

Lincoln Public Schools Special Education Staffing Policy

The Lincoln Public School System is committed to providing a high quality education for every child. Recognizing that every student has unique learning needs, diversified learning opportunities are provided for all students throughout the Local Education Agency (LEA). Learning opportunities are enhanced with supplemental programs and services both in and outside of the classroom. Special education and related services are provided to support students with disabilities in achieving academic and functional performance.

A key element in the provision of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for students with disabilities is the availability of highly qualified teachers, related service personnel, and support staff to implement each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Professional development and training will be available regarding the requirements and intent of all regulations and research based practices used to provide appropriate education for all students

The Lincoln Public School System strives to continuously improve the quality of education to all students, and is dedicated to assess and evaluate the delivery of services to students with disabilities.

The Lincoln Public School System staffing plan will ensure that appropriate personnel are available to deliver the services and instruction required to fully implement student IEP's and provide FAPE in the least restrictive environment. This plan will be based on the needs of students and will follow the guidelines outlined in this policy. The staffing plan will follow these principles:

- All children can learn and the academic and functional performance of all students will achieve adequate yearly progress.
- Due to the unique needs of individual learners, children will be provided with positive learning opportunities that are supported, when necessary and appropriate, with special education and related services that are specifically directed at the individual education needs of students with disabilities.
- A full continuum of special education and related support services will be available to students both in and outside of the classroom as necessary.
- All children will be provided access to the general curriculum and special education services are provided in the least restrictive environment.
- It is vital that parents or guardians participate in a child's educational program and in the development and implementation of an IEP for their child. Parent involvement will be a regular part of the special education program and school activities.
- Special education teacher caseloads and staffing decisions will be based on providing the services a student needs in order to be successful, rather than on a specific category of disability or severity of disability.

- The special education services required by the student's IEP will be considered in determining instructional and related service caseload.
- There must be flexibility in special education staffing to address changes that may occur in a student's educational and functional need throughout the school year.
- Staffing considerations should include the need to provide specific interventions to students without IEPs.
- Special education staffing must be compliant with federal and State law, regulation, and policies governing special education.

The Lincoln Public School System gathered input from the public prior to developing and finalizing this policy. The public input period included the following:

The District prepared a letter (with the Dept. of Education Sample Policy attached) and disseminated it to special education families. This letter notified families of the opportunity to mail or e-mail the school system with suggestions and comments. The draft policy was presented to the School Committee for a first reading on January 12, 2009. In addition, the draft was posted on the LEA's web site and the Director of Student Services addressed the local advisory group. Further, an information session was advertised for January 28, 2009 at the Lincoln High School for further public input and suggestions. The policy was placed on the School Committee agenda for February 9, 2009 as well. The opportunity for public comment was advertised.