



2020-2021

Special Education Updates



On July 31st, the Student Services Department provided professional learning to each Special Education Teacher, School Psychologist and Speech/Language Pathologist. Veteran educators and support staff participated in training on IDEA and Special Education updates. New Special Education Teachers, and those new to our district, participated in a separate session to receive additional support for the development of Individual Education Plans (IEPs). The sessions were recorded and posted on YouTube for teacher reference and future hires.

Extended School Year 2020

The 2020 Extended School Year (ESY) Elementary program looked a little different this year as students received instruction using a distance learning model. The program took place Monday-Friday, June 9th through June 26th and July 13th- July 24th. Students in grades PK through 5th grade participated in engaging lessons via the Google Classroom platform, Zoom meetings and various other distance learning opportunities. In addition to ESY, our staff provided COVID Compensatory Impact Services (CCIS) to students who may have demonstrated regression on their IEP goals and objectives due to the COVID-19 school closure. During the month of June, 108 Students were served and in July, 37 students were served. Twenty teachers, an interpreter, and 2 speech language pathologists helped make this program a success. Although we were not able to interact in-person, teachers were able to make connections with students and facilitate positive learning outcomes.

Extended School Year (ESY) 2020 for middle and high school students was also conducted through distance learning. The program took place Monday – Friday, June 8th through June 26th and July 13th through July 24th. In addition to the 76 students who were eligible for traditional ESY services, 159 students qualified for COVID Compensatory Impact Services (CCIS). A total of 176 students with disabilities who qualified for and received direct services for targeted IEP goals were served in June and 38 were served in July. The program was composed of 1 Autism class, 6 Interrelated classes, 1 SID/PID class, 2 MOID classes, 1 MID class, and 1 GNETS/Behavior Support class. Staffing for this program included 16 teachers, a sign language interpreter, and a speech language pathologist. Additional middle and high school ESY priming services, which help prepare students for their return to the school setting, was implemented for 123 students.



While last school year was definitely eventful and different, we still have a lot to celebrate! This past school year, our 38 lunchrooms received a total of 56 health inspections county-wide. Out of 56 reviews, 55 were a perfect score of 100! The schools listed below have had a decade or more of perfect health scores. We love that our managers and employees work so hard to make healthy and safe meals for our students!

1. Feagin Mill Middle (10 yrs) – Karen Cole
2. Hilltop Elementary (10 yrs) – Nutrina Whitehurst
3. Mossy Creek Middle (10 yrs) – Tammy Roberts
4. Veterans High (10 yrs) – Gloria Jean Williams
5. Parkwood Elementary (12 yrs) – Mary Land
6. Bonaire Middle (13 yrs) – Sandra Boulware
7. Houston County High (13 yrs)– Maria Harrell
8. Perry Middle (13 yrs)– Jaynie Perez
9. Shirley Hills Elementary (13 yrs)– Regina Waters
10. Huntington Middle (14 yrs) – Josephine Durham
11. Quail Run Elementary (14 yrs) – Vera Jackson
12. Lake Joy Elementary (15 yrs) – Lois Winchester
13. Lake Joy Primary (15 yrs) – Maurice Wall
14. Warner Robins Middle (15 yrs) – Gloria Reichman
15. Miller Elementary (17 yrs) – Stephen Askew
16. Morningside Elementary (17 yrs) – Donna Stewart
17. Perdue Primary (17 yrs) – Brittany Williams
18. Tucker Elementary (17 yrs) – Melissa Edwards



HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT RECOVERY PROGRAM

High school special education teachers, counselors, and Program Specialists worked together to identify students with disabilities in grades 9-12 who were credit deficient by one or more Carnegie units. Students with disabilities from each of our five high schools were given the opportunity to attend this program as recommended by their IEP team. The program was held June 1st – July 17th and employed four special education teachers to facilitate the Odysseyware program. The students received daily instruction through 2-hour Zoom sessions. These Zoom sessions allowed students to engage face-to-face with a teacher who could support their content acquisition.

The goal of the credit recovery program was to increase the graduation rate for students with disabilities. Our High School Credit Recovery Program supported this goal by allowing our students to complete a total of 88 courses during the seven week initiative.



VIRTUAL SUMMER SCHOOL

Student Services, in collaboration with Assessment and Accountability, provided support to students with disabilities who attended virtual middle school summer school. Classes were held Monday through Friday, June 8th through July 17th. Two special education teachers supported twenty-four students with disabilities in successfully completing their courses in Odysseyware. The goal of the Student Services staff was to ensure that accommodations were in place and support students as they worked through the web-based program.

One Million Meals Served



The Houston County School Nutrition Program (SNP) reached a milestone on June 8, by providing one million meals for children since March 17, 2020. School Nutrition celebrated “One Million Meals Served” on Wednesday, June 10, as they distributed meals to Houston County’s children. The employees wore special t-shirts celebrating this accomplishment, while handing out the meals at a school or on the mobile routes.

“Nothing about COVID-19 has been convenient,” said Meredith Potter, Director of School Nutrition. “Operating during these times, however, has given us the opportunity to strengthen partnerships with business and community members. Reaching this one-million-meals mark would not have been possible without the support of our Board of Education, distributors, farmers and dedicated employees. The overwhelming support from parents and students was so encouraging as we constantly tweaked our

processes to better serve our families. We are proud to continue our mission of feeding children through the summer months. We also anxiously await the day when we welcome our students back into our cafeterias with hugs and high-fives!”

The Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Dr. Zabrina Canady, commented, “This milestone is a testament to the dedication, teamwork and spirit of our school nutrition staff and administration!” They work tirelessly to provide meals to the children of Houston County.”

Throughout the school district closure, the SNP provided breakfast and lunch to any child up to 18 years of age available at school sites for pick-up, as well as designated van routes. During the month of May, they also offered Houston County families *Pizza Night Meals To Go* with whole pizzas, fresh vegetables, local fruit, and half-gallons of milk provided for the whole family to enjoy.



TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

Welcome back to another great school year! We look forward to highlighting the great things our special education teachers are doing around the district. This month, we would like to shine the spotlight on two of our finest, Amy Wainwright and Mollie Giddens. Amy Wainwright is a Special Education Preschool Teacher and Mollie Giddens is a Speech Language Pathologist at Bonaire Primary School. They consistently plan together to create engaging and interactive lessons for their students. Their lessons are designed to target students' needs and preferences. During the closure, Amy and Mollie taught some AMAZING virtual lessons! Here are a few samples of the educational opportunities the two teachers provided for their students based on a theme from a book:

- After reading a story, we retold the story using a core communication board with pictures and toys. The board was then used to increase verbalizations such as "I see___". The children were provided their own communication board at home to follow along with a Zoom lesson.
- Boom learning cards were used to emphasize the selected theme. The cards were used during a Zoom session to target language comprehension questions with visual choices provided to aid in increasing language skills. Additionally, Boom learning cards were sent to individual students focusing on their IEP goals.
- Activities were provided with take home packets to go along with each story. These activities focused on crafts to retell story, language comprehension activities, and fine/gross motor skills.
- Pre-recorded circle time and interactive items were provided to each student to use at home daily.
- After each Zoom session, the teacher and speech therapist collaborated with interpreters to record story time for our deaf/hard of hearing community. These recordings were posted in Google Classroom so children could replay the stories throughout the week.
- Additional stories that related to the theme were posted in Google Classroom by the paraprofessional and/or interpreter.
- OT/PT participated in weekly Zoom sessions by providing activities with movement to go along with the theme.

We are excited to highlight these two shining stars! Amy and Mollie are phenomenal teachers who are doing GREAT things for our students!

Welcome to Student Services



Christa Nelson is our newest Program Specialist. She is originally from Hawkinsville, Ga. She has a Bachelor of Science degree, as well as a Masters degree, in Speech Language Pathology from Valdosta State University. She earned a Specialist degree in Curriculum, Instruction, and Administration from NOVA Southwest University. During her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family and friends, participating in CrossFit, and coaching all-star cheer. She is excited about the opportunity to work with the Student Services staff and is looking forward to a great year in her new position!

Hannah Wilson is a speech language pathologist who will be working with Child Find and Perry High School. She graduated with her M.Ed. from Valdosta State University and is a native of Houston County. She and her husband, Taylor, recently moved back home from Ellijay, GA. where they spent time working in ministry at Camp Highland. Taylor is a new PE teacher at Matt Arthur Elementary School. Together they love to travel and spend time with family and friends. Hannah is excited to be back in Houston County!



Jennifer Thomas is returning to Houston County as a speech language pathologist focusing on Augmentative and Alternative Communication with the assistive technology team. She graduated from Valdosta State University with a Bachelors and Masters in Speech Language Pathology and from Piedmont College with an Education Specialist degree in Curriculum and Instruction. She is married to Andy and they have three daughters in Houston County Schools. Jennifer has called Houston County home since 2001.

Stephanie McCormick is a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant. She is a graduate of Middle Georgia State University. She has worked the last two years within the Georgia school system providing direct and tele-therapy services. She has also collaborated with speech for telehealth services to provide a holistic approach for serving children. Stephanie believes that all team members working together for the child's success is always the best goal. She loves what she does and is looking forward to the new school year!



Welcome to Student Services



Misty Salter is our new Assistive Technology Teacher. She is excited to begin her new position in Student Services. She has a B.S. in Special Education, a M.Ed. in Special Education, a Specialist in Leadership, and a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction. She has served as a special education teacher for 16 years with her last 13 years teaching at Perry High School. She and her husband, Dusty, along with their 3 children and 4 dogs love being members of the Perry community. She's looking forward to a GREAT year in her new role!

Patrick Thomas is our new Transition Teacher. He graduated from Georgia Southern University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Child and Family Development. After graduation, he began his career at the Methodist Home for Children and Youth in Macon. He then decided to pursue a career in education and completed the TAPP program to obtain his teacher certification. Before joining the Houston County team, he worked in the special education department for Peach County Schools for 12 years. Patrick has since earned his Masters and Specialist degrees in Educational Leadership from Georgia College and State University. When he is not working in the school system, he enjoys spending time with his wife, Paige, and 3 children: Preston (10), Piper (8) and Parker (6 months).



Sara DeJournette is joining the Behavior Intervention Team as a paraprofessional. She is married to Charles and is the mother of five. They have a college junior, a college freshman, and three children at HCHS. She previously served as a Paraprofessional at FMMS. She has over 12 years of experience working with students. Sara studied music in college and utilizes what she learned to better communicate with her students. She loves working with children and making a difference in their lives.