

WEST ORANGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

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Autism Awareness Month

As we enter the month of April, the West Orange Public Schools will recognize Autism Awareness Month. As defined by Autism Speaks, “Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication.” According to research, “autism affects an estimated 1 in 59 children in the United States today.”

We, the West Orange Schools, celebrate our diverse population of students. We value our student’s individual differences and all that makes each unique in his or her own way. In as much, in addition to creating awareness about Autism, our aim is to continue to educate our school community about Autism and meaningfully emphasize the importance of acceptance.

Districtwide, each school has planned cross-curricular activities to educate and celebrate Autism Acceptance. Staff members have purchased t-shirts designed by a student at West Orange High School and will unitedly wear them each Friday during the month of April. Additionally, activities that will take place in the schools include, but are not limited to the following:

- Celebration of “Light it Up Blue” Day on April 2nd.
- Fact-a-Day about Autism during morning announcements
- Faculty Interactive Poem, “I am More than Autism.”
- Digital Learning Experience with the book, [A Boy Called Bat](#)
- Read aloud of the book, [Uniquely Wired: A Story About Autism](#)
- Creation of Autism Awareness decorations by a building Art Club
- Discussion about the Executive Branch, their enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and its impact on schools
- Annual Autism Ceremony at Mt. Pleasant Elementary School

Below are resources that include information about Autism:

- Autism Speaks: <https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism>
- Autism New Jersey: <https://www.autismnj.org/>

In closing, our West Orange community strives to reinforce the guiding principles that awareness leads to acceptance. We thank our students, families, and staff, for their extraordinary courage, strength and commitment to our truly exceptional students.