

Middleborough Public Schools

Pupil Personnel Services

Special Education

Program Descriptions

2011-2012

Special Education Mission Statement

The Special Education Department is committed to providing quality instruction and maintaining high standards so that all eligible students receive a free, appropriate public education designed to meet their unique needs and enable them to obtain meaningful educational benefit in the least restrictive environment.

Introduction

This document provides descriptions of the special education programs and services available within the Middleborough Public Schools. These programs and services are continually evolving to address the individual needs of students with disabilities in the least restrictive setting. The professional staff that delivers special education services are certified and trained to work with a wide range of students with specific disabilities.

Special Education Program Principles

- We provide special education services that meet the individual needs of the student and are developmentally appropriate.
- We bring special education expertise to the student within the general education environment to the greatest extent possible.
- All eligible students receive a free, appropriate public education (FAPE).
- Each eligible student receives an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that is designed to provide meaningful educational benefit through specialized instruction to meet his/her unique needs in the least restrictive environment (LRE).
- All instructional staff members are supported in developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to design learning environments and instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners, including those with significant disabilities.
- All special education instruction is based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.
- Student data is used to inform and improve instruction.
- Related services provided to special education students is educationally relevant, evidence-based, and supports student learning.
- The student's family will be involved in all stages of the decision-making and planning process.
- Learning is continuous in the life span of a child and all children can learn.
- Self-advocacy and self-determination are foundation skills needed by all children.

District-Wide Related Services

Speech/Language

Students with expressive and/or receptive language needs receive speech/language services either through a traditional pull-out model or through an in-class model in which the speech/language pathologist (SLP) works with the classroom teacher and, if applicable, special education teacher to match therapy objectives to curriculum activities to promote application and generalization of skills. At some levels, a speech/language assistant (SLP-A) also works with students, under the supervision of a licensed and experienced SLP. Students may have speech/language as the only service on their IEPs or speech/language may be one of several services provided. Students may also receive remedial articulation services. Sessions generally range from 30-45 minutes in length, 1-4 times a week.

Occupational Therapy/Physical Therapy

Students with motor and sensory disabilities receive occupational therapy and/or physical therapy through a traditional pull-out model; through an in-class model (OT only); through a consultation model; or through some combination of these models. Students may also be identified to participate in a sensory motor group. Services are provided by a licensed occupational therapist, certified occupational therapy assistants, and/or a licensed physical therapist. Frequency and duration of sessions varies depending on student need.

Adapted Physical Education

Students with functional gross motor disabilities receive APE through a traditional pull-out model or through a consultation model. The APE teacher also attends periodic physical education classrooms with students, as needed.

Counseling/Social-Emotional Services

Students with social-emotional difficulties receive counseling or social skills support from the school psychologist or the school adjustment counselor through a pull-out model or through consultation with the classroom staff. These services may be through an IEP if there is an identified social-emotional disability, or through general education support services if the needs are not disability-related.

Behavior Management Services

Consultation and direct support services are available for students who are experiencing significant behavioral difficulties. The school psychologist, school adjustment counselor, ASD Coordinator, and/or the district's board certified behavior analyst (BCBA) are available to provide these supports to students and to the staff (teachers, paraprofessionals, specialists, etc.) working with them.

Middleborough High School Special Education Programs

Inclusion Services

Students with disabilities are included in general education classes to the maximum extent appropriate to address their individual needs. At each grade level at MHS, co-teaching services are available in select English and math classes. Within the co-teaching model, a general education teacher and a special education teacher deliver instruction to a heterogeneous group of students with and without disabilities. Additional supports are provided by paraprofessionals (educational support personnel, or ESPs) to students who require that level of assistance in the other core curriculum areas and/or unified arts classes. Some related services may also be provided within this environment. Student participation in general education classes is supported through the strategies, accommodations, and modifications that are delineated on their IEPs. General education and special education teachers work together to jointly plan lessons and employ the six co-teaching models: one teach/one assist; one teach/one observe; parallel teaching; team teaching; alternative teaching; and station teaching.

Comprehensive Language Program

The Comprehensive Language Program serves students of average cognitive abilities with specific learning disabilities in one or more of the basic perceptual processes involved in understanding or using written or spoken language. A special educator with extensive training in working with students with language-based disabilities is the primary instructor of these specialized English classes. Instruction and information are presented in a highly structured, organized manner, using oral and visual methods to support comprehension development and to emphasize key concepts and main ideas. Follow-up lessons integrating new information with old information are routinely implemented. Students in this program also participate in a skills support class, led by a special education teacher, where reading, writing, spelling, and oral language strategies are explicitly taught and reinforced across the curriculum domains to facilitate continuity, generalization, and internalization. A licensed speech/language pathologist (SLP) provides direct therapeutic services within the language program classroom as well as consultation to the classroom teacher. Students typically attend general education classes for all other content areas, with additional support available when necessary.

Adaptive Learning Center Program

The Adaptive Learning Center Program is a self-contained program for high school-age students with cognitive disabilities, physical challenges, complex medical conditions, and/or multiple disabilities. Students in this program typically take the MCAS Alternate Assessment, though each decision on participation in MCAS is made on an individual basis by the student's special education Team. This is a comprehensive program with services delivered by a special education teacher and several educational support staff, with in-class and consultative services from a school psychologist, a school adjustment counselor, a certified speech/language pathologist, a physical therapist, and an occupational therapist. Additionally, the program has a vocational specialist who facilitates opportunities for student work experience in the community. The students' programs are focused on both acquisition of functional academic skills, based on the

high school curriculum in English, mathematics, social studies, and science, as well as skills for daily living such as taking care of personal hygiene, managing finances, planning and cooking meals, and applying for and maintaining employment. Individualized instruction is delivered through interactive lessons that incorporate visuals and manipulatives. Students develop their recreational and social skills by participating in structured activities at the local YMCA and within the community. They also attend unified arts classes with general education students in the areas of technology, health, art, music, and physical education. Adapted Physical Education is provided for students who have specific gross motor goals on their IEPs.

The Links Program

Links is a unique therapeutic program that supports special education students with emotional disabilities. A special education teacher and an educational support paraprofessional provide instruction within the Links learning center classroom. A school adjustment counselor/intensive case manager also works full time with the program to provide therapeutic counseling supports. The classroom and counseling office are adjacent to one and other, ensuring a comfortable and private environment. Students assigned to the Links Program are typically scheduled for one class block within the learning center classroom each day, where concepts from content area classes are reinforced and IEP goals are addressed. The remainder of the students' daily schedules includes general education classes required for graduation. All students receive regularly scheduled individual and/or group counseling sessions to address specific social/emotional goals. In addition to their scheduled sessions, the students are encouraged to see the school adjustment counselor as often as needed if they are experiencing difficulty or personal challenges. They are also permitted to access the educational supports within the learning center classroom throughout the school day. The Links faculty collaborates with and provides consultation to classroom teachers, guidance counselors, and school administrators regarding students' individual needs. The school adjustment counselor also works closely with students' families, outpatient providers, and any other involved community supports. The goal of the Links Program is to assist students with emotional disabilities in reaching their potential and earning a high school diploma by providing therapeutic services, individualized academic supports, and transitional assistance within a typical high school setting.

Learning Center

The Learning Center is an option for students with various mild to moderate disabilities whose IEP indicates a need for this level of service. Generally, these students have been identified as requiring a level of academic intervention beyond the co-teaching services provided in the general education classrooms. The Learning Center focuses on assisting students to more fully access the high school curriculum at each grade level by providing specially designed instruction in a separate setting to supplement the instruction that is occurring within the content area classrooms. Direct instruction in reading, written language, mathematics, and organizational skills is implemented within the Learning Center. Regular communication and collaboration between the Learning Center special education teachers and general education teachers is critical to ensure that appropriate accommodations and modifications are provided in all environments. The Learning Center is not a study hall, directed study, or homework club.

Futures Alternative Education Program

The Futures Alternative Education Program is designed for both general and special education students who are academically focused and motivated to overcome the challenges that have hindered their success in the typical high school setting. The certified teaching staff is committed to providing a safe and structured environment in which students are afforded the supports necessary to accomplish academic achievement goals, develop appropriate social skills, and learn adaptive coping mechanisms. Students must complete three years of academic coursework, fulfilling the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education core requirements to graduate. All students are also required to pass MCAS in ELA, Mathematics, and Science/Technology. In their third year, all Futures students participate in a partial school/partial internship curriculum to prepare them for adult vocational and career opportunities. The Futures Program utilizes a behaviorally based Point and Level System to provide students with direct feedback and data to monitor their daily progress, as well as their long-term progress toward achievement of personal growth goals. Students work with a school adjustment counselor to identify the behaviors that have previously stood in the way of their success and together they develop new responses to challenging situations. Students who complete the academic coursework and pass the MCAS will earn a Futures Alternative Education Program diploma.

John T Nichols Middle School Special Education Programs

Inclusion Services

Inclusion classrooms at NMS include heterogeneous groupings of students with and without disabilities instructed by a highly qualified general educator and either a special educator or an educational support paraprofessional. All of the core curriculum classes offer inclusion sections. Students, regardless of type of disability, may be included in these classes to the maximum extent appropriate. Multiple supports such as differentiated instructional strategies, accommodations, and curricular modifications are provided within the inclusion classroom. Students with IEPs may also receive related services such as academic support and speech/language within the inclusion classroom. General education and special education teachers work together to jointly plan lessons and employ the six co-teaching models: one teach/one assist; one teach/one observe; parallel teaching; team teaching; alternative teaching; and station teaching. Parents and students are involved in deciding when the students are ready for inclusion classes and which classes to take within the inclusion setting.

Comprehensive Language Prep Program

The Comprehensive Language Prep Program serves students of average cognitive abilities with specific learning disabilities in one or more of the basic perceptual processes involved in understanding or using written or spoken language. A special education teacher with extensive training in language-based disabilities provides specially designed instruction in English and math. All information is presented in a highly structured, organized manner, using oral and

visual methods to support comprehension development and to emphasize key concepts and main ideas. A licensed speech/language pathologist provides direct language and social skills instruction in the classroom, as well as consultation to classroom teachers. Content of instruction is based upon the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks with appropriate accommodations and modifications as indicated by individual student need. All students in the program participate in the standard MCAS testing with accommodations as needed. Students typically attend general education classes for all other content areas, with additional support available when necessary.

AIMS (Academic and Individual Multi-Support) Program

The AIMS Program provides services to students with cognitive and/or developmental impairments with associated delays in communication, language, social, and/or neurological abilities. These disabilities may manifest themselves through difficulties in listening, thinking, speaking, reading, writing, spelling, and/or performing mathematical calculations. Other supported areas include development of social skills, management of transitions, and reinforcement of classroom expectations. Instruction is specially designed to meet the needs of the students within a highly structured, small group setting. Reading, writing, spelling, and oral language strategies are explicitly taught and connected across the curriculum to facilitate continuity, generalization, and internalization. Educational support paraprofessionals provide additional opportunities for frequent practice and review of academic concepts to reinforce instruction and promote skill mastery. Students in the program attend English and math classes outside the general education setting. They are included in general education classes for other content areas such as social studies and science, with curriculum materials modified to meet their personal needs. Individual entry points to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks are identified for each student and used as a basis for determining the necessary modifications. Students in the program participate in MCAS either through the standard assessment with accommodations or through an alternate assessment. Each decision on student participation in MCAS is made on an individual basis by the student's special education Team.

Developmental Life Skills Prep Program

The Developmental Life Skills Program is a self-contained program for middle school-age students with cognitive disabilities, physical challenges, complex medical conditions, and/or multiple disabilities. Students in this program typically take the MCAS Alternate Assessment, though each decision on participation in MCAS is made on an individual basis by the student's special education Team. This is an intensive therapeutic classroom with services delivered by a special education teacher and several educational support paraprofessionals, with in-class and consultative services from a certified speech/language pathologist, a physical therapist, and adapted physical educator, and an occupational therapist. The students' programs are focused on both acquisition of functional academic skills, based on the middle school curriculum in English, mathematics, social studies, and science, as well as skills for daily living. Individualized instruction is delivered through interactive lessons that incorporate visuals, manipulatives, and hand-on activities. Students also participate in unified arts classes with general education students in the areas of technology, health, art, music, and physical education. Adapted Physical Education is provided for students who have specific gross motor goals on their IEPs.

Individual Management Program

The Individual Management Program provides a structured and predictable environment with clear and consistent expectations for students who have had difficulty finding success in the typical middle school environment. A special education teacher, a school adjustment counselor, and educational support paraprofessionals implement a point-based level system with both positive and negative consequences, effective limit setting, and a frequent rate of positive reinforcement. This program is available for all students who require additional supports to access curricular material within a public school setting, regardless of whether or not they have been identified with a disability. Students work on their achieving individual goals and on building problem-solving, organizational, and social skills, in addition to focusing on core academics. Participants in the Individual Management Program are included in the general education setting for a portion of their day and attend classes in a small group setting for a remaining portion of their academic day; frequency and duration of participation is individually determined. The program staff creates a healthy climate that promotes a sense of identity, cohesion, and belonging for the students. The school adjustment counselor also provides therapeutic counseling supports through individual and group sessions designed to address the social, emotional, and behavioral challenges a student may be experiencing. Consultation between program staff and general education teachers regarding student progress occurs routinely. The program staff also communicates regularly with students' families, outpatient providers, and other involved community supports.

Mary K. Goode Elementary School

Inclusion Services

Students with disabilities are included in general education classes to the maximum extent appropriate to address their individual needs. At each grade level at MKG, co-teaching services are available in designated classrooms that include heterogeneous groupings of students with and without disabilities instructed by a highly qualified general educator and a special educator for a portion of the day, with additional services from an educational support paraprofessional as needed. Multiple supports such as differentiated instructional strategies, accommodations, and curricular modifications are provided within the co-teaching classroom. Students with IEPs may also receive related services such as speech/language or occupational therapy within the inclusive co-teaching classroom. General education and special education teachers work together to jointly plan lessons and employ the six models of co-teaching: one teach/one assist; one teach/one observe; parallel teaching; team teaching; alternative teaching; and station teaching.

Therapeutic Learning Center (TLC) Program

The Therapeutic Learning Center serves students in grades 1-5 who have significant challenges in social/emotional regulation and development and who often display behaviors that can disrupt the learning environment. The program provides a safe setting designed to motivate learning and

assist students in developing their self-confidence. These students require structured teaching of social protocols from a special educator and educational support personnel within a controlled and supported environment with a high staff to student ratio. In addition to academic content areas, instruction is focused on promoting the development of self-regulation skills by using research-based best practices and a systematic application of positive behavioral supports. A school adjustment counselor also works with the program to provide therapeutic counseling supports. Ongoing assessment of behavior patterns and monitoring student responses to intervention are a critical component of the program. Students have opportunities for inclusion in general education classrooms, as appropriate, dependent on their individual needs.

ASCEND-L (Academic Skills Center Exploring and Nurturing Diverse Learners) Program

The ASCEND Program serves students in grades 3-5 whose learning style requires specially designed instruction outside the general education setting in a small group, highly structured setting. The foundation of the program is a language-based instructional approach. Students for whom assessment data indicates they require this approach to access the typical English/Language Arts and/or mathematics curriculum are recommended to participate through their special education Teams. The special education teacher and paraprofessional staff working in the ASCEND program focus primarily on breaking key concepts into smaller segments and re-teaching core concepts previously taught in the general education classroom. Intensive remedial instruction using an alternative curriculum, reduced pacing and delivery of information with ongoing reinforcement of concepts, application of a research based multi-sensory phonics program, writing instruction with daily grammar mini-lessons, structured journal writing, and use of graphic organizers, as well modified mathematics instruction, are all available to students as part of the ASCEND Program. Students attend the ASCEND classroom for different periods of the day, dependent on individual need. They typically participate in MCAS through the standard assessment with accommodations, though each decision on participation in MCAS is made on an individual basis by the student's special education Team.

RISE (Reaching Independence In Structured Environments) Program

The RISE program serves students in grades 1-5 with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in both substantially separate and partial inclusion environments. These students typically display significant delays in the areas of communication, sensory regulation, behavior, and social interactions. The program is overseen by the district's board certified behavior analyst (BCBA) and the ASD Coordinator. The unique needs of each student in the program are addressed through varying levels of individualized support from experienced program staff, including a specially trained ASD special education teacher, ASD-trained paraprofessionals, a speech/language pathologist, and other related services providers. The instructional approach of the program is based on the Principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), with discrete trial training (DTT), sensory regulation supports, individual behavior support plans, and structured routines incorporated throughout the day. A controlled and supportive environment with a high staff to student ratio is provided for all students. The RISE Program is designed to promote communicative competency, academic proficiency, functional adaptive skills, and age-appropriate leisure/recreation skills so that each student can ultimately function as an independent and contributing member of his/her school community. Students in grades 3 and

above participate in MCAS either through the standard assessment with accommodations or through an alternate assessment. Each decision on participation in MCAS is made on an individual basis by the student's special education Team.

Henry B. Burkland Elementary School

Inclusion Services

Students with disabilities are included in general education classes to the maximum extent appropriate to address their individual needs. At each grade level at HBB, co-teaching services are available in designated classrooms that include heterogeneous groupings of students with and without disabilities instructed by a highly qualified general educator and a special educator for a portion of the day, with additional services from an educational support paraprofessional as needed. Multiple supports such as differentiated instructional strategies, accommodations, and curricular modifications are provided within the co-teaching classroom. Students with IEPs may also receive related services such as speech/language or occupational therapy within the inclusive co-teaching classroom. General education and special education teachers work together to jointly plan lessons and employ the six models of co-teaching: one teach/one assist; one teach/one observe; parallel teaching; team teaching; alternative teaching; and station teaching.

Developmental Skills Program

The Developmental Skills Program serves students in grades 1-5 with significantly impaired cognitive abilities who are working below grade level and who require a developmentally appropriate functional curriculum. Most of the services are provided within a substantially separate classroom setting by a special education teacher, educational support personnel, and related services providers. Opportunities for inclusion in general education classes and activities are provided as appropriate, as determined by each student's individual special education Team and IEP goals. Short instructional sessions using a multi-modal approach incorporating repetition and rote drill are used to promote retention of skills. A multi-sensory curriculum that incorporates movement, total communication, and sensory-based learning experiences is provided. Students in grades 3 and above typically take the MCAS Alternate Assessment, though each decision on participation in MCAS is made on an individual basis by the student's special education Team.

ASCEND-L (Academic Skills Center Exploring and Nurturing Diverse Learners) Program

The ASCEND Program serves students in grades 3-5 whose learning style requires specially designed instruction outside the general education setting in a small group, highly structured setting. The foundation of the program is a language-based instructional approach. Students for whom assessment data indicates they require this approach to access the typical English/Language Arts and/or mathematics curriculum are recommended to participate through their special education Teams. The special education teacher and paraprofessional staff working

in the ASCEND program focus primarily on breaking key concepts into smaller segments and re-teaching core concepts previously taught in the general education classroom. Intensive remedial instruction using an alternative curriculum, reduced pacing and delivery of information with ongoing reinforcement of concepts, application of a research based multi-sensory phonics program, writing instruction with daily grammar mini-lessons, structured journal writing, and use of graphic organizers, as well modified mathematics instruction, are all available to students as part of the ASCEND Program. Students attend the ASCEND classroom for different periods of the day, dependent on individual need. They typically participate in MCAS through the standard assessment with accommodations, though each decision on participation in MCAS is made on an individual basis by the student's special education Team.

Memorial Early Childhood Center

Kindergarten Inclusion

A special education teacher works with designated Kindergarten teachers to provide specially designed instruction to students with IEPs in general education classrooms through a co-teaching approach. Individual service times vary. Educational support personnel (ESPs) also provide additional services to these students during the school day. Approximately 25-33% of the students in each co-teaching classroom have IEPs. The curriculum is consistent with the Kindergarten standards for Massachusetts, with modifications made by the special education teacher and accommodations implemented by the classroom staff, as needed. Student goals are generally focused on academic readiness, including early literacy and numeracy skills, as well as social, emotional, and behavioral (attention, task completion, etc.) skills, as appropriate. A student must be 5 years old as of September 1st of the given school year in order to be eligible for Kindergarten.

Kindergarten ASD/Language-Based Program

The ASD/Language-Based Program is managed by a special education teacher and housed in a substantially separate classroom. Support staff includes at least one assigned program ESP with one or more additional program or 1:1 ESPs, if necessary. Staffing levels fluctuate from year to year, based on student need. The program serves Kindergarten students age 5 and older with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and/or significant cognitive and language delays, as well as associated motor delays. The students assigned to this program participate in the regular Kindergarten classroom for an amount of time deemed appropriate by their special education Teams. This can vary from short intervals (30-90 minutes) that may be inclusive of lunch, recess, and/or special subjects, up to the entire school day (6 hours). When students are not in the regular Kindergarten environment they are receiving their special education services in the substantially separate classroom. The program is overseen by the district's BCBA and the ASD Coordinator. Student goals are based on results of the VB-MAPP assessment, with data collected daily and recorded in individual program books. Discrete trial training and ABA methodology are used as appropriate. The BCBA and ASD Coordinator monitor implementation of the

interventions through program integrity checks; any decisions to change goals or services are based on the data collection and student responsiveness.

Integrated Preschool

An integrated preschool program is available for students age 3-5 with moderate cognitive delays and/or significant language and behavioral needs, as identified by their special education Teams. Determination of eligibility for integrated preschool is based on the level of the student's disability, its effect on the student's ability to make appropriate progress in social, play, and pre-readiness areas, and its overall impact on a student's development. Integrated preschool sessions occur four mornings and five afternoons per week for 2.5 hours per session. Students attend the number of sessions necessary to meet their individual goals. Generally students attend either in the morning or in the afternoon; however, students may attend double sessions during a day if the special education Team determines that a full-day is needed. Related services are usually embedded during the integrated preschool time, but can also be provided outside of that time if more appropriate for the individual student. Eight typically developing "role model" students participate in each preschool session. These students are selected through a lottery that occurs in the spring before enrollment. Role model students must be 4 years old by September 1st to participate. Up to seven students with IEPs also participate in each session. Each preschool teacher is a licensed special educator with early childhood expertise. The integrated preschool classrooms have an assigned full-time ESP and additional ESP support may also be provided, depending on the needs of the students enrolled in a particular session.

Preschool ASD/Language-Based Program

The ASD/Language-Based Program is managed by a special education teacher and housed in a substantially separate classroom. Support staff includes at least one assigned program ESP with one or more additional program or 1:1 ESPs, if necessary. Staffing levels fluctuate from year to year, based on student need. The program serves preschool students age 3-5 with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and/or significant cognitive and language delays, as well as associated motor delays. Programming is based on the principles of ABA, with very individualized goals for each student. The program is overseen by the district's BCBA and the ASD Coordinator. Student goals and objectives are based on results of the VB-MAPP assessment, with data collected daily and recorded in individual program books. Discrete trial training is used with a high frequency of trials being implemented each day. The BCBA and ASD Coordinator monitor implementation of the interventions through program integrity checks; any decisions to change goals or services are based on the data collection and student responsiveness. Students who are likely to benefit from social interactions with peers may also spend a portion of their day or week in one of the integrated preschool classrooms, with support provided by staff from the ASD classroom. Students may attend up to five days per week for up to six hours per day, as needed and appropriate for their developmental levels and as determined by their special education Teams.

Preschool Social/Language Program

For preschool students with significant language delays affecting play skills but without accompanying cognitive delays, a language/social playgroup is provided for three hours per

week (two 90 minute sessions). This service is intended as an intermediate intervention for students with average ability who demonstrate significant language and social delays and who are not making progress through a traditional pull-out model, but for whom integrated preschool programming is not yet needed. Entrance to the program is determined through data collection during therapy sessions as well as individual assessment.