Anchorage School District

Educating All Students for Success in Life

What Every Anchorage School District Teacher Should Know

Welcome to ASD Special Education!

We provide special education supports and services to over 7,000 students with disabilities throughout the district. Programs include Early Childhood and Elementary Special Education, Secondary Special Education, Related Services Programs, Special Schools, Special Education Records, STEP Center, Alaska School for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Whaley Center, and Mt. Iliamna.

This document includes information on special education basic concepts, responsibilities of general and special education personnel, six fundamental principles of special education, and additional resources to assist teachers in the provision of special education and related services.

Resources to Assist Teachers

Where can I go for additional help or to ask questions?

Questions about student issues or special education procedures should be addressed to the student's special education team or building level administrators and staff.

In addition, each special education program has a supervisor and teacher consultants who provide assistance to teams in the schools. They may be reached at:

- Early Childhood and Elementary Special Education: ……..….907-742-3886
- Related Services: ……..……..907-742-6050
- Secondary Special Education & Special Schools: ……907-742-3888
- Special Education Administration: …….....907-742-4236
- Alaska State School for Deaf and Hard of Hearing: ……...907-742-4243
- Special Education Records: ……...907-742-6077

Additional online resources

ASD Special Education Website, Notice of Procedural Safeguards: **http://www.asdk12.org/depts/sped/**

The Anchorage School District Special Education Handbook: **http://www.asdk12.org/depts/sped/policy/index.asp**

New state and district policy or procedures are posted here: **http://www.asdk12.org/depts/sped/policy/changes/index.asp**

Alaska State Special Education website: **http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/sped/**

Participation Guidelines for Alaska Students in State Assessments **: www.eed.state.ak.us/.../Assessment/participation_guidelines/ParticipationGuidelinesSept2007.pdf**

The STEP Center is a section of the Special Education Department that provides information resources to Students, Teachers and Parents. Click link here: **http://www.asdk12.org/depts/step/** or contact them at 742-3872.

Special Education Basic Concepts

Other Responsibilities of General and Special Education Teachers

Regular Education Interventions should be attempted and documented prior to, or concurrently with a referral for special education. Schools should document the type, duration, frequency, intensity, and result of each intervention implemented with fidelity.

The rationale for systematic regular education intervention is to identify problems early and prevent them from becoming major problems. However, regular education intervention activities must not be instituted to divert or delay a referral to special education.

What is the role of the general educator in IEP meeting?

The general educator(s) must participate in the development of the IEP in order for a student to:

- Advance appropriately towards attaining annual goals;
- Be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum;
- Participate in extracurricular activities and other nonacademic activities;
- Be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and nondisabled children in the regular class and in extracurricular and nonacademic activities.

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Special education means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. Districts must provide special education and related services to eligible children with disabilities beginning at age 3 and continuing through age 21.

To be eligible for special education, a child must:

- Have a disability that adversely affects their educational performance; and,
- Demonstrate an educational need that requires specially designed instruction.

Related Services are services required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education. In ASD, these include:

- speech language pathology
- interpreting services
- physical and occupational therapy
- orientation and mobility services
- school health and nursing services
- audiology services
- psychological and counseling services
- early identification/ assessment of disabilities
- medical services for diagnostic/ evaluation
- transportation

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA guarantees equal access to the school's general curriculum and school facilities.

Child with a Disability includes 14 disability categories:

- cognitive impairment
- deafness
- visual impairment
- emotional disturbance
- autism
- other health impairment
- deaf-blindness
- hearing impairment
- speech-language impairment
- blindness
- orthopedic impairment
- traumatic brain injury
- specific learning disability
- multiple disabilities

Two federal laws protect children with disabilities and are binding on school districts:

1. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
2. Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a legally binding commitment of resources from the School District. Each public school child who receives special education and related services must have an IEP. Each IEP must be truly individualized and designed to help the student be involved in, and progress in, the general curriculum.

IEP Team consists of the following individuals:

- The student's parents
- regular education teacher
- and others at request of IEP participants
- district representative (e.g., supervisor, principal)
- special education teacher
- Related service providers (if applicable)

The primary job of the IEP team is to participate in evaluation planning, development and implementation of the IEP, participation in manifestation determinations if necessary.

Components of Special Education

The Anchorage School District Special Education Department has identified eight components which are paramount in supporting special education.

1. Child Find

All children with disabilities residing in the State, including children with disabilities who are homeless children or are wards of the State, and children with disabilities attending private schools, regardless of the severity of their disability, and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated. Every teacher has individual child find responsibility.

2. Nondiscriminatory Evaluation

All ASD teachers need to know that test and evaluation materials must be:

- Non-discriminatory
- Given in the child's native language or mode of communication
- Technically sound and used to assess all areas related to the suspected disability
- Consider primary language, limited English proficiency, environmental and cultural factors, and attendance

3. Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

FAPE includes the provision of special education and related services that are provided--

- At public expense, under public supervision & direction & without charge;
- Include an appropriate preschool, elementary school, or secondary school education;
- And, are provided in conformity with an individualized education program (IEP).

FAPE must be available to all children residing in the State between the ages of 3 and 22, including children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school.

4. Implementation of the Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Individualized Education Program (IEP) - A written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised according to the requirement of IDEA.

5. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are to be educated with children who are not disabled. This includes access to the general education curriculum and supplementary aids and services as determined by the IEP team.

6. Procedural Safeguards

A copy of the procedural safeguards must be given to the parents of a child with a disability, annually, and include a full explanation of all safeguards and parental rights under Federal and Alaska state law.

7. Parental Participation

Each public agency must take steps to ensure that one or both of the parents of a child with a disability are present at each IEP Team meeting or are afforded the opportunity to participate, including—Notifying parents of the meeting early enough to ensure that they will have an opportunity to attend; and scheduling the meeting at a mutually agreed on time and place.

8. Discipline and Manifestations

A "manifestation determination" is a process that a team, including the parent, utilizes in some instances when the District has disciplined or seeks to discipline a student with a disability under 504 or IDEA. In a manifestation determination meeting conducted within 10 days of the behavior, the team decides whether the student's conduct is substantially related to the student's disability. A manifestation determination meeting is required each time the student is suspended for any number of days over 10 during a school year; the number of days is counted cumulatively over the school year.