

## USING BLOGS FOR WRITERS

"For students with LD who may struggle with generalization, blog writing offers an experiential environment that does not have to be translated to the "real world" - it *is* real." (Jones, 2012)

Blogs are web sites that reflect an author's informal thoughts on topics of their own personal interest. They may have one author or many and most will invite comments from readers. Classroom blogs can offer several benefits for writing instruction. They create an authentic audience for writing. Because blogs have a real audience, they change the purpose of the writing from finishing an assignment to communicating a message. Some may no longer be concerned about the grade they will receive, but rather will write until they believe they can be understood.

Research is limited regarding blogging and students with Learning Disabilities. Studies available suggest that authentic audiences can increase the writing output and achievement of diverse groups of learners, including those with LD.

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## IT'S A CONTEST!!

We need a new title for our newsletter. Please submit your idea for the title of this newsletter to Denise Kelly via email by **February 22, 2013 at 4:00 pm**. Winning title will be chosen by the Pupil Services Department and announced in the March 2013 newsletter. Winner will receive something!! Send your ideas today!!

## Coming Soon...

Successmaker Training (selected schools)	February 21, 2013
IEP Saturdays	February 23, 2013
	May 4, 2013
FASD training (for credit) - KCHS	March 1 & 2, 2013
School - based Referral Deadline	April 1, 2013 (no foolin')
End of Year Paperwork Deadline	May 9, 2013



## USING BLOGS, CONT.'

Studies also suggest that blogs can facilitate authentic writing, increase writing output, and improve writing quality. There are specific things that special educators can do to facilitate student success in blogging.

1. Choose a blog platform based on students' needs and available resources.
2. Create a writing community.
3. Create meaningful writing assignments.
4. Use evidence-based prewriting strategies.
5. Support online composition with assistive technology.
6. Teach students to create and respond to comments.
7. Maintain, evaluate and tweak the blogging experience for long - term success.

Here are some FREE blog platforms for you and your students to explore:

**Google Blogger**      [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)

**Word Press**      [www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com) (KPBSD has an internal server set up through this website that allows any district employee to set up a blog by going to: <http://blogs.kpbsd.k12.ak.us>

**Edublogs** (specific to educators and students)      <http://edublogs.org>

**KPBSD Resource**      [www.kpbsd.k12.ak.us/employees.aspx?id=11230](http://www.kpbsd.k12.ak.us/employees.aspx?id=11230)

Jones, S.R. (November/December 2012). Digital Access: Using Blogs to Support Adolescent Writers with Learning Disabilities. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 16-23.

## Teleconference Meeting Etiquette

In the days of everyone being too busy to even sit down, we are holding more and more school meetings with team members participating via telephone or video.

It is incumbent on all members of the meeting, but especially the facilitator and administrator, to ensure that phone participants feel included in the meeting. Here are some things to do:

- ♥ Introduce all members at the beginning of the meeting and any new person as they enter the meeting,
- ♥ When you speak to the participant on the phone, identify yourself, and
- ♥ Check in periodically, at least every 10 - 15 minutes, to make sure the connection is still working, provide the phone participant an opportunity to provide information, etc.

**The past is a ghost, the future a dream. All we ever have is now.**

**– Bill Cosby**



### notes from assec

For the remaining issues of the school year, we will be featuring learning from educators that attended ASSEC! Please send your learning to Denise Kelly (who reserves the right to edit to fit in the space allotted).

Ron Glodoski was a keynote speaker at ASSEC. He spoke of the critical importance of developing relationships with students - especially the ones that drive us crazy! His personal experiences included school avoidance, gang membership, drug use and dealing, criminal activity, prison, and ultimately therapy, the road to recovery, and development of self - esteem. He urged the audience to be that one person who is there for the difficult students unconditionally. Be the one who keeps coming back to help even when they don't want help. His student activity workbook, "How to be a Successful Criminal: The Real Deal on Crime, Drugs and Easy Money," (it's a "reverse psychology" type of title!) is available at the district office. Contact Rebecca Stilchen - Jaime, and she can bizhub you the entire notebook or make you a hard copy at no cost to you. For more information, check out <http://www.ronglodoski.com/bookstore.html>

If you use the activity workbook, let us know what you think!

## CELEBRATIONS!

We want to have a special spot each month for celebrations of excellence and learning within our district. If you have a celebration about a colleague or about yourself, email it to Denise Kelly!

### CONGRATULATIONS TO THE PRESENTERS FROM KPBSD AT ASSEC:

Amy Sundheim - Beyond Closed Doors...Creating Powerful Teams; From the Laminator to the Natural Environment (2 sessions with Cristina Bieber, Kodiak)  
Jason Steadman & Clayton Holland - iPad Apps: Show Me the Data  
Amanda Miller - Teaching Self - Determination & Self - Advocacy through Student - Led IEPs (with Peggy Fedoroff, Sitka)  
Angie Nelson, Trina Uvaas, & Kevin Downs - KPBSD: Our Journey Implementing PBIS  
Bob Ermold & Clayton Holland - Quality Processes & Collaboration  
Dan Kaasa & Jill Ramponi - Successful Learning Environments for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders  
Bobbie Larrivee - "Art - ship" Fostering Friendships through Art

### And to KPBSD Nominees for the Inclusive Practices Award:

Amanda Miller, Fireweed Academy  
Tina Gilman, Kristin Sisneros & Zita Spann, Team at Soldotna Elementary



### ESERs! (again?)

Some ESERs have come in with needs and recommendations that are not clear or are too general. Here are some things to consider.

The needs must be specific enough for the IEP to be developed from them.

For instance, if there are specific content area needs, such as reading, writing, math, these should be listed separately so that recommendations can be made for each. Listing "academic skills" does not provide enough information to the development of the IEP PLAAFP, goals and objectives, and other areas of the IEP.

Recommendations must be aligned to the specific need and may be a little more general than the needs statements. For example, for a need of "Reading fluency" a recommendation may be, "Small group or individual instruction including use of research - based reading program". This recommendation does not tie any teacher to one particular type of instruction or program, but allows the current case manager to create appropriate goals to match the needs. For a need of "Focus in the classroom," the recommendation may be "Classroom accommodations". This leads one to refer to the accommodations section of the IEP.

\*\*Be cautious that most of the needs and recommendations reflect the need for specialized instruction. That is, if all needs have recommendations for only accommodations, then there is no need for special education.

**Check out the recently clarified "Amending an ESER to Add a Service" flowchart back in the December 2012 newsletter.**

# Reminder!

**All IEPs and ESERs that will expire between August 2013 and September 15, 2013 MUST be completed before the May 9, 2013 paperwork deadline.**

We had TOO many that were legally out of compliance at the beginning of this school year. Mark your calendars and start now!!

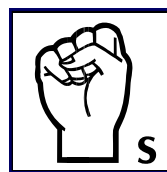
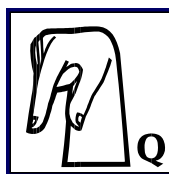
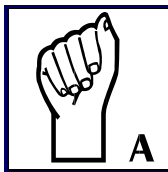
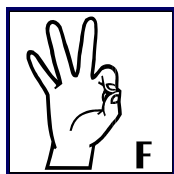


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## PUPIL SERVICES UPDATES

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Q: What do I need to do to clean up my three - year ESERs and annual IEPs?

A: It is very important to make sure that the ESER for a student contains only the most current assessment and other information. This means that all older assessment data should be deleted from the ESER when a new one is held. The same holds true for the IEP paperwork. For instance, the PLAAFP requires all of the information listed to be current. Unless there is trend data or test scores that you need to provide, ALL older test score information needs to be deleted. If you include trend data, the purpose of that data's inclusion should be explained.

Q: Do I need consent for a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)?

A: Yes. If the student is a general ed student, the FBA request must come through the item with parent signature on the item intervention permission form. For students who have an IEP, the FBA comes at the request of the IEP team with parent signature on the consent for evaluation form. Contact your school psychologist for more information.

**\*\*Note:** If consent cannot be obtained, contact your program coordinator.

Q: I need a consent for an evaluation for an 18 year old. When I print it, though, the salutation is still to the parents. What do I do?

A: Contact Laura Rhyner who will change the consent to the student's name (which is preferred) or print a blank consent form and write in the student's name. If you print a blank consent, go back and enter the appropriate dates into the database at the bottom of the referral screen.

Q: Can all teachers please include the specific area of disability in the PLAAFP of the IEP?

A: The section titled, "How Disability Affects Student's Involvement and Progress in General Education" is where the disability needs to be listed and then how that disability affects the student in general education. This is important to ensure that all receivers of the IEP understand the student's disability and to save our colleagues time in going back to look at ESERs or psychologist's reports to find out what the student's disability is.