



San Joaquin County  
Special Education Local Plan Area

# SPECIAL EDition

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FALL 2010

## Bilingual Special Day Class Builds Success



*Mrs. Mendoza watches Ivan read a poem about the sun.*



*Salvador is busy writing.*

Deborah Mendoza's eleven primary age students are a busy and happy group. They like to sing, read, write, draw and do a host of other activities in their bilingual special day class at South Park School in Tracy. Part of San Joaquin County's Special Education Programs, the class is designed to meet the language and literacy needs of the students and provide to families the skills and information they want to help their children succeed.

Students are placed in this class because of language and communication deficits in their primary language. Mendoza describes her efforts as "breaking down and opening out skills so students



*Benjamin names the parts of the body.*

can work on and learn in small increments." Deborah Mendoza uses a wide variety of teaching strategies to make the lessons interesting and engaging for her class. They exercise each morning to get ready for learning. They read charts and pictures to help with science and health lessons. Students use concrete materials to make lessons

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## Search & Serve

If you have a baby who was very small or sick at birth or a young child whose development worries you, a telephone call may put you in touch with someone who can answer your questions and help you get services for your child.

Call your school district office or the San Joaquin County SELPA at 209-468-4925 for more information.

## From Our SELPA Director Kathleen Skeels

As the seasons change at this time of year I often think about the passage of time. Sometimes it goes by in a flash and then again moves like a glacier. Only 35 years ago special education in the United States was born with Public Law 94-142. Before then hundreds of thousands of individuals with disabilities were living at home or in institutions and hospitals. Over a million students were refused school enrollment because of their disabilities. Only one in five were in school. It makes me wonder when I think about what's happened since then.

I remember my first teaching job... As a brand new graduate speech therapist from UOP, I worked with severely handicapped children at Stockton State Hospital. I remember standing in a fenced-in courtyard on a bright fall day surrounded by children with disabilities, feeling excited and a little anxious and scared. I didn't realize it was the start of a journey that would connect me with so many wonderful children and families. Our children are out from behind the fences, they are in our schools and in the community. I couldn't imagine that today our students would be employable in the community and appreciated for their contributions.

I remember my first class... a new preschool program at Lathrop Annex School with Jamie Spaulding. I remember being excited and nervous and then, in they came, bringing the expectations of themselves and their families for an education that will transform their lives. And we were there to provide it, just as our educators are today in classes like Kelli Flores' and Deborah Mendoza's.

I hope all our special educators that we honor on December 3, the "Day of the Special Educator", are spurred on by the stimulation of camaraderie, purpose, laughter and sharing to accomplish the challenges of each day. Seasons come and go but an educator that touches the life of a child remains forever.



**Kathleen Skeels**  
Asst. Superintendent/SELPA Director

## C.A.C. - Community Advisory Committee

The San Joaquin Community Advisory Committee (CAC) invites all parents, educators, and agency representatives who have, teach or assist students with special needs to attend the quarterly educational presentations and the monthly CAC meetings.

Parents are also being sought to become CAC parent representatives for their school districts. We are in need of parents from Jefferson Elementary School District, Lammersville Elementary School District, Linden Unified School District, Manteca Unified School District, and Tracy Unified School District. Please contact your local school district special education director or Margaret St. George at the San Joaquin SELPA at 209-468-4908 for more information about these positions.

The first quarterly presentation which highlighted Early Start services provided by education and Valley Mountain Regional Center was held October 4, 2010. The next presentation will be on Monday, December 6, 2010 and is titled "Transitioning from Early Start and/or Preschool services and entering Kindergarten with an IEP." The CAC parent representatives invite all parents of young children with special needs to attend this informative training.

The next CAC business meeting will be held from 12:00 to 1:00 on Monday December 6, 2010 at the San Joaquin County Office of Education in the WEC Building at 2707 Transworld Dr., Stockton. Please call Kimberly Andreasen at 209-468-9283 for information regarding the presentations or business meetings. All are invited to attend.



## Success from front page

and concepts more real. While these approaches are not unusual in any good primary classroom, what makes Deborah Mendoza's class different is the effort she has made to involve families in her program to build primary language literacy.

Mendoza always makes a visit to each student's home at the beginning of the school year and once during the year. "It establishes rapport and helps demonstrate that



*Srta. Marchena working with Benjamin and Alejandro.*

we care about them and their children. I tell them about homework expectations and about our program." She plans a potluck for the students and their families each semester to get to know each other and develop better understanding. They usually have a program with a skit or oral presentation by the students. She often gives a short talk or demonstration on a topic that shows how literacy in their first language leads to literacy in the second language. She may share books for parents to read or for them to read to their children. She may present a talk on a topic such as how to read to their children more effectively. "Not only do the parents love to see their children perform but I think that talking about reading and reading at home fosters the importance of literacy in preparing for a better future," Mendoza commented.

Over the past several years Mendoza has built up a classroom lending library of over 1000 volumes using classroom instructional funds, categorical funds, donations



*Alejandro's eye is brown.*

and her own money. Every day the students must take a book home to read or be read to and parents sign a reading log. As students get older they transition to books in English.

Deborah Mendoza is proud of the growth her students make in class. "All the students make significant gains in language and literacy and over 75% meet every language and literacy goal on their IEPs," she said. "Parent involvement is 100% and students all see that their parents value education and are partners with the school and the teacher. But the most important outcome is that success builds confidence which is a foundation for future learning. As they begin to experience success through this program with the encouragement of the family and the school, they start to enjoy learning and to like school."



*Good work, Annette.*

# Special Education and Statewide Assessments - Equal Access to Assessment and Achievement

California's statewide assessment program has been a fact of life in schools for many years. The inclusion of all special education students in the testing is one way that schools ensure that all students have the opportunity to access standards-based instruction and are assessed in a way that measures what they have achieved.

For some students the regular assessment (California Standards Test, CST) would not give an accurate picture of what they know. An alternate is allowed by the federal government. Developed for use in California, the California Modified Assessment (CMA) is one of the state's alternate assessments. If students fail to pass the CST in a subject, the IEP team can decide if the CMA is a better alternative. These modified assessments are available in English, Writing, Math and Science.

Recently over 40 teachers and

administrators came to the San Joaquin County Office for a training of trainers on use of the CMA. Debra Hopman, Educational Specialist from the San Joaquin Special Education Local Plan Area, gave a concise description on what you need to know to use CMAs in place of CSTs.



*Debra Hopman has all the information about CMA.*

“One of the most important things to know and remember,” Hopman said, “is that if the IEP team wants to use an alternate assessment in a subject, there must be a standards based goal in that subject in the IEP.”

Hopman shared ideas and information on how to decide if the CMA is appropriate, what accommodations are permitted during testing, how to develop appropriate standards-based goals and how to document the decision-making process of the IEP team. Those attending appreciated the up-to-date and easy to use information they can take back to their districts to assure compliance in this closely monitored area.

## New Laws Raise Kindergarten Age, Redefine Disability

In recent state and federal action the following bills became law:

Governor Schwarzenegger recently signed the Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010 (SB 1381 Simitian), which, beginning with the 2012-2013 school year and over the next four years, will push back the required birthday for admittance to kindergarten from on or before December 2 of that year in 2012-13, to on or before September 1 of that year in 2014-15.

A new federal law, also known as Rosa's Law, amends the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and at least nine other federal laws. S. 2781, a U.S. Senate bill, changes references to mental retardation in Federal law to references to an intellectual disability, and changes references to a mentally retarded individual to an individual with an intellectual disability. Rosa's Law was signed by the President on October 5, 2010. The bill, by Senator Barbara Mikulski of Maryland and 44 other co-sponsors, became Public Law 111-256.



### **Assembly Resolution 99 - Legislature Designates December 3, 2010 to be the Day of the Special Educator**

The California State Assembly, with the Senate concurring, recently proclaimed December 3, 2010, to be the Day of the Special Educator in appreciation of the contributions made by special educators in California schools.. They urge all Californians to recognize the dedication and hard work of special educators in teaching pupils with unique needs.

# Busy New Teacher Finds Autism Class Satisfying

Teacher Kelli Flores is finding her first year in San Joaquin County Special Education Program's K-1 Autism class an exciting challenge. The 8 children in her class at Jacobson Elementary School in Tracy are working hard to develop skills that will help them move toward meeting their goals. "I feel my students are really bright, but behavior and communication concerns impede their success in



*And yesterday was Wednesday.*

general education," Flores said. Building those skills is a major part of what she does with the students in her class.

While still a student at East Union High School in Manteca, Kelli worked with a disabled student, helping her with swimming, riding and daily life skills. She found that experience so satisfying that it started her thinking about going into the field of special education. She entered California State University, Long Beach on a soccer scholarship. After receiving her BA in Psychology there, Flores went on to earn a special education credential from Long Beach. She subbed in special education classes, was an aide in a Resource Specialist Program, and spent 2 years as a behavior interventionist in a private agency while working toward her credential. This background was valuable preparation for her current assignment.



*Teacher Kelli Flores helps Thomas.*

Flores shared that finding the time to keep up with all the planning and preparation necessary every day is her biggest challenge. Delivering lessons while developing positive behaviors keeps her on her toes, but watching her students make growth and improve is what she and her staff find most gratifying. "We all celebrate their small and big steps," she said. Flores gives credit to the instructional assistants in her class. "I have really good assistants," she said, "We make a great team and I couldn't do it without them."



*Itzel, Justin and Thomas choose a color for the song.*

# Art Contest Winners Announced



*Julien Gray*



*Sopreia Mims*



*Stockton Community Class*

Congress has declared each October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month. An annual theme is chosen by the Office of Disability Employment Policy. SJCOE WorkAbility I (WAI) sponsors an Art and Poetry Contest each year based on that theme. The 2010 theme is "Talent Has No Boundaries: Workforce Diversity INCLUDES Workers with Disabilities".

These 8 WAI teachers' classes earned a Movie/Popcorn Party from WorkAbility for having 100% class participation. Individual and group contest winners are highlighted:



*Stockton Community Class wins Best Representation of Theme.*

- Laura Bartlett – West High, Tracy **Julien Gray – Creativity**
- Christine Bristow – Pacific Young Adult, County Programs
- Sopreia Mims – Originality**
- Susan Drawve – Mid-Town, County Programs
- Carole McNair – Manteca Community, County Programs
- Linda Pianto – Sierra High, County Programs
- Barbara Reed-Musto – Claudia Landeen, Lincoln
- Lavonna Robins – Tracy High, Tracy
- Traci Suyeyasu – Stockton Community, County Programs
- Class project – Best Representation of Theme**

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*Ben enjoys the alphabet song with new teacher Kelli Flores.  
(See story page 5)*

## Save The Date!

- Dec 6** Community Advisory Committee Meeting/Program: Transitioning from Early Start/Preschool to Kindergarten with an IEP presented by Vince Hernandez, Staci Johnson and Rolf Athearn, 9am - 1pm, Chartville 1
- Jan 7** LSH Winter Symposium: Multisensory Strategies for Facilitating Language in Children with ASD presented by Patricia Hamaguchi, 8:30am - 4pm, Burwood Auditorium
- Jan 10** Community Advisory Committee Meeting, 12 - 1pm, Chartville 1
- Jan 28** Autism Connection Meeting, noon, Emerson
- Jan 31** Workshop: Autism: Resources for Supporting Individuals with ASD & Their Families presented by Ananda Aspen, 8:30 - 11:30am, Burwood 1
- Feb 1** Workshop: Story-Based Interventions presented by Ananda Aspen, 8:30 - 11:45am, Burwood 1
- Feb 1** Workshop: Autism Characteristics presented by Ananda Aspen, 12:45 - 4pm, Burwood 1
- Feb 8** Community Advisory Committee Meeting/Program: Middle School to High School - It *Will* Be Alright!, presenter to be announced, 9am - 1pm, Chartville 1

### All events held at:

SJCOE Wentworth Education Center - 2707 Transworld Dr., Stockton  
**For more information/events, check our  
Online Calendar at [www.sjcoe.org](http://www.sjcoe.org)**