



February 2019

WASC, Accreditation, and Literacy!

As many of you are aware, this year has been about our accreditation from the **Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)**. This is a process of self-investigation, exploration, analysis, and improvement. Being accredited not only brings greater prestige to AchieveKids, but it puts a structure in place to ensure we consistently measure our successes and plan accordingly to continue our enhancement. With our values being **Learning for Life**, it is important that not only our students and team members participate in that practice, but collectively as an organization we engage in continued growth, so we are able to meet the needs of our students. WASC helps us do that, and holds us accountable to an engaged process of evaluating ourselves and setting a plan of learning.

One discussion that has risen from our focus groups is that of Literacy. A core skill in helping individuals find independence, we feel it is core to the success, as well as a key element to creating opportunity for our students. We define literacy in a broad way, thinking of our full spectrum of learners at AchieveKids. From symbol recognition to comprehending grade level books, and everything in between, we are engaged in a process of how we best meet the literacy and language needs of our students. It has been exciting to see our teams engage in discussions around picture exchange systems, decoding skills, and holding speech groups in the classrooms. We have begun piloting some reading intervention work for some of our learners, and are engaging in stronger integration of service areas to better meet our literacy goals.



I highlight this as an example of the enthusiasm that is created through authentic discussions on who we are and where we want to go. WASC has given us a structure to have those discussions, and it has created a buzz on our campuses on how we can enhance our instruction, and ultimately the opportunities our students can have upon graduation. With our visiting committees and accreditation dates approaching (March 25th in Palo Alto, April 29th in San Jose), I want to thank everyone who has helped us by attending a focus group, filling out a survey, sharing insight about their experiences with us, and giving us feedback on how we can better meet the needs of our students.

Together We Can Achieve!

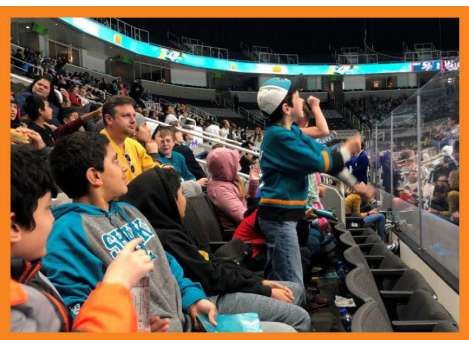
Ryan C. Eisenberg, Ed.D.
Executive Director

Staff Spotlight: Rod Hatch



This month we feature Rod Hatch. A dedicated AchieveKids team member for 22 years, he has held a few different positions throughout those years, and currently is a Program Counselor. Rod has been instrumental in having students in his classroom make presentations using PowerPoint, which gives them the confidence to speak in front of a group, and provides them with the opportunity to do something they didn't think they could do. He also teaches history and health classes. Part of Rod's uniqueness is the way he connects with students on both an individual and group level. He achieves this through using humor and providing students with opportunities to help plan community outings.

Community outings have been an important part of what he brings to the classroom and to our campuses. Rod not only plans community outings with his own class, but plans outings on a larger level for both our campuses. These events have included going to the waterslides, ice and roller skating, attending a Barracuda skating class put on by the Junior San Jose Sharks, and having a member of the Harlem Globetrotters come talk to our students. Rod is a great example of someone who embodies our culture of learning, support and trust.



We are excited to announce that we are partnering with **Bike to the Beach** this year as a 2019 beneficiary of their inaugural ride from Palo Alto to Carmel by the Sea on Saturday, April 13.

A national organization with 7 rides in cities across the country, Bike to the Beach's mission is to build more efficient networks of support for individuals with autism and disabilities through collaborative partnerships that fund local initiatives, shape national/state legislation, and develop more inclusive communities. In partnership with Stanford, they are hosting a ride for cyclists of all levels with 50- and 100-mile options.

Bike to the Beach is for everyone from a weekend warrior to seasoned cyclist. Anyone can do it, and every rider makes an impact for **AUTISM and DISABILITIES**.

Have the time of your life and raise funds for AchieveKids.

Help us fund the future! Invite friends, family, and coworkers to ride to support our programming. With 50 and 100-mile options, anyone can do it. Spread the word and [REGISTER HERE TODAY!](#)

For more info visit www.biketothesea.org/bay-area/

For information on how you can sign up for a school tour or to learn about our program please contact:
Karin Klarreich, Director of Development 650.213.5286 kklarreich@achievekids.org

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