

Princeton Public Schools

Special Education PTO Newsletter

October 2016

News and Updates

We have a lot of important events and updates for you this month! First, we've highlighted below events you should not miss! These two events will give you a chance to understand the district's goals around special education, connect with other parents and the team supporting your students, and hear from the candidates running for the school board this year.

- 1 October 17, 7:00pm - 8:30 pm, John Witherspoon Middle School ACC - Special Education PTO/SEPAG Meet and Greet:** Please join us for a Special Education Meet and Greet event. Micki Crisafulli (Head of Special Services, Princeton), Kristin Graham (Special Education Supervisor (Grade 6 – Age 21) and Eric Cslolak (Special Education Supervisor Grades K - 5) will be presenting along with members from the Special Education PTO Advisory Board. In addition to sharing feedback from May's focus groups and the special education priorities for the year, the Student Services team will also be sharing information on communication protocols, testing triggers and considerations as well as key initiatives for tiered intervention and a focus on differentiated learning.
- 2 October 27, 7:00pm - 8:45 pm, John Witherspoon Middle School ACC- School Board Candidates Night:** Meet candidates for the school board elections and ask questions about the issues that effect you most!
- 3 March TBD - Executive Functioning:** Watch for more information about our March event on executive functioning. This is a district-wide event open to the public. If you are interested in helping plan this event, please email specialdpto@gmail.com

Second, we've had a chance to attend the district-wide PTO Council meeting as well as our monthly meeting with the Student Services team and have highlighted some key updates below:

- 1 Representing students with special needs:** A member from the Special Education Advisory Board will be attending the PTO-Council meetings monthly and sharing information about “what’s trending” with parents who have children with special needs. We also have a voice to offer guidance on how to ensure that the needs of students who have special requirements are met and addressed in any PTO sponsored program. If you have specific concerns you'd like to share, please contact your school's liason (below) or email specialdpto@gmail.com.
- 2 Communication:** All PTO communications will be highlighting Special Education PTO events and important information. We are also working with the new district website manager to make sure our web presence represents current information. We want parents to have multiple channels for getting Special Education information. Please check the [Special Education PTO webpage](#) to find out your school’s PTO liaison.
- 3 Access and Support for Afterschool Programs:** District-paid support is available to children who require it for programs that take place at the schools and are sponsored by the PTO (not the Y-Sponsored MASH program). To get support, parents who have a child with a [significant challenge](#) should talk with their child’s case manager. Case managers have a process for getting the child the support they need if they qualify. Please note: Not every child on an IEP qualifies. If there are questions about whether or not your child would qualify for an aide for the after school programs, please speak with your child’s case manager. The **process takes about a week to complete** so please plan accordingly to request in advance of your child attending the program.

Interested in getting involved with the Special Education PTO? Have ideas for what news and information you'd like to see here? Have a concern you'd like to share? Please email us at specialdpto@gmail.com!

Events and Happenings

17th Annual Autism Speaks Central New Jersey Walk is THIS SUNDAY, October 2 at ETS in Princeton. (660 Rosedale Road)

- Check in for the 5K is 8am, Check in for the mile is at 10am
- Visit www.autismspeaks.org for registration or JUST SHOW UP!!
- There will be music, kids activities, a fair and lots of interesting AND lovable people!!!

Parent to Parent Family Training on ADHD: Oct. 10, 2016 7:00 pm - Nov. 14, 2016 9:00 pm, Montgomery County Upper Middle School

- Weekly seven-session class includes a state-of-the-art curriculum. Each of the weekly two-hour sessions covers an area of information essential to the successful management of ADHD, and includes a parent's perspective, brought to you by experts who have faced the same struggles, questions, and challenges you face.
- In addition to the classes you will receive a Parent to Parent Workbook full of helpful articles, tips and worksheets to use in your own family.
- Also available as a [webinar](#)

Screening of Roadtrip Nation: "Being You": October 13, 7:00pm, West Windsor-Plainsboro School District Central Office: WWP Special Education PTSA (WWP SEPTSA) is hosting a screening and panel discussion of **Roadtrip Nation: "Being You."**

- 1 hour film follows 3 young adults on a 28-day cross-country road trip sharing conversations with successful adult mentors who have diverse, out-of-the-ordinary careers, but also have faced learning challenges like Dyslexia and ADHD.
- Adult mentors include entertainer Howie Mandel and Peggy Stern, an Academy Award-winning producer and director. She will join in person for the evening.
- This event is intended for middle and high school students and their families. Please register at <https://wwpbeingyou.eventbrite.com>

Plainsboro Recreation Special Needs Halloween Dance, October 22, 6:00 - 8:00 pm

- For Teens and Young Adults, \$5.00, Held at the Plainsboro Recreation and cultural Center
- Dress in costume, registration required

Learning Disabilities of New Jersey Annual Conference "Navigating the Maze" Sunday, October 23, 2016, Rutgers University Livingston Campus Student Center, 84 Joyce Kilmer Ave, Piscataway

- Keynote Amanda Morin from Understood.org
- Attend panels and network with specialists, providers and parents

Autism New Jersey's 34th Annual Conference, October 27 & 28, 2016, Harrah's Atlantic City Waterfront Conference Center

Plainsboro Recreation Center Special Needs Social Hour, October 15 & November 2, 6:30 - 7:30 pm, Room 1 at the Recreation and Cultural center

- For teens and young adults, includes refreshments, music, games and lively discussion groups, supervised by a special educator and arts educator
- Registration required at www.plainsboronj.com

[Resources](#)

Each month, we'll highlight resources and articles available. If you have found a particular resource helpful that you don't see here, please share it!

Blogs and Reference:

[Yellin Center Blog and Phone Hour](#): The Yellin Center provides dynamic, interdisciplinary assessments, as well as professional development programs based on emerging science in the study of learning. The blog is maintained by a team of experienced clinicians and administrators based on the All Kinds of Minds program and the latest scientific research. Dr. Yellin also hosts phone-in office hours each Thursday from 8 to 9 a.m. EST*. Anyone may call, without appointment, to briefly discuss any questions you may have pertaining to their work or to your child's learning. There is no fee. Calls are taken in order received. To reach Dr. Yellin, please call the Yellin Center at 646-775-6646.

[College Transition Blog](#): Elizabeth Hamblett, State Certified Learning Consultant (and parent of a PHS graduate who had an IEP) publishes this blog that offers a lot of free resources for families, including her articles that have been featured for Understood.org. Elizabeth is a learning consultant at Columbia University's disability services office and has a consultancy focused on preparing students with disabilities to make a successful transition to college.

[Child Anxiety Network](#): The Child Anxiety Network was created by [Dr. Donna Pincus](#) and is designed to provide thorough, user-friendly information about child anxiety. We accept no advertising. The Child Anxiety Network is also designed to provide direction for those who are not sure where to turn when they think their child or a child they know may need professional help to cope with anxiety.

Activities:

[West Windsor Recreation Department Special Needs Classes](#): Fall Registration is now open for West Windsor's classes including Choral Connect, Dance Aerobics, Adapted Yoga, and Adapted Tai Chi.

[Plainsboro Recreation Department Pre-K Classes](#): Plainsboro recreation offers Music and Movement (ages 1-6) and Pre-Ballet/Creative Movement (ages 3-6) classes

[Schafer Sports Programs](#): Schafer sports offers special needs programs in gymnastics, swimming, and sports on the turf and consist of early intervention, preschool, all through gradeschool.

[Rider Unified Sports](#): The Rider University Unified Sports Club is a recreational club where Rider students (Unified Partners) and Special Olympics Athletes come together to play on the same team, with the goal to promote friendship and inclusion through sports while still keeping a competitive atmosphere. Currently, Rider has soccer every Sunday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Rider's campus in Lawrenceville. This will continue on through October 16th, with the exception of October 2nd. Please email riderunified@gmail.com with any questions you might have.

Articles:

[Four Life Lessons from Parents of Kids with Special Needs](#): Parents Magazine featured this article in their most recent issue.

[The Road to Higher Education With An 'Invisible Disability'](#): A recent article in The Atlantic highlighting the importance of transition planning and key changes in higher education to support children with learning disabilities.

[U.S. Supreme Court to Weigh Level of Benefit Required by Special Education Law](#): An EdWeek briefing on key special education law being considered in the courts regarding the level of benefit in an IEP required by law.

Question of the Month

Each month we'll feature a survey to get input to inform the agendas with the PTOC and district, in addition to getting your tips and lessons learned to share parent to parent. This month's question is:

What have you found is most helpful in preparing for IEP meetings?

To share your ideas, [follow this link](#).

Special Education PTO Advisory Board 2016-2017

Joan Spindel, Co-Chair (Princeton High School): jspindel@erols.com

Lindsay Kruse, Co-Chair (Littlebrook Elementary): lindskruse@gmail.com

Ginny Bryant (John Witherspoon Middle School): bryant.us.uk@gmail.com

Jen Heuson (Community Park): jenheuson@gmail.com

Anne Kiesewetter (Littlebrook Elementary): kiesewetteranne@gmail.com

Steve Mackey (Johnson Park): steve@princeton.edu

Beverly Yilmaz (Riverside Elementary): bevshumway@hotmail.com