

Parent/Staff Special Education Reference Manual & Handbook



**Department of Special Service K-8
23 Pennsylvania Ave., Newark, NJ 07114**

**Link Community Charter School
Newark, New Jersey**

Draft 2022

Mission Statement

Link Community Charter School will provide an outstanding elementary and middle school education for learners of all academic abilities by developing the mind, body and spirit through a strong curriculum, experiential learning, immersion in the arts, and an enduring commitment to Core Values; this will allow them to be successful in competitive high schools and become responsible and resourceful citizens who give back to others.

This reference manual is intended to provide parents/guardians, staff members, and other stakeholders with information regarding the special education services provided at Link Community Charter School, along with additional information to support students with disabilities. While every effort is made to reference current federal and state law in this handbook, all are encouraged to reference relevant laws.

Table of Contents

Introduction

About Special Education Services

 About the Child Study Team

 Who is on the Child Study Team?

 School Social Worker/Liaison

 School Psychologist

 Case Manager

 Link Community Charter School Administrative Staff

 The First Step in the Referral Process

 Procedures and Parents Rights

 Evaluation Process, Identification and Placement Process: Description

 Referral

 Evaluation

 Eligibility

 The Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

 Resolving Disagreements (Prise)

 Disabilities Covered Under the Act

 Accommodations and Modifications in the the Classroom for Testing
 Placement

 Supplementary Aids and Services

Supplementary Instruction

Resource Programs

 Special Education Classes

 Out of District Placements

 Annual Review and Reevaluation

 Group Size

 About Related Services

 Speech

 Speech-Language Therapy Staff

 Paraprofessionals

Link Community Special Education Advisory Council

New Jersey Department of Education/General Information/Office of Special Education Programs

Community Resources/Advocacy/Education

Assistive Technology

 Government Agencies and Committees/Division of Behavioral Health Services

Explanation of Common Acronyms

Link Community Charter School Board Policies: Special Education

A Note to Parents and School Staff

Link Community Charter School values all the stakeholders involved in the life of its students and recognizes they each play a role in delivering the very best education.

As the parent/guardian of a special education student, you are a key part of the process that provides an appropriate and caring educational experience for your child. You are the advocate who remains a constant in your child's life through his or her matriculation throughout their school experience.

As a teacher, service provider, and administrator, you are key members in the team that supports each special education student. You implement plans and advocate for support services to strengthen your student's educational experience so they maximize learning and growth.

LCCS Mission, Vision, Core Values

Notice of Disclaimer

This Special Education Handbook is intended to be for general information use only. The handbook serves as a guide in how Link Community Charter School provides special education services as outlined and defined by N.J.A.S.C. 6A - 14.

About Special Education Services

Evaluation and intervention services are provided to students by the Child Study Team, special education instructional staff, and related services specialists. A referral to the Child Study Team may be initiated by a parent/guardian, teacher, school nurse, school administrator, special services staff member, medical specialist and other professionals or agencies concerned with the welfare of students when an educational disability may be suspected.

The law requires public/charter schools to develop a process for identifying potentially educationally disabled students. An educationally disabled student is one who may be experiencing difficulties of a physical, emotional, academic, intellectual, or social nature to the extent that the student is not able to function effectively in a general education program. An evaluation by the Child Study Team is required in order to determine the level of the difficulties and whether the student is eligible for special services. If the student is determined eligible for special education and related services an individualized education program (IEP) is developed.

Parents and school personnel work together throughout this process to develop an appropriate program to meet the specific needs of students. Under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, parents/guardians are included as an integral part of the IEP Team that plans and develops an appropriate school plan and an IEP for the educationally disabled

student. The complete rules and regulations pertaining to Child Student Team procedures and students with disabilities are contained in the *New Jersey Administrative Code, Title 6A, Chapter 14, Special Education*. Parents/guardians may obtain a copy of this document by contacting Department of Special Services at link@linkschool.org or by accessing the website at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/specialed/>

About the Child Study Team

The Child Study Team (CST) is an essential component in the process of student support services. The CST is traditionally composed of a collaborative team of staff members with specialized expertise, training, and skills. These members act as liaisons between teachers, students, and families. These students have been identified as needing additional support in their academics or behaviors. In addition, to these needs the CST may make recommendations to meet the needs of students' social, emotional, or learning well-being.

Link Community Charter School contracts the New Jersey Educational Services Commission as its Child Study Team.

Members of the Child Study Team include a School Psychologist, Learning Disabilities Teacher (LDT-C), School Social Worker, Case Manager. Link also uses its own School Social Worker as its internal case manager.

What Does the Child Study Team Do?

Depending on the needs within the school, the responsibilities and roles of the CST may vary. CST members are responsible for planning and implementing educational programs for those students that may require additional support within or outside of the general education setting.

The CST responsibilities and roles may include, but are not limited to:

- Observe students in their classroom environment and consult with their teachers
- Determine the eligibility of students in order to receive tiered intervention, special services, or special education programs
- Determine and recommend instructional strategies, programs, special education placements, and any other services required to meet a students' individualized needs
- Communicate and work with parents and other professionals on behalf of students
- Develop and monitor individualized education programs (IEPs), participate in IEP meetings and annual reviews
- Participate in Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) and 504 meetings

Link Community Administrative Staff

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The First Step in the Referral Process

The Intervention and Referral Service (I&RS) team serves as a referral resource for teachers and is an integral part of the pre-referral process. I&RS members typically include, but are not limited to, the school principal, nurse, counselor, CST members, and teachers. I&RS may also include parents, special education supervisors, speech therapists, or reading specialists. The purpose of the I&RS process is to address any possible concerns teachers may have regarding their students' academic, social, or emotional functioning. Based on meetings with teachers, the I&RS team develops case-specific strategies for use in general education classrooms. Teachers then implement these strategies according to I&RS recommendations. Parents are informed about the progress of their child through contact with the teacher. **If the strategies are not effective, they may be revised or, if it is suspected that the student is potentially educationally disabled, a referral will be made to the CST.**

Parents may request their children be brought before the I&RS team. They would do this by contacting the child's teacher or building principal. **Note: Parents are always notified if their child is referred to the I&RS team.** Parents can always request a CST evaluation before, during, or after the I&RS process. Written requests for CST evaluations should be directed to the building principal or a designee.

Procedures and Parents' Rights

Handbook of Parents' Rights

IDEA requires school districts to provide parents of a child with a suspected disability, a notice containing a full explanation of the procedural safeguards (legal rights) available under IDEA and other state and federal regulations. This handbook is called, "Parental Rights in Special Education" (PRISE). Parents can obtain a copy of PRISE by visiting [https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/parents/docs/RevisedParentalRights\(PRISE\).pdf](https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/parents/docs/RevisedParentalRights(PRISE).pdf)

Procedures & Parent's Rights

The procedural safeguards must be given to you each school year and at the following times:

- When your child is first referred for evaluation or when you request an evaluation,
- When you request a copy of the procedural safeguards,
- When your child is removed for disciplinary reasons and the removal results in a change in placement,
- Upon receipt of the first state complaining and/or the first due process petition in a school year (should you file complaint with the state or request a due process hearing),
- Upon revision of the procedural safeguards.

The Evaluation Process

Step One: Referral

Step Two: Evaluation

Step Three: Eligibility

Step Four: Individualized Education Plan

Step Five: Placement

Step Six: Annual Review & Reevaluation

Referral

A student is generally referred for evaluation by school personnel through the I&RS team or by the children's parent/guardian. The referral should be made in writing, addressing the specific concerns and the child's current strengths and challenges. The referral is presented to the building principal who assigns the referral to a designated case manager. The case manager has the responsibility for managing the referral process. If parents make a referral for evaluation, it is important that they know who is designated to receive the referral, who will manage the referral, and who will be responsible for contacting them throughout the referral process. This information may be obtained by calling the school's main number at (973) 642-0529.

Evaluation

An informed and signed parental consent document must be received in order for the school to proceed with the evaluation process. It is important for the parent to understand the components of the evaluation and how the results will be used to determine eligibility for special education services. An initial evaluation shall consist of a multidisciplinary assessment in all areas of suspected disability. The evaluation shall include at least two assessments and shall be conducted by at least two members of the CST in those specific areas. These members must have appropriate training or qualifications through their professional licensure or educational certification and other specialists in the area of disability as required or determined necessary by the state.

The specific types of evaluations a child needs is decided on an individual basis and will include professionals trained to assess specific areas of learning. Persons from varying disciplines including a school psychologist, school social worker, Learning Disabilities/Teacher Consultant (LDTC), speech-language therapist, physical therapist, audiologist, and/or occupational therapist may conduct evaluations.

The common elements of a comprehensive assessment generally include:

1. A psychological evaluation, which includes a standardized aptitude test that measures cognitive functioning, a clinical interview observation, and as needed social-emotional and adaptive behavior rating scales,
2. A social history, which includes developmental, medical, and educational histories, and parent teacher and student interviews,
3. An educational evaluation, which includes achievement testing, learning style inventory, and a classroom observation,

4. A medical evaluation/health appraisal, which includes a physical examination and visual and auditory acuity testing.

Persons trained in the area of hearing or visual impairment may also provide assessment services, as needed. At this step of the process, parents should receive PRISE. After parental consent for initial evaluation of a school age student has been received, the evaluation, determination of eligibility for services under this chapter, and if eligible, development and implementation of the IEP for the student shall be completed within 90 calendar days.

You, as the parent, can provide the school with information about your child that you want them to use in deciding if your child has a disability that requires special education and related services. In the event that a parent does not give permission for the school to evaluate the child and the school personnel believe that the child is in need of special education, the school system may, but is not required to, pursue the initial evaluation of the child by utilizing due process procedures.

Independent Evaluations

As described above, before receiving special education services, your child must receive an evaluation if a disability exists. If you disagree with the school's evaluation results, you can request an independent evaluation. This service is provided at the school's expense and the testing is done by a licensed professional not employed by Link Community Charter School. The results of the independent evaluation must be considered by the IEP team.

Eligibility

After the required evaluations are completed and summary reports are prepared and shared with the parents, the IEP team conference is held to determine if a child has a disability and needs special education and/or related services. The IEP team includes the child's parents and professionals who are knowledgeable about the child's learning and behavior in the school environment. The team should discuss every area of physical, behavioral, and academic functioning that affects the child's educational performance. The team must decide if the child a) meets the eligibility criteria for a disability area as outlined in the New Jersey Special Education Administrative Code, Chapter 14, Title 6A, b) if the disability adversely affects educational performance, and c) is in need of specially-designed instruction and related services. All three criteria must be met in order for the student to be found eligible for special education.

According to IDEA 2006, students may not be found eligible for special education services if they do not meet the eligibility requirements of the law or if their eligibility is based on a lack of instruction in reading and math. A student may also be deemed not to be eligible if the disability does not adversely affect the child's educational performance.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Section 504 is a civil rights law that protects against discrimination and grants equal access for all. It affects students who have physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more life functions (e.g. learning). Under Section 504, if the student does not qualify for special education and related services, he or she may be eligible for reasonable accommodations in the general education classroom. Although there is no official list of reasonable accommodations the following academic adjustments are noted specifically in the law: a) modifications to the method of instruction, b) extended exam time, c) alternate testing formats, and d) increased time to complete a course. Also, auxiliary aids such as a calculator, tape recorders, laptops, may be considered reasonable accommodations.

The Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

Upon completion of the evaluation, an eligibility conference will be held to discuss whether the student meets the code criteria making them eligible for special education and/or related services. A copy of the Child Study Team finds reports will be given to the parents following this conference, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) conference will be held.

During this meeting, the student's educational strengths and needs will be considered. Goals and objectives will be developed to address identified needs. The team will then determine the appropriate program for each individual student with consideration of the least restrictive environment as priority. The evaluations, determination of eligibility for services, and (if eligible), the development and implementation of the IEP shall be completed within 90 calendar days of the district's receipt of parental permission to evaluate.

The implementation of a child's individual education program should occur 15 days after the IEP Team's completion of the plan, unless parents and school personnel mutually agree to an earlier implementation date. Times may vary, for example, if supplemental aids must be acquired and/or staff must receive specialized training in order to fully implement the IEP. The IEP document should identify the student's primary educational placement, the projected date for the beginning of the services and modifications described in the plan, and the frequency, location and duration for each service.

Required Elements of an IEP

For a comprehensive list of the required elements of an IEP, see Special Education NJ Administrative Code, Chapter 14:3.7 (e) 1-17.

IEP Team Attendance

According to Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Individualized Education Program team or IEP Team must include the following persons:

- The parents/guardians of the child;
- At least one general education teacher of the child;
- At least one special education teacher;
- A representative who is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specifically designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities;
- An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation;
- At the discretion of the parent/guardian or the school, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services, personnel , as appropriate; and
- The child, when appropriate.

Parents shall be given written notice of a meeting early enough to ensure that they will have an opportunity to attend.

Meetings shall be scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time and place. If a mutually agreeable time and place cannot be determined, the parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be provided the opportunity to participate in the meeting through alternative means, such as videoconferencing and conference calls.

Resolving Disagreements

What happens if I disagree with the school over the identification, evaluation, classification, educational placement, or the provision of free, appropriate public education?

There may be a time when you and the school disagree; Many disagreements can be resolved by communication with your child's teacher, case manager/liaison, school social worker, the school principal, or other school district personnel. There are also procedures established under state and federal law to address your concerns, such as a complaint resolution, mediation, or a due process hearing.

Refer to the PRISE booklet, page 15, for further details regarding the dispute resolution.

Disabilities Covered Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The following lists and defines each area of disability included in New Jersey Special Education Administrative Code, Chapter 14, Title 6A:

Auditory Impairment means an inability to hear within normal limits due to physical impairment or dysfunction of auditory mechanisms. An audiological evaluation by a specialist qualified in the field of audiology and a speech and language evaluation by a certified speech language specialist are required.

Autism means a pervasive developmental disability, which significantly impacts verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction that adversely affects a student's educational performance. Onset is generally evident before age three.

Intellectual Disability means a disability that is characterized by significantly below average general cognitive functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior.

Communication Impairment means a language disorder in the areas of morphology, syntax, semantics, and/or pragmatics/discourse, which adversely affects a student's educational performance and is not due primarily to an auditory impairment.

Emotional Disturbance means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a student's educational performance due to:

1. An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors;
2. An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;
3. Inappropriate types of behaviors or feelings under normal circumstances;
4. A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or
5. A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

Multiple Disabilities means the presence of two or more disabling conditions, the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in a program designed solely to address one of the impairments.

Deafness/Blindness means concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational problems

that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for students with deafness or students with blindness.

Orthopedic Impairment means a disability characterized by a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a student's educational performance.

Other Health Impairment means a disability characterized by having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness with respect to the educational environment, due to chronic or acute health problems.

Social Maladjustment means a consistent inability to conform to the standards for behavior established by the school. Such behavior is seriously disruptive to the education of the student or other students and is not due to emotional disturbance as defined above.

Specific Learning Disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. A specific learning disability is determined when a severe discrepancy is found between the student's current achievement and intellectual ability in one or more of the following areas, and that discrepancy is not primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, general cognitive deficits, emotional disturbance or environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage:

- (1) Basic reading skills;
- (2) Reading comprehension;
- (3) Oral expression;
- (4) Listening comprehension;
- (5) Mathematical calculation;
- (6) Mathematical problem solving;
- (7) Written expression; and
- (8) Reading fluency.

Traumatic Brain Injury means an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force or insult to the brain, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both.

Visually Impairment: means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a student's educational performance.

Other Definitions Included in IDEA

Adapted Physical Education is a diversified program of activities specifically designed for an individual who meets eligibility criteria for special education and/or related services and is not able to participate safely and/or successfully in the regular physical education program.

Assistive Technology is any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selections, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.

Accommodations and Modifications in the Classroom and Testing

The IEP team determines whether accommodations, modifications of curriculum or testing, or alternative testing are needed. Once the decision is made it must be documented in the student's IEP. The decision regarding the need for special consideration is based on the student's evaluation results, current level of functioning, and unique learning characteristics.

Placement

The New Jersey Administrative Code for special education and the federal IDEA ensure that children with disabilities receive a free, appropriate, public education in the least restrictive environment.

The least restrictive environment indicates, the first placement option considered is the general education classroom with the supplemental aids and supports required to enable the student to meet his/her educational goals.

Supplementary Aids and Services

Supplemental aids and services are provided by paraprofessional aides, teachers, related service providers, or CST members in the general education classroom to afford students with disabilities the opportunity to be educated as much as possible with nondisabled peers.

Supplementary aids and services may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Prompting, cueing, and redirecting student participation,
2. Reinforcing of personal, social, behavioral and academic learning goals,
3. Organizing and managing materials and activities,
4. Implementation of teacher-designed follow-up and practice activities,
5. Consultation regarding
 - a. the development and demonstration of techniques and strategies,
 - b. data collection on the effectiveness of the techniques and strategies,
 - c. development of positive behavioral supports.

6. Adapted instructional materials,
7. Supports to address environmental needs (e.g. preferential seating, altered physical room arrangement),
8. Specialized equipment (e.g. wheelchair, computer, software, etc.),
9. Assignment modification,
10. Testing Modifications

Supplementary Instruction

Supplementary instruction is provided to students with disabilities in addition to the primary instruction for the subject being taught. This instruction may be provided individually or in groups, with a preference for an inclusion/in-class model in the general education classroom. Additionally, some pull-out support may be provided.

Resource Programs

Resource programs provide specialized instruction by a special education teacher to students with disabilities, in the general education classroom (in-class resource program) or in a separate Resource Center (pull-out resources program). An individual student may receive either in-class or pull-out services, or both depending on his or her individual needs.

- **In-class Resource programs (ICR)** may be provided up to the student's entire instructional day, and may provide support to enable the student to participate in the general education curriculum, or replacement instruction that modifies the general education curriculum and instructional strategies to meet the student's individual needs.
- **Pull-out Replacement resource classes (POR)** may be provided for up to three subject areas per day, at the elementary level. In grades one through eight, replacement instruction can be provided in reading, writing and/or math. At secondary level, replacement pull-out resource classes may be provided for the entire instructional day.
- **Pull-out Support resource classes** provide students with instruction in study skills and assistance in organizing and/or understanding material that is being taught in the regular education classroom.

Out of District Placements

Out of district placements include Special Services School District, State Approved Schools for the Disabled, State Operated Programs, and Home Instruction. Home Instruction is considered the most restrictive and should only be utilized on a temporary basis.

Annual Review and Reevaluation

The IEP Team will meet once a year, or more if necessary, to review and revise the IEP. The Team will discuss strengths, weaknesses, and progress of the student and plan for the following year accordingly.

In addition to annual reviews, the Child Study Team must complete a reevaluation of the student once every three years. The IEP Team determines the scope of the revolution by reviewing existing data. Further assessments are not conducted if the IEP Team finds that continued eligibility could be determined from existing data. However, if a revolution is warranted, the IEP Team will determine the assessments needed and obtain prenatal consent. Once testing is complete (within 60 calendar days) the IEP Team meets to discuss findings and plan programming. As with initial evaluations, copies of the re-evaluation reports are provided to parents at least ten days in advance of that IEP Team meeting.

Group Size

Group sizes for supplementary instruction and resource programs shall not exceed the limits listed below. Group size may be increased with the addition of an instructional aide, except where noted, according to the following:

Support Resource and Supplementary Instruction
Elementary K-5 (In Class) No Aide- 8 Scholars
Secondary 6-8 (In Class) Secondary: No Aide-10 Scholars
Elementary K-5 (Pull-out) Support and Supplemental Instruction Single Subject No Aide-6/Aide-7-9 Multiple Subject No Aide-6/Aide 7-9
Secondary 6-8 (Pull-out) Support and Supplemental Instruction Single Subject No Aide-9/Aide 10-12 Multiple Subject No Aide-6/Aide-7-9

About Related Services

Related Services may be provided to students who are eligible for special education and related services. Related services include; speech/language, occupational and physical therapies, counseling, and special transportation, etc.

Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapy (OT) services within a school setting are designed to adapt the classroom environment, assist in the development of performance components that are prerequisites for academic learning, and facilitate functional daily living skills within a child's current educational setting.

How are services provided? Current models of best practice suggest intervention be integrated into the naturally occurring events of the student's day, rather than in isolated settings or artificial settings. There may, however, be situations when certain skills may warrant more direct therapeutic interventions. Collaborative efforts may be pursued with a combination of teachers, other related service providers, parents and clothes pertinent to the student's program to support classroom functioning.

Who receives occupational therapy services? Those students identified to require OT services in an IEP or 504 plan in order to access their education are determined after a period of observation within the education environment and assessing his or her ability to meet the demands of the current educational program.

What skills do occupational therapists typically address?

- Fine motor skills: managing classroom tools and other manipulatives
- Visual perceptual skills: provide strategies for interpreting visual information
- Sensory processing skills: help to effectively process and organize information from all sense so that the student can effectively interact with the environment
- Self-care skills: dressing, grooming, hygiene, and feeding
- Pre-vocational skills: address prerequisite skills such as organization, sequencing, and time management

Speech

The development of age-appropriate speech and language skills is essential to the learning process and to a student's social and emotional growth. Children must be able to comprehend the language, express their thoughts, request explanations in front of the teacher and produce speech that others can easily understand.

Speech disorders include the following:

- Articulation disorders, which include difficulties producing sounds in syllables or saying words incorrectly to the point that other people cannot understand what is being said.
- Fluency disorders include problems such as stutter, the condition in which the flow of speech is interrupted by abnormal stoppages, repetitions, or prolonging sounds and syllables.

- Resonance of voice disorders include problems with the pitch, volume, or quality of a child's voice that distracts listeners from what is said. These types of disorders may also cause pain or discomfort for the child when speaking.

Language disorders can be either receptive or expressive. Receptive disorders refer to difficulties understanding or processing language. Expressive disorders include difficulty putting words together, limited vocabulary, or inability to use language in a socially appropriate way.

What is remediation?

Speech-language therapy involves having a speech-language specialist work with a child on a one-to-one basis, in a small group setting or directly in a classroom to overcome difficulties involved with a specific disorder. Speech-language therapy uses a variety of therapeutic strategies, including:

Language intervention activities - involves having a speech-language specialist interact with a child by playing and talking. The therapist may use pictures, books, objectives, or ongoing events to stimulate language development. The therapist may also model correct pronunciation and use repetition exercises to build speech and language skills.

Articulation therapy - articulation, or sound production, exercises involve having the therapist model correct sounds and syllables for a child, often during play activities. The level of pay is age-appropriate and related to the child's specific needs. Articulation therapy involves physically showing a child how to make certain sounds such as the "r" sound. A speech-language therapist may demonstrate how a child should move his tongue to produce specific sounds.

Referral for Speech Services

With all services listed in this manual/handbook, including students not eligible for special education, are those services provided by our speech therapists. Therapists are trained in techniques to identify, support and remediate a student's speech and language needs. There are two ways in which our district identifies which children may be eligible for speech and language services.

- A child can be referred for evaluation by the child's teacher.
- A child can also be referred by the child's parent who may send a letter to the Child Study Team.

Within 20 days of receipt of a referral a meeting will be convened to discuss with parents, teachers and speech therapists of evaluation for speech services is warranted. If an evaluation is agreed upon, once it is completed, parents, teachers, and speech therapist will reconvene another meeting within 90 days to discuss assessment results and, if necessary, subsequent therapy.

Paraprofessionals

As the IEP team plans, they may decide that a student needs a paraprofessional to support the classroom teacher and/or students. The overarching needs that the paraprofessional is to address are identified by the IEP team. However, on a daily basis, paraprofessionals work as support personnel under the supervision of certified school professionals. A paraprofessional serving in a special education position assists teachers in a variety of responsibilities and performs a multitude of tasks that are both instructional and/or non-instructional.

Link Community Special Education Parent Advisory Council

The Link Community Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC) is a group of parents, professionals and concerned community members with a shared interest in and concern for special education issues. The Link Community Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC) exists to fulfill the requirements of the *New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:14-1.2(h)*:

The SEPAC will work collaboratively with all special education parents and district staff in an advisory capacity to the Link Community Charter School Board of Education to:

Establish, review and maintain by-laws;

Foster increased communication of services and information for families of children with special education needs;

Facilitate and foster parent involvement in parent education resources;

Foster and promote inclusionary special education settings for all students; and provide advisory information to the Board of issues pertaining to special education services in the district.

The committee will be comprised of **two parent voting members** with representation as follows:

1 parent- recommended by the LPA and/or Principal/Vice Principal

1 parent with a student who receives Special Education Services- recommended by the Head of School.

The committee will include the following **non-voting members**:

Child Study Team member

Special education teacher

General education teacher

Principal/Vice Principal

Head of School

Link Community Charter School Board of Education liaison

Goals for Link Community Charter School's SEPAC:

SEPAC will strive to improve the educational process and experience for children in need of special education and related services, which will promote the inclusion of children with special needs, with the necessary support, within their school and the community at large.

SEPAC will strive to offer advocacy, education, resources and support to students/families of students with disabilities/special education needs.

SEPAC will strive to meet regularly with the administrators of Link Community Charter School, to provide input, raise and resolve concerns, and ensure that issues affecting children with special needs are given the attention they deserve.

SEPAC liaisons will strive to support Link Community Charter School by connecting SEPAC with the school administration, PTA and families.

No membership is required. For questions or to be added to the confidential email list to receive information about upcoming events, please contact link@linkschool.org

New Jersey Department of Education

General Information

609-292-4450

Essex County Executive Superintendent of Schools

Essex County Office of Education

Address

Number

Office of Special Education Programs

P.O. Box 500

Trenton, N 08625

609-292-0147

Community Resources

Advocacy

NJ Protection and Advocacy, Inc.	800-922-7233
Parent Education Network	800-522-5827
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, Inc. (SPAN)	800-654-SPAN (7726)
NJ Center for Outreach and Services for Autism Community, Inc. (COSAC)	800-4-AUTISM
NJ Coalition for Inclusive Education	732-613-0400
National Center for Learning Disabilities	212-545-7510
National Federation of the Blind	410-659-9314
NJ Education Law Center	973-624-1815
Autism Speaks	856-858-5400

Education

Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs	609-633-6833
Education Law Center, Inc.	201-624-1815
Education Resource Information Center (ERIC)	800-328-0272
Learning Resource Center-North	973-414-4491

Assistive Technology

NJ Technology Assistive Resource Program (TARP)	800-DIAL-TEC (800-342-5832)
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Government Agencies and Committees

Essex County Office of Education	
Library for the Blind and Handicapped	800-792-8322
NJ Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired	732-255-0720
NJ Developmental Disabilities Council	609-292-3745
Department of Children and Families	

Organizations and Support Groups

Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder Chad	800-233-4050
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National Association for Gifted Children 202-785-4268

National Information Center for Children and Youth
With Disabilities (NICHCY) 800-695-0285

Parents for the Blind Children- NJ POBC-NJ
United Cerebral Palsy Association of NJ (UCP)
Variety Club, The Children's Charity

Division of Behavioral Health Services

Perform Care Mobile Response 877-652-7624

Explanation of Common Acronyms

ADA Americans with Disabilities Act

ADD Attention Deficit Disorder

DHD Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

AI Auditory Impairment

AT Assistive Technology

AU Autism

BD Behavioral Disabilities

BIP Behavior Intervention Plan

CI Communication Impaired

COTA Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant

CST Child Study Team

DB Deaf-Blindness

DDD Division of Developmental Disabilities

DOE Department of Education

DYFS Division of Youth and Family Services

ED Emotionally Disturbed

ESERS Eligible for Special Education and Related Services

FAPE Free Appropriate Public Education

FBA Functional Behavior Assessment

HI Hearing Impaired

ICR In-Class Resource (w/Special Education Teacher)

ID Mildly Cognitively Impaired

ID Moderately Cognitively Impaired

ID Severely Cognitively Impaired

IDEA Individual with disabilities Education Act

IEP Individual Education Program

LD Learning and/or Language Disabilities

LPT Licensed Physical Therapist

LRE Least Restrictive Environment

MCI Moderately Cognitively Impaired

MD Multiple Disabilities

OCD Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

OCR Office of Civil Rights

ODD Oppositional Defiant Disorder

OHI Other Health Impaired

OI Orthopedically Impaired

OT Occupational Therapist

OTR Occupational Therapist Registered

POR Pull-Out Replacement (Special Education Teacher)

POS Pull-Out Support (Special Ed. Teacher)

PT Physical Therapist

PT Physical Therapy

RTI Response to Intervention

SCI Severely Cognitively Impaired

SI Supplemental Instruction (taught by General Ed. Teacher)

SLD Specific Learning Disabilities

SM Socially Maladjusted

TBI Traumatic Brain Injured

TTM Team Teaching Model

VI Visual Impairment

District Policy**2460 - SPECIAL EDUCATION (M)**

Section: Program

Date Created: June 2014

Date Edited: March 2022

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The Link Community Charter School Board of Trustees assures compliance with Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:14-1 et seq. Furthermore, the Board will have programs and procedures in effect to ensure the following:

1. All students with disabilities, who are in need of special education and related services, including students with disabilities attending nonpublic schools, regardless of the severity of their disabilities, are located, identified, and evaluated according to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.3.
2. Homeless students are located, identified, and evaluated according to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.3, and are provided special education and related services in accordance with the IDEA, including the appointment of a surrogate parent for unaccompanied homeless youths as defined in 42 U.S.C. §§11431 et seq.
3. Students with disabilities are evaluated according to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.5 and 3.4.
4. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed, reviewed and as appropriate, revised according to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.6 and 3.7.
5. To the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment according to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.2.
6. Students with disabilities are included in State-wide and school-wide assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations, where necessary according to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.10. All students with disabilities will participate in State-wide assessments, or the applicable alternative assessment in grades three, four, five, six, seven, and eight in accordance with their assigned grade level.

7. Students with disabilities are afforded procedural safeguards required by N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.1 et seq., including appointment of a surrogate parent, as set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.2 and Policy 2467, when appropriate.
8. The rules set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:14 ensure a free appropriate public education is available to all students with disabilities between the ages of three and twenty-one, including students with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school:
 - a. The obligation to make a free, appropriate public education available to each eligible student begins no later than the student's third birthday and that an individualized education program (IEP) is in effect for the student by that date;
 - b. If a child's third birthday occurs during the summer, the child's IEP Team shall determine the date when services under the IEP will begin;
 - c. A free appropriate public education is available to any student with a disability who needs special education and related services, even though the student is advancing from grade to grade;
 - d. The services and placement needed by each student with a disability to receive a free, appropriate public education are based on the student's unique needs and not on the student's disability; and
 - e. The services and placement needed by each student with a disability to receive a free, appropriate public education are provided in appropriate educational settings as close to the student's home as possible and, when the IEP does not describe specific restrictions, the student is educated in the school he or she would attend if not a student with a disability.
9. Children with disabilities participating in early intervention programs assisted under IDEA Part C who will participate in preschool programs under N.J.A.C. 6A:14 will experience a smooth transition and have an IEP developed and implemented according to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.3(e) and N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7.
10. Full educational opportunity to all students with disabilities is provided.

11. The compilation, maintenance, access to, and confidentiality of student records are in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:32-7.
12. Provision is made for the participation of students with disabilities who are placed by their parent(s) in nonpublic schools according to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-6.1 and 6.2.
13. Students with disabilities who are placed in private schools by the school Board are provided special education and related services at no cost to their parent(s) according to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-1.1(d) and N.J.A.C. 6A:14-7.5(b)3.
14. All personnel serving students with disabilities are highly qualified and appropriately certified and licensed, where a license is required, in accordance with State and Federal law, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-1.2(b)13..
15. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-1.2(b)4, the in-service training needs for professional and paraprofessional staff who provide special education, general education or related services are identified, and appropriate in-service training is provided. The school Board shall maintain information to demonstrate its efforts to:
 - a. Prepare general and special education personnel with content knowledge and collaborative skills needed to meet the needs of children with disabilities;
 - b. Enhance the ability of teachers and others to use strategies, such as behavioral interventions, to address the conduct of students with disabilities that impedes the learning of students with disabilities and others;
 - c. Acquire and disseminate to teachers, administrators, school Board members, and related services personnel, significant knowledge derived from educational research and other sources and how the school will, if appropriate, adopt promising practices, materials and technology;
 - d. Ensure that the in-service training is integrated to the maximum extent possible with other professional development activities; and
 - e. Provide for joint training activities of parent(s) and special education, related services and general education personnel.
16. Instructional material will be provided to blind or print-disabled students in a timely manner, consistent with a plan developed by the school..

17. For students with disabilities who are potentially eligible to receive services from the Division of Developmental Disabilities in the Department of Human Services the school will provide, pursuant to the Developmentally Disabled Uniform Application Act, N.J.S.A. 30:4-25.10 et seq., and N.J.A.C.6A:14-1.2(b)17. the necessary materials to the parent(s) to apply for such services.
18. The school will not accept the use of electronic mail from the parent(s) to submit requests to a school official regarding referral, identification, evaluation, classification, and the provision of a free, appropriate public education.
19. The school will provide teacher aides and the appropriate general or special education teaching staff time for consultation on a regular basis as specified in each student's IEP, pursuant to N. J.A.C.6A:14-4.5(d)
20. The school district has a plan in effect to establish stability in special education programming. The plan takes into account the consistency of the location, curriculum, and staffing in the provision of special education services as required by N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7(c)4.
21. The school district screens students who have exhibited one or more potential indicators of dyslexia or other reading disabilities in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:40-5.1 et seq. and Policy 5339.

The school shall provide an Assurance Statement to the County Office of Education that the Board of Trustees has adopted the required special education policies and procedures/regulations and the school is complying with the mandated policies and procedures/regulations.

N.J.A.C. 6A:14-1 et seq.

20 USC §1400 et seq.

34 C.F.R. §300 et seq.

Adopted: 10 June 2014

Revised: 08 May 2017

Revised: 14 March 2022