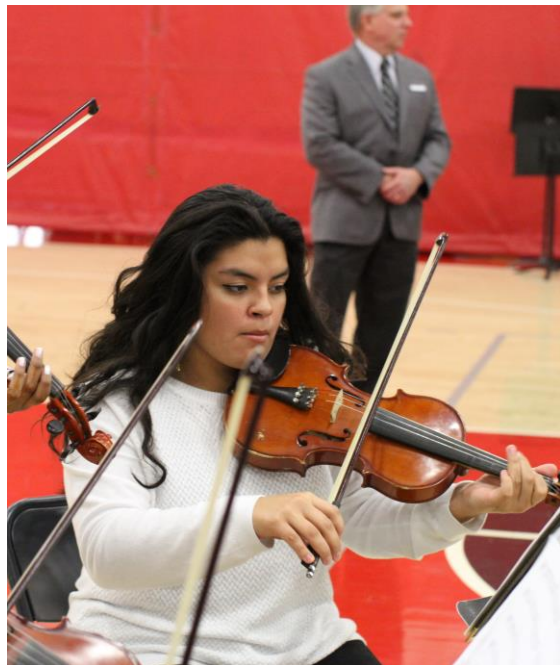




‘A New Day for Music Education that Ensures ‘Every Child Achieves’

In lockstep with the vision and mission of the Elizabeth Public Schools, the National Association for Music Education is celebrating the fact that, for the first time in education history, music has been recognized as a core subject in draft federal education policy!

The National Association for Music Education, among the world’s largest arts education organizations, is the only association that addresses all aspects of music education. This organization advocates at the local, state, and national levels; provides resources for teachers, parents, and administrators; hosts professional development events; and offers a variety of opportunities for students and teachers. The Association orchestrates success for millions of students nationwide and has supported music educators at all teaching levels for more than a century. On April 7th an article entitled ‘A New Day for Music Education that Ensures ‘Every Child Achieves’ was published.



MUISC – Continued

The article refers to the mobilization of music advocates earlier this year to send more than 10,000 letters to their lawmakers resulting in a new bipartisan Senate Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) proposal, the “Every Child Achieves Act of 2015,” that retains the core academic subject section from No Child Left Behind, and, additionally, adds “music” as a specifically enumerated core academic subject. The Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions (HELP) Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-Wash.) announced the bipartisan agreement on “fixing ‘No Child Left Behind’” on April 7.

The Executive Director, Chris Woodside was quoted stating “The benefits of listing the arts as core demonstrate the importance of recognizing our nation’s education priorities at the federal level.” “The elimination of core academic subjects from the Senate Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) would jeopardize national efforts to ensure that all students, regardless of race or economic status, have access to high quality school music programs. . . . music advocates . . . must engage with Congress to urge the inclusion of music in federal statute.”

We, at the Elizabeth Public Schools are proud of the accomplishment of our music department and honor the good work of all of our teachers and our supervisor, Dennis Argul. The department has accomplished the following...

- Curriculum and program offerings have been aligned to the NJCCS 2012 Model Curriculum and National Core Arts Standards of 2014.
- Existing partnerships with artists in residence and discussions with potential future partnerships.
- Working with all comprehensive K-8 Principals to schedule enrichment classes (Band and Chorus) concurrently with their intervention classes. Students not in need of intervention can participate in these music ensemble classes. It provides motivation for students.
- Working of the language of the Grading policy to include passing grades in Music, Visual Arts, World Language and Health/Physical Education for students to be recognized as Teacher, Principal and/or Superintendent Scholars.

Dennis Argul is quoted “My vision for the department has not wavered since my hiring in 2012. I support the district’s vision whereby All Students Achieve Excellence! My perspective on this vision is that the artistic side of a student, their ability to participate in a safe, creative, and nurturing performing arts class, is equally important as their other core subjects. It is my goal that every student receives quality performing arts instruction in every school in Elizabeth, across all grade levels.”



What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

Our vision is that the Elizabeth Public Schools will be one of the best in the nation.

The division of special services is striving to continue to enhance services for our children with special needs. Our director of special services, Dr. Dorothy McMullen and supervisors of special services, Michael Burke and Valerie Dunn have provided this evening a special report for our school community on Autism.

Autism is a developmental disability that is caused by differences in how the brain functions. People with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) typically have symptoms early in life and will usually have symptoms throughout their lives. The term “spectrum” is used because the way ASD affects each person varies widely – from mildly to severely disabling. ASD is characterized by difficulties in: Communication, Interacting, Behaving and Learning.



Some students whose ASD affects them mildly will have difficulty with social communication, such as initiating and sustaining conversations with both peers and adults. They may not respond to social situations in a way that is socially acceptable or common. These students may appear to not be interested in social interactions, but they do desire friendships – they need assistance in learning how to develop these relationships.

Students with more moderate symptoms may require more daily educational support. These students have difficulties with social communication, and may be limited in their ability to verbally communicate their needs and wants. These students may also engage in repetitive behaviors, and may have a very limited amount of activities they will engage in. If they are directed away from their preferred activity, they can become very anxious and upset.

Students with severe symptoms often require substantial educational support. These students are typically non-verbal, and may not be able to communicate their needs and wants in any way. They may engage in repetitive behaviors for large portions of the day and it can be very challenging to engage these students in any non-preferred activity.

The Rutgers – New Jersey Medical School (Zahorodny, PhD) is conducting the New Jersey Autism Study in four New Jersey counties (Union, Essex, Hudson, Ocean). The Elizabeth Public Schools has been an active participant in the study.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) most recent national data, an average of 1 in 68 individuals have Autism Spectrum Disorder. The 1 in 68 national average is roughly 30% higher than the estimate for 2008 (1 in 88 individuals). Boys were almost 5 times more likely to be identified with ASD than girls. The reason for this increase across the nation is not known.

New Jersey’s rate of Autism Spectrum Disorder, as described by the New Jersey Autism Study (NJAS), appears to be the highest rate of autism in the nation and is estimated to be 1 in 45 individuals.

There are some distinct signs and symptoms of ASD which may include, but are not limited to the following:

- *Not responding to his or her name by 12 months of age*
- *Get upset by minor changes in routine*
- *Avoiding eye contact and wanting to be alone*
- *Delayed speech and language skills*
- *Repeating words or phrases over and over*

The district strives to ensure any child with a potential disability is identified and evaluated. We send child find letters to doctor's offices, community providers and post flyers on social media as one of our strategies. Within the school when a teacher or staff member believes a child may have a potential disability they would refer the child to the child study team. As a parent or guardian if you notice that your child is exhibiting any of the signs or symptoms of ASD or your child has difficulty in sitting, standing, walking, talking, and/ or learning please reach out to the division of special services for assistance.

According to New Jersey Administrative code 6a:14 , Autism falls under one of the 14 eligibility categories for special education and related services. This educational classification requires a assessment by a speech language specialist and a physician trained in neurodevelopmental assessments.

A student with Autism must also have an educational need for specialized instruction in order to receive their education, before they are eligible for special education and related services. Students that meet this criteria are entitled to and provided with individualized educational programming and related services, under the IDEA. Students with Autism who do not requires specialized instruction can often be assisted through a Section 504 modification / accommodation plan. In Elizabeth, as our student body population has grown, so has the rate of Autism classifications, and the programming offered for these students.

In 2010, 82 students classified under the federal category of Autism were educated in- district. At that time there were 5 self contained Autism classrooms and 5 teachers. In 2011, 106 students classified under the federal category of Autism were educated in- district. In 2012, 125 students classified under the federal category of Autism were educated in- district. In 2013, 135 students classified under the federal category of Autism were educated in- district. In 2014, 168 students classified under the federal category of Autism were educated in- district, based on the October 15th annual application for state school aid data.

Currently, there are 9 self-contained autism classrooms and 9 teachers. Since the 2011-2012 school year the district has opened 4 new classrooms. This program has expanded from elementary level grades only, to include middle school. Consistently through the past 5 years our in district numbers have increased and the out of district numbers have remained consistent.

The Elizabeth Public Schools program is based on the applied behavior analysis method, also known as ABA, which is the science that involves using modern behavior learning theory to modify behaviors and is used though alignment to the core curriculum, whenever appropriate for the individual student. All program components are individualized for each student, depending on their specific strengths, weaknesses, and educational needs.

The Elizabeth Public Schools Autism Program **Provides services and supports within a nurturing climate, within the least restrictive environment, providing students with the opportunity to interact with their non-disabled peers.**

Extended School Year (ESY) runs for 20 days in the month of July

We also have a preschool disabled program for students ages 3 -5, a few classrooms are specifically developed for preschool students with Autism, where we maintain a maximum of 8 students per classroom, to the extent possible. The program can occur across settings with individually identified objectives, guiding developmentally appropriate activities.

Each student in the autism program is evaluated so that we know where they are starting from – academically, behaviorally, and socially, so that we can set appropriate and individualized goals for student growth. Knowing where a student starts from is the only way to realize gains. Data collection is utilized to monitor and ensure progress for each student. Our over arching instructional methods:

- Emphasize the use of naturally occurring reinforcers (rewards);
- Promote high rates of successful performance;
- Encourage communication and social interaction; and
- Encourage the spontaneous use of learned skills in different settings.

NJ Administrative Code requires that an Autism program maintain a student to staff ratio of 3:1.

EPS Curriculum is aligned to the Common Core Standards. We offer the following programs:

The Autism Curriculum Encyclopedia (ACE) is designed to provide teachers, administrators, and other school professionals with easy access to applied behavior analytic procedures and an effective and efficient way to aggregate and understand student performance data.

Rethink - is a research-based program model for supporting students with disabilities in self contained settings and within the general education setting. Rethinks dynamic online solution includes a comprehensive video-based curriculum, online activities for students, job-embedded professional development and parent training modules, individualized assessment and mobile progress monitoring tools, behavior intervention planning and an *IEP Builder* – all developed by nationally recognized experts in the field. Rethink also offers data-based reports for school and district leaders to automatically monitor progress with *LRE Goals*

The Uncommon Thread - provides the Elizabeth Public Schools with all the tools and services necessary to build and maintain a quality ABA program so that it meets the needs of their Learning Disabled population in the "least restrictive environment". In addition, TUT offers districts the following individual components to expand the capacity of their existing program and/or fill any voids; Functional Behavior Assessments, Behavior Support Plans, In Home Supplemental Services, Parent Training, and Staff Training.

Elizabeth Public Schools uses several different programs to collect data on student achievement, depending on the specific program and/or IEP of the student. Rethink, Rolling Benchmarks (specific students), State Testing (specific students) are among the programs utilized.

The following are the resources available for further information.

New England Center for Children <http://www.necc.org/>

National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/addm>

The Uncommon Thread <http://theuncommonthread.org/>

NJDOE <http://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/autism/>

Kean University Center for Autism Assessment and Research Services

<http://grad.kean.edu/sites/default/files/PDFs/Kean%20Autism%20Brochure%20FINAL.pdf>

Autism Presentation @ April 16th Board Meeting



Your Elizabeth Board of Education

President Ana Maria AMIN	Vice-President José M. RODRIGUEZ	Charlene BATHELUS	Maria Z. CARVALHO	Elcy CASTILLO- OSPINA	Tony MONTEIRO	Stanley NERON	Paul M. PERREIRA	Carlos TRUJILLO
--------------------------------	--	----------------------	----------------------	-----------------------------	------------------	------------------	---------------------	--------------------



Equity • Expectations • Excellence

EQUITY

As a nation, America's Promise is that every child, regardless of race, ethnicity or social class, should receive a high quality, academically rich and rigorous public education.

EXPECTATIONS

The concept of high expectations is premised on the philosophical and pedagogical belief that a failure to hold all students to high expectations effectively denies them access to a high quality education, since the educational achievement of students tends to rise or fall in direct relation to the expectations placed upon them.

EXCELLENCE

Educational Excellence is defined as students performing at high levels or where students are making significant gains in academic achievement helping to prepare every child for global competitiveness.



Equity • Expectations • Excellence

Student

We believe ALL students can learn and achieve at high levels regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, neighborhood, household income or home language.

ALL Means ALL. We will narrow the achievement gaps of students by providing a high quality education to ensure that ALL of our students are college and career ready.

Teacher

We believe teachers make a positive difference in student achievement. Teachers will prepare ALL students for success in college, career, and our technological global society.

We believe that teachers are central in a child's life. Having an effective teacher is the single most important factor in student success.

Leader

We believe that effective leaders demonstrate unwavering commitment to high levels of achievement for ALL students.

Leaders will exemplify and support practices that promote high levels of achievement for ALL students.

Family

We believe that parents and caregivers are both valued partners and active participants in their children's learning. A shared sense of mutual responsibility for learning is the foundation for family involvement to ensure student success.

We are committed to engaging parents and caregivers in their children's education. We will develop a coordinated strategy that enables parents and caregivers to play an active role in building and sustaining family support for their children's learning and academic success.

Team

We believe that every member of the Elizabeth Public Schools team has a responsibility in producing and supporting high levels of achievement for ALL students.

Every member of the Elizabeth Public Schools team will make a measurable contribution to the success and achievement for ALL students by ensuring equitable distribution of resources throughout the organization.