

It's hard to believe a quarter of the year has gone by! It's a perfect time to reflect on all the things we're grateful for – your commitment to students with disabilities is high on the Board's list. The CEC-NH Board wishes you a warm and peaceful holiday season.

Your CEC-NH Board of Directors

PROMISING PRACTICES IN NH – The following was shared by Merrimack Valley School District's Melissa Lear, ELA Coach and Mary Paradise, Special Education Director.

Merrimack Valley School District Literacy Interventions: There are many intervention programs out there and we have not used them all. However, we did want to share these interventions which are yielding results for our students. It is our intention to reduce the number of students who are not successful in learning because of lagging literacy skills.

- **Heggerty – Bridge to Reading:** Through a series of daily, short, and engaging activities, Heggerty focuses on phonemic awareness exercises that include rhyming, blending, segmenting, and manipulating sounds within words. These activities are carefully designed to be developmentally appropriate for young learners, providing a scaffolded progression to build their phonemic awareness skills. Heggerty's structured lessons are not only research-based but also teacher-friendly, offering educators a resourceful tool to seamlessly integrate phonemic awareness instruction into their daily routines. This has been used as both Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions for some students via individual or small group work in and out of the general education classroom.
- **Reading Horizons' Elevate (grades 4-12)** Grounded in research-based methodologies, **Elevate** focuses on phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The approach is a combination of adaptive online activities, and targeted instruction. Additionally, **Elevate** incorporates diagnostic assessments enabling educators to tailor interventions and track progress effectively. Teachers and students alike have reported they like the program and while the data is still preliminary, we are seeing progress for students utilizing the Elevate program.
- **The Sonday System - Tier 3:** The Sonday System incorporates Orton Gillingham proven methods to help students learn and recognize beginning letters and sounds. It is a skill based, multi-sensory instructional program that is systematic, sequential, cumulative, and aligns with common core standards. This program provides structured 30-minute reading intervention blocks for small groups or individualized work. Students are engaged and participating in lessons readily and we are seeing students make progress in their literacy skills.

If you have any questions or want more information feel free to email Melissa Lear mlear@mvsdpride.org or Mary Paradise at mparadise@mvsdpride.org. If you would like to share a promising practice for a future publication, please reach out to Mary and she will be happy to pass the information along to the CEC-NH Communications Committee.

NH-CEC TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Stacy Millington-Hyjek (Enfield Elementary School) was honored as the CEC-NH's Elementary Special Education Teacher of the Year because she represents all of NH Special Educators who strive to educate all exceptional children through her commitment, dedication, and innovation!



Here is Stacy being honored at the NHASEA Winter Conference in March 2023 with CEC-NH Board members Lois Stevens, Jenn Katz-Borin, and Kelly Mask.

Do you know someone who represents the best in the field? Check out the link to find out more about the nomination process for the 2024 Special Education Teacher of the Year.

Applications/Nominations will be accepted until February 1, 2024. The winner of this award will be honored at the Edies in June 2024. The winner will also be eligible to be considered for the international "CEC Special Educator of the Year." For more information: [TOY 2023-24.pdf](#)

TIP OF THE MONTH:

With the first marking period in the rearview, an increase in special education referrals may be on the rise. It's important to remember that IDEA, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and best practice require student access to high quality interventions within a multi-tiered system of support. While "the state of the art" varies across the state, buildings should have a process to support teachers to identify an appropriate intervention, set an intervention goal with adequate time to implement and monitor the student's progress. If the student's response to this intervention is not adequate, the district may consider other interventions including a referral. Some teachers come to referral meetings with extensive data while others may not. This lack of data can interfere with the special education team's ability to effectively respond to the referral. It is the referral team's responsibility to make sure adequate information is considered and to be sure the following questions are asked and answered:

- What interventions have been tried?
- For how long?
- And what are the results?

IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T HEARD

The Progress Center - Keeping with the concept of data collection and data-based decision-making, check out this site for great resources on special education. [Homepage | Progress Center \(promotingprogress.org\)](#)

CEC National Conference - Don't miss out on attending one of the most exciting special education professional development offerings. The conference will be held **in San Antonio on March 13, 2024 - March 16, 2024**. There is still time to register at this link: <https://exceptionalchildren.org/>. If you are planning to attend, please let Amanda Hughlock, know so NH folks can network while in San Antonio. (ahughlock@sunapeeschools.org).