



**Rumson, NJ-** On February 22nd, 2018, 8th grade students receiving special education services from Rumson as well as Fair Haven public school districts were hosted by Rumson-Fair Haven Regional High School for a high school transition forum. Every year, a handful of special education students volunteer and are selected to represent each grade level from 9th to 12th. While special services and administrative personnel make introductions and participate, the students actually run the forum. These young adults address topics ranging from course selection, study skills and cumulative grade point averages to socialization and extra-curriculars.

Spencer Austin, Rumson's school psychologist commented: "I always look forward to this event. I believe our students truly benefit from learning about the high school experience from their peers as opposed to from another adult lecture. I particularly enjoy hearing from some of the older students who may

have made mistakes, yet are comfortable sharing perspective and personal strategies for meeting with success, whether towards college/university or vocational pursuits."

Here are some comments from students after participating in the event:

"You should use the 9th period Learning Resource Centers to your advantage."

"They give you a preview of what high school is going to be like."

If you don't understand something, they will do everything they can to help you."

The RFH high school forum represents one of a number of transition activities offered to students receiving special education services. For example, these students are also invited to attend an 8-day vocational exploration and evaluation program offered through the Monmouth County Career Center in Freehold, NJ. As a result and subject to acceptance, students may then choose to enroll for shared-time programming between RFH and MCCC, or wait until 11th grade to pursue vocational studies as a supplement to state-required coursework.

Michael Snyder, Rumson's District Supervisor of Special Services commented: "As our schools and communities increasingly embrace differences in learning, we are better equipped to nurture the unfolding talents and passions of all students. "One size fits all" represents a very outdated educational model. It is refreshing to see and support different pathways for students to meet with success both in and outside of the classroom".