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# RESOURCE GUIDE FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Strategies & Suggestions  
for Participation in the  
Special Education Process



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August 15, 2019

Dear Families,

I want to welcome you to a new and exciting school year in District 65! I am thrilled to join the team of educators who are committed to ensuring all students receive the quality education they deserve. As part of this vision, we have made some improvements to our special services leadership model that will provide more support in each of our buildings. District 65 has shifted the way in which special education supervisors have been assigned and added three additional Assistant Principals for Special Services for the 2019-20 school year. In line with the District's goals of increasing cognitive rigor and implementing restorative practices, our Assistant Principals for Special Services will be focused on ensuring our students with Individualized Education Plans are experiencing an individualized and rigorous education. Additionally, these staff will support each building in deepening their capacity to apply restorative practices. I am very pleased to introduce you to our dedicated special education leadership team:

Assistant Principals for Special Services

- Trisha Baker: Willard & Lincolnwood
- Michelle Brand: Early Childhood & Kingsley
- Emily Chambers: Walker and Lincoln
- Mike Edwards: Dawes and Dewey
- Trish Murray: King Arts & Oakton
- Sara Novy: Washington, Nichols & Bessie Rhodes
- Sean Rabiola: Dewey
- John Siegler: Orrington & Haven
- Vernessa Stepney: Chute

Director of Early Childhood Education: Sharon Sprague

Coordinator at Rice Children Center: John Mitchell

Principal at Park School: Jill Anderson

As we enter another important year of growth and development for your child, please know that we are here to partner with you. We recognize you as a valuable asset in your child's educational journey and we know that success can be achieved when schools and families work together. Your child's case-manager will be reaching out to you at the beginning of the school year with more important information. We encourage you to maintain open and collaborative lines of communication with your child's school team. Also, please be on the lookout for updates to our special services website with more resources and information for families.

In closing, every school year brings new opportunities for learning and challenges to overcome. Our team is looking forward to working with you and celebrating every success - big and small, along the way.

Your partner in education,



Dr. Romy DeCristofaro

Executive Director for Special Services

## INTRODUCTION

The **Resource Guide for Families of Children with Special Needs** has been written for parents of children with disabilities who need special education services. "Special education" is defined as instruction involving techniques, exercises, and subject matter designed for students whose learning needs cannot be met by a standard school curriculum. The word "parent" includes anyone who has major responsibilities for the care and well-being of a child. If you are a person who has such responsibility – parent, grand-parent, surrogate parent, foster parent – and you think your child has special education needs you will want to read this booklet. It will help to answer questions that you may have such as:

- What kinds of services are appropriate to address my child's areas of need?
- Is my child too young or too old for services?
- What can I do to help?
- Is this going to cost me a lot of money?
- What are my rights and my child's rights?

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Illinois special education rules, all students with disabilities ages 3 through 21 and who have not yet graduated from high school have a right to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Students with disabilities may attend school until receipt of a high school diploma or until the end of the school year of their 21st birthday, whichever is earlier. "Free" means the provision of academic and related services without cost to the parent.

Unlike the IDEA, Section 504 does not limit coverage to certain categories of disabilities and no categorical labels are listed. Instead, the following general definition of a disability is provided: *Persons who have (or have a record of having or are regarded as having) physical or mental impairments which substantially limit one or more major life activities – including such functions as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working.*

Special education and related services must begin on the child's third (3rd) birthday for children served in an early intervention program or for those children referred 60 school days before their third (3rd) birthday and found eligible. District 65 screens children 2 years 6 months and takes referrals from Child and Family Connections.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

State/federal laws and regulations governing the administration of educational programs for students with disabilities recognize the important role of parents in the special education process. You and the school personnel should establish a positive relationship with shared goals and a common understanding of your child's needs at home, school and in the community.

### **YOU SHOULD:**

- Be fully informed about the services available in or through your child's school
- Know the special needs of your child
- Know your child's rights
- Participate in meetings to determine eligibility and to develop the Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Ask questions and voice concerns when you are unsure of terms, language, the appropriateness of your child's program, the school's recommendations, etc.
- Share letters, reports or other materials that can help the school understand your child and provide appropriate services to your child. Be sure to keep a copy of these items for your records.
- Keep all documents and correspondence from the school that you feel are important such as IEPs, samples of your child's work, notices regarding the dates of meetings, etc.
- Develop an ongoing working relationship with those persons responsible for or who provide services to your child. Get to know the names and responsibilities of all those working with your child.

## CHILD IDENTIFICATION/CHILD FIND

The purpose of Child Find is to seek out and identify all children between birth and 21 years of age who may need special education and/or related services to address problems that might interfere with their future development and learning, even those students who are advancing from grade to grade.

Developmental screenings for children 2 years 6 months old through 5 years old are provided by the District 65 Services for Pre-Primary Age Children (SPPAC). These screenings are provided at the SPPAC location at the Joseph E. Hill Education Center as well as at community sites such as preschools, day care centers, etc. These screenings are conducted regularly throughout the school year. Call the SPPAC office 847/859-8114 for an appointment or additional information. Child and Family Connections is the designated agency that screens and evaluates children birth through 2 years of age. Their number is 847/385.5070. Screening for students 5-14 years of age is provided at each Evanston/Skokie District 65 public school and is available to all students.



## OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL SERVICES

The following information is provided as an overview of how the District 65 Department of Special Education is expected to work on behalf of the students and families:

### ◆ **Intervention Teams**

*Response to Intervention (RtI)* is a general Education practice which enables school districts to address academic/behavioral concerns of students experiencing educational challenges.

Within each school in District 65 are Intervention Teams. These teams meet weekly for the purpose of discussing students who are struggling. The Intervention Teams are made up of various professionals from the school (e.g. general education teachers, reading/math specialist, the principal and often times special education staff, etc.) Parents are informed of the meetings and invited to participate. They review student concerns and recommend academic and/or behavioral strategies in an attempt to improve student performance in the general education setting. Monitoring progress is an intricate part of the intervention process to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy. At subsequent meetings staff will review and modify the plans based on the progress monitoring results.

### ◆ **Making a Referral**

At any time during the intervention process, a member of the intervention team, a parent/ guardian can make a referral for a full case study evaluation to determine if there is a disability hindering the student progress.

At the point of a referral, members of the school's special services team, usually the psychologist, social worker and/or speech clinician, will join the intervention team to assist with determining if an evaluation is warranted. If the decision is made that an evaluation is not warranted at that time, the parents/guardians will receive notification of the decision in writing. That notification will include the reason(s) for the decision. If the decision is made to conduct an evaluation, the following steps will be applied:

#### ◆ ***Domain Meeting***

If the decision is made to conduct an evaluation, the parent/guardian will then be asked to participate in a meeting to review the areas of concern (called domains). The domains include: *Health, Vision, Hearing, Social/Emotional Status, General Intelligence, Academic Performance, Communication Status, and Motor Abilities*. The parent/guardian will be asked to provide input into the decision regarding which of the domains will be assessed. In most instances students will not need evaluations in all domains. Additionally, data from intervention plans will be utilized as part of the eligibility process.

◆ ***Consent for Evaluation (To Collect Additional Data)***

The parent/guardian will then be asked to sign a form giving consent for the evaluation(s) to take place. In addition to the consent for evaluation the parent/guardian will receive a copy of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) document entitled, *Explanation of Procedural Safeguards*. That document explains parent/guardian legal rights as they relate to special education services. Under the 2004 IDEIA, an initial evaluation must be completed within 60 school days of receiving written parental consent for the evaluation.

◆ ***Eligibility Conference / IEP (Individualized Education Program)***

Once the evaluation(s) have been completed the parent/guardian will be asked to attend another meeting called an *eligibility conference*. At the eligibility conference, the results of the evaluation(s) will be explained, and the parent/guardian will be informed whether or not the child is eligible to receive special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). If the child is not eligible to receive special education services, the school staff should explain other options, such as returning to the RtI intervention process or, if appropriate, consideration of a 504 plan, to continue to address student concerns.



## ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

The IEP Team, including you, meets 10 school days or more after you receive the Conference Notification form to review the information gathered through the evaluation process. The IEP Team determines whether or not the student has a disability, if the disability has adverse effects on the student's education performance and whether he/she needs special education and related services.

Under IDEA, a child with a disability may have a physical, emotional, learning or behavioral problem that is educationally related and requires special education and related services. Below are definitions of each of the categories for which a child may be eligible. Your child may be eligible in one or more of the categories, but keep in mind that the IEP addresses your child's instructional needs, need for related services and placement decisions.

***Autism*** – A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movement, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. The term does not apply if a child's education performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance.

***Intellectual Disability*** – (Mild, Moderate, Severe/Profound) Significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

***Deafness*** – Loss of hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that is so severe that the student is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, and that it adversely affects a student's educational performance (but that is not included under the definition of hard of hearing).

***Deaf/Blind*** – The student exhibits concomitant hearing and visual disabilities, the combination of which causes severe communication, developmental, educational and vocational needs that cannot be accommodated by special education services designed solely for students with either visual or hearing impairment.

***Developmental Delay*** – To be used only for young children, ages 3 through 9, who meet the criteria of one or more of the other disability categories and who are experiencing delay(s) in at least one of the following areas: physical, cognitive, communication, social/emotional, or adaptive development. They must be functioning significantly below age expectancy and found eligible in one or more of the areas listed above.

**Emotional Disability** – a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over an extended period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child’s educational performance:

- An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors;
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;
- A general pervasive mood of anxiety or unhappiness or depression; or
- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with persons or school problems.

**Hearing Impairment** – A loss of hearing, whether permanent or fluctuation, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance (includes hard of hearing and deaf).

**Specific Learning Disability** – A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations, including such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and developmental aphasia. (The term ‘learning disability’ does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor disabilities, intellectual disability, emotional disabilities or of environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.)

Under the 2004 IDEA, by 2010/2011, when determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, an IEP team must consider how the student responds to scientific, research-based intervention (RtI) as part of the evaluation process.

**Multiple Disability** – Concomitant impairments (such as intellectual disability-blindness, intellectual disability-orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which causes severe educational needs that cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments (does not include deaf/blindness).

**Other Health Impairment** – Limited strength, vitality or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems, such as a heart and other circulatory conditions, asthma and other respiratory disorders, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia and other blood disorders, epilepsy and other neurological conditions, lead poisoning, cancer, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), leukemia or diabetes and other endocrine disorders. Based upon a diagnosed medical condition and the effect it has on the student’s ability to function, the IEP Team will determine whether the disability is severe enough to adversely affect educational performance by impeding the acquisition of basic skills.

**Orthopedic Impairment** – An impairment caused by a congenital anomaly, disease or other cause (e.g. cerebral palsy, amputation, fractures or burns). Based on a diagnosed medical condition(s), the IEP Team determines whether it is severe enough to adversely impact educational performance by impeding the acquisition of basic skills so that special education and related services are necessary.

**Speech and Language Impairment** – A communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child’s educational performance.

**Traumatic Brain Injury** – An acquired injury to the brain caused by an external force and substantiated by medical diagnosis. This injury results in total or partial functional disability that adversely affects the student’s educational performance and/or psychosocial status.

This term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital, degenerative or induced by birth trauma.

**Vision Impairment** – An impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child’s educational performance (includes both partial sight and blindness).



## THE IEP MEETING

### REQUIRED PARTICIPATION

IEP Team Participants	Determining Eligibility Initial or Reevaluation	Annual Review
Parent	I	I
Regular Education Teacher (if child is or may be receiving services in regular education classroom)	R	R
Special Education Teacher (or Speech Pathologist if child is receiving only speech and language)	R	R
Evaluation Representative	R	R
LEA	R	R
Student (age 14 or older)	I	I
Bilingual Specialist for ELLs (as required)	R	R
Community Service Agency Representative	O	O
Related service providers, when services are considered for initiation, continuation or discontinuation	R	R
Case Manager	R	R

I= Must be extended an invitation to participate  
R= Required attendance  
O= Optional attendance

Under the 2004 IDEA, the parent and District may agree to excuse an IEP team member from attending an IEP meeting, in whole or in part, if the particular team member is not required because the member's area of curriculum or related services is not being modified or discussed at the meeting. If the member's area of curriculum or related services will be discussed at the meeting, the member may still be excused if the parent agrees in writing and the excused member submits his or her input in writing.

At an IEP meeting the following areas should be covered in the following order:

- ◆ ***Opportunity for Parent/Guardian Input*** – After all necessary introductions have been handled; the parent/guardian should be given the opportunity to state any issues they would like to make sure are covered during the meeting. They should also be encouraged to ask questions and be an active participant in the process. It should be noted that parents/guardians are considered full members of the team and should not only share information, but should also participate in the decision making process.
- ◆ ***Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance*** – The next thing to come in the flow of events should be the description of the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance. The Present Levels should include information on the material the student is currently working in, any adaptations that are being used, grades received, progress being made, etc. If done correctly, staff and parents/guardians should be able to take the statement of Present Levels from one year to the next and determine what type of change has occurred.
- ◆ ***Identification of Needs*** – Once the student's Present Levels have been covered, it is the responsibility of the group to define the student's needs, e.g. the student needs a small teacher to pupil ratio, the student needs a classroom that provides a great deal of structure, the student needs an extensive level of behavioral support, the student needs direct instruction in modified curriculum for mathematics, etc.
- ◆ ***Establishing Annual Goals and Benchmarks*** – The child's annual goals and the accompanying benchmarks should be developed directly from the identified needs. If a need has been identified, there should be a corresponding, measurable annual goal. The benchmarks should then break the goal into manageable steps. Each goal should include consideration of how that goal will be measured. Under the 2004 IDEIA, benchmarks are only required for students receiving alternate assessments.
- ◆ ***Recommendation of Program*** – Once the child's progress has been reviewed through the Present Levels, the needs have been identified, and the annual goals and benchmarks have been established, the IEP team should then focus on the need for related services and the placement in which the child's goals can best be addressed. At this point, the program needs to be decided upon/developed. Decisions should be based not only upon the annual goals, but also on the child's strengths and the expectation for Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

Under the 2004 IDEA, a parent may refuse to consent to the initial IEP for their student. If the parent refuses to consent, then the District has no obligation to provide special education services to the student and may not request a due process hearing to challenge the parent's decision. Parents should understand that the customary grading and discipline policies will apply in this case.

The IEP team will reconvene each year for the annual review meeting on or slightly before the one-year anniversary, of the determination of eligibility, to review programs and update goals and benchmarks for the next year. Under the 2004 IDEIA, after the annual review, changes to the IEP may be made without another meeting if the parent agrees, and the changes are made in writing.

Every three years, the team will reconvene at the anniversary of the eligibility determination to consider continued eligibility to receive special education services. You will be asked to participate in a domain meeting and sign consent for evaluation to initiate this tri-annual process. Under the 2004 IDEIA, a parent and district can agree that a reevaluation is unnecessary, and no reevaluation will be done.

### **INVOLVEMENT IN NON-ACADEMIC AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES** **DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

In providing or arranging for the provision of non-academic and extracurricular services and activities, the IEP Team will ensure that each student with a disability participates with non-disabled students in those services and activities to the maximum extent appropriate. Your child's IEP will reflect his/her participation in the non-academic and extracurricular services and activities and must provide an educational justification when your child is not integrated in these activities. Examples of non-academic and extracurricular activities are: meals, recess periods, athletics, recreation activities and employment opportunities.



## CONTINUUM OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

The District 65 continuum of special education services is the embodiment of our strong commitment to creating a single, seamless and unified service delivery model for all students. To this end, this continuum stresses our obligations to provide concerted efforts to support students in the least restrictive environment by expanding strategies to maintain students in general education. It requires the provision of supplementary aids and services to support students with disabilities in general education classes. It ensures a full spectrum of program options including quality special education class services in various locations. Evanston/Skokie School District 65 offers a full range of special education services and classrooms for students from 3 to 14 years of age. This is often referred to as a *full continuum of services*. In addition to the special education classrooms, District 65 is often able to offer special education services with support, in the general education setting. District 65 provides necessary Speech & Language Services, School Psychology Services, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Social Work, and Adapted Physical Education based on the needs of students.

### UNIFIED SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM

This chart represents the types of special education services included in the District 65 continuum



STRATEGIES TO MAINTAIN STUDENTS IN GENERAL EDUCATION AND TO SUPPORT ACHIEVEMENT OF STANDARDS
(Examples of services which may be provided are: Educationally Related Support Services, Reading Intervention/Remedial Instruction and Behavioral Support/Social Skills Program)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>SUPPORT SERVICES (Psychology, Social Work, etc.)</li></ul>
<b>REFERRAL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>CONSULTATION</li><li>GENERAL EDUCATION WITH RELATED SERVICES (Speech &amp; Language Only)</li><li>INCLUSION - COLLABORATIVE/TEAM TEACHING</li><li>GENERAL EDUCATION WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER SUPPORT SERVICES (Resource services less than 50% of the school day)</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>GENERAL EDUCATION PART-TIME &amp; SPECIAL CLASS SUPPORT PART-TIME (Instructional services 50% or more of the school day)</li><li>SPECIAL CLASS FULL-TIME IN SCHOOL DISTRICT 65 (Self-contained 100% of the school day)</li><li>SPECIAL DAY SCHOOL FULL-TIME IN DISTRICT 65 (Park/Rice)</li></ul>
<b>OUT-OF-DISTRICT SERVICES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>SPECIAL CLASS FULL-TIME IN SPECIALIZED PUBLIC OR PRIVATE DAY-SCHOOLS</li><li>PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENT/HOME/HOSPITAL INSTRUCTION (TEMPORARY)</li></ul>

## RELATED SERVICES

Related services will be provided, if necessary, to enable your child to benefit from special education. These will be related to the achievement of IEP annual goals and are to be provided in the least restrictive environment at no cost to the student or student's parents. Related services include, but are not limited to:

***Assistive Technology Evaluation*** – assists in evaluating the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device to enable the student to access the general education curriculum. The 2004 IDEIA clarifies that “assistive technology device” does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted or its replacement.

***Audiology*** – includes audiometric testing; recommendations for amplification systems; hearing aid orientations; auditory training; speech reading (lip reading); hearing conservation and counseling and guidance for children regarding hearing loss Services provided by Low Incidence Cooperative Agreement (LICA).

***Vision Services*** – service provided to students with visual disabilities to augment the educational program (e.g. reading/taping materials, Braille or enlarging materials).

***Classroom/Individual Aide*** – services are provided for students who require an extraordinary amount of support to benefit from instruction.

***Interpreter Services*** – provided by a specially trained individual who either interprets (conveys a spoken message to a child with a hearing impairment at the appropriate language ability level via sign language and finger spelling) or translates (verbatim signing and/or finger spelling of a spoken message).

***Occupational Therapy*** – related service for students who have a diagnosed condition that impacts their ability to adapt and to function in educational programs.

***Orientation and Mobility Instruction*** – service is provided for students with visual impairments who require instruction that will improve their ability to perceive and move safely within their environment.

***Physical Therapy*** – related service for students who have a diagnosed medical condition that impacts their motor ability.

***Psychological/Counseling Services*** – services are designed to promote optimal student learning by addressing the student's academic needs and issues surrounding the student's psychological, emotional and social development.

***School Health Services*** – services provided by a certified school nurse, health clerk or licensed practical nurses under the direction and supervision of the certified school nurse or coordinator.

***Social Work/Counseling*** – services address difficulties that impact the student’s emotional availability to learn in school.

***Speech/Language Services*** – provided by qualified staff trained in the areas of articulation/phonology, language, voice and fluency disorders. Students may receive therapy in individual, small group or classroom settings to enhance their learning experience.

***Transportation*** – a service for any student with a disability who is placed by Specialized Services at a school other than his/her neighborhood school or, due to his/her disability, is unable to travel to school in the same manner as their non-disabled peers.

The 2004 IDEIA adds interpreting services and school nursing services if required for a student to receive an appropriate education.

### **SERVICES FOR STUDENTS ENROLLED IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS** **BY THEIR PARENTS**

After initially evaluating your child and determining that he/she is eligible for special education and related services, the school will inform you that District 65 will provide a free and appropriate public school education (FAPE) if the child attends public school.

If you request part-time attendance at the public school, the school will enroll your child as a dually-enrolled student. Dually-enrolled students are entitled to special education and related services in accordance with the IEP developed for the student while attending the public school.

If you do not choose for your child to attend a District 65 school and place the child in a non-public facility without the consent of District 65, the District will not pay for the tuition. However, your child may receive services in accordance with an Individual Service Plan (ISP) developed for privately placed students. Services are provided at a District 65 public school.

Under the 2004 IDEIA updates provide that students placed by their parents in a non-special education private or parochial school outside of District 65 should be evaluated by the public school district within which the student’s private school is located, and if eligible, services will be delivered by District 65.

## MANIFESTATION DETERMINATION

Several IEP Team activities are mandated when a student with disabilities is involved in a disciplinary action that could result in removal from the current educational placement.

When disciplinary action is to be taken against your child that results in a change in placement, you will be notified of an IEP meeting to determine whether the behavior was related to his/her disability (manifestation determination review). The meeting will take place within 10 business days of the date of the misconduct.

Under the 2004 IDEA, the purpose of the manifestation meeting is to determine whether the misconduct was (1) caused by or had a direct substantial relationship to the student's disability, or (2) was the direct result of the district's failure to implement the student's IEP.

In addition, the IEP Team will conduct a Functional Behavior Analysis (FBA) of the student's behavior and develop a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). The Team will also determine whether a change in placement will be recommended for your child.

If your child already has a behavior intervention plan, the Team will review it and determine whether any revisions are necessary. A new FBA/BIP will be completed if there are any changes made to the plan.

If the behavior of the student was not the result of his/her disability the disciplinary actions used with children without disabilities may be applied in the same manner to the student with a disability. In such case, the school shall ensure that the student's special education and disciplinary records are provided for consideration by the person(s) making the final determination regarding the disciplinary action to be taken.

If the student's behavior is a result of the child's disability, appropriate interventions should be described in the Behavior Intervention Plan. The student may not be removed for disciplinary reason for that behavior. The IEP may need to be revised and the current program changed.

## INTERIM ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL SETTING

A school district may make an immediate interim change of placement, up to 45 school days, for students with disabilities who bring weapons to school or possess, use or sell illegal drugs. The interim alternative setting will be determined by the IEP Team no later than 10 business days after making the decision to place the child. The interim alternative educational setting that is selected should enable your child to continue to progress in the general curriculum, receive the services and modifications outlined in the IEP and address the behavior that resulted in your child being removed. If you seek a due process hearing, your child remains in the alternative setting pending the hearing.

If your child is placed in an alternative setting for a weapon or drug violation, the IEP Team will review and modify, if necessary, your child's behavioral intervention plan to address the behavior. The IEP Team will meet to develop a plan if a functional behavioral analysis was not conducted and a behavioral intervention plan already developed.

The school district has the option to seek an expedited due process hearing to remove a child to an interim alternative educational setting because it maintains that it is dangerous for the child to be in the current placement due to behavior.

The 2004 IDEA also permits school districts to initiate a 45-school-day interim alternative placement when a student inflicts "serious bodily injury" upon another person while at school, on school premises or at a school function. It is still unclear how these changes will be implemented in Illinois.



# APPENDIX



## OFFICE OF SPECIAL SERVICES STAFF: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child's special education teachers and support staff, and the District 65 Office of Special Services welcome you to a new school year!

The list below identifies the personnel who will be working with your child this year, as well as their contact information. Also included is a directory of relevant district personnel. Please keep this information in a convenient location. It will help you contact the appropriate personnel in the event you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Dr. Romy DeCristofaro  
Executive Director for Special Services

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### School Personnel

Position	Name	Phone	Email Address
Principal			
Assistant Principal for Special Services			
Special Education Case Manager			
General Education Teacher			
Social Worker			
Psychologist			
Speech Language Pathologist			
Occupational Therapist			
Other			

### District Personnel

Position	Name	Phone	Email Address
Executive Director for Special Services	Romy DeCristofaro	847-859-8091	decristofaror@district65.net
Transportation Coordinator	Lou Gatta	847-424-2425	gattal@district65.net
Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction	Stacy Beardsley	847-859-8032	beardsleys@district65.net
Assistant Superintendent of Schools	Andalib Khelghati	847-859-8031	khelghatia@district65.net

## GLOSSARY

On the next several pages you will find definitions for a number of words often used by the people who work with children with disabilities.

**Accommodation** – learning to do things differently from other students because of a disability or impairment. An example of "accommodation" is the visually impaired student who reads by listening to a recording of a textbook.

**Advocacy** - agencies or individuals acting on behalf of themselves or others.

**Annual Goal** – a statement in an IEP of what a student needs to learn and should be able to learn in his/her special education program within a year.

**Annual Review** – a review of a student's special education program each year which includes an update of the student's progress, a review of the current IEP and development of a new IEP for the upcoming year.

**Appeal** – the formal process by which a parent or school district can ask a court to review or change the decision of a hearing officer.

**Assessment** – a way of collecting information about a student's special learning needs, strengths and interests to help make educational decisions. An assessment may include giving individual tests, observing the student, looking at records and talking with the student and his/her parents.

**Behavioral Intervention** – a method or technique used to influence a student's actions.

**Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP)** – a written plan developed as part of the IEP to address a serious behavioral problem. It is based on a functional behavioral assessment of the student's behavior, describes the interventions to be used, methods of evaluation and provisions for coordinating with the home.

**Business Day** – Monday through Friday except for Federal and State holidays.

**Claim** – the written or electronically submitted request for payment of benefits for Medicaid covered services that have been provided to students.

**Compensatory Service** – compensatory education services will be considered when IEP services are not provided for an extended period of time due to unavailable resource of the school or District 65. If you or your child decide not to accept services offered in accordance with the IEP developed by the school district, it is not considered a delay or break in services.

**Complaint** – the written request by a parent to the state education agency seeking an investigation to determine whether special education regulations are being followed.

**Confidential** – being careful and using good judgment in reporting only the information that is educationally relevant about a student when disclosing personal information to school personnel and others.

**Consent** – a voluntary agreement by the parents to let the school take an action which affects their child's education. Consent is shown by the parent signing a form or letter which describes the action the school wants to take.

**Continuum of Services** – this term defines the availability of many different levels of services covering the span of the regular education classroom to an out-of-district private residential placement. A full continuum will include many program and service options across that span.

**Cross Categorical Class** – a type of special education class that serves students who are eligible to receive special education under different disability categories. A cross categorical special education class may typically serve students with Specific Learning Disabilities and students with Mild Mental Retardation, and Mild Emotional Disturbance.

**Date of Referral** – the date on which written parental consent to complete an evaluation is obtained or provided.

**Disability** – a problem or condition that makes it difficult for a student to learn or do things in the same way as most other students. A disability may be short-term or permanent.

**Due Process** – a legal term that assures that persons with disabilities have the right to challenge any decision made on their behalf.

**Due Process Hearing** – a formal meeting held to settle disagreements between parents and schools in a way that is fair to the student, the parents and school. The meeting is run by an impartial hearing officer.

**Duration** – the length of time a student will need a special program or service during the school year or extended school year, as documented on the IEP.

**Early Childhood** – programs and services provided to children with disabilities from age 3 through 5.

**Early Intervention** – programs and services provided to infants and toddlers with disabilities from birth through age 2.

**Educational Surrogate Parent** – a person who protects the educational rights of a student with disabilities who has no parent/guardian available or who is under the guardianship of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

**Eligibility** – the term used to describe if a child is found eligible to receive special education services. There are specific criteria for each of the IDEA disability categories. The results of an evaluation are applied to the criteria and a decision is made whether or not a child is eligible to receive special education services.

**English Language Learners (Students of Limited English Proficiency)** – students of non-English background whose aural comprehension, speaking, reading or writing proficiency in English is below the average English proficiency level of students of the same age and/or grade whose first or home language is English. (IL. Adm. Code Part 228 – Transitional Bilingual Education and Transitional Program of Instruction)

**Extended School Year (ESY)** – special education and related services that are provided to a child with a disability beyond the school year as designated in the child's IEP.

**Evaluation** – collecting information about a student and any problems that may affect his/her educational development for the purpose of determining eligibility for special education and related services. The evaluation may include giving individualized tests, observing the student, looking at records and talking with the student and his/her parents (also see assessment).

**Expulsion** – removal from school programs for more than 10 consecutive school days by school board action for gross disobedience or misconduct.

**Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** – the words used in the federal law (IDEA) to describe the right of a student with disabilities to receive special education and related services which will meet his/her individual learning needs at no cost to the parents.

**Hearing Officer** – an impartial person in charge of a due process hearing who issues a written decision based upon the evidence and witnesses presented at the hearing.

**Independent Educational Evaluation** – an assessment conducted by someone who is not employed by the school district. The person(s) completing the assessment must be fully trained and qualified.

**IDEA**– Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is federal legislation that ensures all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that includes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs.

**IDEIA** – Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) is the name given to the 2004 amendments/ reauthorization of IDEA.

**Individualized Education Program (IEP)** – the written educational plan for a student receiving special education and related services with goals and objectives to be attained during a calendar year.

**Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)** – a written plan for eligible children aged birth through 2 receiving early intervention services.

**Initiation Date** – the date, month and year in which a program or service will begin as documented on the IEP.

**Intervention Plan** – a general education intervention plan that may be implemented, with parental consent, to assist students that have not been identified as eligible for special education. Interventions are strategies, support or/adaptations for the child in the area of difficulties.

**IAR**– Illinois Assessment of Readiness. The Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) is the instrument the State uses to measure individual student achievement relative to the Illinois Learning Standards. It is a statewide requirement that all Illinois students in grades 3 through 8 take the IAR.

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** – the requirement that children with disabilities shall be educated to the maximum extent possible with children who do not have disabilities.

**Mediation** – a process in which parents and school personnel try to settle disagreements with the help of a trained mediator provided by the Illinois State Board of Education.

**Placement** – the identification of special education and related services and development of an instructional program and setting for a student.

**Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance** – statements in an IEP that specifically describe what a student can do.

**Positive Intervention** – a reinforcer (e.g. praise, positive points, and tokens) provided in order to increase the frequency of the response (e.g., praising a student for cooperative turn-taking).

**Procedural Safeguards** – Federal and state laws establish certain rights for students with disabilities who may be eligible for, or who are receiving, special education and related services and for their parents. These rights are known as procedural safeguards. Illinois state law and federal law (IDEA) require that the district make available to the student and parent a full explanation of their rights.

**Reevaluation** – an assessment that typically occurs every three years, or sooner, to determine continued eligibility for special education.

**Referral** – the process of requesting that a student be evaluated for special education and related services. Any concerned person may refer a student, including teachers, principals, parents, other agency personnel or the student.

**Related Services** – support services needed by a student in order to benefit from special education services. These may include transportation, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech/language therapy, school social work services, etc.

**Resolution Session** – a meeting between the district and parent, to be held within 15 days after a parent requests a due process hearing, for the purpose of resolving the parent's complaints. This meeting may be waived by both parties, or the parties may attend mediation instead.

**School Day** – any day including a partial day, during the regular school year that students are in attendance at school for instructional purposes.

**Screening** – a review of all children in a given group to identify those students who may need an evaluation to determine the need for special education.

**Section 504** – Section 504 is there to assure that local schools provide reasonable accommodations for any individuals who have a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities. Major life activities include: caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, and learning. Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 should not be confused with special education legislation, (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – IDEA) which provides special education services for students who meet specific criteria and have an IDEA related disability.

**Short-Term Instructional Objectives/Benchmarks** – statements in an IEP that describe small increments or steps a student must learn or master before he/she can reach the "annual goals" set for him/her. The 2004 IDEIA requires short-term objectives or benchmarks only for students taking alternative assessments.

**Student Record (Permanent and Temporary)** – file that includes, but is not limited to, family background information, intelligence test scores, aptitude test scores, special education evaluations, achievement level test results, participation in extracurricular activities, disciplinary information, eligibility conference summary reports, IEPs reports or information from non-educational persons or agencies and other information of relevance to the education of the student.

**Suspension** – removal from school programs for 1-10 consecutive school days by administrative action for gross disobedience or misconduct.

**Transportation** – It is expected that students attending their neighborhood school will be able to walk to school. However, transportation is provided as a related service for students with disabilities if a student is placed at a school other than his/her neighborhood school or cannot get to school in the same manner as non-disabled peers.



## PARENT RESOURCES

### Illinois State Board of Education

<http://www.isbe.state.il.us/>

#### Parent's Guide

The Illinois State Board of Education has developed A Parent's Guide: The Educational Rights of Students with Disabilities for parents and others to learn about the educational rights of children who have disabilities and receive special education services. The Guide is not meant to replace the Explanation of Procedural Safeguards that school districts are required to provide to parents of eligible children at specific times. Additional copies of the Guide can be obtained for free from the Illinois State Board of Education (312) 814-8498, (217) 782-5589 or toll-free at (866) 262-6663.

#### Compliance

Parents with questions regarding a possible violation of a special education rule or regulation may contact special education program consultants in the Special Education Compliance Division of the Illinois State Board of Education (217) 782-5589 in Springfield, or (312) 814-5560 in Chicago.



## Intervention through General Education

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Parents and school staff may refer students first exhibiting learning and/or behavioral problems to the school's Intervention Team. Based on the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) and/or Restorative Practices model, the Intervention Team will utilize careful and competent screening and proven interventions by which a student with learning and/or behavioral problems will receive assistance. Those students who receive intervention services recommended by the Team but do not benefit from them, even with adjustments and critical review, may be referred for an evaluation under IDEA or Section 504.

A critical factor for success is that each school utilizes a unified service delivery model that enables the needs of students with difficulties learning and behaving to access all of the expertise and skills possessed by school staff and that provides to the maximum extent possible, instructional and behavioral support to general educators.

### Transitioning Positive Behavior Intervention/Supports (PBIS) to Restorative Practices (RP)

#### How Does PBIS and RP Intersect?

This document has been created to help you better understand how PBIS functions and how it can be transitioned into the use of Restorative Practices. Extensive research has shown that punishment-based strategies (reprimands, loss of privileges, office referrals, suspensions and expulsions) that focus mainly on reacting to specific student misbehavior in the absence of positive strategies, is ineffective (U.S. Office of Special Education Programs, National PBIS website.)

PBIS and Restorative Practices (RP) are both whole-school models that emphasize prevention, enhanced school climate and positive responses to improving behavior opposed to punishment-based strategies. They place value on staff and youth engagement, support social-emotional learning and are seen as effective approaches to lowering discipline referrals.

**PBIS** aims to modify inappropriate behavior through the school staff teaching, reinforcing and rewarding appropriate student behaviors (OSEP, 2007.) This process is grounded in differentiated instruction that provides a range of interventions (Tier 1-universal, Tier 2-targeted group, Tier 3-individual) that are systematically applied to students based on their demonstrated level of need and the role of environment as it applies to the behavior problem. In this way, PBIS can be considered an adult-directed and extrinsically-motivated approach to behavior modification.

**Restorative Practices**, on the other hand, is a relationship-based approach to improving student behavior and discipline. It is driven by the premise that students are happier, more cooperative and productive, when those in positions of authority do things with them rather than to them or for them (social discipline.) When an incident occurs, the school community comes together to provide students high levels of accountability (limiting setting, discipline) and support (nurturing, encouragement). Accountability is achieved through authentic dialogue and helping students

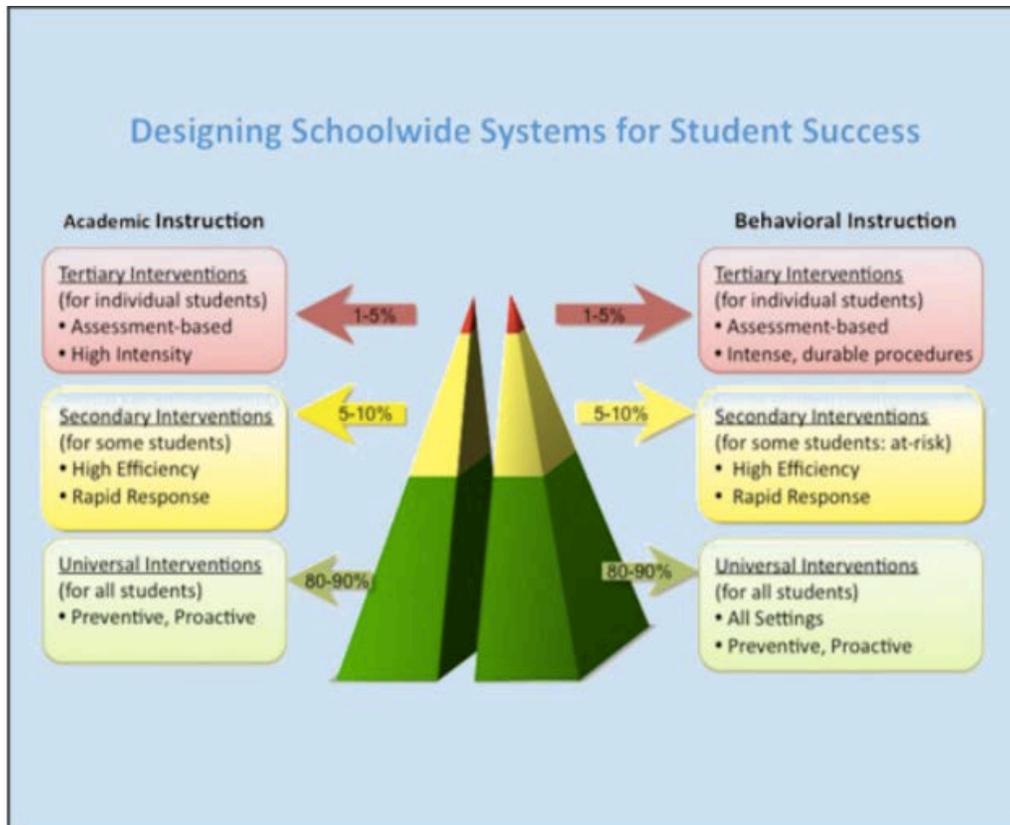
understand the impact of their actions, take responsibility for their choices and work towards repairing the harm done in meaningful ways.

The RP framework promotes a continuum of practices that range from building healthy relationships through proactive circles and restorative conversations to formal restorative conferences that address more serious acts of wrongdoing. This process of combined community-building and social discipline relies heavily on developing trust, mutual understanding and shared values and behavioral norms that guide the interactions of all school members. Improved communication and responsibility help maintain healthy learning environments for all youth. In a restorative school community, students behave not because they are afraid of punishment or because they seek a reward, but because they are intrinsically motivated to become valued members of their classrooms and overall school community. (See [Defining Restorative Practices \(IIRP\)](#) for more information.)

*(Created by: Teresa Quinn with supporting documents from Maddy Ligon and Oakton Elementary Team. Reviewed by Andalib Khelghati, Joyce Bartz, Meagan Novara, Maddy Ligon, Susan Kolian, & Katie Brauman; D65 June, 2019.)*

## Multi-Tier System of Supports/Response to Intervention Framework

Students who experience difficulty with learning and/or behavior have needs of varying nature and intensity. While some needs are mild and require few resources, others may be more severe and require more extensive resources. Further, some may require intense, brief support and others may need more ongoing support. A tiered model of intervention support enables educators to adapt resources to meet the needs of students, rather than requiring students to adapt to pre-existing programs. The following graphic illustrates this model:



### Tier One: Universal Level (Core Instruction)

Through the leadership of the principal and the belief that *all students can learn*, the school enables teachers to use research based core curriculum instruction and classroom behavioral expectations/consequences that address the needs of most students. Teachers collaborate with other teachers, or may also collaborate with parents and family members via journals, assignment contracts, or other incentive-based methods. Teachers may also consult with other professionals, including other teachers, administrators, support specialists (e.g. reading specialists, interventionists, social workers, school psychologists) to assist students in achieving grade level learning goals.

## **Tier Two: (Supplemental Instruction)**

If a student or group of students do not respond to differentiated core instruction at the Tier I level and are not meeting grade level benchmarks, teachers may seek assistance from a problem-solving/intervention team. To initiate the assistance of the intervention team (which *may* be comprised of general education teachers, parents, administrators, reading specialists, interventionists, school psychologists, or school social worker, depending on the presenting concern), the teacher gathers known information about the student or group of students such as (but not limited to):

- Student strengths
- Current instructional level(s) and assessment data
- Previous attempted interventions and accompanying data
- Attendance records
- Office discipline referrals
- Grade reports

and any other data, academic or behavioral, which may be relevant to the presenting problem. At an agreed upon time and place (depending on the school), the team members engage in a problem solving process to: 1) Identify the problem in observable, measurable terms, 2) Analyze the data and form hypotheses as to the cause of the problem, and 3) Develop an instructional plan to try and reduce the problem. Specific assessment activities and timelines should also be outlined to assess whether or not the plan is effective in reducing the problem.

Implementation of this process allows for early identification of students who are at risk and the ability to match intensity of support with level of student need.

## **Tier Three: (Intensive Support)**

For those students who do not respond positively to those intervention plans outlined and implemented with fidelity in tiers one and two, they may benefit from the most targeted/individualized instruction. Just like in tier 2, collaborative teams analyze data from previous intervention attempts to inform decisions about an individual plan. For behavioral interventions, the team should consider the setting event, triggering antecedents, reinforcements, and consequences. Academic intervention plans should specify the type of instructional methods used and the data to be collected as a part of progress monitoring. The support at tier 3 is more explicit and individualized than at each previous tier, and is delivered in small groups or individually. Services this intense may merit an individual plan or support or referral for further evaluation from the intervention or problem solving team.