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SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS/PROGRAMS FOR
HANDICAPPED/DISABLED STUDENTS

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In compliance with applicable state and federal regulations, the Tupelo Public School District special education program includes the following:

Accessibility: Accessibility to all needed programs and facilities will be made available to ensure a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for each student with a disability.

Child Find: The district will undertake ongoing formal activities to identify, locate and evaluate all children from birth through 21 years of age who are suspected of having a disability and who may be in need of special education and related services. Child Find activities are to be (1) directed toward children who are not enrolled in school as well as those enrolled in public and nonpublic schools; (2) conducted for students who are considered highly mobile such as migrant or homeless children; and (3) conducted for students who are suspected to be in need of special education though they are advancing from grade to grade.

Individual Evaluation: Each student suspected of having a disability will be afforded a timely and appropriate evaluation conducted by a Multi-disciplinary Evaluation and Eligibility Team. The evaluation shall meet all pertinent criteria established in the Policies and Procedures Regarding Children with Disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Act Amendments of 1997 (IDEA).

Individualized Education Plan: The IEP of each student shall be based on the unique individual needs of the student, developed by an appropriate IEP Committee, including the student's parents and when appropriate, the student. The IEP shall be developed and implemented in a timely manner and must address all of the student's identified needs (special education and related service needs).

The IEP shall determine placement in the least restrictive environment (LRE). LRE should be determined at least once per year, based on the IEP and determined by the IEP Committee. The student shall be educated to the maximum extent appropriate with children in his/her age range without disabilities.

The IEP shall reflect the student's participation and progress in the general education curriculum, regardless of where the student is placed. IEP goals and objectives should be aimed toward acquiring the skills and competencies that will facilitate the student's maximum involvement in the general education curriculum and placement.

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Occupational Diploma: As an alternative to receiving a regular high school diploma, students with disabilities shall be given the choice of working toward an Occupational Diploma.

Procedural Safeguards: Students with disabilities and their parents shall (1) receive written prior notice of actions to be taken relating to identification, evaluation, placement and services; (2) be provided with due process and complaint procedures; and (3) receive procedural safeguards regarding discipline. Consideration shall be given to the influence that the student's disability may have on the behavior(s) in question. Confidentiality of records shall be maintained.

Participation in Assessments: To the extent possible, students with disabilities shall be included in state and district-wide assessment programs with allowable accommodations and modifications. Guidelines shall be implemented for students with disabilities who cannot participate in state or district-wide assessments; these students shall participate in alternative assessments.

Professional Development: General and special educators will be provided with the content, knowledge and collaborative skills needed to meet the needs of children with disabilities. Efforts will be made to determine specific needs of teachers, administrators, school board members, related service personnel and paraprofessionals and to provide for their specific needs.

Transition: Activities shall be coordinated to result in an outcome-oriented process for promoting movement from school to post-school activities. The coordinated set of activities should be based on the student's needs, take into account his/her preferences and interests, include instruction, related services, community experiences and adult living/employment skills and, if appropriate, daily living skills/functional vocational evaluation.

Placement: The district is committed to providing all students with disabilities a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in their least restrictive environment in compliance with all statutory provisions. A primary objective of this commitment is to provide the most appropriate education for each student without infringing on other students' rights to a profitable learning environment. The district emphasizes the belief that all children can learn and that their developmental and academic needs come first.

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Direct Support Model

In a Direct Support Model the special education teacher meets regularly with general education teachers 1) to provide support in the form of guidance in planning lessons/units that include differentiated instruction, 2) to suggest accommodations & modifications for individual students, and 3) to monitor student progress. The special education teacher helps address teacher concerns, provides professional development to teachers around differentiating instruction and meeting students' needs in an inclusive classroom, and is responsible for developing and maintaining students' Individualized Education Plans (IEP) with the input of the IEP team.

Within this model, students with special needs also receive direct support from a special education teacher. Direct support may be designed as a daily class period of study skills or resource room support in a small group with the special education teacher. In a study skills class, students receive instruction in study skills and strategies, and support with the work being done in their general education classes. In a resource room class, students receive assistance in building skills in specific subject areas. Direct support includes the special education teacher "pushing-in" in the general education classroom.

A continuum of placement options that extends from regular classroom placement with consultative services to home/hospital services embodies the district's commitment to appropriately serve students according to their unique needs. All applicable members of the school community will be trained and encouraged to support this continuum of services.

The first level of placement is regular classroom ~~with consultative services, an arrangement involving the special education teacher and/or specialized support personnel providing regularly scheduled, ongoing assistance through effective consultative collaboration with the regular classroom teacher(s).~~ with consultation/accommodations. The student is served in the general education classroom with consultation and support from the special education teacher. The general education teacher is responsible for direct instruction, testing, grading and behavioral management as specified in the IEP. The special education teacher support may include assisting the general education teacher with the design and preparation of materials, adaptations and accommodations. The special education teacher is responsible for monitoring the student's progress on IEP goals.

The second level of placement is ~~itinerant instruction in the regular classroom involving services to the student or support for the staff in the regular education environment.~~ in the general education with direct special education support in the classroom. The student receives special education support from the general education curriculum in the general education setting. The special

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education teacher, support service provider, or trained paraprofessional will be in the general education classroom to provide direct instruction, instructional support, or other assistance to the student or a group of students, through models such as collaborative or co-teaching. The special education teacher/service provider is responsible for monitoring the student's progress on IEP goals.

~~The third level of placement is co-teaching with the regular educator where the special education teachers are paired with regular education personnel to provide educational services in the regular education environment.~~

The ~~fourth~~ **third** level of placement is resource room instructional support consisting of special instruction provided to students who receive the majority of their educational program in the regular education environment. Students are considered to be self-contained if they participate in less than two academic courses with their non-disabled peers. All other students are considered to be resource students.

The ~~fifth~~ **fourth** level of placement is through assignment of students to a part-time special class where only a minor portion of the day is spent in a special classroom.

The ~~sixth~~ **fifth** level of placement is the assignment of students to a full-time special class where students receive the majority of their instruction.

The ~~seventh~~ **sixth** level of placement is community-based services where students are provided their instruction or a portion of their instruction in a community-based environment.

The ~~eighth~~ **seventh** level of placement is the provision of services in a special school. This option is considered when placement options one through six cannot be altered to fit a student's needs. This is a placement that coincides with the length of the typical school day.

The ~~ninth~~ **eighth** level of placement provides special education and related services in a residential facility where room, board and twenty-four hour care is included.

The ~~tenth~~ **ninth** and final level of placement is individualized special education and related services provided in the home or in the hospital.

Each placement decision will be made through a consensus decision of the members of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Committee. All IEP's are revised at least annually and are subject to review and revision whenever an IEP Committee member identifies the need.

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Changes in placement or the delivery of special education services will occur only upon the recommendation of the IEP Committee and after review and revision of the IEP. Due process is available whenever the student, representative of the student, or the district determines due process procedures to be necessary.

Effective Date: August 9, 2002

Legal Reference: MCA §37-16-11 (SB 2578)

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