

Special Education Department Informant



SOUTH LYON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
FALL 2014

Director of Special Education—Susan Toth

Coordinator of Special Education—Amy Atwell

A letter from the Director, Susan Toth....

Although the sun is shining and the days are hot, it is beginning to feel like fall. Maybe it is the new school supplies which are arriving to all of the stores and the cooler evenings which begin to influence the feeling that the start of the 2014-2015 school year is just around the corner. In preparation for our next school year, it is helpful to reflect on last year and share plans for our future.

The 2013-2014 school year was a great success. The numbers of students who receive services and support through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) grew to over one thousand. The Early On program transitioned to a new delivery of service model. More children were serviced in their natural environments which typically was their home. Our service providers began teaming and conferencing more, centering their discussions and planning around our youngest children.

At the Early Childhood Center, we continued to work with our groups of students and families. There were plenty of thematic lessons occurring and many smiles and giggles every day.

At our elementary schools we introduced Sensory Kits which included resources and materials for students who displayed a need for such items. Elementary resource room teachers and ancillary staff served as leaders by sharing the possible uses for and the proper use of each sensory item.

Our secondary schools continued to support our students in their various settings. Opportunities for discussion related to the accommodations for students occurred. Teams of teachers examined ways that technology can be utilized to increase student success.

Adult students in the post-high school program were introduced to micro-enterprises. They were seen throughout our community selling sweet treats and working in various settings.

Many of our parents were able to attend our Parent Meeting Nights. We discussed how to reduce stress in our daily lives and learned more about district programs and services from teacher volunteers.

Our Summer Experience in June and July offered an exciting camp style learning opportunity. The Under the Sea theme was exciting with many sea creatures found throughout the classrooms. We had many staff and student volunteers assisting with the fun.

Looking ahead, we have a busy year ahead of us. We have been interviewing candidates for different district positions. There have been building visits to discuss items which might be addressed through the Bond. Parent Meetings and staff meetings have been scheduled. New enrolling students have been processed. We are piloting a peer mentor program at the secondary level. When our teachers return they will be met with new information and time to plan for their new students.

Through all of the different program improvements, meetings and supporting initiatives our overall goal has remained the same: to provide the highest quality educational process, so that all students can excel as individuals, and become productive and contributing members of society.

The summer days are still here and there is a lot of swimming and barbecuing to be done in the next few weeks. When September does arrive, you will find that your children are returning to an exceptional learning environment that is prepared for and dedicated to students.

Congratulations to our Scholarship Recipients!

The Knights of Columbus have generously supported our students with special needs. In fact, the Knights of Columbus have been supporting us for OVER 20 YEARS! The members sponsor the Tootsie Roll drive around our community and funds from this activity help us to sponsor two scholarships for graduating students from South Lyon and South Lyon East High Schools. This year, the two scholarship recipients were Hannah Palmer from South Lyon High School and Kelly

Gardner from South Lyon East High School. Each recipient was awarded \$500.00 to be used to further their education. If you know a member of the Knights of Columbus, be sure to acknowledge them for their support.



Special Education Department

A letter from the Special Education Coordinator, Amy Atwell....

August brings feelings of anticipation and excitement as we educators begin to prepare for the new school year. This time of year was always a time of making the 'To Do' lists and checking things off as I started preparing my classroom for the first day of school. Even though I am no longer teaching in the classroom, I still have those feelings of excitement and anticipation to begin the new school year.

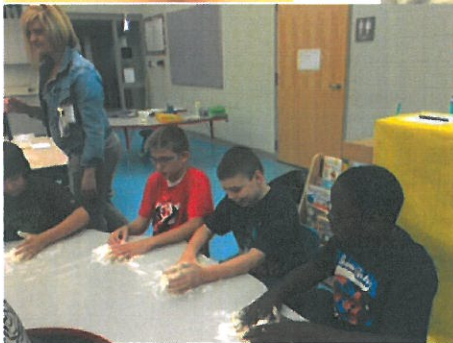
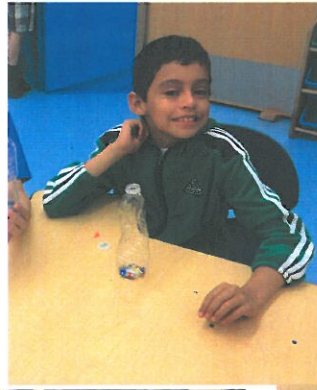
I began my new role as Coordinator of Special Education November 1, 2013 and as I reflect back I realize I never introduced myself. So, I would like to take a moment to formally introduce myself to you now. My name is Amy Atwell and I have been working in the special education field for 14 years. I received my undergraduate degree, in Cognitive Impairments, from Central Michigan University and my master's degree, in Learning Disabilities, from Eastern Michigan University. Before accepting the Coordinator of Special Education position I taught in a self-contained classroom for 10 years at Kent Lake and Hardy Elementary. I have also had the role of teacher consultant and resource room teacher at Hardy Elementary for 2 years.

I currently live in Commerce with my husband and two sons. My oldest son will be entering third grade in the Fall and my youngest will be starting kindergarten. I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, reading, spending time outdoors, and traveling.

My role may have changed, but August still brings the 'To Do' lists along with the feeling of anticipation and excitement for the new school year to begin. I look forward to what the new year brings and having the opportunity to work with families (old and new), students, teachers and staff. Please, enjoy the rest of your summer as September 2nd will be here before we know it!

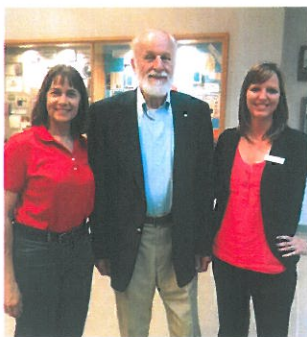
Summer Experience 2014

Summertime brings warm weather and camp experiences. This year roughly 50 elementary and middle school aged students joined our, camp like, Summer Experience located at Hardy Elementary. Students were taken on an *Under the Sea* adventure for three weeks at the beginning of their summer. Classrooms were taken over by different kinds of sea creatures, and other fun *Under the Sea* activities. Each day student's rotated to different coral reefs (classrooms), and participated in different theme related activities. It was great to see the excitement from our students as they went from coral reef to coral reef. Students made sea foam floats, sand castles and wrote about what they would do on vacation. The last day of Summer Experience was to be filled with fun 'water' activities outside; sprinklers, water balloons etc. However, Mother Nature had other plans that day and it was a wet and chilly day 'out at sea'. That did not stop our staff from bringing the water day fun inside! The last day was filled with sharks and minions game, water tables, making sensory water bottles and the best part...eating pizza at the very end! Kudos to our teachers, staff, volunteers and students for making our *Under the Sea* adventure a great success. Next year the students may be filled with wild adventures on an *African Safari*. Thank you again for a great Summer Experience!



Special Education Department

THANK YOU!!!



At the June Board of Education Meeting, a generous gift was presented to the Special Education Department. South Lyon Kiwanis purchased a platform swing and a rebounder for our students. The gift was valued over seven hundred dollars. We would like to extend our gratitude Dr. Alisha Senechal, for her donation to the Kiwanis Club and to Richard Sobato who presented the gift on behalf of the Kiwanis Club to our District. The students of South Lyon Community Schools will put the equipment to use.

PAC - Parent Advisory Committee

South Lyon Community School District is overseen by Oakland County Intermediate School District (Oakland Schools). One of the many plans that Oakland Schools has involves the Plan for the Delivery of Special Education Programs and Services. This plan specifies that each school district in the county will appoint representatives for the Special Education **Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)**. South Lyon Community Schools is looking for a Parent Advisory Committee Member Representative. Contact the Special Education Department for more information!



Guest Para-Educators Needed

Our district is currently in need of guest para-educators to serve in classrooms with students who have special needs. Interested candidates are encouraged to contact the Special Education Office for more information 248-573-8220.

2014-2015 Parent Meetings

Mark your calendars for parent meetings.

October 8, 2014

February 11, 2015

May 13, 2015

Each meeting will begin at 7:00 PM and will be held at Centennial Middle School in the Team Room. We hope to see you there to discuss topics related to special education.



Medical Emergency Forms

If your child has a medical issue that requires a plan to be instituted in an emergency, you must provide our district with a new/updated plan in order for it to be implemented. All medical plans have expired from the 2013-2014 school year. Medical forms may be found on our website www.slcs.us under "department and services" tab on the "Special Education Department" page.

Follow us!



You can find the most up-to-date information on our district website, www.slcs.us. You will find the special education department under the "Departments" tab. The special education department is now on Twitter and Facebook too! (SLCS Special Education)

