



Special Education in Action

Engaging Stakeholders through Promising Practices and Program Development

Click here for the **special edition feature** on **Autism Awareness Month**.



As part of Special Education Week, the New Jersey School Boards Association and ASAH, since 2002, sponsored an "Innovations in Special Education" award program that has drawn wide interest from the state's special education community. For this year's awards program, public and private schools from across New Jersey submitted 59 eligible entries. The NJSBA and ASAH, which has been serving the special education community since 1974, recognized the following districts as the 2023 award recipients:



Click [here](#) to learn more about the program and awardees.

Neptune Township Regional Deaf Education Program,
Neptune Township Regional School District



Power Mobility Program,
P.G. Chambers School

Social Behavioral Support Program,
Marlton Elementary School,
Evesham Township School District



Safety Ambassador Program,
New Road School of Somerset

Woodglen's Lost and Found Program,
Woodglen School, Lebanon Township School District

Lebanon Township School District
Hunterdon County, New Jersey

Click on the icons, images and text for direct access to updates, spotlights and opportunities.

Table of Contents

Recent Release

The Local Special Education Profiles and the Special Education Data360 Series



Resources

Parental Rights in Special Education 2023

- Including the Dispute Resolution Forms that are now form fillable.

Facilitated Individualized Education Program (FIEP)

Guiding Principles for Creating Safe, Inclusive, Supportive and Fair School Climates (USED, 2023)



Call to Action in Special Education

Community of Practice for Educators and Professionals who Support Students with Autism
(Deadline: September 29, 2023)



Professional Development Opportunities



CLICK HERE



LRC Learning Resource Center Network



The Family Connections Corner "Stronger Together"



Parent Circle Series as part of the New Jersey Inclusive Child Care Project (NJICCP)

Offered in Both English and Spanish

Planning technical assistance for next school year?

Click [here](#) to review our offerings and submit your requests.

Stay Connected
Visit our Special Education in Action

Engagement Webpage





Special Education in Action

Special Edition Feature

Every April, schools throughout New Jersey participate in schoolwide and community activities to commemorate Autism Awareness Month. The Office of Special Education created a theme to help encourage and support ASD awareness in schools. This year's theme for Autism Awareness Month was "Colors of My World". The theme encourages schools to take part in fostering ASD awareness to promote understanding and acceptance for individuals with ASD in their schools and surrounding communities. It also encourages schools to celebrate the diversity, and unique contributions individuals with ASD make daily in the classroom.

Schools throughout New Jersey share how they celebrated

Autism Awareness Month

April 2023



**South Mountain School in
Millburn Township School
District (Essex County)**

In Brick Township School District, "INCLUSION, AWARENESS, and ACCEPTANCE" were daily actions, not just words. They focused on Developmental Disabilities in March, Autism in April, and Special Education Week in May. Celebrating diversity has become a part of Brick's culture.

In March, they held a district-wide Rock Your Socks event on 3/21 to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day. Participants received gift cards to a local ice cream parlor. They also provided educators with a resource document containing professional development articles, activities, book recommendations, and bulletin board ideas.

In April, they created a resource document for Autism Awareness and Acceptance, distributed to educators. They hosted a virtual spirit day on Twitter for World Autism Awareness Day and shared daily Autism "Facts of the Day". They even extended their celebration through a collaboration with Brick Memorial High School's lacrosse team to promote their Autism Awareness Game. They closed out the month of April with an Autism Awareness and Acceptance Spirit Week, featuring daily themes and prizes for faculty, staff, and students.

In May, the school district participated in the Step Up For The Arc Walk to raise awareness for developmental disabilities. The Department of Special Services organized a district-wide Door Decorating contest, with winning doors selected from different divisions. The doors, created by students, embodied the theme of INCLUSION.



The bulletin board theme for this year at South Mountain School (SMS) was "Acceptance is an Action. What are you doing to help it grow?" Each classroom teacher had taught a mini lesson to their students about Autism, neurodiversity, and how to be accepting and supportive of their autistic peers. From PreK to 4th grade, every student in the school had designed an infinity symbol to contribute to the vibrant acceptance tree. They had included pictures, drawings, and messages showcasing the actions they could take to demonstrate Acceptance. Videos and photographs were included as well, capturing the meaningful moments.

At SMS, they prioritize educating themselves and others about neurodivergent minds, not just on that day but every day. Every day they celebrate the unique qualities that make each student special and valued.