

# Special Education Board Report

## November 2017

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### **HIGH SCHOOL NEWS**

The High School has great new spaces for teaching and learning!

The READ 180 Room provides the optimal environment to help students gain important literacy skills. The department utilizes the Scholastic Read 180 Curriculum. Read 180 provides individualized, adjusted instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

Another awesome space for the High School Team is the Independent Living Skills Classroom. This classroom was designed to simulate the atmosphere of an apartment. It contains everything that is needed to create, live in and maintain personal independence. Students learn skills that will benefit them beyond their high school career. This space will provide students individual instruction to promote student success in multiple areas, such as social skills for students with emotional and behavioral problems, social skills for students with Autism, independent living skills, independent personal social skills, transition skills and independent social arts.

The newly renovated regular education classrooms also are an important place of learning for students with disabilities. The High School continues to strive toward the goal of inclusion by utilizing team teaching in multiple core courses. Special education teachers have integrated the use of several applications on the student's I-Pads to assist with meeting individual student goals. Some of these applications include Showme, ClassDojo, Google Read and Write, IXL and Google Classroom.

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS**

There are exciting changes at UMS in the Special Ed department this year. The staff continues work with the Professional Learning Community (PLC) model. The main goal

of the Middle School's PLC Leadership Team is to improve Reading outcomes for middle school students with disabilities, with an added emphasis on Math outcomes for the coming year.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) have a strong, positive and sustainable impact on the academic achievement of students, including students with disabilities. Student growth is tracked to show the impact of PLC functioning on student achievement. The committee has noticed positive results.

Team teaching continues to be a focus of the PLC work as well. Each year there has been an increase in the number of students who have access to the general education curriculum; in addition, special education teachers have been able to provide additional instruction and support in general education classrooms. With the increased emphasis on Math this year, one math section at each grade level, has a regular education and special education teacher. Collaboration is the key and there are gains with students in team teaching settings. At the 7th and 8th grade levels, Kari Nelson teaches all Math classes and Linda Leidle teaches all Language Arts classes, allowing energy and focused professional development on one specific content area for the teachers.

## **ELEMENTARY NEWS**

The elementary regular and special education teachers have been working to meet the needs of the students with disabilities in a more inclusive environment. An additional part time teaching position was added so that team teaching can occur at every grade level. An additional early childhood teacher was added to meet the increasing needs at that level and to allow for team teaching at the 4K level.

The speech and language program is once again utilizing tele-practice to serve a portion of the speech caseload. Telepractice utilizes technology to the delivery of speech language pathology at a distance by linking clinician to client or clinician to clinician for assessment, intervention and/or consultation. As the therapists become better acquainted, it has also provided a networking opportunity for collaboration which did not exist prior to it's use.