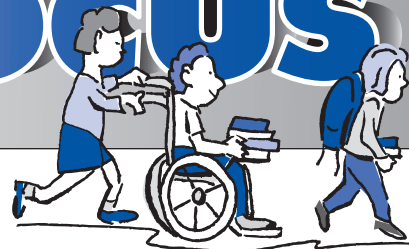


# Family Focus



For families who have a child on an IFSP or IEP and as a courtesy to families who have a child on a 504 plan for the purpose of informing and assisting parents as they participate on their child's education team.

## JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT

By: Patty Schoff, Special Education Teacher

In 1988, Junior Achievement of the Upper Midwest was willing to work with me to develop and support a business based program for High School and Transition age students with "special needs". The "ABC" Junior Achievement Program "was born" and has been supported by JAUM, the Anoka-Hennepin School District, and the community.

Since 1988, the program has been located at the Anoka Technical College, the Champlin Plaza Mall, and is now in its current site in the Andover Downtown Center.

The students are referred to this work based learning program by members of their IEP team and are supported by their high school work coordinators. We work with the work coordinators to review student performance and recommend future placements that are based on interest, strengths, and goals.

Since research shows that students with special needs benefit from formal opportunity to be introduced to and to develop skills that lead to self-determined behaviors and emotional intelligence, we have made this the focus of our program. We encourage an environment that allows for active student involvement in their learning in the areas of: choices and decisions, self-advocacy, meaningful communication, responses and reactions that indicate self-control, respect and value of others, understanding self and



realizing needs, and being a part of a team. This is just a portion of what can be learned and practiced at this work based learning site.

"ABC" Junior Achievement is a place to practice for life and for the world of work. In this setting, we are the caring adults that: teach, step back, observe, assess growth, and give suggestions to try it again. Evaluations take place in the production area as well as in an assessment room. Amy Hartl, a licensed vocational evaluator, tests for quality and quantity in a variety of areas that the students may see in the world of work.

Those that visit the program usually focus on the final products that are sold in a variety of retail locations

*Continued on page 5...*

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If you would like a translated version of this document and/or further assistance, please contact your child's school or the Family Welcome Center (763-433-4684).

Yog koj xav tau ib qhov txhais ua lus rau daim ntawv no thiab/losyog kev pab ntxiv, thov cuag nrog koj tus menyuum lub tsev kawm ntawv los yog qhov Chaw Tos Txais Tsev Neeq (Family Welcome Center) (763-433-4684).

Si desea una versión traducida de este documento o más información, haga el favor de ponerse en contacto con la escuela de su hijo/a o el Centro de Bienvenida a la Familia (Family Welcome Center) (763-433-4684).

Haddaad u baahatid dokumiintigaan noocisa turjuman iyo/ama caawimo dheeraad ah, fadlan la xariir dugsiga ubadkaaga ama Xarunta Soodhoweynta Qoyska (Family Welcome Center) (763-433-4684).

# TRANSITIONS

**E**ight hours of high school every day for the last four years was somewhat hard, but I did graduate with a good GPA! I had excellent teachers and support from my family along the way. My middle school program helped me develop my self-identity as an individual with hearing loss while preparing me for the academic rigor of high school. I learned important study skills and practiced language strategies that improved my use and understanding of English. At the end of eighth grade, I made the difficult decision to leave my Deaf/Hard of Hearing peers so that I could go to my neighborhood high school. I wanted to be independent.

My high school years were filled with even more learning moments that prepared me for my transition to college. With the help of my itinerant D/HH Teacher, I learned how to advocate for myself in my classes. Four years later, I walked across the podium and received my diploma! As I did, I had feelings of thankfulness for my family, friends, and teachers. I was so proud of myself for overcoming the challenges I had faced during my educational journey!

The transition to college from high school has been a wake-up call. My class schedule is very different than my high school schedule. I continue to use my advocacy skills with the help of Access Services at my college. So far, I have used note-takers and extended test time. Next semester I will start using the CART system. CART is a type of assistive technology that will provide me with real-time captioning in my classes. I am glad for the accommodations I receive from my college. The skills I learned in high school have been

valuable skills that have carried through to college. These skills have helped me advocate for myself and ask for necessary services to help me succeed. It has been a challenging process that has taken time to figure out, but I am confident that Winona State University will support me along my path to success. College is a time when I will gain many new learning experiences, and I will also build new friendships. My family, friendships, and support services will continue to be there for me every step of the way in my journey to a college diploma!

## NOTE FROM DHH TEACHER, ANN HANSON-HOBOT:

*Reanna Somkhan is a 2016 Andover High School graduate. Prior to high school, Reanna attended Coon Rapids Middle School and Hoover Elementary within the Anoka-Hennepin School District. There she and her Deaf/Hard of Hearing peers received specialized instruction in classrooms taught by Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing for part of their day. Intensive Speech/Language therapy and Audiology services were also provided in these settings. Reanna was born with profound hearing loss in both ears and eventually received bilateral cochlear implants. Her family's support and Reanna's strong motivation have helped her maintain the high standards she has always set for herself. In the article below, Reanna describes her experiences as she transitioned from various D/HH program models throughout the District as well as the transition to her current university setting.*

# SEAC

SEAC is a group of parents and staff within the school district working together to strengthen our Special Education Community. Everyone is welcome.

## **We have three goals we'll continue next year:**

- Increasing Anoka-Hennepin staff involvement with the committee
- Gathering Parent Input about SEAC through a Parent Survey
- Developing and Distributing two Family Focus Newsletters

SEAC meets the first Thursday of each month, October through May. Dinner and childcare are provided.

Questions about SEAC can be sent to Mary Gale at [Mary.Gale@ahschools.us](mailto:Mary.Gale@ahschools.us) or 763-506-1362.

Look for your SEAC flyer to come home with your child(ren) each month. If you are not getting the SEAC flyer, please contact your child(ren)'s case manager.



# DIRECTOR'S CORNER



**A**s we begin the second half of the school year, I wanted to update you on news about our Special Education Audit. During the spring of 2015, the school district entered into an arrangement with the CAREI Institute to conduct a comprehensive audit of our special education programs, communication systems, academic outcomes for students with disabilities, and staffing. Through this audit the district is looking for information that will help prioritize, plan, and implement special education services that align with best practice research and the needs of our students.

CAREI is an independent research and evaluation center in the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) at the University of Minnesota (<http://www.cehd.umn.edu/carei/>). The center was created in 1988 to improve the quality of education for all learners through rigorous research, evaluation and assessment. We are working with a number of outside experts under the direction of Dr. Kim Gibbons, Ph.D., an Associate Director for Innovation and Outreach, who is supervising implementation of all the audit components.

The audit is focusing on:

- I. Continuum of special education services across disability areas
- II. Effectiveness and efficiency of staffing
- III. Academic outcomes of students with special education needs
- IV. Effectiveness and efficiency of communication processes
- V. Effectiveness of professional development

The auditors are using a variety of strategies to gather information from all stakeholders. They are conducting surveys, observing in classrooms, interviewing staff and conducting focus groups. Teams of outside experts have completed portions of the audit that align with services for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and with Developmental Cognitive Delays. They have also focused on staffing, our Setting IV program at River Trail Learning Center, Early Childhood programs, as well as district office services. Auditors are currently starting their reviews of our transition programs, extended school year services, health services and services to students with Emotional Behavior Disorders and those with Specific Learning Disabilities.

As we move further in this process, recommendations will be brought to the school board for their review and determination of next steps.

As a member of Anoka-Hennepin's special education program, I have always been very proud of our staff and the services they provide to children with special education needs. It is very exciting to be a part of this endeavor. As a district, we entered into this process with the understanding that all systems can improve. The special education department acknowledges that opportunities for improvement are most likely to be successful when built upon the district's strengths, history, structure, and resources. We are looking forward to recommendations that will allow us to develop a multi-year plan for continuous improvement.

Watch for the next edition of the Family Focus newsletter to learn more.

*Cherie Peterson*

Director of Special Education

**Please Join Us!**

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) meets the first Thursday of each month (October-May) at the Staff Development Center in Anoka. Dinner and networking starts at 5:30 p.m. Meeting is from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Childcare available upon request, you must RSVP, to [mary.gale@ahschools.us](mailto:mary.gale@ahschools.us) or 763-506-1362.

## SEAC EMAIL

To contact SEAC parent co-chairs write to: [mary.gale@ahschools.us](mailto:mary.gale@ahschools.us)  
We welcome speaker suggestions, questions and concerns.

## Special Education Administrative Team

### Director and Assistant Director:

**Cherie Peterson** - Director of Special Education,  
Evergreen ..... 763-506-1353  
**Marsha Polys** - Assist. Director of Special Education,  
LAUNCH ..... 763-506-1359

### Special Education Supervisors:

**Jill Kenyon** - Adams, Hamilton, Lincoln, EIP . . . 763-433-4801  
**Emily Rustman** - ECSE (3-5), Hoover,  
Mississippi ..... 763-506-6101  
**Lori Olson** - Bridges and Pathways ..... 763-506-7501  
**Erin Jensen** - Compass,  
STEP/STEP Ahead, River Trail Learning  
Center (RTL), Support Admin. Intern. .... 763-506-1361  
**Heather Johnson** - RTL, Andover HS, AHS, BHS, CPHS,  
CRHS, AHRHS, AHTHS ..... 763-506-1364  
**Stephanie Diaz-Celon** - RTL ..... 763-506-1901  
**Melissa Hayes** - Evaluation Team,  
Sandburg Ed. Center, Franklin and Wilson .... 763-506-7921  
**Carey Raph** - AMS, CRMS, JMS, NMS,  
OVMS, RMS, Epiphany ..... 763-506-1358  
**Dr. Jennifer Babiracki** - CBPA, Dayton, Jefferson, Ramsey,  
Rum River, Sand Creek, ESY ..... 763-506-1367  
**Stephanie Mars** - RTL@Morris Bye,  
Crooked Lake, Johnsville, Monroe, Morris Bye . . 763-506-3761  
**Sam Phillips** - Sped. Admin. Intern., Eisenhower,  
McKinley, Madison, Oxbow, University ..... 763-506-1534

### Special Education Teacher and Learning Specialists:

Carol McDonald ..... 763-506-1351  
Kathy Steffens ..... 763-506-1418  
Rachel Wick ..... 763-506-1531  
Bill Underwood ..... 763-506-7827

### Special Education Coordinator of Staffing and Finance:

Darcy Doke ..... 763-506-1360

# CLIP & SAVE

## Special Education Administration Structure

If you have a concern about your child's special education program or would like to speak to one of the administrative team, please feel free to call:

**Director of Special Education:**  
**Cherie Peterson . . . . .763-506-1353**  
Evergreen

**Assistant Director of Special Education:**  
**Marsha Polys . . . . .763-506-1359**  
LAUNCH

**Special Education Supervisors:**  
**Jill Kenyon . . . . .763-433-4801**  
Adams, Hamilton, Lincoln, Early Intervention Program (EIP)

**Emily Rustman . . . . .763-506-6101**  
Hoover, Mississippi, ECSE (3-5)

**Erin Jensen . . . . .763-506-1361**  
Support Admin. Intern., Compass, RTL, STEP/STEP Ahead

**Lori Olson . . . . .763-506-7501**  
Bridges, Pathways

**Heather Johnson . . . . .763-506-1364**  
RTL, AHS, CRHS, Andover HS, BHS, CPHS, AHRHS, AHTHS

**Stephanie Diaz-Celon . . .763-506-1901**  
River Trail Learning Center

**Carey Raph . . . . .763-506-1358**  
AMS, CRMS, JMS, NMS, OVMS, RMS Epiphany

**Melissa Hayes . . . . .763-506-7921**  
Franklin, Wilson, Sandburg, Eval Team

**Dr. Jennifer Babiracki . .763-506-1367**  
Ramsey, Rum River, Dayton, Jefferson, CBPA, Sand Creek, ESY

**Stephanie Mars . . . . .763-506-3761**  
RTL@Morris Bye, Crooked Lake, Johnsville, Monroe, Morris Bye

**Sam Phillips . . . . .763-506-1534**  
Sped. Admin. Intern., Eisenhower, McKinley, Madison, Oxbow, University

My Child's Casemanager is:

Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

# PARENT RESOURCES...

*This section includes resources that parents may want to access depending on the needs of their child.*

## American Society of Deaf Children

800 Florida Ave. NE, #2047, Washington DC 20002  
800-942-2732 [www.deafchildren.org](http://www.deafchildren.org) [asdc@deafchildren.org](mailto:asdc@deafchildren.org)

## The ARC Greater Twin Cities

2446 University Ave. W., Suite 110, St. Paul, MN 55114  
952-920-0855 [www.arcgreatertwincities.org](http://www.arcgreatertwincities.org) [info@arcgreatertwincities.org](mailto:info@arcgreatertwincities.org)

## Autism Society of Minnesota

2380 Wycliff St., 102, St. Paul, MN 55114  
651-647-1083 [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org) [info@ausm.org](mailto:info@ausm.org)

## Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

8181 Professional Place, #150, Landover, MD 20785  
800-233-4050 [www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org)

## Children's Home Society and Family Services

1605 Eustis St., St. Paul, MN 55108  
651-646-7771 [www.chsfs.org](http://www.chsfs.org) [welcome@chsfs.org](mailto:welcome@chsfs.org)

## Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

8011 34th Ave. S., Suite 116, Bloomington, MN 55425  
651-631-3290 [www.cff.org](http://www.cff.org) [minn@cff.org](mailto:minn@cff.org)

## Down Syndrome Association of Minnesota

656 Transfer Rd., St. Paul, MN 55114  
651-603-0720 [www.dsamn.org](http://www.dsamn.org) [dsamn@dsamn.org](mailto:dsamn@dsamn.org)

## Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota

1600 University Ave. W., Suite 300, St. Paul, MN 55104  
651-287-2300 [www.efmn.org](http://www.efmn.org)

## Girl Scouts River Valleys

5601 Brooklyn Blvd., Brooklyn Center, MN 55429  
800-548-5250 [www.girlscoutsrv.org](http://www.girlscoutsrv.org)

## Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health

165 Western Ave. N., St. Paul, MN 55102  
800-528-4511 [www.macmh.org](http://www.macmh.org) [info@macmh.org](mailto:info@macmh.org)

## Minnesota Organization-Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (MOFAS)

1885 University Ave., Suite 395, St. Paul, MN 55104  
651-917-2370 [www.mofas.org](http://www.mofas.org) [info@mofas.org](mailto:info@mofas.org)

## Minnesota Speech-Language-Hearing Association

1000 Westgate Dr., Suite 252, St. Paul, MN 55114  
651-290-6292 [www.msha.net](http://www.msha.net) [office@msha.net](mailto:office@msha.net)

## National Council on Disability

1331 F St. NW, #850, Washington DC 20004  
202-272-2004, TTY 202-272-2074 [www.ncd.gov](http://www.ncd.gov) [ncd@ncd.gov](mailto:ncd@ncd.gov)

## PACER

8161 Normandale Blvd., Bloomington, MN 55437  
952-838-9000, TTY 952-838-0190 [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org)

## Polaris-Special Needs Scouting, Northern Star Council BSA

763-231-7244 [www.polaris.nsbbsa.org](http://www.polaris.nsbbsa.org) [samberg@northernstarbsa.org](mailto:samberg@northernstarbsa.org)

## United Cerebral Palsy of Minnesota

1821 University Ave. W., Suite 180N, St. Paul, MN 55104  
651-646-7588 [www.ucpmn.org](http://www.ucpmn.org) [info@ucpmn.org](mailto:info@ucpmn.org)

## JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1...



and handle disappointment, use team skills that work toward a common goal, and develop and use their rights and responsibilities that lead to responsible citizenship.

Since these are the preferred outcomes of The "ABC" Junior Achievement Program, we model, teach, and expect it every day. If we are not teaching it, then we are teaching something else!

It is important that, as our student workers move on, they are able to speak about themselves, their growth and knowledge, their wants and needs, and their responsibilities to others.

If you are interested in learning more about The "ABC" Junior Achievement Program, please contact us at 763-506-7590 or talk to a member of your IEP team at your district high school. We also have a Facebook page that may answer questions. You can find us at The "ABC" Junior Achievement Program.

### Parent comments:

"Junior Achievement has brought a new sense of confidence to Jordan. He has also become more respectful and less argumentative. I attribute this to him learning to be a part of a program that shows him that he matters. JA, thank you."

"Junior Achievement has been great for Sammy's self-esteem."

and at some of our classroom pop up sales. (The Round Barn, The Vintage Pixie, Lotus Lake) We look at the final product too because of our standards/expectations! But, as educators, we look at students that: challenge themselves, step out of their comfort areas, teach others using words that are respectful and meaningful, learn how to compromise

## NORTH METRO DOWN SYNDROME PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

By Carrie Delaney, Early Childhood Teacher, Parent, and Creator of the Support Group

Families who have a child with a disability often need mutual support. The North Metro Down Syndrome Parent Support Group is a new group in our area designed to support parents who have a child with Down Syndrome. The group is supported by the Down Syndrome Association of Minnesota. There are several groups that meet throughout the state, but none in the Anoka-Hennepin area, so, we decided to start one! We have had a great start with approximately 10 families attending the meetings/events that we have had since starting this past year. We hope to support families by providing a network of people who may have similar concerns, celebrations or questions. We also may have speakers or topics that we hope will give important and unique resources to our families. We are growing every month and love getting new members! We meet the second Monday of each month at a church in Blaine. If you are a family who has a child with Down Syndrome and would like to join us, there is a closed Facebook page that you could request to join called MN North Metro Down Syndrome Parent Group.



# CREATING A VISION FOR YOUR CHILD

By: Andrea Haglund, Parent and Co-Chair of SEAC

If you are like many parents, receiving a disability diagnosis can be overwhelming. We try to imagine what life might look like next week, next year and well into our child's adult life. The thoughts of the future can be enough to paralyze us.

One way to help keep us moving forward and helping to direct our child to their best future is to write a vision statement.

The purpose of a vision statement for your child is much like the purpose of a company's vision statement. It is created to set a vision of what the future will look like, keep goals focused, and create initiatives to move forward. Also like a company's vision statement, your child's vision statement should be referred to often when making goals, planning schedules, during meetings and even in planning your budget.

Your vision statement could be just a sentence or paragraph such as:

"Johnny will be mostly self-sufficient, have a job of his choosing, live independently, and be a meaningful part of his community." The vision statement could also be much longer but preferably not more than a page. Other things your child's vision statement may include are a description about your child or their disability which will help give an idea of appropriate outcomes. It may include information regarding long term academic goals such as a vision for post-secondary schooling or independence goals in the academic arena. The statement could include more details regarding adult housing options or what independent living will look like for your child.

The vision statement should also include information about your child's participation in society or their community. It is easy to stay focused on the years of our child's growth when society is mostly contributing to them but what vision do you have for your child contributing to the community around them?

Writing a vision statement can be challenging or seem overwhelming but it is great to start one whether your child is in preschool or a teenager. This vision

should also be a collaborative effort. If there are other people invested in your child's life such as a spouse or relative, then perhaps get their input as well. If your child is old enough or capable of telling you his or her vision or desires for their life, then try to incorporate those thoughts as well. We are often busy making the plans we think are best for our children and sometimes forget to ask their input about their own lives. Remember that again like a company's vision, your child's vision statement must be realistic with attainable goals and not just a lofty dream.

Once the vision statement is written, then it is time to put it into practice. Begin to share the vision with those who impact your child's future. Are your child's academic goals moving toward the vision? If you have a goal for post-secondary education are you looking into those options? Are you encouraging independence at school? Are you having your child be more and more independent with their homework?

If you have a goal for independent living of some sort what are you doing to pursue that goal? Is your child doing chores at home? Are you teaching your child social stories to help them in real life situations? Are you giving your child more and more opportunities to be independent?

Do you have plans for your child to be a part of the community? Is your child's school giving your child ample opportunity to contribute in his or her class? In a time where it is easy to pour a lot of resources, time and energy into our children, especially those with disabilities, it is important to keep in mind they will one day need to be a part of a larger community.

Looking far off into the future can be daunting but taking the step of writing a vision statement can help keep things in perspective along the way. It can help us set appropriate goals, use our time and money wisely, and help us better communicate the future plans of our child with others. The future can be very bright for each child if we hold the vision for them and then help them take hold of it for themselves.

***"Johnny will be mostly self-sufficient, have a job of his choosing, live independently, and be a meaningful part of his community."***

# SUMMER CHROMEBOOK PROJECT STUDENTS FROM PATHWAYS AND BRIDGES

I would like to share with you a unique, powerful, student learning opportunity that was created right here in Anoka Hennepin for some of our wonderful students with special needs. This story is about a summer work experience supported by several District departments including; Library and Media Services, Technology and Information Services, Special Education Department, and Employee Services.

Last spring, the Media and Technology departments began to plan for 10,000 Chromebooks that would be acquired over the summer for the 2016-2017 school year. Each device needed to be unboxed, plugged in, connected to the network, browser updated, enrolled into the AHApps domain, and configured for the district network. Each device also needed to be tracked with a barcode and electronic record.

In addition, many of the Chromebooks needed to be placed into a charging cart. These carts needed customization as well. Each computer's power supply needed to be fastened and positioned in the cart. Each slot in the cart was required to be numbered to match the Chromebooks so students would know where to return it in the cart.

This was an enormous summer project. Different options were considered and the decision was made to develop a relevant real life work experience to benefit our own young adults. Pathways and Bridges students were referred to the program by their teachers. Each student completed an actual application and participated in an interview process. Some students shopped the Career Closet at Pathways to make sure they were dressed for success. In the end, all 13 students were hired.

By the end of summer, all 10,000+ Chromebooks and hundreds of charging carts were delivered operational and ready to go before teachers and students were back at school. This program was a huge success, the work was completed accurately and production goals were met.

For the Pathways and Bridges students that were part of this project, this was more than a job. This was an opportunity to not only gain competitive integrated employment, but to gain skills relevant in our technology-driven economy. Students were excited to share how this program improved their self-esteem and built confidence in what they could accomplish both as an individual and collaboratively as a team.



A special thank you goes out to the staff that supported this project, especially, Lee Anne Clauer, Bruce Dewitt, Joel VerDuin, Employee services, Network Services, Media Services, and staff from Pathways and Bridges.

As the Special Education Supervisor aligned to both the Pathways and Bridges Program, I am looking forward to what the future will bring and the continued partnerships that we can develop. Thank you so much!!!

This article was written by Lori Olson, SPED Supervisor, with information provided by Lee Anne Clauer.

## Special Education Advisory Committee Family Resource Fair

April 6, 2017

5:30 to 7:30 pm

*Come and learn about available  
district and local resources for  
your child and family*

**You won't want to miss this  
opportunity!**



**Learning Knows No Bounds**

### Located at:

Staff  
Development  
Center

2727 N. Ferry Street  
Anoka, MN 55303  
Room 113

Please enter Door 7

If you have any  
questions, please  
call Mary Gale at  
763-506-1362

# SEAC PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

By: Dr. Amelia Maynard

## Purpose

In Spring 2016, the Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) of the Anoka-Hennepin School District worked with staff in the Research, Evaluation and Testing Department to administer a survey to parents of students receiving special education services. The survey was meant to identify areas for development and to guide future events by SEAC.

## Method

Postcards that provided a link and QR code for the online survey were mailed to parents of students receiving special education. Parents also had the option of contacting the district to receive a paper copy. Parents were invited to complete the survey multiple times if they had more than one child receiving services.

## Findings

In total, we received 82 survey responses, a response rate of less than 1%. Respondents included parents of students across all ages (birth to 21 years), educational settings, and who have a wide range of disabilities (Autism Spectrum Disorder was the most frequently selected, 29%).

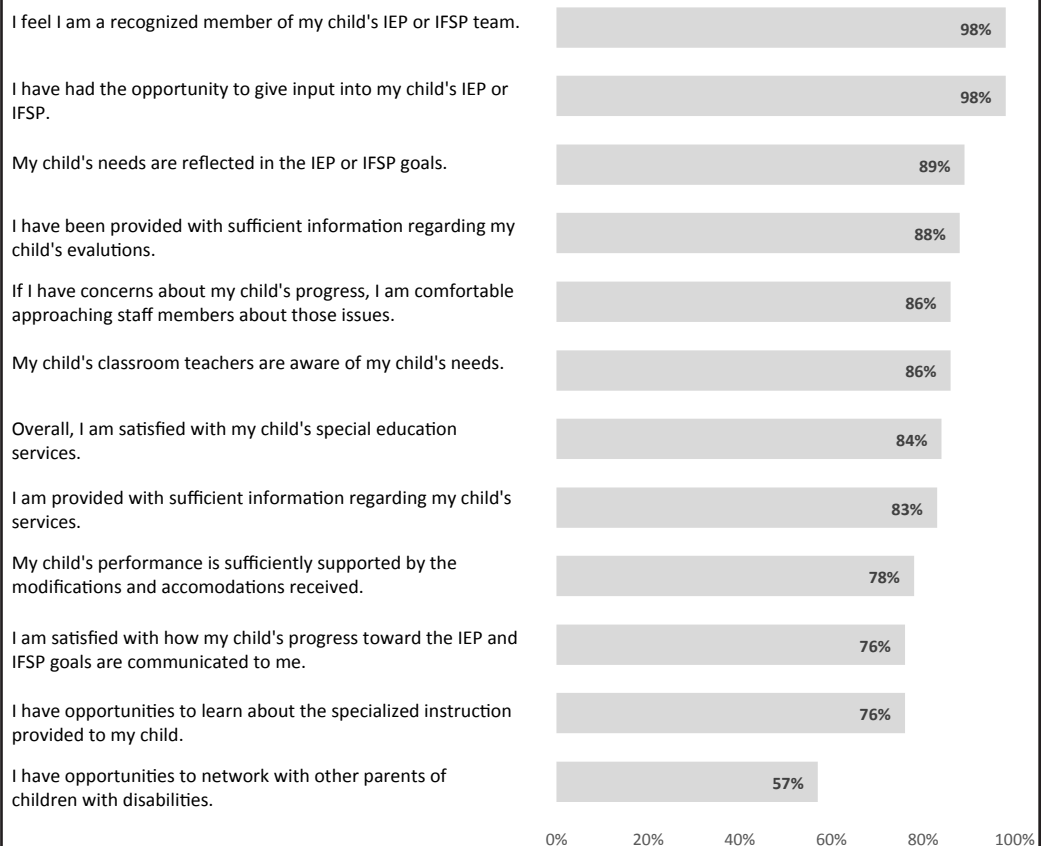
The survey asked participants about the availability of information related to their child's disability. Overall, most respondents feel that they have been given information or access to information about their child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Program (IFSP, 93%), their child's educational needs/disabilities (88%), the special education evaluation process (85%) and community agencies that assist families and children (82%). Fewer parents said they have been given suggestions for supports to be used at home (66%) and only 38% of parents said they

have used the district's website to find special education resources.

Participants were asked about their level of understanding for a variety of topics. The majority of participants said they completely understood the IEP/IFSP process (65%) and their child's special education rights (66%). Of the parents whose children use assistive technologies or augmentative communication systems, fewer felt completely knowledgeable about those items (39% and 44%, respectively). As shown in the figure below, the vast majority of respondents felt they had opportunities to participate in the IEP/IFSP process and were satisfied with their child's special education services. Only 57% of parents feel they have the opportunity to network with other parents of children with disabilities, the lowest rated item.

To further improve the education provided by SEAC, the survey asked participants about what topics are of

**Percent of respondents who strongly agreed or agreed with these statements**





# SEAC PARENT SURVEY RESULTS, CONT...

interest to them and what are the barriers to attending SEAC meetings. The most frequently selected topics were: methods for promoting self-esteem and motivation; promoting problem solving and positive social skills; assisting your child with homework, and how to promote your child's development. The most common obstacles to attending SEAC meetings are the time/date, lack of interest, and lack of awareness of SEAC. Findings suggest that the district should do more to inform parents about the details of the meetings, including the

time/date of meetings and that dinner and childcare are provided.

## Next Steps

The Special Education Advisory Council has reviewed these survey findings and is currently using the results to plan speakers for the monthly meetings, as well as write articles for Family Focus. They are also planning a Resource Fair for spring.

## PACER CENTER: CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

**P**ACER Center is your place for information, training, and support for families of children and youth with disabilities, and for those who are bullied. raining, and support for families of children and youth with disabilities, and for those who are bullied.

### PACER HELPS IN MANY WAYS

Through more than 30 projects, PACER Center ([pacer.org](http://pacer.org)) provides individual assistance, workshops, publications, and other resources to help families make decisions about education and other services for their child or young adult with disabilities.

**PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center** ([pacer.org/bullying](http://pacer.org/bullying)) provides resources designed to benefit all students, including those with disabilities.

**PACER's Children's Mental Health and Emotional or Behavioral Disorders Project** brings together parents, youth and professionals to help families receive the resources and support their children need.

**PACER's Simon Technology Center** is dedicated to making the benefits of assistive technology more accessible to children and adults with disabilities.

**PACER's National Parent Center on Transition and Employment** addresses the national need for research-based, family-friendly resources to help parents and youth with disabilities in transition and employment.

### PACER's MISSION

PACER Center enhances the quality of life and expands opportunities for children and young adults with all disabilities and their families so each person can reach their highest potential.

## ABOUT PACER CENTER

PACER Center is a Minnesota and national parent center. PACER expands opportunities and enhances the quality of life of children or without with any disability and their families.

### PACER HELPS:

- Families and their children with disabilities or special health care needs from birth through adulthood
- Educators and other professionals who work with students with or without disabilities
- Students who are bullied
- Parents of all children and schools working together to encourage family involvement in education.

### WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

**By contacting PACER, you're taking the first step toward finding more support for your family.**

The majority of PACER staff are parents of children with disabilities. They understand what you are experiencing and are ready to help you help your child.

### HOW CAN PACER HELP ME?

**PACER staff will help you find the resources or information you need.**

PACER helps a wide variety of families and professional on local, state and national levels every day. Most PACER services are provided free of charge to Minnesota families.

[pacer.org](http://pacer.org) | 952-838-9000 | [PACER@PACER.org](mailto:PACER@PACER.org)

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## ACTION INFORMATION SHEET

### Teach Your Child Key Homework Skills

As a parent, you know that homework plays an important role in your child's education. Homework helps your child learn in different ways. It gives your child the opportunity to:

- practice and participate in the academic skills taught during the school day
- make greater progress in school
- build student responsibility

Homework helps you as well. It gives you the chance to see what your child is learning in school, and to note his or her progress.

Most parents want to help their children with homework, but what is the best way to do so? Children build skills by doing homework independently. *It is important that parents do not complete homework for their children.* The best way to help is by teaching your child the following key homework skills. You can support your child's learning at home by teaching these skills that will be useful throughout your child's entire school year.

#### Key Skills

##### 1. Know what is assigned and what is needed to do the assignment

- Use a planner or another method to record the assignment and the due date
- Develop a method to identify books and materials that need to go home
- Learn when teachers assign homework. Learn where they record it publically for students. Examples include classroom boards, paper calendars, or online postings

##### 2. Choose an appropriate place for doing homework

- Find a place that meets the student's study style and needs
- Have room for required books and materials

##### 3. Start all assignments by carefully reading and following directions

- Use other assignments and book examples as guides
- Write down specific questions to get help during the next class
- Know who to ask if problems or questions occur

##### 4. Break down hard or long-term assignments

- Look for and identify key parts and words in the directions
- Figure out how much time is needed to do the parts of long-term assignments Make a timeline to follow
- Develop ways to keep information and work organized

##### 5. Stay focused on homework

- Take breaks
- Create a goal or reward for finished work
- Look for ways to make boring assignments more interesting

##### 6. Pay attention to detail

- Check that all assignments are completely done
- Make sure all assignments are labeled with name and class
- Produce work that is neat and readable

##### 7. Follow due date requirements

- Bring homework to class
- Know when and how to turn in homework
- Find out if the homework should be kept after it has been returned

*\*Content based upon Seven Steps to Homework Success: A Family Guide for Solving Common Homework Problems by Sydney S. Zentall and Sam Goldstein*

# MINNESOTA LIFE COLLEGE

By: Nina Jonson, Director of Enrollment and Outreach

**M**innesota Life College (MLC) is a life-long learning program for individuals on the autism spectrum and with other learning differences who want to lead an independent life within the community. Our purpose is to provide Real Skills for Real Life™ training in an experiential learning setting and be a transition guide for the many changes that can take place throughout one's adult life.

**One in 68 children has an autism spectrum disorder, but this is not a childhood challenge. All of these children will grow into adults.**

**Our mission is to transform the lives of individuals and families affected by autism spectrum disorders and learning differences.** Since 1996, MLC has been creating a community of resources for independence by educating individuals on how to successfully transition from high school into safe, healthy, productive, and independent adults.

Since our founding in 1996, Minnesota Life College has prepared 116 graduates to live happy, healthy, independent lives, and one of our graduates happens to be an Anoka-Hennepin alum! We sat down with Andy McLean to learn about what is so special about Minnesota Life College!

## **Where did you graduate from and when?**

Anoka High School, class of 2004

## **Why did you choose Minnesota Life College?**

After high school, I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do, but I read an article in the Star Tribune about Minnesota Life College, and it sounded great. I came in with my family for a tour, liked it even more, and the rest is history!

## **What was the most important thing you learned during the 3 year Undergraduate Program?**

How to live with roommates. Before I came here, I had never shared a room with someone else, and living with a roommate was challenging at first, but I learned so much.

## **What are you doing now?**

I am currently living in an apartment with one other person. I work as a cashier at Lunds and Byerlys in Richfield. I've done it for over a year. And, I am always really active in the Community Living Program activities.

## **What do you like most about being a part of the Community Living Program (CLP)?**

I really enjoy the awesome staffers that we hang out with, and the great activities. I couldn't even pick my favorite, they are all so great! I really do love the retreats we go on, and I am really excited to go on a trip to the Bahamas with my friends this spring!

## **Why should a student from the Anoka-Hennepin school district choose Minnesota Life College after they graduate from high school or a transition program?**

Minnesota Life College is a very good learning opportunity for living on your own, learning important life skills like paying bills on time, taking your medications and understanding how they work, cooking your own meals, doing laundry, getting, and keeping a job, and time management.

Just like Andy, every year, our graduates are getting and keeping jobs, living independently, accessing the community for work and play, having friendships and relationships, and feeling happy and fulfilled! Minnesota Life College admissions staff are happy to talk about their unique programs with any interested families, so please call them at 612.876.9431 today!



**Special Education Department**

2727 N. Ferry St.  
Anoka, MN 55303



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## FAQ - Email us!

In future Family Focus editions we will answer questions from our readers in the areas of school services, community services and family services.

If you have a question you would like addressed email us at:  
**[mary.gale@ahschools.us](mailto:mary.gale@ahschools.us)**

The **Family Focus** newsletter will be mailed out approximately two times a year to Anoka-Hennepin Schools parents of students on IEP's and 504 plans.

- If you know someone who would like to receive this newsletter please call 763-506-1362, leave name and complete address.
- If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please call 763-506-1362, leave name, complete address and state you do NOT want this mailing any more.

