



# FOCUS on Special Education

A Newsletter for Parents of Students with Disabilities

from the Ingham Intermediate School District

Parent Advisory Committee

Parents as Advocates

[www.inghamisd.org](http://www.inghamisd.org)

January 2012

The Mission of the Ingham Intermediate School District Parent Advisory Committee is to promote partnerships among parents and educators that benefit students with disabilities.

## Beliefs

We Believe...

- Students with a disability should be supported by parents, students, and the community.
- Parents, schools and community partnerships should provide opportunities that promote independence for students with disabilities.
- The person comes first, not the disability.
- A person with a disability should be an active participant in the community.

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## January 18, 2012 IISD PAC Meeting: Capital Area Career Center Overview

LOCATION: Waverly Community Schools/Administration Building  
515 Snow Road, Lansing, MI

Jeffrey Bohl, Principal of the Capital Area Career Center, will present about Ingham ISD's Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and services offered through the Career Center. This will include discussions of the general importance of career and technical education to today's students to help build the American workforce of tomorrow.

Jeffrey worked in industry for 8 years as a result of his own CTE schooling prior to moving into education. He taught mathematics and statistic for 8 years and has been an administrator for 9 years. He has worked with a broad range of students, from repeating ninth graders in the urban core of Miami, FL, to top 5% math, science, and computer students at an academy in Battle Creek.

## February 15, 2012 IISD PAC Meeting: Project Based Curriculum

LOCATION: Stockbridge Community Schools/Heritage Elementary Library  
222 Western Avenue, Stockbridge, MI

Lori Swan is the mom of two wonderful boys with different special needs. She has a Bachelors degree in Child Development and Psychology, a Masters in Special Education, and certification in Autism Spectrum Disorders. She voluntarily runs the Autism Foundation of Ingham County, is on the board of many different Special Needs organizations including being the co-chair for the Ingham ISD PAC, and has spoken on this topic and others throughout the state. Lori has been using Project Based Curriculum with her oldest son, who is a high school freshman, for over six years helping the school to make his curriculum. She has been using Project Based Curriculum for the past three years with her gifted younger son who is in the 7th grade. Both boys have had great success with this type of Curriculum.

Project based learning involves using the student's preferred learning style to demonstrate their knowledge in one subject or combining subjects, by completing a project, preferably one they will truly enjoy. Project based learning can be used with all students, including those with lower abilities to gifted students in multiple school settings. This presentation will demonstrate different ways to set up a project based curriculum for students at various levels of abilities and needs. You will leave with ideas to try.

## TIPS FOR PARENTS ON COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY WITH THE SCHOOL

When it comes to providing appropriate services for students with disabilities, the need for parents, schools, and educators to establish effective communication is extremely important. Poor communication can result in students not receiving the services they need, or perhaps not progressing in school like they should. Therefore, parents and school personnel need to commit themselves to improving their communication skills.

The following tips are taken from an article by the Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education, or CADRE:

- Think about your “emotional pressure gauge” as you work or prepare to work with the school on matters that are important to you and your child. CADRE suggests,

“Keep thoughts of past (or present) problems at school, worst fears, and other negatives from creeping into your mind. Focus positively on your goals and the view that the school wants to do their best for your child. Keep telling yourself that you and your child will succeed.”

- Prioritize and plan.
- Actively listen to school personnel with a desire to understand their point of view.
- Clarify your statements if you see that someone is confused about what you are saying. Ask for clarification in return.
- Have options in mind and offer them for discussion.

- Remember that you and others are only human. Acknowledge the contributions of school personnel and any progress that has been made. You can help to “sweeten the air a bit” at a time when frustrations are rising. Say you’re sorry if you think you might have hurt someone. This helps “humanize” what is often a formal process and sends the message that you can be forgiving of others’ mistakes. It may sound funny, but “please” and “thank you” really make a difference.

Finally, as for the “yes.” When you are not in full agreement on how to address an issue, restate and discuss options. Examine proposed solutions, then directly and politely ask for what you want or ask why it is not possible.

### LOCAL EVENT: January 25, 2012

#### ICLE - Legal Issues of Autism

Estate Planning for the Client with Autism  
(Attorney Tripp)

9:30 - 10:10 am Webcast

Please contact [icle.org](http://icle.org) for more information regarding this event including registration

Please **Like** us on Facebook!



<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ingham-Parent-Advisory-Committee/120928544607792?sk=wall>

### Local Special Education Directors

Dansville	Krista Voss	517.623.6120 x310
East Lansing	Kris Chapman	517.333.7461
Haslett	Mike Caine	517.339.8205
Holt	Wayne Abbott	517.694.2442
Lansing	Marty Alwardt	517.755.4001
Leslie	Kathleen Dopp	517.589.9500

Mason	Deborah Disbro	517.676.6532
Okemos	Bill Wilcox	517.706.4828
Stockbridge	Pam Jones	517.851.8600 x4121
Waverly	Christine Holman	517.391.3011
Webberville	Pam Jones	517.521.3447 x323
Williamston	Bronwyn Cobb	517.655.2855 x4001
Ingham ISD	Andrew Rable	517.244.1263

## HELPING CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES TIP: EMPHASIZE HEALTHY LIFESTYLE HABITS

It may seem like common sense that learning involves the body as well as the brain, but your child's eating, sleep, and exercise habits may be even more important than you think. If children with learning disabilities are eating right and getting enough sleep and exercise, they will be better able to focus, concentrate, and work hard.

- **Exercise** - Exercise isn't just good for the body, it's good for the mind. Regular physical activity makes a huge difference in mood, energy, and mental clarity. Encourage your learning disabled child to get outside, move, and play. Rather than tiring out your child and taking away from schoolwork, regular exercise will actually help him or her stay alert and attentive throughout the day. Exercise is also a great antidote to stress and frustration.
- **Diet** - A healthy, nutrient rich diet will aid your child's growth and development. A diet full of whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and lean protein will help boost mental focus. Be sure your child starts the day with a good breakfast and doesn't go more than 4 hours between meals or snacks. This will help keep his or her energy levels stable.
- **Sleep** - Learning disability or not, your child is going to have trouble learning if he or she is not well rested. Kids need more sleep than adults do. On average, preschoolers need from 11-13 hours per night, middle school children need about 10-11 hours, and teens and preteens need from 8 1/2 -10 hours. You can help make sure your child is getting the sleep he or she needs by enforcing a set bedtime. The type of light emitted by electronic screens (computers, televisions, iPods and iPads, portable video players, etc.) is activating to the brain. So you can also help by powering off all electronics at least an hour or two before lights out.

### Encouraging healthy emotional habits

In addition to healthy physical habits, you can also encourage children to have healthy emotional habits. Like you, they may be frustrated by the challenges presented by their learning disability. Try to give them outlets for expressing their anger, frustration, or feelings of discouragement. Listen when they want to talk and create an environment open to expression. Doing so will help them connect with their feelings and, eventually, learn how to calm themselves and regulate their emotions.

HELPGUIDE.org [http://helpguide.org/mental/learning\\_disabilities\\_treatment\\_help\\_coping.htm](http://helpguide.org/mental/learning_disabilities_treatment_help_coping.htm)

## About Your Parent Advisory Committee

Michigan law requires that each Intermediate School District (ISD) have a special education Parent Advisory Committee (PAC). This committee consists of a parent representative from each of the twelve local school districts and the public school academies in Ingham ISD Service Area.

The committee's role is advisory to the ISD special education administration and parent representatives serve as liaisons between other parents they represent and the local special education administrator in their resident district. The PAC meets monthly at the Ingham Intermediate School District. Meetings are open to all parents and other persons interested in special education within Ingham ISD service area.

Members of the Ingham ISD PAC are parents of students with disabilities. Their top priority is to inform and communicate with other parents of students with disabilities in their district or academy.

Contact your PAC representative if you have questions or concerns about special education programs, services and/or student issues in your district, academy or school (see list on page 4).

**INGHAM ISD**

Thorburn Education Center  
2630 W. Howell Road  
Mason, Michigan 48854

Andrew Rable, Director of Student Support Services  
Phone: 517.244.1263  
E-mail: arable@inghamisd.org

Contact: Leanne Minshall  
Phone: 517.244.1298  
E-mail: lminshal@inghamisd.org



## Ingham Intermediate School District

Student Support Services

*Special Education:  
It's not a place, it's a Service.*



Ingham ISD  
[www.inghamisd.org](http://www.inghamisd.org)

Ingham ISD Parent Advisory Committee  
[http://www.inghamisd.org/programsandservices/special\\_education/parentadvisorycommittee/](http://www.inghamisd.org/programsandservices/special_education/parentadvisorycommittee/)

## Parent Advisory Committee Representatives

*We are parents...*

*...of children with disabilities. We represent students in local schools throughout the Ingham ISD Service Area, as well as students who attend Ingham Intermediate School District classroom programs.*

<b>Dansville</b>	Lori Swan Co-chairperson	517.896.3292 / aficlori@gmail.com
<b>East Lansing</b>	Susan Stroup	517.333.9031 / sastroup1@sbcglobal.net
<b>Haslett</b>	Tracy Hilliard Secretary	517.339.0448 / mailtracy2001@yahoo.com
<b>Holt</b>	Michelle Holloway Co-chairperson	517.420.0881 / hollowaym@michigan.gov
<b>Ingham ISD</b>	OPEN	OPEN
<b>Lansing</b>	Laura Markham	517.372.2732 / lauramarkham@sbcglobal.net
<b>Leslie</b>	Jennifer Shuster	517.878.8006
<b>Mason</b>	Heather Martin	517.676.4895
<b>Okemos</b>	OPEN	OPEN
<b>Stockbridge</b>	Gary & Karen Smith	734.786.3752
<b>Waverly</b>	Diane Flanagan	517.321.1652 / dflanagan@waverlyk12.net
<b>Webberville</b>	Tracy Haite	517.294.4300 / thaite@webbervilleschools.org
<b>Williamston</b>	Christine Bacon	517.992.5083
<b>Windemere Park</b>	Michelle Locher	517.449.5634

*We represent local districts in the Ingham ISD service area.  
Please call any of us with questions.*

## INGHAM ISD PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2011-2012 MEETING DATES

Meetings held from 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm (unless otherwise noted)

DATE	TOPIC	LOCATION
Wednesday, September 21, 2011:	LINKS/Transition IISD Transition Staff	<b>WEBBERVILLE High School</b> Spartan Conference Room—enter at back of building
<b>Saturday, October 8, 2011: 9:00-4:00</b>	<b>CANCELLED: Will be rescheduled</b> <b>Parent Workshop: IEP 101</b>	<b>Ingham ISD</b> Thorburn Education Center—Rooms ABC
Wednesday, October 19, 2011:	Instructional & Assistive Technology Phil Booth, Esther Fintushel, Melissa White	<b>HOLT</b> Ninth Grade Campus—Administration Wing/ Board Room
Wednesday, November 16, 2011:	Personal Curriculum & Certificate of Completion Cindy Anderson	<b>HASLETT</b> Administration Building: Board Room
Wednesday, January 18, 2012:	Capital Area Career Center Overview CACC Staff	<b>WAVERLY</b> Administration Building: Board Room
Wednesday, February 15, 2012:	Project Based Curriculum Lori Swan	<b>STOCKBRIDGE</b> Heritage Elementary Library
Wednesday, March 21, 2012:	PAC/SE Directors' Dinner Meeting <b>Please RSVP 517.244.1298</b>	<b>Ingham ISD</b> Thorburn Education Center—Rooms ABC
Wednesday, April 18, 2012:	No More Sidelines Miracle League	<b>DANSVILLE</b> High School Library
Wednesday, May 16, 2012:	Summer Activity Panel CMH, YMCA & Lansing Parks and Recreation	<b>LANSING</b> Everett High School Special Dining Room