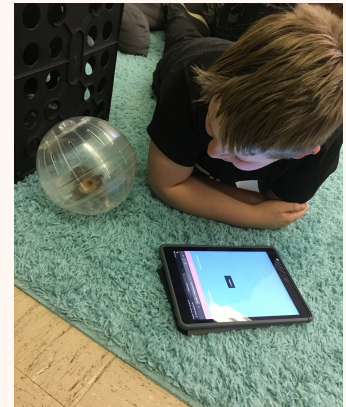
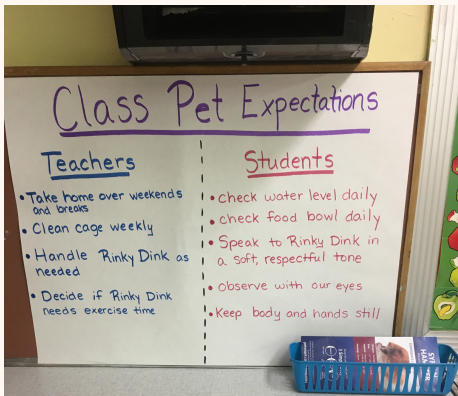


# SUPERINTENDENT'S BLOG

ROCKAWAY BOROUGH SCHOOLS--MARCH 26, 2019



**RINKY DINK HELPS  
TO ENHANCE SOCIAL  
EMOTIONAL  
LEARNING FOR  
STUDENTS**

## ROOM 114 WELCOMES A CLASS PET

Last week, students in Ms. Scimeca and Mrs. McGill's Resource room welcomed a new friend to room 114, namely one female Syrian Hamster, affectionately known as Rinky Dink. Ms. Scimeca had the idea that having a class pet would help to infuse and reinforce social-emotional learning skills into the academic curriculum as well as help to keep students motivated through an authentic learning experience.

Ms. Scimeca acquired Rinky Dink after doing research and applying for a grant from PetSmart and The Pet Care Trust which is a non-profit charitable foundation in Washington D.C. whose mission is "to promote public understanding of the joys and benefits of pets through education, support and interaction". The goal of the project is for students to participate in content lessons enriched with the social emotional and responsibility aspects of pet owning. Having a class pet can teach and allow students to practice important values such as compassion, empathy, respect and responsibility for other living things.

Once Rinky Dink was introduced to the students, they began reading literature provided by PetSmart to familiarize themselves with their new classmate. As a group, students suggested rules and guidelines to ensure a highly respectful classroom environment that would help their pet live a happy life. Suggestions were then compiled into a "Class Pet Expectations" anchor chart that clearly defines the responsibilities of all parties, but most importantly, ensures the safe existence of Rinky Dink.

In addition, students have also taken on the responsibility of tending to a mini classroom garden that will help supplement Rinky Dink's diet with fresh vegetables such as spinach and green beans. Daily measurements are taken to track growth with the data used to help students employ different gardening strategies to meet the needs of their vegetable plants and of course, Rinky Dink.