

SPECIAL SERVICES MONTHLY

908.436.5200



DIVISION OF SPECIAL SERVICES



EPSNJ.ORG



Dear Parents and Guardians of Elizabeth Public Schools,

I am pleased to introduce myself as the Director of Special Services for Elizabeth Public Schools. It is an honor to serve in this capacity and to lead a dedicated team committed to supporting our students and their families.

My experience with Elizabeth Public Schools spans nearly twenty years, during which I have served in various roles including Teacher, School Psychologist, and Supervisor of Special Services. As the Director of Special Services, I remain fully committed to serving our school community with professionalism, compassion, and integrity. I look forward to collaborating with you to support the needs of our students. We will provide important updates regarding SEPAC meetings and other events through our monthly newsletter to keep our community informed and engaged. Additionally, we are proud to introduce our new logo representing the Division of Special Services. The logo's roots symbolize the strong connection and foundational support we share with your families, reflecting our values of integrity, compassion, and dedication.

On behalf of the Division of Special Services, I wish everyone a smooth and productive start to the new school year. I look forward to meeting you and working together to ensure a positive, engaging, and successful educational experience for your children.

Sincerely,

Nancy Morales-Frigolito

Director of Special Services



Professional Spotlight

STARTING STRONG WITH JORDAN TOMA

The Division of Special Services opened the year with keynote speaker Jordan Toma, author of *I'm Just a Kid with an IEP*. Toma's story centered on the idea that "my struggle is my strength"—and challenged us to lead with empathy, high expectations, and a deep sense of belonging for every learner. Following the energizing keynote, our educators, child study team members, and related service providers moved into sessions designed to turn inspiration into

Practice. For families, this means we reaffirm our commitments to high expectations with appropriate supports so students meet and exceed IEP targets. Additionally, collaborative, positive relationships among professionals translate to student success. The Division of Special Services will continue this important work through ongoing professional learning. We are excited for a year of progress, connection, and possibility.

Featured Community Resource **PROCEED, INC.**

Proceed, Inc. offers a wide range of community services in Elizabeth, NJ— including family resources such as, parenting support, economic self-sufficiency courses, and employment help to name a few. Group counseling for substance abuse and behavioral health is also available. Get in touch at (908) 351-7727, visit 1126 Dickinson Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07201, or email info@proceedinc.com <https://proceedinc.com/>

Parent Tips

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD WITH READING

Reading with your child isn't just about sounding out words—it's also about understanding. Help build your child's comprehension by discussing the story before, during, and after reading. Ask open-ended questions like "What do you think will happen next?" or "Why do you think the character did that?" Re-reading favorite books and making connections to real-life experiences can deepen their understanding and build confidence.

Even just 10-15 minutes a day of shared reading can make a big difference! More tips and examples are available at:



"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." — Eleanor Roosevelt

Know your IEP

BUZZ WORDS

Understanding the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) terms helps you make informed decisions as a member of the IEP team. Know these terms and don't hesitate to ask for clarification if in doubt.

LRE (Least Restrictive Environment)

Students learn with nondisabled peers as much as appropriate, with supports before considering other settings. This can be quantified with a percentage of time your student spends with general education peers.

Related Services

Supports like speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling, paraprofessional aide, and transportation that help your child access learning.

PLAAFP (Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance)

This explains how your student is doing right now—strengths, needs and how the disability affects learning and participation. This is based on evaluations and classroom performance. It is the starting point for setting annual goals and services.



School Spotlight

SCHOOL 22 KICKS OFF THE YEAR WITH HUSKIE SPIRIT!

The first day of school at School 22 was filled with excitement and warm welcomes! Students were greeted by the spirited Huskie mascot, a festive balloon arch, and fun photo frames to capture the moment. In Mr. Dec's autism classroom, students dove into an "All About Me" apple project to share with parents. New students also had a special chance to attend the Huskie Signing Event prior to the first day, helping them feel part of the pack! It was a joyful start to a year full of learning, laughter, and Huskie pride!