

Special Edition

A Newsletter to Parents and Staff

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Above, Rose Hill High School students prepare the puppets backstage before their first public performance of Nepskew Park, a safety program for primary students. Pictured are (standing, front to back) Alex Richey, Jordan Eftland, (sitting, front to back) Justin Reynolds, Zach Suter, Ben DeMoss and Alex Burtin.

Rose Hill High School students take puppetry show on the road

"Pretty Cool!" is how Rose Hill High School junior Alex Burtin describes the puppetry project he and fellow classmates have been involved with the past two months.

"We learned how to build a puppet stage, how to work a puppet's mouth and how to use the rod arms that move the puppet's hands up and down," Burtin said.

Burtin and fellow puppeteers received warm praise from their audience of Rose Hill Primary third graders after their first public performance on April 12th. The performance included 11 separate skits focusing on civics issues, social responsibilities and safety issues.

Rose Hill High School interrelated classroom teacher Chris Diller and 14 of his junior and senior students constructed the set and wrote portions of the script.

"The students did the measuring and painting as well as determined what supplies they would need for the project," Diller said.

Diller said the puppet project provides lessons for his high school crew members in the following: mathematical equations, measurement, architectural design, online research, budget building, history of folklore and oral traditions, play writing, script writing, life skills, interviewing, tryouts and performance assessment.

The goal of the puppet program for the Kindergarten through fifth grade students, Diller said, is to offer lessons on how to become productive and safe citizens.



By Greg Buster,
Director of Special Education

Extended School Year

Each spring I receive a number of inquiries about Extended School Year services. When the Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed initially or reviewed annually, the IEP team considers the need for extended school year (ESY) services for students with disabilities (not gifted).

Extended school year services are different than summer school and may or may not be provided in conjunction with the general education summer school.

ESY is an extension of the school term and is designed for the purpose of addressing the individual needs of students whose education will be "significantly" jeopardized if the student is not provided an extended educational program during the summer break.

An ESY program is not intended to replicate the traditional school day and students' experiences during the fall and spring semester of a school year.

Students who do not meet eligibility for ESY services (education would not be "significantly" jeopardized) may enroll independent of the IEP in the district's general education summer school program to the extent that the program is appropriate or available.

Children qualify for ESY services when the child would regress to such an extent and the amount of time required to re-learn skills or behaviors becomes so significant that he or she would be unable to benefit from his or her special education program.

A "yes" response to all the following questions provides a strong indication that ESY services are warranted. The questions are:

- Do progress reports and data show that the child demonstrates periodic regression, which is related to breaks in instruction throughout the school year?
- Do progress reports and data show that the child regresses and cannot re-learn the skills in a reasonable amount of time (a grading period or approximately 45 days) following the breaks?
- Does documentation support that without ESY services the child would regress to such an extent and have such limited recoupment ability that he or she would be unable to benefit from his/her special education program?

Inclusionary playground dedicated April 17



At left, Riley Brown checks out the play components that are part of the new inclusionary playground located at Summit Park in El Dorado. At right, special education adaptive physical education teacher Brenda Clarkin emcees the dedication ceremony for the new playground.

The playground has 231 sq. ft. of elevated deck space for play, over 203 sq. ft. of shaded deck space, 20 elevated play components, 15 ground-based components, and ramp access to all areas of the play system.



Cottonwood teachers receive grant to install sound field equipment

Cheryl Lyda recently purchased sound field amplification equipment for her early childhood development classrooms at Cottonwood Elementary School in Andover. The new sound equipment was paid for with an \$865 grant from the Andover Advantage Foundation.

Sound field equipment amplifies a teacher's voice to overcome barriers to listening such as distance, noise and reverberation.

"Cheryl has two students with hearing impairments who wear hearing aids," audiologist Carmen Schulte explained. "However, all the students in the classroom will benefit from the equipment."

"This new equipment improves each student's ability to hear the teacher. The teacher wears a wireless microphone that

transmits to a speaker. The speaker then amplifies the teacher's voice 10-15 decibels over the background noise of the classroom.

"Studies have shown that sound field equipment increases attention, listening, and comprehension. The equipment can be plugged into a TV or another sound source."

Lyda said, "Young children have short attention spans and this sound field amplification equipment helps them focus in and attend to the teacher. We are finding it to be very effective with all the children. We appreciate the support of the Andover Advantage Foundation."

Lyda and speech pathologist Wendi York co-wrote the grant to purchase this new sound equipment.

Augusta High School students open in-school store



Above, Augusta High School freshman Christina Reiswig organizes the inventory in the new student-run in-school store.

March 1, AHS students opened the "Orioles' Nest," located in the ticket office of the high school auditorium (adjacent to the commons area).

The Orioles Nest is operated by students daily during the lunch hour. The store stocks those items that AHS students indicated they would be interested in purchasing, such as deodorant, blank CDs and DVDs, mechanical pencils, calculators, key chains, hair ties and back packs.

The store is a vocational training program developed by Transition Coordinator Sally Peterson and Independent Living teacher Carrie Spear.

Peterson said, "The students who work in the store are learning about inventory control, marketing, counting a cash drawer, profit and loss, customer service and working as a team. The students com-

plete an inventory sheet and make a deposit each day. In addition, the store has to be set up and torn down every day.

"Jacki Conrady, Mrs. Spear's paraeducator, was very instrumental in getting the program off the ground. Gloria Canady, with Arc of Butler, donated startup money — a grant from El Dorado Charities and the United Way.

"AHS Wood Tech IV teacher Tom Sullivan and two of his students, seniors Kale Meeks and Hunter Rowland, donated labor to build the locking cabinet we use to store the merchandise.

"Three of Karen Hastings' in-school training students, juniors Anthony Rodriguez and Zach Cannady, and senior Joe Teter, did the marketing for the store. They created the posters and signs that were hung around the high school building. Joe and Marilyn Newlon, owners of Prairie Wind, donated the "Nest Crew" t-shirts that students who work in the store wear," Peterson said.

Lending Library Moves



Above, Prospect freshman Chris Sehie (left) and junior Miguel Blanco-Diaz load a moving van with equipment belonging to the Special Families Lending Library.

The Lending Library has moved to Towanda Intermediate School (516 N. Towanda in Towanda). The library will be open on Fridays from 8:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. when school is in session. During the summer the library is open by appointment only. Contact Kathy Donovan at 316-393-4074 to make arrangements.

Donovan said, "We are in the process of unpacking right now. If a classroom teacher or a family needs a particular item, or they want to check out the library's resources, they can call me or leave a message with the office at Towanda Intermediate School."

The Lending Library has the following items for checkout: switches for toys and computers (assistive technology); fine motor materials (adaptive aids to use with writing skills); gross motor items (therapy balls, wedges, adaptive chairs, tilt boards, etc.); wheelchairs; language materials (related to language therapy); and visual aids (for use in visual therapy). The inventory is quite extensive.

The library operates with a volunteer staff.

Special Edition

The newsletter *Special Edition*, from the Butler County School Board Council Special Education Program, is intended to provide information to parents and staff about special education activities and classrooms throughout the county.

Special Edition is published semi-annually by Butler County School Board Council, USD 490 Director of Information, Jacalyn Clark. BCSBC Special Education Program, 124 West Central Avenue, El Dorado, KS 67042, (316) 322-4800, www.bcsbc.org.

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Butler County School Board Council

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Arc of Butler reorganizes

By Nancy Olson, Arc President

Arc was originally known as Association for Retarded Children. Later the name was changed to the Association for Retarded Citizens, and most recently the acronym has been dropped and the national and local organization goes simply by Arc.

Arc of Butler County was organized in 1954 by parents exploring the possibilities of special classrooms for their children with mental and physical challenges (before special education classrooms).

Some of Arc's past projects have included:

1. Summer Program for Recreation, Education and Enjoyment (S.P.R.E.E.)
2. Tennis tournaments
3. Seasonal activities
4. Donations to special education classrooms for their activities, and
5. Scholarships for teachers and camperships for students

In recent years, the organization had become less active, and was reorganized in January 2005.

Arc is currently sponsoring:

- Stipends to teachers to assist them in providing spring activities and materials for students with mental retardation.
- Free transportation for students with mental retardation who wish to attend the summer Y.E.S.S. program in Wichita.
- Informative presentations on services and activities for individuals with disabilities.

Arc of Butler County held a meeting May 2nd at Andover High School. The speaker was Marty Rothwell, the man who has been so instrumental in the many programs being offered by Sedgwick County Arc. Marty will be assisting us in deciding on the next activity to be undertaken by Arc of Butler County, and helping us with our new growth and development.

Anyone interested in programs for persons (not just children) with developmental disabilities is welcome to attend.

Persons with questions about the organization can contact Nancy Olson, president, at 316-775-6576 or by email at nancy_olson@cox.net.

Free Preschool Screenings

Count Your Kid In is a free developmental screening for infants and preschool children. The purpose is to help parents identify potential learning problems and find help. If your child has difficulty walking, talking, seeing, hearing or learning, please call the Special Education office at 322-4800 or 1-800-353-8561 to schedule a free appointment.

Assistive technology is key to communication for Circle High School student

This spring Circle High junior Christy Siebels took the Kansas State Assessments independently for the first time. Christy hadn't been able to do that before. What made the difference is the assistive technology she has been working hard to master in the past year and a half.

Christy said she enjoys working independently and indicated she likes not having to wait on someone else to help her.

"Christy was named the 2004 Assistive Technology Student of the Year because she had shown the most progress utilizing her assistive technology," Assistive Technology Consultant Kristen Wiebe said. "Because of the award, Butler Rural Electric awarded her a grant to purchase the software programs she uses at school for her home computer. She can now use the same programs at home during the summer or when she is home sick during the school year."

Christy, who has independent body movement from the neck up, uses a mouth stick and a Magic Wand Keyboard to complete homework, take online courses through the Virtual Prescriptive Learning (VPL) program and do research on the Internet.

"My favorite VPL class is vocabulary," Christy said.

Wiebe explained that shortcuts are programmed into the Magic Wand Keyboard to help Christy save time and effort. For example, by touching just one key, Christy types her name and password into her e-mail program.

Christy also uses several software programs that save her time and effort



Above, Circle High School junior Christy Siebels demonstrates how she uses assistive technology to communicate and complete coursework.

when completing her assignments. Wiebe explained that the Co:Writer program helps Christy predict words so she can choose a word from a list of words after typing only a couple of letters.

"She uses Co:Writer with her e-mail program, in her Word documents and on the Internet," Wiebe said. "The Write:OutLoud software program reads out loud what she has written. If she has used bad grammar, she can hear that. Another program, Draft Building, helps her with outlining and organization of her papers.

"We can now hook up her computer

to a TV so her aides can more easily see what she is typing. When Christy started using the assistive technology, she was typing on an older computer that ran slowly. She started applying herself and showed that she could do it, so she got to upgrade to a new computer that is a lot faster. The thing she has really improved on is mousing."

Wiebe said, "Christy had a lot to say and a lot to write. Now she can. This equipment allows her to do things she would not have accomplished otherwise. Because she's worked hard, she sees a lot of benefits."

Andover High students enjoy first basketball season

By Karen Bainter, Andover High School Teacher

This January and February, Andover High School played two home games and two away games against Chisholm Life Skills Center and Northwest High School in Wichita.

Thirteen students played on the basketball team and nine others participated as cheerleaders.

It was a wonderful experience and we are looking forward to our season next year, with even more schools participating.



Left to right: Andover High School teacher Karla Tedder, AHS student Phillip Woodman, AHS teacher Jackie Bishop, and students: Lando Botello, Amber Hogan, Amanda Turner and Clayton Robinson.

Students gain work experience during school day

A goal of the four Butler County Transition Coordinator Specialists is to provide work experience to high school juniors and seniors who need exposure to the world of work.

Lorna Holmes, specialist with the El Dorado, Flinthills and Bluestem districts, explains, "The work experience is community based, where students are placed with local businesses for a non-paid experience. The student is placed at a different business each semester.

"We have some great employers in El Dorado and the surrounding communities who are willing to work with our students. The students' work experiences range from clerical to retail sales to physical labor. Students are working in grocery stores, the public library, a tire shop — a variety of businesses.

"I try to place a student based on what the student's interest area is. I usually won't place them in a fast food job or those jobs that traditionally they could go out and get on their own—to give them a variety of experiences they may not get otherwise. Paraeducators transport the students to their non-paid jobs. If students need job support or job coaching, there are paras available to support them. However, the majority of our students are on their own."

Holmes added, "I think the employers are pleased with our students and I think the students gain valuable work experience through the community effort. We document the student's hours. The employers complete evaluation forms and we work with the student and the employer if there are any problems."

Holmes said she also oversees several



Above, El Dorado High School junior Jenny Hughes works at the public library during school hours.

students who have paid employment during the school day.

"Although the work experience program is for juniors and seniors, we also provide onsite work experience for students who are under 16 and need pre-vocational and work skills. These students may work (non-paid) in the school cafeteria or with the school custodian, for example.

"My job is fun because I learn a lot. I have learned so much about the community. So many of our community members are vested in helping young people."

Sally Peterson (Augusta and Rose Hill districts), Jane Harwell (Andover district) and Nancy Olson (Circle, Douglass and Remington districts) are the other transition coordinator specialists with the Butler County Special Education Cooperative.

Skelly early childhood students practice Bal-a-Vis-X strategies

At right, Skelly Elementary student Bailey Smith demonstrates one of the balance exercises that are part of the Bal-a-Vis-X program. Speech Pathologist Nancy Basquez has been teaching Bal-a-Vis-X exercises to the early childhood students at Skelly since the beginning of the school year.

"It's amazing to see the progress they've made," Basquez said. "The kids love the program."

Besides balance exercises, the students also bounce and catch balls, first by themselves and then with partners.

"We are working on gross motor skills," she said. "They are learning left and right, behind (passing a ball behind the back), some shapes, crossing midline (bouncing a ball across the body), diagonal, etc. The exercises get progressively more difficult."



Above (l-r) Ryan Troxler (Douglass), Alesa Jacks (El Dorado), Cameron Simpson (Rose Hill) and Alexandra Bayer (Augusta) participate in the second annual Douglass Invitational Retro Thinkathon.

2004-2005 Cantrell Grants

The allocation committee of the Partners in Education Felix Alton Cantrell, Jr. Endowment for Educational Technology and Equipment announces the following grant recipients for the 2004-2005 school year:

- Alicia Odom, Augusta Middle School, was awarded \$2,490 for her grant, "Sensory Room Accessory Pack." Odom will use the grant to purchase a Sound Spa Acoustic Relax Machine, a Music Cloud Chair, Huggz Pillows, an Actitunnel and hardware to install a swing that she currently has.
- Kristen Wiebe, Butler County Special Education Assistive Technology Consultant, was awarded \$369 to fund her grant, "Super Talker Progressive Communicator." This grant will purchase a machine that can be programmed to "speak" for a child who cannot speak. The child will be able to push one button and it will communicate (or speak) the child's needs. This equipment can be used at home or at school.
- Melissa Baumgartel, Skelly Elementary in El Dorado, was awarded \$249 to pur-

chase a Hamilton Stereo Listening Center. Children can plug earphones into the listening center to listen to CDs and tapes.

The purpose of this teacher grant fund is to help teachers purchase new or enhance existing technology or equipment to meet the needs of their special education students. This spring the Cantrell Committee awarded \$3,107 to teachers.

There is another part to the Cantrell Fund that provides grants to families to assist in the purchase of equipment. The Partners in Education Felix Alton Cantrell, Jr. Endowment for Families of Special Education Students provides **matching** funds to **EL DORADO** families to assist in the purchase of technology or equipment. Families may make requests at any time by calling Linda Lutz at the Butler County Special Education Cooperative office, (316) 322-4800.

These funds are established through the generosity of Ms. Jeanette Rudy of Nashville, TN, in memory of her brother, Felix Alton Cantrell, Jr.

Butler County middle schoolers take part in Douglass Thinkathon event

Butler County middle school students had a great time naming their teams at D.I.R.T. II, the second annual Douglass Invitational Retro Thinkathon, a Scholars Bowl-like event. Team names included the Dust Bunnies, People of the Dirt, the Mud Slingers and the Mud Daubers.

"The Thinkathon was a resounding success," Douglass gifted education teacher Marjorie Landwehr-Brown said. "We hosted 37 middle school students from Augusta, Rose Hill, El Dorado, Remington, Towanda and Douglass.

"We mixed the students up so that the seven teams were made up of kids from different schools. It was a chance for them to get to know each other as well as an opportunity to build social skills."

She said, "The Thinkathon operated

like a Scholars Bowl event. It was a round robin, where every team played every other team in the competition. There were 10 questions per round and the first place team won based on the combined scores of all the rounds."

D.I.R.T. II winning team members are: Jeremy Burghardt (Rose Hill), Blake Holton (El Dorado), Brady Reynolds (Augusta), Ty Butler (El Dorado) and John O'Crowley (Douglass).

Landwehr-Brown said the Thinkathon moderators were high school and middle school Scholars Bowl coaches and Greg Buster, Director of the Butler County Special Education Cooperative. She said the questions were drawn from a bank of 10,000 questions covering core subjects as well as trivia and logic.