



Biennial Special Education Plan

2010-2012

NISKAYUNA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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I. Introduction

Part 200. 2(c) of the Regulations of the New York State Commissioner of Education requires that each school district board of education shall prepare biennial special education plans. The plan must describe:

- The District's special education programs and services.
- The numbers of special education students by type of disability and by recommended settings.
- The methods used to evaluate the extent to which program objectives have been achieved.
- The policies and practices of the board of education to ensure that appropriate space will be continually available to meet the needs of resident students in BOCES special education programs.
- The estimated budget to support such a plan and the date on which such plan was adopted by the board of education.

We will also include a description of our Academic Intervention Services, Educationally Related Support Services and the activities and practices of our Committee on Special Education, space allocated to District special education programs, staff training, and recommendations for the future.

In the process of developing this plan, the District has a great opportunity to review our special education programs and services and make plans to update and improve them. The plan will help us to deliver excellent services to our students with disabilities.

Lynne Rutnik,
Administrator for Student Support Services
August 2010

II. Academic Intervention Services (AIS) and Educationally Related Support Services

A. Academic Intervention Services

1. Description of Services

Academic Intervention Services (AIS) are instructional interventions and student support services offered to help students at risk of not meeting the State Standards. AIS instructional interventions serve to remediate students in the early grades with the primary goal of supporting students in overcoming academic difficulties. AIS services are considered part of the resources to address student academic needs and their response to intervention. AIS also includes services such as counseling, social work services for students experiencing personal or behavioral issues, and peer mediation if students are having interpersonal conflicts.

The District provides a variety of Academic Intervention Services at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. What follows is a list of the services offered at each level:

Elementary:

- Reading Support - one-to-one, push-in and small group
- Response to Intervention (RTI) includes but is not limited to:
 1. AIMSWEB progress monitoring
 2. Fountas and Pinnell progress monitoring
 3. Pilot RTI program at all K-5 school buildings commencing 2010-11 school year
- Writing Support – small group, push-in
- Math Support – small group
- General Education-Special Education Collaboration for math or English Language Arts
- Extended Day Kindergarten
- Summer Literacy Program
- Counseling
- Monitoring-Classroom Teacher Support

Middle School:

- AIS Reading and Math
- Summer AIS Reading and Mathematics Program
- Peer Mediation (Student-student conflict resolution process)
- Counseling
- Social Work Services
- Monitoring-Classroom Teacher Support for English Language Arts, Math, Social Studies and Science

High School

- AIS for English, Math, and Social Studies (small remedial classes, 2 days/4 day cycle)
- High School Assistance Team (HSAT) grades 9 and 10 (15 students in each grade taught by a team of English, math, science and social studies teachers. Teachers are in regular contact with parents. Students receive teaching assistant support.)
- Progress monitoring and extra assistance available (quarterly) by specific content area classroom teachers for students at risk of not meeting NYS Standards, as determined by previous NYS assessments.
- Math Lab
- Peer Mediation (Student-student conflict resolution process)
- Counseling
- Social Work Services
- Academic Support Lab (ASL)
- Individualized Success Plans (ISP) for students who receive quarterly grades with four or more Ds and Fs who are not receiving support from special education, HSAT or ASL. These students receive more intensive support from a school counselor who helps them with motivation, social-emotional and study skills issues. They also receive study skills support from a teaching assistant. This program is also considered to be a pre-referral service.
- Summer School

2. Eligibility and Exit Criteria for Academic Intervention Services

Students are selected for AIS based on their performance on several indicators including classroom work and tests, local, standardized and State exams. Parents, teachers, and building Student Support Teams may refer students for AIS. Students exit AIS when they can succeed in general education classes and meet the State Standards without support.

What follows is a table summarizing eligibility and exit criteria for AIS:

ASSESSMENT	INSTRUMENT	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	EXIT CRITERIA
Standardized Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment • Aimsweb Benchmark Assessments gr. K-3 Fall, Winter, Spring 	<p>Scoring below grade level expectations</p> <p>Scoring on or below the 26th percentile</p>	<p>Meeting grade level expectations including reading accuracy and comprehension</p> <p>Achieving at a national percentile of 45 or higher and achieving a second criterion such as teacher recommendation</p>
NYS Assessments	See above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scoring below a level 3 in grades 3-8 • Not achieving a passing score on Regents Exams 	Scoring a 3 or 4 on state exam, satisfactory performance on teacher developed parallel task, or passing a Regents Exam
Individual Classroom Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit Tests • Class Work • Participation in Class • Homework • Projects • Teacher Observations • Performance Based Tasks 	Records of unsatisfactory student performance with the recommendation of the building child study team	Satisfactory student performance with the recommendation of the building child study team

B. Educationally Related Support Services

Educationally Related Support Services are pupil personnel services offered to students on a temporary basis to help them succeed in school. These services include speech improvement (non-special education speech) and counseling services.

III. Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE):

The Committee on Preschool Special Education held 224 meetings during the 2009-2010 school year and 177 meetings during the 2008-2009 school year. Meetings included initial referrals, program reviews and annual reviews. Pursuant to the regulations of the State Commissioner of Education, the CPSE makes recommendations to the Board of Education based on the needs of the students. As of August 4, 2010 the District had 53 preschool students with IEPs.

The criteria and procedures for eligibility, referral, evaluation, recommendations, and program implementation are slightly different for preschool students than they are for school age students.

A. CPSE Membership

The required members of the CPSE are:

- The child's parent(s)
- The child's teacher/related service provider
- A parent member
- The school district representative
- The county representative
- For a child transitioning from an early intervention (EI) program (birth to 3 years old), a representative of the agency providing EI services

B. CPSE Process

a. Eligibility Determinations

Preschool children may be identified as having a disability if they exhibit significant delays in one or more functional areas related to cognition, language and communication, adaptive skills, social emotional development, and sensory or motor development that adversely affects a child's ability to learn. The CPSE considers all evaluations and compares the child's performance to accepted milestones for child development. The criteria for eligibility are:

- A 12 month delay in one or more functional areas; or
- A 33% delay in one functional area, or a 25% delay in each of two functional areas; or
- If appropriate standardized tests are individually administered, a score of two standard deviations below the mean in one functional area, or a score of 1.5 standard deviations below the mean in two functional areas; or
- Meeting the criteria for a disability as described in the terms for school aged students.

C. Referral

A preschool child suspected of having a disability shall be referred in writing to the CPSE Chairperson. A referral may be made by the child's parents, a professional staff member of the school district or a preschool, a physician, or a judicial officer.

D. Evaluation

Upon the consent of the parent and the parent's selection of an approved evaluator, a multidisciplinary evaluation will be conducted. The resulting report will include a detailed description of the child's needs and a recommendation for services.

E. Recommendations

If the CPSE determines that the child has a disability, the committee shall recommend a program for the child. The committee is required to consider a continuum of services starting from the least restrictive to the most restrictive services (least intensive services to the most intensive). The full range of services for preschool students may include related services only, special education itinerant services only, integrated special class programs or self contained special class programs. When a special class program is required, the CPSE must first consider placement in a part-time or half-time program in a setting where age-appropriate peers without disabilities are typically found. More restrictive placements may only be considered if education in a less restrictive placement would not succeed even with supplementary aids and services.

Transportation needs must also be considered.

The CPSE must develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) as described on page 7.

F. Implementation

A similar timeline for implementation of services must be followed as for K-12 students referred to the CSE.

G. Annual Review

The IEP of each preschool student must be reviewed at least annually.

H. Mediation and Impartial Review Process

Due process for preschool students with disabilities closely matches the due process for school-aged students. See page 13.

IV. The Committee on Special Education:

The Committee on Special Education held 879 meetings during the 2009-2010 school year and 878 in the 2008-2009 school year. The meetings included initial referrals, program reviews, annual reviews, and re-evaluations (required at least every 3 years). Pursuant to the regulations of the State Commissioner of Education, the CSE makes recommendations to the Board of Education on the needs of those students referred to the CSE. Based upon those recommendations the District had 442 K-12 students with IEPs as of August 5, 2010.

A. CSE Membership

The required members of the CSE are:

- The child's parent(s)
- The child's general education teacher
- A special education teacher
- A school psychologist
- A district representative (CSE Chairperson)
- A parent member
- The school physician, as needed (with at least three days notice).

B. CSE Sub-committee Membership:

- The child's general education teacher
- A special education teacher
- A school psychologist, only needed if updated evaluations are reviewed
- A district representative (CSE Chairperson)

In many instances, a CSE Subcommittee is utilized for the following reasons:

1. Difficulty obtaining parent members to serve on the committee
2. Scheduling conflicts (Psychologist is triple booked)

The subcommittee meets for routine case reviews and annual reviews. A full CSE committee is needed for the following reasons:

- Initial evaluations
- Moving a child to an out-of-district placement
- Moving a child into a self-contained setting for the first time

Student Support Services (SSS) office makes every effort to obtain a quorum for CSE meetings by using the following procedures:

1. Written invitations are mailed prior to meetings.
2. The SSS Office places calls to home reminding parents of the upcoming meeting.
3. We offer to use conference calls to parents' home or work if they can not attend in person.

B. CSE Process

1. Pre-referral Interventions

Generally when a student is experiencing academic or social difficulties in school, the student's teacher/team will refer the student to their building's Student Support Team. The primary purpose of each Student Support Team is to use a collaborative approach to understanding and meeting the child's needs, as follows:

1. Teacher/Team or Guidance Counselor presents child's challenges to Student Support Team
2. Data is presented to the team and discussed
3. Challenges are prioritized
4. Problem solving approach is utilized by Student Support Team
5. Instructional strategy, intervention or additional support is agreed upon by Student Support Team.
6. The Student Support Team reconvenes at agreed upon time to review outcomes of progress monitoring data.

The Student Support Team (SST) in each building typically consisting of the following:

1. Principal/Building Administer
2. School Psychologist
3. Special Education Teacher
4. Related Service providers
5. Reading Specialist
6. General Education Teacher(s)
7. Guidance Counselor

If the recommended strategies, interventions or additional supports are not sufficient, then the teacher/team or counselor will refer the child for academic intervention services (AIS). These services include support for reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students at risk of failing to meet the NYS State Standards are monitored closely by their classroom teacher and given extra help as needed. The second level of AIS is provided by an AIS teacher. Small groups of students meet two or more times per week with an AIS teacher who helps the children in order to improve their achievement.

If in spite of eight to twelve weeks of trials using:

1. Researched interventions tailored specifically to the student's individual needs
2. Weekly progress monitoring (K-5)
3. The three tier framework of the RTI pyramid

the student is failing to make adequate progress or gains, the Student Support Team will make a referral to the Committee on Special Education (CSE).

2. Referral

A student suspected of having a disability should be referred in writing to the CSE chairperson or a school principal. The referral may be made by the student's parents, teacher or other professional staff member, a judicial officer, or the student him or herself if over 18 years of age.

The referral should state the reasons why the student is suspected of having a disability. Test results, records, and reports should be cited. Attempts to remediate the student's problems including RTI₂ should also be stated.

3. Evaluation

An individual evaluation shall be commenced by the CSE. The initial evaluation and determination of eligibility must be completed by the CSE within 60 calendar days from the date when the CSE receives written parental consent to evaluate.

The evaluation must include a variety of assessments and include review of the following:

1. Information provided by parents. (Parents should be contacted before the evaluation and concerns should be discussed and brought to the CSE meeting for consideration.)
2. Recent psychological evaluation
3. Recent achievement testing
4. RTI trials (individualized instructional intervention and weekly testing)
5. Social history
6. Recent medical examination
7. Recent observation of the student in his/her current educational placement.

4. Eligibility Determination

The CSE makes the determination on whether or not the student has a disability after reviewing the assessments, teacher reports, and parental statements. Students being considered for classification as learning disabled must be given RTI trials. If the student fails to make adequate progress despite scientifically based interventions, the student will be classified as learning disabled. If the CSE is evaluating whether or not a student is learning disabled in reading, the student cannot be found learning disabled in reading unless he has been taught reading using a "balanced approach" including instruction in these elements: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

A student can be identified because of mental, physical, or emotional needs as having one of the following disabilities:

- Autism
- Deafness

- Deaf-Blindness
- Hearing Impairment
- Emotional Disturbance
- Learning Disability
- Mental Retardation
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Speech or Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment

Please refer to the appendix for definitions of these classifications.

5. Development of Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Prior to developing a recommendation to the Board of Education for special education services, the CSE must ensure that the student is receiving general education services including Academic Intervention Services as appropriate.

The CSE must develop an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) for each student with a disability. The IEP must list a student's academic, physical, social, and management needs and present levels of educational performance (PLEPS) for each major goal area. It must also include:

- The classification of the disability
- Measurable annual goals (and short term objectives and benchmarks for students with significant impairments who participate in the NYS Alternate Assessments)
- Evaluation criteria for each goal
- The recommended special education program and related services
- Recommended placement
- The class size
- Supplementary aides and services the student needs
- Program modifications or supports for school personnel
- A statement of transition goals that will reasonably enable the student to meet measurable post-secondary goals (beginning when the student turns 15)
- Assistive technology devices needed
- Curriculum and testing modifications
- Date for initiation of services and end of services
- Upon graduation or age 21, each child leaving Niskayuna High school will receive a "Summary Report", codifying their academic, social and physical performance and needs as they transition to their next phase of life.

In September 2007, the law was changed to permit parents and the school district to agree to amend an IEP after the annual review meeting has been conducted without convening a CSE meeting (Chapter 378 of the Laws of 2007).

6. IEP Implementation

It is the District's responsibility to implement the IEP within 60 school days of the date that the parent signed consent for CSE evaluation of the student. That means that the services described on the IEP must be delivered within the timeline stated above. Under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) the parents may refuse to allow the school district to implement an IEP. If parent does so, the student has no protections nor is the student entitled to any special education services. The referral process must be used in its entirety for another referral to The CSE. The District may not use due process to force the issue. Each student's parent and teachers must be provided with a copy of the IEP.

7. Annual review and Reevaluations

The CSE must review the IEP of each student with a disability at least annually and make recommendations for an updated IEP. The review will include a consideration of the progress the student has made in general and special education. Then the IEP is revised to address lack of progress in key areas and to meet the student's needs. Test and instructional modifications are reviewed and changed as needed.

Students are reevaluated at least every three years to determine if they continue to be eligible for special education services and if they are eligible, the CSE reviews and updates the IEP in light of present needs.

If a student is no longer eligible to be classified as a special education student, the student may be declassified with no further services or the student can receive a year of declassification support. These transitional services typically consist of a reduced amount of consulting teacher support, possibly related services, and continuation of testing modifications. The principal is responsible for seeing that these services are implemented.

8. Mediation and Impartial Hearing Processes

If parents disagree with the recommendations of the CSE they can ask for mediation to resolve their differences with the District or they can request an impartial hearing. Should they request an impartial hearing, the Board of Education appoints an impartial hearing officer to conduct the hearing. Prior to the impartial hearing, parents and the District are now required by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) to meet for a resolution session with the hope they can reach an acceptable agreement and avoid the time and expense of a hearing.

Hearings are generally held in the Board room. Usually the parents are represented by an attorney at the hearing as is the District. The decision of the impartial hearing officer is final unless it is appealed to the State Review Officer.

C. Committee on Special Education Statistics:

Year	2009-10	2008-09	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05	2003-04
# of meetings	879	878	634	740	908	899	837
# students classified	55	42	31	50	56	57	75
# students declassified	34	26	30	26	32	21	32
# new referrals	68	72	37	62	71	86	93
# of transfers in	31	20	15	18	23	18	34
# transfers out	28	28	22	30	19	13	19
# of student in outside Special Education Placements (BOCES, Wildwood)	36	34	36	35	*	*	*
# IEP students in private schools receiving support services	18	16	18	17	18	20	21
Total # of IEP students	442	448	460	452	505	509	499

* NA = Not Available

Trends:

- The numbers of CSE meetings is increasing (250+) in our opinion for the following reasons:
 1. We are seeing an increase of students with severe needs move into our district. Although our numbers of identified students have decreased we are spending and expending more resources on our students due to the increased of severity of many of the unique situations and needs of our students both in and out of district.

2. In addition, we are also noticing an increase in students needing support with emotional and mental health issues, especially at the middle level and high school as the curricular expectations increase.
3. We also have several students in our district with very unique programs and needs. Many times it takes three to five meetings during annual review time to gain consensus.
4. Most importantly, we are using additional meetings to continue to work through unresolved items and build consensus, ultimately avoiding Impartial Hearings.
 - New classification rates have remained consistent over the past 5 years.
 - Declassification rates are stable.
 - New referrals have been somewhat consistent due to a great deal of time, effort and assessment from our CSE's and psychologists using data driven decision making.
 - Students with disabilities transferring into our district continue to increase.
 - Students with disabilities transferring out of our district has increased over 5 years, but remained constant for 2 years.
 - Students in outside placements have remained constant despite new programs in district designed to keep students in their least restrictive environment (LRE).
 - Students with disabilities in private school settings are stable.
 - The number of identified students has remained consistent for the past 5 years; however the severity of our students needs has dramatically increased requiring more intensive support, time and resources.

V. Section 504 Committee

Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a national civil rights law guaranteeing equal access for all students with disabilities attending public schools. If a student has a disability that does not require special education, his parent, teacher, or other school professional can refer him to the Section 504 Committee if this disability is negatively impacting the educational process or the disability or medical condition requires the student to be given testing accommodations. Such disabilities include hearing loss, orthopedic disabilities, visual impairments, attention deficit disorder, severe asthma, diabetes and other conditions. Section 504 requires public schools to provide accommodations to students with disabilities.

A. Description of the Section 504 Committee

The Section 504 Committee is made up of persons knowledgeable about the student's disability and needs. In our school district, we use the CSE as our Section 504 Committee.

B. Section 504 Process

The CSE acts as the Section 504 Committee in our district. A general education teacher familiar with the student’s educational needs attends the meeting. Upon receiving a referral, the Section 504 Committee gathers information concerning the student’s learning and/or physical needs, and then convenes a meeting at which they decide whether or not the student has a disability significantly affecting a major life activity such as seeing, hearing, walking, breathing, and learning. If the Committee finds that the student does have a disability, they develop a written accommodation plan to meet the student’s needs. Typically a plan calls for practical measures to be carried out by general education teachers to ensure that a student with disabilities has full access to school district programs, e.g. for an orthopedically impaired student, ramping to gain access to a room, or preferential seating near the teacher for a hearing impaired student.

Each building principal takes responsibility for the implementation of the 504 plan in their building. At the end of the first semester (January), the Student Support Services Office sends a roster of 504 students to each principal and asks the principal to certify that the 504 plans in his/her building are being properly implemented. All 504 plans are updated in the spring as part of the annual review process.

C. Section 504 Statistics:

	2010-11 (expected)	2009-10	2008-09	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05	2003-04
Elementary	17	26	41	40	47	46	44	41
Middle School	38	36	32	28	20	19	20	21
High School	31	19	21	19	30	25	32	23
Total	86	81	94	87	97	90	96	85

Trends

The number of students with 504 plans has remained somewhat consistent over the past three years to about the same level as 2007-2008. These students have a variety of impairments requiring accommodation plans and sometimes related services, but they do not need special education instructional/support services. The number of 504 students remaining consistent is most likely due to the fact that the District is requiring more stringent documentation of health conditions and their impact on academic performance.

VI. Description of Students with Disabilities

A. Preschool Students

As of August 2010 the District served 53-54 three and four year old students as during the 2008-2010 school year as follows:

- 33-36 full-time students at integrated preschools during the 2008-2010 school year (meaning general education students are also instructed at each school).
- 3-6 full time students at special education preschools
- 1-4 at residential school
- 7-8 receive services at their home

The students are instructed at these preschools:

Beginnings (*Niskayuna*), Achievements (*Niskayuna*), Schonowe Preschool (*Rotterdam*), Cloverpatch (*Glenville*), Crossroads Center for Children (*Glenville*), Spotted Zebra Learning Center (*Colonie*) and Helping Hands Pre-School (*Clifton Park*).

Typically our preschool students are speech and/or language delayed. Some are also cognitively delayed and may have fine motor needs (dressing, feeding, coloring, cutting, etc.) or gross motor needs (difficulty with walking and /or running).

Students who attend full-time programs have more severe needs: *autism, serious behavior management problems, or multiple disabilities.*

Decisions on eligibility, planning, and placement are made by the District's Committee on Preschool Education (CPSE).

The following table shows the placement of Pre-Kindergarten students over the past five years as of December 1 each school year:

Year	2009-10	2008-09	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05
General Ed. Preschool for at least 80% of school day	36	33	35	43	22	37
Gen. Ed. Preschool for at least 20% of the school day but less than 80%	3	6	4	11	29	16
Separate Sped. Class	5	4	2	3	7	8

Home	8	7	7	1	0	0
Residential Facility	1	4	3	0	2	1
Total	53	54	51	58	60	62

Trends:

- We have in increase in the amount of meetings by 50 meetings during the 2009-2010 school year. Many of the students we are serving have very intense needs, requiring program adjustments and program review on a frequent basis. Parents are new to the CPSE process and require more time and have been requiring more meetings with the CPSE to ensure appropriate programming for their children.
- Approximately 5 pre-school cases have had hearings during the 2009-2010 school year. We have used additional CPSE meetings to avoid hearings and mediate concerns, fostering collaboration.
- 30 CPSE students turned school aged during the 2009-2010 school year. A great deal of coordination is needed to support transition in to the kindergarten setting.
- 7 out of 30 pre-schoolers were placed in special class programs in our district. These students require two and sometimes three meetings to set up unique related services. In addition, parents also request additional meetings and make further recommendations for the CPSE to consider.
- The great majority of our students are placed in general education pre-schools or integrated general education-special education preschools.

We have seen a consistent trend in the number of students who are identified at the pre-school level. Although the numbers have remained consistent, the levels of severity and our pre-school population has increased, especially in the area of Pervasive Development Disorders (PDD) and Autism Spectrum. Students on the Autism Spectrum not only require unique services, but also increased level of service combinations.

Here is a table showing the numbers of K-12 students with IEPs in each disability category over the past five years:

Disability	2009-10	2008-09	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
	# of Students	# of Students	# of Students	# of Students	# of Students
Learning Disabled	117	116	111	126	145
Other Health Impaired	158	150	167	169	160
Speech/Language Impaired	81	88	85	84	83

Multiply Disabled	24	29	34	37	44
Emotionally Disturbed	13	16	19	20	20
Autistic	38	38	32	32	34
Traumatic-Brain Injured	5	4	3	3	3
Orthopedically Impaired	3	3	4	4	6
Hard of Hearing Impaired	3	3	3	4	3
Deaf	0	0	0	0	1
Deaf-Blind	0	0	0	0	0
Visually Impaired	0	1	2	2	2
Mentally Retarded	0	0	0	2	4
Total	442	449	460	483	505
% of Total Pop. With IEPs	4423 10.4%	4282 10.4%	460/4441= 10.4%	483/4403= 11.0%	505/4470= 11.3%

Trends:

- The size of the special education population as a percentage of the general education population has been decreasing for the past three years. Staff are careful to try using AIS first or other RTI interventions before initiating a CSE referral.
- CSE Chairpersons are holding additional meetings to discuss front line interventions and RTI progress monitoring trials and trends before moving to classify students.
- The number of students classified as Learning Disabled (LD) continues to remain consistent, decreasing over the past 5 years. This may be related to the use of RTI as a way of targeting intervention to students in need of instructional interventions, as well as increased benchmarking and progress monitoring which allows classroom teachers to adjust instruction when reviewing data to better meet students' individual needs.
- We are classifying fewer students as OHI (other health impaired). However, we are concerned that many of our students on the Autistim Spectrum are receiving this classification, misrepresenting how many students we have in our district who are classified as Autistic or Aspergers or who are on the Autism/PDD Spectrum.
- The numbers of students classified as ED (emotionally disturbed) continues to decline.
- The number of students classified as MD (multiply disabled) continues to decline.

VII. K- 12 Special Education Programs and Services

In compliance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA) and the Part 200 Regulations of the New York State Commissioner of Education, the Niskayuna Central School District provides the

following continuum of services for our students with disabilities. The services are listed from least restrictive to most restrictive (least intensive to most intensive). Services are offered on a K-12 basis in all buildings unless otherwise specified. In this section we describe the District's programs and services, and we offer guidelines for entering and exiting the programs and services.

A. Related Services

Related Services are specialized instruction offered to students with needs in the areas of speech/language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling, hearing impairments and visual impairments. Service providers include speech language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, teachers of the deaf/hearing impaired, and teachers of the blind/visually impaired. Students are served one-to-one, in small groups and within push-in models.

1. Speech/Language Services

Description of Speech/Language Services

The speech/language pathologists provide services to students who need help with articulation, fluency (stuttering), voice (hoarseness, nasality) or language (expressive and receptive language, limited vocabulary, abbreviated sentences, improper syntax, weak pre-literacy and literacy skills), pragmatics conventions of social language conversations, etc.) and related disabilities.

They also work with students needing help with auditory processing (ability to focus on critical information with competing noise in the background), cognitive aspects of communication (i.e. attention, memory, problem solving, planning and organizing), augmentative communication methods/devices (special communication methods or devices used by people with sensory or developmental disabilities), and with students who have hearing impairments.

Speech/Language therapists provide:

- Prevention Services
- Therapy
- Screening
- Consultation to parents, teachers and students
- Assessment and Diagnosis
- Follow-up, Management, and Monitoring
- IEP/504 plan development and implementation.

Entrance Criteria for Speech/Language Services

The following entrance and exit criteria are tempered by the clinical judgment of the speech/language pathologists on how well the student is able to function academically and socially given his/her communications ability.

Students whose problems can be corrected in a relatively short period of time receive *speech improvement* services (speech for non-disabled students). Students whose problems are long term in nature and but only have a mild impact on classroom performance receive speech therapy as part of a 504 accommodation plan. e.g. a student undergoing cleft palate repair who needs careful monitoring and some help with speech. Students whose problems are long term in nature and whose communications functioning is judged by the CSE to have an adverse impact on their educational progress are classified as *speech impaired* and receive IEP services for students with disabilities.

With regard to *articulation*, students who are not easily understood by the unfamiliar listener (less than 80% of the time) may be eligible for classification as speech/language impaired.

With regard to *language*, students with deficits in expressive, receptive or pragmatic language whose performance on standardized tests falls at least one standard deviation below the mean standard score may be eligible for classification as speech/language impaired.

With regard to *fluency*, students who display mild to moderate disfluencies across three varied settings along with noticeable tension and other secondary characteristics present may be eligible for classification as speech impaired. Students may also display speech rate and prosody (the varying pitches and accentuations of speech) that impede communication.

With regard to *voice* (hoarseness, nasality, denasality, pitch, intensity) problems of a serious nature that interfere with communication, classification may be considered. Parents of a child with such problems may be asked to refer the child for a medical evaluation.

Exit Criteria for Speech/Language Services

Students exit speech/language therapy when their speech/language problem no longer exists or no longer interferes with their educational performance. Speech /language therapy is also discontinued if students are no longer benefiting from the therapy, are no longer progressing having achieved their potential level given physical, emotional, or developmental factors, or have demonstrated appropriate compensatory behaviors.

2. Occupational Therapy Services

Description of Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapists instruct students who demonstrate impaired functioning in such fine motor skill areas as handwriting, cutting, or drawing. They also help students who demonstrate significant weakness in their upper bodies, difficulty performing activities of daily living such as dressing, feeding, or toileting, difficulties with organization, or difficulty processing sensory information (e.g. hypersensitivity to sound or touch).

Entrance Criteria for Occupational Therapy

Students receive occupational therapy services if their performance on standardized tests of skills such as fine motor skills and sensory processing abilities falls below the 15th to 21st percentile (depending on the skill being tested) and if the students have significant difficulties with activities of daily living as they impact functioning in school. Medical information, if available, is considered in making this decision.

Exit Criteria for Occupational Therapy

Students are discontinued from occupational therapy when they can function within normal limits or when additional therapy will not result in significant improvement. Occupational therapy may also be discontinued if other professional staff can carry over skills taught by the occupational therapist or provide needed modifications. Medical information, if available, is considered in making this decision.

3. Physical Therapy Services

Description of Physical Therapy

Physical therapy is provided to students who have significant gross motor, orthopedic or neurological issues. Students who need physical therapy may have difficulty with locomotor skills, body coordination, balance, low muscle tone, or limited range of motion in their joints.

Entrance Criteria for Physical Therapy

Students qualify for physical therapy based on standardized tests of gross motor ability. Generally, performance below the 15th percentile and difficulty functioning in the educational environment (including school building, bus, and playground) would qualify a student for this service.

Exit Criteria for Physical Therapy

Physical therapy is discontinued if a student can function safely and independently within the educational environment in such activities of daily living as walking, running, or lifting. Physical therapy may also be discontinued if additional therapy will not result in improved functioning.

See Appendix E for additional information on entrance and exit criteria.

4. Counseling Services

Counseling is provided to students on a short-term basis as an educationally related support service or on a long term basis if they have significant emotional or behavioral issues that interfere with their education. A school psychologist or social worker generally provides counseling for students with disabilities. In some cases a guidance counselor provides it.

Entrance Criteria for Counseling

Teachers, the Committee on Special Education, parents, or students for themselves may make counseling referrals. The students are evaluated by the counselors and then offered counseling if it is warranted. In many cases students can be helped in a few sessions especially if they are motivated to change. Students with deep-seated emotional problems may receive counseling over several years.

Counselors inform parents of counseling available from outside agencies when counseling needs go beyond school related issues.

Exit Criteria for Counseling

Counseling is discontinued if the student is functioning well in school and no longer needs counseling in the judgment of the counselor, teachers, or the student's parents. Counseling may also be discontinued if continued counseling is not likely to be effective or if the student has refused to cooperate with counselor over a period of several months.

5. Teaching Assistant Service

The CSE provides teaching assistant services to students who need one-to-one or shared small group support in regular or special education classes in order to benefit from instruction. Teaching assistants help students to stay on task, complete work properly, keep organized, clarify directions, administer IEP/504 testing modifications, read texts, trade-books, worksheets and other materials, assist the students to organize their writing, prepare modified instructional materials, assist in implementing behavior plans, and so forth. Shared teaching assistants also help non-disabled students in the classroom as the teachers direct them. In the co-teaching model, Teaching Assistants are utilized for re-teaching and management of classroom centers to allow for increased differentiated instruction.

One-to-one teaching assistant service is provided to students who have severe physical, cognitive or behavioral challenges and who need this service in order to benefit from instruction.

Either the classroom teacher or special education teacher can direct a teaching assistant. In any case teachers must provide directions and plans for the teaching assistants with whom they work.

Teaching assistants should foster student independence as much as possible. Their goal should be to help the student only as much as needed to ensure co-dependency does not occur. Independence and gradual “weaning” of adult support is the ultimate goal for students needing TA assistance.

Entrance Criteria for Teaching Assistant Service

Teaching assistant services are provided to students who cannot function successfully in the general education classroom without additional adult support. These students have attention, organizational, learning (especially reading and writing), or behavioral issues that impede their progress. The CSE will target teaching assistant service to particular subjects/classes in which it is needed.

Self-contained class ratios are dictated by the State Education Department (6:1:2, 12:1:2)

Exit Criteria for Teaching Assistant Service

If a student can function successfully in the general education classroom with only the teacher’s help, teaching assistant service is discontinued.

6. Other Related Services

Several other types of related services exist. For students diagnosed as deaf/hard of hearing, we offer the service of a teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing. For students with visual impairments we offer the services of teachers of the visually impaired, teachers of visual rehabilitation and teachers of orientation and mobility. If a student is the victim of traumatic brain injury, specialized teachers are available to assist the student with problems caused by the injury.

B. Special Education Services

1. Consultant Teacher Service

Consultant teacher service is the least restrictive special education service. It is supplemental support for students provided by the special education teacher directly

to the student in a general education class or is provided indirectly when the special education teacher consults with the general education teacher. The purpose of consultant teacher service is to aid the student in benefiting from general education classes.

Co-teaching is defined under the Consultant Teacher Model as direct consultant teaching on a student's IEP. Co-teaching is a service delivery model in which a special educator and general educator share instructional responsibility and accountability for a single group of students. Co-teaching occurs primarily in a shared classroom, giving students with special needs access to the general education curriculum in the least restrictive environment to the greatest extent possible.

Service is provided for a minimum of two hours per week per student and can be combined with Resource Room services to create a balanced push-in/pull out program, supporting inclusion.

Entrance Criteria for Consultant Teacher Service

Students receiving consultant teacher service generally function at the 15th percentile or higher (nationally) on standardized tests in the areas of reading, written expression, and mathematics. They need the service to succeed in general education classes.

Exit Criteria for Consultant Teacher Service

Students will exit from consultant teacher services when their grades are satisfactory and they have shown that they can succeed academically working without consultant teacher support. Typically such students will demonstrate performance above the 35th percentile (nationally) on tests of reading, writing, or mathematics.

2. Resource Room Service

Resource room service is subject support provided directly by the special education teacher to the student on a pullout basis. The minimum service is three hours per week. Group size is up to five students.

Entrance Criteria for Resource Room Service

Resource room services are offered to students who generally function below the 15th percentile (nationally) in reading, written expression, or mathematics or who have great difficulty attending to instruction due to ADHD or health problems. Classroom performance, teacher recommendations and ratings on behavior scales are also considered. These students need at least three hours per week of subject

support for general education classes and would not succeed with consultant teacher services alone. Resource room students can learn in the general education classroom but need the academic support offered in resource room.

Exit Criteria for Resource Room Service

Resource room services can be discontinued when a student passes all of his classes with minimal assistance from the resource teacher. The student may be able to succeed academically with consultant teacher services or with no special education support.

3. Part-Time Special Class (<40% per day)

Part-Time Special Class is direct instruction by the special education teacher usually for English Language Arts or Mathematics. In addition, at middle school or high school, social studies may be offered. Students with disabilities receive this service if they cannot be successful learning in the general education class with support. Group size can be up to 12 students. Due to the high stakes assessments at the secondary level, it is preferred that the special classes taught by a certified teacher in that content area. Students being recommended for special class at the elementary level must fall below the 10th percentile, making it very challenging to succeed in their general education setting without significant modifications.

Entrance Criteria for Part-Time Special Class

Students are scheduled for part-time special class if they cannot succeed in general education classes with a teaching assistant, consulting teaching or resource room support and accommodations. Such students typically have cognitive delays, severe learning disabilities, difficulty attending to instruction, or moderate to severe behavior management needs. They are typically functioning two or more years below grade level and fall below the 10th percentile.

Exit Criteria for Part-Time Special Class

This service is discontinued if a student can succeed in a general education class with teaching assistant, consulting teaching or resource room support.

4. Special Education Classes (>60% per day)

These classes provide full-time special education teaching services for CORE content areas for students testing in the 10th percentile or below. Our students in these settings have mild to moderate cognitive disabilities. These classes are sometimes referred to as skills development classes and Intensive Management classes, serving students with Autism and or cognitive delays. Students in Special

Education Classes/Programs are included in general education classes with support from either a consultant teacher or a teaching assistant, as dictated by their IEP.

Intake Process for Special Education Classes

In order to make appropriate placements of students in special education classes, we have developed an intake process.

1. Principal/school psychologist contacts administrator for student support services and explains why the student should be placed in the particular class. Supporting documentation and data such as progress reports, recent achievement and psychological testing results must be provided.
2. The Administrator for Student Support Services schedules a visitation to the observe the child, review records and previous intervention models.
3. If the student's assessment data is below the 10th percentile, behavior is such that the LRE is not longer appropriate or progress monitoring data supports a more restrictive setting, the Administrator for Student Support Services schedules an intake meeting including sending teachers and therapists, receiving special education teacher, school psychologist, principal and CSE chair.
4. At the intake meeting the intake committee reviews the documentation and discusses the student's needs, comparing the student's profile with the criteria for the class/strand, and decides whether or not student would be appropriately placed in the class.
5. If the intake committee decides that a student is appropriate for a district special education class, then a meeting is arranged between the parents and the school psychologist and the sending and receiving teachers. The principal may wish to participate as well.
6. For the final step, the CSE meets to develop/revise the student's IEP recommending the new placement.

Description of Special Education Classes

a) Skills Development Classes

These classes serve students with delayed language and/or cognition. Some students may also have mild to moderate emotional, motor, or sensory disabilities. A mixture of academic and functional skills is taught. When appropriate, mainstreaming with support is encouraged. Class size is 8 to 12 students. The students in the K-2, 3-5, and 6-8 classes push-in to general education classes as

appropriate with support for much of their instruction. Students in the grades 9-12 class are not mainstreamed for core subjects.

- **K-2** class emphasizes language concepts, communication skills, academics, and social skills. It also serves as a diagnostic classroom for students with disabilities.
- **3-5** class continues the emphasis on language, and focuses on social skills, functional academics and the NYS Standards as appropriate.
- **6-8** class continues to provide functional academic and social skills instruction, and introduces prevocational skills.
- 9-12 class prepares students to graduate with strong functional academics, vocational skills, and social skills. Students generally receive IEP diplomas and are prepared for entry level adult work. Currently, the students are working closely with our Employment and Life Skills Mentor to obtain job skills in and out of the District such as:
 - a. Price Chopper
 - b. SCC
 - c. Local greenhouse
 - d. Panera
 - e. Barnes and Noble etc.

Entrance Criteria for Skills Development Classes

Students are selected for the Skills Development Strand classes who may have cognitive ability around the *10th* percentile or below for their chronological age. Many have accompanying language needs (particularly at the K-2 level) that seriously affect their ability to succeed academically and socially. **These students need small group or one-to-one instruction for most of the school day.** They may receive instruction in regular education classes or in the skills development class.

Exit Criteria for the Skills Development Classes

Students exit the Skills Development strand if:

- They can function academically at or above the 25th percentile (nationally) on standardized tests.
- Their language skills are at or above the 25th percentile (nationally).
- Their needs can be met in a less restrictive placement, i.e. part-time special education class or with resource room support.
- Their progress is very inconsistent and they need more intensive special education services

b) Intensive Management Program: (Grades K-5)

These two programs were created over the past two years, as the district found a growing need to provide an increased sensory and systematic, researched based behavioral approach for our younger students on the Autism Spectrum. Most students in the IMP program exhibit characteristics of Autism or PDD. Several of our students who attend these programs have a classification or diagnosis of Autism, PDD or Asperger's Syndrome requiring a smaller student to staff ratio. The IMP Program is a 6:1:2 program, but many of the students require more adult assistance. The staff in the IMP Program receives specialized training in the area of Autism and behavior modification. There is a strong focus on building appropriate communication skills, a common area of weakness for the students in this classroom which impeded learning with their general education peers. Sensory diets and behavior plans are individualized for each child in this program. Social skills training and sensory activities are a theme in both IMP classrooms.

Entrance Criteria and Exit Criteria are being developed as these programs are developing

c) Social – Emotional Program (Grades 9-12)

We offer a social - emotional program at Niskayuna High School for students with mild to moderate emotional problems. We have a resource room teacher who specializes in meeting the needs of these students. Most students are scheduled for support for at least two mods per day (about 80 minutes). The teacher gets to know each student's problems and concerns and provides practical counseling and academic support to assist them. Most of these students also receive social work services and some receive counseling from a school psychologist.

Entrance Criteria for the Social-Emotional Program

Students are selected for this program if their emotional/behavioral needs warrant more individual special education teacher attention or counseling than would be available in a typical resource room or consulting teaching program.

Exit Criteria for the Social-Emotional Class

Students exit this program if their needs can be met with consulting teacher or typical resource room support. Alternatively they may leave the program if they require more intensive services.

d) Consulting Teaching Program/Co-Teaching (Grades 9-12)

The consulting teaching program at the high school for grades 9, 10, 11, 12 is a push-in direct instruction and support service for selected students in their core Regents and Mastery classes. The special education teacher consults/co-teaches an integrated group of special and general education students. Resource Room is offered to provide extra support for the consulting/co-teaching teaching program students. In each grade we offer support as follows when appropriate:

- Gr. 9, 10, 11: Regents and Mastery English & Math
- Gr. 9, 10, 11, 12: Math, Social Studies and Science classes

Other consulting teaching available: We also provide consulting teaching for selected ninth and tenth grade students in English and math in sections separate from the above mentioned classes.

Entrance Criteria for the Consulting/Co-teaching Program (9-12)

Students are considered for the consulting teaching program who have a range of learning disabilities or are other health impaired. The program helps the students to graduate from high school with a Regents or local diploma. To participate in the program, a student must be motivated to succeed academically and not have serious behavior management needs.

Exit Criteria for the Consulting Teaching Program/Co-teaching (9-12)

A student will be discontinued from the program if they demonstrate that they can succeed academically with less intensive support. Alternatively, a student will be discontinued if they do not make the effort to keep up academically or if they do not have the ability to succeed even with the support of the program and having made a good faith effort to succeed.

e. High School GED Special Class

This class at Niskayuna High School serves students who wish to earn their GED. It includes students with disabilities and general education students. The class is an alternative for students who have struggled with the Regents curriculum. The GED program is overseen by the High School administration.

Students must be able to read at a ninth grade level in order to comprehend the GED tests. They must attend school for a minimum of 100 hours to prepare for the GED exam.

Students reading at less than a ninth grade level must study pre-GED materials.

Entrance Criteria for the GED Special Class

Students enter this program if they have not been successful in the general education program with resource room and other supports. They must have turned sixteen years of age in the prior school year.

Exit Criteria for the GED Special Class

Students exit the GED program when they earn their GED or if they leave of their own accord. A few may elect to return to the general education curriculum if sufficiently motivated.

VIII. Program Evaluation

The District evaluates the quality of the special education programs by closely examining three indicators:

- A. Student progress toward IEP goals as measured at annual review and triennial review IEP meetings.
- B. Student Progress on State Education Department tests and on standardized tests.
- C. Program Evaluation questionnaires completed by staff and parents.

IX. Staff Training

Training is provided on Superintendent's Conference Days and at in-service courses, teacher conferences and summer training opportunities.

TA training is also offered once a month on topics to support Teaching Assistants in their role in the classroom.

Some of the training goals we intend to pursue in the next couple of years are:

Elementary School Level

NEW Professional Training Focus:

ELEMENTARY LEVEL:

- Assistive technology training (Ipod Touch/Apple training for self-contained & SLP)
- Co-teaching : embedded classroom visits with Dr. Ward
- Writer's Workshop: continuation of P.D. with general education peers
- State Education, IEP Update Training: New changes on IEP
- RTI: Classroom intervention/interactive Strategy Approach in the classroom with general education peers
- Disability awareness for K-5 school children and buildings to coincide with Disability Awareness week October 18.
- TA: Writer's Workshop continuation
- TA/Teachers: Autism awareness and classroom strategies
- TA: Monthly workshop mini-lessons on OT, PT, SLP, ED etc
- TA: Roles and responsibilities to support RTI

MIDDLE LEVEL:

- Assistive technology training (Ipad Touch/Apple training for self-contained & SLP)
- Co-teaching : embedded classroom visits with Dr. Ward
- State Education, IEP Update Training: New changes on IEP
- TA/Teachers: Autism awareness and classroom strategies
- TA: Monthly workshop mini-lessons on OT, PT, SLP, ED etc
- TA: Roles and responsibilities to support RTI

HIGH LEVEL:

- Assistive technology training (Ipad Touch/Apple training for self-contained & SLP)
- Co-teaching : embedded classroom visits with Dr. Ward
- State Education, IEP Update Training: New changes on IEP
- Transition Curriculum training to span 4 grade levels
- Naviance Training
- TA/Teachers: Autism awareness and classroom strategies
- TA: Monthly workshop mini-lessons on OT, PT, SLP, ED etc
- TA: Roles and responsibilities to support RTI

X. Special Education Classroom Space

The District provides appropriate space for special education programs. All of our special education teachers and related service providers have adequate classroom space considering the type of services they provide to students. Resource room and related service classes are placed in smaller classrooms appropriate for the small groups they serve. As the building project is completed in each building, all special education teachers and related service staff have received exceptional space in which to service our students.

The District will host nine BOCES special education classes during the 2010-11 school year. This allows some of our neediest students to be served in-district when appropriate. The District will continue to provide space for BOCES classes subject to change based on District needs. Here are the BOCES classes located in each building and a brief explanation of the programs.

Craig Elementary School

- 1 Intermediate Steps Program Class

Birchwood Elementary School (NEW)

- 1 Intermediate Development Program class (IDP)
- 1 Diagnostic Development class (DDP)

Iroquois Middle School:

- 1 Intermediate Steps Program Class
- 2 Comprehensive Developmental Skills Classes

Van Antwerp Middle School:

- 1 Skills Development II Class
- 1 Fundamental Skills Instruction Class

Niskayuna High School:

1 Social-Emotional Class

Here is a brief explanation of the programming and student, teacher, aide ratios offered in the various types of BOCES classes:

- Comprehensive Developmental Skills, 12:1:4. The CDS program serves cognitively delayed, multiply disabled students.
- Intermediate Steps Program, 9:1:2. ISP classes serve students with cognitive delays and moderate behavior management needs.
- Skills Development II, 12:1:2. SDII classes serve students with learning disabilities who also have moderate behavior management needs.
- Fundamental Specialized Instruction, 12:1:1. FSI classes serve students who have mild to moderate cognitive delays.
- Social-Emotional Classes, 8:1:1 SE classes serve students with moderate to severe behavior management needs.
- Intermediate Development classes, 12:1:2. Serves students using an interdisciplinary approach to teaching focusing on experimental, hands-on learning, as well as pragmatic language development, basic motor development and socialization.
- Diagnostic Development classes, 12:1:2. Designed for young students who are not ready for typical elementary classroom settings. This program focuses on skills development through structured plan and concrete activities.

XI. Provision of Alternative Materials

The District has an obligation to provide alternative materials in a timely fashion that are needed by students with disabilities as specified in their IEPs. Alternative materials include large print books, audio taped versions of books, alternative tests, etc. The alternative materials must be available to the students with disabilities at the same time as instructional materials are provided to general education students.

We will meet this requirement by purchasing alternative materials over the summer after annual review IEP meetings. By purchasing the materials in a timely fashion, they will be available for our students with disabilities at the start of the new school year.

As regards provision of alternative materials for students who transfer in to our district during the school year, we will order such materials as soon as we receive the students' IEPs and records from their last placement.

XII. Budget

The special education budget for the 2010-11 school year can be found in Appendix B. It includes all of the items in the 2250 special education code and the 2820 psychology budget code.

XIII. Student Support Services Core Team-

The Student Support Services Core team is a District committee, broken down into a K-5 CORE and a 6-12 CORE. Each CORE is composed of reading specialists, special education teachers, general education teachers, school psychologists, the two CSE chairpersons, and a building principal. Special Education CORE uses its monthly meetings to set goals and work through tasks. Topics are fluid and most meetings have goals and outcomes before moving on to other topics of interest and need as a department and school district. The goal and function of the SSS CORE has been a focus on best practices surrounding students with special needs:

1. Instruction and delivery models to support inclusion to the greatest extent possible
2. Co-teaching practice, training needs and implementation
3. Transition practices in Middle School and High School levels
4. Parent communication surrounding the IEP Process
5. Special Class criteria
6. Specialized training needs
7. Technology needs for students with disabilities
8. Using Shared decision making processes to problem solve and collaborate to strengthen community of learners among special education teachers
9. Turn-key training
10. High school scheduling as it pertains to co-teaching and overall special education resources
11. Adapting, modifying and updating protocols (Special Class criteria, new regulations, Adapted PE procedure etc.)

XIV. Recommendations for the Future

What follows is a list of recommendations to consider for the next two years:

1. Continue to build positive parent relationships through NISKY CARES committee.
2. Increase relevant training opportunities for Teaching Assistants to better support their understanding of roles and responsibilities, as well as how to support students with varying disabilities.
3. Continue to encourage co-teaching teams more training on Differentiated Instruction.
4. Build upon new K-2 & 3-5 Management Intensive classes created during the past two years. The children who age out of the 3-5 program will need a program in the middle grades.
5. Skills Development Programs; New location and Structure (2010) will need support by holding firm to profile of students accepted in these programs. Review success of changes.
6. Work with Building Principals and NISKY CARES to formulate a consistent plan K-5 to increase peer education about Disability awareness during Disability Awareness Week, October 18th.
7. Continue to provide guidance, support and training for co-teachers
8. RTI: Continue to build knowledge, awareness if RTI while collaborating with building principals, the ELA department and the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction on implementation of Pilot proposal in 2011.
9. Continue the concerted effort at the high school level to provide excellent transition services which will result in a greater percentage of our graduates being successful in college or in employment.
10. Work with psychologist and special education teachers to formulate a school by school faculty meeting training about the use and appropriateness of testing accommodations.
11. Explore alternative staffing. Perhaps it would be more effective to employ a greater number of special education teachers especially for consulting teaching or co-teaching and fewer paraprofessionals.
12. Review and revise new Protocols and procedures surrounding Adapted PE referral process
13. Offer training to Physical Education teachers about Adapted PE.

XV. Appendices

- A. Definitions of Disability Classifications
- B. Budget for Special Education and Psychological Services

A. Definitions of Disability Classifications

Autism: a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3, that adversely affects a student's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism include engagement in repetitive activities, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory stimuli.

Deafness: a hearing impairment so severe that a student is impaired in processing linguistic information with or without amplification. The disability must adversely affect educational performance.

Deaf-Blindness: a concomitant hearing and visual impairment so severe that the student cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for students with deafness or students with blindness.

Emotional Disturbance: a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a student's educational performance.

- a. an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
- b. an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
- c. Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
- d. A generally pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression
- e. A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

The term includes schizophrenia. It does not apply to students who are socially maladjusted unless it is determined they have an emotional disturbance.

Learning Disability: a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological process involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, which manifests itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do in mathematical calculations. The term does not include learning problems that are the result of mental retardation, emotional disturbance or environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.

Mental Retardation: significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a student's performance.

Multiple Disabilities: means concomitant impairments the combination of which cause educational needs that cannot be accommodated in a special education class solely for one of the impairments, e.g. mental retardation-blindness, mental retardation-orthopedic impairment.

Orthopedic Impairment: a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a student's educational performance, e.g. clubfoot, polio, cerebral palsy.

Other Health Impaired: means having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that is due to chronic or acute health problems, e.g. heart condition, tuberculosis, attention deficit disorder.

Speech or Language Impairment: means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment or voice impairment that adversely affects a student's educational performance.

Traumatic Brain Injury: mean an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force or by certain medical conditions such as stroke or a brain tumor with resulting impairments that adversely affect a student's educational performance.

Visual Impairment Including Blindness: means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a student's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.