

UNCOMPAHGRE BOARD OF COOPERATIVE SERVICES (UNBOCS)

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Serving Norwood, Ouray, Ridgway, Telluride and West End Schools

Information to Share Newsletter

Volume 9, Issue #1

Welcome to the 2009-2010 School Year!

Welcome to the 2009-2010 school year and the first of four quarterly issues of the Uncompahgre BOCS Information to Share Newsletter. It is our intent to provide useful and timely information to parents and guardians who have children involved with the UNBOCS. The newsletters will be posted online at the UNBOCS website: www.unboocs.org.

This is the only copy of this newsletter that will be mass mailed - we're trying to save a few trees! However, if you'd still like to receive a print copy of this newsletter, please call Wendy at the UnBOCS office at 626-2977 and we'll add you to our mailing list. If you'd like to receive an email notification when each new issue of the newsletter is available on the website, please send your email address to wbolane@ridgway.k12.co.us and I'll add you to our parent email list.

If you have ideas of items, articles or information you would like to see in our newsletter, please feel free to contact Wendy Bolane at the phone number or email address listed above. We hope you all have had a fun and restful summer and that your school year starts off with a bang!

Sincerely, Wendy Bolane, UnBOCS program coordinator

UNBOCS Child Find Dates for 2009-2010

Ridgway	Wednesday	8/26/09	Ridgway School
Telluride	Monday	9/14/09	Telluride School (3-5 year olds)
Ouray	Friday	9/25/09	Baptist Church
Telluride	Monday	10/5/09	Telluride School (Birth-3 year olds)
West End	Friday	3/12/09	Naturita Elementary
Norwood	Friday	3/19/09	Norwood School

The Sunny Side of ADHD

From www.parenthood.com

To change the way you view your AD/HD child, Edward Hallowell recommends finding the positives in negative behaviors and nurturing these as special gifts:

Negative Trait

Hyperactive, restless Energetic
Intrusive
Can't stay on point
Disorganized
Stubborn
Inconsistent

Positive Mirror Trait

Energetic
Eager
Sees Connections others don't
Spontaneous
Persistent, won't give up
Shows flashes of brilliance

***** Peak Parent Center is offering two free workshops in Montrose Saturday, September 12, 2009. Childcare available! Topics are: From Bullying to Belonging and Friendship Building Strategies. To sign up call PEAK Parent Center at 800.284.0251 by September 8, 2009*****

2009/2010

UnBOCS Office Staff

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*Julie Derbes, Fiscal
*Wendy Bolane, UnBOCS Program Coordinator
*Johanna Berry Wasser, UnBOCS Specialist

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*Jill O'Dell, Lindsay Hepp and Annie Clark, OT; Maureen Reese, Therapy Assistant

*Melissa Turner, PT and Patty McIntosh PTA

*Kristine Ash, Audiologist

*Virginia Kile, Johanna Berry-Wasser, Ann Kochara and Virginia Stevenson, Early Childhood Specialists

*Sharon Sirotek, Jessica Burress, and Lisa McClun Psychologists

*Ursula Cristol
Cultural Mediator

*Dee Williams and Kristi Gabriel
SWAP

*Wendy Bolane
GT and Transition

Early Entrance to Kindergarten or First Grade for Exceptionally Gifted Children **By: Wendy Bolane, Instructional Program Coordinator, UNBOCS**

During the 2008-2009 school year, elementary principals, school psychologists and UNBOCS personnel met to formulate a process for determining qualified applicants for our Early Entrance Program. The Early Entrance Program is designed to allow *Exceptionally Gifted* 4 and 5 year olds the opportunity to enter Kindergarten or First Grade a year early.

Most 4 and 5 year old students, even most 4 and 5 year old gifted students are well served in their normal classroom environment. However, there are a rare few individuals that would be better served by an accelerated program of study. It is for this reason that the UNBOCS developed this protocol. Below is a brief description of the process for determining eligibility for this program.

- Parents learn about Early Access availability and requirements from a variety of sources including pre-schools, community sources, and District locations.
- Interested parents pick up an application packet at schools, District offices, private pre-schools, or community locations after Feb 15th of each school year.
- Packets are turned in at the district office no later than April 1st. 60 calendar day time-line starts.
- District sends preschool/Kindergarten teacher Nomination form and BASC checklist and conducts interview with Parent/Guardian to determine next steps. If evaluation is to be scheduled, district gives parents contact information of the school psychologist and collects a non-refundable fee of \$300.00.
- Parent contacts school psychologist directly to schedule IQ testing.
- Formal evaluation is conducted by the district School Psychologist including the WIPSI, an IQ evaluation; the BASC, a social/emotional checklist completed by the Parent/Guardian; and the VMI which measures fine and visual motor skills.
- Assessments are scored by the school psychologist who gives them. Children must fall at the 98% or above to qualify.
- The UNBOCS Early Childhood Specialist conducts a classroom observation using the Social Attribute Checklist, which is included in the final report.
- The School Psychologist generates a written report and meets with the Parents/Guardians and the Early Entrance Committee (EEC) to discuss the results of the formal evaluation.
- If the child has met the criteria the EEC meets to discuss placement and develop the child's Advanced Learning Plan (ALP). Student performance will be monitored at least every 5 weeks.
- If the child has NOT met the criteria, the EEC meets to discuss any accommodations that should be made for the student in his/her regular classroom placement.
- Dispute resolution shall take place if necessary.

It is important to remember that this is a process designed for Exceptionally Gifted students; it is not intended to bypass the district policies for school entrance ages. This is an extremely rigorous process and Parents/Guardians should not enter into it lightly. It is the hope of the UNBOCS that this process will create the pathway for appropriate placement for these exceptional kiddos and ensure their future success in school. For more information regarding the Early Entrance Process, please contact Wendy Bolane, Instructional Program Coordinator for the UNBOCS at 970-626-2977 or wbolane@gmail.com.

7 BACK-TO-SCHOOL TIPS: Start the Year Off Right (from www.peakparent.org)

1. Build Alliances

The old saying, “There is strength in numbers,” is still true today. If challenges arise during the school year, it is helpful to know you have others you can turn to. Now is the time to nurture alliances with teachers, support staff, parents, students and others who impact you and your child. Call or send a thank you note to those who provided “bright spots” during the previous year. Mention how you appreciated their involvement and how you look forward to their future support. Contact others you would like to include among your supporters in the coming year and let them know the important impact they can have in your lives. Be sure to offer your support to others in return.

2. Review Your Child’s IEP

Many times Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are written in the spring. Your child’s new teacher this fall may have no idea which learning goals are priorities for the coming year. Before school starts, read through the IEP to refresh your own memory. Talk over the learning goals with your child, especially those old enough to advocate for themselves. Then make sure each classroom teacher working with your child has a copy and understands the IEP’s intent. An IEP’s strength lies in the parents’ and teachers’ understanding of it and active participation in implementing it.

3. Create a “What Works” Portfolio

All parents should consider creating a “What Works” portfolio. It can be used to smooth your child’s transition each new school year. The portfolio should contain positive descriptions of your child. Include a profile describing your child’s strengths, interests, favorite activities, and learning priorities for the year. Include tips about physical assistance or communication with your child if these are needs. Describe behavioral supports that work or ways to structure situations to avoid behavior challenges. Make a list of tasks, roles, and responsibilities for a teacher’s assistant, if applicable. Describe classroom arrangements that help support your child (i.e., seating and positioning needs, noise-level tolerance, climate comfort levels, etc.). Include samples of your child’s work and describe any accommodations or modifications that were made to the original assignment. Share the names of students who are friends with your child and give tips on facilitating connections with other students. Finally, include a photo or brief video showing your child participating with other students and being supported successfully in the classroom.

4. Request a Meeting

Call your child’s teacher and request a meeting to share insights and information about your child. This is your chance to begin developing a positive relationship with your child’s teacher and to establish yourself as an active team member in your child’s education. This is a great time to review your child’s IEP and “What Works” portfolio. Most teachers will appreciate your involvement and the knowledge you can share about how your child learns best. Consider this initial meeting as a “marketing” opportunity for your child. End the meeting with plans for on-going communication with the teacher. Will you make contact daily, weekly, or only “as needed?” Will you communicate using notes, telephone, email, or in person? Establishing this routine reinforces your involvement.

5. Visit the Classroom

Making a presentation to your child’s classmates can be a great way to begin developing positive connections between other students and your child. Be sure to present your child as the “star” of the presentation. Consider starting with a story that is fun, educational, and sparks discussion. There are many books that speak about differences or disability in a positive way. Some examples for elementary-age children include *A Bad Case of Stripes*, *Different Just Like Me*, and *Special People, Special Ways*. Explain how your family views your child’s disability and what makes your child unique. Answer their questions honestly and address any fears. (Can he play with me? Will I hurt her? How do I talk to him? etc.) Kids are natural helpers so let them know what they can do to be a friend and support to your child. Finally, remind them that we are all more alike than different.

6. Stay Involved

After laying the groundwork, you can help ensure your child’s success by being involved at school throughout the year. Consider joining the PTA or Building Accountability Committee, volunteering in the classroom, helping in the lunchroom or library, or assisting with special events. The more active you are, the more impact you can have on your child’s school, the people who work there, and the education your child is receiving.

7. Continue Your Own Education

Because you are your child's most important ally, it is essential that you develop the skills to help your child create a rich and meaningful life. Maybe you would like to learn more about your child's developmental and educational needs, how to write and implement a good IEP, or how to advocate for your child. PEAK Parent Center offers a variety of resources to assist parents to increase their knowledge and skills: consider attending a PEAK workshop or conference, check out a book from PEAK's family library, or call a Parent Advisor at PEAK for free one-on-one advice. Call 1-800-284-0251 or in Colorado Springs (719) 531-9400.

Montrose County confirms first case of swine flu

By Mallory George

Daily Press Writer

Published/Last Modified on *Friday, August 7, 2009 4:13 AM MDT*

MONTROSE — Montrose County has its first confirmed case of the novel H1N1 flu virus, Karen Connor, health educator for Montrose County Health and Human Services, said yesterday.

The state health department returned the results yesterday of samples sent from kids who developed flu-like symptoms last week at a camp in Cedaredge that tested positive for influenza A in a rapid test. The state health department test results indicated that one of the campers from Montrose County was infected with H1N1, also known as swine flu, which is one of the subtypes of influenza A.

"We're not panicking about it, and we don't want people panicking about it," Connor said. "Just handle it like it's any other flu."

Now that H1N1 has reached Montrose County, rapid tests that indicate someone has influenza A will not be tested further at the state health department to determine if it is H1N1.

"It will just be considered probable," Connor said. However, if people are hospitalized because of influenza A, those samples will be tested for H1N1.

H1N1 symptoms are much like those of regular seasonal flus, including fever, body aches, runny or stuffy nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.

Connor recommended that people take the same precautions as they would with any other airborne virus — wash your hands frequently, avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, stay home if you become symptomatic and cough and sneeze into sleeves or the inside of the elbow.

She also said that once someone experiences the onset of symptoms, he or she should stay home for seven to 10 days. Or, if the patient experiences symptoms for longer than 10 days, he or she should stay home 24 hours after the symptoms are gone.

There is no vaccine available yet for H1N1, but there may be one in the fall.

Like the seasonal flu, the H1N1 virus varies in severity from person to person. Both can cause mild to severe illnesses, and both have resulted in death. However, research conducted by the

Centers for Disease Control indicates that H1N1 has a greater disease burden in people younger than 25 of age than in older people, while the seasonal flu usually causes greater burden in older people.

Both viruses may affect people more who have underlying conditions such as asthma, diabetes, suppressed immune systems, pregnancy, heart disease, etc.

The Cedaredge camp — which Connor said did not disclose it's name — closed its last session one day early when campers developed flu-like symptoms, and it cancelled the next session. However, a new session is slated to start Monday, Aug. 10.

For more information about the novel H1N1 virus, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site at www.cdc.gov.

Protect Your Health

Take these everyday steps to protect your health

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) Keep away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick.

If you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

In children, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

What Services Does the Uncompahgre BOCS Provide?

Audiology Services

Educational Audiologists in Colorado provide comprehensive support and management to children with listening and/or hearing difficulties, birth through high school graduation. Responsibilities include management of early childhood and school hearing screening programs, assessment of auditory disorders, determination and management of hearing instrumentation devices, consultation regarding auditory habilitation activities, management of hearing conservation programs, and counseling and training for school staff and parents.

The UnBOCS Audiologist is Kristine Ash.

Cultural Mediator Services

Servicios Culturales del Mediador

A cultural mediator plays a critical role in facilitating successful communication with students and families who speak a language other than English, and in serving as a link between the culture of the school and the culture of the child's family. The Cultural Mediator translates assessment questions, and supporting evaluation and responses accurately and impartially. The Cultural Mediator has a background in cultural competence, and interprets school information and program recommendations to the family, as well as the family's history, family dynamics, and concerns to the school.

Un mediador cultural desempeña un papel fundamental en facilitar la comunicación con los estudiantes y las familias que hablan un idioma distinto del Inglés, y sirve como una conexión cultural entre la cultura americana y la cultura de dicha familia y de su niño. El mediador cultural se traduce pregunta de evaluación, y apoyar la evaluación y respuestas con exactitud y de manera imparcial. El mediador cultural tiene un fondo en la competencia cultural, escuela e interpreta la información y las recomendaciones programa para la familia, así como la historia de la familia, dinámica familiar, y se refiere a la escuela.

The UnBOCS Cultural Mediator is Ursula Cristol.

Early Childhood Services

Special education is a state and federal mandated program for 3- to 5- year old children who meet state eligibility criteria under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). Special education preschool services and required related services are provided for children at their preschools, in their daycare settings or in private homes.

Children's progress will be monitored with an authentic ongoing assessment called Creative Curriculum. Preschool teachers and service providers have been trained in the Social Emotional Pyramid Model. Early intervention is critical for children who have developmental delays or disabilities.

Early Childhood Specialists for the UnBOCS are: Virginia Kile, Johanna Berry-Wasser, Ann Kochara and Virginia Stevenson.

Gifted and Talented (GT) Services

Gifted and talented children means those persons between the ages of 5 and 21 whose abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment are so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational needs. Gifted and talented students are capable of high performance, exceptional production, or exceptional learning behavior by virtue of any or a combination of general or specific intellectual ability; specific academic aptitude; creative or productive thinking; leadership and human relations abilities; visual arts, performing arts, spatial or musical abilities and psychomotor abilities.

The Gifted and Talented Coordinator for the UnBOCS is Wendy Bolane.

Occupational Therapy (OT) Services

An Occupational Therapist is a trained health professional that uses purposeful, goal-directed activities and task analysis to enable a child with a disability to benefit from their individualized Education Program (IEP). The focus of OT services in a school setting is to promote functional independence or participation within the educational environment. A school-based OT addresses a child's needs in the areas of fine motor and gross motor skills, sensory processing, visual perceptual skills and self-care.

OT services may be delivered directly to the child, on behalf of the child (consultation with parents and teachers) or through modifications and support for school personnel that will be provided for the child. School-based Occupational Therapy services are not intended to satisfy the medical needs of a student and can not "stand alone" as a special education service.

Occupational Therapists for the UnBOCS are Jill O'Dell, Lindsay Hepp and Annie Clark.

Physical Therapy (PT) Services

Physical Therapy provides therapy services for children who qualify for special education services, ages 3 to 21 years. Areas addressed by PT as a related service may include gross motor development skills, mobility, adaptive equipment, positioning needs and other functional skills and concerns which interfere with the student's ability to perform at school, promote improved functional independence and/or to assist with the implementation of appropriate adaptive equipment and/or accommodations. PT as a related, special education service is NOT intended to satisfy all of the student's medical needs which may be related to the diagnosis, and can not "stand alone" as a special education service.

Melissa Turner is the physical therapist for the UnBOCS, Patty McIntosh serves as her assistant.

School Psychology Services

School psychologists are the mental health professionals who help children and youth overcome barriers to success in school, at home, and in life. They use many different strategies to address individual needs, as well as enhance systems that support students on school and district-wide levels.

School psychologists lower barriers to healthy learning and behavior through intervention, prevention, assessment, consultation, and advocacy. School psychologists work with parents, educators, and other mental health service providers to help each child develop resiliency, competence, and self esteem, resulting in improving the lives and learning of children and youth.

Sharon Sirotek, Jessica Burress and Lisa McClun serve as the school psychologists for the UnBOCS.

School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP)

The School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP) is a collaborative initiative between the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), the Department of Education, and local school districts. The purpose of SWAP is to provide successful services for young adults aged 16-25 that results in employment and increased community linkages through career exploration, career development, employment related instruction, job development or placement, case management and follow-up.

Dee Williams and Kristi Gabriel are the SWAP Coordinators.

Special Education Services

Special education means specially designed instruction to address the unique needs of a child with a disability, including academic support in the general education classroom, skill development services provided for part or all of the school day, and life skill development as appropriate. The UnBOCS makes available special education and related services for the education of any child between the ages of 3-21 who is found eligible following the formal evaluation process.

Special Education teachers are employed by each individual district.

Speech Language Pathology (SLP) Services

Students who have Speech Language disabilities in Colorado have access to a range of services for educational, communication, and social support. The rules for the administration of the Exceptional Children's Education Act (ECEA) in Colorado define a child with speech-language disability as having a "communication disorder which prevents the child from receiving reasonable educational benefit from regular education." In the UnBOCS, speech-language assessment and intervention services are provided by a licensed, certified speech therapist.

Kelli King, Cecil Beech and Sarah Cowley are the Speech Therapists for the UnBOCS.