



# RCS Special Education Chalkboard Fall 2009

Developing tomorrow's leaders today.....

## Who's Who in The Special Education Office?

For a matter involving special  
Education, please contact either:

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**Janice Radley**  
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*If you are interested in  
joining the RCS Special  
Education Parent Support  
Group please contact  
Kathleen Emory  
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**Next Meeting**  
October 29, 2009  
High School Library  
6:30 pm

## Students Return to In-District Programming at RCS

The Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk Special Education Department is committed to providing students with programming and services in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Each year special education staff visit students who are attending programs outside of the district in BOCES or other private placements. Our staff evaluates and conducts observations of students who have made significant progress in their placements and are appropriate for classrooms located within the RCS district. This year we have focused on returning students to in-district programs at the secondary level. It is our hope that each year we will be able to consider and return more students to programming in RCS classrooms.

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## Integrated Co-Teaching Classes

The RCS Special Education Department offers Integrated Co-Teaching classes at both the elementary and secondary levels. "Integrated co-teaching services" as they are called in the NYS Regulations of the Commissioner of Education means a general education teacher

and a special education teacher are jointly providing instruction to a class that includes both students with and students without disabilities to meet the diverse learning needs of all students in a class. Every classroom typically has a heterogeneous mix of students that includes general education students of mixed abilities, classified special education students, declassified special education students and students receiving accommodations under section 504. The benefits of offering Integrated co-teaching classes are numerous. These classes help the district to refine the placement of students with special needs in their least restrictive environment (LRE). In Integrated classes all students in the classroom benefit from the instruction and support of a second teacher. Having a general education and special education teacher in the classroom will increase the support offered to students who may be struggling at any given time and ultimately benefits everyone. Additionally, Integrated classes reduce transitions in and out of the classroom, which results in an increase in instructional time.

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## Parent-Teacher Conferences

Home and school share the goal of helping children learn and feel successful. Establishing effective partnerships between home and school requires efforts from both teachers and parents. It is important that both parties develop trusting and equitable relationships. It is important that parents not worry or feel afraid to attend a parent, teacher conference. Conferences are often an opportunity for parents to develop cooperative partnerships with their student's teachers.

There are several things that a parent can do to prepare for a parent-teacher conference that will help to make the meeting productive and positive for all involved.

### Conference Preparation

- Bring relevant materials (report cards, health records, test scores, ...)
- Review materials in advance
- Talk with your child before the conference
- Get a copy of the student handbook
- Be familiar with your child's homework assignments
- Prepare a list of questions
- Be ready to collaborate

### During the conference



- Listen carefully
  - Offer your perspective
  - Ask questions
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## The Triennial Evaluation

Your student may be due for his/her Triennial Evaluation at some point this year.

A Triennial Evaluation also referred to as a Re-Evaluation- is a required review to be conducted every three years for students who have been classified by the Committee on Special Education (CSE) and are receiving services through an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

If your child is due for a Triennial Evaluation, you will be receiving notification in the mail from the CSE Office. Many notifications have already been sent.

The school psychologist in your child's building will contact you and your child in order to begin conducting a reevaluation.

The psychologist may request an updated social history, or the completion of test/evaluation forms to be filled out by parents



The psychologist will also conduct:

- A classroom observation for your student
- Intelligence and academic testing

- Social emotional testing as necessary

Additionally, the psychologist will ask for teachers and parents to complete adaptive behavior scales.

When all testing is complete, the psychologist will compile a comprehensive report which will be reviewed with the parent to report the findings or results.

Additionally, a CSE meeting will be held to review the results of the Triennial Report, and to consider any recommendations as they relate to the student's disability, IEP development, current services and/or placement.

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## State Testing & Special Education Grades 3-8



State and federal education standards have been revised over the last decade, with the goal of helping students learn what they'll need to be successful in today's world. This is true for students in the mainstream, as well as most of those with special needs.

The New York State tests given throughout the school years are one set of tools used to measure student's academic growth and progress.

Special education students elementary through high school are taking and performing well on these tests. This is both a testament to their hard work and to the dedication of their teachers who help lay the academic groundwork needed for success in life, as well as during testing.

Parents need be aware of what the State tests are, what they are designed to reflect and how you can help support your children and teens toward success, not stress, with the tests.

Testing, which begins in the third grade is one way of ensuring that students are learning their daily lessons well. These tests are designed to evaluate the types of information and skills that children are expected to learn at their grade levels.

Although students are given opportunities throughout the year to become familiar with the format of these tests (which can be particularly important for those students with special needs that require a pre-set for new experiences), the school year is not spent drilling for these exams.

During the school year, elementary and middle school-age students will take tests in the following areas:

*English Language Arts*

*Mathematics*

*Science*

*Social Studies*

*Second Language Proficiency*

*Alternate Assessments*



### *English Language Arts (ELA)*

The English Language Arts tests are administered in two sessions for students in grades 3,5,6,7 and 8 and three sessions in grade 4. These exams are designed to measure students' abilities in reading, listening and writing. The tests contain a variety of questions

including multiple-choice, short answer, extended response and editing tasks.

### *Mathematics*



Math tests in grades 3, 5,6,7 and 8 are given in two sessions. Fourth graders take the Math assessment in three sessions.

The first session includes multiple

choice questions. The second session and the third session in grade 4 consist of short answer and extended response questions. These tests are designed to measure students' abilities with mathematics such as numbers and shapes, algebra, statistics and data analysis.



## Science

The science test given in grades 4 and 8 has two parts: a written section made up of multiple-choice, short answer and extended response questions and a performance section (manipulation and experimentation at three stations.) There are five open ended questions per station for grade 4 and seven to nine questions per station for grade 8. These tests are designed to show knowledge of the natural/living world, physical settings and the history of science.



## Social Studies

The social studies test is given in grades 5 and 8. It has two parts made up of multiple-choice, constructed response and a document based question designed to measure students' understanding of U.S. and world history, geography,

economics, citizenship and government.

## Second Language Proficiency (Intermediate-level)



This test is given in grade 8 for students who are studying a language other than English. It is designed to measure students' understanding of culture and abilities at speaking, reading and writing in a second language.

## Alternate Assessment



For many students with significant special needs, alternates to the State tests are the preferred way for them to show their range of skills and academics.

For example, an alternate assessment for a student with cerebral palsy might be designed to show his or her physical, as well as intellectual growth and its change over a period of time. Likewise students with severe learning disabilities would be asked to demonstrate their

knowledge of the "real world" skills that they will need to move ahead in their program and as move out into the adult world.

Testing in such a holistic way allows parents or caregivers, teachers and others on the student's education or transition team to gain a rich understanding of what the student can do. It reflects his or her progress in reaching the State standards. It can also be valuable to those with the student's home district Committees on Special Education (CSE) and his or her transition team in making appropriate recommendations, designing programs and planning for a student's move from one program to another.

*The next installment of the RCS Special Education Chalkboard will be released in January. Please remember to visit the school district website at [www.rcscsd.org](http://www.rcscsd.org) where you will find a Special Education link. Upcoming events and information are posted.*