

Report of the Special Services Director

In 2018 we said good bye to some of our special educators including Lynn Noyes and Joanne Hernon who retired or moved on to great professional opportunities. We thank them for their years of service and dedication to our learners. We also saw staff, Andrea Bancroft and Jennifer Scott, move from a role as a special education teacher to a regular education teacher. It is wonderful to add to our list of classroom teachers who are dual-certified. These changes gave us an unanticipated opportunity to welcome educators Lena Vitagliano (special education building coordinator), Charlene Caswell, Sara Detollenaere, and Jennifer McCullough (special education teachers), Jennifer Lanchoney (speech-language pathologist), and a few para-educators.

We continue to meet the NH Department of Education compliance reviews. NHDOE has reviewed the required information and determined that the Fremont School District meets the requirements and purposes under IDEA based on their established criteria. We were notified by the NHDOE that Fremont School District has NOT been selected for Compliance and Improvement Monitoring (CIM) for the 2019-2020 school year. Determination of selection is based on points earned. Looking back 4 years at the longitudinal information, Fremont has scored the highest score of zero indicating we are substantially in compliance in all areas across all 4 years with one exception. In the year 2014-2015, we received a 1 indicating we were in need of assistance for Indicator 6a as our percentage of preschoolers in regular education environments was not sufficient. We changed our programming for the preschool population and the following year returned to substantial in compliance.

Again the annual NH Department of Education compliance reports were submitted in a timely manner. NHDOE provided notice that the district has met Indicator 11 requirements for Timeliness of Initial Evaluation. NHDOE Post-School Outcome Surveys were sent out again this year. This survey assesses how students are doing after leaving high school and is valuable information. We appreciate the feedback.

In April 2018, the NHDOE special education parent involvement survey was administered again. This survey is administered every other year. We appreciate the responses from the parents who took the time in their busy days to complete this survey and look forward to receiving the results from the NHDOE. We listen to the information parents share with us.

Special education has an obligation to identify, locate and evaluate all children with disabilities from ages birth to 21. This is called Childfind. Section 504 also has a Childfind obligation but on a more limited basis. Anyone including a parent, teacher, and medical professional may make a referral to special education or Section 504. In order to capture the children ages birth to 5, the district offers free screenings twice a year in the fall and spring. Please call or look for the advertisements of these screenings if you are concerned your child has a disability.

Although the federal law called Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is considered an unfunded mandate as it has never been fully funded, the federal and state governments provide some funding. One of those funding sources is special education aid, formerly called catastrophic aid, which is provided based on an individual learner's IEP whose cost exceeds 3.5 times the estimated state average cost per pupil. This year we are estimated to receive \$235,456. Another way districts receive funding is through a federal IDEA entitlement grant. The entitlement grant we received in July 2018 is for \$118,077. While these funds in no way cover the cost of special education, they do help in offsetting costs.

As providing learners an education in the least restrictive setting is mandated by IDEA and a priority for the school district, we use the IDEA Grant, NHDOE initiatives, and trainings by district professionals to build our internal capacity to provide services, allowing to the maximum extent appropriate for our learners to stay in their neighborhood schools of Ellis Elementary School and Sanborn Regional High School in the most fiscally responsible way. Keeping identified learners in their neighborhood school, among their friends and close to their families can have a significant, positive long-term effect on their quality of life and future in society. It also enriches the school environment with a diversity of learners.

As always it is pleasure to serve the learners and the community of Fremont.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa McKeon



Photos courtesy of Theresa Blades

**Ellis School Career Day
12 April 2018
Ellis students interacting with members of the
Fremont Fire Rescue Department**

