

# **Student Services Parent Handbook**

**Wilmette Public Schools, District 39**

*Revised 7/09*

# Student Services Parent Handbook

## Table of Contents

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| <b>Welcome</b>                                 | <b>Page 3</b>  |
| Who to Contact                                 | Page 4         |
| Handbook Overview                              | Page 6         |
| Understanding Federal Law                      | Page 6         |
| <b><u>Student Services in District 39</u></b>  | <b>Page 7</b>  |
| Health Services                                | Page 7         |
| Reading Intervention                           | Page 7         |
| Social Work and Counseling Services            | Page 8         |
| Problem Solving                                | Page 10        |
| <b><u>Special Education in District 39</u></b> | <b>Page 13</b> |
| Birth-to-Three                                 | Page 15        |
| Early Childhood                                | Page 16        |
| Primary School (K-4)                           | Page 19        |
| Middle School Junior High (5-8)                | Page 21        |
| External Placements                            | Page 23        |
| Frequently Asked Student Services Questions    | Page 24        |
| Student Services Abbreviations                 | Page 29        |

## **Welcome**

This handbook, developed by parents and educators, is for parents of children who receive support services in District 39 schools. While this handbook is an overview of special support programs and services available, there is an emphasis with regards to special education. While this handbook is not exhaustive, parents can receive more information by speaking directly with the professionals who work with their child. Additionally, links providing more complete information are available on the District 39 website, the student and special services link.

<http://www.wilmette39.org/>

District 39's educational philosophy is one of inclusion. As much as possible children are educated at the home school in a general education classroom. The district honors and supports parent collaboration. In this spirit, a parent group (PASS 39) was established in 2002 to promote communication and teamwork among parents and with district staff. More information about PASS 39 can be found on the district website. PASS 39 can also be reached by email at [pass39@wilmette39.org](mailto:pass39@wilmette39.org)

On behalf of our community of children, parents and teachers, we welcome you and look forward to working with you.

## Who to Contact

If you have questions about your child's special education program, calling her/his special education teacher is a good place to start. However, you are also welcome to contact the people who over-see the various programs and services:

*Denise Thrasher*, Administrator of Student and Special Services. His responsibilities include oversight of all student services and special education programs.

[thrashed@wilmette39.org](mailto:thrashed@wilmette39.org) or 847-256-2450

*Ms. Anne Davy Bowers*, Assistant Director of Student Services and Special Education Coordinator. Her responsibilities include McKenzie Elementary School.

[bowersa@wilmette39.org](mailto:bowersa@wilmette39.org) or 847-256-2450

*Ms. Debbie Cooper*, Special Education Coordinator. Her responsibilities include Harper Elementary School and Wilmette Junior High School.

[cooperd@wilmette39.org](mailto:cooperd@wilmette39.org) or 847-256-2450

*Ms. Julie Pease*, Special Education Coordinator. Her responsibilities include birth-to three, early childhood, and school age children at Romona Elementary School.

[Peasej@wilmette39.org](mailto:Peasej@wilmette39.org) or 847-256-0211

*Ms. Tonya Martin*, Special Education Coordinator. Her responsibilities include Central Elementary School and Highcrest Middle School.

[martint@wilmette39.org](mailto:martint@wilmette39.org) or 847-256-2450

*Ms. Sandi Capsuto*, Chairperson for English Language Learners. Her responsibilities include coordinating ELL services across the district. [capsutos@wilmette39.org](mailto:capsutos@wilmette39.org)

*Ms. Cristina Chung*, Chairperson for Speech and Language Services. Her responsibilities include coordinating Speech and Language services across the district. [chungc@wilmette39.org](mailto:chungc@wilmette39.org) or 847-853-2900

*Ms. Paula Lundell*, Chairperson for Occupational and Physical Therapy. Her responsibilities include coordinating Occupational and Physical Therapy services across the district. [lundellp@wilmette39.org](mailto:lundellp@wilmette39.org) or 847-853-2900

*Ms. Pam Strunk*, Chairperson for Health Services. Her responsibilities include coordinating nursing services across the district. [strunkp@wilmette39.org](mailto:strunkp@wilmette39.org) or 847-853-2900

*Mr. Lou Mongillo*, Chairperson for Social Work Services. His responsibilities include coordinating social work services across the district. [mongillo@wilmette39.org](mailto:mongillo@wilmette39.org) or 847-256-7280

## **Handbook Overview**

Student and Special Services in Wilmette District 39 is a division of the school system that oversees a broad range of programs and services that directly impact every single child that enters our schools. There are two broad categories of programs. The first is Student Services and the second is Special Education.

The first section of this handbook outlines programs and services available to the general education population as a whole. These include Health Services, Social Work and Counseling Services, English as a Second Language Programming, Reading Intervention and 504 Plans.

The second section of this handbook deals specifically with Special Education. The Special Education section directly deals with programs and services for children with disabilities. Much of what we do in special education programming, as well as with 504 plans, has to do with federal legislation. This handbook opens with a brief overview of the federal laws that govern our practice in schools.

### **Understanding Federal Law**

There are primarily three bodies of federal law that protect the rights of children with disabilities. The first, IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) governs "Special Education" as schools know it today. This law, while quite comprehensive, only provides direct programming for children with one of thirteen disabilities, when in fact there are literally hundreds of disabilities.

The second body of disability law is Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The Federal Government developed Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act as a way to address the many disabilities not covered under IDEA. Section 504 is a far-reaching law that extends protections to individuals with disabilities in most aspects of their lives. The procedures outlined in this report address Section 504 as it applies to schools.

The third body of law, which protects the rights of children with disabilities, is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA primarily provides for accessibility of the physical structure of a school. This includes washrooms, access to playgrounds, lift buses, etc.

## **Student Services in District 39**

### **Health Services**

Parents have the primary responsibility for the health of their children. The efforts of the school are directed to help parents recognize and assume their responsibility. A trained staff provides quality care to the children in the Wilmette schools. The District employs registered nurses or licensed practical nurses for the full-time health paraprofessional positions.

According to The School Code of Illinois, physical examinations are required of all students prior to initial entrance into the school district and upon entrance into sixth grade. Physical, dental, and eye examination forms are available from the school health office or school secretary and on our website at <http://wilmette39.org/specialservices/healthserv.html>. All health examination forms must be dated. Children are not permitted to enter school until this requirement is met.

### **Questions**

If you have questions about health services in WPS39, please visit our website at <http://wilmette39.org> or contact the health services provider at your school.

### **Reading Intervention Program**

District 39 formally introduced a reading services program in the 1999-2000 school year. A committee of teachers and administrators met throughout the 1998-1999 school year to define and develop the program. At the committee's recommendation, four Reading Services Teachers (RSTs) were employed to implement early reading intervention services for students in the elementary grades. Since that time, additional RSTs have been hired as a result of some grant funding.

The main focus of the program is addressing the needs of young readers whose scores on reading screening devices indicate a need for early intervention. Reading screening tools are also administered at various times throughout the year to monitor student improvement. Students targeted for support will receive instruction either individually, in small groups, or within the classroom setting.

The Reading Intervention Program involves several intervention models. One model focuses on developing emergent reading skills, particularly phonemic awareness, and is an extension of the work of Roland Good from the University of Oregon. A second model provides direct services for first through fourth grade children.

Both of these interventions have demonstrated that they are effective in helping young children who are struggling to improve their reading skills.

### **Reading Services Teachers (RST) and Reading Teacher Assistants (RTA)**

The role of these teachers includes:

- providing direct reading instruction to at-risk elementary grade students in an individual settings, small group setting, or whole class setting. This instruction is in addition to, not in place of, classroom instruction from the classroom teacher
- co-teaching and collaborating with classroom teachers to support struggling readers. For example, RSTs or RTAs may go into a general education classroom and work with a selected group of students to improve phonemic awareness, while the classroom teacher works with other students
- conducting parent information opportunities
- acting as a resource on reading methods and theory for parents, administrators, teachers

### **Questions**

If you have questions about the program, please contact the Reading Services Teacher at your child's school.

### **Social Work and Counseling Services**

In District 39, each school building has social work and counseling services. Social workers support and empower students within our educational community by meeting with students individually, in small groups, and in the classroom. Various topics addressed with students include, but are not limited to: social skills, school motivation, anxiety, depression, confidence, self-esteem, conflict resolution, anger management, problem solving skills, school phobia, stress management, and crisis intervention. Social Workers

teach strategies and techniques that enable students to develop self-confidence, make good decisions, resolve conflicts peacefully and become effective problem solvers. Social Workers help students to develop a sense of understanding, individual uniqueness, and gain an ability to apply it to daily life. In addition to direct services, social workers also develop programs to address and meet the needs of students and the school at large.

Social Workers are also part of the Student Assistance Team (SAT). Social workers, along with administrators, school psychologists, teachers, and parents collaborate and develop interventions to meet individual student's educational needs.

Students are referred for social work services through various avenues when social/emotional concerns are impacting their educational performance. Referrals can be made through SAT, parent(s), teachers, and students themselves. When services are requested, the social worker completes an assessment to determine whether school social work services are appropriate. In addition, social workers can provide a list of community resources to parents.

Social Workers also support children with special education needs. When a special education case study evaluation is deemed necessary, social workers complete a social developmental study. This component includes a parent interview, a student interview, and an assessment of adaptive behavioral functioning.

## **Problem-Solving at a Glance**

A **Problem-Solving Model** focuses on the development of educational environments that are receptive and responsive to all students. It is a system that blends the expertise of all staff, as well as the resources and services available in the school, into one system to effectively meet student needs. School-based teams use the problem-solving process to develop interventions tailored to the individuals needs of a specific student or group of students sharing common needs.

A teacher or parent initiates the problem-solving process when she/he would like assistance figuring out strategies for helping a student to be more successful. The problem-solving team is not necessarily the first step in the problem-solving model. Most of the time, the teacher brings a case to the team after she/he has tried consulting with other teachers to develop and implement interventions but has not seen a positive response from the student to the interventions tried.

### The Problem-Solving Process

At the beginning of the **Problem-Solving** process, the parents of the child must be notified by the classroom teacher about the concerns the teacher is having regarding their child's progress and that strategies will be developed by the educational team to support the student's needs within the classroom. Parents do not need to be present during the meeting, but they must be notified of the concern.

Each school-based team may implement the Problem-Solving process in any model of service delivery that they deem appropriate (i.e. Intervention Team, SAT meetings) as long as all information is documented as pre-referral history with the Student Assistance team.

### Steps of the Problem-Solving Process

#### **Step One: Problem Identification**

- What is the discrepancy between what is expected and what is occurring?

#### **Step Two: Problem Analysis**

- Why is the problem occurring?

### **Step Three: Plan Development**

- What is the goal?
- How will the progress be monitored?
- What is the intervention plan?
  - Levels of support may vary and will be matched with the educational need.
    1. Level One: Consultation
    2. Level Two: Modification  
Develop interventions that modify the particular academic area or behavior to move the student toward meeting the desired outcomes.
    3. Level Three: Grouping and Support  
If Level Two interventions are not appropriate, the individual student may be grouped and supported with students who have similar challenges within their classroom (i.e. reading groups, in-class groups with Learning Behavior Specialists).  
If a grouping does not exist in the individual's class but exists in another classroom (i.e. reading group with the class next door), the child may receive the specific intervention within the neighboring classroom for a period of the day). Verbal parent permission is required.
    4. Level Four: Diagnostic Teaching  
Diagnostic teaching (in-class service): If academic or behavior difficulties cannot be supported by modification or modified groupings, the student may receive individual support provided by the Learning Behavior Specialists or Speech and Language Pathologist who works within the classroom at that time.  
Diagnostic Teaching (Pullout service): If in-class individual services do not meet the student's needs, pullout support may be implemented.  
Written parental consent is required.

### **Step Four: Plan Implementation**

- How will implementation integrity be ensured?

### **Step Five: Plan Evaluation**

- Was the intervention plan successful?
- If not, consider a case study evaluation.

- If a student does not respond positively to the interventions and support provided, the team may refer the student for an immediate case study evaluation. During the evaluation proves, interventions may continue if they are effective.
- If the student responds to Option Four supports, but more than twelve weeks cumulatively is required, the team may consider a Case Study Evaluation with the consultation of the school psychologist, considering the current level of discrepancy and goal progress.

## **Special Education in District 39**

Wilmette Public Schools District 39 offers a full continuum of Special Education services. Special education is instruction and related services provided by special education personnel or by a general education program that has been modified through the use of special education support services, supplementary aids, or other special programming.

District 39 follows the state and federal laws that establish criteria for special education eligibility. The federal government recognizes 13 categories under which children may qualify for special education. These disabilities include: autism, cognitive disabilities, deaf-blindness, deafness, emotional disability, hearing impairment, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disabilities, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairment.

District 39 programs are aligned k-8 to provide children similar program experiences as they move through our schools. However, the type of support is adjusted to be developmentally appropriate, so the name and focus of the program may change from building to building. Below is a brief schematic overview of k-8 programs. More detailed descriptions of all programs follow this schematic.

### **Grades K-4**

### **Grades 5-8**

Inclusion----- ➔ Inclusion

Pull-out Reading ----- ➔ Instructional Reading Class

Pull-out Math ----- ➔ Instructional Math Class

Pull-out Writing ----- ➔ Instructional Writing Class

Functional Academics ----- ➔ Functional Academics

Student Learning Center ----- ➔ Functional Academics  
or

Student Learning Center ----- ➔ Student Support Center  
or

Student Learning Center-----➔Instructional Classes  
**External Placements**-----➔**External Placements**

## **Birth-to-Three**

Wilmette Public Schools District 39 is proud to offer birth to three services for infants and toddlers residing in the District. Wilmette District 39 is one of the few school districts that provide: Screenings, Evaluations, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy or Play Group Sessions to this population.

### **Evaluation Process**

- Parents may make a referral to have their child evaluated.
- Families are then asked to complete an extensive developmental and functional profile. Copies of any previous evaluations or reports regarding the child are helpful.
- A team of early childhood experts including speech and language, occupational, and physical therapists and a school psychologist review the information.
- Based on the information, the evaluation team may make a determination to evaluate the child.
- In order to be eligible the child must demonstrate a 30% delay in one or more of the areas assessed.

### **Service Provision**

- If the child is found eligible they can receive service in one therapeutic domain.
- Services are provided at no fee to the family.
- These services are provided at the Mikaelian Education Center or another District 39 school.

### **Multiply or Severely Impaired Children**

The service that District 39 provides is intended to supplement services to children who have a higher level of need. Parents of children who are multiply or severely impaired may choose to access other sources of support. Child and Family Connections is an Illinois State funded program that provides evaluations and services to children under the age of three who are suspected of being delayed.

For more information please contact:  
Julie Pease, Coordinator for Early Childhood at 847-256-0211

Or contact:  
Child and Family Connections at 847-385-5070

The District is also responsible for transitioning children from 0-3 to the District 39 Early Childhood Program. At the age of 2 1/2, Child and Family Connections notifies District 39 of a child in need of transition. The District has up to 6 months to complete any additional evaluations the team recommends and then meet with parents to discuss whether continuing intervention is needed. A variety of options may be discussed with parents.

## **Early Childhood**

Wilmette District 39 offers a continuum of special education services to meet the unique educational needs of the three to five year old students with disabilities. The range of available services is designed in compliance with the federal and state guidelines supporting the least restrictive environment in which services can be provided. Least restrictive environment means providing services in settings similar to programs provided to typical preschool children.

Preschool children are found eligible to participate in district services through an identification and assessment process. The assessment of preschool children focuses on the expectations and growth of the preschool child, and the evaluation of developmental skills, which are the foundation for academic and social learning. The assessed skill areas relate to academic functioning and are divided into five developmental domains: cognitive skills, fine and gross motor skills, self-help skills, social skills, and speech and language skills.

## **Early Childhood Identification Procedures**

### Children of District 39 Residents

District 39 provides preschool screenings on a regular basis throughout the school year. Three, four and five-year-old children, who have not entered kindergarten, may participate in the district screening. The child must be registered for the screening through Ms. Kathy Hughes at the District 39 Student Services office (847-256-2450). Screenings are free of charge. The screening process provides basic information about the child in the areas of cognitive, motor, social, and speech and language development. A certified nurse also completes a vision and hearing screening. The preschool screening is designed to identify developmental lags or areas of concern and is not a tool to determine eligibility for advanced placement in school. Further assessment in one or all of the domains may be indicated from the results of the screening.

When further assessment is indicated, parents are contacted and a meeting is held to discuss concerns and determine appropriate components of the evaluation. After permission to evaluate is obtained, the district attempts to complete the assessment as soon as possible. However, the district has sixty school days to complete the assessment and meet with parents to discuss results. If the child qualifies for special education services as a result of the evaluation and team meeting, goals and objectives are written. An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for providing services is developed, and program placement is determined. The Individualized Education Plan is reviewed on an annual basis, adjusted, and revised as necessary.

Finally, a preschool child may be brought to the attention of the Early Childhood Education team by parent referral. Parents may contact the Coordinator for Early Childhood, Julie Pease, at 847-256-0211 to discuss concerns and determine an appropriate response.

### Children currently in Birth-to-Three Programs

District 39 is responsible for providing services to preschool children who have been identified and received support through a birth to three early intervention agency or program. A transition plan is established between the early intervention agency and District 39 in order to provide appropriate services without interruption when the child turns three.

### Children Transferring from Another District

The Early Childhood Education team reviews records and meets with the family of the preschool child who has participated in Early Childhood Education services in another district and is transferring to District 39. After the family establishes district residency, the existing IEP is reviewed and implemented as written by the previous district. Further assessment and changes may be recommended at the initial IEP meeting.

### **Early Childhood Education Service Options**

The District 39 Early Childhood Program offers a range of offerings. The program is based on each child's individual needs. These needs are determined after an extensive assessment. The possible programs are listed below.

### **Speech and Language Services**

When a child needs only speech and language services, the services are delivered at the Mikaelian Education Center. Criteria for Speech services are based on a severity rating scale index; mild-moderate disorder/delay in one or more areas of speech/language or moderate/severe disorder/delay in speech production (articulation, phonological processes, oral-motor functioning, voice fluency).

### **Connecting Kids**

This is a District 39 integrated preschool class, located at Romona School. This class enrolls typically developing peers, as well as children with significant developmental needs in more than one area, or children presenting a severe to profound speech and language need. A special education classroom teacher, with assistance from classroom paraprofessionals, provides instruction in this classroom. Related services, including speech and occupational therapy, also are provided.

### **Full-Day Self-Contained**

On a rare occasion, children have more severe and profound educational needs. The district relies on a full-day program for children with severe and profound needs.

## **Primary School (Grades K-4)**

Primary School children are provided special education services when they come to school with an existing IEP, as a result of a preschool program or because of a transfer in from another school district. However, children also can be identified to have a special education disability while they are at a District 39 school. Whenever a parent or a teacher has a concern about a child a referral is made directly to the team at school. The formal assessment of children is provided after a series of academic interventions have been implemented (e.g. a reading intervention). Once indicated, a team of professionals conducts a comprehensive evaluation. The assessed skill areas include: general intelligence, motor, health, social/emotional, communication status, functional performance, and academic performance.

Students, who qualify for one of 13 disability categories, receive services in accordance with their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The child's IEP is developed by her/his IEP team. There is a legal requirement for educating children in the least restrictive environment. This means that children with special education needs are programmed for, as much as possible, in their home school in a general education classroom. Services are provided in accordance with the IEPs of individual students.

Below is a brief description of the program options available at the primary level.

### **Primary K-4 Programs**

#### **1. Student Assistance Team (SAT)**

Each school is equipped with a Student Assistance Team. This team is comprised of a group of technical experts who can address a myriad of learning and emotional concerns. This team includes the psychologist, social worker, speech pathologist, special education teachers, occupational therapist, nurse, a special education coordinator and the school principal. This team meets weekly to address concerns from teachers and parents for children with and without disabilities. This team conducts special education evaluations, makes disability diagnoses, develops and implements individual education plans for children.

- 2. Inclusion support**

The special education staff in each of the primary buildings attempts to teach students within the general education environments. This is done utilizing a team-teaching approach. In collaboration with classroom teachers, the special educator may co-teach for a period of the day, where differentiated instruction is emphasized to address the needs of children with IEPs.
- 3. Pullout support**

Certain children may need a specialized method of instruction for remediation of an identified deficit. When this is the case, the special education teacher will pull small groups of children with similar learning profiles from the classroom to receive highly specialized instruction in reading, writing or math.
- 4. Student Learning Center**

Some children need more structured instruction. When this is required, the Student Learning Center is an option. The Student Learning Center is designed for children that have more intense learning needs that require more frequent instruction in a smaller setting, more intense instructional or emotional support away from the general education classroom.
- 5. Functional Academic Program**

For children requiring specialized instruction or remedial support on a consistent basis at the elementary level the district offers the Functional Academic Program. Children receive the Functional Academic Program as part of their individual schedule while continuing to participate in the general education program to the extent possible. This classroom handles the needs of children both with significant learning disabilities and with needs for life skill development (functional reading, writing and math).
- 6. External Placements**

On a rare occasion, children have more severe and profound educational needs. The district relies on private placement

options, for special education programming for children with severe and profound needs.

## **Middle and Junior High (Grades 5-8)**

Middle and junior high school children are provided special education services when they come to school with an existing IEP, as a result of a preschool program or because of a transfer in from another school district. However, children also can be identified to have a special education disability while they are at a District 39 school. Whenever a parent or a teacher has a concern about a child a referral is made directly to the team at school. (See flexible service delivery on page 9). The formal assessment of children is provided after a series of academic interventions have been implemented (e.g. a reading intervention). Once indicated, a team of professionals conducts a comprehensive evaluation. The assessed skill areas include: general intelligence, motor, health, social/emotional, communication status, and academic performance.

Students who are eligible for Special Education Services as a result of the assessment receive services in accordance with their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The child's IEP is developed by her/his IEP team. There is a legal requirement for educating children in the least restrictive environment. This means that children with special education needs are programmed for, as much as possible, in their home school in a general education classroom. Services are provided in accordance with the IEPs of individual students.

Below is a brief description of the program options available at the middle school level.

### **1. Student Assistance Team (SAT)**

The Middle School has a team that is comprised of a group of technical experts who can address a myriad of learning and emotional concerns, known as the Student Assistance Team. This team may include a psychologist, social worker, speech pathologist, special education teachers, occupational therapist, nurse, a special education coordinator and the school principal. This team meets weekly to address concerns from teachers and parents for children with and without disabilities. This team conducts special education evaluations, makes disability diagnoses, develops and implements individual education plans for children.

## **2. Inclusion Support**

The special education staff in the Middle School supports students within the general education classroom as much as possible. This is done utilizing a team-teaching approach. In collaboration with classroom teachers, the special educator may co-teach for a period of math, reading or writing each day. This co-teaching emphasizes differentiated instruction, in addressing the needs of children with IEPs. Having a team teaching model emphasizing differentiated instruction has the added benefit of promoting the learning of every child in the classroom, regardless of disability status.

## **3. Academic Strategies**

As the challenges of the curriculum advance, many students with disabilities need extra support. Academic Strategies is a smaller sized class taught by a special education teacher, who can pre-teach, re-teach, organize schoolwork or provide direct instruction in any content areas a student may find difficult. Academic Strategies is offered as an academic class in place of foreign language.

## **4. Instructional Class**

Certain children may need a specialized method of instruction for the remediation of an identified deficit in reading, writing, and/or math. When this is the case, children are provided a separate special education class and grouped with children having similar learning profiles. These small classes have access to technology, instructional materials, and learning approaches that encourage the learner to move at his/her own pace in the curriculum.

## **5. Functional Academic Program**

For children requiring specialized instruction or remedial support on a consistent basis, the middle & junior high schools offer the Functional Academic Program. Children receive the Functional Academic Program as part of their individual schedule while continuing to participate in the general education program. This classroom handles the needs of children both with significant learning disabilities and with needs for life skill development (functional reading, writing and math).

## **6. Student Support Center**

For children in need of emotional or behavioral support, the Student Support Center is available. The teacher of this program (a behavior specialist) manages students who are in an immediate crisis and need individual support. Additionally, this teacher conducts behavioral assessments and assists classroom teachers in developing behavior management plans. This room is also available when students temporarily need instruction in a place away from the classroom. The student support center can also be used as a full-day long-term placement

## **7. External Placements**

On a rare occasion, children have more severe and profound educational needs. The district relies on private placement options, for special education programming for children with severe and profound needs.

## **External Placements**

District 39 has a host of private and public options for providing special education programs when a District 39 program does not meet a child's special educational needs. There are certain complex disabilities that require high levels of instructional support. These external programs are for children who have these intense instructional needs.

## Frequently Asked Student Services Questions

### **IDENTIFICATION:**

**1. How do I know if my child needs services? If so, what can I expect from District 39?**

*If parents are concerned about their children needing special services, they should contact their school principal. Parents can expect a meeting to review their concerns. The school will recommend additional follow-up if needed.*

**2. Are there any milestones I should be looking for to be sure my child is "on target" in his/her development?**

*Delayed attainment of developmental milestones is one early indicator of future learning problems. District 39 offers a developmental screening for preschool-aged children. For school-aged children, a Student Assistance Team (SAT) is available to screen concerns about typical development. Additionally, most childcare texts contain a variety of milestones.*

**3. What preschool screenings are available? When are they available and what are they looking for?**

*Preschool screenings are available for children between the ages of 3-5. The screenings are available to parents who have concerns about their child's development. The screenings address speech, cognitive and motor development. The schedule of preschool screenings can be found in the school calendar.*

**4. What services are available from District 39 for children ages 0-3?**

*District 39 coordinates services children ages 0 to 3. Contact Julie Pease, Coordinator of Early Childhood at 847-256-0211.*

**5. What does the Student Assistance Team do?**

*This team of teachers and teacher specialists, including the school psychologist, social worker, and speech-language pathologist, meets at school weekly. (It is during these meetings that the team consults with parents when there is a school concern about their child.) The team may make recommendations to parents and classroom teachers, suggest some short-term interventions, or may even ask permission for further assessment. A follow-up meeting is scheduled when needed.*

## **6. What does short-term intervention consist of?**

*Short-term intervention includes a wide variety of options under what is known as “Flexible Service Delivery.”*

## **7. What is Flexible Service Delivery?**

*Flexible Service Delivery is a support system that provides general education support for students who are struggling academically, behaviorally, and/or socially. The benefit of flexible service delivery is that children can receive more immediate intervention.*

*With flexible service delivery, the team follows a series of problem-solving steps for these students. First, through consultation with classroom teachers, the primary area of concern is identified. A Flexible Service Delivery Plan is developed by a team of school professionals and individualized to meet the student’s needs. Interventions may include providing a student with instructional, behavioral, or social support (e.g., academic instruction, social skills training), environmental and/or curriculum modifications (e.g. modified workload, extended time, visual cues), and/or a reinforcement system to use new skills or behavior (e.g., individualized praise, point systems). Interventions typically are first attempted in the General Education environment (e.g., in class, neighboring class). If these supports are deemed inadequate, specialized instruction from a special education teacher may be utilized for up to 12 weeks in either a small group or individually. Intervention effectiveness is monitored and evaluated. Parents and the Student Assistance Team will decide whether or not a case study evaluation is appropriate.*

## **8. Under Flexible Service Delivery, can a child receive specialized instruction as long as she/he needs it?**

*No, if a student’s academic needs cannot be met after 12 weeks of specialized instruction, then a referral is made for a special education evaluation. The evaluation data will assist the team in deciding what continued support is needed. However, flexible service interventions may continue during the completion of the evaluation.*

## **9. What screening is given for a Flexible Service Delivery?**

*No formal testing is required for Flexible Service Delivery. The need for flexible service interventions is based on teacher recommendation, evidence of student performance, or as a result of a Student Assistance Team (SAT)*

*meeting. The SAT at your school reviews the needs of individual children and recommends specific support as needed.*

**10. When does a child need an evaluation for special education?**

*An evaluation for special education is needed when the parent or school suspects that a child has a disability. The evaluation usually occurs after Flexible Service Delivery supports have been implemented and outcomes have been evaluated.*

**11. Does every child get an evaluation?**

*No, every child does not need an evaluation. The school has a Student Assistance Team, which reviews the needs of children who struggle at school. The purpose of an evaluation is to identify a special education disability.*

**12. What is a disability?**

*The federal law that governs special education has identified 13 disabilities. When one of these disabilities impacts learning at school, then an educational disability is identified. These disabilities include: Autism, Cognitive Disability, Deaf-Blindness, Deafness, Emotional Disabilities, Hearing Impairments, Multiple Disabilities, Other Health Impairment, Specific Learning Disabilities, Speech/Language Impairments, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Visual Impairment.*

**PROGRAMS and SERVICES:**

**1. What types of counseling does District 39 provide?**

*Each building offers Social Work and Counseling services, which are provided in small groups, individually, and/or within the classroom. Some topics addressed include, but are not limited to, social skills, school motivation, anxiety, depression, stress management, and crisis intervention.*

**2. What type of health care does District 39 provide?**

*The district provides nurses in each of our buildings. The nurses are available for a wide variety of health needs (e.g. injuries at school, administration of medication, formulation of health plans). Parents should contact the school nurse if their child has special health needs.*

**3. How can I access the services that District 39 has to offer?**

*For a complete description of the services that District 39 provides, please visit our web site at <http://wilmette39.org>*

**4. Who are the contacts at each school and what services are available? How do I reach them?**

*A complete listing of school service providers can be found on the web site at <http://www.wilmette39.org>, or in the District 39 Calendar and Handbook.*

**5. What is the role of paraprofessionals in the school?**

*Paraprofessionals assist teachers in the implementation of Individual Education Plans or Flexible Service Delivery Plans. Teachers provide instruction and paraprofessionals reinforce teaching.*

**6. Are there different types of paraprofessionals?**

*Yes, most paraprofessionals are “classroom” assistants serving a small cluster of special education students in the classroom. There are also “individual” paraprofessionals assigned to a single student. Individual paraprofessionals are provided for students who require significant personal assistance (e.g. personal care, behavior monitoring).*

**7. What type of transition is provided for my child as they move from one school to the next?**

*Transition planning is provided for children as they change buildings. The level of planning is based on individual student needs. At a minimum, a staff member from the receiving school meets with teachers from the sending school to share important information. A few children have such extensive special education needs that an individual transition plan is developed.*

**8. Do parents need to ensure a continuum of services at every building or does the district oversee this?**

*The district must make a continuum of services available to all children with disabilities. However, a continuum cannot be provided at each building. The district endeavors to make as many programs, services and supports available at each school as possible. However, from time-to-time a child will need to travel to a different school to receive the services she/he needs.*

**9. Where can a parent get information concerning various disabilities and all of the physical, mental, and emotional factors that can be associated with them, so families can know what to expect now and in the years to come?**

*An exhaustive list of "all factors" is not possible. However, much information can be obtained by visiting our web site at <http://www.wilmette39.org> and talking with your school's staff and other Student Services professionals. Additionally, PASS 39 offers a variety supports and information (e.g. workshops, lectures and support groups). Their web sites can also be found at our website.*

**10. How can parents find out about state and local educational laws, especially from out of state?**

*Our web site, at <http://www.wilmette39.net> provides links to sites pertaining to Illinois educational laws.*

**11. Am I alone?**

*This is a common feeling parents have as they face a myriad of issues special needs present. As a support to you, there are an incredible amount of resources available and people ready to help. Please start at our web pages <http://www.wilmette39.org/specialservices/default.html> Next you may wish to contact parents directly at Pass 39 [pass39@wilmette39.org](mailto:pass39@wilmette39.org) .*

## **Student Services Abbreviations**

### **504 PLAN - Section 504 Educational Plan**

Accommodation plan that supports the many disabilities not covered under IDEA

### **ADA - Americans with Disabilities Act**

This is a federal law prohibiting discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

### **ADHD - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder**

The student with ADHD is one who seems to have average or better ability, health, vision, hearing, and intelligence, but is still unable to learn things as easily or quickly as most other students his age. The concern is due to a severe inability to stay on task or pay attention (distractibility) and/or inability to control behavioral impulses (hyperactivity). If the condition impacts the child's educational progress, he or she may be eligible for a 504 plan or Special Education services.

### **APE - Adapted Physical Education**

Physical Education adapted to meet the unique physical needs and challenges of students with identified disabilities and medical conditions that prohibit their ability to fully benefit from a general physical education curriculum.

### **AT - Assistive Technology**

A related service that provides a device or service that helps a student function in the educational setting. These services may include evaluating the student's needs, providing a device and/or service to match student needs, and training for the student, family, and school personnel in using the selected device. An Assistive Technology device can be provided as special education services, related services or as supplementary aids and services to the general education program. An example of an Assistive Technology device would be a "Touch Talker." This device displays an array of pictures which speaks words and phrases when touched, thus allowing a non-verbal student to communicate

**AU - Autism**

Autism includes a spectrum of disorders, which may include PDD, Asperger Syndrome, Autism and Rett Syndrome. It is a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. The term does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance.

**BIP - Behavior Intervention Plan**

A comprehensive plan designed to target and change specific inappropriate behaviors that interfere with a student's ability to benefit from his/her educational program or develop and maintain relationships.

**CAPD - Central Auditory Processing Disorder**

CAPD is an auditory processing disorder characterized by difficulty in attending to, discriminating, recognizing, and understanding what is heard, even though hearing and intelligence are normal. CAPD creates difficulty in developing speech and language skills. These children are often thought to have hearing problems. Treatment includes speech and language therapy, modifications in the environment, and computerized therapy.

**CD - Cognitive Disability**

Significantly below average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. (Formerly MR – Mental Retardation))

**CP - Cerebral Palsy**

A general term for a group of permanently disabling symptoms caused by damage to the developing brain before, during, or after birth. People with cerebral palsy may have poor balance, difficulty in walking, movement, speech impairment, and/or cognitive limitations.

**CSE - Case Study Evaluation**

A CSE is method of collecting information about a student's individual learning needs, strengths, and interests, in order to assess whether or not a child has a disability. The assessment is an process by which qualified

professionals, together with families, through standardized tests and observation, look at all areas of a child's development: motor, language, intellectual, academic achievement, social/emotional, and adaptive/self-help skills. An assessment may include giving individual tests, observing the student, looking at records, and talking with the student and/or his parents. Eligibility for special education services is determined at the completion of the evaluation process. An individualized education plan is developed as appropriate.

**DD - Developmental Delay**

A term used to describe infants and toddlers who need early intervention services because they: (1) are experiencing developmental delays, such that the child has not achieved skills and abilities which are expected to be mastered by children of the same age. Delays can be in any of the following areas: physical, social, emotional, intellectual, speech and language, and/or adaptive development (self-help skills), *or* (2) have a diagnosed physical or mental condition which has a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay. Children may only be eligible for special education services under this criterion to the age of nine years. (**Caution:** The term developmental delay may be used loosely and is occasionally used incorrectly, giving the false impression that the student will “catch-up.”)

**ECE - Early Childhood Education**

Educational programs and support services available to meet the needs of the young learner from three through five years of age. Students must be eligible to receive these supportive services, which are to be delivered in the least restrictive manner. Students become eligible for Early Childhood through the Case Study Evaluation process.

**ED - Emotional Disability**

A condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over an extended period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance:

- Learning difficulties that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers
- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances
- General pervasive mood of anxiety or depression

- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems

**ELL - English Language Learners**

Includes instructional support for children who come to school speaking another language.

**ESY - Extended School Year**

Special education and related services that are provided to a child with a disability beyond the typical school year, in accordance with the child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Students are eligible for ESY services when the educational team determines that the child's educational skills will significantly regress over the summer months if no educational program is provided.

**FBA - Functional Behavior Assessment**

A Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) is a behavioral assessment that looks at targeted behaviors from an environmental perspective. FAB is conducted when a particular student behavior is either dangerous or interferes with student learning. The FBA collects data on targeted student behaviors with a focus toward the antecedents, consequences that reinforce the behavior as well as possible functional alternatives. The FBA may lead to the development of a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). A student's IEP may be changed to reflect the addition of a BIP.

**FAPE - Free Appropriate Public Education**

Federal law mandates that students have the right to a free, appropriate public education, including special education and related services. The public school provides these services at the preschool, elementary, and secondary levels at no cost to parents. Students with visual and hearing impairments may receive services from birth. The programs and services must follow goals and objectives stated in the student's IEP.

**HI - Hearing Impairment**

An impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance, but that is not included under the definition of deafness. (*Definition of deafness: A hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.*)

**IAA - Illinois Alternate Assessment**

The Illinois Alternate Assessment is the state-developed portfolio assessment that must be used for any special education eligible student whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) indicated that she/he is unable to participate in the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT), even with accommodations

**IDEA - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act**

This federal law, enacted in 1990 and reauthorized in 1997 and 2004 amends and renames the Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA). The law ensures a free appropriate public education to students with one of thirteen disabilities. A portion of special education funding to schools is dependent upon compliance with this law and its subsequent amendments.

**IEP - Individualized Education Plan**

The IEP team, including parents, general educators and special educators, develops the individualized education plan when a student qualifies for Special Education Services. The IEP includes the student's present level of school performance, educational goals and objectives for the student, and accommodations the student will receive. It documents the specific services the student needs, how where and how often services will be provided, and how progress will be measured. IEPs are reviewed annually with the IEP team.

**ISAT - Illinois Standards Achievement Test**

The Illinois Standards Achievement Test provides a view of student performance in relation to the state standards. Third, fifth and eighth grade students are administered reading, writing, and mathematics assessments. Fourth and seventh grade students are administered science and social study assessments. These assessments are written at the state level and are scored by the state. Individual student scores and school scores are returned to the district. Many students with IEPs receive accommodations for ISAT testing, which can include extended time or administration of the testing with a small group. Only students with significant learning difficulties may be exempt from taking the ISAT. The IEP team makes this decision.

**ISBE - Illinois State Board of Education**

ISBE is the State agency that oversees the implementation of public education, including special education, in the State of Illinois.

**LBS - Learning Behavior Specialist**

In District 39, teachers with special education certification are referred to as Learning Behavior Specialists. They are special education teachers charged with designing and implementing IEPs.

**LD - Learning Disability**

A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, or do mathematics, including such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

**LRE - Least Restrictive Environment**

The special educational setting or program that best meets the needs of the student with a disability. The intent is to provide as much access to the general education program as possible. The student's IEP team determines the Least Restrictive Environment.

**MD - Multiple Disabilities**

Concomitant impairments (such as mental retardation-blindness, mental retardation-orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of disabilities that causes severe educational needs (does not include deaf-blindness).

**OHI - Other Health Impairment**

Limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened sensitivity to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that: is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, and sickle cell anemia. Health problems need to adversely affect a child's educational performance and need to be diagnosed by a medical professional.

**OI - Orthopedic Impairment**

A severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance; includes impairments caused by congenital anomaly (e.g., clubfoot, absence of some limb, etc.), impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures).

**OT - Occupational Therapy**

Facilitates the development of self-maintenance tasks including feeding, eating, dressing, and hygiene. Areas of assessment and intervention also include motor performance (manipulation of school related materials and educational tasks), neuromusculoskeletal components (movement and postural control), sensory awareness and attending skills. Intervention is integrated within the student's total educational experience and closely coordinated with other aspects of the student's program.

**PT - Physical Therapy**

Facilitates the development of functional movement skills including adapting equipment for mobility and positioning. Areas of assessment and intervention also include motor performance (safety and alternative positions), neuromusculoskeletal components (movement and postural control), architectural accessibility, utilization of appropriate assistive devices (wheelchairs, walkers, adapted seating and work spaces), transfers and transportation (school and community). Intervention is integrated with the student's total educational experience and is closely coordinated with other aspects of the student's program.

**SLI - Speech and/or Language Impairment**

A communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

**SLP - Speech and Language Pathologist**

A specialist certified to design and implement special education programming for children with Speech and/or Language Impairments.

**TBI - Traumatic Brain Injury**

An acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition, abstract thinking, judgment, problem-solving, sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities, psychosocial behavior, physical functions, information processing, and speech. The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

**VI - Visual Impairment**

Impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance (includes both partial sight and blindness).