

## ***Exceptional Student Education (ESE)***

When students struggle academically or behaviorally or have other barriers to learning, strategies and interventions are put in place to address student needs. When it appears that a student's needs cannot be met with general education interventions, a student may be referred for evaluation for possible Exceptional Student Education (ESE) consideration.

Both students with disabilities and students identified as gifted receive services and supports through the district's Exceptional Student Education (ESE) department. Students with disabilities have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) developed to meet their unique educational needs. Students who meet gifted eligibility criteria have an Educational Plan (EP).

For most students with IEPs, efforts are made to serve students in their neighborhood zone school when possible. Certain programs may require students to attend a different school which offers the program. This is typically true for students in low incidence programs, including the district's gifted program.

For students with IEPs, the district is committed to ensuring that students are served in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) to meet their educational needs, as this is a foundational principle of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). For example, a student with a mild learning disability may be able to have their IEP addressed in a general education classroom as opposed to a more restrictive setting. As a result, student progress is reviewed regularly to ensure that LRE for each student is being addressed.

School districts are also required to meet the needs of preschool children (ages 3-5) who have been identified with a disability. The identification of children with disabilities and the development of a service plan is done through the district's Child Find office. If you suspect your child has a developmental delay or disability and would like a screening, contact the Child Find office at 386-734-7190, ext. 52841.

Parents/guardians of K-12 students suspecting that their child may have a disability are encouraged to contact the chair of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), formerly known as the Problem Solving Team (PST), at their child's school. This team of educational professionals will help identify interventions and supports for a student to be successful (i.e., in general education or ESE if eligible). Parents/guardians of students who are already identified as a student with a disability or giftedness may contact your child's ESE teacher(s) for assistance. Frequently asked questions for parents/guardians regarding ESE services can be found [here](#).

### **The Volusia County ESE Advisory Committee**

The Volusia County ESE Advisory Committee is comprised of families and professionals dedicated to collaborative interaction among schools, service agencies, and the public. The committee meets virtually on a regular basis to gain information on issues that pertain to students served in Exceptional Student Education (ESE) in Volusia County.

Per recommendations from members, two groups, formerly known as the ESE Task Force and ESE Advisory, consolidated into the Volusia County ESE Advisory Committee, which is an outcome-focused group that supports the district's mission and strategic plan advocating for students with disabilities. The Volusia County ESE Advisory Committee supports collaboration with parents and community members. Our goal is to identify areas for improvement and make meaningful recommendations to promote the success of all students. For more information visit: [www.vcsedu.org/directory/departments/teaching-leading-and-learning/exceptional-student-education/ease-advisory-committee](http://www.vcsedu.org/directory/departments/teaching-leading-and-learning/exceptional-student-education/ease-advisory-committee).