

HUDSON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

DISTRICT PLAN FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

2007-2009

Submitted by:

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**COMMISSIONER'S REGULATIONS REQUIRING A BI-ANNUAL
SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN**

According to the Commissioner's Regulations, Part 200.2 (c), each Board of Education receives an apportionment for eligible students (with disabilities), pursuant to subdivision 19 of section 3602 of the Education Law, or preschool students with disabilities pursuant to section 4410 of the Education Law, shall use such apportionments for special education programs and services which are in accordance with the provisions of this Part. Each plan shall include, but not limited to, the following:

1. A description of the nature and scope of special education programs and services currently available to students and preschool students residing in the district in terms of group size and composition;
2. Identification of the number and age span of students and preschool students to be served by type of disability and recommended setting;
3. The method to be used to evaluate the extent to which the objectives of the program have been achieved;
4. A description of the policies and practices of the Board of Education to ensure that the continual allocation of appropriate space within the district for special education programs that meet the needs of students and preschool students with disabilities;
5. A description of 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 and preschool students with disabilities who attend special education programs provided by the Boards of Cooperative Educational Services;

6. The estimated budget to support such a plan;
7. The date on which the plan was adopted by the Board of Education.

The identified needs of students with disabilities (SWD) create a need to maintain and develop appropriate programs and services to ensure compliance with providing a free, appropriate education to all students. We have analyzed data of students receiving special education services in the Hudson City School District. This analysis is the basis for the information presented in this plan, which includes current status and projected needs.

Nature and Scope of Special Education Programs and Services

The Hudson City School District is committed to the task of providing all students with an education that is challenging and rewarding. Students with educational disabilities range in ability levels, including those with minimal need for support and services to those students with severe disabilities. Commitment to provide excellence in education is directed toward students with disabilities to the same degree as non-disabled students. Opportunities are provided to students with disabilities in order for them to achieve in accordance with their own abilities. The ultimate goal is to equip all students with the skills necessary for personal, academic and social success necessary for post secondary opportunities.

At both the elementary and secondary levels, there is a strong commitment to the concept that students with disabilities be placed, to the maximum extent possible, in classes with non-disabled peers. The coordination of curriculum, modification of strategies and instructional techniques are facilitated on all academic levels.

Students with disabilities need to be able to demonstrate competency on all New York State assessments. For students with severe disabilities, alternate assessments are required. The alternate assessment is a portfolio-type

assessment which is completed throughout the school year for students with severe disabilities, who meet the NYSED requirements. Students with disabilities are entitled to appropriate aids and services in the least restrictive environment (LRE) so that students benefit from the general classroom experience, to the extent possible, based on the nature and severity of the educational disability. This opportunity is essential to the development of self-worth and self-respect as well as the preparation of students with disabilities to live and work successfully in a challenging adult world.

The 2007-2008 school year has started with greater opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in the least restrictive environment through mainstreaming designs utilizing consultant teacher, integrated co-teaching and study skills services. We will continue to work on improving programs and services so that students with disabilities are offered maximum opportunities to be successful learners. These efforts support the increase of student achievement in reading/ELA and math and increasing the graduation rate for students with disabilities with regents/local diplomas.

Description of Special Education Programs and Services

The district provides a continuum of special education services as per Part 200 regulations. The Committee on Special Education (CSE) and the Committee on Pre-School Education (CPSE) emphasize LRE (least restrictive environment) in considering appropriate support for students with disabilities. These include the following:

- **Consultant Teacher Services-** means direct and/or indirect services to students with disabilities who are enrolled in regular education classes, including career and technology courses. The maximum number of students with disabilities assigned to a consultant teacher is 20. Each student receiving Consultant Teacher Service receives support of 2 hours of instruction per week.

Consultation is provided by a certified special education teacher with the regular education teachers to assist them in adjusting the learning environment and/or modifying instructional methods to meet the individual needs of a student(s) with a disability.

This educational service is typically for students who need a minimal level of support in order to be successful in regular education. Students receiving this level of support often have IEPs that allow flexibility (indirect/direct) in order to maximize what works best for the student. Often, this level of service utilizes test accommodations and text modifications.

- **Related Services-** are provided to students with a disability, determined by the CSE for educational purposes. Related Services include speech language pathology, audiology services, psychology services, physical services, occupational therapy, health and safety aide, counseling services, orientation and mobility services, medical services, parent counseling and training, skilled nursing, school social work, assistive technology services and other appropriate support services.
- **Resource Room-** The purpose of this level of service is to provide supplemental assistance to SWD who attend regular education classes. Students requiring resource rooms program receive an average of 3 hours of instruction per week. An instructional group in a resource room does not exceed 5 students per teacher, except in grades 7-12 whereby the maximum size may be 8. Please note that a previous director of student services removed this service from district programs. Since it is a mandated level of service, currently no student receives this service.
- **Integrated Co-Teaching-**This level of service is new as of January 2008 and we currently provide for students in all grade levels, K-12. It was previously

mislabeled as Consultant Teacher Service (CTS) service in our district. Students receive support by a certified special education teacher or teaching assistant in the regular classroom setting, as per regulation. The general education and special education teachers collaboratively plan and teach academic content to students. At times, one teacher will assume primary responsibilities for specific types of instruction or areas of the curriculum. General and special education teachers develop and deliver instructional content collectively in the classroom. The general education teacher assumes responsibility for delivering the essential content of the instruction. The special education teacher assumes the responsibility for developing and implementing supplementary and supportive learning activities. Both teachers are present in the classroom and monitor both types of learning activities. In an integrated class, there may be no more 12 students with disabilities within the group. This level of educational program is designed for students that have no significant behavior problems; have ability for basic communication skills with peers; and benefit from the use of assistive technology (Alpha smarts and FM monitors, e.g.), adaptive readability texts and test modifications.

- **Special Class**– This level of special education service is provided to students in various ways. Students with disabilities are grouped with peers with similar educational needs. The maximum size of special classes varies dependent upon the needs of the individual students.
 - **Special Class/Departmentalized Program** is offered at the secondary level (grades 7-12). These classes are planned to have 15 students in the classroom, but the class size may be increased to 18 after the first day of school. This includes core subjects ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies as well as Study Skill classes. This level of program provides the same curriculum as general

education/regents program of study. It utilizes modified texts and test accommodations.

- o **Study Skills**- These classes provide supplemental instruction for students with disabilities who are in need of specialized supplementary instruction. These classes are generally for students with disabilities who are in general education classes 60% or more of their school day. The profile of a student who receives Study Skills support is a student with academic delays, particularly in reading/ELA and math, and has difficulty with organizational skills.
- **Special Class (Self-Contained)** – offers a variety of class/size ratios depending upon the needs of students. Students in self-contained classes receive modified instruction that parallels NYS curriculum in all grade levels. Students receive support in either 12:1+1, or 8:1+1 classes in district programs. Students in Self-Contained classes are usually 2.5-3 years below achievement levels in ELA/reading/math. They have difficulty in focus and control for a class period and need a moderate to significant level of support to successfully complete instructional periods.
- **Identification of Students with Disabilities by age range and recommended setting**

Chart 1:

Resident pupils with Disabilities Provided Special Education –IEP Direct Student Data as of 10/23/07.

	Ages 2- 3	Ages 4-5	Ages 6-21
Pupils provided special education within this district		24	350
Pupils provided special education by Questar III		0	17
Pupils provided special education in a residential school		0	6
Pupils provided special education by an approved private day school		1	10
Pupils provided special education in an approved preschool program	30		
Pupils provided special education in the district preschool program	2 (CPSE@UPK)		
TOTALS	32	25	383

Chart 2:

Resident School Age Students by Age and Classification serviced by District, Questar III, and Approved Private Day School. IEP Direct Student Data as of 10/23/07.

Disability Category	Age 4-5	Age 6-11	Age 12-13	Age 14-17	Age 18-21	TOTAL
Autism	4	5	2	3	1	15
Emotional Disability	3	18	12	35	2	70

Learning Disability	4	55	36	78	7	180
Mental Retardation	0	3	4	7	0	14
Deaf	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hard of Hearing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Speech Impairment	5	23	3	2	0	33
Visually Impairment	0	0	0	0	0	0
Orthopedic Impairment	1	1	0	0	0	2
Other Health Impairment	2	27	8	14	4	55
Multiple Disabilities	6	14	4	7	4	35
Deaf/Blind	0	0	0	0	0	0
Traumatic Brain Injury	0	2	0	2	0	4
	25	148	69	148	18	408

Chart 3:
Resident School Age Students' Units of Service by Recommended Program
IEP Direct Student Data as of 10/23/07.

Recommended Program	Total Number of Students
Consultant Teacher	109
Integrated Co-Teaching Math	59
Integrated Co-Teaching ELA	72
Integrated Co-Teaching Social Studies	62
Integrated Co-Teaching Science	86
Special Class Basic Math (HHS)	8
Special Class Basic Reading (HHS)	7

Special Class Basic Language Arts (Elementary)	8
Special Class 12:1+1	55
Special Class 6:1+1	11
Special Class 8:1+1	27
Special Class Social Studies	37
Special Class Science	3
Special Class Math	81
Special Class English	80
Special Class Study Skills	126
Related Services	
Counseling	177
Speech	105
Occupational Therapy	91
Physical Therapy	25
1:1 Aide	16
Shared Aide	17

I. Evaluations

The evaluation of program and services is ongoing, and will continue until we are sure that students' needs are met appropriately, commensurate with regulations. Conferences are held with the Superintendent, the Director of Student Services and the administrative leadership team weekly as needs are identified. Data is gathered through building and district personnel, including teachers (special and general education teachers), speech therapists, social workers and counselors, administrators, physical and occupational therapists, parents and other members of the educational community. Services for students with disabilities are evaluated by goals that are written into each IEP and reviewed at least annually, as well as through progress reports, report cards, class tests and assignments, curriculum benchmarks and state assessments. The CSE reviews the IEP when requested by parents and/or professionals as needed.

II. Space Allocation for Special Education Programs and Services

To ensure that adequate and appropriate space is made available for special education classes provided by the district, as well as in programs provided by Questar III BOCES, the Board of Education allocates an appropriate amount of space in district facilities to meet the needs of students in such programs. The allocation will be part of the bi-annual district plan for the provision of special education programs and services, as mandated by the Commissioner. The building plan for additional classroom space for students with disabilities includes new building projects. An existing Board policy governs and sanctions the space allocation requirement. See attached HCSD policy 4321.1.

III. Estimated Budget

Attached is the special education budget for the 2007-2008 school year. The budget includes funds (from general budget) and F funds (federal grant support) It must be noted that a significant portion of the instructional and tuition expenses are offset through the subsequent year's state aide (approximately 50% for Questar III and public school students; 70% for private tuitions). The district is reimbursed at 80% for 12 month schooling.

Total Special Education: \$4,365,696. See attached 2007-08 special education budget.

Federal Funds: \$665,296. This includes the 611/ 619 grants and Federal UPK grant. Please note that 15% of allocation from 611 must be spent on professional development (training and workshops). See attached special education budget.

Transportation Expenses: \$695,691. See attached 2007-08 transportation budget estimate. Please note that 80% of transportation costs are reimbursable. See attached estimated budget.

IV. Student Services Administration

The Student Services office consists of a director and 3 office staff members. The director is responsible for special education programs and staff, the CSE and CPSE process, and clinical staff throughout the district. This includes psychologists, social workers, counselors, physical and occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, nurses and other professional staff who provide or may provide related services to students. Support for students with disabilities is administered collaboratively with building administrators.

All district psychologists and the special education department heads are appointed CSE chairs and subcommittee chairs by the BOE (at reorganization meeting each July). This means that these individuals serve as the chairperson of the committee on special education as assigned by the director. Two psychologists are also appointed as CPSE chairperson and serve in the same capacity for preschool students with a disability. We currently have approximately 32 students receiving services under CPSE. These services are decided upon by the CPSE but the county is responsible for providing much of the service and cost for service. This may change within the next 2 years and become a district responsibility, as federal law specifies that school districts are responsible for students with disabilities ages 3-21, and NY state has been looking at implementing changes.

Special Education Department meetings are held once per month at each school for all special education teachers and related service staff members.

The Instructional Support Team (IST) is located in each building and is comprised of a team of professionals (teachers, speech therapist, psychologist, guidance counselor and administrator) that evaluates general education students who are identified as having difficulties. The IST process is also a preventive measure

for students who may be in need of special education services or a 504 plan with academics or adjustment to school. The IST recommends educational plans and enhancements to the curriculum and school program in order to assist the identified student. This also serves as an early detection measure so that intervention (RTI) may prevent some students from needing special education support. IST recommends educational plans and enhancements to the curriculum and school program in order to assist students.

This may include a 504 accommodation plan as defined by Section 504. Section 504 is a civil rights law of the US Department of Education that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Section 504 ensures that a child with a disability that substantially limits a major life activity has equal access to an education. The child may receive reasonable accommodations and modifications as determined by a 504 Planning Team. In HCSD, there are (6) 504 Plans at John L. Edwards School; (7) at Greenport School; (18) at the Middle School; and, (19) at the High School.

VII Future Goals and Considerations

- Training of all special education teachers and other professionals in IEP Direct (Data Management Program)
- Training and re-training of all staff on CSE/CPSE requirements with a focus on updated regulations to ensure that appropriate services for students with disabilities are provided
- Training for staff on the requirements for 504 Plans, and Response to Intervention (RTI). Further training in the development of functional behavior assessments and behavior plans for students
- Supervision, direction and coordination of clinical and nursing services throughout the district

- Expansion of the Parent Member representatives for CSE meetings.
- Support various parent groups. Start up and improve support parents of children with similar needs, such as parents of children with autism
- Improve methods and process for transitional services for students
- Create a clinical and educational network that follow and support students as they transition from one school to another
- Create a special education handbook that will support consistency throughout the district in process, programs, and services.
- Collaboration with Assistant Superintendent for enriched professional development program for district staff
- Review and assess assistive technology needs for students with disabilities in the district
- Maximize resources through budget process
- Ensure materials (technology, software, modified texts) are provided for students and staff members