

Guide to Student Services



BERNARD ZELL

ANSHE EMET DAY SCHOOL

בית ספר אנשי אמת ע"ש ברנרד זל

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Welcome	2
Overview of Faculty and Services	3
Determining the Need for Support	7
Developing a Plan for Services— Staffings and Transition Meetings	9
Transition to High School	12
Communication	14
Faculty Directory for Student Services, 2018-2019	16

Welcome

Welcome to your guide to the Student Services Department at Bernard Zell. The Student Services Department works in partnership with families to support student development throughout their school experience. We collaborate so that academic and social-emotional needs are identified and addressed in a meaningful and comprehensive way. The Student Services team is currently comprised of a Director of Student Services, six grade-level learning specialists, one Hebrew language learning specialist, two social workers, an academic enrichment specialist, and a literacy specialist. As a team, we work together to recognize and support students through the range of services we provide. The team focuses on identification of students with diverse needs, consultative and direct services, collaboration with school, home, and private providers, and implementation of strategic programs to support student development.

Overview of Faculty and Services

Learning Specialists

Each learning specialist is a certified special education teacher who has been trained to work with children with diverse learning styles, including providing specialized instruction and making modifications and accommodations to classroom instruction to meet a wide range of student needs. While the certification spans across all school-aged children, our learning specialists hone in on a specific grade level bands within each division. In Early Childhood and Lower School, we have one learning specialist who supports in Senior Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades and one learning specialist who supports in 3rd and 4th grades. We have four Middle School learning specialists who each focus on two grade levels. In addition, we have one Hebrew-language learning specialist who supports students from 1st grade through 6th grade. This model enables the specialists to establish strong relationships with general education teaching partners, build on their expertise of content and curriculum within the grades, and develop meaningful curricular supports that align with the classroom objectives.

Learning Specialists play an important role in collaboration with the classroom teachers. In addition to attending planning meetings with their grade level team members, they support students in the classroom setting with mastering grade level content, work with students in a small group setting, and facilitate communication and collaboration with private providers. The learning specialists participate in parent meetings in collaboration with the classroom teachers and advisors. They support student growth through academic interventions done in a small group or individualized setting, and work with students to support study skills, organization, planning, and previewing and/or reviewing of classroom content.

Social Workers

Bernard Zell employs two full-time social workers who partner with teachers, staff, families, and administrators within the whole school to help grow our students as social emotional learners. The social workers on our team are licensed clinical social workers with professional educator licenses for practice in a school setting. They support the social emotional needs of students as it relates to their functioning in the school setting. One social worker is assigned to Senior Kindergarten through 4th grade and one social worker is assigned to 5th through 8th grades. Incorporating systems theory, they utilize their skills through individual, small group, and whole-class sessions in order to play an integral role in supporting student needs. Social workers collaborate with teachers, learning specialists, parents, and outside providers

in order to provide a comprehensive plan of support between home and school. In addition this year, Early Childhood faculty and families are supported by consultations with Tuesday's Child, a group of child psychologists and social workers in Chicago, consulting in our school setting.

Social Work Services

The social workers provide services within and outside the classroom in a variety of ways that attend to the developmental needs and academic learning style of each student. Social workers offer individual and group services for students challenged with life transitions, academic and/or social-emotional issues. The focus of group work is both proactive and flexible and targeted at supporting the developmental concerns as well as the specific needs of the students. Social workers are present across a student's school day in a variety of settings. They work in conjunction with faculty members to facilitate and empower change. They build the skills for and encourage students to be proactive and strive to foster a growth mindset. Social workers may include participating in morning meetings, advisory groups, providing social emotional lessons across grade levels, facilitating small groups (such as Banana Splits, for children of divorced parents or social skills groups or friendship groups) to address student needs, providing direct individual student support, and consultation with staff, parents, and outside providers. The social workers are also involved in facilitating programs such as Safe Touch in Senior Kindergarten through 8th grade (a program to support the state mandated Erin's Law) and Erika's Lighthouse (a program to address depression in youth). The goal of the social worker is to meet the needs of the whole child, provide advocacy, and foster a parent-school partnership.

Literacy Specialist

The literacy specialist is an integral part of our school, providing Bernard Zell students with literacy instruction and guidance rooted in best-practice educational standards and pedagogy. In addition to working with students, the literacy specialist offers professional development for faculty and curriculum guidance and leadership. The work of the literacy specialist is focused in our Lower School, with targeted work alongside classroom teachers in 1st and 2nd grade in order to promote strong early literacy skills and early identification of students who may need targeted instruction in literacy.

Literacy Specialist Services

The literacy specialist works alongside the classroom teachers to build a strong foundation in early literacy skills for all learners through shared planning, curricular

collaboration and weekly literacy meetings. The literacy specialist team teaches reader's and writer's workshop in 1st and 2nd grade, models strong literacy teaching in phonics, and works with students in both whole class, small groups, or individual settings to reinforce and support classroom instruction and student learning. When a child is struggling and identified, the literacy specialist may provide interventions in an individual or small group setting to target instruction.

Academic Enrichment Specialist

The academic enrichment specialist works closely with the Lower School teams in a collaboration, consultation, and planning capacity. The academic enrichment specialist meets with teachers, instructional leaders, and administrators to identify and understand grade level trends and needs of individual students. The specialist also collaborates with the grade level social worker to make a plan of support to meet the social/emotional needs of cognitively high learners. The academic enrichment specialist focuses work with children and teachers in math and literacy within the classroom and in small groups outside of the classroom.

Academic Enrichment Services

Based on individual needs, students receive a flexible combination of enrichment support, provided at intensive, targeted and universal levels. The Academic Enrichment Specialist engages in consultation and planning with grade level teachers and also works individually and in small group settings with students. Enrichment is provided in the classroom setting, push-in, pull-out or team-teaching sessions. Services include independent projects; regrouped advanced classes; differentiated learning; readiness based flexible grouping; advanced learning models including critical and creative thinking, inquiry and problem solving; social skills group; interest based before and after school programs and character development grounded in Jewish values.

What is academic enrichment at Bernard Zell and why is it valued?

At Bernard Zell, we work together with families, students, and teachers to ensure that the needs of students with highly advanced cognitive abilities are addressed in a meaningful and comprehensive way. Learning experiences for all children should provide the opportunity not only for academic achievement, but also for continuous academic growth. Matching educational experiences to a child's readiness level and pace of learning encourages the development of a positive sense of self, motivation, industriousness and a love of learning which are critical skills for success and achievement. To reach this goal, it is necessary to provide appropriately accelerated

and enriched instruction for students demonstrating advanced levels of aptitude and achievement. The enrichment specialist works with teachers and students primarily in Lower School, with some opportunities for supporting students in Senior Kindergarten or Middle School as determined by the school teams.

Who is being identified?

Rather than identifying general giftedness, we believe that students should be identified who need domain (subject area) specific modified learning experiences in order to have ongoing challenges in their learning.

How are students identified?

A broad and flexible identification process emphasizes the philosophy that for each individual, talents vary across domains, and change over time and across environments. Quantitative assessments, such as NWEA MAP, aimswebPlus (for math), Fountas and Pinnell Reading assessments, and domain specific pre-testing (math) are utilized to help identify needs for enrichment within reading and math domains. In addition, qualitative information, such as teacher observation, parent input, student motivation and self-nomination, are all taken into consideration in individualizing learning plans for students

Determining the Need for Support

Students may be identified as needing supports in school from the teacher(s), parents, or from a formal gathering of information, such as a private evaluation.

Information utilized in determining if students are meeting grade level expectations

At Bernard Zell we utilize a variety of information to assist us in determining how well students are meeting the grade level academic expectations and how social, behavioral, and/or emotional needs have an impact on learning. These include, but are not limited to, *teacher observations, classwork, classroom assessments, and grade level-wide universal assessments. In reading, we use the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System in Senior Kindergarten through 6th grade. In math, we use aimswebPlus in Senior Kindergarten through 4th grade, and all 3rd through 8th graders take the NWEA MAP, a nationally normed standardized test in reading and math.*

If students are not meeting grade level expectations

If students do not appear to be meeting grade level expectations within several of the domains above, the classroom teacher team may make a **referral** to the student services department. A referral starts the process of an examination of data and observations with the appropriate team members to discuss the areas of need, make a plan for interventions, determine a timeline for reviewing progress, communicating with families, and following-up with next steps and/or recommendations.

Teacher interventions for initial support

Interventions may be done within the school day and implemented with a classroom teacher, an instructional specialist at the school, or a member of the student services team. Classroom teachers will communicate with families to share with them when students are referred for additional supports.

Collaboration with families about student needs (referral & collaboration)

Parents also provide valuable information about their children and either identified needs (through a formal evaluation or doctor note) or observations that may be noticed at home. Parents are a valuable resource and should always feel comfortable reaching out to the classroom teacher to ask questions, share observations, or express concern. Should a parent bring an area of concern to the teacher or team, all

of the information above will be reviewed to determine the best next step in either gathering additional information or making a plan of support.

Recommendations for professional evaluations

When a student has participated in a private neuropsychological, behavioral, speech and language or occupational therapy evaluation and results include identifying diagnostic information with recommendations for supports at school, the relevant team members will gather to review the findings, and recommendations and to make a support plan.

When the school staff recommend private evaluations in any area, families will participate in a staffing meeting with the school team. Private evaluations may be recommended by the school due to any of the following reasons: academic performance below grade level academic expectations and/or lack of progress with interventions, when speech, motor, and/or sensory needs impact learning in the classroom, or when behavioral or social-emotional needs impact learning or overall functioning throughout the school day. (Please see *Staffings Information* section for more details.)

Recommendations for outside support

In addition to students services support, there may be a need for additional support, outside of the school setting. Depending upon the need, this might include outside academic tutors, speech and language development therapists, occupational therapists, social workers individual support or psychologist/psychiatrist support or medicine management. At the staffing or as a student's response to an intervention reveals the complexity of need, the school might recommend outside support. Of course, parents can seek the support on their own as well. All outside support is financially sustained by the family.

Developing a Plan for Services—Staffings and Transition Meetings

Purpose

The purpose of a staffing is to bring a team together to share information, observations, ideas, and support plans for an individual student once needs are identified through a comprehensive neuropsychological evaluation. The staffing is a collaborative effort to make, review, and agree on a plan for in-school supports and collaboration with families and private providers.

Attendees and Roles

Staffings are facilitated by the Director of Student Services. In addition to the Director of Student Services, participants include, but are not limited to the following individuals: parents, division head, general and Hebrew / Jewish Studies teachers (Lower School) or advisors (Middle School), grade level learning specialist, grade level social worker, diagnostician (psychologist), and any additional private providers (speech-language therapists, occupational therapists, physician, tutor, counselor or therapist, and possibly others).

Diagnostician: The psychologist and/or other diagnostician plays an important role in the meeting. The diagnostician holds valuable information about how the child learns, processes information, and responds to instruction. This person typically shares with the team an overview, highlighting findings and school-based recommendations. The professional also offers insight as questions arise and helps the school team to formulate a comprehensive plan of support within the constraints of what the school can support.

School Team: The school team, led by the Director of Student Services, along with the division head, classroom teacher(s), learning specialists, and/or social worker, come to the table prepared to share updated information about the child's strengths, present levels of performance, and areas of need as it relates to the school day. The school team also shares the plans for supports in school and ongoing communication and collaboration with families and private providers.

Parents: Parents are key team members in the staffings. Parent participation is extremely valuable in building a comprehensive and collaborative plan for the child. Parents are asked to share all diagnostic reports at least two weeks prior to the staffing in order for the team to most effectively review the findings and prepare. During the staffing, parents are encouraged to ask questions, share observations, and discuss their hopes. As part of the home-school partnership, the team may

recommend that families will need to make provisions for a private resource outside of school, such as a tutor or therapist, to support the student's growth in collaboration with what the school is able to put in place as a plan of support.

All families are asked to sign a release of information form with Bernard Zell to allow collaboration between key team members inside and outside of school. The release of information form can be found on BZ Connect and will be shared with families by a member of the Student Services team or a child's Division Head.

Private Providers: Any additional private providers (speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, tutors, psychologists or psychiatrists, vision therapists, physical therapists, alternative school or behavioral health programs or providers) are invited by the school to participate in the staffing at school. The team approach is most successful when we collaborate and make a comprehensive plan together.

Scheduling a Staffing

All staffings take place after an initial evaluation or new/updated evaluation has occurred. Once the evaluation has taken place, and after the report has been shared with the school team for a review of the findings and recommendations, a staffing will be scheduled to bring the team together to review the findings and recommendations. Staffings are scheduled from 7:30-8:30 in the mornings in order to maximize participation of the school team with the least disruption to the teaching day.

Learning Profile

The team will collaborate at the staffing to determine what services can be provided by the teachers and specialists at Bernard Zell as well as what services will need the attention of outside resources, such as occupational therapy, speech or language therapy, tutors, counselors/therapists, or other related areas as determined by the team. A plan will be developed which outlines the supports (related to academic, social emotional, or behavior needs) and each team member's role in implementing strategies, accommodations, consultations, and direct services.

After the staffing takes place, the key members of the Student Services Team (either the learning specialist, social worker, or both) create a working document which will outline services and/or accommodations as determined by the team. This working document lays out the child's strengths, identifies learning style/needs, classroom and testing accommodations, as well as the suggested type of school support and provider. It is shared with the classroom teams. The learning specialist and/or social worker monitors and reviews the learning profile throughout the year and shares it

with the relevant professional faculty. Together, the team reviews the learning profile quarterly and it is updated at a minimum annually, or when new information is received, to reflect the current needs of the student. The Learning Profile is shared with families after the team has met for the staffing and collectively determined a plan of support.

Transition Meetings

All families of students who have a learning profile are invited to an end-of-year transition meeting with the Director of Student Services and the student's current and following year's learning specialist, social worker, and division head. At the transition meeting, the team will share a brief update of the current school year and discuss the plan of support for the upcoming school year. Staffings do not take place each year. Instead, at the beginning of each school year the teams use the plan outlined at the transition meeting to begin supporting students.

Transition to High School

Providing a Smooth Transition

At Bernard Zell we are committed to helping students to build skills, advocacy, and a love for learning that will prepare them for secondary education. By the time our students are ready to leave 8th-grade, they have often spent years receiving supports, strategies, and accommodations that complement their individual learning styles. In order to continue with receiving the appropriate accommodations and services in high school, it may be necessary to request an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan with Chicago Public Schools (CPS). The Director of Student Services will meet with families to explain the differences between a 504 plan and an IEP and to help determine which is most applicable.

The Director of Student Services stays current with CPS expectations, protocols and procedures and will work to convey this information to families, review the process, gather necessary information, collaborate with school and private team to include all relevant information, and to put together the packet of information required by CPS to make the request.

There are key pieces of information about making the request for an IEP or 504 plan with CPS. It is essential that you follow the process below.

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan for support in Chicago Public Schools

All requests for an IEP or 504 plan need to be facilitated through the Director of Student Services at Bernard Zell. **The CPS process has recently changed**—Families cannot go directly to CPS central office or to their neighborhood CPS school. Families will be referred back to Bernard Zell.

At Bernard Zell, we start the IEP/504 CPS process in **the Fall of the student's 7th-grade year**. The Director of Student Services will ask all families interested in learning more and/or moving forward with the request to schedule a meeting to discuss the individual circumstances.

Bernard Zell **does not** determine if a student is eligible for an IEP, 504 Plan, or any services with CPS. **CPS makes that determination**. We inform families of the process, the CPS requirements and guide families through the process in order to get the best outcome for the individual circumstances and needs.

Process for referral to Chicago Public Schools

Once it is determined that we will submit a request, we work together to gather information to include in a packet to CPS which will serve as **supporting documentation** aligned with the request.

The packet will include, but is not limited to, the most recent report card, MAP score report, individual student learning profile, private evaluation and/or doctor's note outlining diagnostic criteria, and any additional information or data gathered by the school or private providers.

All requests require a **signature** on a CPS parent consent form. No requests can be submitted with CPS without the consent form completed and signed.

Once the request is made to CPS, **CPS** will respond with **a determination of whether the student qualifies for an evaluation** (which may lead to eligibility for an IEP) or a 504 plan. Should CPS respond in favor of an evaluation, they will schedule a meeting at one of their central office locations. Parents and the student should plan to attend the meeting. Relevant members of the Bernard Zell student services team will attend the meeting on behalf of the student and family (this usually includes the Director of Student Services and the student's learning specialist). Families are welcome to ask their private providers to attend; however, it is not necessary.

Communication

When an area of need is identified

When a teacher notices a need to gather additional information at school, put interventions in place, or a need for outside resources, the initial information will be communicated to families by the teacher. This may include an email, phone call or an in-person meeting. While the teacher may make the initial contact, additional team members, such as other grade level team members, the division head, or members of the student services team, may be asked to join in the conversation. If families have questions about their child's progress they should contact the classroom teacher, advisor, or content area teacher first.

When families provide a private diagnostic report

If parents get a private evaluation for their child prior to the school bringing up any concerns, they should inform the classroom teacher/advisor, division head, and director of student services. Together, the team will start the process for collaborating with families and diagnosticians to share information and put any needed plans in place. Please see the *staffings* section for additional information about the process when families initiate by providing a diagnostic report.

Ongoing Communication after a staffing

Once students have gone through the private evaluation and the team has met for a staffing, an individual plan, called a learning profile, is made to outline any direct support, accommodations, and collaboration. Families will receive a copy of the learning profile following the staffing. The learning profile becomes a working document that is shared with the school team and adjusted as new information is received and, at a minimum, as students transition to a new grade level. Families will hear regular updates from the student service team members, both individually and shared with the classroom/grade level team. If continued areas of need are recognized, the relevant team member (classroom teacher/advisor, student services faculty, division head, or director of student services) will communicate with the families to discuss needs and next steps. We work as a team and our communications are shared and collaborative. Families should always feel that they can reach out to the team to inquire about their child's supports and progress in the classroom.

Questions?

There may come a time where parents have questions. Please feel comfortable contacting Lauren El-Mofty, Director of Student Services at Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School. lmofty@bernardzell.org ~

Faculty Directory for Student Services, 2018–2019

Lauren El-Mofty, Director of Student Services

MS Indiana University, Special Education

MA University of Illinois at Chicago, School Administration, Type 75

lelmofty@bernardzell.org

Seth Davis, 4th, 6th, and 7th grade, learning specialist

BA DePaul University, Elementary Education

National Louis University, Learning Behavioral Specialist 1 Endorsement

M.Ed National Louis University, Reading Specialist

sdavis@bernardzell.org

Bonnie Gamze, SK–4th grade social worker

BS Indiana University, Opera and Business

MA University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration, Child and Family Systems (LCSW, CADC)

Post-MA Loyola University, Professional Educator License (Type 73) — School Social Work Endorsement

bgamze@bernardzell.org

Lisa Goodman, SK–4th grade, academic enrichment specialist

BS Northwestern University, Learning Disabilities

MA University of Michigan, Elementary Education

Northwestern University Gifted endorsement

lgoodman@bernardzell.org

Hilary Gorosh, 6th and 8th grade, learning specialist

BA Michigan State University, Special Education — learning disabilities and language arts Endorsements

M.Ed. DePaul University, Literacy and Specialized Instruction — Reading Specialist

hgorosh@bernardzell.org

Kate Gorsky, 7th grade and 8th grade, learning specialist

BS Indiana University, Secondary Education

M.Ed. University of Illinois, Chicago, Special Education

kgorsky@bernardzell.org

Hali Hymen, 5th and 6th grade, learning specialist

BS Miami University, Family Studies — Child Development

MA American University, Special Education — Learning Disabilities

hhymen@bernardzell.org

Hillary Lev, Senior Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade, learning specialist
BS University of Iowa, Special Education
MA Concordia University, Curriculum and Instruction, with ESL endorsement
hlev@bernardzell.org

Diana Levich, 1st–6th grade, Hebrew learning specialist
BS and MS University of Belorussia, Special Education
dlevich@bernardzell.org

Bridget McKenna, 3rd and 4th grade, learning specialist
BS Notre Dame University, Psychology
MS, University of Nebraska at Omaha, School Psychology
Chicago Teaching Fellows, Learning Behavior Specialist endorsement
bmckenna@bernardzell.org

Sarah Sweet, 5th–8th grade, social worker
BA Northeastern University, Sociology
MSW, Loyola University Chicago, Child & Family Specialization
Post-MSW, University of Illinois at Chicago Professional Educator License (Type 73)-
School Social Work endorsement
ssweet@bernardzell.org

Emily Twomey, Lower School literacy specialist, Early Childhood consultation
BS University of New Hampshire, Psychology and Women's Studies
MA Simmons College, Elementary Education
MA DePaul University, Literacy and Specialized Instruction
etwomey@bernardzell.org

