

St. Johns County School District
Exceptional Student Education
40 Orange Street
St. Augustine FL 32084
(904) 547-7672
(904) 547-7687 (fax)

Lisa Bell
Director



September 15, 2020

Dear Parents:

On June 13, 2008, Governor Crist signed into law Senate Bill 856. The bill, called “Disability History and Awareness Instruction,” requires school districts to designate the first two weeks of October as Disability History and Awareness Weeks. The bill also encourages schools to provide information about disability history and promote the awareness of the contributions of individuals with disabilities.

One of every five Americans is a person with a disability. A person may be born with a disability. A person may acquire a disability through an accident or illness. A person may acquire a disability simply as a part of growing older. Despite the fact that disability is a natural part of life, people with disabilities have not always had access to equal opportunities. Not until 1975, with the passage of the federal Education for All Handicapped Children Act, did school-aged children with disabilities have a right to a free appropriate public education.

Florida started the first special education class in 1926 in Jacksonville. Since 1926, specially designed instruction and related services have expanded throughout Florida. Now, approximately 401,700 students identified with disabilities are participating in Florida’s public education and are graduating and going on to postsecondary education or employment. In St. Johns County, over 7,000 students are identified as students with disabilities.

We are proud to participate in promoting awareness of disability history and contributions of individuals with disabilities. At the regular school board meeting on October 13, 2020, I will ask that the board adopt a resolution to designate the first two weeks in October 2020 as Disability History and Awareness Weeks.

Thank you for helping us raise awareness of the abilities of all persons and for sharing this information with other family members. Should you need further information, please contact us at (904) 547-7672.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Bell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Director for Exceptional Student Education