Dear STEPS Students & Families,

Welcome back!

This school year marks a year of change for the STEPS program… and with change comes fresh ideas, perspectives, and opportunities. Our program has moved to three district high school buildings (Neuqua Valley Birkett Freshman Center, Waubonsie Valley High School, and Metea Valley High School) and our students and staff are acclimating to their new surroundings. We are grateful to the high school administrators and staff members who have welcomed us with open arms. We also have new staff members and new classrooms. Just days into the school year, STEPS students and staff are already building new routines and forging new relationships that will last for years to come. I’m confident that these changes will result in another successful year for our students!

This is the first of the 2017-2018 monthly newsletters that I will be sharing with all of you. If you would like me to send out any information regarding community events or activities that is pertinent to our STEPS population, feel free to email me; I will try my best to include this information in the monthly newsletter, which I typically distribute on or before the first day of the month.

**STAFF NEWS:**

I’m pleased to announce that STEPS has two additional teachers/case managers this year! Mike Ackerman and Kate Melody are both housed at Metea Valley. Mike, formerly a special education teacher at Metea, continues there as a STEPS teacher this year while Kate is new to the district. We also welcome Jennifer Perruquet, new full-time STEPS Speech & Language Pathologist, and Melisse Reynolds, part-time STEPS social worker. (See the attached note from Jen Perruquet.) Also new this year is our STEPS Secretary position, which has been filled by former STEPS assistant Mary Michael. Welcome to all our new staff!

**PHONE NUMBERS:**

To report an absence, **call 630-428-6400 / Choose Option #1 / Enter 9918.** Students are encouraged to call and report their own absences. Also, please remember to call First Student at if you do not need busing for the day. STEPS secretary Mary Michael can be reached at (630) 428-6441. Teacher extensions are still in the works and will be shared as soon as they are in place.

**NEUQUA BIRKETT FRESHMAN CENTER (BFC) PICK UP/DROP OFF PROCEDURES**

For students housed at Neuqua BFC, we ask that you follow specific pick up/drop off procedures. Between the hours of 8:00 and 1:30 STEPS parents may drop off and pick up their students at the main STEPS entrance, Door 18, located in the back of the building. Before 8:00 and after 1:30, busses will prevent parents from using this location for drop off/pick up. If you are dropping off a student before 8:00, please do so at Door 1, the main entrance. Similarly, if you are picking up at/after 1:30, please join the parent pick up line in the front of the building.

**STEPS CURRICULUM NIGHT: THURS. SEPT. 14th, 6:30PM - 8:00PM**

On Thurs., Sept. 14th from 6:30PM- 8:00PM STEPS staff will be hosting a Curriculum Night at each of the program locations. Staff will present an overview of the program and teachers will discuss their individual classes. Parents will also be able to sign up for Parent Teacher Conferences in November. We look forward to seeing you there!

**STEPS SPIRIT WEAR- LAST CALL for ORDERS FRI., SEPT 15th**

Students participating in community work training sites must wear proper attire. (Please see the attached Dress Code information.) Students must wear a gray STEPS polo shirt (OR plain gray polo shirt with no graphics or stripes) with black black pants. If you would like to order a gray STEPS polo shirt, please fill out the attached Spirit Wear order form. Completed order forms and your payment are due on Fri., Sept. 15th. If you have questions about appropriate work attire, please contact Sharon Kickel, Vocational Coordinator, at sharon\_kickel@ipsd.org.

**IMPORTANT REMINDERS:**

We have a number of students who have not completed registration at the home high schools. If you still have registration forms and fees to submit, please do so as soon as possible. Bussing will cease for students who have not completed registration. If you have questions about registration, feel free to contact me at jen\_broz@ipsd.org or (630) 428-6440.

Registration packets included a supply list for students. Please make sure that your students have brought in the necessary supplies. Similarly, if your student uses a communication device, or talker, please make sure your student is charging his or her device at night so that it is ready to go for school. We have already started asking students to use talkers throughout the day. Also, please make sure to put the charger in your student's backpack each morning in the event we need to charge it at school.

**LADSE TRANSITION ALLIANCE: NEXT STEPS THE TRANSITION SERIES**

Please see the attached flyer for the LADSE training series designed for the family members of individuals with disabilities. This 5-part series begins on Oct. 3rd and runs through Nov. 16th. Registration is free, but seating is limited. See attached for details.

**Mark Your Calendars:**

**9/14 STEPS Curriculum Night**

**9/15 Spirit Wear Orders Due**

**10/9 No School Columbus Day**

**10/27 End of First Quarter**

**11/9 Transition Conferences 4:30 pm - 8:00 pm**

**11/13 No School- Transition Conferences 8:00 am - 8:00 pm**

Until next month…

~Jen Broz

STEPS Coordinator

jen\_broz@ipsd.org

(630) 428-6440