

Menands School

Special Education Services Guide



**This document reflects the Part 200
Regulations of the NYS Education Department**

**April 27, 2010
Added to May 26, 2010**

Menands School Special Education Services Guide

Mission Statement for Menands School District

The Menands Union Free School District, in partnership with students, teachers, parents, and the community, is committed to excellence. Our students are encouraged to excel in all areas of learning, to respect cultural diversity, and to become valued members of society. We strive to develop lifelong learners within a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment. By creating innovative, well-balanced programs that challenge the unique abilities of all students, we are able to nurture each student's potential. We are educating the leaders of tomorrow and value the belief that children come first.

Vision for the Education of Students with Disabilities

Our vision is that students with disabilities in Menands School will experience success academically, socially, and emotionally, and that they will make great strides in each of these areas during their time in our school. We want students with special needs to feel that they are fully a part of their school – actively participating in and contributing to the wide range of learning experiences and school activities.

As educators, we believe that students with disabilities are best educated in their neighborhood school to the greatest possible extent, and we welcome the diversity that students with special needs contribute to Menands School. We recognize that each student with a disability has a unique set of strengths and needs and, because of that, we are flexible in using different instructional approaches, resources, and delivery models in our work. As we teach to the present needs of a student with a disability, we are also keeping our eye on the long view. Like all students, students with disabilities will need independence, self-advocacy, and a strong desire to continue learning when they leave Menands School. We know that this will be accomplished best through collaboration and shared responsibility among general education teachers, support services teachers, administrators, and parents working together for students' success.

Continuum of Services

A. Consultant Teacher Services

Consultant teacher services are direct and or indirect services provided to a school-age student with a disability in the student's general education classes. The consultant teacher creates curriculum-based interventions designed for the student with a disability who needs assistance applying skills in the classroom. Within this program option, each student receives direct and/or indirect services for a minimum of two hours a week.

Direct consultant teacher service

The Direct consultant teacher service is specially designed instruction provided to an individual student with a disability or to a group of students with disabilities within the classroom by a certified special education teacher to aid the student(s) in benefiting from the general education instruction.

Examples:

- using highly adapted materials and expectations that parallel the general education curriculum integrated within the regular education classroom
- integrated instruction to help differentiate the general education program for a special education student
- modified curriculum developed and presented by a special educator to meet the individual needs of a student with a disability, within the general education classroom

Indirect consultant teacher services

Indirect consultant teacher is a service in which a certified special education teacher provides consultation to a general education teacher to assist in adjusting the learning environment and/or modifying their instruction to meet the individual needs of a student with a disability.

- Congruency meetings between general and special educator(s) to discuss and develop appropriate curriculum or assessments
- Teaching assistants may be used to support this model

B. Resource Room

Resource room is a special education program for a student with a disability. The student receives specialized supplementary instruction in an individual or small group setting for a portion of the school day. In Menands School, resource room is provided outside of the general education classroom.

Resource room programs shall be for the purpose of supplementing the regular instruction of students with disabilities. Students in resource room are provided with intensive support for general education subjects and additional skill development in areas of weakness.

Examples of support for the general education subject:

- review of vocabulary for social studies and science
- pre and post teaching of new concepts
- learning strategies and study skills
- assistance with long term projects

Examples of additional skill development in areas of weakness:

- reteaching of number concepts
- teaching reading comprehension strategies
- executive functioning skills

C. Integrated Co-teaching

Co-Teaching is a service delivery model in the general education classroom, in which the special and general educators share instructional responsibility for a single group of students. This model is delivered to meet the needs of special education students who are best served using pooled resources and joint accountability.

The CSE could recommend this model for one or more subjects for a given student or group of students.

Example:

- a special educator and general educator would teach a math class together, sharing all responsibilities on a daily basis.

D. Special Class

A class consisting of students with disabilities who have been grouped together because of similar individual needs for the purpose of being provided specially designed instruction.

In Menands, the CSE may decide that a special class may be more appropriate for a particular subject(s) rather than providing the student with a modified and/or parallel curriculum within the general education classroom.

Example:

- a special reading/math class with instruction at the student (s) level

E. Related Services

Related services, such as speech/language services, physical therapy, and occupational therapy, and counseling may be recommended by the CSE to meet specific needs of a student with a disability. Based on the needs of the student, related services can be provided individually or in a small group not to exceed five students.

Terminology

IEP:

An Individual Education Plan is written for a student with a disability. IEPs are working documents that can be changed as needed to meet the needs of the student. The Committee on Special Education prepares this document, with input from parents, special educators and general educators.

All decisions made and documented on the IEP, must be followed at all times, unless the CSE has amended the IEP.

IEP Direct:

IEP Direct is web-based special education management software. This program manages NYS special education student information and programs.

Committee on Special Education:

The Committee on Special Education is a multidisciplinary team that is responsible for the decision making and programming for students with disabilities.

Consists of the following members: parent(s); general education representative; special educator; psychologist; related service provider as needed; parent representative

504 Plan:

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal civil rights law that requires school districts to provide students who have significant medical conditions with reasonable accommodations that are necessary to ensure access to all public school programs and activities.

A child would be considered for a Section 504 Plan if the student has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major

life activities such as walking, seeing, speaking and learning.

For example:

- a student may have ADD and need a separate location, extended time or other accommodations
- a student may acquire accommodations due to short term or long term medical conditions, such as epilepsy, diabetes, depression

A team of teachers and specialists in each school district are responsible for developing and annually reviewing a 504 Accommodation Plan, describing the supports and services for each student. Parents are invited to participate in the meeting to develop this plan.

* A student with a 504 Plan does not require an IEP because he or she does not need special education programming but does need accommodations for his/her medical condition.

Testing Accommodations:

Testing accommodations are changes made in the administration of a test in order to remove obstacles to the test-taking process without changing the constructs being tested.

There are several purposes of testing accommodations:

- to enable students with disabilities to participate in assessment programs on an equal basis with their non-disabled peers
- to provide an opportunity for students with disabilities to demonstrate mastery of skills and attainment of knowledge without being limited or unfairly restricted due to the effects of a disability
- to promote the access of students with disabilities to assessment programs as well as access to more challenging courses

Testing accommodations are neither intended nor permitted to:

- alter the construct of the test being measured or invalidate the results.
- provide an unfair advantage for students with disabilities over students taking tests under standardized conditions.
- substitute for knowledge or abilities that the student has not attained.

The testing accommodations most frequently required by students as indicated in their IEPs are:

Flexibility in Timing, such as extended time; frequent breaks; administering a State assessment over multiple dates (requires state approval)

Flexibility in Setting, such as a separate location; individually or small group administration; adapted equipment; special acoustics

Accommodation of Method of Presentation, such as revised test format; Braille editions of tests; large type editions of tests; increased spacing between test items; reduced number of test items per page; multiple-choice items in vertical format with answer bubble to right of response choice; revised test directions; directions read to student; directions reread for each page of questions; language in directions simplified; verbs in directions underlined or highlighted; cues (e.g., arrows and stop signs) on answer form; additional sample items provided; larger print; minimal visuals; preferential seating; tests read/computer - except on state assessments testing reading; fewer problems per page

Flexibility in Method of Response, such as use of a scribe; use of a calculator, times table except on state assessments testing math skills; oral response

Other Accommodations, such as on-task focusing prompts; waiving spelling requirements; waiving paragraphing requirement; waiving punctuation requirements; use of abacus; use of arithmetic tables; use of spell-check device; use of grammar-check device

*Students who are provided a spell-check device as a test accommodation are responsible for spelling accuracy and therefore cannot also be excused from spelling requirements.

Testing modifications:

Testing modifications are changes made to an assessment that change the constructs of the assessment itself. Modifying tests is a collaboration between general and special education teachers based upon what has been agreed to on a student's IEP.

An IEP is a legal document: accommodations and modifications decided upon by the CSE and written into the IEP must be followed.

Examples of testing modifications: alternate test questions that are developed to only assess basic curriculum at the level of the student; simplification of test questions; reading of items designed to test the student's reading skills; use of spell and /or grammar-checking devices on a test of the student's writing skills; use of a calculator on a test of the

Added to on May 26, 2010

student's computational skills; reduced choices on a multiple choice test; reduced number of questions; supplying word banks; student takes general education test but is graded with alternate expectations

It is critical that the CSE consider the distinction between accommodations and modifications when determining the appropriate program.

Curriculum modifications or parallel curriculum:

Curriculum modifications or a parallel curriculum are modifications to the delivery of instruction or method of student performance that does not change the content area but does significantly change conceptual difficulty of the curriculum.

Examples:

- general education students are reading a story. The class is responsible for many story elements while the special education student will listen and identify the setting and the main characters
- general education students are completing a math worksheet on fractions. The special education student is completing a counting from 1-10 worksheet
- general education students in social studies class are reading the newspaper aloud and answering questions. The special education student orally reports three things remembered from listening to others read
- the science class is learning the body systems and their function. The special education student uses a lower level text and is tested on basic concepts about the human body

Grading and Report Cards:

Students who receive modifications will have a comment placed on their report card that states that the curriculum or the assessments were modified as noted on the student's IEP.

Planning and congruency meetings:

General and special educators work together to share responsibilities for students' learning. Congruency meetings are held weekly to differentiate instruction, to monitor progress, and to assure IEP goals are being addressed.

Team meetings:

Added to on May 26, 2010

Team meetings are held to discuss strengths and needs of a student. Team meetings include all of the professionals who service a given student. The professionals develop and review goals to implement, a means for monitoring a student's progress, and how parent communication will take place,

Roles of Teaching Assistants:

Teaching assistants are certified professional staff members who:

- assist in the delivery of special education services but cannot serve in place of a special education teacher
- facilitate the instruction of general education students in the classroom while the classroom teacher works with a small group
- support and reinforce instruction and practice skills
- support social interaction among students
- assist in providing testing accommodations
- assist with implementing modifications

Role of teacher aides:

Teacher aides are staff members who:

- perform non-instructional duties
- assist in physical care tasks and health-related activities as appropriate
- assist students with behavioral/management needs
- assist in preparation and set-up of classroom materials
- assist in correcting of test papers, recording grades, maintaining of files
- supervise students (i.e. watching students during recess, hall transitions, etc.)

Acronyms for Special Education

ADA: American with Disabilities Act

ADD/ADHD: Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder

APE: Adaptive Physical Education

AE: Age Equivalent

ASL: American Sign Language

AT: Assistive Technology

BOCES: Board of Cooperative Educational Services

CPSE: Committee on Preschool Special Education

Added to on May 26, 2010

CSE: Committee on Special Education
DD: Developmental Disability
ED: Emotionally Disabled
FAPE: Free and Appropriate Public Education
FERPA: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP: Individualized Education Program
IH: Impartial Hearing
LD: Learning Disabled
LRE: Least Restrictive Environment
MR: Mentally Retarded
OHI: Other Health Impaired
OT: Occupational Therapy
PDD: Pervasive Developmental Disorder
PT: Physical Therapy
SED: State Education Department
SEIT: Special Education Itinerant Teacher Services
SETRC: Special Education Training Resource Centers
SI: Speech Impaired
TBI: Traumatic Brain Injury
TDD: Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf
VESID: Office of Vocational & Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities
VI: Visually Impaired
VR: Vocational Rehabilitation

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the difference between accommodations and modifications?

Accommodations are changes made to a curriculum or to an assessment that remove obstacles that are presented by a disability. Accommodations do not change the constructs of a curriculum or an assessment.

Examples: preferred seating, larger print, separate location, taped books, extended time, oral test

Modifications are significant changes made to a curriculum or an assessment. Modifications change the constructs of a curriculum or an assessment.

Examples: Simplifying questions on a test, word banks, alternate grading system, reduced homework assignments, alternate class work

2. How are modifications of curriculum or modifications of assessments for students on IEP's decided upon? Who is responsible for making these modifications?

Curriculum and/or testing modifications for a given student are decided upon by the Committee on Special Education with input from the student's general education teachers. Modifications are noted on the student's IEP.

Implementing curriculum and assessment modifications involves collaboration between the student's general and special education teachers.

3. Are students who are not on IEP's eligible for modifications of curriculum and/or modification of assessment? How are modifications for these students decided upon?

A limited number of struggling students who have gone through the IST (Instructional Support Team) process and a limited number of ESL students are eligible for curriculum and/or testing modifications.

When the IST recommends curriculum or testing modifications for a struggling student, these modifications are identified on the student's IST plan.

An ESL student is eligible for curriculum and/or assessment modifications when the student has difficulty understanding the grade level curriculum due to the language barrier. Modifications are dictated by knowledge of the student and the combined professional judgment of the classroom teacher and the ESL teacher. Modifications used when needed to help an ESL student achieve success in school and are intended to be gradually removed as the student develops greater language proficiency. These modifications are decided upon through collaboration between the ESL teacher and the student's classroom teachers.

4. How does a teacher know what accommodations or modifications are in place for a given student?

IEP Student: Accommodations and modifications are recorded on a student's IEP. All teachers are responsible for reading the IEP's of the students they teach via IEP Direct. Additionally, special education teachers provide a crib sheet listing each student's accommodations and modifications at the start of the school year.

Added to on May 26, 2010

IST Student: If the IST has recommended accommodations or modifications for a struggling student, they are listed on the student's IST plan. At the beginning of the year, the faculty is provided with a list of students who have IST plans in place from previous years. The binder of IST plans is kept in the guidance office for teachers to review. When the IST meets to review a student during the school year, teachers are notified of the meeting by email. After the meeting, an IST plan for the student is emailed to the faculty.

ESL Student: An ESL student's needs may change from semester to semester as he or she develops proficiency with the language. Accommodations or modifications needed by an ESL student are put into place as needed through ongoing conferencing between the ESL and the classroom teacher.

5. Do accommodations need to be noted on a report card?

Accommodations do not need to be noted on a report card. Every teacher has the right to provide accommodations to any child within his or her classroom.

Only students on IEP's and ESL students are eligible for accommodations on State assessments, however.

6. How should modification of curriculum and/or modification of assessments be noted on report cards?

All teachers need to use the following language on report cards to record modifications:

1. Curriculum has been modified as per IEP
2. Assessments have been modified as per IEP
3. Curriculum has been modified as per IST plan
4. Assessments have been modified as per IST plan
5. Curriculum has been modified to meet ESL student's needs
6. Assessments have been modified to meet ESL student's needs

7. Should we be modifying curriculum and modifying assessments for students given that each year all students have to take the State assessments and State assessments can't be modified?

Added to on May 26, 2010

It relatively few IEP, ESL, or IST students who receive modified curriculum and assessments. For this small number of students, modifications of the grade level curriculum and grade level assessments are necessary so that these students can learn and be assessed at their instructional level. For a relatively small number of students, modifications of what is expected at the grade level are necessary so that the student can learn and meet with success in school.

8. It seems to take a long time for a student to progress through the IST or CSE process. Why does it take so long?

The goal of the IST process is to provide targeted support to a struggling student. This is accomplished when teachers share expertise so that all teachers can teach the student more effectively.

The IST reviews a student's strengths and needs and identifies interventions to implement through an IST plan. The student's progress is monitored to determine the success of the interventions. Because students learn differently and have varied personal and academic backgrounds, identifying how to teach the student effectively is a multi-step process which takes time and persistence.

The goal is to identify for special education only those students who are students with disabilities. Current best practice and soon-to-be-changes in State regulations require that schools implement and document consistent interventions before classifying a student with certain disabilities.

9. What are some of the best practices for providing push-in support services in general education classrooms? What are the most effective ways for general education teachers and special education teachers, AIS teachers, and teaching

assistants to work together to provide services within the general education classroom?

The following best practices were identified by teachers at a faculty meeting in May 2010:

- The support services teacher or teaching assistant and the general education teacher need to plan the instruction together on a weekly basis at a minimum.
- The two teachers can co-teach on days when push-in support is being provided.
- The full class can be divided into two groups with each teacher taking one of the groups.

- One of the two teachers can work with an individual or small group of students while the other teacher works with the rest of the class. The individual student or the small group of students can be those needing re-teaching of the general education lesson, a modified lesson, or an enrichment/acceleration lesson.
- Students besides those in need of remediation or special education can be included in the small group that the support teacher or teaching assistant is working with.
- It is helpful to keep a folder with instructional plans/materials or a communication log in the general education classroom that the different teachers and teaching assistants working with a given student or group of students can refer to.

April 27, 2010
Added to on May 26, 2010