Lakes Country Academy

Special Education Setting IV: K-12

Serving 26 Region IV LCSC Districts

Alexandria, Ashby, Barnesville, Battle Lake, Brandon-Evansville, Breckenridge, Chokio-Alberta, Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley, Campbell-Tintah, Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton, Detroit Lakes, Fergus Falls, Frazee-Vergas, Hawley, Herman-Norcross, Lake Park Audubon, Minnewaska, Moorhead, Morris, Pelican Rapids, Perham, Rothsay, Ulen-Hitterdal, Underwood, West Central Area, Wheaton

Mission:

Lakes Country Academy exists to serve students with educational and behavioral challenges by providing transformational support and skills (through evidence based practices) in a highly individualized environment.

Values:

- Individualized: Student centered programming
- Safety: Positive, supportive learning environment
- Collaboration: Connect and include families, school districts, and other agencies
- Education: High learning standards and use of evidence based practices
- Relationships: The foundation for building acceptance and trust

Regional Sites:

Fergus Falls (K-12, EBD, ASD & SUN)
Alexandria (K-6, EBD, ASD & SUN)

Staff Includes:

- Special Education Director
- Special Education Site Administrators
- Special Education Teachers
- Paraprofessionals
- School Social Worker
- School Psychologist
- Behavior Specialists (BCBA, RBTs)
- Occupational Therapist
- Speech/Language Pathologist
- DAPE Professional
- School Nurse

Lakes Country Academy (LCA) Setting IV Eligibility Requirements:

Please complete the following checklist:

- ❏ Student must be eligible for special education services and have a current IEP.
- ❏ Demonstrates lack of progress toward IEP goals, despite receiving a full range of services.
- ❏ Exhaust interventions/resources within the district.
- ❏ Explored interventions/resources outside of the school setting.
- ❏ Shows an evaluated or present level need for behavioral (EBD) or ASD programming (FBA and BIP/BSP are required criteria for referral)
- ❏ Is 18yrs or younger (LCA does not provide 18-22 services)
- ❏ Has met "Part B" criteria
- ❏ Current programming is at a federal setting III.

  OR
- ❏ Current programming is at a federal setting V, VI, VII or VIII (Residential Placement, Homebound, Hospital, etc.) with recommendations for a less restrictive placement.
  - ❏ Obtain release of information for educational records at residential treatment center/hospital **(Please include a copy of signed release in referral packet)**
  - ❏ Obtain education records/transcript from residential treatment center/hospital **(Please include a copy of these records in referral packet)**

LCA Referral Process:

Please complete the following checklist prior to referring:

- ❏ Obtain signed release of information (ROI) by parent/guardian between referring district and Lakes Country Service Cooperative ISD 926 **(Please include signed release in referral submission)**
- ❏ Referral Form filled out in its entirety
- ❏ Most Current Evaluation Report
  - ❏ Functional Behavior Assessment **required** for program acceptance
- ❏ Most Current IEP and any amendments
  - ❏ Behavior Intervention Plan **required** for program acceptance
- ❏ **Referral forms along with ALL supporting documentation is submitted to LCA Director of Special Education preferably scanned & sent via email.**
  - ❏ **Email adoll@lcsc.org *(PREFERRED and most reliable)***
  - ❏ Mailing Address: Attn: Angela Doll, 1001 East Mount Faith, Fergus Falls, MN 56537

Once referral materials are submitted it will be evaluated by the LCA referral team. A team member will be in contact with the referring district's Special Education Director/Coordinator for next steps and requests for more information, if needed.

****Please be advised the referral process may take up to three weeks, in some cases longer, due to allowing LCA staff to thoroughly consider all referral information, conduct interviews, and conduct observations. Districts are encouraged to ensure they are providing FAPE to the student during the referral and acceptance process. The LCA is not responsible for services or compensatory services before an enrolled start date is established in MARSS for the student to begin attending LCA.**

Referral meetings are held on Mondays for both sites. ALL Referrals must be submitted/received by Angela Doll before the Wednesday prior to referral meetings to be considered at the next scheduled referral meeting. This is to give the referral ample time to review and consider the information.

*****Complete Referrals received after April 15 will be considered only for acceptance for the next school year.*** *In SOME instances, LCA may accept a referral received after April 15 to start during ESY.*
*****Complete Referrals received after May 15th will not be reviewed until the following August*** *(most likely the third week of August). Please have a plan in place for next year's programming until all referral tasks are completed (e.g., observations of the student in the current setting and staff interviews) in the fall.*

Referrals with missing data will be returned for more information needed. Only complete referrals will be considered. **LCA staff may want to conduct several observations and staff interviews before making an acceptance decision.** The purpose of this process is to ensure student needs are being met in the least restrictive setting in their resident district and that LCA will be an appropriate placement for that student.
If the LCA site is full, accepted students will be put on a waiting list. The LCA will keep the referring district updated on the status of the student's placement on the waiting list. *If a student is on a waiting list for more than 3 calendar months, the referring district will be asked to update referral data or re-submit a referral, as determined by the LCA referral team.*

If student is accepted for placement at LCA:

1. The referring district holds an IEP meeting to propose a setting IV change of placement with Prior Written Notice (PWN) proposing placement. Parents should be in agreement for placement before this meeting happens. Once the parent/guardian signs consent for the change of placement, the referring district alerts the LCA Referral Team by sending a copy of the signed PWN.

2. Once a signed PWN has been received authorizing the change of setting*, LCA personnel* will reach out to schedule an Intake meeting with the student, parent/guardian and often certain school staff. At the intake meeting, the team will set a start date at LCA. Referring district should be mindful of the student's due process timelines:
    a. *Referring district must complete a 3yr re-evaluation prior to placement if the student's re-eval date falls within 90 school days of anticipated start date at LCA*
    b. *Referring district must complete an annual IEP prior to placement if the student's IEP annual date falls within 30 school days of anticipated start date at LCA*
3. *The LCA* will assist the referring district to draft an amended IEP prior to the student's first day at LCA. LCA staff will guide the referring district in making needed changes to fit LCA services and programming specifics in the student's Amended IEP.
4. Referring district arranges and manages ALL transportation, including ESY if needed, and ensures district transportation notification procedures are completed (such as Emergency Health Information form is completed in SpEdForms) and parents are informed of transportation details before the student's first day at LCA.
5. The referring district will transfer student SpEdForms file to identified LCA personnel before the student's first day at LCA.
6. As identified in this section, the referring district will coordinate and lead the paperwork obligations up to the student's start date at LCA, as well take leadership of paperwork obligations as a student transitions back to his or her referring district with collaboration from LCA staff.

If student is not recommended for placement ("deferred") at LCA:

a. The LCA team will provide rationale as to why the referral was not recommended and discuss options to support the referring district.

In the event a student leaves the LCA or is absent for any reason for more than 15 school days in a row (e.g., court placement elsewhere, moved to a school outside Region IV), the LCA will not keep their spot open. The student must be re-referred and may be subject to a waiting list.