

Darien Public Schools

Special Education and Student Services Program Overview & Initiatives 2022-2023

December 13, 2022

Shirley K. Klein, Assistant Superintendent, SESS

Laura Straiton, Program Director, ELP
Kristin O'Reilly, Program Director, Elementary SESS
Scott McCarthy, Ph.D., Program Director, Secondary SESS

Department Structure

Shirley K. Klein
Assistant Superintendent
Special Education and Student Services (SESS)
Grades PK - 12+

Laura Straiton
Program Director
Early Learning Program (PK)

School Psychologists
Special Education Teachers
Speech/Language Pathologists
Paraprofessionals

Kristin O'Reilly
Program Director
SESS Grades K - 5

Leslie Davis
SESS AP - Hindley

Kathleen Brunswick
SESS AP - Tokeneke

Katie Risk
SESS AP - Royle

Lindsay Sulzycki
SESS AP - Ox Ridge

Anmarie Galgano
SESS AP - Holmes

Scott McCarthy
Program Director
SESS Grades 6 - 12+

Sarah Ramaley
Department Chair - MMS

Cristina Brás Taylor
Department Chair - DHS

Program Overview - Continuum of Services



General Education

General Education with Speech Therapy as a Special Education Service

- ELP Itinerant Services
 - K-12 Students Receiving Speech Services Only
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General Education with Special Education Teacher Supplemental Services

- ELP Integrated Program (16, 20, and 22.5 Hour Services)
 - K-12 SET Services in General Education Classroom
 - Grade 5 Co-taught ELA Classes
 - Grades 6-12 Co-taught ELA and Math Classes
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Special Education Teacher (SET) Supplemental Services

- K-12 Resource Room / Learning Center
 - Grade 6-12 Direct Reading Instruction
 - Grade 6-8 AIM Program
 - Grade 9-12 CORE Program
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Modified Content Classes

- Grade 6-8 Alternative Learning Center (ALC-2)
 - Grade 9-12 Comprehensive Classes
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Specialized Programs

- K-5 Developmental Learning Centers (DLC)
- Grades 6-8 Alternative Learning Center (ALC-1)
- Grades 9-12+ Excel Program

Early Learning Program - Program Overview

The Darien Early Learning Program (ELP) is an integrated preschool for children ages three to five, in which children with learning differences and children with typically developing skills learn from each other in a nurturing environment. Play-based and project-based learning provides opportunities for children to be purposeful, creative, inquisitive, flexible, and reflective.

Itinerant Services

Speech, OT and PT for students attending community pre-schools

16-Hour Program

Integrated, School-Based Program 9:30am-1:30pm Monday - Thursday

20-Hour Program

Integrated, School-Based Program 8:30am-1:30pm Monday - Thursday

22.5-Hour Program

*Integrated, School-Based Program 8:30am-1:30pm Monday - Thursday
Friday 8:30am-11:00am IEP students only*

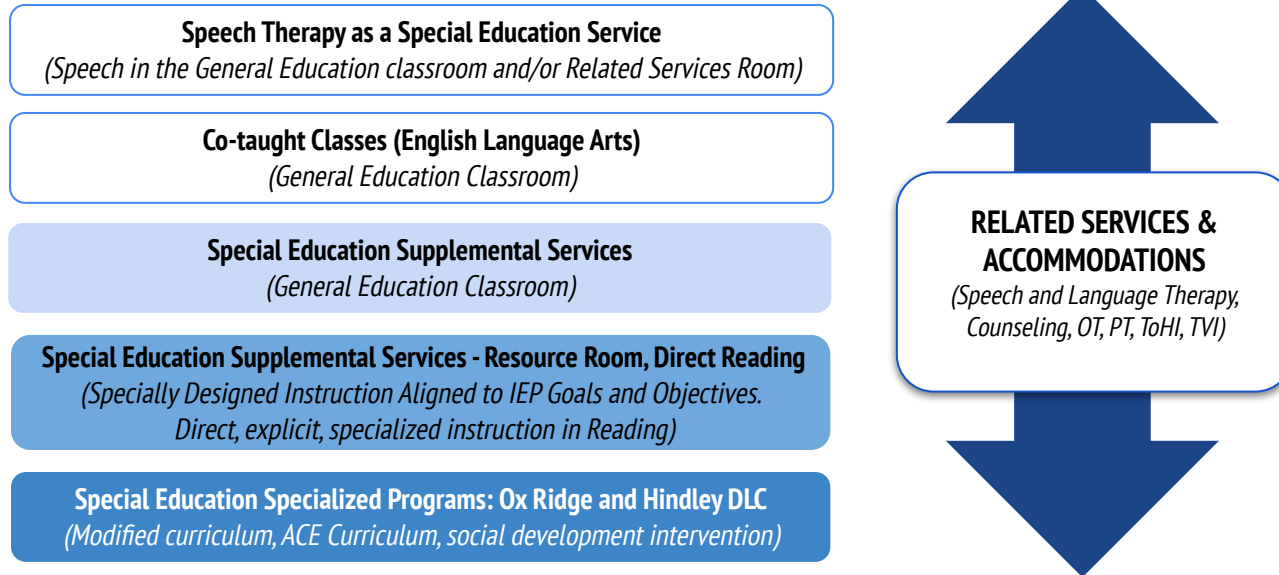


RELATED SERVICES & ACCOMMODATIONS

*Speech and Language Therapy,
Counseling, Parent Training, OT, PT,
ToHI, TVI,*

Elementary Schools - Program Overview

Specialized instruction at the Elementary Schools is delivered in Grades K - 5. Students access program options within a continuum of services designed to meet their individual needs. Planning and Placement Teams (PPTs) develop Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) with goals/objectives developed to ensure students access and progress in the general education curriculum. IEPs are designed to align to Common Core standards, ensure attainable goals and meaningful progress, provide services responsive to students' evidenced needs, and promote independence across domains.



Middlesex Middle School - Program Overview

Specialized instruction at Middlesex Middle School is delivered across grades 6-8. Sixteen special education teachers, 3 speech and language pathologists, 3 school psychologists, and 1 social worker support students along with assistive technology, behavior analysts, vision and hearing supports. IEPs are designed to align to Common Core standards, ensure attainable goals and meaningful progress, provide services responsive to students' evidenced needs, and promote independence across domains.

Speech Therapy as a Special Education Service

*(Speech in the General Education classroom and/or
Related Services Room)*

Co-taught Classrooms (English Language Arts/Math)

(General Education Classroom)

Special Education Supplemental Services - Resource Room, Direct Reading

*(Specially Designed Instruction Aligned to IEP Goals and Objectives.
Direct, explicit, specialized instruction in Reading)*

Academic and Individual Management (AIM)

(Social/emotional Programming)

Academic Learning Center (ALC-2)

(Modified Content - Aligned to Grade-level Curriculum)


Academic Learning Center (ALC-1)

(Modified Content and Vocational/Living Skills Curriculum)



RELATED SERVICES & ACCOMMODATIONS

*Speech and Language Therapy,
Counseling, Parent Training, OT, PT,
ToHI, TVI,*



Darien High School - Program Overview

Specialized instruction at Darien High School is delivered grades 9-12+. Eighteen special education teachers, 3 speech and language pathologists, 5 school psychologists (1 psychologist at Fitch Academy), and 1 social worker support students along with assistive technology, behavior analysts, vision and hearing supports.

Speech Therapy as a Special Education Service
*(Speech in the General Education classroom and/or
Related Services Room)*

Co-taught Classes (English Language Arts/Math)
(General Education Classroom)

Learning Center Instruction
(Specially Designed Instruction Aligned to IEP Goals and Objectives)

Creating Opportunities for Restructuring Education (CORE)
(Social/emotional Programming)

Comprehensive Classes
(Modified Content, Aligned to 300-level Curriculum)

Excel
(Modified Content and Vocational/Living Skill Curriculum)



RELATED SERVICES & ACCOMMODATIONS
*Speech and Language Therapy,
Counseling, Parent Training, OT, PT,
ToHI, TVI,*

Early Learning Program - Program Highlights

- **Literacy:** Dr. Margie Gillis and Literacyhow specialists developing early reading and literacy skills of young learners using the coaching method (building teachers' tool boxes, methods and strategies), Heggerty daily explicit and systematic phonological and phonemic awareness lessons, and Handwriting without Tears
- **Mathematics:** Everyday Math
- **RULER:** Incorporating the Mood Meter and Feeling Words: Happy, Sad, Angry, and Calm
- **Social/Emotional/Behavioral:** Zones of Regulation, Responsive Classroom, Social Thinking- Michelle Garcia Winner, Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) training for professional staff, Physical / Psychological Management Training (PMT)
- **Instructional Technology:** Autism Curriculum Encyclopedia (ACE), Augmentative and Alternative Communication: Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), Language Acquisition through Motor Planning (LAMP), Proloquo2go

Elementary Schools - Program Highlights

- **Literacy:** Orton-Gillingham, Wilson Reading Systems, SPIRE Reading Program, Visualizing & Verbalizing, Seeing Stars, Writing Support, Structured Literacy, Heggerty, LLI, Co-Teaching and The Science of Reading (SOR).
- **Mathematics:** Do the Math, Math in Focus, Touch Math, Bridge the Gap
- **Language & Communication:** PROMPT Approach, Beckman Oral Motor Protocol, Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC), Picture Exchange Communication (PECS), Language Acquisition through Motor Planning (LAMP)
- **Social/Emotional/Behavioral:** Executive Functioning, Physical and Psychological Management Training (PMT), Responsive Classroom, Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), The RULER Approach (Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing, Regulating)
- **DLC program at Ox Ridge:** Three classes, related services, state-of-the-art therapeutic related service rooms and equipment

Co-Teaching Grade 5 Elementary Schools-Year One

Co-Teaching Implementation: 5th Grade literacy 90-minute Block

- Peer Co-teaching coaching and modeling prior to the school year with MMS and DHS colleagues
- Ongoing team building between special education and general education teachers
- Reviewing effective Specially Designed Instructional practices to support student achievement (station and parallel teaching)
- Reviewing student data to support instruction and student outcomes (student grouping)
- Co-teaching planning opportunities utilizing scheduled meetings and electronic shared documents (Google Doc, Google Classroom)
- Professional learning Communities: (PLC) Grade level meetings for general and special education teachers to support best practices in instructional strategies and methodologies.
- Ongoing coaching, modeling, and feedback to support the implementation of the co-teaching models across the five elementary schools (elementary special education program director, and building level administration)

Elementary Assistant Principals-Year Two

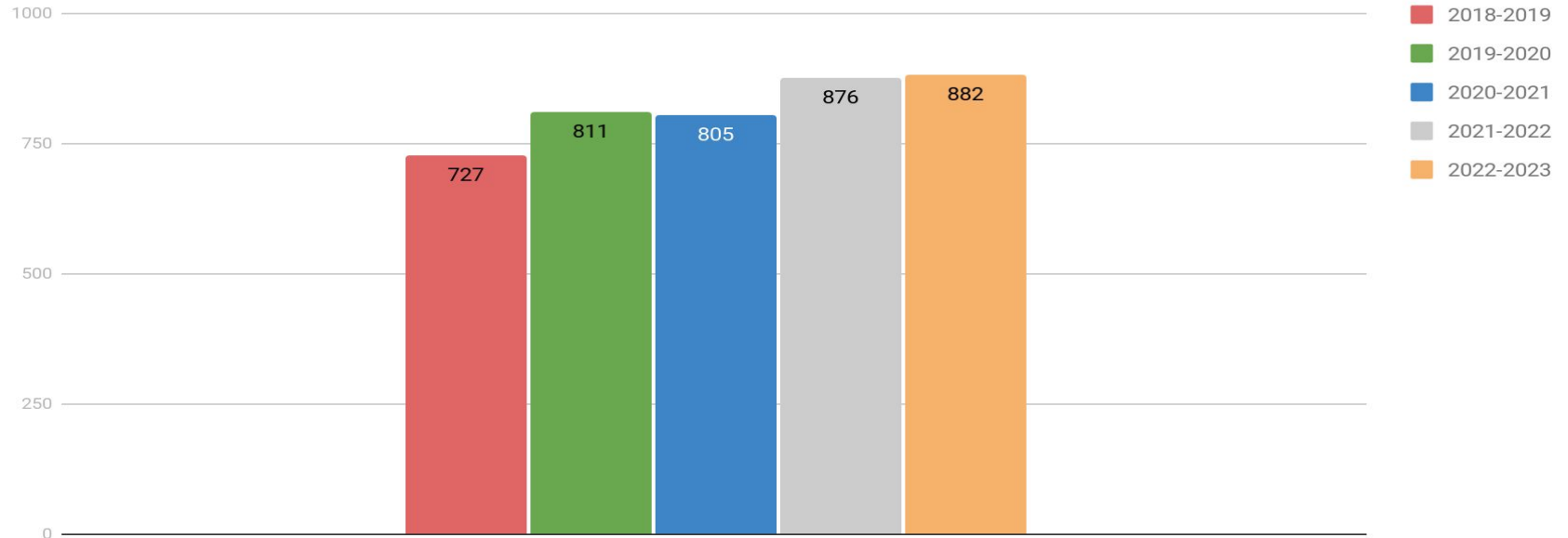
- Support the implementation of co-teaching in the general education classroom during the 5th grade literacy block
- Expert trainers in CT SEDs who provide ongoing support and professional development at the building level for special education teachers and related service providers in support of IEP development, compliance, and finalization
- Facilitate and provide ongoing professional development for special and general education staff through the PLC model
- Support ESY planning, including schedule development, parent, and staff communication
- Communicate and collaborate with parent organizations and the surrounding community through parent coffee series on a myriad of topics
- Monitor compliance of State-mandated evaluation timelines and regulations
- Supervise and evaluate paraprofessional, special education, and general education certified staff

Secondary Schools - Program Highlights (MMS / DHS)

- **Literacy:** Orton-Gillingham, Wilson Reading Systems (Introductory and Level 1 Certifications), SPIRE Reading Program, Visualizing & Verbalizing, and Seeing Stars
(DHS: Curriculum-aligned Comprehension Reading Instruction Class)
- **Mathematics:** Do the Math, Math in Focus, Touch Math, Equals Math (MMS: Numbers World)
- **Language & Communication:** PROMPT Approach, Beckman Oral Motor Protocol, Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC), Picture Exchange Communication (PECS), and Tobii Eye Tracking Communication System
- **Social/Emotional/Behavioral:** Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR), Executive Functioning, Physical & Psychological Management Training (PMT), Responsive Classroom, Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), and RULER Year 2 Implementation,
(MMS: Autism Curriculum Encyclopedia (ACE) via New England Center for Children (NECC))
- **Community Outings:** Reintroduction of community outings and vocational programming in ALC and Excel classrooms (MMS: Dragon Delight Cafe, new kitchen space construction)
- **Extracurricular Activities:** Unified Sports (new this year!)

District Data - Students with IEPs (PK - 12+)

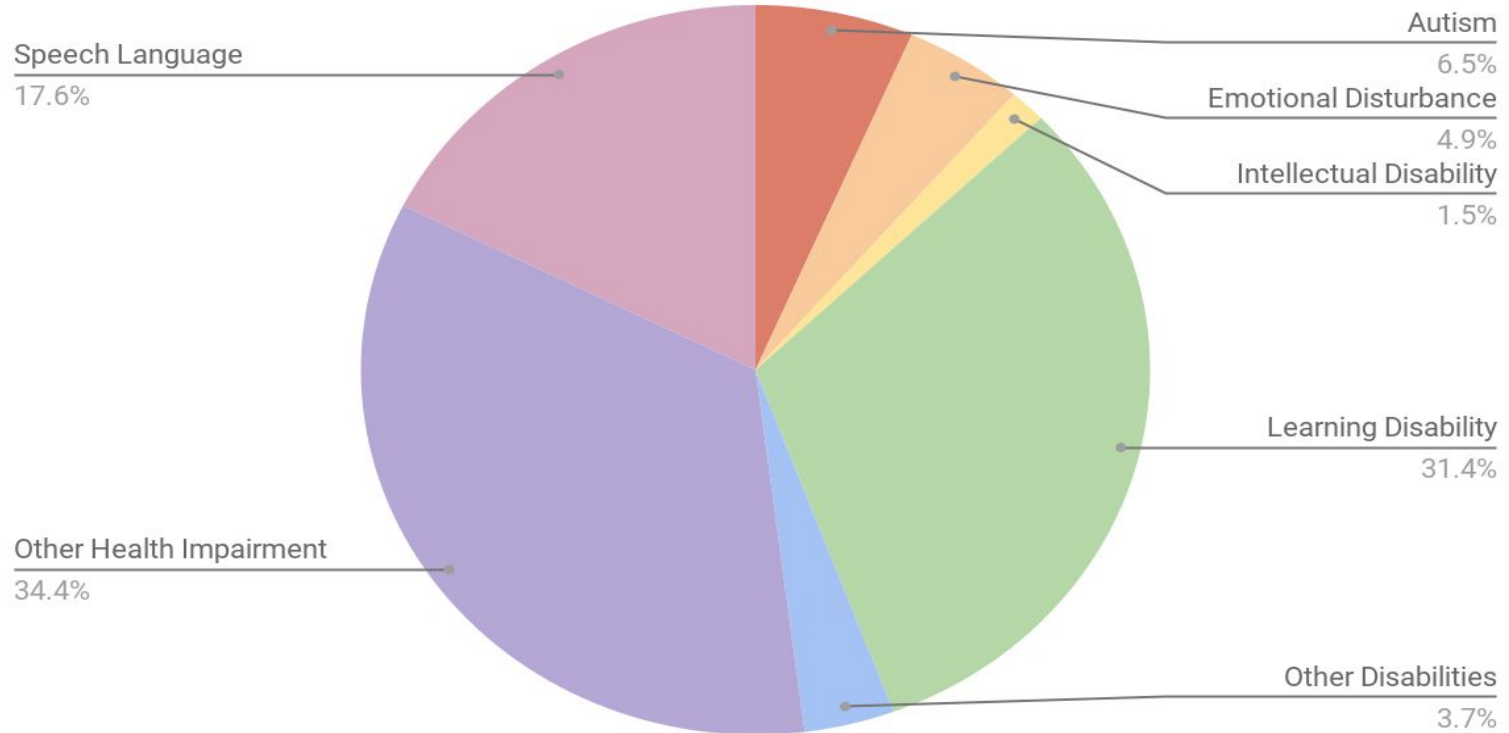
Year-to-Year Change in Population of Students with IEPs



*Note: 2022-2023 data has not yet been officially released

District Data - Educational Classifications

Darien Public Schools - Prevalence within Special Education



Staffing Challenges - Recruitment Outcomes

- Staffing shortage in special education teachers and school psychologists were remedied by the indefatigable efforts of our special education teachers and school psychologists who provided services to students not on their caseloads during their prep and lunch periods
- Part-time contracted psychologists are currently addressing the remaining staffing vacancies at ELP and Tokeneke
- Resignation of two contracted occupational therapists were remedied by outside providers and/or make-up sessions currently in progress
- Continued job postings on Frontline and OLAS web based recruitment sites for broad access to certified candidates

Special Education Staffing Caseloads K-12 (mean)

	Elementary Schools	Middlesex Middle School	Darien High School
Special Education Teachers (SETs)	12	12	16
Speech and Language Pathologists	20	25	27
School Psychologists	20	17	17
Social Workers (MMS/DHS)	n/a	23	38
Occupational Therapists	33	25	15
Physical Therapists	8	5	8

Implementation CT-SEDS 2022 - 2023

- Implemented July 1, 2022
- Staff IEP Quality Training January 2022- March 2022 (8, 90-minute sessions)
- Expert Staff Training (15 Staff Members - Summer 2022)
- Ongoing support throughout the 2022-2023 school year provided by expert trainers at each building, building and central office administration, and State provided training and resources
- District-based Parent Presentation (June 2022)
- Building-based Parent Coffees (Fall/Winter 2022)
- Updates and new CT-SEDS information continue to be posted in the State Resources Section on the District Special Education Webpage, updated throughout the year

Looking Ahead: 2023 - 2024 School Year

- **Specialized Programs:** Review of instructional strategies and methodologies and staffing to address the developmental needs of students ELP and grades K-12+
- **Professional Development**
 - CT K-3 Reading Curriculum
 - CT SEDs and the new CT IEP (e.g., Implementation of standards-based goals)
 - Ongoing training to support co-teaching instruction
 - New multidisciplinary evaluation and assessment tools
 - Lifecourse planning and transition (18-22) programming
- **ELP Program: 2023-2024** Move to Ox Ridge for the 9 ELP classrooms (8 integrated classrooms and 1 specialized classroom)

Workshops and Parent Seminars

- **Elementary Parent Coffee Series:** DBT Overview and Use of Validation, DBT Mindfulness, DBT Distress Tolerance, DBT Emotion Regulation, DBT Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills, SEL Building-Based Parent Coffees, CT SEDs/Expert Trainer Parent Coffee, Community Resources-STAR (DLC focused), ELP-to-K Transition, Elementary-to-MMS Programs and Transition Planning (Articulation)
- **Secondary Parent Coffee Series:** Specialized Reading Instruction and Evaluations, IEP Bootcamp, New CT IEP Review, SRBI/RTI/MTSS Structures of Support and Social/Emotional Learning, 5-6 and 8-9 Articulation Preparation
- **ELP-12 Mental Health Learning Series:** Staff and Parent Workshops

Professional Development - Staff Training

- **Assessment Training:** School psychologists and special education teachers (Feifer Assessment of Reading (FAR), ADOS)
- **Progress Monitoring using the CT-DOTS, CT-SEDS**
- **Instructional Focus:** Ongoing training for best practices in co-teaching
- **CT-SEDS, New CT IEP**
- **IEP Quality Training, Progress Monitoring**
- **Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) Training: Lenore Dweck, MA, L-BCBA**
- **NECC/ACE training**
- **Physical and Psychological Management Training (PMT)**
- **Dr. Margie Gillis and Literacyhow:** Ongoing training in effective strategies and methodologies in early literacy acquisition

Glossary of Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
AAC	Alternative/Augmentative Communication
ABA	Applied Behavior Analysis
ACE	Autism Curriculum Encyclopedia
ADL	Activities of Daily Living
AIM	Academic and Individual Management
ALC	Alternative Learning Center
AT	Assistive Technology
BCBA	Board Certified Behavior Analyst
CORE	Creating Opportunities for Restructuring Education
CT ELDS	Connecticut Early Learning & Development Standards
DBT	Dialectical Behavior Therapy
DLC	Developmental Learning Center

Acronym	Definition
DTT	Discrete Trial Training/Teaching
ELP	Early Learning Program
FAPE	Free and Appropriate Public Education
GET	General Education Teacher
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Program
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
OT	Occupational Therapist
PECS	Picture Exchange Communication System
PT	Physical Therapist
PMT	Psychological/Physical Management Training
PPT	Planning & Placement Team

Acronym	Definition
PROMPT	Prompts for Restructuring Oral Muscular Phonetic Targets
PRT	Pivotal Response Training
RDI	Relationship Development Intervention
SDI	Specially Designed Instruction
SESS	Special Education and Student Services
SET	Special Education Teacher
SLP	Speech/Language Pathologist
ToHI	Teacher of the Hearing Impaired
TVI	Teacher of the Visually Impaired
CT-SEDS	Connecticut Special Education Data Systems

Questions
