

## APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 3, 2019.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: County of Henrico  
Program Title: Making Peer Socialization a SNAP  
Program Category: Health and Human Services

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Anthony McDowell  
Title: Deputy County Manager for Public Safety  
Signature: Anthony E. McDowell

## **Program Overview**

In 2017, Henrico County Public Schools launched a summer program called “SNAPS,” an acronym for “Students Navigating Appropriate Peer Socialization.” SNAPS is geared towards students with high-functioning autism who struggle with everyday social skills. The classroom staff consists of a trained autism teacher, instructional assistant and a speech pathologist. They practice social skills in the classroom and during real-world opportunities with age-appropriate peers. Support from general education peers is also a part of each classroom, as peers serve as role models and buddies for each identified participant. Purposeful social skills are taught on Mondays within the school setting. Students go into the community Tuesday through Thursday to apply these skills in everyday life. The class visits local parks and recreation centers, community shopping centers, local eateries and nursing facilities each week. Outcomes are based on individual student data about goals and objectives pertaining to social skills in each Individualized Education Program.

## **Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality**

The idea for SNAPS began with a series of discussions among various stakeholders, including parents and teachers. Besides participation in various isolated activities during the summer, there was no organized program to support maintenance of learned social skills. Henrico Schools has found that, while many mainstreamed students may be able to access the curriculum, they can still struggle when socializing appropriately with peers. Since students with high-functioning autism have pragmatic social needs, a speech pathologist is embedded in the program to collaborate and support these skills.

### **How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria**

The SNAPS program is an innovative way to offer previously unavailable services to students with disabilities in grades K-12. This summer program has enabled these high-functioning students to maintain their social skills and continue to maintain the high scholastic standards to earn a standard diploma.

### **How Program Was Carried Out**

The program's objectives are for students to: maintain appropriate peer social skills as outlined in individual IEP goals; practice social skills in the classroom and in real-world opportunities with age-appropriate peers; and demonstrate the ability to use socially accepted language to make requests, identify needs and participate in group activities.

#### **Development and Implementation Time Frame:**

- A team of exceptional education staff members, including autism coordinators, a speech pathologist and exceptional education teachers, began planning during the 2016-17 school year. The team met monthly to plan and organize all aspects of the program.
- The team first identified a profile of the students the program would target.
- The next step was to outline overall weekly social goals for students, to be taught across the classroom settings.
- The team identified community partners and scheduled summer visits with appropriate social activities.
- A series of activities related to the individual social skills was developed, maintained, and made available to each SNAP teacher.

- Applications for student volunteer buddies was developed and distributed to local schools.
- The identified classroom teachers and assistants received training, which included classroom objectives, data maintenance and use of peers.
- Identified peer helpers received training to outline the roles and responsibilities of these students in the classroom and the community.

Clientele:

- The SNAPS program targets students across the school division with high-functioning autism who require additional support with social skills. Department chairs and case managers are informed of the program and the profile of students who would be possible candidates. HCPS shares information about SNAPS with families through the IEP process. Sites for SNAPS are chosen based on centrally located schools selected for the school division's Summer Academy. Summer Academy is a program that gives elementary, middle and high school students an opportunity for summer enrichment, credit-recovery, and remediation. The SNAPS program is currently at one elementary school, one middle school and one high school.
- The SNAPS program also offers community volunteer hours for general education peers who volunteer their time. The volunteers are also recruited from schools and programs throughout the division.

Contributions of Other Partners:

The SNAPS program participates in weekly community outings Tuesday through Thursday. These outings are planned and organized by Henrico Schools staff and the community liaison. Henrico County Recreation and Parks staff members develop various lessons around the social-

skills objectives to help students maintain these skills. Area nursing homes have opened their doors for weekly visits to encourage residents and HCPS students in building relationships.

Henrico Schools' Department of Pupil Transportation worked closely with the planning committee to develop consistent transportation plans for weekly community trips.

Drama students in the Center for the Arts at Henrico High School developed videos about social skills for help in training opportunities.

### **Financing and Staffing**

The program has no additional costs or staffing. Students qualify for these services as part of their extended-school-year services. All trips are provided through HCPS' transportation department and are free. Program peer buddies are volunteers and receive volunteer hours toward their diploma status.

### **Program Results**

The SNAPS program supports students who qualify for additional support with social skills through their IEP for extended-school-year purposes. It helps the students that participate to maintain skills they have learned through the school year.

The results of the program may be best seen in case studies of individual students.

Student No. 1: A male fourth-grade student started in the program during its initial year. Entering the program, he had a social-skills goal stating that he would communicate information clearly by speaking and/or writing to fit an identified situation. He ended the 2016-17 school year with this skill at an emerging level, and data collected that year by the special education teacher and case manager through the classroom's internal system indicated that he required an average of four to

five journal entries to show success with his goal. After the first marking period of the 2018-19 school year, data indicated that he had mastered this goal.

Student No. 2: A 10th-grade student identified with autism, health impairment and a speech language impairment participated in the program during the summer of 2017. He had a social goal stating that he would make comments and ask questions in order to participate in conversations on preferred and non-preferred topics with peers and adults.. After the first marking period of the 2018-19 school year, data indicated that he could independently ask questions and maintain a conversation when discussing a topic of his choice. He would maintain appropriate eye contact with limited reminders on volume and rate of speech. He was maintaining the topic of non-preferred topics when provided only two or three prompts.

Student No.3: A fourth-grade student participated in the program during the summer of 2018. His social goal was to speak with an appropriate voice level with 80 percent accuracy in given social situations. At the end of the 2017-18 school year, his data showed that with 87 percent accuracy, he was able to maintain this success in voice level throughout the first marking period of the 2018-19 school year.

Student Volunteers: During the past two summers the program has received 40 student volunteers. Of these, 14 have participated both summers and two have adapted this opportunity to create an internship for their high school specialty program. The two students chose to volunteer for the entire summer, beyond the requirements of their internship, and created final projects to use with students in the program, based on appropriate social skills.

## **Brief Summary**

In 2017, Henrico County Public Schools launched a summer program called “SNAPS,” an acronym for “Students Navigating Appropriate Peer Socialization.” SNAPS is geared towards students with high-functioning autism who struggle with everyday social skills. The classroom staff consists of a trained autism teacher, instructional assistant and a speech pathologist. They practice social skills in the classroom and during real-world opportunities with age-appropriate peers. Support from general education peers is also a part of each classroom, as peers serve as role models and buddies for each identified participant. Purposeful social skills are taught on Mondays within the school setting. Students go into the community Tuesday through Thursday to apply these skills in everyday life. The class visits local parks and recreation centers, community shopping centers, local eateries and nursing facilities each week. Outcomes are based on individual student data about goals and objectives pertaining to social skills in each Individualized Education Program.