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Saint Paul Public Schools Policy

508.00

## **508.00 STUDENTS WITH INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS (IEP)**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to state the position of Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) regarding the need to provide special educational services to eligible students with disabilities in the school district with the goal of equity for all.

As part of its commitment to provide the best possible education to all district students, SPPS strives to ensure students have the opportunity to reach their full potential and are held to high expectations. By successfully meeting the needs of students with special education needs, SPPS will improve the learning environments for all students.

### **II. DEFINITIONS**

- A. *IEP* is the acronym for Individualized Education Program. It is a legal document that is collaboratively developed for each student who needs special education services.
- B. *IFSP* is an acronym for Individual Family Service Plan. It is a legal document that is collaboratively developed for a child who needs special education services prior to entering Kindergarten.
- C. *LRE* is the acronym for Least Restrictive Environment. It means that a student with a disability should have the opportunity to be educated with non-disabled peers to the greatest extent possible.
- D. *Natural settings* are places where a child or young adult would normally live and learn. Examples of natural settings for birth through preschool aged children are in the home and in preschool classrooms. Examples of natural settings for young adults age 18 through 21 are work programs and post-secondary classrooms.
- E. *Standards based curriculum* refers to systems of instruction and assessment that are based on the student showing understanding of specific skills.

### **III. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

SPPS recognizes that some students require and benefit from special education and related services. Consistent with federal and state law, SPPS will provide a free and appropriate public education for every student with a disability who is the responsibility of SPPS.

SPPS will carry out the requirements of the child's Individual Education Program (IEP)/Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP). Necessary services to meet the needs of the student will be included in the student's IEP/IFSP. The IEP/IFSP should be structured to encourage the student to make progress in light of the student's circumstances.

#### **IV. DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. SPPS has the responsibility to identify, evaluate, and provide special education and related services for students with disabilities who are the responsibility of SPPS and who are eligible for services as established by state and federal law; this includes eligible individuals from birth through age 21.
- B. When eligible for special education, SPPS shall ensure that these students are provided special education and related services that meet their educational needs. Some services require or result from interagency cooperation. When the provision of such services requires or results from interagency cooperation, SPPS shall participate in these interagency activities in compliance with federal and state law.
- C. Special education services shall be provided in the Least Restrictive Environment, including natural settings.
- D. SPPS shall provide professional development opportunities for all staff, who work with students who have IEPs/IFSPs, including special education teachers, support personnel, and general education staff.
- E. SPPS shall ensure special education services are provided in tandem with other education services to which the student is entitled, such as English Learner services and gifted and talented services, when appropriate.
- F. SPPS will follow due process procedures that guarantee the rights of all students with disabilities, as well as parental or guardian rights of participation in the due process decision-making procedures, including identification, evaluation, program planning, and determination of appropriate level of service.
- G. When restrictive procedures are used, SPPS will follow federal and state laws. SPPS guidelines and Minnesota law ensure that such procedures are used only in times of emergency for the student's safety or for the safety of others. Restrictive procedures shall be implemented in a manner that is most respectful to the student's dignity, are the least restrictive procedures possible, and consistent with law.

**V. SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. Schools will ensure students have access to Minnesota standards based curriculum and continual progress monitoring so that they have the opportunity to learn and reach their full potential.
- B. Schools will ensure timely communication between the school and the student's parents or guardians regarding issues concerning their student. Schools will also ensure that parents receive special education progress reports whenever general education students receive grade reports as required by law.
- C. Schools will ensure that all required IEP team members are invited to participate in IEP meetings and will follow state procedures for when a required member is not able to attend.
- D. Schools will work to develop positive relationships with all students to foster a positive and inclusive school environment.
- E. Schools will encourage parents and guardians of students with disabilities to participate in school and District committees, and make those committees accessible, to ensure a diverse parent perspective is included in school and District decisions.

**VI. PARENT/GUARDIAN RIGHTS AND EXPECTATIONS**

- A. As valued and respected partners, parents, guardians, and students have the right, and are encouraged and supported, to fully participate in planning to meet the needs of students.
- B. SPPS is committed to being responsive to parents and guardians. If parents or guardians object to a proposed action, such as identification, evaluation, placement or program planning of their student with a disability, SPPS will follow federal and state guidelines for conciliation, facilitated IEP, mediation, or due process hearing to resolve concerns.
- C. SPPS is committed to ongoing communications with parents and guardians. Parents and guardians of students with disabilities will be informed at least annually of the Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) that advocates for students with disabilities. Additionally, the District shall employ a variety of methods to communicate opportunities for family involvement and support.

**LEGAL REFERENCES**

20 USC 1440, *et seq.* (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)

34 CFR Title 34 *et seq.* (Code of Federal Regulations, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education)

Minn. Stat. Ch. 125A (Special Education and Special Programs)

Minn. Rules Ch. 3525 (Department of Education: Children with a Disability)

**CROSS REFERENCES:**

Policy 101.00 - Racial Equity

Policy 102.00 – Equal Employment/Non-discrimination

Policy 602.01 – Multicultural, Intercultural, Non-racist, Non-sex-biased, Gender and Disability Fair Education

Policy 707.00 – Transportation Eligibility