

# W.I.S.E.

## We In Special Education

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FOR LAFAYETTE AREA PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT CURRENT ISSUES IN THE FIELD OF SPECIAL EDUCATION



Meet members of the Lafayette Special Education Team on 11/13/12

See Pg 3 for details on our upcoming Wise Meeting

## SPECIAL EDUCATION 101

**Welcome back to all our returning parents and students! We also want to welcome a host of new arrivals to Lafayette. We are excited to meet you and work with your children this school year!**

Special Education, according to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004, refers to **specially designed instruction**, at no cost to parents, to meet the **unique needs** of a child with a disability. It can include instruction conducted in the classroom, in a resource room, in the home, or in hospitals and other institutions. At Lafayette special education takes many forms. It can include a student working independently in his/her regular classroom whose work has been specially modified during teacher planning time, to having a special education teacher or assistant in the classroom working next to the child, to the child spending a portion of his or her time in a resource classroom for certain subjects. IDEA also mandates that we consider the child's Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) when deciding how to implement a student's special education services. That means the most

preferable, least restrictive location is in the regular classroom with non-disabled peers. Anything more restrictive must be justified by the student's needs. Historically, DC Public Schools has had one of the highest segregation rates of special ed. students in the nation. We work very hard at Lafayette in order to keep our disabled and non-disabled students integrated. Now, roughly 87% of our students with disabilities spend the majority of their day with their regular class. We have a dedicated and talented staff at Lafayette in order to accommodate all our students' needs and to keep them in their LRE. This is an exciting and wonderful time to be a part of Lafayette's special education program! Come join us on November 13th as we give an overview of what Special Education looks like at Lafayette and some of the models we use. See you then!

---Kerry

# LAFAYETTE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEAM BIOS

**We are fortunate to have such a talented and experienced group of professionals again this year! Meet some of our team members:**

**4th and 5th Grade Special Ed. Teacher, Kerry Cassidy:** Kerry was a special education teacher at Eaton ES before she came to Lafayette. She is trained in Read Naturally, Wilson Foundations, Touchmath, the Kennedy Center's Changing Education Through the Arts (CETA) programs, Responsive Classroom and more. She received her Masters in Special Education from George Washington University. She is also the Local School Agency representative for Lafayette .

**Early Childhood Special Ed. Teacher, Irene Taguian:** Irene has been teaching for 12 years. She has a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Special Education from George Mason University, and another Master's and undergraduate degrees from the University of the Philippines. Some of her training includes: the Kennedy Center's Changing Education Through the Arts (CETA) programs, Touchmath, Wilson Reading System (WRS), and Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS).

**1st and 2nd Special Ed. Teacher, Jane Cohen:** This year Jane is working with 1st and 2nd grade, doing mostly inclusion work with the students. Before coming to Lafayette, Jane was a special education teacher at Janney ES.

**4th and 5th Grade Special Ed. Teacher, Bridget O'Malley:** This is

Bridget's first year at Lafayette and her first year with DCPS. She previously worked at a public charter school. She is a Teach For America alum . Bridget primarily works with 4th and 5th grade inclusion.

**3rd Grade Special Ed. Teacher, Loni Hollins:** Loni has joined our team as a term-sub for Erin Brooks. She has been a teacher for 2 1/2 years in various parts of Maryland and now at Lafayette Elementary. She earned her undergraduate degree at The University of Hartford in Connecticut and went to Towson University in Maryland for her graduate program.

**School Psychologist, Harriet Kuhn:** Harriet joined our team this year. She administers, scores, and interprets cognitive and other psychological test data to assist in the determination of a student's eligibility for special education services. Harriet has a B.A. from Simmons College in Boston in psychology and two masters degrees; an M.A. from Catholic University in Psychological Services and an M.Ed. in Bilingual Special Education from George Mason University.

**Speech and Language Pathologist, Beth Schneider:** Beth Schneider is a speech-language pathologist who joined the Lafayette special education team this year. She received her undergraduate degree in Computer Science from Tufts University and her

masters degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders from Emerson College. During her career, Beth has worked in public school systems, private practice, and early intervention. She is a licensed, nationally certified, speech-language pathologist.

**Social Worker and School Counselor, Jillian Diesner:** Before coming to Lafayette, Jillian taught for 4 years at Wilkinson ES in Anacostia. She has a Master's in Special Education from GWU and another in Family Counseling from the University of Florida. Jillian is a former special education teacher and coordinator. She now works as the social worker and counselor for students who have behavioral support goals on their IEPs.

**Educational Aide, Lynda Henderson:** Lynda has been working as an aide since moving to Bethesda, MD with her family. This is her third year working at Lafayette.

**Educational Aide, Jared Catapano:** Jared is starting his second year at Lafayette. Jared works with the Special Education team as an Instructional Aide primarily working with fourth and fifth graders. He is a graduate of Ramapo College of New Jersey holding a Baccalaureate degree in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Literature. He is currently enrolled at Trinity University DC for a Master of Arts in Teaching degree.

# WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES?

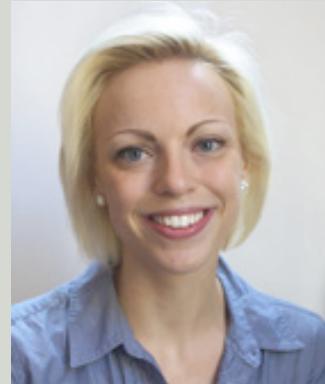
There are 14 specific primary terms included in IDEA under the lead definition of "child with a disability." These federal terms and definitions guide how States define disability and who is eligible for a free appropriate public education under special education law. Note, in order to fully meet the definition (and eligibility for special education and related services) as a "child with a disability," a child's educational performance **must be adversely affected** due to the disability.

Clicking on one of the linked terms will take you to NICHCY's fact sheet for that particular disability and to other related information.

1. [Autism](#)
2. [Deaf-Blindness](#)
3. [Deafness](#)
4. [Developmental Delay](#)
5. [Emotional Disturbance](#)

6. [Hearing Impairment](#)
7. [Intellectual Disability](#)
8. [Multiple Disabilities](#)
9. [Orthopedic Impairment](#)
10. [Other Health Impaired](#)
11. [Specific Learning Disability](#)
12. [Speech or Language Impairment](#)
13. [Traumatic Brain Injury](#)
14. [Visual Impairment Including Blindness](#)

Excerpt from NICHCY  
<http://www.nichcy.org/disabilities/categories/pages/default.aspx>



**Spotlight  
on Bridget  
O'Malley,  
4th/5th Grade  
Teacher**

Working with the Lafayette ES community so far this year has truly been a pleasure, and I have felt incredibly welcomed by the families and staff of the school. While this is my first year at Lafayette, I have been teaching special education in Washington, D.C. for three years. This year, I teach 4th and 5th grade reading, writing, and math inclusion primarily, but I have also recently started working with a small 2nd grade math pull-out group. There is no greater joy as a teacher than watching students learn and grow, not only academically but also in their confidence levels. I am located on Team 3 and am always available any questions you may have about special education. I can be reached at [bridget.omalley@dc.gov](mailto:bridget.omalley@dc.gov). Here's to a fantastic 2012-2013 school year!

## Dates to Remember: Tuesday, November 13 2012

We will meet after school at 3:30pm in the Special Education Services Center (aka portable #1, closest to the cafeteria) and light refreshments will be served. A brief overview of special education will be given, and members of the Lafayette team will be on hand to introduce themselves and answer any questions you may have. We hope to see you there!

## Friday November 2, 2012

Records Day - Early dismissal at 12:15

## Friday November 16, 2012

First Term progress reports will be sent home with the classroom report card.

## WISE NEWSLETTER

*Edited by Kerry Cassidy, M.A.; M.Ed*

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*Thanks to all of you!*