

**Bow School District  
Special Education Department  
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**SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT REPORT  
PREPARED MARCH 21, 2011 FOR APRIL 7, 2011  
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**

An individual's communication skills play a vital role in their life experiences. Possessing solid communication skills leads to success in the areas of listening, speaking, thinking, reading and writing. These are all key components of one's educational programming that will result in an effective communicator and integral member of society. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) has designated the month of May as "Better Hearing and Speech Month". This annual event provides opportunities to raise awareness about communication disorders and to promote treatment that can improve the quality of life for those who experience problems with speaking, understanding, or hearing. ASHA provides many resources to help clinicians celebrate Better Hearing and Speech Month every day.

According to the National Institutes of Health, 5% of children have been diagnosed with a communication disorder. Speech-language pathology involves the diagnosis and treatment of communication disorders. Within a school setting, speech-language pathologists (SLPs) assist children who exhibit communication disorders that impact upon their learning skills and social interactions. Students may require speech-language therapy services in such areas as: articulation, oral-motor, swallowing/feeding, fluency (stuttering), voice, and language (semantics, syntax, morphology, pragmatics). Speech-language pathologists provide assistance to students with associated impairments including learning disabilities, autism, developmental delays, cerebral palsy and hearing loss. The role of the SLP goes well beyond providing direct therapy services to students. Some of the responsibilities of a SLP in the public school setting include: identification of students at risk, completing formal assessments, diagnosing speech-language impairments, developing IEPs and 504 plans, and collaboration and consultation with parents, teachers, and specialists. One of the most exciting new initiatives involving school based speech-language pathologists is Response to Intervention. Using a three-tiered approach, speech-language pathologists are now able to identify and provide consultative and intervention services to at-risk students. This innovation in education will serve to benefit a greater number of students in our public schools.

Speech-language pathologists are critical members in the success of students. Let's look ahead to next month to thank and celebrate the services and collaboration that our speech-language pathologists provide to Bow students, families, faculty and staff!

Respectfully submitted,

*Daniel J. Ferreira*

Director of Special Education