

# Secondary Special Education

## Secondary Special Education Department Staff:

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## Special Education program support and supervision:

- High Schools
- Middle Schools
- Special Schools
- Alternative Schools
- Whaley/ABA
- Outreach/Continuation
- Charter Schools

## Middle School Special Education:

Special education services are provided in all comprehensive middle schools.

PTR Averages: Student:Teacher:Teacher Assitant Ratios

Resource – 17:1

Life Skills 1 – 10:1:2

Life Skills 2 – 6:1:2 or 3

Life Skills 1&2 – 7-8:1:2

Autism – 8:1:2

- Approximately 847 students with mild to moderate disabilities are supported in our middle schools
- Regional classroom sites for students with more intensive needs are in 7 of 9 middle schools with a total of 10 classes. The majority of life skills students are supported in their neighborhood schools.
- Middle schools have programs for students requiring intensive services, life skills instruction, and specialized autism services, which support a total of 89 students.
- Central and Mirror Lake do not have Life Skill programs. Regional sites are Romig, Clark and Gruening.
- The midlevel autism class is currently housed at Wendler Middle School.
- Students with autism who have more extensive needs are supported in Life Skills classes.
- All schools currently support students with behavioral needs.
- All middle schools have a spectrum of services that support inclusive programs, resource classes, study skills classes and behavior supports.
- Intensive direct instruction for Language Arts through implementation of the Language! Program in all middle schools.

## High School Special Education:

Special Education services are provided at all eight comprehensive high schools.

PTR Averages: Student:Teacher:Teacher Assitant Ratios

Resource – 23:1

Life Skills 1 – 12:1:2

Life Skills 2 – 6:1:2 or 3

- 1,315 students with mild to moderate disabilities are currently supported in our high schools.
- Seven of eight comprehensive high schools support life skills class settings.
- There are currently 19 Life Skills classrooms supporting 159 students.
- Each school is required to support students with behavioral issues. Program development is done at each school to meet the unique needs of students.
- Each high school has a vocational teacher to address transition needs. Currently, voc ed teachers are teaching One Your Own and Prevoc classes only. Additional focus is on supervision of job sites, vocational support, postsecondary planning and connecting with outside agencies.

## Special Schools and Alternative Schools:

Special education services are provided throughout Anchorage in residential treatment center and hospitals

- Booth
  - ARCH
  - API
  - North Star Hospital
  - North Star Residential
  - Jesse Lee
  - Providence Girls
  - Fireweed
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- Services are provided for all students in the residential treatment facilities. At North Star Hospital, only special education and 504 students receive services due to the numbers and turnaround of patients.
  - Currently, PLATO is in all programs to support high school students in earning credits and transitioning back to neighborhood schools.
  - Curriculum currently being used mirrors materials used in the regular education classes at the neighborhood schools
  - Alternative Programs – Benny Benson, Search, SAVE, Polaris, and Steller all have special education staff to support students in each of these programs
  - McLaughlin Youth Center provides special education service to both adjudicated students and those attending the day treatment program.
  - Outreach/Continuation provide services to any special education students on long-term suspension, expulsion and in Interim Alternative Educational Settings. This is the first year that Continuation has opened its doors to special education students. Teams are determining which program best supports the needs of individual students.
  - KCC has three special education teachers and 5 TAs who support special education students attending KCC.

## **ACE/ACT – Alternative Career Education/Adult Community Transition**

Special Education services are provided to students who require continued education through the age of 21. ACE/ACT provide services to students coming from high school life skills programs and require additional education as they transition toward independence or community assisted living.

- The ACE/ACT program provides services in the areas of functional skills, job readiness, rec/leisure and self-help for the adult students with more intensive needs transitioning into the community.
- The unique nature of the program requires more extensive staffing in order for the community training to occur.
- Current enrollment in ACE/ACT totals 100 students with a breakdown of 4 level 1, 49 level 2 and 47 level 3. The enrollment is up 12 compared to the previous year's total of 88 students.
- ACE is currently housed at KCC.
- ACT has sites at the YMCA, the Consortium building, ARC, and UAA satellite in Eagle River. One roving classroom meets at different site in the community.
- Collaboration with outside agencies is crucial to the success of students transitioning from ASD to community support services.

## Whaley School

Special education services are provided at Whaley for students who are unable to be supported in the regular school due to intensive behavioral needs.

- Currently, there are 34 elementary and 97 secondary special education students attending Whaley School.
- Whaley/Special Schools is in its fourth year as a school in need of improvement under NCLB
- Fifteen students with the most significant needs are attending Whaley in a specialized program called ABA.
- Whaley supports students in grades 5-12. Students requiring services beyond 12th grade can receive services up through age 21.
- Whaley is currently working to implement Read 180 and Follow the Leader to increase reading scores.
- ABA supports students with severe behavioral issues. Half are students certified as autistic. This program has been extremely successful in reducing behaviors and transitioning students back to regular programs.

## Trends and Challenges for the Secondary Special Education Department:

- ❖ Whaley continues to have major facility issues. Electrical problems make it difficult to run educational programs.
- ❖ ACE needs a community site for their program. This would open up some space for the Newcomers program and extending KCC vocational programs.
- ❖ Language! Program has shown good progress for our lowest readers. This program needs to be continued and extended. We are currently only teaching levels A and B. Money is needed to purchase levels C through F and to provide extensive training.
- ❖ Expansion of math curriculum is needed to support the unique issues of middle school and high school special education students in the areas of basic math, pre-algebra and algebra. Currently, we are reviewing researched-based direct instruction math programs.
- ❖ A large amount of money is being spent to pay for decisions made in due process.
- ❖ The cost of bringing in outside trainers is extensive especially when we get into specific training for autism, behavior, and other disabilities.
- ❖ Expansion of autism program is need for next year to meet the needs to students transitioning into high school as well as students currently in high school who are having difficulties.
- ❖ Increased need for transitional services for students 16 and older. New IDEA has beefed up district responsibility in transitional services. This means increased support in community training and vocational education.
- ❖ Retention and recruitment of staff is a major concern.
  - Whaley is currently subbing 4 sped positions
  - Midlevel and high school are subbing 6 positions
- ❖ Curriculum at Whaley is needed. Very limited amount of regular education, special education and affective skills curriculum is currently available in the building.
- ❖ Waivers are no longer available for special education and 504 students for the HSGQE. This has huge ramifications on our graduation rates.
- ❖ Continued training is occurring of regular education staff on their responsibilities to special education students. We have many complaints regarding the lack of accommodating and modifying. We are willing to train as much as regular education will invite us in.

## **Trends and Challenges with Student Populations:**

- ❖ High number of students certified with autism attending middle school and high school. One critical issue is the bubble of students coming up from elementary and the need to classes to support these students.
- ❖ Behavioral Challenges. - There are an increasing number of students with behavioral challenges as part of students' disabilities. Providing support for these students is becoming increasingly difficult.
- ❖ Behavioral issues in life skills and autism classes. Currently all staff in supporting these students are trained in CPI, which is a program designed to support teams in handling situations through de-escalation and evasion.
- ❖ Increased numbers of students attending ACE/ACT. Staffing has to keep up with the high numbers in order to maintain the integrity of the programs.
- ❖ Special education students who do not pass the HSGQE will need a program of continued educational support. Is it appropriate for the students to continue to attend their neighborhood schools up through 21 or should we plan for a different program and setting?