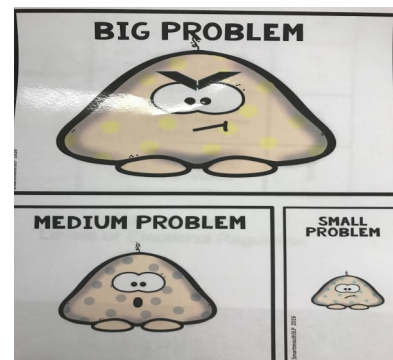
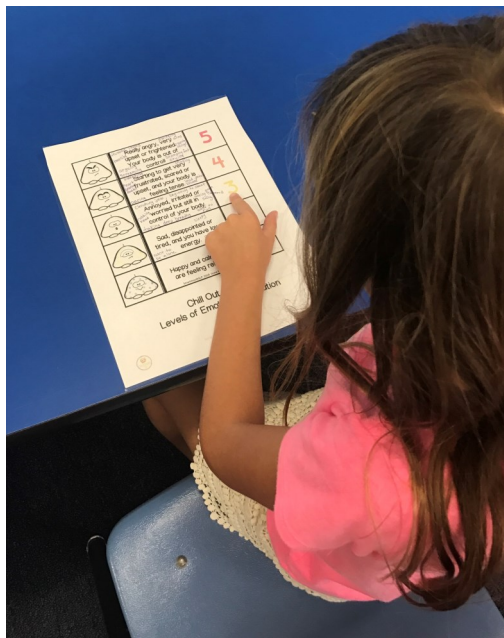


## St. Johns County School District

### PV/PV Rawlings Elementary Problem Solving techniques

PV/PV Rawlings Elementary has been working with their K-5 social skills groups on regulating emotions and keeping problems small. They are working on recognizing signs that their emotions are climbing out of control by using a visual scale to gauge where they are and where they need to be. They are learning strategies to bring their emotions down the scale. They are then connecting regulating their emotions to keeping their initial problems small.

PV/PV Rawlings Elementary uses role playing, prepared phrases and actual real situations in the lunchroom, classroom, out at recess, and in resource classes to accomplish these goals. Once a week they combine an Occupational Therapy skill in their teaching to help students in this area as well. They are looking forward to applying these skills outside of school and will include some family and community participation next quarter.



#### Important Dates:

11/14, 6:30-8:30 p.m. – Gifted Parent  
Advisory Committee Meeting,  
Ponte Vedra High School

12/05, 6:00-7:30 p.m. – ESE Parent Advisory  
Committee Meeting, Fullerwood Center,  
10 Hildreth Drive

*Contributed By: Mary E'Errico M. Ed,  
ESE Varying Exceptionalities Teacher,  
PV/PV Rawlings Elementary*



## R. J. Murray Middle School's 2017 Rookie Teacher of the Year

R. J. Murray Middle School is proud to announce Mr. Kirsimagi, outstanding educator and teacher leader, as their 2017 Rookie Teacher of the Year. Mr. Kirsimagi teaches 6th-8th grade science and social studies in the Behavior Unit at R. J. Murray. He creates a positive learning environment for his students with high engagement strategies and positive rewards and incentives. He also sets high academic expectations and instills joy and love of learning for all of his students. Most importantly, Mr. Kirsimagi strongly believes in building positive and influential relationships with students and serves as the MMS Positive Behavior Intervention Support lead teacher. His students describe him as caring, compassionate, and fair.

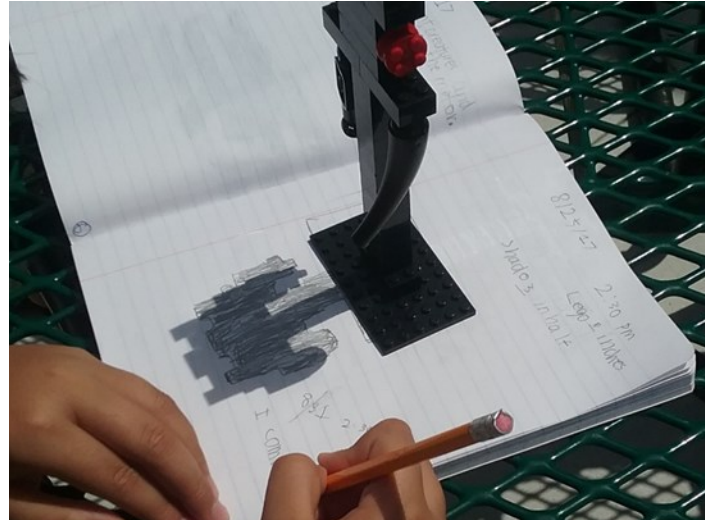
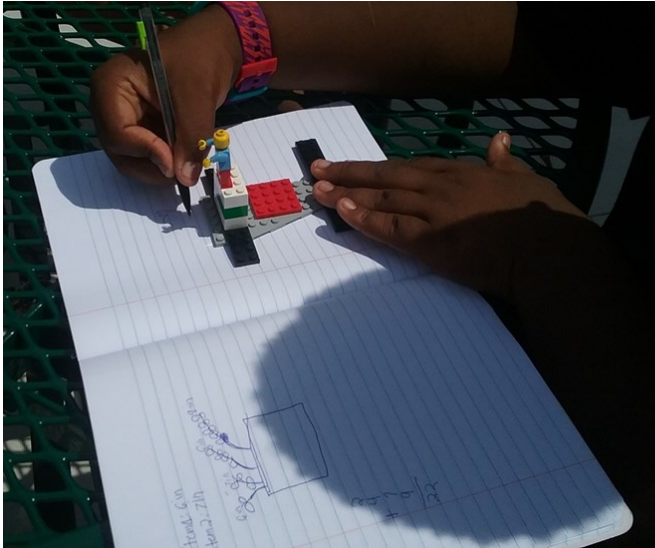
Congratulations to Mr. Kirsimagi for representing R.J. Murray Middle School as the Rookie Teacher of the Year!

*Contributed By: Melissa Lime,  
Assistant Principal, R. J. Murray Middle School*





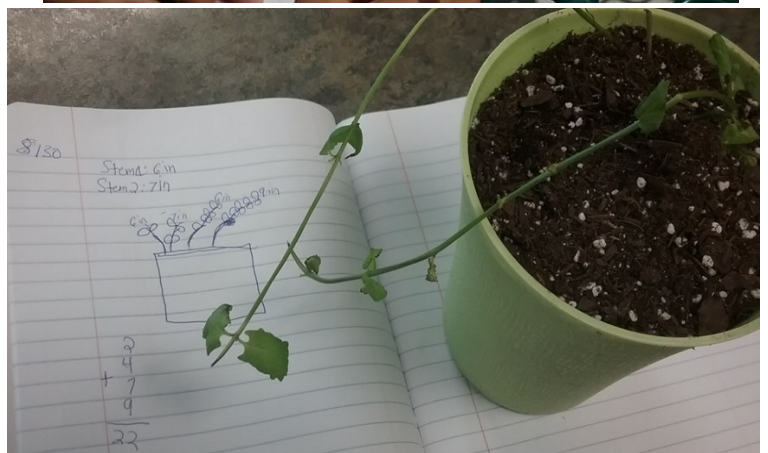
## Valley Ridge Academy's Middle School Science Class



VRA has been learning about scientific processes. They learned that scientists make observations, infer, predict, sort data, measure make models, and compare.

They studied shadows for three weeks to develop questions as scientists. They also made observations and inferences, and compared data. Some questions they wanted to learn about included:

Why do shadows change? When are shadows bigger? They learned from their text that shadows occur when light is blocked. VRA also learned that when it is cloudy, there is not enough light to see a shadow. Their shadows appeared larger in the morning than in the afternoon. They also noticed that their shadows appeared larger from 8/25 to 8/31.



The class transplanted a mint plant into a larger pot and took measurements of stem length and leaf quantity to see if the transplant would increase growth.

*Contributed By: Rebekah Zaiser, ESE Teacher,*



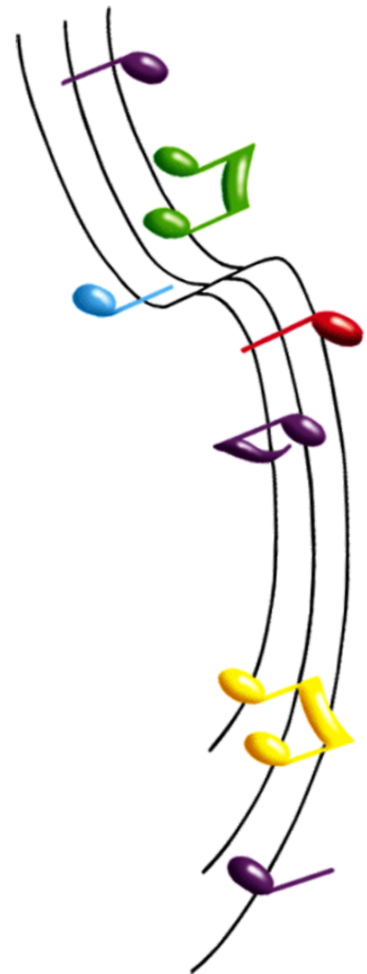
The class made a model of a tornado in a bottle with glitter to learn about storm debris. They learned that sometimes debris makes it harder to see the actual storm.



## Hickory Creek Elementary' s Chorus Debut

The 3rd through 5th grade chorus at Hickory Creek Elementary made their 2017 debut at the Westminster Woods Fall Festival on Saturday, October 21st. This talented group of children gave an impressive performance of five songs that included jazz, pop and patriotic selections. These students were amazing and were a great showcase for the school!

*Contributed By: Joy Reichenberg, Assistant Principal, Hickory Creek Elementary*





# What Is Exceptional Student Education for Children with Disabilities?

In Florida, children with disabilities who need specially designed instruction and related services are called exceptional students. The special help they are given at school is called exceptional student education (ESE). The purpose of ESE is to help each child with a disability progress in school and prepare for life after school.

ESE services include specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of the child. ESE services may also include technology devices, therapy, special transportation, or other supports. There is no charge for ESE services. A team of people make decisions about the child's needs and ESE services. The child's parents are part of this team. This process is based on the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The main steps in the ESE decision-making process are described below.

**Referral for Individual Evaluation:** A referral is a request for a formal review of all the information available about the child's learning needs, strengths, problems, and interests. A team of people, including the parent(s), reviews the information. The team uses a problem-solving process during the review in order to find out what type of instruction works best for the child. The team will decide whether additional evaluation is needed to determine if the child is eligible for ESE services.

**Individual Evaluation:** An evaluation includes all the procedures used to gather information about the child. These procedures may include interventions, interviews, observations, and, sometimes, individual tests that are given by a specialist, such as a school psychologist. The team, including the parent(s), makes decisions about which particular evaluation procedures will be used. The parent(s) must sign a consent form before the evaluation process can begin.

**Eligibility Determination:** After the evaluation, the school holds a meeting called an eligibility staffing. The parent(s) and the rest of the team discuss the information collected about the child. Then the team determines whether the child is eligible for ESE services. To receive ESE services, the child must meet the criteria listed in Florida's State Board of Education Rules, State Statutes and District Special Programs and Procedures.

**Parents Are Part of the Team!:** Teachers and other school staff can answer parents' questions about ESE and explain how parents can participate in their child's education. School staff can also provide information about parents' rights and responsibilities in the ESE process. Parents who want more information may contact the school principal or the ESE Administrator in the local school district office (<http://www.fldoe.org>). The rights of parents in the ESE process are called their "Procedural Safeguards." Parents receive a written summary of their procedural safeguards when they are asked to give their consent for their child to be individually evaluated.

**What Happens if the Child Is Eligible? Development of the First IEP:** If the child is eligible for ESE services; the next step is to hold a meeting to write an individual educational plan (IEP). The child's parents are invited to this meeting because they are part of the IEP team. The IEP team decides which special services and supports the child needs in order to make progress and achieve his or her annual goals.

The IEP team also decides where the child will receive services. Most children with disabilities spend the majority of their school day in general education classrooms. Some children leave the general education classroom for part of the day to receive services in an ESE classroom. A few children spend all day in a special classroom or in a special school.

**Consent for Services to Begin:** A child cannot receive ESE services for the first time until the IEP is written and a parent has given written consent.

**Review and Revision of the IEP:** The IEP team decides how a child's progress will be measured and reported. At least once every 12 months, the IEP team meets to discuss the child's progress and to review the IEP. However, because a child's needs may change at any time, the IEP may also be amended at an IEP team meeting.

*Resource by:* <http://www.columbiak12.com/student-support-services-ese-e8111472>

## Upcoming Events

**Make Money Work: Borrowing Money- November 2, 4:30 P.M.-6:00 P.M.,** A financial literacy workshop for students ages 15-20 who want to learn about money management and the basics of borrowing money. Students will learn about the benefits and drawbacks to different types of loans. The Make Money Work program is designed for students who want to learn about the value of money, developing a healthy banking relationship, wise borrowing and spending, and protecting oneself from identity theft and fraud. There are a limited number of spots available. These workshops are open to students with various disabilities, as well as existing CARD constituents. Location: UF Developmental Pediatric Center, 6271 St. Augustine Rd., Suite 1, Jacksonville, 32217. Click <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/making-money-work-financial-literacy-workshop-tickets-37946213145> to register or for more information. Questions? Contact [audrey.bringman@jax.ufl.edu](mailto:audrey.bringman@jax.ufl.edu).

**College Bound: THRIVE at the University of North Florida- November 6, 5:00-6:30 P.M.,** An informational workshop for parents and students. Speaker: Tara Rowe, Project Coordinator for THRIVE (Transition to Health, Resources, Independence, Viable careers, and Education) at University of North Florida. This workshop is for high school students with ASD and related disorders, and their parents or guardians, who are considering applying for college at the University of North Florida. Learn about THRIVE and resources that may be helpful to you while pursuing higher education. Please register one ticket per person. Location: UF Developmental Pediatrics, 6271 St. Augustine Rd., Suite 1, Jax, FL. 32217. Click <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/college-bound-thrive-at-the-university-of-north-florida-tickets-38109335047> to register. For more information contact [audrey.bringman@jax.ufl.edu](mailto:audrey.bringman@jax.ufl.edu) or call (904)633-4330.

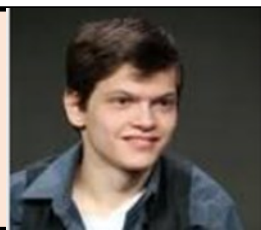
**\*\*New\*\* PAIP – Overcoming Disorganization- Nov 7, 14, 28 & Dec 5, 12, 19,** A program offered by the UF Health Pediatric Assessment and Intervention Program (PAIP). Do you have a 12-17 year old who needs help getting organized? Our organizational skills group is designed to teach your middle or high school student quick and easy-to-use strategies to promote organization and improve skills surrounding homework, study habits, and project completion. This group will meet weekly, for an hour and a half and will tackle a different strategy specifically designed for students with deficits in executive functioning, attention, and goal setting. For more information contact [marlena.jenkins@jax.ufl.edu](mailto:marlena.jenkins@jax.ufl.edu) or call (904) 633-0762.

**The Autumn Drumline: Performance at Bartram Trail High School- November 8, 6:00 P.M.,** Join percussion instructor Jay Brown and the Autumn Drumline for their performance at the *St. Johns Middle School Cross Country Championship*. Location: 7399 Longleaf Pine Pkwy, St. Johns, FL 32259. For more information contact [jayan.brwn@jax.ufl.edu](mailto:jayan.brwn@jax.ufl.edu).

**25<sup>th</sup> Annual CARD Conference – St. Pete Beach- January 12-14,** The purpose of this annual statewide conference is to provide information on state-of-the-art practices in areas that promote best practices in education, early intervention and quality community based life-styles for individuals with autism, deaf-blindness, and related disabilities. For more information click <http://card-usf.fmhi.usf.edu/CARDconference/> The 25th Annual Statewide Autism Conference and PEPSA Pre-Conference, will take place January 12-14, 2018, at the Trade Winds Island Grand Resort, in St. Pete Beach, Florida.

**ADOS-2 Training @ the Annual CARD Conference – St. Pete Beach- January 11-12,** This 2-day workshop teaches, through instruction and live demonstration, how to use the ADOS-2 to clinically assess and diagnose autism. Who should attend? Psychiatrists, psychologists, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, and other professionals who assess and diagnose autism spectrum disorders. Location: The TradeWinds Island Grand Resort in St. Pete, FL. For more information click <http://card-usf.fmhi.usf.edu/CARDconference/ADOS.html>

Micah D. Fowler, born March 5, 1998 in New Jersey, is an American actor with cerebral palsy. He is most known for his roles in “Labor Day” and as JJ DiMeo in the television series “Speechless”. Fowler has also had minor roles in “Blue’s Clues” and “Sesame Street”.





Jill Tabala, Executive Secretary  
(904) 547-7672 Jill.Tabala@stjohns.k12.fl.us

### **Program Specialists**

**Lynn Adkins** (904) 547-7697 (office)  
Lynn.Adkins@stjohns.k12.fl.us  
Specific Learning Disabilities, Learning Strategies,  
Other Health Impaired, FSA/EOC Waivers

**Helen DiMare**, (904) 547-7692 (office)  
Helen.Dimare@stjohns.k12.fl.us  
Gifted Services

**George Freeman**, (904) 547-7704 (office)  
George.Freeman@stjohns.k12.fl.us  
Emotional Behavioral Disorders,  
Mental Health Counseling, Behavior Specialists

**Avery Greene**, (904) 547-7557 (office)  
Avery.Greene@stjohns.k12.fl.us  
Hospital Homebound, Orthopedically Impaired,  
Traumatic Brain Injured, Visually Impaired, Virtual  
School, Surrogate Parents, Private Instructional  
Personnel, Parent Advisory Meetings

**Leigh Ann Hale**, (904) 547-7678 (office)  
Leigh.Hale@stjohns.k12.fl.us  
Transition, Intellectual Disabilities, Alternate  
Assessment, Diploma Options/Deferrals

**Sonia Howley**, (904) 547-7543 (office)  
Sonia.Howley@stjohns.k12.fl.us  
Speech/Language Impaired, Deaf Hard of Hearing

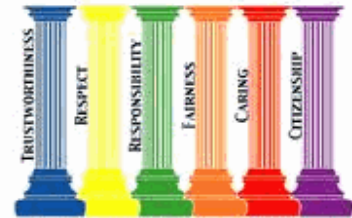
**Lisa Thacker**, (904) 547-7530 (office)  
Lisa.Thacker@stjohns.k12.fl.us  
Autism Spectrum Disorders,  
Access Points Curriculum

### **St. Johns County School District** **Exceptional Student Education Department**

**Lisa Bell, Director**  
Lisa.Bell@stjohns.k12.fl.us  
(904) 547-7672 (office)  
(904) 547-7687 (fax)

**Tina Kennon, Assistant Director**  
Tina.Kennon@stjohns.k12.fl.us  
(904) 547-7546 (office)  
(904) 547-7544 (fax)  
OT/PT, Assistive Tech, 504, McKay Scholarships

## **CHARACTER COUNTS!**



**ST. JOHNS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Sarah Coffin, Confidential Staff Secretary  
(904) 547-7712 Sarah.Coffin@stjohns.k12.fl.us

### **Mission Statement: To identify and meet the unique educational needs of exceptional students and to provide support and resources to enhance educational opportunities so they become productive citizens.**

ESE programs and services address the unique needs of students who are gifted in kindergarten through 12th grade and those with mild, moderate and severe disabilities from age three until they graduate with a regular diploma or until their 22nd birthday. ESE programs and services are designed to assist students in reaching their educational goals through the use of instructional and behavioral approaches which are research-based and exemplify best practices. Technology is used in many creative ways to meet student needs as well.

ESE services are available at all district schools for gifted students and students who have mild to moderate disabilities. PreK students with disabilities and students with more significant disabilities are served in cluster programs at selected sites. Program support is provided to students, parents and school personnel by program specialists based at the district office. Students with disabilities who are not eligible for services through the ESE program may be eligible for an accommodations plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

### **WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER ELECTRONICALLY?**

We hope that you find this newsletter informative and useful. The next issue of the Parents As Partners Newsletter will be posted to the St. Johns County School District web site at [www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/dept/academicsservices/e.se](http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/dept/academicsservices/e.se).

For other parent resources, visit our website at: [www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/e.se/resources/](http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/e.se/resources/)

