



LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dr. Janice Adie Day School
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To: Jeannine Durkin, Acting Superintendent of School

From: Patricia Clark-Nowoswiat, ^{PCN}Coordinator Dr. Janice Adie Day School

The Dr. Janice Adie Day School respectfully requests that Annemarie Langlois, M.S., CF-SLP be able to attend the Pittsburgh AAC Language Seminar from Monday November 5, 2018 through Thursday November 8, 2018. Ms. Langlois applied for and was granted acceptance into the seminar because of her work with non-speaking/minimally-speaking students at the school. Lodging is provided free of charge through Pittsburgh AAC Language Seminar Series. Accommodations include the Monday night, Tuesday night, and Wednesday night. The cost of the flight (\$116.40) is being paid for by Ms. Langlois. No substitute is required and there is no cost to the district.

The Dr. Janice Adie Day School is a therapeutic day school dedicated to servicing students diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Students with ASD often have deficits related to receptive, expressive, and pragmatic language. The majority of the students at the Dr. Janice Adie Day School are non-speaking or minimally-speaking. These students rely on Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), or different modes of communication including sign language, gestures, pictures, or AAC systems on tablets. AAC systems are designed to match the complex communication needs of individuals to support their vocabulary, language, and interaction development. Many of the students have demonstrated success with using AAC systems. Ultimately, by giving these students a voice, they became less frustrated, more engaged during school, and demonstrated less maladaptive behaviors.

Performing speech and language evaluations on these students comes with a specific set of challenges. Tests that assess student's speech and language skills are compared to same-aged, typically developing peers. However, due to each individual's specific needs, students diagnosed with ASD are often unable to comply with testing procedures. Therefore, their skills cannot be accurately assessed and standard scores cannot be determined. Additionally, these tests often focus on what the students cannot do, opposed to showing what they can do.

The Minspeak seminar addresses ongoing AAC assessment to determine communicative competence for individuals using AAC. This seminar focuses on using a process of ongoing AAC assessment that enables development of individual AAC performance profiles, comprehensive and evidence based treatment plans, and effective AAC team management. Additionally, as assessment drives therapy, this will improve the SLP's ability to create meaningful objectives that will improve therapy outcomes. This seminar is part of Pittsburgh AAC Language Seminar Series (PALSS) and goes from November 5-8, 2018 in Pittsburgh, PA. Only 25 applicants per seminar are accepted. This is at no cost to the district.