**2019-2020 CAC Meetings**

**Q&A**

**9-25-19**

**Question**: **Is there any way a reading specialist expert in autism can come into the individual schools and give resource teachers and parents support and skills to improve reading comprehension?**

**Answer:** The District does not employ itinerant reading specialists as it did in previous years. Instead, there are Autism Specialists who are assigned to schools who are available to support special education and general education teachers and parents. They have specific trainings available to staff and they also offer a parent workshop specific to supporting students with autism.

At the same time, the District is training all elementary special education teachers in the “fundamentals of teaching reading” which is 3 days of training throughout the year. The combination of this new understanding of successful strategies in teaching reading comprehension, plus the autism support from our Specialists, will address these issues. I recommend that you ask your principal or assistant principal about what trainings the Autism Specialist can provide your school.

It is also important to note that if an IEP team believes a child has a need in the area of reading comprehension (irrespective of the area of disability), the team will create appropriate goals and services necessary to make growth. If you have concerns about these goals or services, please contact your child’s case carrier and request an IEP meeting, or if you are not certain who the case carrier is or have other general questions, reach out to your principal or assistant principal for assistance.

**Question:** **Can a district specialist attend and provide education, tips & tricks, verbiage to teachers and principals about autism? Can principals implement this year?**

**Answer:** The district recognizes the complex components that construct the disability of autism. Our Autism Specialists take on the role of educating administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and transportation support personnel to better understand the needs of our students with autism. The Autism Specialists offer trainings and workshops that they can provide to staff and parents. It is recommended that the CAC representative work with the principal to schedule a training.

The District also provides Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) training to provide best practices and strategies for supporting all students’ behavioral needs and for safely de-escalating student behaviors. CPI is a 2 day training that is required for all administrators and also for special education teachers and paraeducators (aides) who work in mod/severe classes that serve students with autism. Trainings are also available for all general education and school staff, including custodians, office managers, general education teachers, etc. CPI is offered each summer and every 2-3 months during the school year. CPI trainings can also be provided for school staff at their site. If there is a concern that staff members have not been trained in CPI, please notify your principal and they will work with their staff and the S3 department to arrange for CPI training.

**Question**: **If the district has so many openings for special education positions, why do the schools not allow parents to volunteer in special ed classrooms?**

**Answer:** While we truly appreciate the interest of parents who would like to volunteer in our special education classrooms, we do not permit untrained support within the classroom environment due to the unique needs of our students who receive special education services. We encourage you to speak to the principal of the school or the PTA president to ask about other ways that you can volunteer and support the school with events, activities, etc.

**Question**: **How does the pilot program at SMS differ from the current program at middle schools?**

**Answer:** This is the first year of the STEPS program at Shorecliffs Middle School (SMS). However, this is not a pilot; it is the same STEPS program that is also offered at Newhart Middle School, Marco Forster Middle School, and Niguel Hills Middle School.

**10-9-19**

**Question**: **Why is there such a big turn over of administrators at school sites?**

**Answer:** Principal and assistant principal assignments at school sites are determined by a variety of factors. These factors include (but are not limited to): background and expertise that aligns with the specialized programs (both general education and special education) that are offered on each campus; enrollment trends (size of student enrollment impacts the need for an assistant principal, for example); and administrator input. Due to the fact that there are multiple factors that are considered, some administrators may stay for 10 years or longer at one school site while others move more frequently.

**Question: If a parent wants to know more about placement and programs, where can they be found besides the District website?**

**Answer:** S3 is currently redesigning all program brochures which will be made available on the website and at each school site for IEP team members. The brochures will be available beginning in January 2020. In the meantime, you can access basic information about our programs and their locations: [CLICK HERE](https://docs.google.com/document/d/197lWbJAnh4OUMQrj7XxxZ0Dm0DJpYz06eh1soq0a99Q/edit?usp=sharing).

**Question: Is program/class observation available for parents? If so, what is the process?**

**Answer:** Yes, program and class observation is available for parents. However, as a District we are careful to limit parent observations because they can be (unintentionally) distracting to our students and staff. Please contact your principal to arrange for a visit because either the principal or assistant principal will accompany you when you observe and they can answer questions that you may have. You may also want to discuss the logistics of an observation with your case carrier and IEP team as well.