

**Pine Plains Central School District  
District Special Education Plan**

**July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2024**

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## Purpose

School districts have specific responsibilities in preparing special education district plans according to Section 200.2 (C) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. The District Plan must include:

- A description of the nature and scope of special education programs and services currently available to school-age and preschool students residing in the district.
- Identification of the number and age span of school-age and preschool students to be served by type of disability, and recommended setting.
- The method used to evaluate the extent to which the objectives of the program have been achieved.
- A description of the policies and practices of the Board of Education to ensure the continual allocation of appropriate space within the district for special education programs that meet the needs of preschool and school-age students with disabilities.
- A description of the policies and practices of the Board of Education to ensure that appropriate space will be continually available to meet the needs of resident school-age and preschool students with disabilities who attend special education programs provided by Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES).
- A description of how the district intends to ensure that all instructional materials to be used in the schools of the district will be made available in a usable alternative format to students with disabilities.
- The estimated budget to support such plan.
- The date on which such plan was adopted by the Board of Education.

## **Description of Special Education Programs**

The following description of special education services represents program options from the least restrictive environment to the most restrictive. Federal and State regulations, as well as best practice, require that students are educated in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) that will meet their individual needs. The LRE is determined by the Committee on Special Education.

Current educational research has shown that students who are taught in an integrated setting demonstrate better academic progress than students taught in segregated settings. While all LRE decisions are based on individual needs, the Pine Plains Central School District is committed to including as many special education students as possible in general education classes, where they have maximum exposure to grade level curriculum and an opportunity for enhanced social development. To that end, the PPS department continues to dedicate resources toward providing Integrated Co-teaching whenever possible.

### **Related Services**

Related services is the lowest level of special education services on the least restrictive environment continuum. Related services are developmental, corrective, and supportive services that are required to assist students with special needs. Related services typically provided to students include speech/language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and counseling. Those services are available to all students, whether through special education, Section 504, or response to intervention (RTI). Additional related services that may be provided to students through special education at the recommendation of the CSE include teacher of the hearing impaired, teacher of the deaf, teacher of the visually impaired, and orientation and mobility services. Provision of those more specialized services is contracted through Dutchess BOCES or another outside agency.

### **Integrated Co-Teaching**

Integrated Co-Teaching pairs a special education teacher with a general education teacher to co-teach a class. At PPCSD, the Integrated Co-Teaching model is available in grades K-8 in the areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics. There are several co-teaching models, including supporting teaching, parallel teaching, complementary teaching and team teaching. The co-teaching model includes a content specialist, the general education teacher, and an access specialist, the special education teacher, to ensure that students with disabilities can be successful in the general education classroom. Both teachers are responsible for the learning of all students in the class.

There may be no more than 12 students with IEPs in the general education co-taught classroom. Upon request, the State Education Department may grant a variance for one additional student for a total of 13 students. The percentage of students with disabilities in an integrated classroom

may not exceed 50%. Integrated Co-Teaching is the only service on the special education continuum that districts are not required to provide.

### **Consultant Teacher Services**

The District provides direct and/or in-direct consultant teacher services to students with disabilities in the general education classrooms K-12 as needed, with most recommendations at the high school level. Special education consultant teachers collaborate with general education teachers to plan instructional accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities in the general educational settings. The consultant teacher may deliver those services directly to the students in the classroom or indirectly through collaboration with the general education teacher.

Instructional accommodations are changes in how a student accesses information and demonstrates learning and do not substantially change the instructional level, content, or performance criteria. Accommodations may include changes in presentation or format of instruction and/or response format and procedures, instructional strategies and time/scheduling, environmental considerations, equipment and physical setting. Modifications are changes in what a student is expected to learn to provide opportunities to participate meaningfully and productively with other students in classroom and school learning experiences. Modifications may include changes in instructional level, content and performance criteria. The principles of universal design for learning have shown us that these accommodations and modifications may also benefit general education students.

### **Resource Room**

Resource Room is for students with disabilities who are in need of specialized supplementary instruction in a small group setting for a specific subject area, such as math or reading. The resource room supports general education through small group review, reinforcement of skills, remediation of learning deficits, pre-teaching new concepts, and supplementing reading or math instruction. Students are assigned to a resource room based on similarity of individual needs according to levels of academic achievement, learning characteristics, social and physical development, and management needs.

No more than 5 students may be placed in a resource room at any one time. Students are assigned to a resource room program for not less than three hours per week and not more than 50% of the school day. A teacher assigned to teach resource room full-time may have a caseload of no more than 20 students.

## **Special Class Programs**

The District provides special class programs taught by a special education teacher outside of the general education setting. The chronological age range within special education classes for students less than 16 years of age may not exceed 36 months. If circumstances arise which would result in an age range greater than 36 months, the district would need to apply for a variance to Part 200.6 (g)(5). The district provides the following types of special class programs.

### ***Special Class 15:1***

The district operates 15:1 classes when appropriate to meet student needs. A 15:1 class consists of no more than 15 students and a certified special education teacher. At the elementary and junior high level, specialized reading instruction using the Orton-Gillingham approach, called Multisensory Language Training, is delivered in a 15:1 Special Class model. Special Class 15:1 ELA or Math classes are provided at the elementary level as needed to meet student needs.

The curriculum in 15:1 special classes parallel that of the general education program and includes modifications to methodology that could not be accomplished satisfactorily in a general education setting. Students will only need part of their day in the 15:1 class. The majority of these students participate in general education classes for a majority of their core and elective classes. The goal is to transition students from the special class setting to an integrated co-taught or general education classroom setting as they are ready to maximize independence.

### ***Special Class 12:1:2 and 12:1:1***

The District runs one 12:1:2 classroom at Cold Spring Early Learning Center (Grades K-1) and one or two 12:1:1 classes at Seymour Smith Intermediate Learning Center (grades 2-5) based upon the age range of the students in need each year. A 12:1:2 class consists of no more than 12 students, a certified special education teacher, and two paraprofessionals. A 12:1:1 class consists of no more than 12 students, a certified special education teacher, and one paraprofessional. Additional support staff may be utilized based on the needs of the students. The program has a goal of flexibility to supports students who struggle in a less restrictive environment. It also includes a counseling and social skills component.

Students in 12:1:2 and 12:1:1 special classes are in need of an alternative learning environment in which they can receive small group academic instruction. These students generally have a severe discrepancy between their academic skill levels and actual grade level that would prevent them from accessing appropriate content from instruction in the general education setting, even with supplementary aides and services. The curriculum in 12:1:2 and 12:1:1 special classes parallels that of the general education program and includes extensive modifications to methodology that could not be accomplished satisfactorily in a general education setting.

Students may spend all or part of their day in the 12:1:2 or 12:1:1 class, depending on the nature and severity of their academic and management needs. Students are integrated with their general education peers for lunch, recess, specials, and field trips. The goal for most students in this class will be integration into general education academic classes with appropriate support as they are ready.

### ***Special Class 8:1:2 and 6:1:1***

In an effort to support students' needs in district-based programs rather than out-of-district placement, the District operates a Special Class 8:1:2 at Stissing Mountain Jr/Sr High School for junior high school age students and a Special Class 6:1:1 for high school age students. The 8:1:2 class has a maximum of eight students, one special education teacher, and two paraprofessionals. The 6:1:1 class has a maximum of six students, one special education teacher, and one paraprofessional. Additional support staff may be utilized based on the needs of the students. Students generally attend these classes for all academic areas and may be integrated into general education electives where appropriate.

Students in these classes may have severe developmental or multiple disabilities and require functional academic curriculum and/or pre-vocational skills training. Due to their cognitive and adaptive behavior delays, the students cannot be accommodated satisfactorily in a general education setting even with supplementary aides and services.

Students in these classes are assessed with the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) and are working towards the Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential (SACC), rather than a Regents or local diploma. The SACC is a commencement certificate accompanied by documentation of the student's skills and strengths and levels of independence in academic work, career development, and foundational skills needed for post-school living, learning, and working. The high school 6:1:1 class includes a work study program in partnership with local community businesses, such as the Pine Plains Library, the Pine Plains Pharmacy, and Pine Plains Auto Body. With adult support, students participate in hands-on work-related activities to provide valuable skills and learning experiences to prepare for the transition to adulthood.

### **BOCES Operated Classes**

If we cannot meet a student's needs through one of our district's programs, students may be referred to out of district programs, of which Dutchess BOCES is typically our first option. Some students may be referred to Ulster BOCES as well. By combining student populations across multiple school districts, the BOCES provides our district with the capacity to provide students with a program more closely tailored to the student's educational, social, physical, and management needs. Programs are supervised by the BOCES administrators and monitored by our district's CSE. We typically have elementary and middle school age students enrolled in small ratio special classes at Salt Point Center and high school age students enrolled in the Alternative High School on the BOCES BETA campus.

Career and Technical Education is available at Dutchess BOCES for all students, including those with special needs. Students attending the Dutchess BOCES Career and Technical Institute (CTI) may earn the Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) credential in addition to a Regents/local diploma. The CDOS learning standards are a progression of standards for career development, integrated learning and universal foundational skills. The NYS CDOS Commencement Credential requires documentation that the student has demonstrated knowledge and skills at the commencement level of the CDOS learning standards. The credential consists of 216 hours comprised of classroom hours from appropriate courses and at least 54 work-based learning hours of hands-on activities.

### **Privately Operated Programs**

A student is placed in a such a program when no public program is appropriate or available to meet the student's individual needs. The program is supervised by the administration of the facility and is monitored by our district's CSE. Local privately operated programs to which we may refer our students include the Anderson Center for Autism, the Astor Learning Center, Center for Spectrum Services, Devereux, and the Hayes School.

### **State Operated Schools**

Such schools are administered by the State Education Department to meet the needs of severely impaired students through a variety of programs. A student gains entrance to such a school either through recommendation of the CSE or through a Commissioner's appointment following a parent/guardian application.

### **Preschool Services**

When a parent or pre-school program suspects a child ages 3-5 may have a disability that requires special education services, the district Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) refers that child to a county-run evaluating agency and then meets to make an eligibility determination. Preschool special education services are recommended by the district and provided by the county in which the child lives, either Dutchess or Columbia.

### ***Related Services***

Preschool students with disabilities may have itinerant speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, or counseling services, depending on their individual needs. These services are provided at the convenience of the parent, in the home, day care, or pre-school setting.

### ***Special Education Itinerant Services***

A special education itinerant teacher provides instruction in pre-academic skills and/or social skills to a preschool child with a disability either in the home or in a preschool setting.

### *Center-Based Services*

Center-based special education preschool programs may be half-day or full-day programs and are available throughout Dutchess and Columbia counties. Center-based programs address the overall developmental needs of the child, coupled with related services, according to each child's individual needs. The class size and staffing may vary depending on student needs. Center-based special education preschool programs may be provided in a segregated or integrated setting. Beginning in the 2021-22 school year, the Anderson Center for Autism is renting space from the District to create two center-based preschool classrooms at Cold Spring ELC, which may provide a closer option for district preschool children in need of a program.

Special classes in segregated settings do not include peers without disabilities in the same class as the preschool child with a disability. This placement is generally recommended when a child has multiple or high needs for special instruction and services. A special class program in an integrated setting includes both children with and without disabilities in the same classroom. This placement is generally recommended when a child has fewer needs or less severe delays, or when the CPSE believes the child would benefit from the modeling of peers without disabilities for social skills and language development.

## **Methods to Evaluate Progress**

The Pine Plains Central School District utilizes student performance on Statewide 3-8 ELA and Math examinations, district-wide Right Reason assessments, report cards, and performance on Regents exams to measure student progress toward graduation. New York State Special Education Performance Plan Indicator data also assists in providing feedback regarding student achievement and graduation rates.

Students may be evaluated using group and individual achievement tests. Data is collected on each student's Response to Intervention in an ongoing manner. For some students, the New York State Alternate Assessment provides information on progress toward meeting their individual educational goals. Additionally, data collection for the Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential and the Career Development Occupational Studies (CDOS) credential will provide information regarding student progress.

## **Allocation of Space for Special Education Programs & Services**

The Board of Education recognizes its responsibility to allocate adequate and appropriate space for special education classes, programs, and services that are provided by the District or by BOCES. The Board affirms a commitment to serve students with disabilities in settings with peers who do not have disabilities.

Therefore, the administrative team will monitor the number of students with disabilities and the services required for those students and will anticipate future needs in order to identify current and future space needs. Planning for special education programs and services will maximize physical integration of general and special education programs.

The Superintendent will consider special education space needs as part of the annual budget cycle and during all long-range facilities planning.

## **Availability of Alternative Format Instructional Materials for Students with Disabilities**

The District has a responsibility to ensure that all the instructional materials used in our schools are made available in a usable alternative format for students with disabilities in accordance with their individual educational needs and course selection at the same time as those materials are available to students without disabilities. In accordance with applicable law and regulations, any such alternative format procured by the district will meet the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard.

Alternative format will mean any medium or format for the presentation of instructional materials, other than a traditional print textbook, that is needed as an accommodation for a student with a disability enrolled in the school district, including but not limited to Braille, large print, open and closed captioned, audio, or an electronic file. An electronic file must be compatible with at least one alternative format conversion software program.

All textbooks used by the District are now available digitally, which generally includes options for audio presentation and to change font size or style. With the support of the District Technology Integration Specialist, relevant PPS staff members have been trained in the use of appropriate assistive technology to be used by students in and out of the classroom. Such technology includes speech-to-text/speech recognition software and text-to-speech/screen readers. The District maintains subscriptions to relevant assistive technology programs and resources, such as Bookshare and Snap&Read, and provides staff members with ongoing professional development. The CSE may recommend that students use specific assistive technology programs or devices at school and/or at home. State assessments are available in alternate formats and requests are coordinated at the building level when required.

### **Special Education Budget**

A budget to support the proposed delivery of special education programs will be developed annually, based on the number of special education students and their individual needs. The budget will include funding necessary to support in-district programs, as well as BOCES special education programs and private placements. An additional sum of money is added to the special education budget each year in anticipation of new special education students moving into the district as well as an amount for unexpected additional needs of current students that might arise. The budget is prepared annually and reviewed by the Director of Pupil Personnel Services, the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance, the Superintendent, and the Board of Education.

## **Relevant Board of Education Policies**

BOE Policy # 4321 - Programs for Students with Disabilities under the IDEA and New York's Education Law Article 89

BOE Policy # 4321.01 - Provision of Special Education Services in the Least Restrictive Environment

BOE Policy # 4321.02 - School-Wide Pre-Referral Approaches and Interventions

BOE Policy # 4321.03 - Allocation of Space for Special Education Programs

BOE Policy # 4321.04 - Independent Education Evaluations

BOE Policy # 4321.05 - Confidentiality and Access to Individualized Education Programs, Individualized Education Services Programs and Services Plans

BOE Policy # 4321.06 - Availability of Alternative Format Instructional Materials for Students with Disabilities

BOE Policy # 4321.07 - Districtwide and Statewide Assessments of Students with Disabilities

BOE Policy # 4321.13 - Pre-School Special Education

BOE Policy # 4773 - Diploma and Credential Options for Students with Disabilities

BOE Policy # 5020.3 - Rights of Students with Disabilities under Section 504