

Special Education in DJUSD

February 18, 2016

Mission Statement

Support all students with disabilities in achieving their highest potential in the areas of academics, communication, social skills, and life skills to become included, productive members of the community.

Condensed history of special education in the U.S.:

Special education law is based in civil rights. Specifically, students with special needs have the same right to access their education as their typically developing peers.

In *Brown*, the Supreme Court described the emotional impact that segregation has on children, especially when segregation “has the sanction of the law”. “In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education.” - *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

In 1975 Congress enacted Public Law 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act. Congress intended that all children with disabilities would “have a right to education, and to establish a process by which State and local educational agencies may be held accountable for providing educational services for all handicapped children.”

In 1990, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) replaced P.L.94-142.

IDEA states that children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education and that each child's education will be planned and monitored with an individualized education program or an individualized family service plan. Section 612 of IDEA states:

To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children, who are not disabled, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 1990)

Section 612 of IEDA supports the inclusive philosophy that we have in DJUSD.

IDEA was most recently reauthorized in 2004. The reauthorized statute is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 and is known as IDEA 2004. The statute is in Volume 20 of the United States Code (U. S. C.), beginning at Section 1400. The special education regulations are published in Volume 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) beginning at Section 300. In reauthorizing the IDEA, Congress increased the focus on accountability and improved outcomes by emphasizing reading, early intervention, and research-based instruction by requiring that special education teachers be highly qualified.

Special Education Staff:

43 Teachers – 43.4 FTE (RSP – 20.7 FTE; Inclusion – 14.3 FTE; Special Day Class– 6.4 FTE; Preschool – 2.0 FTE)

School Psychologists – 10.9 FTE

Speech Therapists – 13.3 FTE (DJUSD Employees – 10.1 FTE; Contracted – 3.2 FTE)

Occupational Therapists – 4.0 FTE (DJUSD Employees 3.4 FTE; Contracted - .6 FTE)

Behaviorists – 2.5 FTE

Secretaries – 2.0 FTE

Program Specialist – 1.0 FTE

Director – 1.0 FTE

Current number of students who receive special education services:

We currently have 944 students in DJUSD and 10 years ago in the 2005-2006 school year we had 767 students, an increase of 177 students. The intensity of the students we serve has increased as well. As illustrated below, 9% of our students qualify as having emotional disturbance which is three times the state percentage and over double the SELPA percentage.

IDEA's Categories of Disability for school-aged students with number/percent of students in each category in DJUSD and percent in the SELPA and State:

Intellectual disability (23 students; 2%) (SELPA 5%) (State 6%)

Hard of Hearing (10 students; 1%) (SELPA 2%) (State 1%)

Deafness (0) (SELPA <1%) (State <1%)

Speech or language impairment (282 students; 30%) (SELPA 28%) (State 22%)

Visual impairment, including blindness (4 students; <1%) (SELPA 1%) (State <1%)

Emotional disturbance (85 students; 9%) (SELPA 4%) (State 3%)

Orthopedic impairment (11 students; 1%) (SELPA 2%) (State 2%)

Other health impairment (123 students; 13%) (SELPA 8%) (State 11%)

Specific learning disability (283 students; 30%) (SELPA 35%) (State 40%)

Deaf-blindness (0) (SELPA <1%) (State <1%)

Multiple disabilities (2 students; <1%) (SELPA <1%) (State 1%)

Autism (121 students; 13%) (SELPA 11%) (State 13%)

Traumatic brain injury (0) (SELPA <1%) (State <1%)

Guiding principles from IDEA when developing an IEP:

FAPE – Free Appropriate Public Education – An individualized educational program that is designed to meet the child's unique needs and from which the child receives educational benefit, and prepares them for further education, employment, and independent living.

LRE - Least Restrictive Environment - To the maximum extent appropriate, school districts must educate students with disabilities in the regular classroom with appropriate aids and supports, referred to as "supplementary aids and services," along with their nondisabled peers in the school they would attend if not disabled, unless a student's IEP requires some other arrangement.

Special education services allow access general education and related services allow access to special education

Overview of the IEP Process with timelines:

Referral

Assessment Plan (15days to develop)

Parent Consent (15 days to sign)

Assessment

Eligibility IEP Meeting (within 60 days of receipt of signed assessment plan)

Placement, with service and instruction

Annual review

Special education placements in DJUSD:

PRESCHOOL

The Special Education Preschool is located on the Valley Oak Campus.

The preschool program was established in DJUSD during the 2003-2004 school year.

There are 3 classes with new referrals throughout the year.

Serves students who are 3-5 years old, identified as having a qualifying developmental disability that requires special education intervention.

Transition is an integral component of Preschool; as 3 year olds, students are transitioned from the (YCOE) Infant Program.

Many of the related services (Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy) are provided in the class environment.

Mainstreaming opportunities in the State Preschool program are provided when appropriate.

Following completion of Preschool, they are typically transitioned into their neighborhood school's Kindergarten program.

RSP (mild/moderate) level support

This program serves students with mild to moderate needs and provides direct instruction and support services to special education students who are assigned to general education classrooms for the majority of the school day.

The Resource Specialist teacher also provides consultation and support to the general education staff.

INCLUSION (moderate/severe) level support

This program serves students with moderate to severe disabilities who require more intensive Special Education support with an emphasis on functional academics.

Direct instruction is provided to students in a separate classroom and students are supported in general education classes

The inclusion teachers provide case management, academic and developmental assessments, direct instruction and curriculum adapted to the needs of the student, social skills training, and behavior modification and intervention.

Substantial paraeducator support is incorporated into the program to support students in the general education class environment.

Special Day Classes (SDCs)

These classes serve students who require more intensive instruction and services, when the nature of their disability precludes them from participating in the general education school program for the majority of a school day.

In these classes special education teachers provide case management, academic assessments, learning strategies, direct instruction and curriculum adaptations for the students in the program and they provide opportunities for mainstreaming when appropriate.

PRIMARY SDC at BIRCH and PIONEER

These classes are for students in kindergarten through 6th grade.

This class was established in 2009 to allow DJUSD students who would have been placed in a special day class in Woodland to remain in the District.

These classes are for our primary students who are not ready for inclusion in a general education setting due to cognitive delays and communication and behavioral issues.

The class works to improve the student's academic, behavioral and communication skills so that they can move into an inclusion program at their neighborhood school.

BLC at PATWIN and EMERSON

The Behavior Learning Class is a self-contained classroom for special education students who have behavior difficulties that inhibit them from benefiting from instruction in the general and special education environments.

The classroom can accommodate up to 12 students and serves students in grades K-6 and 7-9

A positive behavioral model of intervention is used and students are included in the general education classroom as appropriate.

ED Foundations at Holmes and DSHS

This is a program for secondary students with significant emotional issues that make it challenging for them to function in a general education setting.

In these classes emotional support and a more flexible learning environment is provided.

There are opportunities for mainstreaming in general education classes for the students in these classes.

Looking forward:

The DJUSD special education department is dedicated to ensuring that students have access to their education. It is imperative that we collaborate with all stakeholders to ensure that we have a strong team focused on student success. To that end, we meet monthly with the superintendent's advisory committee on special education (SACSE) to ensure that information is flowing to and from the schools. The special education department has offered and continues to offer professional development to special education staff as well as the general education staff and administrators. We work collaboratively with the bargaining units and last year we updated the certificated contract language for special education for the first time in over 20 years. In addition, special education is represented on the LCAP advisory committee to represent the interests of the special education department and to get feedback from the other committee members. As we increase the number of students in special education and as their needs increase we will continue to collaborate with parents and staff to ensure that we are appropriately serving our students.