

Martinsville City Public Schools

Special Education Advisory Committee

Newsletter

Save the Dates

Next SEAC Meeting
April 13th, 6:30 PM
At the School Board Office

**Special Education
Spring Games**
May 5th
At the MHS Football Field,
Or the MHS Gym if it rains

Inside This Issue:

Turning 18: Age Of Majority
(Part I)

Meet: Dr. Talley

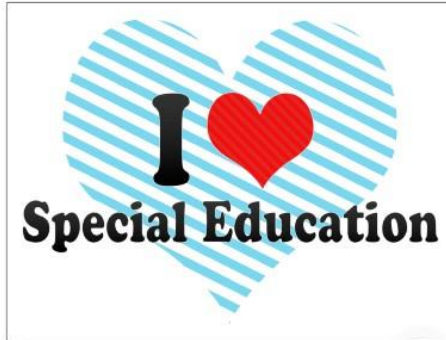
Inside IEPs:
Parent Concerns

Preschool Focus:
Kindergarten Registration

How to Help at Home:
Read To Your Child

Q&A: Can A Student Have A
Disability And Be Gifted?

On Track for Graduation:
Check And Make Sure Your
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Hello!
from the

Martinsville City Public Schools SEAC

This is Issue #1 of the MCPS SEAC Newsletter. I hope that it will help parents understand more about what MCPS has to offer for their child, and encourage parents more involved in their child's learning.

The plan is to get a new issue out every quarter, with different topics to help make everything easier for everyone. If you have something in particular you'd like this newsletter to address, make sure to submit it! Otherwise, I hope one of these various sections will interest you.

This is a bit of a new idea, so if you have any suggestions on how to make this newsletter better, I'd be glad to hear from you!

Caroline Westphalen
SEAC Secretary



Turning 18: Age of Majority (This is Part 1 of a continuing series on this important topic!)

What happens when your child turns 18? This is called the age of majority. The rights a parent has transfer to the child now that they are considered an adult. This means the child can make decisions about their education and schooling.

You'll be reminded of this at least one year prior to your child's 18th birthday. This will give you and your child time to prepare. For most students with IEPs there's no problem with the transfer of rights. They'll do just as well as any other student.

Next time: What if you don't think your child will be ready?

Meet Dr. Talley, Superintendent

Q: How long have you been in education?

A: 39 years. This was my first job. I came straight to Martinsville Middle School and started my career in 1978.

Q: What's your favorite part of your current job?

A: I get to see all students, from Clearview to the high school. I go to buildings 4 to 5 days a week. I want to make sure teachers and students know they can talk to me. I enjoy going to student events such as plays and sports games. I am looking forward to the upcoming Robotics tournament.

Q: How has education changed since you started working, especially for students with special education needs?

A: When I first started, there were barriers for students with disabilities. However, now there are more resources and more laws to protect these students. Now you can be in special education and still have the same opportunities as non-disabled students. There are more resources from the state and federal government. It levels the playing field.

Q: What are some challenges you face in the school division and for students with IEPs?

A: Make sure that students are in the least restrictive environment so they have the same opportunities as others. We want to be sure we don't hinder students because of their disabilities. It is important to do this, whatever it takes.

Q: What are some ideas you have to help education for the division and for Special Ed students?

A: We need to be sure our policies meet the needs of all students. We need to monitor



data and make sure resources are available for special education. I want to make sure our special education students get the same support as any other student.

Q: What should parents do if they have concerns about their child's education?

A: First you can call your student's case manager, next the building administrator. If you still have concerns, then Dr. Simington, the Executive Director of Special Education and Student Services. These people should be able to help you, but parents can always appeal to me.

Inside IEPs: Parent Comments

It is important for YOU to be involved in your child's IEP. Did you know that there is a section in the IEP for parent comments? This doesn't mean you should ignore everything else; but, if you have any concerns that aren't addressed anywhere else in the IEP, this is a great place to mention them. Maybe you want to make sure everyone remembers that you are concerned about what your child is learning. Or, you might want to ask, "Is my child getting along well with others?"

However, remember if you have any major concerns, you should talk to your child's case manager as soon as possible. You don't have to wait until it's time to do an IEP.

Preschool Focus

Kindergarten Registration is coming!

For students turning five years old before September 30th, kindergarten registration will be held April 18 through 20 at Clearview Early Childhood Center from 9:00 until 5:00.

Be sure to bring:

- Child's birth certificate (original)
- 2 Proofs of residence (ex. utility bill and Lease Agreement)
- Current physical examination (completed after 8/9/16)
- Up to date Immunization record

If you have any questions, contact Felicia Preston, Director Of Pupil Personnel Services at 276-403-5794.

How to Help at Home: Read to Your Child

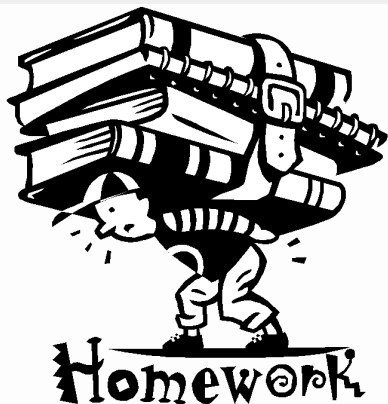
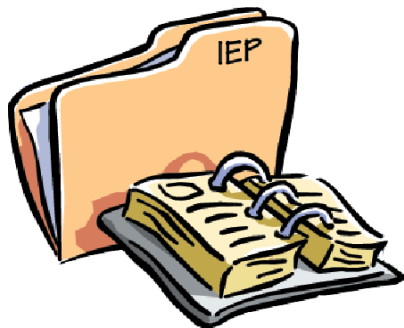
Did you know how important it is to read to your child? Research says that it may be the most important thing you can do for your children. According to www.readaloud.org reading to your child has many benefits.

First, it builds vocabulary. As your child hears more words, they will learn them even though they may not realize they are learning.

Also, it's fun for you and your child. It can be a great way to spend time with your child even with a busy schedule. Set aside 15 minutes a day for this important activity. If you can't find the time, maybe another adult in your child's life or even an older sibling can read with your child.

Even when you child can read by himself, it's still good to read with them. This helps them understand how important reading is.

For more ideas, check out www.readaloud.org





Q & A: Can a student have a disability AND be gifted?

Yes! They are called 'Twice Exceptional'. A student may have physical or emotional disabilities, but that doesn't affect their intelligence. Students with learning disabilities have average to *above* average intelligence. Students with intellectual disabilities may not be academically gifted, but they can still have talents in other medias such as art or music!

Three things can happen to Twice Exceptional students who aren't correctly identified. First, the disability may hide the giftedness. Then the student may be judged based on their disability without anyone even realizing they are gifted. For example, a student with a speech disability may be so hard to understand that no one knows that he has an advanced vocabulary.

Second, the giftedness may hide the disability. When this happens, adults may think that just because the student is gifted, there is nothing wrong with them, even though they may have a disability. For example, adults may think that a gifted student with poor social skills is being deliberately mean, instead of realizing that she has autism.

Lastly, the two cancel each other out. The disability hides that the student is gifted, but the giftedness also hides the disability. The student is considered average, and doesn't get the accommodations they need for being gifted OR for being disabled.

If you think your child might be Twice Exceptional, talk to his/her teacher.

Thank you for taking the time to read through our first newsletter. We hope to send one once a quarter.

Graduation Checklist (Will your student be ready?)

Standard Diploma

Virginia Board of Education Requirements	Standard Credits	Verified Credits
English	4	2
Math	3	1
Lab Science	3	1
History/SS	3	1
Health /PE	2	
Foreign Language, Fine Arts, or CTE	2	
Economics and Personal Finance	1	
Electives	4	
Student Selected Test		1
Total	**22	6

Advanced Diploma

Virginia Board of Education Requirements	Standard Credits	Verified Credits
English	4	2
Math	4	2
Lab Science	4	2
History/SS	4	2
Foreign Language	*3	
Health /PE	2	
Fine Arts or CTE	1	
Economics and Personal Finance	1	
Electives	3	
Student Selected Test		1
Total	26	9

Students must also complete a total of 40 hours of service learning over and above their scheduled coursework throughout their four years of high school.

****Courses completed to satisfy the requirements of Standard Diploma must include two sequential electives, which should provide a foundation for further education or training of preparation for employment.**

*Courses completed to satisfy the Foreign Language requirement of the Advanced Studies Diploma must include three years of one language or two years of two languages.

Graduation

Verified Credits

Students who successfully complete a course and who achieve a passing score on an end-of-course SOL test or a substitute test for that course shall be awarded a **verified credit**.

All students enrolled in a course that has an SOL test must take the test.

Credit Accommodation

To be eligible to earn locally awarded verified credits in English, mathematics, science and/or history and social science, a student with an IEP must:

1. Pass the high school course;
2. Score within a 375-399 scale score range on any administration of the Standards of Learning test after taking the test at least twice; and
3. Demonstrate achievement in the academic content through an appeal process administered at the local level.



