

# Interboro School District

## SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW

## **Student Programs within the Interboro School District**

The following is an overview with some general information about the various categories of special education, a general description of some of those categories and a more specific explanation of how we as a district program for our students with special needs.

If a student is struggling within the regular education classroom it is the obligation of all educators to notify an administrator or Child Study team member of these concerns. This notification will trigger a series of steps, which if all other interventions prove unsuccessful, will culminate with an evaluation by a school psychologist. Based on the assessment and any other pertinent data collected throughout the evaluation process, the psychologist will determine, based on specific guidelines, whether a student qualifies for Special Education services. Below are a list of the 13 school-aged categories, according to IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Act), in which a student may be identified in order to obtain specially designed instruction and special education support. Depending on the severity of the disability services can usually be managed through district resources with at times support from the Intermediate Unit. However, there may be instances where the severity is such that out of district placements may be recommended. All decisions regarding a student's services are made by the IEP team (which includes parent, student and school personnel).

There are 13 categories of special education as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In order to qualify for special education, the IEP team must determine that a child has one of the following:

- **Autism**
- **Deaf / Blindness**
- **Deafness**
- **Emotional Disturbance**
- **Hearing Impairment**
- **Intellectual Disability**
- **Multiple Disabilities**
- **Orthopedic Impairment**
- **Other Health Impairment**
- **Specific Learning Disability**

- **Speech or Language Impairment**
- **Traumatic Brain Injury**
- **Visual Impairment (including Blindness)**

## **General Descriptions of each Special Education Category**

### **1. Autism**

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Autism are both general terms for a group of complex disorders of brain development. The word spectrum reflects the wide variation in challenges and strengths possessed by each individual with autism. These disorders are characterized, in varying degrees, by difficulties in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication, repetitive and impulsive behaviors. There is not one type of autism, but many types caused by different combinations of genetic and environmental influences. Program supports may include, but are not limited to: intensive specially designed instruction in social, communication and behavioral supports, functional living skills, academic support, augmentative communication devices, behavior management support, and a well-structured, consistent and organized environment.

### **2. Deaf-Blindness**

Deaf-blindness refers to a child with both hearing and visual disabilities IDEA officially defines the term as “concomitant [simultaneous] hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.”

### **3. Deafness**

A hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification.”

### **4. Emotional Disturbance**

Emotional Support classes are designed to provide both academic and emotional support to students who are unable or are struggling to successfully participate in the regular education programs because of moderate to severe behavioral, social and personal skill deficits. The location of these programs within the regular school buildings are necessary to provide the students with positive role models as well as the ultimate opportunity to once again become fully included in the regular education classroom / least restrictive environment (LRE). Students will receive the same instruction in all subject areas as

their regular education peers. Program supports will include, but are not limited to: direct instruction in academic and social skill areas, support services / counseling from social workers, counselors, psychologists, behavior specialists, etc, transition services for secondary students, FBA and PBSP support and inclusion opportunities. Class size may vary depending on how often students are in the classroom setting. Class size may vary depending upon the student population.

**5. Hearing Impairment**

“An impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance, but is not included under the definition of 'deafness.’”

**6. Intellectual Disabilities**

Intellectual Disability (ID) once called Mental Retardation, is characterized by below average intelligence or mental ability and lack of skills necessary for independent day to day living. People with ID can and do learn new skills, but they learn them much more slowly. Intellectual disability is a generalized neurodevelopment disorder characterized by significantly impaired intellectual and adaptive functioning. It is defined by an IQ score under 70 in addition to deficits in two or more adaptive behaviors that affect every day, general living. Most often these students receive life skills support which are usually more functional than academic. Program features may include, but are not limited to: augmentative communication devices, functional academic instruction, self-help, independent living skill, social and community living skill development. Travel training, prevocational and vocational experiences are also vital for these individuals.

**7. Multiple Disabilities**

The term "multiple disabilities" means when an individual has more than one significant disability.

**8. Orthopedic Disabilities**

Orthopedic impairments involve physical disabilities which could affect a student's ability to progress academically or perform other independent or functional activities or skills.

**9. Other Health Impairment**

Other health Impairment means having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment. It may be due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, etc. The impairment adversely effects a student's educational performance.

**10. Specific Learning Disability**

Learning disability is a general term that describes specific types of learning problems. A learning disability can cause a person to have difficulty learning and using certain skills. The skills most often affected are: reading, writing, listening, speaking, reasoning and math. These individuals have difficulty learning in a typical manner but are absolutely capable of learning with the right adaptations and accommodations. Program supports vary greatly depending on the type and severity of the learning disability, but understanding the student's strengths and needs are vital in developing a program of instruction that meets those needs.

### **11. Speech or Language impairment**

Speech and language impairments are “a communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance.”

### **12. Traumatic Brain Injury**

Traumatic brain injury means 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.

### **13. Visual impairment**

A visual impairment involves an issue with sight which interferes with a student's academic pursuit. IDEA officially defines the category as “an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.”

## **District Programs and Descriptions**

A general comment about programming: A student's disability category or diagnosis does not dictate the type of classroom or instructional setting for the student. Services of any kind, regardless of the disability or how severe the disability, can be implemented in any setting or any classroom. In fact, we always attempt to educate all students in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), which is the regular education classroom with supports.

Throughout all programs that we utilize in the special education classroom, we ensure they are research based and will address the various needs of our students.

Academically we research and implement academic programs based on the following areas of ELA: Foundational Skills, Reading, Language and Writing. Specifically, we look for programs that address reading informational text, reading literature, vocabulary acquisition and use. Writing is an important component of the student's ELA programming. Programs that address for grammar and mechanics of writing are essential areas. Students have the ability to write and revise multiple pieces of writing.

In the area of math, we focus on numbers and operations, algebraic concepts, geometry, measurement and data.

The district utilizes Schoology as their virtual learning platform. All accommodations and modifications can be utilized through the platform.

## **Autistic Programs**

Programming is available for all grades at all schools (programming may vary at individual schools).

Students are instructed and supported in the following areas: academics (reading, math, social studies, science, electives), communication, behavioral support, fine/gross motor, daily living skills, social skills

The Primary Goal is to: Develop social, communication, behavioral, academic, and functional living skills in the least restrictive setting.

### **PROGRAM FEATURES:**

- All work / activities are adapted / modified to meet student's needs
- Intensive Specially Designed Instruction in academic, social, communication and behavioral skill development
- Behavior Management Support Services
- Coordination with Regular Education Curriculum
- Individualized Educational Planning
- Counseling Support Services
- Small group instruction completed in short intervals (10-15 mins)
- Sensory Breaks
- Differentiated Instruction
- Flexible lessons because each day is unpredictable
- Related Services as needed

### **Resources and Supplementary Supports and Activities**

#### Researched Based Math Programs:

- Go Math
- Touch Math
- Xtra Math
- ESpark

#### Researched Based ELA/Language Program:

- LLI
- Foundations
- Reading Milestones
- Making Connections
- Edmark
- Reading Eggs
- Corrective Reading
- Lexia
- Journeys
- Collections
- Orton Gillingham
- ESpark

#### Researched Based Social Skill Programs:

- Second Step
- Healthy Relationships
- Zones of Regulation

#### Related Services:

- Speech and Language Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Counseling (Social Skills)
- Vision and Hearing (Support from the IU)



- Assistive Technology
- Reading Specialists Services

## **Emotional Support Programs**

Programming is available for all grades at all schools (programming may vary at individual schools). Students are instructed in the following areas: Academics (reading, math, science, social studies, electives), positive behavioral management, counseling, and social skills. The Primary Goal is to: Develop social, behavioral, and academic skills in the least restrictive setting.

### **Program Features:**

- All work / activities are adapted / modified to meet the student's needs
- Intensive Specially Designed Instruction in Academic, Social, and Behavioral Skills
- Behavior Management Support Services
- Coordination with Regular Education Curriculum and Teachers
- Individualized Educational Planning
- Counseling Support Services
- Small group instruction completed in short intervals (10-30 mins)
- Sensory breaks
- Differentiated Instruction
- Promote Inclusive Model, challenge students academically
- Related Services as needed

## **Resources and Supplementary Supports and Activities**

### Researched Based Math Programs:

- Go math
- Khan Academy
- Xtra math
- Big Ideas
- Khan Academy
- ESpark

### Researched Based ELA/Language Programs:

- Journeys
- Leveled literacy interventions (LLI)
- Gateways
- Foundations
- Reading Eggs
- Lexia
- Wilson
- Barton
- Corrective Reading
- Read naturally
- Making connections
- Rewards
- Project read
- Orton Gillingham
- Collections
- Read Naturally
- ESpark

### Researched Based Social Skill Programs:

- Second step
- Healthy relationships
- Zones of regulation

### Related Services:

- Speech and Language Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Counseling (Social Skills)
- Vision and Hearing (Support from the IU)
- Assistive Technology
- Reading Specialists Services

## **Life Skills Support Programs**

Programming is available for all grades at all schools (programming may vary at individual schools).

Students are instructed in the following areas: academics (reading, math, social studies, science, electives), independent living skills, functional skills, life skills, safety skills, behavior support and social skills.

The primary goal is to prepare our students for independence (living and employment) as adults by developing their functional life skills, employability skills and survival skills.

### **Program Features:**

- All work / activities are adapted / modified to meet the student's needs.
- Independent functional living skill development
- Employability skill development
- Pre-vocational and vocational skill development
- Behavior support
- Social skill development
- Transition support
- Small group instruction completed in short intervals (10-15 minutes)
- Sensory breaks
- Differentiated Instruction
- Individualized programming
- Related Services as needed

**Life Skills Program Features Specific to High School:**

- Life Links Employability Programming / Establish Community Contacts
- Apartment setting / independent living experiences
- Academic Support
- Travel training
- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

## **Resources and Supplementary Supports and Activities**

### **Research-Based Language Arts Interventions**

- Leveled literacy interventions (LLI)
- Foundations
- Reading Eggs
- Lexia
- Gateways
- Wilson
- Barton
- Corrective reading
- Read naturally
- Reading milestones
- Making connections
- Rewards
- Project read
- IXL

### **Research-Based Math Interventions**

- Go math
- Khan Academy
- Xtra math
- Touch math

### **Research-Based Social Skills Interventions**

- Second step
- Healthy relationships
- Responsive classroom
- Zones of regulation

## **Functional Academics**

- **Math**
  - Number sense
  - Mathematical operations
  - Money skills
  - Understanding time
  - Using measurements
  - Real life application
- **Functional Reading**
  - Decoding
  - Sight words
  - Fluency
  - Pre-reading skills
  - Comprehension skills
  - Functional vocabulary
- **Functional Writing**
  - Personal information
  - Signatures
  - Complete sentences
  - Structuring paragraphs
  - Increasing expression

## **Functional Technology Skills**

- Managing emails
- Basic internet skills
- Using computer programs
- Computer safety

## **School/workplace skills**

- Making good choices



- Managing emotions
- Showing respect
- Personal organization
- Independent task completion
- Willingness to try new things
- Following written/picture directions
- Follow verbal directions
- Being prompt and prepared
- Accepting responsibility
- Working in a group

### **Social Skills**

- Interacting in a group
- Listening skills
- Conversation skills
- Manners
- Making and responding to request
- Understanding emotions/feelings
- Expressing emotions/feelings
- Developing positive relationships
- Understanding differences in relationships
- Family vs friends vs acquaintances
- Appropriate social media use
- Self-advocacy
- Compromising

### **Habits of Wellness**

- Personal grooming and hygiene

- Nutritional habits
- Leisure activities
- Managing stress
- Practicing safety
- Dressing appropriately
- Independent living skills

**Transition and Employability**  
**Including College and Career Readiness**  
**Curricular Domains and Goal Areas- Ages 14-18**

**Functional Academics**

- Math
  - Number Sense
  - Mathematical Operations
  - Money Skills
  - Understanding Time
  - Using Measurement
  - Real Life Application
- Functional Reading
  - Decoding
  - Sight Words
  - Fluency
  - Pre-reading Strategies
  - Comprehension Skills
  - Functional Vocabulary
- Functional Writing
  - Personal Information
  - Signatures
  - Complete Sentences
  - Structuring Paragraphs
  - Increasing Expression

**Functional Technology Skills**

- OSMO
- Google Classroom
- Managing Emails
- Basic Internet Skills
- Using Computer Software
- Computer Safety

- Schoology
- Zoom

### **School/Workplace Skills and Attitudes**

- Making Good Choices
- Managing Emotions
- Showing Respect
- Personal Organization
- Independent Task Completion
- Willingness to Try New Things
- Following Written/Picture Directions
- Follow Verbal Directions
- Being Prompt and Prepared
- Having a Positive Attitude
- Accepting Responsibility
- Managing Belongings and Personal Space

### **Travel Training Skills**

- Reading Schedules
- Buying Tickets
- Time Management
- Good Safety Choices

### **Social Skills**

- Interacting in a Group
- Listening Skills
- Conversation Skills
- Manners
- Making and Responding to Requests
- Understanding Emotions/Feelings
- Expressing Emotions/Feelings
- Developing Positive Relationships
- Understanding Differences in Relationships
- Family vs Friends vs Acquaintances

- Appropriate Social Media Use
- Self-Advocacy
- Compromising

### **Habits of Wellness**

- Personal Grooming and Hygiene
- Nutritional Habits
- Leisure Activities
- Managing Stress
- Practicing Safety
- Dressing Appropriately
- Independent Living Skills

### **Vocational and Community Skills**

- Vocational Skills
- Consumer Skills in the Community
- Restaurant/Dining Etiquette
- Accessing Community Resources
- Money Management/Budgeting
- Resume Building
- Applying for a Job
- Exploring Job Interests
- Community Safety

### **Functional Academics:**

- Edmark Functional Word Series
  - Fast food/Restaurant Words
  - Grocery Words

### **Vocational Training:**

- *School Based Opportunities*
  - Office work
  - Cafeteria work
  - Electives
  - Extra-curricular supports
  - Pretzels sales
  - Interboro Coffee House
  - Maintenance Work
- *Community Based Opportunities*
  - YMCA
  - Wawa
  - EATON
  - MacDade Bowling Alley
  - Kindergarten Academy
  - Norwood Library
  - Norwood School
  - Prospect Park STEM
  - Connor Williams
  - Retro Fitness

**Social Skills:**

- Weekly Structured Social Skills Groups using Healthy Relationships and Autism
- Increased Focus on Pragmatics Within Speech and Language Services
- Inclusion in Extra-Curricular Activities: Bucs Buddies
- Unified Sports League: Bocce

**Community Based Instruction:**

- Community Based Trips Monthly
- Consumer Education
- Restaurant/Dining Etiquette
- Leisure Activities

- Community Resources

**Transition and Employability  
Including College and Career Readiness  
Curricular Domains and Goal Areas- Ages 18-21**

**Community Living and Learning**

1. Accessing Community Resources
2. Identifying Local Businesses
3. Connecting Needs and Services
4. Enhancement of Recreation & Leisure Activities
5. Safety in the Community
6. Travel Instruction

**Independent Living Skills**

1. Managing Household Tasks
2. Food Handling/Storage
3. Cooking/Serving Meals
4. After Meal Clean up
5. Laundry
6. Cleaning and Basic Maintenance
7. Home Safety
8. Basic First Aid
9. Budgeting/Paying Bills
10. Hobbies
11. Managing Relationships
12. Managing Wellness

**Employability Skills and Instruction**

1. Assessment/Instruction of Interpersonal Skills
2. Problem-solving Skills
3. Self-Advocacy in the Workplace
4. Generalizing Skills in a Work Setting



5. Career Preparation
6. Resume Building
7. Portfolios

### **Enhanced Employment Opportunities**

1. Part-time Employment Opportunities
2. Individual or Small Group Job Coaching
3. Meeting Expectations of an Employer
4. Accepting Feedback From Employers
5. Using Feedback to Improve Performance
6. Addressing Concerns at Job Sites
7. Looking for New Opportunities

### **Exploring Post-Secondary Opportunities**

1. Research Schools or Training Programs
2. Research Entrance Requirements
3. Test Prep
4. Visit Programs and Schools
5. Understanding Resources Available
6. Understanding Funding and Costs

## **Learning Support / Resource Programs**

Programming is available for all grades at all schools (programming may vary at individual schools). Academics (reading, math, social studies, science, electives). The primary goal is to support students academically.

### **Program Features:**

- All work and activities are adapted / modified to meet student's needs.
- Related services as needed
- Individualized programming
- Promote inclusive model (least restrictive environment)
- Pull out and push in support

### **Resources and Supplementary Supports and Activities**

#### Researched Based Math Programs:

- Go math
- Khan Academy
- Xtra math
- Big Ideas
- Khan Academy
- ESpark
- IXL

#### Researched Based ELA/Language Programs:

- Journeys
- Leveled literacy interventions (LLI)

- Gateways
- Foundations
- Reading Eggs
- Lexia
- Wilson
- Barton
- Corrective Reading
- Read naturally
- Making connections
- Rewards
- Project read
- Orton Gillingham
- Collections
- Read Naturally
- ESpark
- IXL

Researched Based Social Skill Programs:

- Second step
- Healthy relationships
- Zones of regulation

Related Services:

- Speech and Language Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Counseling (Social Skills)
- Vision and Hearing (Support from the IU)
- Assistive Technology
- Reading Specialists Services

## **Speech and Language Support**

Programming is available for all grades at all schools (programming may vary at individual schools).

Based on evaluations, students will receive speech and language services from certified speech and language therapists. Speech Therapists work with students exhibiting the full range of communication disorders, including those involving expressive/receptive language, articulation (speech sound disorders), fluency, voice/resonance, social skills, and swallowing.

Speech Therapists are based in every district building.

### **Program Features:**

- All work and activities are adapted / modified to meet student's needs.
- Scaffolding is provided to improve independence with skills to support success in the classroom.
- Speech and language frequency based on student needs.
- Individualized programming to target student goals based on formal and informal assessment, data collection and progress.
- Consultation between speech therapists, parents and teachers/support staff.
- Pull out and push in support.
- Support for students using AAC, as well as support and training for staff working with the student.

### **Resources and Supplementary Supports and Activities**

Researched Based Language Programs:

- Supporting Knowledge in Language and Literacy (SKILL) program
- Lindamood Bell programs
  - Visualizing and Verbalizing
  - Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing (LiPS)
  - Seeing Stars

## **Additional Programming and Supports**

### ➤ **Transition Classroom at the Administration Building**

Primarily high school students, primarily with an IEP or 504 and occasionally middle school students with an IEP or 504.

Students are instructed in all major subject areas and electives. There are optional instructional deliveries including online or through direct instruction, or other means that support the individual. Regardless of the mode of instruction students receive 1:1 support. Programs are individualized and blended based on student need.

The Primary goal of the Transition Program is as a temporary placement for high school students who are either struggling at the Interboro High School for a variety of reasons or are transitioning back into the school district. The Transition Program offers students a small class size with high teacher to student ratios. The mission of the program is to provide educational options for all students that empower, engage and prepare them for college, work training and citizenship while supporting each student in achieving their highest educational and personal potential. The Transition Program provides an appropriate learning environment for all students in which the unique needs of each student can be met. Students are able to discover their strengths and abilities while experiencing academic achievement and personal success. The program is a short term option with the ultimate goal to return the student to the high school in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

#### **Program Features:**

- Increase student motivation
- Provide 1:1 instruction
- Develop social skills / counseling services
- Provide abbreviated schedules
- Provide close communication with families, teachers, administrators and outside agency workers
- Develop a plan with which the student can meet with success
- Have students return to the high school as soon as the team decides the student can be successful
- Give students the flexibility of remaining at the Transition Program for the entire school year if the team agrees.

- Students that are identified within the category of Other Health Impairment, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, or Traumatic Brain Injury will be supported in classrooms depending on that student's individual needs. Part of the evaluation and IEP process is to place students within a setting that is least restrictive, but where the student can be most successful. All of the "Program Features" listed above for the districts various programs are also available for these students. As was previously stated, a student's disability category or diagnosis does not dictate the type of classroom or instructional setting for the student. The specially designed instruction, goals and services needed by a student will determine that setting, with the least restrictive environment always being the first option.
  
- Students that are identified with Deaf / Blindness, Deafness, and visual impairment may will also be serviced within the School District, if possible, with the support and resources from the local Intermediate Unit (DCIU). Students that may need more intensive supports / resources may be referred to out of district placements. These placements are discussed and decided upon at the IEP meeting. The parent must support the placement decision. In these cases an optional placement may be more supportive due to the fact that their will be more resources available to meet the student's more intensive and specific needs. A placement does not have to be permanent. Each year at the IEP meeting all options are discussed and the least restrictive environment is always considered.
  
- **Behavior Supports**
  - School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Interboro places a large emphasis on schoolwide systems of support that include proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments. A continuum of positive behavior support for all students within a school is implemented in areas including the classroom and non-classroom settings (such as hallways, buses, and restrooms).
  - Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

MTSS encompasses multiple levels and means of support for students, including academic, behavioral and socio-emotional provisions to meet the various needs of all our learners.

    - *Tier I (All Students – Core Support):*

- Students receive effective instruction within the core curriculum
- Effective practices and interventions are provided by the classroom teacher
- Flexible grouping provided in specific areas of need
- All district-wide assessments are administered
- Progress is monitored, as needed
- *Tier 2 (10-15% of Students – Strategic Support)*
  - Research-based, strategic interventions provided by teacher and/or support staff *in addition to Tier-1 classroom interventions*
  - Small group strategic intervention for about 60-90 minutes each week
  - Bi-weekly progress monitoring
- *Tier 3 (5-10% of Students – Intensive Support)*
  - Higher-intensity interventions are provided *in addition to Tier-2 interventions*
  - 1:1 or smaller-group support
  - Weekly to daily progress monitoring

- Other Behavioral Supports

- Development of FBAs & PBSPs
- Group Counseling
- Individual Counseling
- Social Skills Instruction
- Referrals to Community-Based Mental Health Providers
- Ongoing Collaboration with Community-Based Mental Health Providers
- Trauma Informed Care
- Safety Cares (Crisis Prevention and Intervention)
- Progress Monitoring of Behavioral Goals

- Additional Classes for Support at the High School

- **Skill Development for College and Career**- Students will be exposed to resume writing, interview strategies, application management and other functional skills that will prepare them for real world experiences. . In addition,

throughout the course students will improve their executive functioning skills, organization, self- advocacy and self improvement. At the completion of the course, students will feel more confident applying and receiving a job.

- **Employability Experience-** The purpose of this elective is for students who want to learn skills to help them become more independent and employable. The students have volunteer experiences throughout the community with various jobs. We have established cooperative experiences at local businesses, where students have the opportunity to learn various job skills. Students must be willing to communicate and work with others. Additionally, the Bucs to Elders program assists senior citizens in the Interboro Community with raking, light house work, yard work, etc. Throughout the year, classwork assignments relate to learning how to communicate effectively, express and deal with feelings, working with others and job skills. Resumes and portfolios are also developed. Students are encouraged to apply at the end of this work experience for jobs in the skill areas they have been taught.