



Rock Brook School \* 109 Orchard Road \* Skillman, NJ 08558

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# Rock Brook Family News - December 2015

## Individualized Programs ~ Personal Success

### Important Upcoming Dates

#### December

Dec 11 Early Dismissal 1:30 pm  
Dec 23 Early Dismissal 1:30 pm  
Dec 24-31 RBS Closed - Winter Break

#### January 2016

Jan 1-3 RBS Closed - Winter Break  
Jan 4 RBS Reconvenes - Regular Day  
Jan 9 PNO 5:30 - 9:30 pm  
Jan 12 RBS Board Meeting 6:00 pm  
Jan 18 RBS Closed MLK Day

Winter Break - RBS Closed

12/23/15 - 1/3/2016



### From the Director Mary Caterson

I was shopping for some gift items at Costco for our staff holiday get together. I found a beautiful gift basket with gold accents that had the word **“Peace”** across the front. Looking around some more I saw a blue basket with the word **“Joy”** and lastly a red one, **“Love”**. I had to buy them all! What do we wish for this holiday season? **Peace** throughout our troubled world, **Joy** in appreciation and gratitude for all that we have, and **Love** that we experience from our family and friends. That is what we need this holiday season.

Best wishes to you all,  
Mary Caterson

### Contributed by Mary Caterson

#### The End of No Child Left Behind?

The US Senate was supposed to vote on Tuesday, 12/8 on an overhaul of the controversial federal education law known as No Child Left Behind, which officially expired in 2007. The “Every Student Succeeds Act”, its replacement, passed the House last week and could get the President’s signature before the holidays. Maybe the perpetually divided US Congress will get one big thing accomplished this year. This bill would scale back federal oversight of schools and this new law makes dramatic changes in that regard.

No Child Left Behind established high goals that all students achieve proficiency on state tests by 2014. Schools faced stiff sanctions if they failed to make “adequate yearly progress” toward that goal. The new bill gives states the right to decide what constitutes adequate performance and how to intervene with schools that don’t measure up.

Schools would still be required to test students in English and Math every year from third to eighth grade and once in high school. States would still be required to intervene in the lowest-performing schools. However, in addition to test scores schools will be judges on measures like graduation rates, student and teacher engagement and student participation in advanced coursework.

Hopefully this new approach will shift accountability away from naming and blaming schools to providing schools information they need to improve.

### Contributed by Katie Hardgrove & Cheryl Ferrigno

In a memorandum from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services from November 2015, emphasis was placed on ensuring all children including children with disabilities are held to rigorous academic standards and high expectations. In order to make certain that children with disabilities are held to high expectations, an individual education program (IEP) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) must be aligned with the states’ academic content standards for the grade in which the child is enrolled.

States are permitted to define alternative academic achievement standards for children with significant cognitive disabilities. This is where the development of the Dynamic Learning Maps™ (DLM®) ties in. The DLM offer an innovative way for all students with significant cognitive disabilities to demonstrate their learning throughout the school year via the DLM Alternate Assessment System. The DLM focuses on Learning maps and Essential Elements. From the DLM website: “Think of a learning map as a common road map. Although students may share the same destination, they all begin their journeys from different starting points on the map. For parents and educators who hope to guide students to their destinations, that road map provides a wealth of information. A map shows where a student is starting from, as well as the main route, which is the shortest, most direct way to reach the destination. However, a good road map does more than show a single route. It also shows several alternate routes in case the main route cannot be taken. Finally, the map shows all the places students must travel through to get to their destinations. Dynamic learning maps help us see beyond where students are today to show us how they can get to where they need to go.”

The Essential Elements (EEs) are specific statements of knowledge and skills linked to the grade-level expectations identified in college- and career-readiness standards. EEs build a bridge from content standards to academic expectations for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The EEs specify academic targets, while the learning map clarifies how students can reach a specified standard.

The take away point from the memorandum is the IEP Team must ensure annual IEP goals are aligned with the State academic content standards for the grade in which a child is enrolled .



Involvement & Support at Rock Brook School



Sunday, June 5, 2016 Rock Brook School will be hosting our annual fundraiser/party. This school event is great way to support our school as well have a fun time. The planning has begun and Mary Caterson is looking for a few more volunteers for the committee.

Please contact her at : [maryc@rock-brook.org](mailto:maryc@rock-brook.org) if you would like to help.



PNO

Our next Parent’s Night Out for the 2015-2016 School Year is Saturday, January 9, 2016.



Used Printer Ink Cartridges

Donate your used Printer Ink Cartridges. Class 7 recycles them for cash. The money is then used during the Winter Holidays to purchase food and gifts for local food banks and other groups with Holiday Wish Lists.



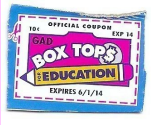
2015 Year End Annual Appeal

Our 2015 Year End Annual Appeal asks that you make a gift to invest in the current programming needs of our students. Your donations will allow us to purchase iPads, laptops, subscriptions to online education programs and software.

Visit <http://www.rock-brook.org/donate/>

Please contact Christy Tracey at Rock Brook with any questions.

[christy@rock-brook.org](mailto:christy@rock-brook.org)



Box Tops for Education

We still need a volunteer to count and send in the Box Tops on behalf of RBS. Can you help???

RBS earns cash for our school with these little pink rectangles. If your child wants to tape or glue them on to a collection sheet at home please check out: [www.boxtops4education.com/learn/flyers.aspx](http://www.boxtops4education.com/learn/flyers.aspx)

parentReach

Just as a reminder, we have the parentReach Emergency Notification Alert System that will notify you with a phone call when we have a delayed opening or are closed due to inclement weather. On the caller ID it will say Rock Brook. You need to answer and say hello to hear the message. We will also put an updated voice message on the school’s main office line and update the Rock Brook website. Miss the call?

Call the Hotline if You Missed a Call or Want to Replay the Latest Message:

parentReach Hotline - 1-770-406-5581

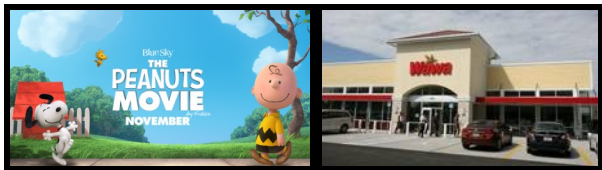
RBS Site Identifier: 6896



Guest Feature Article by RBS Student Larry



On November 23th classes 6,7 & the high school went to see The Peanuts Movie. After the movie we went to Wawa to pick out some great food. When we went back to school we had an epic feast.



Speech Corner - Contributed by Chrissy Sulouff - HS Program

Noisy Toys



When shopping this holiday season, put down the noisy toys! Many parents think noise is not a problem until their child reaches adolescence; however, some toys are so loud that they can cause hearing damage early on. Some squeaky toys can emit sounds at 90dB (decibels), as loud as a lawn mower. Workers would be required to wear ear protection at this level.

The real danger is when children hold these toys to their ears, as most do, exposing them to noises as great as 120dB, the equivalent to a jet plane taking off. This can cause pain to the ear and permanent hearing loss. Some toys in the high-risk category include electronic swords, musical instruments, talking dolls, and vehicles with sirens and horns.

When shopping for a new toy, listen to it; if the toy sounds loud, put it back on the shelf. Check out toys that you already have at home and take out batteries or discard if they pose a potential danger to hearing. Some other strategies include duct taping speakers on noisy toys or looking into a decibel meter app.

The Sight and Hearing Association has a list of noisy toys on their website and The American Speech and Hearing Association is a great resource for safe hearing levels. <http://www.sightandhearing.org> <http://www.asha.org/>

Technology - Contributed by Miss Maggie

Some of Rock Brook School's Technology Resources for student success:

**Popplet™:** Popplet is the simplest tool to capture and organize your ideas. With Popplet you can quickly jot down your ideas and sort them visually. Popplet is great for school and for learning in the classroom and at home. Students use Popplet to think and learn visually. By capturing facts, thoughts, and images, students learn to create relationships between them and generate new ideas.

**ConversationBuilder™** (Pat. Pend.) is designed to help elementary aged children learn how to have multi-exchange conversations with their peers in a variety of social settings. The auditory pattern of conversation is presented in a visual format to help students recognize and master the flow of conversation. Students will learn when it is appropriate to introduce themselves, ask questions, make observations and change the subject of the conversation.

**BrainPOP:** BrainPOP creates animated, curricular content that engages students, supports educators, and bolsters achievement. The award-winning online educational resources include [BrainPOP Jr.](#) (K3), [BrainPOP](#), [BrainPOP Español](#), and, for English language learners, [BrainPOP ESL](#).

**News-2-You:** News-2-You has been connecting students to the world through current events for over 15 years. With News-2-You, students learn about current events through symbol-supported articles, activities, games and worksheets. All of these instructional materials reinforce the topic of each weekly newspaper.

**The Timed Timer:** The Time Timer is a remarkably easy timer app for iPhone and iPod Touch. The Time Timer app displays time as a red disk that quietly gets smaller as time elapses. Children as young as three understand that when the red is gone, time is up! And unlike many other visual timers, the Time Timer app has a professional look and packed feature set to help adults make every moment count. Highly recommended by experts in professional organizing, healthcare, ADHD/ Autism and parenting.

**iPrompts® PRO:** combines three apps into a powerful suite of next-generation autism technology! Buy iPrompts® PRO and receive iPrompts® (the leading research-based app for visual schedules, timers, choices and video modeling), StoryMaker™ (create and present Social Stories™) and SpeechPrompts™ (exercises for speech therapy and prosody) at a discount over buying individually. iPrompts, the original app for visual support, is used by caregivers to provide visual structure to those with autism. Story-Maker is the premier app creating and presenting Social Stories, featuring exclusive content from Carol Gray. SpeechPrompts, a collaboration with the Yale Child Study Center, provides exercises to practice rate, pitch, stress and intensity of speech. Features of all apps are based on research, funded by the U.S. Department of Education's SBIR program.

**Attainment's Social Success:** Social Success Software is an interactive social skill tutorial for adolescents and adults with developmental disabilities, including autism. Fifty skills are shown in an easy-to-navigate interface, so students can work independently or in self-directed groups. Each skill has five activities: Intro, Steps, Self -Talk, Movie, and Problem Solving.

**Attainment's Dollars & Cents:** Attainment Company has produced several functional math programs over the years. As technology continues to change and advance, so do Attainment's collection of math resources. We now offer a comprehensive iPad app that teaches a variety of money skills: Dollars and Cents. Dollars and Cents features three progressive programs with options to use either U.S. or Canadian currency: Counting Coins, Spending Money, and Making Change. All of the programs feature clear, realistic graphics and an easy-to-navigate interface. Plus, this money talks! Personalize each program: select activities, determine which coins and bills are presented, choose U.S. or Canadian currency, and set scanning options.

**Attainment's Community Success:** Community Success helps students with developmental disabilities, including autism, prepare for community outings and eventual independence. Learning independent living skills is a complex process. First, you need to master a myriad of social interactions: What do you say to a store clerk? Who gets off an elevator first? You're also required to execute step-by-step sequences: find crosswalk, push "walk," wait for "walk" sign, stay in crosswalk. Plus it's helpful to have a working knowledge of how businesses function: Can a restaurant call you a cab? How much do you tip the driver? This app covers these skills and more in an easy-to-navigate, engaging program. It focuses on 24 important activities, like riding the bus, shopping for groceries, and going to a movie theater. Information is made accessible through video modeling, photo-based directions, talking stories, and vivid illustrations of social behaviors. The videos take place in actual locations, and the photos illustrate activities step by step. The short stories feature professional narration with highlighted text and emphasize safety, activity tips, and relevant vocabulary. All stories end with a comprehension quiz, with the results stored in student files. The app allows for unlimited users, each with customizable settings. Community Success is scanning capable to accommodate students with physical disabilities.

**Unique Learning System®** is an award-winning, online, standards-based set of interactive tools specifically designed for students with special needs to access the general curriculum. Used daily in school districts and classrooms across the country, Unique Learning System provides preschool through transition students with rigorous, standards-based materials specifically designed to meet their instructional needs. Users interact with differentiated, thematic units of study with text-to-speech, interactive components, hundreds of activities and multiple opportunities to show what they know.