

SOUTHWEST WEST CENTRAL SERVICE COOPERATIVE

SWWC

Education & Administrative Resources

Special Education Overview for School Boards

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Special Education Process

Special Education Process: Pre-Referral

1. Recognition & Initial Concern
2. Information Gathering
3. SAT Team Discussion
4. Implement Interventions (2)
5. Referral for Special Education
6. Evaluation
7. Development of Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

Due Process Paperwork

Evaluation Report (Initial and Tri-Ennial)

Individualized Education Plan (Initial and Annual)

Progress Reports

IEP Team Roles & Responsibilities

Parents: A parent on an IEP team advocates for their child, shares insights about the child's strengths and needs, and collaborates with educators as part of the IEP team.

Special Education Teacher: In Minnesota, a licensed teacher in the student's disability area must be part of the IEP team. Ideally, the case manager holds this license, but if not, another licensed team member must participate and provide consultation and indirect services to the teachers involved.

General Education Teacher: General education teachers speak to grade-level expectations and the student's areas of relative strength and weakness. This information contributes directly to making decisions about what types of supplementary aids and services (e.g., accommodations, modifications, assistive technology, or paraprofessional support) the student may need to be successful in the general education setting and achieve their IEP goals.

Qualified District Representative: IDEA defines this individual as someone qualified to provide or supervise specially designed instruction for students with disabilities, knowledgeable about the general curriculum and available resources. Typically, building administrators fill this role, but they can designate others in the building if needed. Contact your building administrator for specific details.

Student: If of transition age (beginning at 9th grade), the student should attend their IEP meeting in order to advocate for their own educational programming.

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SWWC and Special Education

Contracted Services

1. Director of Special Education
2. Due Process Specialist (DPS)
3. Occupational Therapy (OT)
4. Speech Language Therapy (SLP)
5. Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)
6. Deaf & Hard of Hearing (DHH)
7. School Psychologist

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Caseload Recommendations

Estimating Caseloads

Based on Pipestone's model (having a SEAT team and SpEd secretary), here are some estimates:

- 20-25 is reasonable for most setting I/II SLD/EBD teachers
- 12 to 15-ish for a setting III teacher
- ECSE (the only area of special education with established caseload limits) would be approximately:
 - 12 for a special education teacher serving your Part C (home visit) students
 - 12-15 for a special education teacher serving your Part B (preschool) students
- A full-time SEAT teacher

Quick Comparisons

District A:

- Caseloads are around 20 students
- Full-time special education secretary
- Full-time school psychologist
- Full-time SEAT (assessment) teacher

District B:

- Caseloads are around 20 students
- Full-time special education secretary
- 2 Full-time school psychologists
- Full-time SEAT (assessment) teacher

District C:

- Caseloads are around 20 students
- Full-time special education secretary
- Full-time school psychologist
- Full-time SEAT (assessment) teacher

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Tips for Running a Successful Special Education Program

Indicators of Success

- Adhering to state and federal regulations surrounding special education
- High-Quality Professional Development
 - SWWC Provided: Monthly Due Process Meeting, New Teacher Cohort (3-year model), PD On Demand
 - Strong In-District Mentorship Opportunities
- Ensure Adequate & Appropriate Staffing
- Family & Community Engagement
 - Strong parent partnerships
 - Foster community partnerships
 - Parent education
- Administrative Support
 - SWWC Provided: Monthly Coffee Hour Training, Superintendent's Meetings
 - PAS Specific: Monthly meeting with building administrators, district administrative meeting

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Supporting Your Special Education Department

Supporting Special Education

Appropriating Resources: Ensuring that sufficient funding is allocated for specialized services, staffing, and equipment.

Policy Development: Establishing policies that promote inclusion, equitable services, and best practices in special education.

Engaging the Community: Fostering collaboration between schools, parents, and community organizations to meet students' needs.

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Staffing Shortages

Addressing Staff Shortages in Special Education

- Offer competitive salaries and benefits (including incentives)
- Focus on teacher retention
- Consider alternative staffing options:
 - e.g. virtual due process paperwork support, virtual mentorship for Tier 1 and Tier 2 staff
- Support flexible licensing pathways
 - Paraprofessional to SpEd Teacher Programs
 - Teacher Pipeline Grant
 - Currently there are 8 PAS employees participating in the Pipeline grant

Thank you!