

Just a few January days at Rock Brook School



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Rock Brook Family News - January 2017

Important Upcoming Dates

February 2017

- Feb 4 PNO 5:30 - 9:30 pm
Feb 9 **100th Day of School-Assuming NO Weather Related Closings**
Feb 10 Valentine's Day Dance In-School Event
Feb 14-16 Parent Conferences Early Dismissal 1:30 pm - Students
Feb 17-20 RBS Closed for ALL Presidents' Day Break

Save the Date
for the 3rd annual
Rock Brook School Celebration
Sunday, June 4, 2017
4:00 - 8:00 pm
Details coming soon!!!


From the Director, Mary Caterson

Many thanks to those of you who wrote letters to the State Board of Education members about your children and the need for programs like RBS. Some of the changes in the fiscal regulations are a direct attempt to diminish the quality of the educational and therapeutic services in programs like ours. That cannot happen. New Jersey needs to support and encourage a variety of placement options – including private schools—that allow children with disabilities to receive their education as required by law. Data shows that students with disabilities who graduate from private schools are more likely to have job, be engaged in the community or be enrolled in higher education. When ALL costs to taxpayers are considered, private special education schools in NJ are 20-30% less costly than similar public programs... We are proud of our programs and the 10,000 students with complex conditions that we educate.

Mary

By Katie Hardgrove, Rock Brook School Principal



Happy New Year! A Time for Resolutions

New Year's brings a time to reflect as well as set goals for what to accomplish in the upcoming year. According to a recent article in Parents magazine, making resolutions with your children can be fun and exciting, a time for growth and change, and an opportunity for family bonding. 8 tips to make it a positive experience include: Be Resolution Role Models, Keep a Positive Approach to Resolutions, Narrow Down the Resolutions List, Take Turtle Steps Toward Big Resolutions, Suggest—Don't Dictate Resolutions, Follow Up but Don't Nag About Resolutions, Make Family Resolutions Together, Make Resolutions a Ritual.

We are looking forward to a great second half of the school year.

By Mary Caterson, Rock Brook School Director

Lots to Pay Attention to....The Committee has postponed the vote for the nominee for Education Secretary, Betsy DeVos. Mrs. DeVos is a billionaire with no experience in education or public schools. She is an advocate of charter schools and for private school vouchers. Many of you probably know, that when questioned about the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), DeVos said that educating students with disabilities should be left up to the states and was a bit confused about what IDEA was anyway. If students with disabilities are given vouchers to attend private schools, they give up their rights to special education services. DeVos was also asked if she could do anything to see if the Education Department could move toward sending more special education dollars to the states. DeVos said she would commit to looking into the issue if confirmed. She also commented that "maybe the money could follow the individual students instead of going directly to the states." This would be a big change from the way federal money currently flows to states for special education. Stay tuned.

By Lisa Mantz RN,BSN, Rock Brook School Nurse

The "Common Cold" We have all experienced the common cold at some point. Feeling congested, tired, run-down, coughing and sore. On a larger scale, this common cold costs the U.S. billions of dollars a year on medical expenses and lost work productivity.

Preventative care strategies, to avoid getting the common cold, include good and frequent hand-washing. Always choose soap and water over hand sanitizers when able. Refrain from touching your face, as it is easy for cold viruses to enter through your nose, eyes, and mouth. When grocery shopping, grab a wet hand towel sanitizer, usually located at entrances and around the store, and wipe your shopping cart handle. If you are sick, stay home.

Practicing these preventative care techniques will not only help you to stay healthier, but your family and school will benefit as well.

Stay Healthy for a Great 2017!



Parent Communication / Involvement / Support at RBS

PNO - February 4, 2017
5:30 pm - 9:30 pm



We are so excited to have students from The Hun School join us on 2/4/17. They are planning a special Valentine's Dance event for our students and other attendees. We hope that your child attends! It's going to be a lot of fun.



<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/22-2120902>

We would your support!

Buy your Valentine's Day gifts at smile.amazon.com and Amazon donates.

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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

Parent/Team Conferences/Early Dismissal 2/14/17~2/16/17

Our conferences will be held during the week of Feb 14-16th. Conferences are scheduled for 30 minute time slots. This is your mid-year opportunity to meet and discuss progress with the teaching teams. You will be receiving your child's progress report prior to your scheduled conference. As with the previous November conference, this conference will be an overview of your child's total performance and progress. The teams will not go through each one of the rated objectives on the report. If there is a specific area you would like to talk about please let the team know prior to the conference to ensure concerns and questions are addressed within your allotted conference time. SignUpGenius is being used to schedule your apt. Please remember RBS will have Early Dismissal at 1:30 pm on these 3 days.

RBS will then be CLOSED on 2/17 & 2/20 for Presidents' Day Break.

Guest Feature Article by RBS student Larry



On December 16th it was the holiday concert. I heard the kids sing some holiday songs. The songs in the concert were Dreidel, 12 Day of Christmas and more. The kids got pictures with Santa. It was a fun day. Yesterday we said goodbye to Casey. The teacher told me that he was leaving Rock Brook School. He was nice, great and happy. We will miss you. Enjoy your new School. (Casey had been writing a separate guest feature article. We hope to have someone else featured soon!)



Looking for a new vacation spot this summer??! Morgan's WONDERLAND is located in San Antonio, TX but it looks fabulous <http://www.morganswonderland.com/> Their website states they are opening a new water park this spring. FUN!!!!

Speech Corner - By Ms. Campos, Speech Classroom 5

Reinforcing Language

On a website, responsiveclassroom.org, the idea of using reinforcing language to empower children by helping them discover what they do well within the classroom setting. An article from that website, titled, "How's Your Reinforcing Language?" describes techniques used by instructors in a responsive classroom.

I became aware of this model of teaching when viewing a series of required webinars this year for school-wide certification of our teachers, therapists, and teaching assistants as Certified Autism Specialists. As a Speech-Language Therapist and teaching professional, I was instantly attracted to the concept of "noticing" what students were doing right and giving verbal feedback based on their performance by verbalizing exactly what was good about their interactions and insights. This is referred to as using "reinforcing language."

When thinking about human behavior in children and in adults, I realized that each one of us are motivated when someone notices and verbally acknowledges efforts we make and contributions we give in a group situation. It feels good to have someone observe and reinforce those attempts to participate, express ideas and make comments.

Being a responsive person is something we can practice with our children and others in our lives. There is something particularly satisfying about being an adult who can encourage and foster social, academic, and personal growth in children. It is enriching to us and to family members and friends, when we affirm people in this way.

What does this reinforcing language sound like? With a young child who comments on something, gestures or points to something to share attention, it could be as simple as saying, "Andy, you showed me the dog in the picture! You shared your book with me."

If two children a bit older are working on a project together and one comments on the project or has a good answer: "Jane that was an interesting answer. I see you used the new vocabulary word to tell me about your project."

A key point of using this technique involves using a positive statement about a specific behavior that was used by the child or adult. The statement is true and genuine.

Another example with a teenager might go like this: "You used polite language when Mrs. Jones was here. She seemed pleased that you talked with her."

Noticing behavior in a class or with several children at home: "I see some of you are putting your books in your desks and getting ready to pack up."

Encouraging words that acknowledge positive work: "Sam, you really worked hard on your reading today. How did you do that?"

Using reinforcing language is something we can incorporate into our everyday lives. It builds confidence and self-awareness in others, increases the likelihood of continued use of positive behavior, and is rewarding for the teachers and parents who use it with their children.

Technology - By Ms. Maggie, Technology Classroom

Meet Dot and Dash!

Dot and Dash are real robots. They respond to voice, navigate objects, dance, and sing. The students will be learning how to plan, organize and sequence behavior blocks, through coding activities, to interact, play and explore with Dot and Dash. Specifically, the students will use iPad applications named "Wonder" and "Blockly" to create new behaviors for the robots.



According to the parent company, Wonder Workshop, "Dot & Dash are characters that ignite curiosity and confidence while providing fun ways of learning the essential skills of collaboration, communication, and digital literacy."

Dot and Dash will be wonderful additions here at the Rock Brook School. We will begin exploring robotics and related STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) with Dot and Dash in February!