

District Developed Special Education Service Delivery Plan

Atlantic Community School District

Public Comment Draft - April 25 -May 15, 2023 Review for Re-adoption



The Iowa Administrative Rules of Special Education require each school district to develop a plan for the delivery of special education services. Districts must make the plan available for public comment. If you have comments that you wish to be considered before this plan is finalized, please submit those comments to:

James Northwick, Schuler Elementary Principal (712-243-1370) or jnorthwick@atlanticiaschools.org

Comments must be received by May 15, 2023

What process was used to develop the delivery system for eligible individuals?

The delivery system was developed by Iowa Administrative Code rule 41.408(2)"c." The individuals who developed the system included parents of eligible individuals, special education teachers, general education teachers, administrators, and at least one representative of the Area Education Agency (AEA). Team members included Steven Barber, Superintendent; Stacey Hornung, Preschool/Elementary Principal; James Northwick, Elementary Principal/Curriculum Director; Scot Aden, Middle School Principal; Heather McKay, High School Principal; Brooke Lamp, AEA; Mary McLaren, AEA; Beth Schwarte, Special Education Teacher; Tarah Anderson, Special Education Teacher; Jill Miller, Special Education Teacher; Marilyn Jacobs, Special Education Teacher; Mandi Brauer, Special Education Teacher; Randall Simpson, General Education Teacher; Liz Reid, General Education Teacher; Jodie Hogue, General Education Teacher; Hannah Alff, Student Teacher/future General Education Teacher; and Dianna Blake, Parent.

Participants attending the March 22, 2023 and March 29, 2023 meetings included:

AEA - Brooke Lamp and Mary McLaren

District Administration - Steve Barber, Stacey Hornung

Special Education Teachers - Beth Schwarte, Tarah Anderson, Jill Miller, Marilyn Jacobs, Mandi Brauer

On March 22, 2023, the Atlantic administration team met with AEA staff and Special Ed teachers to review the modified Special Education Matrix. This matrix reflected changes recommended by special education teachers to more accurately define caseload. Each member of the sub-committee took the current matrix and proposed a modified matrix and compared the points of their current caseload. Sub-committee reconvened on March 29, 2023, discussed differences, and consensus was built to present to the larger committee.

Participants attending the April 19, 2023 meeting included:

Parent – Dianna Blake

General Education Teachers – Randall Simpson (High School), Liz Reid (Middle School), Jodie Hogue (Washington Elementary), Hannah Alff (Washington Elementary Student Teacher/future Teacher)

Special Education Teachers – Marilyn Jacobs (Middle School), Tarah Anderson (Washington Elementary), Beth Schwarte (Early Learning Center)

LEA (Local Education Agency) Administration/Designees – Steven Barber, Superintendent; Stacey Hornung, Preschool/Elementary Principal; James Northwick, Elementary Principal/Curriculum Director; Scot Aden, Middle School Principal; Heather McKay, High School Principal

AEA Representatives – Brooke Lamp – School Psychologist, Mary McLaren - School Psychologist

All members above received copies (either electronic or paper) of the plan draft for review prior to the April 19 meeting with opportunities for providing feedback.

**After the April 19th meeting, the plan will be posted on the district website with instructions on how to provide comments and feedback from the community.

Date of Board Action: TBD

How are services organized and provided to eligible individuals?

Atlantic Community Schools will offer a continuum of service models to meet the needs of all students with disabilities, ages 3-21.

Consulting Teacher Services: Consulting Teacher services are defined as indirect services provided by a certified special education teacher to a general education or regular early childhood program teacher, in adjusting the learning environment and modifying his/her instructional methods using specially designed instruction strategies to meet the individual needs of a student with a disability receiving instruction in the general education classroom or program.

Co-Teaching Services: Co-teaching services are the provision of specially designed instruction and academic instruction provided to a group of students with disabilities and nondisabled students. These services are provided by the special education teacher and general education or regular early childhood program teacher in partnership to meet the students content and skill in the general education classroom or program. These services take shape in a variety of ways. For example, teachers co-plan, divide the class, and provide the instruction to smaller groups, or teachers co-plan and then co-teach different content components. In all co-teaching arrangements, the special educator is responsible for designing and delivering specially designed instruction, assuring access to the general curriculum, and assessing the progress of students with IEPs (Individualized Education Programs).

Collaborative Services: Collaborative services are defined as direct, specially designed instruction provided to an individual student with a disability or a group of students with disabilities by a certified special education teacher in a general education classroom or regular early childhood program to aid the student(s) in accessing the general education curriculum. These services are provided simultaneously with general education instruction.

Out-of-Class Services: Out-of-Class services (e.g, pull-out) are defined as direct specially designed instruction provided to an individual student with a disability or a group of students with disabilities that services are provided by a certified special education teacher to supplement instruction that cannot otherwise be provided during the student's regular instruction time. These services are provided in an individual or small group setting, for a portion of the day. These services supplement the instruction provided in the general education classroom or program through Consulting Teacher services or Collaborative/Co-Teaching services. The specially designed instruction provided in settings outside of the general education classroom or Regular Early Childhood Program does not supplant the core or targeted instruction provided in the general education classroom. For a small number of students with significant cognitive disabilities, the level of their instruction reflects the Iowa Core Essential Elements, which provides access to the general education curriculum at a less cognitively complex level. In some cases, for students with significant disabilities, core instruction is supported through a reverse consultation model.

Early Childhood (Ages 3-5) Special Education

Special Class/Early Childhood Special Education Program (ECSE): Special Class or ECSE services are defined as direct, specially designed instruction provided to an individual student with a disability or group of students with disabilities by a certified special education teacher to provide instruction which is tied to the general education or preschool curriculum, but has been modified to meet the unique needs of the student(s) in a self-contained setting (including, but not limited to special classes/ECSE Program, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions). This means the student is receiving their primary instruction separate from non-disabled peers.

Regular Early Childhood Program with Teacher holding Dual Endorsements (i.e., Endorsement 100: Teacher—Prekindergarten through grade three, including special education). The child is served in the regular early childhood classroom with a teacher with a valid practitioner’s license issued by the Board of Educational Examiners that includes prekindergarten and early childhood special education. The teacher is responsible for direct instruction, preparation of materials, adaptations and accommodations as specified in the IEP. The teacher with the dual endorsement is responsible for implementing and monitoring the child’s progress according to the IEP.

Segregated Facility/Special School: The District has two specialized programs in this area. The Link Center includes a secondary program. These programs are offered in a separate facility. In addition to educational services, students receive instruction and support in the social-emotional domain. Students in this program have behavioral and emotional disabilities. The second program is the Cass County Educational Opportunity Center (CCEOC). This is an alternative school program for high school students, which may also include students with IEPs.

Notes:

- Students may receive different services at multiple points along the continuum based on the IEP.
- The district will provide access to this continuum for all eligible individuals based on their IEP. Services may be provided within the district or through a contractual agreement with other districts and agencies.
- The continuum includes services for eligible individuals ages 3-21.
- **For preschool-age students with disabilities, a full continuum of services is offered, ranging from monitoring in the general education setting to more intensive special education programming.** For general education intervention, preschool students with disabilities can access Regular Early Childhood Programs. Students requiring more specialized instruction may be served in an Early Childhood Special Education Program. Teachers providing the ECSE program hold valid practitioner licenses issued by the Board of Educational Examiners including prekindergarten and early childhood special education. In addition, the teachers are responsible for direct instruction, preparation of materials, adaptations, and accommodations as specified in the IEP. The teachers are responsible for implementing and monitoring the child’s progress according to the IEP. These programs include peer models who comprise more than 50% of the classroom. The district has identified Quality Preschool Program Standards (QPPS) as the implementation model for preschool services.

How will caseloads of special education teachers be determined and monitored?

Caseloads will be tentatively set in the Spring for the following year. However, caseloads may be modified based on summer registration and fall enrollments. Teachers will be responsible for maintaining student caseload data (including point allocations) on a district Google Doc that will be available to LEA administration and supporting AEA staff. Teachers will be encouraged to complete this in October and at least one additional time per year to account for changes in caseload.

A “full” teacher caseload will be 85 total points. When a teacher’s caseload exceeds this number, the caseload resolution process (see below) will be followed.

In determining special education teacher caseloads, the ACSD will use the following values to assign points:

Note: *In cases where special education teachers share responsibility for implementing a student IEP (i.e. one teacher provides SDI for reading and a different teacher implements the SDI for math), caseload points noted below should be split appropriately between the teachers. Points may be split within one category as well. Points will be reflected based on what is written in each student's IEP.*

	Curriculum	IEP Goals	Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)	Student Support outside SDI Time and/or Collaborative Planning and Consultation	Assistive Technology	Social Emotional/ Behavior
0 points *	Student does not require modifications and/or accommodations.	Student has IEP goal(s) monitored by another teacher or service provider.	** 10 or less minutes of daily instruction is specially designed and/or delivered by the special education teacher. SDI may include teaching, co-teaching and collaborative instruction.	***Collaborative planning occurs that is average for all students.	****Assistive technology use is similar to peers or students are independent in using the device (examples: slant boards, pencil grips, fidget toys, weighted dogs, cube chairs, visuals, laptops at appropriate ages).	Student requires no social emotional/ behavioral support or requires support that is able to be handled by the general education staff.
1 Point	Student requires weekly modifications and/or accommodations to the general education curriculum by the special education teacher.	Student has 1-2 IEP goal areas monitored by the special education teacher.	** 11-59 minutes of daily instruction is specially designed and/or delivered by special education personnel. SDI may include teaching, co-teaching and collaborative instruction.	***Special education teachers collaboratively plans/provides student support for an hour or less per month as written in the IEP. (e.g. creating modifications, assistance with de-escalation, provision of accommodations, and discussion of curriculum with teachers and/or paras, etc.)	****Assistive technology requires less than 1 hour per week where the special education teacher is providing individualized training or support of the assistive technology material(s) for the student.	Requires 60 minutes or less per week of assessment, planning, data collection, communication with other staff regarding the student's social emotional/behavior needs and/or additional time managing social emotional/behavior needs outside of SDI time.
2 Points	Student requires daily modifications and/or accommodations to the general education curriculum by the special education teacher.	Student has 3 goal areas monitored by the special education teacher.	** 60-150 minutes of daily instruction is specially designed and/or delivered by special education personnel. SDI may include teaching, co-teaching and collaborative instruction.	***Special education teachers conduct collaborative planning for 1-2 hours per month (e.g. creating modifications, assistance with de-escalation, provision of accommodations, and discussion of curriculum with teachers and/or paras, etc.)	****Assistive technology requires less than 1-2 hours per week where the special education teacher is providing individualized training or support of the assistive technology material(s) for the student.	Requires 61-150 minutes per week of assessment, planning, data collection, communication with other staff regarding the student's social emotional/behavior needs and/or additional time managing social emotional/behavior needs outside of SDI time.
3 Points	Student qualifies for Alternate Assessment.	Student has 4 or more IEP goal areas monitored by the special education teacher.	** 151 minutes or more of daily instruction is specially designed and/or delivered by special education personnel. SDI may include teaching, co-teaching and collaborative instruction.	***Special education teachers conduct collaborative planning for more than 2 hours per month (e.g. creating modifications, assistance with de-escalation, provision of accommodations, and discussion of curriculum with teachers and/or paras, etc.)	****Assistive technology requires more than 2 hours per week where the special education teacher is providing individualized training or support of the assistive technology material(s) for the student.	Requires more than 150 minutes weekly of assessment, planning, data collection, communication with other staff regarding the student's social emotional/behavior needs and/or additional time managing social emotional/behavior needs outside of SDI time.

* When student point totals in multiple columns are “zero,” an exit from special education should be considered.

** **Specially designed instruction:** For most students with disabilities, “specially designed instruction” is defined as involving intensive, relentless, structured, appropriately paced instruction, in small groups in which each student’s progress is monitored frequently (Kauffman & Hallahan, 2005). According to Kauffman and Hallahan, all of these characteristics should usually be more evident in special education than is typically the case in general education. **Intensive instruction** translates into more teacher instructional time and more opportunities for students to respond to the instruction and more time to practice and review what they have learned. **Relentless instruction** involves repeating this sequence or parts of this sequence more often than is typically done with non-disabled students. **Structured instruction** refers to teachers being more directive, instituting more explicit rules, and providing more frequent consequences for appropriate or inappropriate behavior. The pace of the instruction in special education is tailored more to the needs of the student. Instruction in small groups facilitates the intensity, relentlessness, structured nature, and the individualized pace of instruction. Moreover, specially designed instruction means that a student’s progress in learning is monitored frequently, often several times per week. (Green Hills AEA Comprehensive Improvement Plan, 2012)

Note: Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) in preschool environments requires special considerations (i.e., in cases where dually certified teacher ECSE/General Education) is in place.

***For the “collaborative planning and consultation” column, this refers to regularly scheduled time (calendared) where a special education teacher meets with general education teachers, AEA staff, guidance counselor, nurse or paraprofessionals for the purpose of training, consulting, helping facilitate accommodations, or helping to plan instruction, support involvement and progress in the core curriculum. Collaborative planning may support the development of co-teaching, or it may also support a reverse consultation model.

****Assistive Technology, if the para, student or parent is the primary person responsible for this device the special education teacher should not receive points towards this task.

Unique Placement Situations

Preschool (ages 3-5)

The district-sponsored preschool program adheres to the Quality Preschool Program Standards (QPPS) teacher child ratios. Standards adopted by QPPS outline appropriate group sizes as a maximum of 20 for 4 year-olds and a maximum of 16 students for 3-year-olds and teacher/paraprofessional to child ratios as 2:20 for 4 year-olds and 2:16 for 3 year-olds. Additional staff are added beyond these ratios to meet student needs as outlined in IEPs. If a paraeducator is assigned to provide specific supports or services identified in a child’s IEP which will remove the paraeducator from supporting other children during classroom activities, the paraeducator is not included in the count for teacher:child ratio. However, the child is included in the count for class size. Local community partner preschools have also been involved in QPPS professional development.

Scheduling of preschool programs and assignment of paraprofessionals are significant considerations when determining preschool teacher caseloads. The preschool programs currently include a combination of students with disabilities and those without disabilities. At any point and time, the ratio of students with IEPs to those without IEPs impacts the amount of specially designed instruction required by ECSE teachers. The caseload point system described above will also be completed by preschool teachers to help determine if needs of students with disabilities can be met. **Because of the unique needs of young students, a “full” caseload for teachers of preschool students will be considered 125 points.**

Link Center Program (for students with significant behavioral needs)

The district offers middle school and secondary programs that provide core instruction and social-behavioral programming for students with significant behavioral challenges and mental health needs. Because of the unique needs of students served in these programs, there will typically be additional paraprofessional staff that support each teacher. To support the behavioral needs of these students, functional behavioral assessments and behavior intervention plans are necessary, impacting the allocated points for each student. **In these programs, a “full” caseload for teachers will be considered 125 points.**

What procedures will a special education teacher use to resolve caseload concerns?

Teachers will be responsible for maintaining their student caseload data (including point allocations) on a district Google Doc that will be available to LEA administration and supporting AEA staff.

If a teacher’s caseload exceeds 85 points (or 125 points for ECSE preschool programs, Link Center, and Significant Needs teachers), the teacher will contact the Principal to discuss whether the teacher is able to provide the services and support specified in their students’ IEPs. If the teacher is able to do so, no further action is needed. If the teacher is unable to provide the services and support specified in their students’ IEPs, a plan of action will be developed. If the teacher is not satisfied that the plan of action will meet the requirements of their students’ IEPs, additional steps noted below will be taken to resolve the situation. Additionally, if a teacher’s caseload falls below 45 points, there will be a conference with the Principal for discussion of possible additional duties.

In cases requiring resolution, the teacher may request a caseload review by submitting it in writing to the building Principal. The Principal must assemble the Caseload Resolution Team (CRT) within ten working days. A resolution and written decision must be made available within ten days after the CRT meeting.

The purpose of this activity is to review caseloads for appropriateness. The CRT will consist of the building administration, AEA representative, and a special education teacher(s) assigned in the building. The CRT makes recommendations as to schedule or roster adjustments for a teacher, needed paraprofessional assistance, etc.

If the person requesting the review does not agree with the determination, they may appeal to the AEA Director of Special Education. The appropriate AEA Designee will meet with personnel involved and will provide a written decision within ten working days.

How will the delivery system for eligible individuals meet the targets identified in the state’s performance plan? How will the delivery system for eligible individuals address needs identified by the state in any determination made under Chapter 41? What process will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the delivery system for eligible individuals?

In order to meet the State Performance Plan/Annual Progress Report (SPP/APR) goals, accountability will be addressed in the following ways:

- Individual student IEP goal progress monitoring

- Aggregation of progress monitoring and summative evaluations for groups of students at both school and district levels
- Examination of disaggregated subgroup achievement and SPP/APR data

The ways of evaluating the effectiveness of the delivery system are detailed below.

Individual

Individual student progress on IEP goals will be reviewed on a regular and ongoing basis (a minimum of every 2 weeks) by the special education teachers. AEA staff and school administrators will collaborate and support as appropriate. On a monthly basis, teachers will submit student progress monitoring graphs to their building Principal (or they will be accessed/reviewed on the ACHIEVE system). The purpose of these reviews is to determine if adequate progress is being made and/or if any adjustment in specially designed instruction is needed.

School: Aggregated by School and District

Each school in the district will review student progress monitoring, formative, or summative evaluations on approximately a quarterly basis. The IEP subgroup performance in both reading and math will be reviewed and discussed by grade level teams which include both general and special education teachers. Subgroup achievement, growth, and the achievement gap will be included as items for discussion and planning. Schools with a subgroup achievement gap, thus impeding progress toward meeting the district SPP/APR requirements, will develop a school-based plan to close the achievement gap by grade level in each school. These plans will be monitored at the school every semester and at the district level at the end of each school year. In the event that this process creates the need to revise the DDSDP, the district will follow the process to revise and readopt the DDSDP.

District: Disaggregated by School Levels

At the district level, IEP subgroup data for each school, along with the plans as described above, will be reviewed on an annual basis by the district's leadership team. IEP student data will also be disaggregated and examined by school level (elementary, middle, high). In addition, the district will examine their SPP/APR data to determine priorities and develop an action plan as needed. If the district meets SPP/APR requirements, both procedural and performance, the delivery system will be considered effective. If the district does not meet requirements, the district will work in collaboration with the State and AEA.

Assurances

□ The district assures it provides a system for delivering instructional services including a full continuum of services and placements to address the needs of eligible individuals aged 3 to 21, and shall provide for the following:

(1) The provision of accommodations and modifications to the general education environment and program, including settings and programs in which eligible individuals aged 3 through 5 receive specially designed instruction, including modification and adaptation of curriculum, instructional techniques and strategies and instructional materials.

(2) The provision of specially designed instruction and related activities through cooperative efforts of the special education teachers and general education teachers in the general education classroom.

(3) The provision of specially designed instruction on a limited basis by a special education teacher in the general classroom or in an environment other than the general classroom, including consultation with general education teachers.

(4) The provision of specially designed instruction to eligible individuals with similar special education instructional needs organized according to the type of curriculum and instruction to be provided, and the severity of the educational needs of the eligible individuals served.

□ The district assures the school board has approved the development of the plan for creating a system for delivering specially designed instructional services.

□ The district assures prior to the school board adoption, this delivery system was available for comment by the general public.

□ The district assures the delivery system plan was developed by a committee that included parents of eligible individuals, special education teachers, general education teachers, administrators, and at least one AEA representative (selected by the AEA Special Education Director).

□ The district assures the AEA Special Education Director verified the delivery system is in compliance with the Iowa Administrative Rules of Special Education.

□ The district assures the school board has approved the service delivery plan for implementation.

Appendix: Atlantic Community Schools Special Education Staff Assignments

Updated to reflect known changes as of June, 2023

Referral for Special Education (Preschool) – ECSE teachers collaborate with AEA Early Childhood Staff for screenings, general education intervention and initial evaluations when disability is suspected.

Referral for Special Education (K-12) – Referrals run through building level assistance teams. Assigned special education teachers collaborate with AEA Special Education Representatives. General education intervention is led by general education staff with AEA/LEA special education providing targeted assistance. AEA/LEA special education staff provide leadership for the process when disability is suspected.

LRE Preschool Placements – Most preschoolers will be served in the two district programs. Speech-only students may be in other centers, served by AEA staff. The four ECSE Classrooms attempt to balance the percentage of general education and special education students.

Beth Schwarte - ECSE

Michaela Myers - ECSE

Montana Applegate - ECSE

Christina Simonton - ECSE

Tarah Anderson – primarily kindergarten and first grades

Kelly Northwick– primarily second and third grades

Jenny Madsen – K-3 grades

Jenny Heath – K-3 grades

Jill Miller – 4-8 grades

Katie York – 4-5 grades

Paul Iekel – 5-8 grades

Marilyn Jacobs – 6-8 grades

Michelle Fritz – 6-8 grades

Allison Widrowitz – 6-8 grades

Jesse McCann - 9-12 grades

Mandi Brauer – 9-12 grades

Cecily Knapp - 9-12 grades

Cayleigh McBee - 9-12 grades

Mary McBride – Link Center Middle and High School Program 6-12 grades

Karen Vogl – CCEOC 9-12 grades