As a parent of a special education student, you are a key part of providing an appropriate and caring education experience for your child. You are the advocate who remains a constant in your child's life as he or she progresses through the school system. This brochure is our effort to provide you with clear and accurate information that will help you work effectively with district personnel. It does not replace state laws and guidelines, which are detailed in separate booklets that you will receive throughout your child's education. Use it as a resource in tandem with your personal communication with district professionals.

WHAT IS SPECIAL EDUCATION?

The district provides special education programs and related services to all eligible students, ages 3 to 22. A continuum of programs is designed to educate students in the "least restrictive environment." This could include: modification of regular programs, in-class special reading or writing instruction, learning support instruction (pull out), a special class, or placement in another school outside of the district.

HOW DOES MY CHILD RECEIVE SPECIAL EDUCATION?

A referral for special education can be made for any child who is underachieving. The referral can be made by the parent or guardian, the child's teacher, by the school social worker or psychologist, and by service providers from within the community (Early Intervention, pediatricians, family support agencies). The child is referred to the Principal or the Director of Student Services. Once received, the school-based team will meet to develop a response or plan. Staff may ask parents/guardians for a delay of evaluation to attempt interventions (RTI). The team may instead ask permission to evaluate. Qualified (licensed and trained) staff will complete any necessary evaluations, and a determination of need will then be made. If your child is eligible for special education a TEAM will convene.

WHO IS ON MY CHILD'S TEAM?

The TEAM is used to describe the group of people who are contributing members of your child's education. This Team includes: the child, the parent/guardian, the GenEd teacher, the SpecEd teacher, possibly the Director of Student Services, Principal, School Psychologist and any other licensed special education staff who may provide services to your child.

IEP - INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM

If the TEAM determines that your child requires special education services, the Team will meet to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP). At this meeting, the student's educational strengths and needs will be considered to determine what goals and objectives will ensure that the student receives appropriate placement in an education program.

The evaluations, determination of need and eligibility, and the development of the IEP must be completed within 45 school working days from the day the district received the signed consent to evaluate for your child.

ANNUAL REVIEW AND RE-EVALUATION

The TEAM will meet once a year, or more if needed, to review and revise the IEP. The TEAM will discuss strengths, weaknesses, parent/guardian concerns, and progress of the student, as well as plan for the next year.

In addition to the annual IEP review, evaluations will be done every three years to re-determine eligibility for special education services. The district must obtain parental permission to begin evaluations. Once the evaluations are completed, a TEAM meeting will be called to review the results and findings. Changes can be made to the IEP as needed either through an amendment process or at a TEAM meeting.

OTHER SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

There is a range of services offered through the school district in order to meet the goals of a child's IEP. Not all services are needed by each child, and a child may need a particular service at one time in his/her educational career, but not at other times. For example, a child who requires speech therapy in first grade may have met the speech goals in his/her IEP by third grade, and no longer requires this service.

Counseling

Licensed social workers, adjustment or guidance counselors provide counseling. When needed, the district works with community-based agencies so students in need can access counseling after school.

Occupational Therapy (OT)

Occupational therapy helps with fine motor and handwriting skills, along with the daily living skills necessary for children to master skills appropriate to the child's age and level in school.

Physical Therapy (PT)

Physical therapy assists with gross motor skills, total body movements/ posture, and mobility. In addition, P.T. works on muscle tone, range of motion, postural ability, quality of movement and balance. The P.T. is also a consultant to enhance student performance in their academic placement.

Speech Language Therapy (SLT)

Speech and language therapy assists with expressive and receptive language weaknesses. Therapeutic interventions are designed and implemented for those children whose difficulty interferes with their academic success or ability to effectively communicate. Speech and language therapists provide individual or small group opportunities

Transportation

Transportation can be provided as a related service if needed. This may include special transportation equipment and arrangements for assistance to and from school. For out of district placements, transportation is consistent with the school calendar of the receiving school.

WHAT IS A PAC?

Under Federal and Massachusetts Special Education Regulations, each school district is required to have a Special Education Parent Advisory Council (PAC). Special Education PACs are a system-wide organization of parents, teachers, and administrators working in partnership to promote an innovative educational environment where children with disabilities have equal access to educational opportunities. PACs help our schools to be safe, nurturing and challenging learning environments for ALL children.

SEPAC meetings are listed on the school website under Special Education Department/SEPAC

We welcome anyone interested in special educational services to attend. If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact a liaison from the list below:

Marion Liaison: Binu Oien

Mattapoisett Liaison: Kristina Wade

Rochester Liaison:

ORR & MA Superintendency Union #55 Liaison: Beth Jupin

Or for further information regarding special education please call the ORR Student Services Department at 508·758-2772 x1942.

TRI-TOWN SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (SEPAC)

INFORMATION
REGARDING SPECIAL EDUCATION
IN THE TRI-TOWN AREA
SERVING THE
MARION, MATTAPOISETT, ROCHESTER AND
OLD ROCHESTER REGIONAL
SCHOOL DISTRICTS