

Conant Special Educational Needs Policy

Last Review/Update Fall, 2014

Philosophy

We believe all students deserve the right to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). We provide all students with differentiated instruction so they are given the opportunity to learn and grow in all academic areas. We practice full inclusion in order to ensure our students are in their least restrictive environment (LRE) in accordance with IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act). We follow Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE), which includes but is not limited to the following interventions:

- assessment of least restrictive environment
- classroom instruction
- consultation
- ancillary support
- adaptive equipment
- comprehensive evaluations
- specialized instruction.

The need for additional support is determined through comprehensive evaluations conducted by the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET). Each staff member has a variety of screening and evaluation tools in which they are qualified to administer; some of the tools we use include the WIAT-III, SELF, BASC, and WISC. Upon completion of those evaluations, the MET determines a student's eligibility for Special Education services. If it is deemed that a student has a disability that impacts their educational progress, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is co-written with members of the MET and representatives of the student's family. The IEP is created in alignment with the Revised Administrative Rules for Special Education in Michigan. By law, our special education students spend 80% or more of their day in a general education setting, i.e. in their least restrictive environment. For the other 20% or less of the student's day, the student receives special education support services.

Student's progress is monitored on a weekly basis, and instructional supports are modified based on the student's current functioning. The general education teachers, the special education resource teacher, and additional support staff (e.g. the speech and language teacher and the school social worker) when appropriate, work very closely together to ensure students are making adequate progress. Support staff collaborate with each other and the general education teachers daily in order to reinforce the instruction happening within the general education classroom. This allows for pre-teaching of concepts and vocabulary, as well as continued practice on skills that are not yet mastered.

All student matters receive careful attention and are addressed with sensitivity. In general, student academic records are kept in a CA-60 file that only Conant staff

members can access. All special education documentation is kept in a separate and locked location within the school and only handled by Conant's Special Education staff. Any student identified as needing Special Education is afforded confidentiality whether it is in regard to school records and/or information shared between staff and family.

In conclusion, regardless of a student's disability and development, a comprehensive education is provided that promotes inquiry in order to prepare students to be active citizens and to participate in a global community.

Resources

We have a Building Instructional Team (BIT), which consists of our school principal, social worker, psychologist, speech and language teacher, special education resource teacher, two general education resources teachers, English as a second language teacher, and a reading recovery teacher. General education teachers with concerns about individual student's progress can meet with the BIT to discuss any or all of the following:

- current student performance
- areas of concern (academic, social, emotional)
- student's history
- any relevant information that may be contributing to the student's area of concern
- previous interventions/current supports
- student's strengths, weaknesses, and interests
- whether or not a special education evaluation is deemed appropriate
- follow-up BIT date(s), etc.

During a BIT meeting, we create an action plan as a team, including who's responsible for instituting support, for the child. When a general education teacher initiates a conversation about one of his/her students, the general education teacher is generally the person responsible for keeping the child's parents/guardians informed of the action plan, as well as the child's progress. Though, in some cases, when the supports necessary involve an additional staff member, the responsibility may shift and/or be shared by the additional support staff. We consider input from all stakeholders, including the child when appropriate, in order to create the best educational plan; ultimately interventions are based on student's individual needs with progress being communicated back to all stakeholders in order for the child to continue to learn and grow. When adequate growth is not being made, the general education teacher or BIT member can initiate a follow-up BIT to discuss more intensive interventions and the possibility of a 504 Plan or an IEP. (Note: a 504 Plan refers to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, which specifies that no one with a disability can be excluded from participating in federally funded programs or activities, such as our public school.) Once a 504 Plan or IEP goals are established by the team, which does include family input, all classroom and single-subject area

teachers are informed of the student's accommodations and modifications via formal meetings and documentation.

Additional services are available to our students, families, and staff through the Bloomfield Hills School District; Oakland Schools, our Intermediate School District (ISD); and the Bloomfield Hills community. (The Bloomfield Hills Schools' Special Education Handbook for Parents is available upon request.)

We have created school-wide essential agreements and instituted a school-wide Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) system in order to communicate our behavioral expectations to our students as well as to teach prosocial behaviors. We understand the importance of creating an environment conducive to learning and begin each school year by sharing our essential agreements in order to set our students up for a successful year. Through our PBIS system, behaviors modeling our essential agreements are rewarded in a variety of ways. When behaviors fall short of our expectations, supports are put into place to coach, model, and scaffold behaviors, such that a comfortable learning environment is established for all.

Practice

As previously mentioned student learning goals and modifications are outlined in the child's IEP or 504 Plan. Goals are written with staff and family input and are then shared with all parties who are responsible for supporting the child's success. Special education staff has ongoing communication with parents regarding progress, testing results, concerns, and any other information regarding the student's performance. Staff communicates via phone, email, or face to face meetings.

When a child transfers to another school or grade, the special education files are sent to the new location, and the staff is in contact with the new special education staff regarding goals, progress, and behaviors.

Student Individualized Educational Plans are reviewed annually in accordance with IDEA. Additionally, every three years we are required to re-evaluate a student's IEP in order to determine his/her eligibility for continued special education support. It is important to note, at any time, parents can request that an IEP be opened, reviewed, and/or revised.

Currently we have approximately 32 students receiving special education services at Conant. Their need for support depends upon the severity of their disability and their current levels of performance. These students receive services from one or more of the following support staff: Speech and Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Social Worker, and/or Resource Room Teacher.