

Inclusion / Special Needs Policy

Mission Statement

The Jordan-Elbridge Middle School creates rigorous academic opportunities for young people to become inquiring, independent, and knowledgeable learners, who show acceptance and compassion for others. Through these attributes, students will foster an awareness of the need to respect, acknowledge, and value diversity and other points of view.

Objectives of the Instructional Program

- To ensure that all students have access to a broad and balanced curriculum that will allow them to become career and college ready
- To differentiate instruction in order to meet varying levels of student need
- To provide a caring and safe environment in which students grow intellectually, socially, and emotionally
- To treat parents as partners in their child's education
- To provide support and resources as needed to ensure participation for all students, regardless of disability
- To provide a continuum of special education services

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Regulations

A State must adopt, consistent with 34 CFR 300.309, criteria for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability. In addition, the criteria adopted by the State:

- Must not require the use of a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability
- Must permit the use of a process based on the child's response to scientific, research-based intervention; and
- May permit the use of other alternative research-based procedures for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability.

The determination of whether a child suspected of having a specific learning disability is a child with a disability must be made by the child's parents and a team of qualified professionals, who must include:

- The child's regular teacher; or if the child does not have a regular teacher, a regular classroom teacher qualified to teach a child of his or her age; or for a child of less than school age, an individual qualified by the State educational agency (SEA) to teach a child of his or her age; and
- At least one person qualified to conduct individual diagnostic examinations of children, such as a school psychologist, speech-language pathologist, or remedial reading teacher.

A student with a disability is defined as a student who has not attained the age of 21 prior to September 1st and who is entitled to attend public schools, and who, because of mental, physical or emotional reasons, has been identified as having a disability and who requires special services and programs. Terms related to the identification of a disability are as follows:

(1) Autism means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3, which adversely affects a student's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. The term does not apply if a student's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the student has an emotional disturbance. A student who manifests the characteristics of autism after age 3 could be diagnosed as having autism if the criteria in this paragraph are otherwise satisfied.

(2) Deafness means a hearing impairment that is so severe that the student is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, which adversely affects a student's educational performance.

(3) Deaf-blindness means concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for students with deafness or students with blindness.

(4) Emotional disturbance means 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:

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

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

(5) Hearing impairment means impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects the child's educational performance but that is not included under the definition of deafness in this section.

(6) Learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which manifests itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and developmental aphasia. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor disabilities, of an intellectual disability, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.

(7) Intellectual disability means 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 educational performance.

(8) Multiple disabilities means concomitant impairments (such as intellectual disability-blindness, intellectual disability-orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which cause such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in a special education program solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf-blindness.

(9) Orthopedic impairment means a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a student's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by congenital anomaly (e.g., clubfoot, absence of some member, etc.), impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputation, and fractures or burns which cause contractures).

(10) Other health-impairment 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, including but not limited to a heart condition, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, nephritis, asthma, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, epilepsy, lead poisoning, leukemia, diabetes, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or Tourette syndrome, which adversely affects a student's educational performance.

(11) Speech or language impairment means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment or a voice impairment, which adversely affects a student's educational performance.

(12) Traumatic brain injury means an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force or by certain medical conditions such as stroke, encephalitis, aneurysm, anoxia or brain tumors with resulting

impairments that adversely affect educational performance. The term includes open or closed head injuries or brain injuries from certain medical conditions resulting in mild, moderate or severe impairments in one or more areas, including cognition, language, memory, attention, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgment, problem solving, sensory, perceptual and motor abilities, psychosocial behavior, physical functions, information processing, and speech. The term does not include injuries that are congenital or caused by birth trauma.

(13) Visual impairment including blindness means impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a student's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.

NYS Regulations

Special education means specially designed individualized or group instruction or special services or programs and special transportation, provided at no cost to the parent, to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities.

1) Such instruction includes, but is not limited to, that conducted in classrooms, homes, hospitals, institutions and in other settings.

2) Such instruction includes specially designed instruction in physical education, including adapted physical education.

The continuum of special education services for school age students with disabilities is an array of services designed to meet individual student needs. The continuum is comprised of the following services:

- ≈ Consultant teacher services, direct or indirect
- ≈ Resource room services
- ≈ Related services
- ≈ Integrated co-teaching services
- ≈ Special classes

JEMS Special Education Tenets

At the JEMS we believe that all faculty and staff are teachers of all students: the instruction of students with disabilities is the responsibility of the whole school. As part of that inclusive philosophy we adhere to the IDEA requirements and state and district policies relative to the education of students with disabilities.

The student body is comprised of many children with special needs including learning disabilities, emotional disabilities, autism and speech and language impairments. To best meet the needs of these students, we offer a continuum of services as prescribed by SED. In addition students with disabilities who do not require specialized instruction but who fall within the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973 are provided accommodations as deemed necessary through our response to intervention process, the Instructional Support Team and/or the 504 Committee.

Social and emotional opportunities are extended to all students. The opportunity to participate in student council, social skills groups, National Honor Society, modified sports, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, the PTO Dance program, the community recreation program, band, chorus, the HS drama and musical productions and other extracurricular clubs is afforded to all. The Eagle Awards recognize students who exemplify the learner profile traits as voted upon by their peers, faculty and administration. The aim of the Eagle Awards is for students to internalize the learner profile traits and to honor the contributions of students who are making the school a better place for themselves and others. In concert is the building's character education program that features lessons from the Second Steps program.

The student body is actively involved in a number of community outreach programs including the holiday food drives, the Giving Tree, the Winter Hats and Glove Drive, the Heifer Project and Pennies for Patients.

Parents are encouraged to help their child access the portal as a way of tracking assignment completion and grades. Grade level teams and individual teachers maintain websites as a form of parent communication.

JEMS Special Education Programing

Central to the instructional program is a continuous cycle of planning, instruction, and assessment, and identification of needed supports. The Star Assessments in reading and math serve as our universal screening tools and are administered in September, January, and June. This diagnostic data is triangulated with other data points to determine a student's need to receive academic support based on a response to intervention model.

Math Academy, Ten Marks, Do the Math, Leveled Literacy, academic intervention services, modified schedules, peer buddies, peer tutors, classroom modifications, differentiated instruction, and guided reading serve as our tier 2 and tier 3 programs. Inherent to all these intervention programs is the goal-setting process. Students are progress-monitored via the Star Assessment software. The design of the master schedule allows for fluidity. In addition, there is a 35 minute academic support period. During this time, teachers can require students to seek additional help on a fixed or rotating schedule. Should a student's achievement gap continue to widen in spite of receiving tier 2 and tier 3 services, the building's Instructional Support Team may make the determination that a CSE referral is warranted. The building's Instructional Support Team includes the principal, the school psychologist, the guidance counselor, a special education representative, an academic intervention service representative, and the referring teacher.

Should the Committee on Special Education make the decision that a student meets the threshold to be classified, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be generated. In its deliberations the CSE will discuss and document the steps necessary to ensure proper implementation of the IEP including:

- Identifying staff who will be responsible to provide the recommended services, accommodations, program modifications and supports in accordance with the IEP;
- Determining how and by whom the student's teachers, related service providers and other service providers will be provided copies of the student's IEP;
- Designating an individual who is knowledgeable about the student's disability and program to inform staff of their IEP responsibilities;
- Planning how resources and materials necessary to implement the IEP will be obtained (e.g., instructional materials in alternative formats; assistive technology devices ordered);
- Arranging, as appropriate, for testing accommodations; and determining how coordination with other agencies, if appropriate, will occur

A student's IEP is comprised of the following components:

- Identifying information
- Present levels of performance and individual needs
- Evaluation results including state and district summative assessments
- Academic achievement, functional performance, and learning characteristics
- Social development
- Physical development
- Management needs
- Effect of student needs on involvement and progress in the general education curriculum
- Student needs relating to special factors
- Measurable annual goals linked to the learner profile and the common core learning standards
- Measurable post-secondary goals (Beginning no later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student is 15)
- Progress reporting to parents
- Recommended special education programs and services
- Testing modifications
- Transition activities
- Participation in state and district wide assessments
- Participation with students without disabilities
- Special transportation
- Placement recommendation

The monitoring of individual student progress is an integral part of the JEMS' special education programming. As such, the IEP of each student with a disability is reviewed and, if appropriate, revised periodically but not less than annually. During such a review the following factors are considered:

- The strengths of the student;
- The concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child;
- The results of the initial or most recent evaluation of the student;
- As appropriate, the results of the student's performance on any general State or district-wide assessment programs;
- The academic, developmental and functional needs of the student;
- The educational progress and achievement of the student with a disability and the student's ability to participate in instructional programs in regular education and in the least restrictive environment.

If appropriate, the IEP must be revised to address:

- Any lack of expected progress toward the annual goals and in the general education curriculum or participation in appropriate activities for preschool students with disabilities, if appropriate;
- The results of any reevaluation conducted pursuant to this Part and any information about the student provided to, or by, the parents;
- The student's anticipated needs;
- Or other matters, including a student's need for test accommodations and/or modifications and the student's need for a particular device or service (including an intervention, accommodation or other program) in consideration of the special factors in order for the student to receive a free appropriate public education.

Prior to the annual review, the Committee on Special Education shall notify the parent of its intent to review the student's program and placement; upon completion of the annual review, the committee on special education shall notify the parents of the committee's recommendation.