The background features a stylized illustration of a parrot with green, blue, and yellow feathers perched on a dark branch. The branch is adorned with several yellow citrus fruits, possibly lemons or oranges, each with small white seeds. The entire scene is set against a solid, muted brown background. The central text is contained within a dark blue, scalloped-edged frame with a white double-line border.

THE MT. VERNON
CITY SCHOOL
DISTRICT SPECIAL
EDUCATION PARENT
HANDBOOK

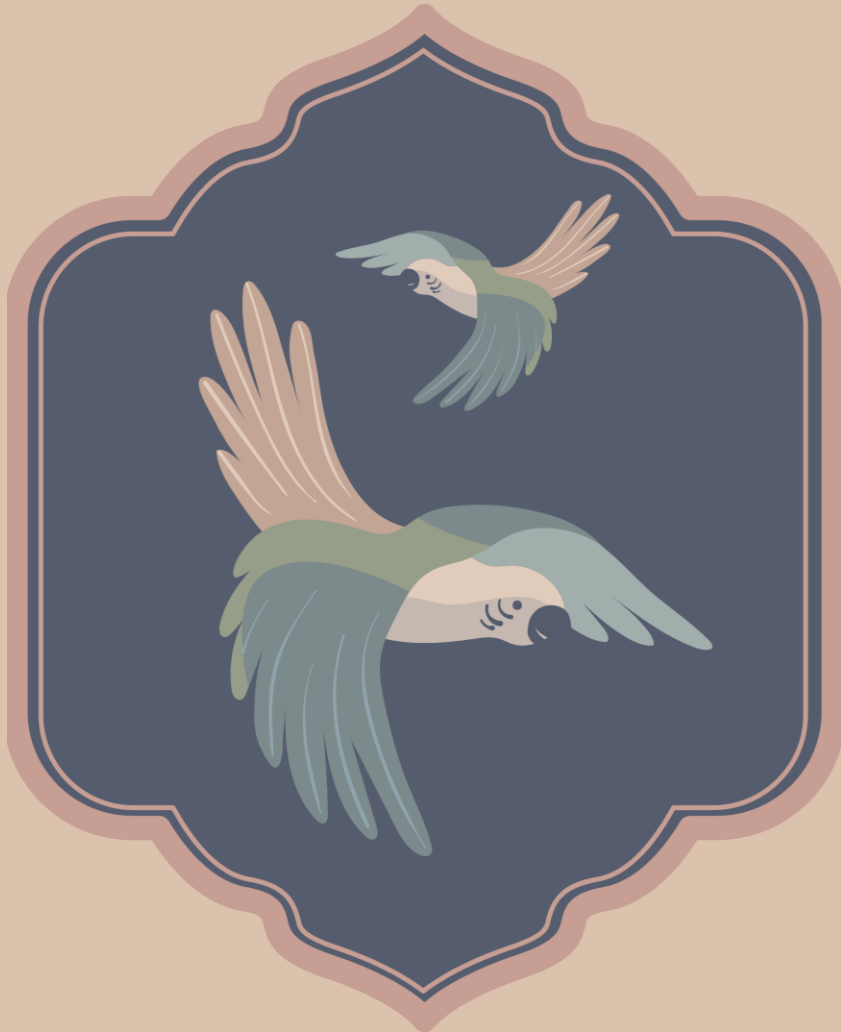
A GUIDE TO DISTRICT PROGRAMS & SERVICES



The mission of the MVCSD Special Education Department is to provide an appropriate, inclusive and dynamic education for students with disabilities, in the least restrictive environment, that will enable students with disabilities to reach their potential, both academically and personally so they may become effective citizens of their local and global community.



WELCOME!



Acting Superintendent of Schools

Dr. K. Veronica Smith

(914)665-5201

ksmith@mtvernoncsd.org

Link to the MVCSD Special Education Department
web page:

<https://www.mtvernoncsd.org/departments/special-education>

MT. VERNON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT CORE VALUES

CORE VALUES

- All scholars can learn.
- Scholars learn in different ways and at different paces.
- Scholars should be challenged to be lifelong learners.
- The key aspect of education is developing well-rounded scholars who think creatively and critically to make informed decisions and solve problems.
- Education enables individuals to be responsible, self-disciplined members of society.
- Cultural diversity enriches the educational experience for scholars.
- A safe and caring environment is important to scholars and staff.
- Education is a collaborative partnership with the Board of Education, staff, scholars, families, and resources in the community.



Mission Statement, Vision, District Goals, and Core Values for 2023 – 2024

Mission Statement

The Mount Vernon City School District, comprising its board members, staff, scholars, parents, and community members, is dedicated to fostering an inclusive environment that recognizes every scholar's unique qualities while providing a comprehensive and rigorous education that promotes respect, cultivates character, and inspires intellectual growth. The district is committed to empowering scholars to become lifelong learners, who are successful and responsible citizens and who positively contribute to their local and global communities.

Vision

The Mount Vernon City School District, through a shared decision-making process, is committed to helping its scholars, parents, teachers, and administrators enhance their academic, social, economic, and technological skills to prepare individuals to function effectively in today's global society.

District Goals

➤ Academic Goals

- ♣ **Ensure** that every scholar has foundational reading, writing, and arithmetic skills.
- ♣ **Prioritize** teachers' use of data assessment to drive instructional practices in all classrooms.
- ♣ **Increase** scholars' achievement district-wide by at least 3% in all core subjects with particular attention to sub-groups with special needs.

➤ Operational Goals

- ♣ **Promote** efficiency and accuracy in all of the operational branches of the Central Office – Administration, Buildings & Grounds, Business, Curriculum & Instruction, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Human Resources, Operations and Accountability, Pupil Personnel Services, and School Improvement.
- ♣ **Create** and communicate unified procedures, protocols, and practices throughout all facets of the school district.
- ♣ **Improve** communication between central office leadership and building-level leadership.
- ♣ **Obtain** additional funding for district programs.

Core Values

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BLUEPRINT FOR IMPROVED RESULTS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Office of Special Education

Students engage in self-advocacy and are involved in determining their own educational goals and plan.

Parents, and other family members, are engaged as meaningful partners in the special education process and the education of their child.

Teachers design, provide, and assess the effectiveness of specially-designed instruction to provide students with disabilities with access to participate and progress in the general education curriculum.

Teachers provide research-based instructional teaching and learning strategies and supports for students with disabilities.

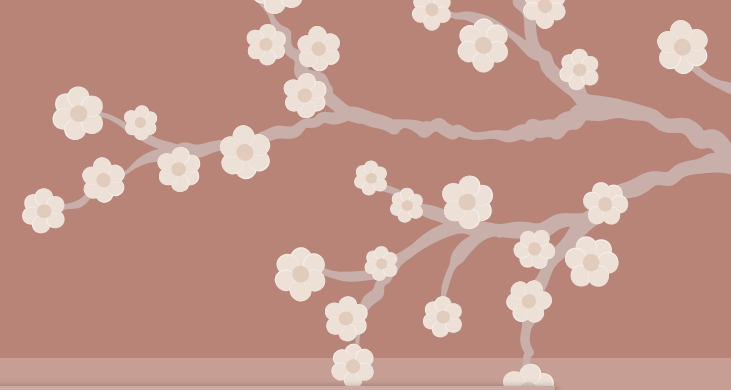
Schools provide multi-tiered systems of behavioral and academic support.

Schools provide high-quality inclusive programs and activities.

Schools provide appropriate instruction for students with disabilities in career development and opportunities to participate in work-based learning.

NYSED BLUEPRINT FOR IMPROVED RESULTS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

WHAT IS SPECIAL EDUCATION?



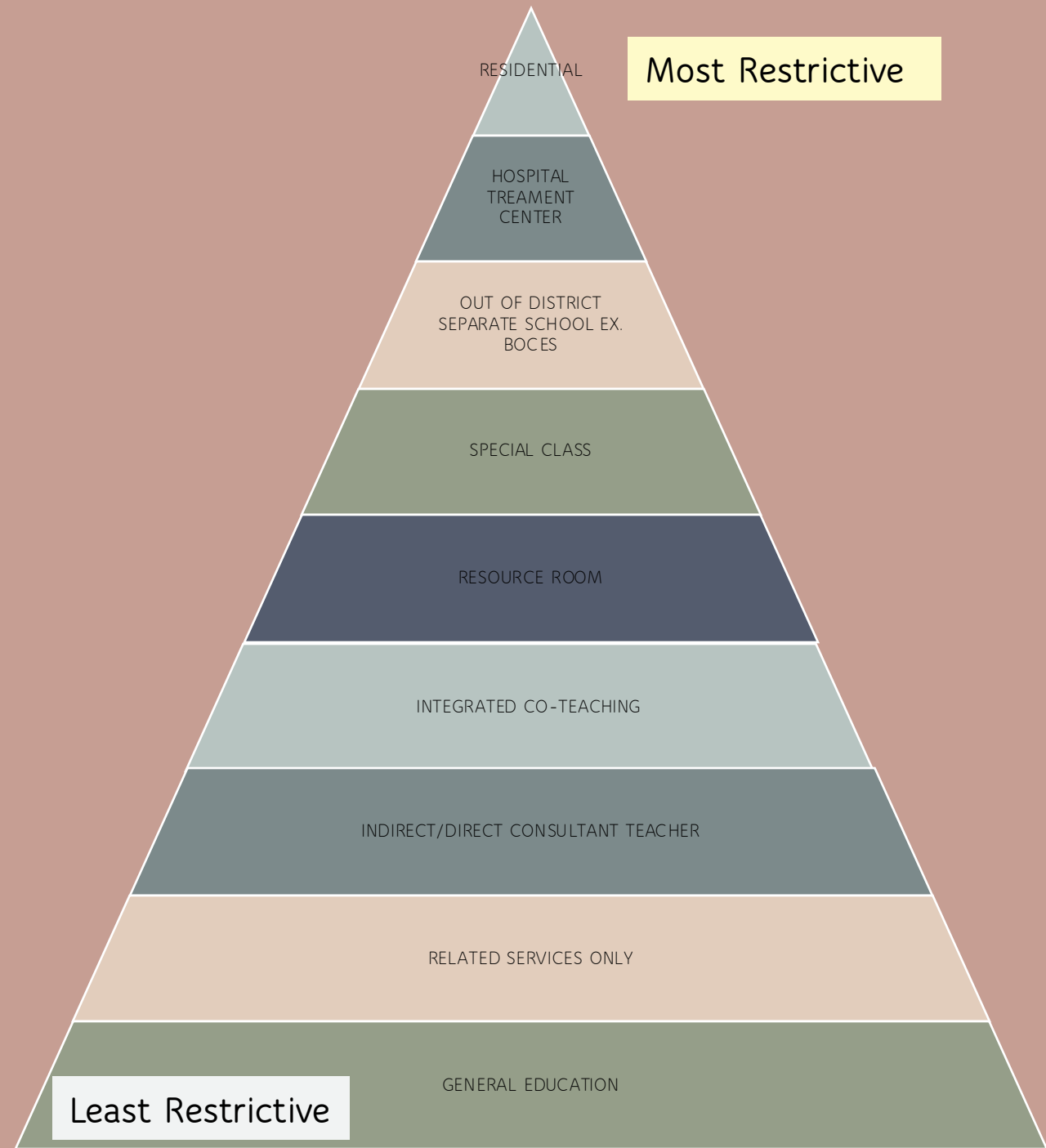
Special education means specially designed individualized or group instruction or special services or programs to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities. Special education programs and services are provided at no cost to the parent.

The Committee of Pre-School Special Education (CPSE) - The CPSE provides special education programs and services through the County for eligible children between the ages of 3 to 5. Any child residing in the District, and suspected of having a developmental delay can be referred to the CPSE. The CPSE will arrange a comprehensive evaluation and appropriate services for children upon approval. The program is funded jointly by the Westchester County Health Department and the New York State Education Department. **Referrals should be made in writing to the District's Office of Special Education.**

The Committee on Special Education (CSE) - The CSE is a group of educational professionals, parents, student (when appropriate) who meet to make decisions about the special education needs of a student. CSEs meet for initial determinations, annual reviews, manifestation determinations, consideration of declassification, re-evaluations and amendments. Decisions made by CSE are legal mandates and must be followed by all school personnel. **Written referrals may be submitted by parents, schools, or designee of a public agency responsible for the education of a student to the MVCSD Office of Special Education to the CSE Chairperson**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS (CSE)

- The parent(s)/guardian(s)
- The student (when appropriate)
 - The chairperson
- At least one (1) general education teacher
- At least one (1) special education teacher
 - A school psychologist
- Other persons having specific knowledge of the student such as school counselor or related service provider.
- If student is an identified ENL student an ENL/ESL teacher should be invited.
- A parent member (if requested by the parent)



LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE) IN A STUDENT'S INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)



LRE means that placement of students with disabilities in special classes, separate schools or other removal from the regular educational environment happens only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that, even with the use of supplementary aids and services, education cannot be satisfactorily achieved.

The placement of an individual student with a disability in the LRE must:

- ❖ Provide the special education needed by the student.
- ❖ Provide the education of the student to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of the student with other students who do not have disabilities; and
- ❖ Be as close as possible to the student's home.

THE INITIAL REFERRAL TO SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESS

The initial referral to CSE must be in writing.

You will be asked to sign consent for initial evaluations.

The CSE has 60 days to evaluate your child. This timeline begins the date you sign consent to test.

The IEP team will determine if your child meets one of the 13 disability classifications.

If found eligible, an IEP will be created with start date of program and/or services.

If found ineligible the parent can refer their child to the 504 -plan committee.

A list of the 13 Disability Classifications

1. Autism
2. Deafness
3. Deaf/Blindness
4. Emotional Disability
5. Hearing Impairment
6. Intellectual Disability
7. Learning Disability
8. Multiple Disabilities
9. Orthopedic Impairment
10. Other Health Impairment
11. Speech or Language Impairment
12. Traumatic Brain injury
13. Visual Impairment

[NYS Part 200 Disability Definitions](#)

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE C.S.E REFERRAL PROCESS



- A referral for an **initial evaluation** may be made by:
 - Student's parent
 - School representative
 - Childcare institution
 - The request should be made in **writing** to the district's C.S.E Office.
 - State the reasons for referral
 - Describe in writing intervention services and/or instruction to remediate the student's performance prior to referral.
 - Describe extent of parent contact.

- The CSE referral timeline begins the date the CSE Chairperson receives the referral.
- Within 60 CALENDAR DAYS of received parent consent to evaluate, the CSE will determine if said student is eligible for an I.E.P.
- The C.S.E has 60 SCHOOL DAYS to implement program/services if recommended.
 - Calling or emailing the District's Office of Pupil Personnel Services & Special Education **WILL NOT speed up this process.**
- <https://www.nysed.gov/special-education/section-2004-procedures-referral-evaluation-iep-development-placement-and-review>

ACCESS VR	Adult Career & Continuing Education Services - Vocation
BCBA	Board Certified Behavior Analyst
BIP	Behavior Intervention Plan
CDOS	Career Development & Occupational Studies
CTE	Career and Technical Education
CSE	Committee on Special Education
CPSE	Committee on Preschool Special Education
504	Section 504 Accommodation Plan
FBA	Functional Behavior Assessment
FAPE	Free & Appropriate Public Education
IEP	Individualized Education Program
IESP	Individualized Education Service Plan (homeschooled students)
IHIP	Individualized Home Instruction Plan
IDEA	Individual with Disabilities ACT

**SPECIAL
EDUCATION
ACRONYMS**



LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
NYSAA	New York State Alternate Assessment
OT	Occupational Therapy
OPWDD	Office of People with Developmental Disabilities
PT	Physical Therapy
PWN	Prior Written Notice
SACC	Skills & Achievement Credential
S/L	Speech & Language

WHAT IS THE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER AND/OR RELATED SERVICE PROVIDER'S ROLE AS YOUR CHILD'S CASE MANAGER?



- What is the Case Manager's Role?

- Ensure the completion of the Chapter 408 process.
- Compile, complete, enter and submit IEP progress reports quarterly.
- Create and ensure the completion of the IEP draft for CSE meetings.
- Attend all student CSE meetings for the academic year.
- Monitor content of the IEP. Inform the SPED Supervisor of any IEP errors related to goals, program or services.

- The Case Manager for each student is selected by the Special Education Supervisor of each school building.
 - Each student is matched with a special education teacher with whom they have regular contact.
 - If the student only has related services such as speech/language, their speech teacher will be their case manager.

DESCRIPTION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS OF THE M.V.C.S.D.



12:1:2 SC GRADED	Twelve students, one teacher, two teacher assistants. Students enrolled in this class typically have severe multiple disabilities and require additional staff to address management needs. Their cognitive/academic abilities permit them to participate in a graded academic program.
15:1:1 SC GRADED	Fifteen students, one teacher, one teaching assistant. Students' content classes are taught with specially designed instruction with modifications and test accommodations students require to access the general education curriculum in support of elementary to middle school students.
15:1 SC GRADED	Fifteen students, one teacher. Students content classes are taught with specially designed instruction with modifications and test accommodations students require to access the general education curriculum.
Resource Room (RR)	A maximum of five students per resource room class. RR provides specialized small group instruction.
Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT)	It provides specially designed and academic instruction to an integrated group of students. There is a minimum of one general education teacher and one special education teacher. Kindergarten ICT has a max of 8 SWD/class.
Consultant Teacher – Direct or Indirect	Direct consultant teaching: Aid the student to benefit from the general education class instruction. Indirect consultant teaching: Assist the general education teacher in adjusting the learning environment and/or modifying their instructional methods to meet the individual needs of a student who attends a general education classroom.

8:1:2 SC -UNGRADED	Eight students, one teacher, two teacher assistants. Student management needs are intensive requiring a significant degree of individualized attention and intervention.
8:1:1 SC GRADED	Eight students, one teacher, one teacher assistant. Students have medical concerns which warrant close support within their academic program.
12:1:2 SC -UNGRADED	Twelve students, one teacher, two teacher assistants. Students enrolled in this class typically have severe multiple disabilities and their program consists of habilitation and treatment .

NEED TO KNOWS...



- ❖ **The Individualized Education Program (IEP)** is the written document which describes the student's individual special education program, services, goals and needs for the student to receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The IEP is a legal document that can only be changed by the CSE. The IEP is sent home by mail or electronically along with a Prior Written Notice (PWN) which documents the IEP development process.
- ❖ All teachers must provide the **program modifications** if any in all of the student's classes. These include aspects of the delivery of instruction or modification of the instructional setting such as preferential seating;, refocusing and redirection.
- ❖ The IEP may mandate **testing accommodations**. Students must receive their accommodations as recommended by the CSE. For example, a student may require extra time or tests read and may need to go to a separate location for this accommodation.
- ❖ **Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)** - If a student has behaviors that significantly interfere with their learning or that of others they have a BIP. The CSE would request your permission to conduct a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) an evaluation which collects data about a student's behavior across a variety of school settings. The goal of a BIP if created is to ensure everyone uses a common language and strategies to provide positive alternatives and consequences for behaviors.

HOW PARENTS CAN PREPARE FOR CSE

- ❖ It is a good idea for parents to maintain a file or notebook about their child's Special Education documents/meetings.
- ❖ Do bring your notes/questions to the meeting.
- ❖ Do share your child's interests, preferences and strengths from your perspective.
- ❖ Remember, everyone is there to help your child.
- ❖ Remember, you are a valued member of the CSE team.
- ❖ Do express your concerns to the Committee.
- ❖ Do ask questions, seek clarification.
- ❖ Do clearly state what you agree with and what you may not agree with.
- ❖ Allow an open mind to be receptive to what the CSE members have to share.
- ❖ Do write down the recommendations made at the meeting for future reference.

TRANSITION IN THE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) -WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.



- Beginning with the first IEP to be in effect when the student is age 15 (and at a younger age, if determined appropriate), and updated annually, the IEP must include a statement of needed transition services and a statement of the responsibilities of the school district and when applicable, participating agencies for the provision of services and activities that promote movement from school to post school opportunities before the student leaves the school setting.

- The Mt. Vernon City School District Transition Coordinator for high school Students with Disabilities who participate in New York State Assessments:

- Ms. Nina Capitelli - Mt. Vernon High School, (914) 358-2872, ncapitelli@mtvernoncsd.org

- ACCESS VR

The Mt. Vernon City School District Transition Coordinator for high school students with Disabilities who participate in NYSAA.

- Ms. Rechelle King-Mt. Vernon High School (914) 357-4153, rking@mtvernoncsd.org

OPWDD and Legal Guardianship

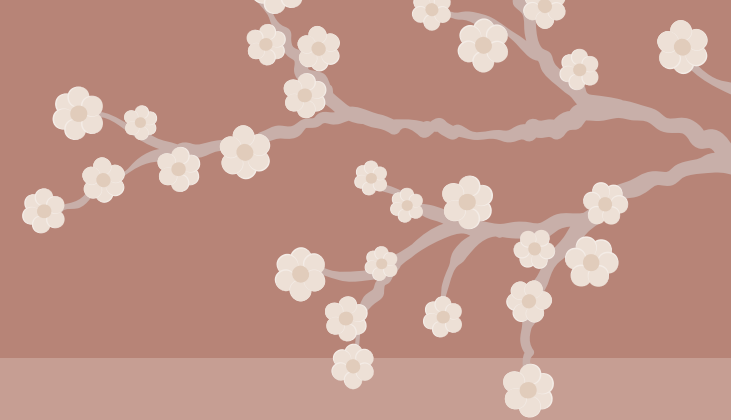
YOUR STUDENT LEAVES HIGH SCHOOL WITH AN EXIT SUMMARY, NOT AN I.E.P.

The purpose of the Student Exit Summary is to provide the student with a written report that provides essential information to consider as the student transitions from secondary school. The Student Exit Summary should be a useful and relevant document that summarizes individual student abilities, skills, needs and limitations and provides recommendations to support successful transition to adult living, learning, and working. The Student Exit Summary should be designed to assist the student in establishing eligibility for reasonable accommodations and supports in postsecondary settings, the workplace, and the community and to aid the student in accessing adult services as appropriate. It should help the student better understand the impact of his/her disability and articulate individual strengths and needs as well as supports that would be helpful in post-school life.

The Student Exit Summary should be completed through a team process that includes the student, family and several school personnel including the special education teacher, general education teacher, school psychologist and/or related services personnel who know the student best. If appropriate, adult agency personnel should be included in the discussions. LEAs should establish a system to manage this process so that a quality document is completed. Development of the Student Exit Summary is a student-centered process. Conversations with the student and family should drive this process. For a student in a board of cooperative educational services (BOCES) or Non district program, the LEA will need to collaborate with that program to determine who will complete the Student Exit Summary.

The Student Exit Summary may serve a variety of functions for the student (e.g., assisting with eligibility for adult vocational rehabilitation services, financial benefits, and residential placements; supplementing documentation necessary for accommodations in college; and summarizing skills and strengths necessary for successful employment). Therefore, it is important that this document accurately reflects the student across all settings. Information should be presented in such a way as to document the student's abilities, skills, strengths, and interests as well as the student's needs and limitations with an emphasis on the supports or compensatory strategies that have been effective for the student.

NEW YORK STATE ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT (N.Y.S.A.A)



- The NY State Alternate Assessment allows students with severe cognitive disabilities to demonstrate their performance toward achieving the New York State learning standards for English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science. This assessment measures student knowledge on Essential Elements. Essential Elements are alternate achievement standards that are reduced in depth and breadth from the New York Learning Standards.
- New York State contracts with Dynamic Learning Maps to provide a computer-delivered adaptive assessment that customizes the assessment to the individual abilities and needs of the student.
- **Who takes this test?**
- The Committee on Special Education (CSE) determines student eligibility for participation in NY State Alternative Assessment. Eligible students have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that specifically identifies them as eligible for this assessment.
- Students in grades 3-8 must be assessed once a year using assessment materials based on their ages (nine through 14 years old). The secondary-level NY State Alternate Assessment for high school students is administered once, when students are 17 years old.

- **How are the results used?**
- NY State Alternate Assessment scores are used to track a child's progress on grade-level alternate achievement standards for families and teachers. They may be used to guide conversations about a child's IEP or to determine educational priorities and academic goals.

NYSAA students exit high school with a Skills Achievement Commencement Credential (SACC)

TYPES OF CREDENTIALS YOUR STUDENT COULD EARN.



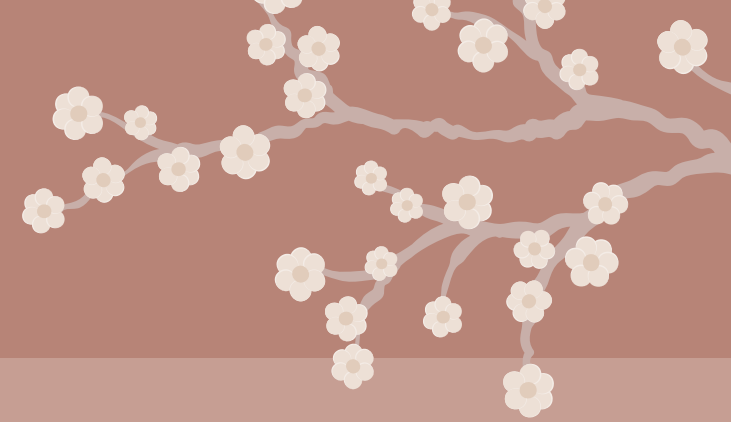
- **CDOS – Career Development and Occupational Studies Commencement Credential**
 - ALL New York State students may exit high school with the CDOS if they are unable to meet the diploma requirements.
 - For a student with a disability, pursuant to section 200.5(a)(5)(iii) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education prior the student exiting with a CDOS Commencement Credential, the parent or guardian must be given prior written notice indicating that the student continues to be eligible for a free appropriate public education until the end of the school year in which the student turns 21 or until the receipt of a Regents or local high school diploma.
 - https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/curriculum-instruction/cdos-pathwayq-9-18.ose_.pdf

- **Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential for Students with Severe Disabilities (SACC)**

- Students in New York State who are assessed using the NYSSAA may exit high school with the Skills & Achievement Commencement Credential.
- The SACC is not a regular high school diploma in accordance with State standards or for federal accountability purposes.
- This credential must be issued with a summary of the student's academic achievement and functional performance (Student Exit Summary).

<https://www.nysed.gov/special-education/skills-and-achievement-commencement-credential-students-severe-disabilities>

REVOKE OF CONSENT (DISCONTINUE THE I.E.P)



- A parent or guardian has the right to revoke consent for special education services. Any staff member in receipt of such a request shall immediately notify a Supervisor of Special Education. Formal requests to revoke consent must be in writing.
- If, at any time after special education services have begun, the parent of a student revokes consent in writing for the services, the school district;
- shall not continue to provide any special education programs and services to the student, but must provide prior written notice in before ceasing the provision of special education programs and services;
- shall not use the due process procedures to obtain agreement or a ruling that the services may be provided to the student;

- shall not be considered to be in violation of the requirement to make available a free appropriate public education to the student because of the failure to provide the student with further special education programs and services;
- is not required to convene a CSE meeting of the committee or develop an IEP for the student; and
- is not required to amend the student's education records to remove any references to special education because of the revocation of consent.

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AN IEP AND A SECTION 504 PLAN

- If your student is found ineligible for an IEP, you as a parent have the right to refer them to the 504- plan committee.
- A student with a 504 plan has access to accommodations and supplementary supports to help them access the general education curriculum.

IEP vs 504	Individualized Education Plan (IEP)	Section 504 Plan
Type of law	Special Education - Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)	Civil Rights - Rehabilitation Act of 1973
Department	Department of Education	Office of Civil Rights
Requirements for eligibility	Has a disability that: a) meets criteria under IDEA, b) significantly impacts educational performance, and c) requires specialized services	Has a disability that significantly impacts a major life function.
What is included?	Specialized education services, accommodations, related services.	Accommodations, modifications.
Age limits	IEP offered through 12th grade.	No age limits with a 504 plan.
Where is the plan used?	Educationally, through the 12th grade. Does not transfer to college.	School, work, and college. 504 Plans will transfer to college.
Discipline	A Manifestation Determination meeting must be held to determine if the offense is a manifestation of the disability by the 10th day of suspension. Services are required during long-term suspension.	A Manifestation Determination meeting must be held to determine if the offense is a manifestation of the disability by the 10th day of suspension. May require reevaluation.

THANK YOU

Board of Education

- ❖ Adriane Saunders, President
- ❖ Sabina Kelley, Vice President
- ❖ Lorna Kirwin
- ❖ Chris McDonough, PhD
- ❖ Wanda White
- ❖ Helene Thompson-Njenga
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