



EPHRATA
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Special Education **Handbook**

Every student can learn, just not on the same day, or in the same way.

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SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT GOALS

In order to provide appropriate specially designed instruction to all qualified students with disabilities in the Ephrata School District, the special education department has the following goals and objectives:

1. Provide qualified and well-trained special education staff
 - **Recruit and hire special education staff that are committed to students with disabilities**
 - **Provide ongoing staff development opportunities to all special education staff**
2. Retain qualified and well-trained special education staff
 - Provide access to appropriate and timely staff development
 - Provide ongoing opportunities for individual and team problem solving/support
3. Implement state and federal regulations
 - Provide accurate and timely evaluations of student needs
 - Develop appropriate programs for students with special needs
4. Work with district technology staff to provide training and access to appropriate programs used in Special Education
 - Keep current on district adopted technology programs
 - Maintain updated information on the Special Services web page
5. **Provide staff development to general educators regarding appropriate accommodations and techniques for meeting the needs of all students**
 - Provide collaboration time for Special Education teachers
 - Seek in-service opportunities for Special Education staff

SPECIAL EDUCATION REFERRALS

Response to Intervention (RTI) teams will be used at each building when concerns arise about the educational, behavioral, social/emotional, and/or speech and language needs of a student. Buildings hold RTI team meetings at regularly scheduled intervals in order to discuss progress and suggest strategies to improve the learning opportunities of students. RTI teams have the task of determining which interventions can meet the needs of the student, which interventions may still need to be explored, and the efficacy of attempted interventions. Additionally, data collection for interventions and student progress are examined.

Referrals

After the RTI team has determined that a special education referral is appropriate, a referral to the SST (Student Services Team) is made. A representative from the itinerant staff, the building administrator, a school psychologist, the special education director, and the referring teacher are members of this team.

If the SST determines that an evaluation for special education services is appropriate, notification will be sent to the Special Services office. There, the Special Services secretary will make a testing folder and document the timeline. From there, an evaluation case manager is assigned by the special services director and consent is sought.

Outside Referrals

When a written referral for evaluation for special education services is made by someone other than a school RTI team, the special services secretary stamps the referral with the date and alerts the special services director. A letter is generated and mailed to the referring party informing them of the 25 day timeline the district has to determine if there will be an evaluation. If it is determined that an evaluation is appropriate, the referring party is notified and consent is sought.

The special services secretary is responsible for obtaining parent consent to test.

IEPS

The IEP Primary Case Manager is the student's advocate in the building. He/she is responsible for assuring that each student on his/her caseload receives Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) in all areas for which the student qualifies for Special Education. Unless otherwise documented on the IEP Reimbursement form, it is the Primary Case Manager who will receive payment for completing the IEP. Completion of the IEP includes any and all revisions and transition plans, required during the plan year.

1. Write IEPs that reflect the most recent evaluation report, being sure that all areas indicated are being served, including related services, behavior goals and plans, transition plans, etc.
2. Conduct IEP meetings within legal timelines for special education students on your caseload.
3. Turn in complete IEPs to the special education department no later than the last workday of the month.
4. Design instruction for each student on your caseload.
5. Monitor and evaluate progress for each student on your caseload and provide quarterly goal reporting to parents.
6. Participate with school psychologists in Evaluations, Reevaluations, and Functional Behavioral Analysis as needed for students on your caseload.
7. Assist with Behavioral Intervention Plans as needed from Evaluation or Functional Behavior Assessment.
8. Monitor accommodations and modifications in the general education setting for your students.
9. Keep working files of students on your caseload in order, with current IEPs, evaluations, important information, and other data easily accessible.
10. Participate in transfer activities as students move to the next grade/building.

IEP Checklist

<p align="center">IEP Completion Checklist (Use this form once you receive the 30 day reminder email)</p>			
Enter date of completion	Task Due	Task	Description
	30 days prior	Contact Team	Be sure that you contact team members who you feel <i>need</i> to be in attendance at the IEP meeting prior to scheduling with parents to check their availability. Staff to consider: principal, speech teacher, language teacher, occupational therapist, physical therapist, school psychologist, special services administrator.
	28 days prior	Contact Parent	Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting of team with parent present. • Meeting of team with parent attending via phone call. • Meeting of team without parent present (if unable to attend). • Enter contact attempt(s) in IEP Online
	25 days prior	Open Document	Required steps for the document to be accessible to team members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create document AND copy over minimum data (checkbox). • Enter meeting date and time. • Enter plan start and end dates • Answer LRE Change question (drop down menu YES/NO). • Select "Form Not Returned" in Medicaid drop down menu.
	25 days prior	Letter Invitation	Steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add contact attempt (letter) in IEP Online • Print letter invitation • Send letter home with student or by mail.
	25 days prior	Contact Team	Email IEP team from IEP Online to inform them of the meeting date and time. To do this, click the "EMAIL" button on the bottom right of the screen when viewing the participants list.
	2 days prior to IEP meeting	Excused Members	Mark any team members that will not be able to attend or you have not received a response from as excused. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Click on their name in the participants list then check the "excused" box and add a description of the reason for their absence. • Inform parent (prior to the meeting date) of team members excused and ensure that they are okay with meeting in their absence. • Record date, time, and means of contact for informing parent of excused members.
	1-2 days prior to IEP meeting	Complete IEP	Be sure all areas are covered. You can use the small colored dot on the right hand side of the screen to monitor the percentage complete. Print and proofread the IEP prior to meeting with parents.
	After meeting	Lock & Send	Once the meeting has been held: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a copy of the signed document to the parent. • Open the document and add any revisions to the online document. • Send the ORIGINAL to the Special Services secretary. • Lock the document in IEP Online. This can be done by clicking the lock on the left hand side of the screen when viewing the list of IEPs for the student.

EVALUATIONS

The office secretary will do the following:

- Upon Receipt of Referral: Verify referral with psychologists.
Review referral and send packet (consent, Health Inventory, safeguards) to student's school counselor to get parent signature.
Add student name to Case Manager and initial evaluation lists.
Send "Teacher Input" forms to teachers.
- Upon Receipt of Signature: Update IEP Online and rosters with consent date and due date.
Create a manila initial evaluation file and give it to case manager.
- Weekly: E-mail "Initial Evaluation" roster to all specialists.
- Before count day: Enter new evaluation data on Skyward.
- Ongoing: Create new official file and file reports.
Create a classroom file and send it to IEP case manager.

Special Services staff will do the following:

- Ongoing: Communicate with the secretary regarding new referrals.
Evaluate students.
Prepare report.
Schedule and meet with parents.
Turn completed file to office secretary.

REEVALUATIONS

The office secretary will do the following:

70 days prior to due date: Send consent to parent/guardian, reconciling qualifying areas with previous evaluation.
E-mail SS Staff.
Give pink evaluation folder to the case manager with NWEA scores.
Add student names to Case Manager (CM) lists.
Send "Teacher Input" forms to teachers.

50 days prior to due date: Call parent/guardian if consent has not yet been received.
Send second consent to parent/guardian if no verbal consent.
Document parent contacts on IOL.

5th & 20th day of each month: Print and distribute "Assessments" rosters to case managers.

Before count day: Enter new evaluation data on Skyward.

Ongoing: Add incoming info to CM files (consent, teacher input, med info).
Add consent dates to IOL.
File reports.

Special Services staff will do the following:

Ongoing: Evaluate students.
Prepare report.
Schedule and meet with parents.
Turn completed file to office secretary.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

The Ephrata School District adheres to WAC 392-172A-5140 through 392-172A-5155 whose purpose is to ensure that students eligible for Special Education services are not improperly excluded from school for disciplinary reasons.

School personnel may remove a student eligible for Special Education services for not more than ten school days to the extent the same removals are applied to students without disabilities.

When a student removal reaches ten school days, a Manifest Determination will be held. If the behavior that led to the removal is found not to be a manifestation of the student's disability, school personnel may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures in the same manner and for the same duration as would be applied to a student without a disability, except that Special Education services shall still be provided. If the behavior that led to the removal is found to be a manifestation of the student's disability, the District will conduct an FBA and BIP.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A Special Education advisory committee has been jointly established to provide a forum for studying and discussing special education issues and concerns.

The membership of the Special Education advisory committee shall consist of three employees appointed by the Association president and three employees appointed by the District. Four members shall constitute a quorum, but recommendations will require a six-member vote. All members shall be familiar with issues and laws pertaining to special education students. A joint chair responsibility shall exist between the Association and the District. Cancellation of any meeting will require agreement between both chairs. In any meeting, other individuals may attend to provide information, suggestions and express concerns about specific issues of discussion.

Members shall serve two-year terms on the advisory committee on a rotating basis such that each year one District appointee and one Association appointee will be eligible for replacement.

The following are the general purposes of the advisory committee:

1. Examine and make recommendations for program/curriculum improvement.
2. Study and make recommendations regarding special education case/work loads, including procedures for and distribution of resources.
3. **Review and make recommendations regarding the Special Education procedural handbook.**

BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PLANS & FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENTS

Functional Behavior Assessments will be conducted when a student's behavior is determined to have an adverse effect on his/her ability to learn. The FBA is conducted by the school psychologist or assessment specialist.

Behavior Intervention Plans are developed and delivered by the school team which includes the special education teacher, the school counselor, the principal, and any general education teacher involved with the student's program.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Ephrata School District serves students age 0 to 5 in an Early Childhood Education Program. Students age birth to three are served once per week and students in preschool are served twice per week. Members of the Early Childhood Team include a preschool/B-3 teacher, OT/PT, psychologist, and SLP.

Childfind screenings are conducted at the beginning of each school year and once per month thereafter, excluding summer. All members of the Early Childhood Team work together to complete a comprehensive determination of eligibility. A Childfind screening form will be completed and initiated by each member of the team for each child. If it is determined that there is no need for further evaluation, a copy of the screening form will be given to the parent and one kept on file at the Special Services office. If further testing is necessary, an appointment will be scheduled for an evaluation.

B-3 students will be transitioned into the preschool program after they reach their 3rd birthday. In the spring of each year a meeting will be held with the building principal, B-3/preschool teacher, psychologist, SLP, OT/PT, and elementary special needs classroom teacher. The purpose of the meeting shall be to determine placement for B-5 students.

CHILDFIND ACTIVITIES

The Ephrata School District is required by Washington Administrative Code 392-172-100 to inform patrons of the special education services and programs available within the district. The State of Washington defines special needs as having concerns with: developmental delays, vision, hearing, health, communication skills, academic performance, social-emotional status, general intelligence, motor abilities, autism, traumatic brain injury, transition services or other disabilities.

The Ephrata School District engages in the following Childfind activities.

1. The district publishes a child find notice in the local newspaper and sends the child find notice to all patrons in the district's newsletter annually.
2. Childfind notices are also sent to all area clinics, doctors, preschools and daycare centers in conjunction with preschool screening activities. Preschool screenings are conducted several times annually. These screenings are conducted in conjunction with community agencies such as Head Start and area preschools.
3. All children entering kindergarten are screened to identify children with suspected disabilities. This is done in the fall of the year during the month of September.
4. The files of all children transferring to the district are screened to identify children who may have been receiving special services in their prior district.
5. For children attending the district ages 6 to 21, the primary child find process is parent and teacher referrals. In-service activities to assist teachers in making appropriate referrals are provided annually.

Parents with children from birth to age 21, who have any of these conditions, are encouraged to contact the district's Director of Special Services for more information.

TRANSFERS FROM OTHER DISTRICTS

Students who transfer from one district to another within the state continue to be eligible for special education and any necessary related services. When a special education student transfers into the district, the building principal or designee (e.g. psychologist, counselor, special education provider) will notify the Special Services office. The IEP Team will review the student's IEP to determine whether the district is able to implement the services on the IEP, as written. If implementation of the IEP is not possible, the district will provide services that approximate the services on the old IEP until a new IEP can be developed. If it is necessary to develop a new IEP, the district will convene the IEP team as soon as possible.

When a student who was identified as eligible for special education transfers from out of state into the district, the building principal or designee (e.g. psychologist, counselor, or special education provider) will notify the Special Services office. The Evaluation Team will review the evaluation, eligibility documentation and IEP, to determine whether or not the student meets state eligibility criteria. If the student meets the state eligibility criteria, the procedures described in the previous paragraph will be followed. If the student needs to be evaluated to determine eligibility in this state, the evaluation process will be initiated.

EXITING STUDENTS FROM PROGRAM

If it is suspected that a student will no longer be eligible to receive special education services, the re-evaluation process will be initiated. If it is then determined that a student will still need accommodations, but not specially designed instruction, the student will be placed on a 504 plan.

DISABILITY CATEGORIES

Special education and related services are provided to students who meet Washington State eligibility criteria under one of the disability categories defined below. Students must meet specific eligibility criteria for one of these disability categories. For detailed eligibility criteria, refer to WAC 392-172-114 through 392-172-148. In addition, there must be documented an adverse educational impact and need for specially designed instruction and/or related services because of a student's disability.

All students being considered for eligibility for special education and any necessary related services shall be evaluated in all areas of suspected disability and in accordance with procedures in WAC 392-172-106 through 392-172-111.

Developmentally Delayed - Children at birth through age eight who are delayed in cognitive development, communication development, physical development, social or emotional development, adaptive communication or qualify for one or other eligibility categories specified below are in need of special education and any necessary related services.

Emotionally/Behaviorally Disabled – Students who exhibit one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree: inability to build or maintain a satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

Communication Disordered – Students who have a documented communication disorder such as stuttering, voice disorder, language impairment, and/or impaired articulation, which adversely affects a student's educational performance and requires specially designed instruction.

Orthopedically Impaired – Students who lack normal function of muscles, joints, or bones due to congenital anomaly, disease, or permanent injury and such conditions adversely affect educational performance and require specially designed instruction.

Health Impaired – Students who have limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that result in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment due to chronic or acute health problems, such as a heart condition, rheumatic fever, nephritis, asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, or diabetes, that adversely affect their educational performance and require specially designed instruction.

Specific Learning Disability – Students who have a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using spoken or written language. This may include problems in listening, thinking, speaking, or communicating clearly; reading with comprehension; writing legibly and with meaning, spelling, and accurately performing mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. A learning disability is indicated by a severe discrepancy between the student's intellectual ability and academic achievement.

Intellectual Disability – Students demonstrate significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, which adversely affects their educational performance and requires specially designed instruction.

Multiple Disabilities – Students who have two or more disabling conditions, which adversely affect their educational performance and require specially designed instruction, the combination of which cause such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. This term does not include deaf/blindness.

Deafness – Students who have hearing impairments which are so severe that the student is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects their educational performance and requires specially designed instruction.

Hearing Impaired – Students who have a permanent or fluctuating hearing impairment, but are not included under the definition of deafness, which adversely affects their educational performance and requires specially designed instruction.

Visually Impaired – Students who have a visual impairment, which even with correction adversely affects the student's educational performance and requires specially designed instruction. The term includes both partially sighted and blind students.

Deaf-Blindness – Students whose hearing and vision impairments, in combination, cause such severe communication and other developmental and educational problems that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for the students with deafness or blindness. The impairments adversely affect the student's educational performance and require specially designed instruction.

Autism – Students who have a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects a student's educational performance and requires specially designed instruction. Students in this category have a range of intellectual abilities. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. The category of autism includes students with pervasive developmental disorders if the students meet eligibility criteria.

Traumatic Brain Injury – Students who have acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force resulting in total or partial functional disability and/or psychosocial impairment that adversely affects educational performance and requires specially designed instruction.

IMPORTANT SPECIAL EDUCATION CONCEPTS

Ephrata School District strives to provide appropriate services to our students with disabilities.

Free Appropriate Public Education. It is the legal responsibility of the local education agency (school district) to provide an appropriate education to all children with disabilities residing within the boundaries of the district. In order for this to happen, the school district must address the following issues:

- Child Find. How the district will go about finding children who may have disabilities.
- Individual Evaluations. Develop a process for conducting individual evaluations.
- Qualified Staff. Employing qualified staff to evaluate and teach students with disabilities.
- Related Services. Employing qualified staff to provide speech and language services, physical therapy, occupational therapy, counseling and psychological services, sign language interpreting, etc.
- A range of services. Not all children need the same level of service. The district is required to develop a range of services ranging from support in the regular classroom to “pull out” resource room services to home or hospital instruction.

Every eligible student who has a disability, whose disability adversely affects the student’s educational performance and whose unique needs cannot be addressed exclusively through education in the general education classes, with or without accommodations, has the basic right, guaranteed by state and federal law, to a free and appropriate public education designed to meet his or her unique educational needs. Services are mandated for all eligible students aged three through 21.

The Notice of Procedural Safeguards for Special Education Students and Their Families must be given to parents any time they ask for a copy and:

- The first time a child is referred for a special education evaluation.
- Each time an individualized education plan (IEP) meeting is scheduled for the child.
- Each time the child is reevaluated.
- Each time the parents request a due process hearing.
- When the district takes disciplinary action that results in a change of placement for the child.

Prior Written Notice must be given to the parents before making important decisions that affect their child’s special education. These include decisions related to any proposal or refusal to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, placement, or provision of a free appropriate public education.

Parent Participation in Meetings. Parents must be given the opportunity to participate in any meetings about the identification, evaluation, educational placement and other matters relating to their child’s free appropriate public education.

Parent Consent. Parental consent is required before the district can conduct an initial evaluation, a reevaluation, before initial placement in special education and before any change of placement.

Special Education Eligibility is a three-pronged test. An individual evaluation by a multidisciplinary team must document all three parts of the test before a child can receive special education services.

- The child has a disability.
- The disability(ies) adversely affects the child’s educational performance.
- The child requires specially designed instruction.

Adverse Affect. Adverse affect is a description of the degree of deficits in the general education curriculum. It is a statement describing the student's needs that have not been met through general education interventions with or without accommodations. Adverse affect is typically evaluated with evidence of a dual discrepancy.

- The student performs below grade level, and
- The student demonstrates a learning rate that is substantially below that of peers.

Determination of Need for Special Education Services. The determination of need utilizes a problem-solving approach to determine the need of special education services. A system of general education interventions is put in place to attempt to resolve problems in the least intrusive, least restrictive level. The function of the general education intervention process is to develop intervention plans to assist students with academic and behavioral concerns. The focus is upon assisting the student's progress in the general education curriculum. Examples of general education interventions include remedial classes, retention, individual student or family counseling, group counseling in social or behavioral functioning, and community assistance programs. The need for special education services is established if the evaluation team determines that the presenting problem or behavior has not been responsive to general education interventions. A second factor the evaluation team considers is whether or not the resources and supports necessary for the student to progress in the general education program are beyond those available in the general education program. If they are not, the student may need specially designed instruction.

Specially Designed Instruction. The student's educational program becomes specially designed instruction when different content is used or when the method of instruction is adapted, occurs with greater intensity or is provided in a different setting. Specially designed instruction must be designed and managed by a certificated special education teacher.

Missed Services. In the event that special education intervention sessions are missed due to a student's absence from school, student participation in a class or school-wide activity, absence of the intervention provider, or a combination of any of these factors, a process exists for addressing concerns of team members. This process is based on guidance provided by the United States Department of Education on this matter. Any member of the student's IEP team can request a meeting of the team to discuss whether or not an absence or repeated absences constitute a denial of a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and the student's progress toward meeting annual goals in his or her IEP. Any denials of FAPE determinations are inherently individual in nature and must be made on a case-by-case basis.

DEFINITIONS

Screening is a procedure which is applied uniformly with a given age, class or grade and is used to identify potentially at risk students. For example, the STAR test is given to all students in certain grades or the WRAT-III test is used to screen for children who are referred for academic difficulties.

Evaluation is a procedure used in accordance with WAC 392-171 to determine whether a student is handicapped, and the nature and extent of the special education and related services the student needs. The term means procedures used selectively with an individual student and does not include basic tests administered to or procedures used with all students in a school, grade, or age group.

Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) is a team of professionals that evaluates students who are suspected of having a disability. The team is usually composed of the parents, the regular education teacher, the special education teacher, school specialist, such as, a school psychologist, physical therapist or speech and language pathologist, and other professionals as needed. Each member of the team completes an individual evaluation, writes a report and submits the report to the team leader. The individual reports must include the following information; (1) what procedures and instruments were used, (2) what were the results were, (3) any conclusion from observations of the student, (4) a statement of the apparent significance of the findings as related to the student's suspected disability (ies) and instructional program.

The Team Leader collects the various individual reports and writes the Evaluation Summary Report. Individual team members sign the Evaluation Summary Report signifying their agreement with the report. If members do not agree with the Evaluation Summary Report, they are required to write a statement indicating why they do not agree with the report.

The Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a written education plan that has been individualized to meet the student's needs. It includes goals and objectives for the student, and specifies who will teach which goals, where the instruction will take place, for how long and when the instruction will begin and end. The IEP also includes accommodations, program modifications, supplementary aids and services to meet the student's needs in the regular education program.

Special education student means any student, enrolled in a school or not, (I) who has been identified as having a disability, (II) whose disability adversely affects the student's educational performance, (III) and whose unique needs cannot be addressed exclusively through education in general education classes with or without individual accommodations and is determined to be eligible for special education services.

Special education is instruction that is specially designed to meet the unique needs and disabilities of an eligible student with disabilities. It must be provided at no cost to the student or parent, in conformance with the student's IEP. Specially designed instruction includes instruction conducted in the classrooms, in the home, in hospitals, institutions, in other settings, and instruction in physical education.

Related services means transportation and developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a student to benefit from special education and not provided as specially designed instruction. Related services may include:

- Communication disorders services and audiology services
- Psychological services
- Physical and occupational therapy

- Recreation (including therapeutic recreation)
- Early identification and assessment of disabilities
- Counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling
- Medical services for diagnostic or assessment purposes
- Orientation and mobility services
- School health services
- Social work services in schools
- Classified staff services
- Travel training
- Parent counseling and training
- Transportation
- Vocational training
- Behavioral intervention instruction
- Transition services

CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

In order to provide Special Education services in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Ephrata School District provides a continuum of services that includes self-contained special education classrooms, integrated classrooms, and resource rooms.

SNC

Integrated Classrooms

Resource Rooms

MEDICAL RECORDS

Medical Records are confidential and not to be shared with staff. When medical records are received by the Special Services office, they will be given to the school psychologist or assessment specialist to determine the educational impact of the contents of the records. Once this is determined, the relevant information will be written into the evaluation of the child. The medical records will then be placed in the student's special education file in the special services office. Medical records are not to be copied for distribution to staff.