our school psychologists are instrumental to the function of our department. They have a specialized license with a focus on psychometrics and writing evaluation reports. They basically are the gate keepers for student identification in qualification of special education services. This testing process usually takes 60 days. With only one psych, we will have to delay testing on students that are referred to our department for testing. This could put our district in jeopardy for litigation. I am currently working with the

union president to negotiate a higher starting salary for both of these positions, which will make us more competitive. We can contract for online services also for this position. Testing students using a web cam is quite difficult. Best practice is for the tester to build a rapport with a student in order to obtain valid testing results.

Our first goal this year is to provide staff with the training and materials that they need so that our students receive the services outlined on their IEP's. The second goal is to build relationships with parents and also to provide them with the tools they need to support their child at home. My personal goal is to spend more time in the classrooms, which will help me to support students and staff.