

## **Special Education Delivery in Council Rock**

Special Education in Council Rock involves all schools and curricular areas from Pre-Kindergarten through a student turning 21 years of age, and comprises 20.3% of the district's annual budget. A student must first be identified as in need of services, then placed in the appropriate classroom, to access the curriculum.

### **Identification**

In Council Rock, the chronology of identification of a child with special needs is as follows:

- 1 - Referral by parent, doctor, teacher or other care giver
- 2 - Testing by a multi-disciplinary team to determine eligibility for Special Education services
- 3 - Formation of the IEP (Individualized Education Program) team which typically includes: the parents of the child; not less than one regular education teacher of the child (if the child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment); not less than one special educator of the child; the representative(s) from CR who is qualified to provide, or supervise the specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities, and someone from CRSD who is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum and the resources of CRSD
- 4 - IEP Team determines what is needed for appropriate educational services
- 5 - Once the IEP team evaluates the needs of the child, the student is placed in the program that best fits their needs. All students are reevaluated as needed to determine appropriate program and placement.

### **Implementation**

In the 2009-10 school year, Council Rock reported 2,118 children between the ages of 2 and 21 receiving Special Education - 1,926 students of those students were ages 6 to 21 years. In the 2010-11 school year there are 1,895 identified Special Education students receiving special education, of which 44 are aged 19-21 years. There are also 1,078 students who were identified as gifted and 63 of those gifted students were also identified as having a disability.

Currently, there are six different, broad ranging areas of Special Education throughout the district. They are: Learning Support, Autistic Support, Emotional Support, Multiple Disabilities, Life Skills Support and Intensive Learning Support.

Special Education students' school assignment is not based on their address; they are placed in a school where the support program matches the intensity of services required. This can result in special education students attending a school that is different from their neighbors and one they would otherwise not have attended. These "district level classes" are noted in the following chart as NHS, which refers to students Not at their Home School.

All 15 schools in the district provide Itinerant Learning Support (ILS). The other five areas of Special Education that are specific to a particular school are detailed in the chart on page \_\_\_\_\_ or below, along with the population of ILS by school. The chart reflects data as of January 2011 for elementary schools, and April, 2011 for the secondary schools.

Students with needs in all areas of support are provided services inside the district, but students with more intense needs in Learning Support, Emotional Support and Life Skills Support are educated outside of the district. Students with outside placements account for 1.3% of students with disabilities.

<u>School</u>	<u>Iterant Learning Sup</u>		<u>Autistic Support</u>		<u>Emotional Support</u>		<u>Multiple Disabilities</u>		<u>Life Skills Support</u>		<u>Intensive Learning Support</u>	
	<u>Total</u>	<u>NHS*</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>NHS</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>NHS</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>NHS</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>NHS</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>NHS</u>
Churchville Elem	62	5									8	
Goodnoe Elem	77	0	74	58								
Hillcrest Elem	29	0							12	10		
Holland Elem	58	14									18	
Newtown Elem	51	0					5	4				
Richboro Elem	39	0	8	6								
Rolling Hills Elem	52	0										
Sol Feinstone Elem	64	0										
Welch Elem	60	0			19	17						
Wrightstown Elem	36	0										
Holland Middle	85	0			4							
Newtown Middle	118	0	17	n/a*	7							
Richboro Middle	64	0			2		3	n/a	8	n/a		
North HS	255	0	29	n/a	29	0						
South HS	232	0			11	0	7	n/a	8	n/a		

\*NHS – students not attending their home school (would have gone to a different school if there were no special needs requirements).

\*\*n/a – not available at this time

### **Special Education Curriculum Delivery**

The process of placing students in classrooms, and setting curriculum, must encompass all students' needs as determined by their IEP. The district must always be mindful of a requirement that the classroom provide the "least restrictive environment," meaning that students must be included in classrooms with their peers whenever possible.

Classes are formed based on need and each case may result in a different placement. At the primary level, a "Response to Intervention" process is used to initially identify children at risk academically. A structured intervention is provided to see if the student responds before the formal evaluation for eligibility begins. The students are evaluated and needs are determined prior to deciding which school the student will attend. That placement is based on the alignment of need and services provided.

Curriculum delivery is up to the district, but it must align with the Council Rock and Pennsylvania state standards. This does not necessarily mean a student is following the curriculum appropriate for their age or grade level. If they are not able to process the material, the curriculum will be delivered for the grade level at which they are able to work, but it must maintain the Council Rock curriculum. For example, a 5<sup>th</sup> grade student working at a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level in reading will follow the same curriculum guidelines as the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders for reading.

To ensure the “least restrictive environment”, a variety of assistive technology devices and software are available to allow students to participate in regular education classes. These are determined by the formal IEP process. Additionally, staff development on inclusive practices for teachers and assistants is provided. In recent years the district has broadened the staff development to include not only academic classes, but specials and electives.

There are many tools available to teachers of Special Education. At the elementary level are the Wilson Reading Program, “Visualizing and Verbalizing”, and “Seeing Stars” for Reading, English, Language Arts (RELA). At the secondary level there are computer applications: Kid Biz and Teen Biz, both for RELA, and Touch Math for Math remediation. In addition, Holland and Goodnoe elementary schools run a facilitated recess program currently the focus of a research project with the University of Pennsylvania.

In Council Rock, Special Education Supervisors are the point people for curriculum. There are six Special Education Supervisors; two at the elementary level, one at the middle level, one for each high school and one devoted to autistic support. These supervisors are members of the curriculum committee and interact with the specialists for each subject area to stay informed as curriculum is updated. The Special Education Supervisors have supervisory responsibility for the Custodial Teacher. The Custodian is a Special Education teacher who interprets the way the student’s IEP is delivered. They are the interface between all of the child’s teachers and are responsible for all state required paperwork.

Each student is assessed based on how they are progressing relative to their IEP; they are not compared to other students in the classroom. An attachment to the elementary report card indicates which needed modifications were applied. A section of the IEP called “Specially Designed Instruction” also specifies these modifications for Special Education students at all levels. Parents are given a progress monitoring report four times a year.

Students are exited from the program either by District recommendation or parent request (against District recommendation). In 2009-10 approximately 170 students (about 9%) exited the program. Of these, approximately 35% were students receiving only speech services. Very few students leave the program by parent request.

Providing an appropriate curriculum for Special Education students, while following all state and federal laws and regulations (see article “Special Education Laws and Regulations on page \_\_\_) comes at a high cost. Please see “Special Education – Special Cost – Insufficient Funding on page \_\_\_.