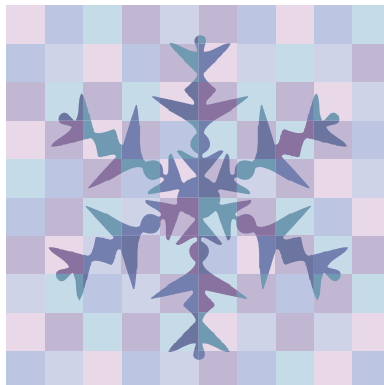


Mid-Valley Special Education Cooperative Newsletter



January, 2015

Notes from the Executive Director

It seems like winter break was just a little longer than we expected! Welcome back! I hope your break and your “cold days” were wonderful and warm. My ski trip was very nice, but not something we would repeat. I think we all like to be home for the holidays. Plus, although the altitude was lower in Washington State (my husband’s quest for me), the area did not really have enough snow to ski much. That’s OK because I was injured after about an hour of skiing anyway. I was forced to be in a beautiful location, reading my kindle and having refreshments. I’m very fortunate!

This newsletter is a little shorter than usual because I don’t have a lot of news from the programs yet with things just getting started again. Enjoy!

Holiday Thanks!

A huge thank you to those who delivered all the food and gifts for our needy families for Thanksgiving and Christmas!

Upcoming Bowling in Event in March

Watch carefully for information about the Bowling Party in March. Families are welcome to join us at this really fun event.

Annual Needs Assessment

By now, you have received a link to complete a needs assessment for all of Mid-Valley staff. This includes certified, licensed, and non-certified staff. The survey asks about professional development and program needs. It is an important part of our overall comprehensive plan and is a repeat of the survey from previous years (with a few updates). It is a requirement of the federal

funding that we receive. Please take about 15 minutes of your valuable time to provide us with your thoughts and insights so that we can better plan for the cooperative.

Parent Survey

A part of the needs assessment is a survey for parents. For those parents for whom we have email addresses, we will be sending it directly to them electronically. We will send all other parents a paper copy via the administrative offices. Parents may send them back to us or they may return them with their student. If you receive any surveys, just send them over to Bonnie. Of course, parents may access this survey via the MVSE website or they also may request a paper copy, if they were sent an email link. Please include the importance of this information in your newsletters to parents.

New Activity Account Form

In order to keep all the activity accounts straight, there is a new form available on the website and from your principal/coordinator if you need to request a check from the activity accounts (Sunshine, Character Council, etc.). If you have questions, please contact your coordinator.

Upcoming Professional Development at Mid-Valley (check the website)

All details about professional development, mentor meetings, department meetings are available on the website (mvse.org) by clicking on the calendar button on the right side of the page. **Please register via the website for all of the following events. Just click on the event on the calendar on our website (mvse.org).**

- January 13, 3:00-4:30 PARCC Accommodations training for all certified staff administering the PARCC this year (New Directions, CLASS, some of New Pathways)
- **New staff**: Initial CPI January 27 full day, 29th ½ day at the Illinois Food Bank in Geneva
- Transition Network, January 27
- Weaving Transition Assessment through the IEP, Sharon Slover, January 16 or January 30, 8:00-3:00, Illinois Food Bank, Geneva.
- Next Steps Training for Parents and Students regarding Transition, February 24 and April 28 in the D303 Board room
- Balanced Assessment Webinars January 29 and February 12, 3:30-4:30

Reminder: Most Paraprofessionals will participate in the February 27th Institute Day. More details about February 27th will be coming out in January.

Parent News

Please let your parents know about the Parent Resource Fair on January 22 at Rotolo Middle School in Batvia, 6:30-8:30.

SAVE THE DATE

Speaking of summer---Save the Date for June 5th when we will have a staff, family outing at the Cougar stadium!! Remind your parents many times!

Tuition Waivers

Tuition waivers are available for both NIU and ISU. If you are interested, please contact Carla. I have heard from three staff members so far about the spring 2015 semester for NIU. Please let her know by **January 20** if you are enrolled in NIU classes.

LAST CALL! NIU Early Clinicals

NIU is looking for teachers who would like to host early clinical students for 18 days in the next semester. If you are interested in helping a future teacher and having a couple of extra hands in the classroom, please contact Carla by **January 16th**.

Student Growth

Before the next Institute Day (February 27), you should be collecting the next set of data on your student growth instruments. Also, you should be exploring additional assessment areas or instruments that you can use for next year's pilot. We will be spending time again on the 27th or in department meetings reviewing your data and making plans for continued student growth.

Journals

As a cooperative, we are members of the Council for Exceptional Children. We receive many pertinent journals with our membership. The table of contents are attached along with this newsletter. If you are interested in any of the articles, just contact Bonnie who will scan a copy to you!!

Move Requests

For this month, our next move date will be Thursday, January 29. So, that means you should turn in any move requests to **Bonnie Carlson** by **Monday, January 26**, so we can organize the work requests. If you have large furniture, equipment or large boxes to move, please fill out the form and clearly label the items to be moved. The forms are on the web-site.

Think Summer! ESY!

Dates and Hours: July 6-July 30, 2015, 8:00-12:00
Mondays through Thursdays (No Fridays)

Three Locations: MJC (Mades-Johnstone Center)
The Shelby Transition Center
Munhall Elementary School, St. Charles

- Theme: *Air! Land! Water!*
- Staff Deadlines: MV Student Referral Information is due to respective coordinators by March 19th
- Parent Deadlines: Parent registration packets are the responsibility of the case manager or teacher and should be forwarded to the MV coordinator by April 17th
- Procedures/Forms: Details for ESY procedures and forms are included on the web-site
- Hiring: MV will be hiring supervisors, teachers, teaching assistants, related service personnel, and secretaries. Hiring for available positions will begin in late March and will continue through May. Interested applicants should apply through the form on the web-site and not Applitrack or Kane County. Even if you have worked for ESY in previous years, you must complete an application each year. In order to be considered for employment, you must have completed the necessary certification requirements, including parapro requirements.

New Staff in January

Brandie Kottmeyer has joined us as a teaching assistant in the ELS program at Blackberry Creek. Welcome!

IMPORTANT Deadlines

Several important deadlines are fast approaching. If any of the following apply to you, please notify Nancy IN WRITING in the Human Resources Department, by the appropriate deadline.

- Feb. 1: Employees on leave of absence must inform MVSEC of their intention to return to work (MVSEA & TASC)
- Feb. 1: Certified staff members seeking a leave of absence must inform MVSEC of their intention for the upcoming school year (MVSEA)
- Feb. 1: Full-time, tenured staff members may request a reduction to a part-time position (MVSEA)
- Feb. 1: Part-time staff members intending to continue part-time must provide written notice (MVSEA)
- Feb. 1: Individuals who wish to job share must jointly apply (MVSEA)
- Feb. 1: Employees may notify their desire for a change in their caseload assignment for the upcoming school year (TASC)
- Feb. 1: Employees may request a change in FTE status for the upcoming school year (TASC)
- Mar. 1: Educators must notify MVSEC of interest in receiving payment in full the balance of their salary (no summer pay) (MVSEA)
- Mar. 1: Any certified employee who is interested in a transfer for the upcoming school year should notify MVSEC of their intent (MVSEA)
- Mar. 1: Employees must file an irrevocable notice of retirement (MVSEA & TASC)

Case Manager Reminder

Especially with the recent cold/snow days, if your IEP meeting schedule changes, please notify **all** of your related service providers. They often have many students and we don't want them to have a conflict or miss your rescheduled meeting!

Birthdays!

Happy January birthday wishes to: Linda Hensel (1), Karin Alber (3), Lela Franrzen (6), Jen Haney (11), Donna Popelka (14), Paul Scanlon (15), Dianne Zedonis (17), Ryan Potter (21), Theresa Baier (26), Johnny Johnston (26), Althea Sawalski (26), JoAnne Pikula (26), Carolyn Werline (28), Meg Bingham (29), Magen McCarthy (29), and Terri Edwards (30) and Maura Burns (31). Happy Birthday!

Thoughts and Prayers...Get Well Wishes

...to everyone who has had the flu! Hang in there, it's almost spring!

Linda Moran is out for this month. Sending her get well wishes!

Our Sympathies to...

Jill Wilder whose grandmother passed away over the weekend. She was 95 and a half. Jill will be gone most of this week to travel back east.

Monika Sikitis' brother passed away suddenly with a brain aneurism on Christmas Eve.

People News

Anne Waters' daughter was married over the holidays!

Congratulations to Carolyn Viereckl and Sharon Jenkins who will be presenting at the Illinois Teachers of Hard of Hearing/Deaf Individuals Conference in March. Here is a little information about their presentation.

Ready or Not? Here They Come! Student Growth, Evaluations, PERA, Oh My!

Summary of Presentation:

As part of the new Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA), numerous changes have been made and continue to take place regarding teacher evaluations. According to PERA, the new act "requires districts to design and implement performance evaluation systems that assess teachers' and principals' professional skills as well as incorporate measures of student growth." The new evaluation system must be implemented regardless of classroom or itinerant based teaching. This presents a new dilemma for itinerant teachers who serve a broad range of students and teach a broad range of academic and functional skills and strategies.

This presentation will educate and inform the itinerant teacher population on the upcoming changes and requirements for teacher evaluation that will be based on student growth indicators. We will be sharing general information on the PERA law, requirements for student growth, and possible tools to be used to measure growth of students served in an itinerant setting.

Carolyn and Sharon are hoping that their presentation is informative for the hearing itinerant teachers throughout the state. There are many who cover large areas and are completely on their own with little support. They may be hearing this information for the first time.

Good luck!!

Program News

6 of our 12+ students and 2 SAIL students have participated in the boot camp training for the internships at the Work Investment Act! These are paid internships, including gas cards. When it is over, they have the opportunity to participate in additional training, if they don't find employment. These individuals will continue to work with students afterwards. Really great!!

No Pictures!



Professional Development Opportunities

The following are some professional development opportunities you may want to explore. Just let Carla know if you'd like more information.

- ***STAR training, January 22-23, Sterling, IL
- Classroom and Therapy Strategies for Asperger's, ADHD and Anxiety; Alternative and Innovative Interventions, January 27, Rockford
- Using Video Modeling to Teach Social Skills to Children with Special Needs: A TeachTown Social Skills Training, Infinitec Southwest, Tinley Park, January 29
- Law, Science, and Practice Perspectives on SLD Identification, Perry Zirkel, Mark Shinn, January 29, National Louis North Shore Campus.
- 36th Annual Illinois School Psychologist Conference, Mindfulness as a Vehicle for Change, Springfield, February 5-7th
- Learning Disabilities Association Conference, February 18-21, Chicago
- PECS Level 1 Training, February 23-24, Chicago
- Using iTechnology as Evidence-Based Practice! Addressing the Learning and Behavior Needs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Susan Stokes, February 27, Benton, IL

Final Thought

May your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears."

-- Nelson Mandela,
former South African president

As we start a new year together, I hope that you make plans to think big thoughts and reflect on your hopes for yourselves and your students. In addition to hoping that I keep my desk clean, I'm also hoping that we continue to strengthen the cooperative in its service to students, families and our community.