

Fall River Public Schools Special Education Programs



Fall River Public School Special Education

Mission:

The Fall River Special Education Department is committed to supporting the district in providing high quality educational experiences for all students. We strive to maximize the strengths and support the needs of students with disabilities to reach their full potential, gain independence, and contribute to their community. We value inclusiveness, relationships with families and staff, high expectations, and a positive learning environment.

Preschool Programs

Overview: The Fall River Public Schools provides a continuum of preschool programming for children ages 3-5 with moderate to severe disabilities who require specially designed instruction and/or related services in order to participate in developmentally appropriate typical preschool activities. Related services include but are not limited to speech/language therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy, vision, and orientation & mobility. .

Student profile:

- Children ages 3-5 who have a disability and have been found eligible for special education services.

Description:

- **Programming:**
 - Children who are 2 or 3 years away from entering kindergarten are enrolled in a half day program.
 - Children in their year before entering kindergarten are enrolled in a full day program.
 - Children who require only a related service(s) in a developmental area(s) such as communication or motor development may be offered walk-in services at the Early Childhood Center, the child's neighborhood public school or in some instances the community-based early childhood program the child is currently attending. Parent consultation is also available to all students receiving walk-in services.
- **Staffing:**
 - **Integrated** - Integrated classrooms serve students with moderate disabilities who are able to access the standard preschool curriculum with accommodations and/or modifications outlined in their Individualized Education Plan and a moderate level of support.
 - Class size cannot exceed 20 students with 1 dual licensed teacher and 2 paraprofessionals and have no more than 5 students with disabilities. If the class has 6 or 7 students with disabilities, the class size cannot exceed 15 students with 1 licensed teacher and 2 paraprofessionals.
 - **Substantially Separate** - Substantially separate preschool classrooms serve students with severe disabilities who require a highly modified preschool curriculum and a high level of support across multiple domains (i.e academics, communication, self-care, social skills etc)
 - Class size is limited to 9 students with 1 dual licensed teacher and 2 paraprofessionals.

- All preschools classrooms have support from a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) as well as access to consultation from Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Pathologists, and Physical Therapists.
 - **Curriculum**
 - Preschool classrooms offer a nurturing, language-rich environment with a focus on play, social skills, language development, fine/gross motor, and pre-academic skills. All programs follow the MA Curriculum Frameworks and MA Guidelines for Preschool and Kindergarten Learning Experiences.
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Fall River Public Schools offers a variety of programs and services for children with disabilities ages 5-22. Services are provided in and out of the general education setting as well as within specialized substantially separate programs. Special education services including but not limited to, academic support, speech/ language therapy, assistive technology, adaptive physical education, occupational therapy, physical therapy, vision, orientation & mobility, and counseling may also be provided to students. The type of service, frequency, duration, and setting for special education and/ or related services is based on the individual needs of the child as outlined in their Individualized Education Plan and determined through the Team process.

Inclusion Programs (K-12)

Overview: The Fall River Public Schools inclusion programs provide learning environments where students with disabilities in grades K-12 are educated within the general education classroom alongside their peers between 60-80% of the day.

Student Profile:

- Students with mild, moderate, or severe disabilities can participate in our inclusion programs.

Description:

- **Programming** - Students receive specially designed instruction in and/or out of the general education setting. Special Education staff also provide scaffolds, differentiated materials, and support within the general education classroom. The inclusion setting is considered the least restrictive environment for students.
 - **Staffing** - Special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and/or related services provide direct services within the general education classroom, outside of the general education classroom, or through a collaborative consultation model as outlined in the student's Individualized Education Plan.
 - **Curriculum** - Most students access core curriculum with accommodations/supports and receive specially designed instruction for their disability related need(s). A small number of students with severe disabilities may participate in the inclusion setting and require modifications to the core curriculum as well as additional adult support.
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The program descriptions below are intended to provide general information about the supports, services, and instructional approaches available within each setting. **They are designed to support decision-making and guide collaborative discussions among team members, but should not be used as stand-alone criteria for determining a student's placement.**

Placement decisions are individualized and made collaboratively by the educational team, based on multiple sources of data, student disability related needs, progress, and other relevant evidence.

The **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** is an essential part of every placement discussion, and teams should consider whether a student's needs can be appropriately met with supplementary aids, services, and supports in a less restrictive setting **before** considering a more restrictive placement.

Specialized Programs:

GROW - Getting Ready Our Way (Kindergarten)

Overview: The GROW program provides an educational environment for special education students who require a moderate to high level of specially designed instruction and adult support to meet the academic, social, and behavior expectations of Kindergarten.

Student Profile:

- Students with disabilities entering Kindergarten who may or may not have participated in a preschool program. These students present with significant disability related needs across multiple domains (academic skills, sensory, self-regulation, and/or communication) due to their disability:
 - Students require significantly more redirection, prompting, and adult support to follow routines, engage with peers, and participate in the learning environment..
 - Students require more reteaching and guided practice to acquire and generalize skills across settings that can not be done in the general education setting.
 - Students require more explicit and targeted instruction in foundational skills to access the Kindergarten grade level standards above and beyond what can be provided in the general education classroom.
 - Students require a higher level of adult support to address disability related needs and engage learning than what would be expected from a child their age.

Description:

- **Programming:** Students require flexibility to receive specially designed instruction and/or intervention outside of the general education classroom between 21-60% of the school day in order to make meaningful progress in the core curriculum. Students participate in the general education classroom daily with additional scaffolding and adult support.
- **Staffing:** The GROW program can not exceed 16 students. There is 1 special education teacher and 2 paraprofessionals per classroom. The program staff support the students within the general education program to the greatest extent possible. The program also has consultation from a Board Certified Behavior Analyst to support students. Related services are provided as outlined in the student's Individualized Education Program within or outside of the general education classroom.
- **Curriculum:** Students access core curriculum with accommodations, scaffolds and supports.

Entrance Guidelines:

1. Student is eligible for special education and the Team recommends a partial inclusion program for Kindergarten.
2. Data indicating the student demonstrates significant disability related needs in at least 2 major areas (academic skills, sensory needs, self-regulation, self care, and/or communication) which impacts their ability to access learning in the general education setting.
3. Data indicating the student requires a higher level of adult support and scaffolding within the general education setting than what would be expected for a student their age.

Exit Guidelines:

1. Student demonstrates consistent progress toward IEP goals.
2. Student follows classroom routines and expectations with expected amount of adult support for age and setting.
3. Student maintains safe and expected behavior across instructional settings.
4. Student demonstrates increased engagement during whole-group, small-group, and independent learning activities.
5. Student is able to functionally communicate with peers and adults.

ACHIEVE (Grades 1-12)

Overview - The ACHIEVE program is a partial inclusion program for students transitioning from a substantially separate classroom to a less restrictive placement in the general education setting or students. This program supports students who require a moderate to high level of specially designed instruction and adult support to meet the academic, social, and behavior expectations within the general education classroom.

Student Profile:

- Students with disabilities who have a history of placement in a substantially separate classroom or a public day school and are ready to move to a less restrictive setting but still require a moderate to high level of specially designed instruction and adult support to engage in learning within the general education classroom.

Description:

- **Programming:** Students require flexibility to receive specially designed instruction and/or targeted intervention outside of the general education classroom between 21-60% of the school day in order to make meaningful progress in the core curriculum. Students participate in the general education classroom daily with additional scaffolding and adult support.
- **Staffing:** The Achieve program can not exceed 16 students. There is 1 special education teacher and 1 paraprofessional per classroom. The program staff support the students within the general education program to the greatest extent possible. Related services will be provided within or outside of the general education classroom as outlined in the student's Individualized Education Program
- **Curriculum:** Students access core curriculum with accommodations, scaffolds and supports.
 - Students in middle school may receive additional instruction in foundational reading and math skills in lieu of foreign language or unified arts within this program.

Entrance Guidelines:

1. Student has a history of substantially subseparate or day school placement and the Team determined they are ready to move to a less restrictive environment.
2. Student demonstrates consistent progress toward IEP goals.
3. Student demonstrates increasing independence across settings.
4. Student is able to follow routines and expectations, and transition between activities with supports.
5. During times of dysregulation, behavior creates minimal disruption to the learning environment.
6. Student is able to access core curriculum with scaffolds, accommodations, and specially designed instruction within the general education setting with additional adult support.
7. Some students may require frequent, explicit and systematic instruction outside of the core curriculum to address prerequisite/foundational skills through targeted interventions.

Exit Guidelines:

1. Student consistently demonstrates progress toward IEP goals and objectives.
2. Student is able to access grade-level curriculum using accommodations and specially designed instruction that can be provided within the general education classroom.
3. Student's behavior does not significantly interfere with their own learning or the learning of others.
4. Student can work independently for a period of time and ask for help if needed.
5. Student demonstrates meaningful engagement in general education instruction for the majority of the school day.
6. Student consistently demonstrates growth in prerequisite skills through targeted intervention.

STRIDE - Success Through Rich Instruction and Differentiated Environments (Grades 1-12)

Overview: The STRIDE program provides an highly-structured and supported educational environment for special education students with neurodivergent profiles who require intensive specially designed instruction across multiple areas in order to be successful in the school setting.

Student Profile:

- Students within the STRIDE program present with a variety of neurodivergent conditions that result in significant challenges with learning and generalizing skills, communication, emotional regulation, sensory processing/integration, social skills and executive functioning. Their needs are best met in a smaller substantially separate classroom with a high level of adult support.

Description:

- **Programming:** Students receive all specially designed instruction through small group or individual instruction outside of the general education classroom. Assistive technology may be used within the classroom to promote engagement and communication skills. Within the substantially separate classroom students receive explicit and target instruction in social skills, self-regulation, self-advocacy as part of the program.
- **Staffing:** All classrooms can have no more than 12 students
 - Grades K-2: 1 Special Education Teacher and 3 paraprofessionals per classroom
 - Grades 3-12: 1 Special Education Teacher and 1- 2 paraprofessionals per classroom
 - All Stride classrooms have ongoing support from a Board Certified Behavior Analyst.

- Related services will be provided within or outside of the substantially separate classroom as outlined in the student's Individualized Education Program
- **Curriculum:** Instruction follows the scope and sequence of the core curriculum focusing on the essential skills and is aligned to the MA curriculum frameworks. Pacing, presentation, instructional strategies, materials, response and assessment are highly scaffolded and/or modified to meet the unique needs of each student.
 - In middle school, some students may participate in specially designed reading and/or math instruction in lieu of foreign language or unified arts in order to address foundational reading and math skills.
 - Students are provided opportunities for inclusion in a manner that leverages their strengths and interests. These opportunities may increase as the student demonstrates success.
 - Research based interventions are embedded throughout the day to support a student's access to core curriculum.

Entrance Guidelines:

1. Data indicating the nature and severity of the student's disability(ies) is so intensive that the student is unable to make meaningful progress in the general education classroom with the use of supplemental aids and services.
2. Data indicating a lack of academic progress in the general education classroom given targeted intervention and support over a marked period of time (a least 2 marking periods) despite Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions.
3. Data indicating the student exhibits significant difficulty across multiple areas such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, spelling, math, organization, attention, memory, processing, social pragmatics, sensory processing/integration and self-regulation across settings as compared to typical peers.
4. Data indicating the student requires a high level of adult support and prompting to engage in the learning environment and complete academic tasks.

Exit Guidelines:

1. Student consistently demonstrates progress toward IEP goals and objectives.
2. Student is able to access grade-level curriculum using accommodations and specially designed instruction that can be provided within the general education classroom.
3. Student's behavior does not significantly interfere with their own learning or the learning of others.
4. Student can work independently for a period of time and ask for help if needed.
5. Student demonstrates meaningful engagement in general education instruction for the majority of the school day.
6. Student consistently demonstrates growth in prerequisite skills through targeted intervention.

RISE - Reaching Individual Success Everyday (Grades K-12)

Overview: The RISE program provides a highly structured and supportive environment for Autistic students who require intensive specially designed instruction across all areas (behavior, academic, communication, social skills, activities of daily living, sensory needs and fine/gross motor skills). Inclusion opportunities are provided on an individual basis with adult support. The focus of these inclusion opportunities is on developing the students social and communication skills.

Student Profile: Students in this program are on the Autism Spectrum and experience many of the challenges below:

- Significant impairment in verbal and non-verbal communication skills
- High sensitivity to sensory input impacting the student's functioning throughout the school environment.
- Frequent restrictive and repetitive patterns of behavior
- Significant rigidity with maintaining routines, schedule, and expectations.
- Significant disability related need in social skills
- Moderate to significant assistance needed to complete activities of daily living (ADLS)

They learn best in a 1:1 or small group setting with a high level of adult guidance, significant scaffolds, visual supports, and predictable routines.

Description:

- **Programming:** Instruction is focused on the student's unique learning profile and is addressed through highly individualized instruction with curriculum materials and methodologies that are substantially different from the general education setting. Assistive technology both high and low tech is an integral part of the program.

Discrete trial training and evidence based behavioral supports are incorporated into the daily instruction within the classroom to support skill acquisition and manage challenging behavior. Due to significant deficits across multiple areas, most students in the RISE program meet the criteria for participation in the MCAS Alt Assessment.

- **Staffing:** All classrooms can have no more than 12 students
 - Grades K-2: 1 Special Education Teacher and 3 paraprofessionals per classroom
 - Grades 3-12: 1 Special Education Teacher and 2 paraprofessionals per classroom
 - All RISE classrooms have ongoing support from a Board Certified Behavior Analyst.
 - Related services will be provided within or outside of the substantially separate classroom as outlined in the student's Individualized Education Program
 - Team consultation is a regular part of programming.
- **Curriculum:** Most students utilize an alternative curriculum focusing on access skills aligned to MA curriculum frameworks.

Entrance Guidelines:

Data indicating the following:

1. Student is eligible for special education under Autism or students who may not have an Autism diagnosis but display similar needs and require very substantial and individualized support across all areas (communication, social, language, activities of daily living (ADLs), self-regulation and academics). For students without an Autism diagnosis, Teams should consult with the special education supervisor of the RISE program.
2. Student exhibits communication skills both verbal and non-verbal significantly below age-expectations.
3. Student demonstrates restricted and self directed interests, repetitive behaviors, rigidity to changes in routines, schedules and expectations with limited response to prompting and redirection.
4. Student demonstrates extreme responses to sensory input (noise, touch, smell, taste etc.) that negatively impacts participation throughout the school environment.
5. Student displays significant deficits in social interactions including receptive, expressive and pragmatic

language

6. Student requires significant adult support to access academics, participate in social activities, meet sensory needs/regulation, complete activities of daily living and communicate with others.
7. Student requires an alternative curriculum which is significantly modified from the general education core curriculum.

Exit Guidance:

- Team decision based on data and the student's individual profile.

PREP - Preparing students to Reach and Explore all Possibilities (K-12)

Overview - The PREP program provides a learning environment for students with severe cognitive impairments and/or medically complex conditions. Students in this program require a modified curriculum that is significantly different from the general education setting. Inclusion opportunities are provided on an individual basis with adult support. The focus of these inclusion opportunities is on developing the students social and communication skills.

Student Profile:

- Students within the PREP program present with severe cognitive impairments and/or complex medical conditions which significantly impacts their ability to learn and generalize skills across multiple areas such as completing academic tasks, perform activities of daily living, engage in fine/visual, gross motor tasks and communicate with others as expected for a child their age. Some students require individual nursing services to address their medical needs. All students learn best in a 1:1 or small group setting with a high level of adult guidance, significant scaffolds and supports.

Description

- **Programming:** Students require a highly modified and scaffolded curriculum that focuses on functional academics, ADLs, social skills, and independent living skills. Curriculum materials and methodologies are significantly different from those presented in the general education setting. Inclusion opportunities are provided on an individual basis with adult support. Assistive technology both high and low tech is an integral part of the program.

Along with academics that are highly modified for complexity and pace, students receive explicit instruction in adaptive skills, self-care skills, social skills, and communication skills in order to increase their independence and participation in the life of the school and community.

Due to significant deficits across multiple areas, most students in the PREP program meet the criteria for participation in the MCAS Alt Assessment.

- **Staffing:** All Prep classrooms can have no more than 12 students. Each classroom is supported by a special education teacher and 1 paraprofessional. 1:1 paraprofessionals and nursing services are provided based on the services identified in the students' IEPs.
- **Curriculum:** Students utilize an alternative curriculum focusing on functional academics and life skills. Students are working on access skills aligned to Massachusetts Curriculum Standards.

Entrance Guidelines:

1. Severe deficits in cognitive functioning or complex medical conditions with significant impairment across multiple areas.
2. Student accesses the Massachusetts Frameworks and Common Core standards through access and entry skills and requires an alternative curriculum which is significantly modified from the general education core curriculum.
3. Student requires explicit and specialized instruction in adaptive, communication, social, and independent living skills.
4. Student requires a high level of adult support to engage in learning and participate in the life of the school (transition in the hallways, lunch, unified arts etc.)

Exit Guidance:

- Team decision based on data and the student's individual profile.

REACH - Respectful Relationships, Emotional-Regulation, Awareness of Self, Critical Thinking and Healthy Decision Making (Grades K-12)

Overview -The REACH program provides a supportive educational environment for students who have difficulty accessing the general education curriculum or the life of the school as a result of their social emotional needs related to their disability.

Student Profile:

- Students in the REACH program present with Emotional Impairments or Health disabilities that result in significant weaknesses across the five social-emotional competencies (CASEL - self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making) due to their disability. Students struggle to follow school expectations, regulate their emotions, interact with others, control impulsives and problem-solve situations as expected for children their age. Some students have a complex trauma history that results in trauma reactive responses to typical situations.

Description:

- **Programming:** Students require direct, frequent and explicit instruction in the areas of self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision making, and executive functioning skills within a small group setting. Core instruction can be provided either in or outside of the general education classroom with a level of support that is aligned to their individual needs. Students within the REACH program participate in individual and/or small group counseling with SEL staff.

The program also provides a high level of reinforcement through multi-tiered behavior support systems. Individual goal setting is a key component of the behavior support system in middle and high school. Students in the REACH program are provided opportunities for inclusion with their same aged peers in a manner that leverages their strengths and interests. These opportunities may increase as the student demonstrates success. Ongoing collaboration with families and outside agencies to ensure consistent communication and support for students.

- **Staffing:** Instructional blocks outside of the general education classroom will have no more than 12 students in the substantially separate setting with 1 Special Education Teacher and 1-2 paraprofessionals.
 - SEL Liaisons support students in regulation, social interactions, and skills development

- A Social Adjustment Counselor or Social Worker oversees the SEL components of the program
- A BCBA may serve as a consultant for students with challenging behavior
- **Curriculum:** Academic instruction is provided using grade level core curriculum with accommodations across all subjects.

Entrance Guidelines:

- Student is eligible for Special Education due to an Emotional Impairment, Health Disability or Developmental Delay (students younger than 9) and displays a consistent and significant pattern of dysregulation that is not explained by social maladjustment or environmental factors.
- Student has a chronic or complex trauma history and frequently exhibits an extreme response (fight, flight, freeze) to typical situations across the school environment.
- Data indicates a lack of academic progress in the general education classroom with the use of supplemental aids/ services and explicit intervention for lagging academic skills.
- Data indicates multiple attempts to implement tiered social-emotional, behavior interventions within the general education setting with limited progress.
- Consultation with district level BCBA or School Psychologist to ensure that all data indicates the student require a significant level of reinforcement and support that can not be provided in the general education setting.
- Student requires a higher level of adult supervision/intervention in less structured settings (cafeteria, recess, hallways etc) than same aged peers.
- Data indicates that the student displays significant deficits in multiple social-emotional competencies.

Exit Guidelines:

- Data indicates that the student is able to recognize emotions independently or with minimal prompting and use self-regulation strategies across school settings as expected for a child their age.
- Data indicates episodes of dysregulation have significantly decreased in frequency, intensity, and duration and no longer substantially interfere with learning or safety.
- Student is able to tolerate changes in routine, correction, peer conflict, and other common school stressors within a level of support that is expected for students their age.
- Student demonstrates measurable progress toward IEP social-emotional goals and social-emotional competencies.
- Student demonstrates safe and expected behavior across structured and unstructured settings (classroom, unified arts, cafeteria, recess, hallways, arrival/dismissal).
- Data indicates that the student is able to access the general education setting throughout their school day.

Young Adult Transition Program (18+) :

Overview: The Young Adult Transition Program at B.M.C. Durfee High School is intended for students with significant needs in Adaptive Skills and/or Intellectual Skills. Students who attend the program typically have completed four years of high school, focused on functional academics, transition, and independent living skills. The IEP team has recommended the student attend the Young Adult Transition Program due to the student's need for transition services in order to provide the student with a Free and Appropriate Public Education. Students and guardians are supportive of participation in the program.

Student Profile: Students in the Young Adult Transition Program (18-22 years old) access significant modifications to the curriculum based on their individual needs as identified and documented within their IEP. Students require intense specialized instruction and intervention to access academics, daily living and

transition skills.

Description:

- **Programming:** Students require a highly modified and scaffolded curriculum that focuses on functional academics, job skills, ADLs, social skills, and independent living skills. Curriculum materials and methodologies are significantly modified from the general education setting. Inclusion opportunities are provided on an individual basis during lunch and electives.. Assistive technology both high and low tech is an integral part of the program.

Students are provided with staff support based on individual level of needs during inclusive opportunities. Staff are supporting students transitioning throughout the school building (ratio is determined based on individual student need). Students have support from trained staff to complete all activities of daily living.

Life skills and job skills curriculum are embedded into all components of functional academic lessons. Students participate in classroom based daily activities, and work on individualized skill areas based on their needs. IEP teams have determined that students need more transitional services and adult living skills. Students will participate in frequent community experiences focusing on community/postschool living, education, and employment.

- **Staffing:** All Young Adult Transition Program classrooms can have no more than 12 students. Each classroom is supported by a special education teacher and 1 paraprofessional. 1:1 paraprofessionals and nursing services are provided based on the services identified in the students IEP.
- **Curriculum:** Functional academics are the focus of this program. Curriculum focus includes job skills, adult and independent living skills, and functional communication to access community support.

Entrance Guidelines:

1. After completion of four years of high school, identified students will transition to a post-secondary school-based program, as determined by their IEP team.
2. IEP teams have determined through the use of data that students need IEP services in the areas of transition skills in order to receive a Free and Appropriate Education.
3. Students require explicit and specialized instruction in adaptive, communication, social, community access, and independent living skills.
4. Students require a high level of adult support to engage in learning and prepare for life after high school.

Exit Guidelines:

- Team decision based on data and the student's individual profile.
- Students age out of the program on the day before their 22nd birthday or based on data from a Team meeting.

Therapeutic Public Day School

Overview: The Stone Day School is a small, structured, therapeutic school for students in grades Pre-K through 12 experiencing significant social-emotional difficulties that require intensive therapeutic support.

Student Profile:

- Students are referred to the Stone Day School by the IEP Team due to the nature and severity of their school emotional challenges which cannot be supported in a traditional school setting. Many students have not experienced success in the general education or substantially separate classroom for a marked period of time. Many students also have complex trauma histories and have required crisis intervention or short term hospitalization.

Description:

- **Programming:** The program is characterized by strong collaborative relationships between staff, administration, families, students, and outside care providers. All instruction is provided in a small group format within a therapeutic milieu. Along with academics, students receive specially designed instruction to develop self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making to support their success in the classroom and throughout the life of the school.

The Stone School uses a comprehensive behavioral management system which includes highly incentivized school wide expectations, individual behavior support plans, and individual student goal setting. Behavior is tracked using a point system and students have regular opportunities to cash in points for a variety of reinforcers.

- **Staffing:** Class size is typically 8-9 students
 - 1 Special Education Teacher and 1 paraprofessional per classroom
 - Behavior Specialists (RBT) for each level (elementary, middle and high school)
 - School Psychologist
 - School Adjustment Counselor
 - BCBA

Curriculum: Students access core curriculum with accommodations, scaffolds and supports. Students also receive direct, frequent and explicit instruction in the areas of self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making either individually or within a small group setting.

Entrance and Exit Guidelines - Team decision