

Report of the Special Education Coordinator

I would like to thank the town of Fremont for giving me the opportunity to serve the community as the District Special Education Coordinator. My first task in this new role was to help create a cohesive administrative team, with a common vision, to support all of our students and staff. Although a daunting task, given the new administrative structure here at Ellis School the transition was a smooth one. This was due to the stalwart leadership of Superintendent, Bill Lander and Principal, John Safina, and the newly appointed Assistant Principal Doug Totten.

It is a continuous goal of the Special Education Department to reinforce the notion of the least restrictive environment. All special education students are typical students first and foremost. They have the right to be educated with their peers and have their instruction differentiated to address their individual learning styles. Any evaluation, support or service added to a students' day is done so with careful consideration by the special education team, is supported by data, and is carried out with parental consent. The Special Education Department, which is comprised of special educators, para-professionals, speech/language therapists, occupational therapists and physical therapists, is a determined group of talented and dedicated specialists. A major focus for these professionals is to assist classroom teachers in helping students generalize new skills they have learned through specialized instruction into their everyday classroom work in order to access the curriculum.

This year alone the staff has participated in many professional development opportunities such as the Medicaid to Schools program, Interventions for students with Autism, Remediation of Learning Problems in Math, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Understanding Socially Challenged Students. Many of these trainings have been open to regular education teachers, nursing staff and guidance.

The fall of 2011 also marked the Fremont School Board's recognition of the Fremont Special Education Parent/Teacher Partnership. The purpose of the group is to provide education and support for parents of special education students as well as anyone else who wishes to learn more. This is done through monthly presentations at Ellis School, parent mentoring and the development of a "Welcome Packet" for families new to the special education process. Local parent Shannon Bryant has been the driving force behind the existence and success of this group.

The Ellis School preschool instructional team, led by Brigid Connelly provides screening of children for whom there are developmental concerns. The process of Child Find may lead to special education evaluation or eligibility and preschool programming if results warrant.

It is with great enthusiasm that I look forward to the challenges and successes of 2012!

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Krebs, Special Education Coordinator