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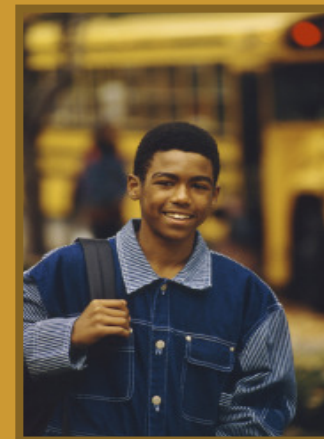


Laura E. Pincus, Director
DEPARTMENT OF EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION
(561) 434-8626

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2009

Possibilities
A Parent's Guide to Exceptional Student Education



**The School District of
Palm Beach County**



A Message from the Superintendent

Every child has gifts and talents that we, as educators, have a responsibility to nurture, as we provide all of our students with a high quality education. Our Exceptional Student Education (ESE) staff works closely with all of our schools, parents, and advocates to ensure that the needs of all of our students are met, and I am proud of their success working with our ESE students. These are exciting times for exceptional student education. Through new and ongoing research, and our own experience, we know more today than ever before about ways to help our ESE students achieve their full potential. Including ESE students in the mainstream of public education, for example, not only adds greatly to their education, but it enhances the educational experiences of all students and teachers. I applaud the hard work and success of our ESE students and the dedication of all of the parents, educators and advocates who are committed to providing them the best possible education.

Sincerely,

Dr. Art Johnson

A Message from the Director of Exceptional Student of Education

Dear Parents,

The School District of Palm Beach County takes great pride in its exceptional student programs. Communication between parents and staff is an essential ingredient in the total education of our children. We invite you to partner with the school district to ensure that all students reach their maximum potential. With that in mind, the ESE Department is providing you with this brochure, which we believe will assist you in understanding the language of special education and finding the persons to ask when you have questions. This brochure was created with parental input and feedback, in an effort to meet the needs of every parent.

The ESE Department encourages you to ask your questions so that you can continue to play a positive role in the education of your child. Our teachers, support personnel, school, area and district staff are here to assist.

Best Regards,

Laura E. Pincus

HELPFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Palm Beach County School District

Exceptional Student Education

561-434-8626

Assistive/Adaptive Technology	434-8551
Audiology	434-3257
Autism Spectrum Disorder	434-8272
Contracts	434-8707
Emotional/Behavior Disability	434-8272
ESE Budget	434-8684
FDLRS Manager	434-8971
FDLRS/Child Find	434-7337
FDLRS/HRD	434-8543
FDLRS/Parent Services	434-8393
FDLRS/Instructional Technology	434-8181
Florida Inclusion Network (FIN)	434-8627
Gifted Education	963-3881
Hospital/Homebound/VI/TBI	684-5192
Instructional Support	434-8539
McKay Scholarship	434-8377
Medicaid	434-8366
Multicultural Team	434-8972
Occupational/Physical Therapy	434-7321
Pre-kindergarten	434-8377
Private Schools	434-7366
Inclusion and Special Programs	629-8587
Psychological Services	434-8972
SEDNET	434-8147
SLI, DHH	434-8066
Transition/Post-Secondary	434-8367
TTY	434-8653

ESE Parent Library

(561) 684-5227

The Elizabeth Bias Professional Library/FDLRS Parent Services Library offers a large array of current educational journals, and books. The library is located in the McKesson Building at 1400-A North Florida Mango Road, West Palm Beach, Fl. 33409. Parents are welcome to the materials and should contact the library for hours.

YOUR AREA ESE OFFICE

If you have a question or concern that can't be addressed at the school level regarding your child or the school's ESE program, the next step is to contact your Area ESE Office. The Area office assists schools regarding procedures for identifying, evaluating, and placing students who have a disability or are gifted.

Area ESE Offices can help parents who need assistance in understanding the complexities of ESE laws and regulations and in explaining their rights.

Area ESE Offices are here to help you and your child get the help that you need.

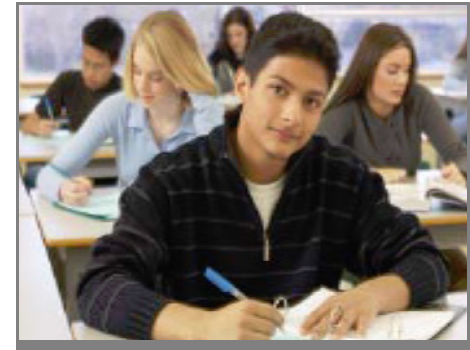
South Area ESE Coordinator	738-9801
Central Area ESE Coordinator	868-5301
West Area ESE Coordinator	996-4991
North Area ESE Coordinator	494-1533

AREA SUPERINTENDENT OFFICES

South Area Superintendent	989-7561
Central Area Superintendent	434-3397
West Area Superintendent	996-4900
North Area Superintendent	494-0050

This guide was created to help parents and guardians of children with special needs to learn about Exceptional Student Education (ESE) in Palm Beach County and to try to answer many common questions.

What is ESE?



Exceptional Student Education (ESE) is the name given in Florida to educational programs and services for students with special learning needs (including those who have disabilities and those who are gifted).

When a child is having difficulty in school, several kinds of help, or interventions, are tried before a referral for evaluation is made. If the interventions are not successful, then the school and the parent will meet to discuss the option of evaluation. **The evaluation will only happen with parent consent.**

In order to be eligible for ESE programs and services, a student must meet all the requirements listed in Florida State Board of Education Rules for a specific disability.

Exceptional Student Education ACRONYMS

AT	Assistive Technology	IDEA
ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder	
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder	
BIP	Behavior Intervention Plan	
CST	Child Study Team	
E/BD	Emotional/Behavioral Disability	
EP	Educational Plan	
ESE	Exceptional Student Education	
ESY	Extended School Year	
FBA	Functional Behavior Assessment	IEP
FERPA	Family Educational Rights Privacy Act	
FDLRS	Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System	
FIN	Florida Inclusion Network	
FAPE	Free and Appropriate Public Education	
HI	Hearing Impaired	
IEP	Individual Education Plan	
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	
InD	Intellectual Disabilities	
LD	Learning Disability	
LI	Language Impaired	EsE
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment	
OT	Occupational Therapy	
OI	Orthopedic Impaired	
OHI	Other Health Impaired	
PT	Physical Therapy	
SI	Speech Impaired	
SLD	Specific Learning Disability	
SAI	Supplemental Academic Instruction	
SSS	Sunshine State Standards	
TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury	FAPE
VI	Visual Impairment	

GLOSSARY (continued)

Specific Learning Disabilities: A student who has average or above average ability but is still unable to learn things as easily as most other students do.

Speech and Language: Relating to a student's ability to talk, write, listen, or read. This includes understanding others and making himself or herself understood.

Standard Diploma: Diploma granted to students who earn a specified number of credits and grade point average, meet the regular Sunshine State Standards, and pass the state graduation test. This is the general education diploma.

State Board of Education Rules: The rules developed to implement Florida's laws related to education.

Sunshine State Standards: A set of objectives that describe what Florida's students are expected to know and be able to do at certain stages of their school career.

Sunshine State Standards for Special Diploma: A set of objectives for students with disabilities in Florida to work on if they cannot meet the regular Sunshine State Standards.

Transfer of Rights: The shift of rights from the parent of a student with a disability to the student when the student reaches the "age of majority."

Transition IEP/Meeting: The IEP used for students age 14 or older. The transition IEP helps prepare students for life after school. A major purpose of the meeting is to help plan a young person's move into adult life.

Visually Impaired: A student who has a loss of some or all of the ability to see.

Vocational: Relating to skills needed for a trade or technical career. Examples of vocational skills are typing and carpentry.

GLOSSARY (continued)

Occupational Therapy (OT): Treatment for a student with a disability that helps the student to maintain, improve, restore, or develop skills needed for daily living.

Physical Therapy (PT): Treatment for a student that helps to maintain, improve, restore, or develop the student's movements and coordination so that he or she can benefit from ESE services.

Physically Impaired: A student who has an illness, injury, or condition that makes it hard for the student to learn in the same ways other students do. This program includes students who are orthopedically impaired, health impaired, or traumatic brain injured.

Placement: The type of setting in which the child is to receive special services.

Present Levels of Educational Performance: Statements in an IEP or EP that describe what a student can do or what he or she knows now.

Related Services: Special help given to a student with a disability in addition to classroom teaching. Examples of related services are special transportation, physical and occupational therapy, and the services of readers for the blind.

Screening: A way of testing a group of students to find out if any of them need an individual evaluation.

Special Certificate of Completion: This certificate is given to students with disabilities who pass the required ESE courses in high school but fail to master the Sunshine State Standards for Special Diploma.

Special Diploma: The diploma given to students with disabilities who are not able to meet the regular Sunshine State Standards and receive a standard diploma. There are two types of Special Diploma: Special Diploma option 1 and Special Diploma option 2. To receive Special Diploma option 1, the student must meet the Sunshine State Standards for Students with Disabilities. Criteria for Special Diploma option 2 are based on the individual needs of the student.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the first step in getting help for my child?

If you are concerned about problems your child may be having in reading, math, writing or behavior, your first and primary contact is your child's teacher.

What is a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)?

The words used in the federal law (IDEA) to describe the right of a student with a disability to special services that will meet his or her individual learning needs, at no cost to his or her parents.

What kind of help can I expect?

The services your child receives may include special teaching methods, special materials, or technology devices. They could include therapy, special transportation, or other supports.

What is an IEP?

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a written plan that describes the individual learning needs of a student with disabilities and the services, supports, accommodations and/or modifications that will be provided to that student.

What is the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)?

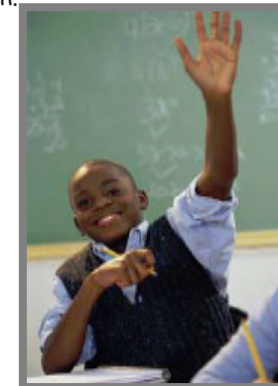
The school setting (placement) that allows a child with a disability to be educated to the greatest extent possible with children who do not have disabilities.

Who do I contact to request a meeting?

Contact your child's school and ask to speak with the ESE (Exceptional Student Education) Contact person .

What if I think my child is gifted?

Contact your child's school and ask to speak with the ESE (Exceptional Student Education) contact person.



WHO TO TURN TO

Who do I speak with, at the school level,

STEP 1

TEACHER

STEP 2

ESE CONTACT

STEP 3

PRINCIPAL

TEACHER:

Your first and primary contact is your child's teacher. You may send a note with your child or leave a message for the teacher to set up a conference to discuss your concerns.

ESE CONTACT:

The ESE Contact person can schedule a meeting to discuss options for your child.

PRINCIPAL:

If your child continues to have difficulties after receiving services or you do not feel your child's needs have been met, contact the principal's office to arrange a meeting.

GLOSSARY (continued)

Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE): An evaluation requested by a student's parents and carried out by someone who does not work for the school district.

Independent Functioning: A student's skills in meeting his or her own needs, such as feeding, dressing, and toileting; traveling safely; and using time management and organizational strategies.

Individual Education Plan (IEP): A written plan describing the individual learning needs of a student with disabilities and the services, supports, accommodations and/or modifications that will be provided to the student.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): The most important United States law regarding the education of students with disabilities.

Intellectual Disabilities (InD): Significantly below average general intellectual and adaptive functioning manifested during the developmental period (birth to 18 years) with significant delays in academic skills.

Interventions: Strategies used to help a student make progress in learning or behavior.

Job Coaching: Help for a student with disabilities in which a specially trained adult goes to the workplace with the student and to help the student learn all the tasks that are part of that job.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): The school setting (placement) that allows a child with a disability to be educated to the greatest extent possible with children who do not have disabilities.

Mediation: A process in which parents and school personnel try to settle disagreements with the help of a person who has been trained to resolve conflicts.

Modification: A change in the requirements of a course or the standards a student must meet; a change in what the student is taught or tested on.

GLOSSARY (continued)

Emotional/Behavioral Disability: Persistent, and consistent behaviors that adversely affect educational performance. Not attributable to age, culture, gender, or ethnicity.

Evaluation: A way of collecting information about a student's learning needs, strengths, and interests. It is used to help decide whether a student has a disability and is eligible for ESE programs and services.

Exceptionality: A disability or special learning need.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE): The words used in the federal law (IDEA) to describe the right of a student with a disability to special services that will meet his or her individual learning needs, at no cost to his parents.

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA): The process of gathering data about problem behaviors of students with disabilities.

Functional Vocational Evaluation: An ongoing process that identifies a student's work-related skills, interests, and need for training.

GED Diploma: A high school diploma earned by a student who is at least 18 years old and who passes the Tests of General Educational Development.

General Curriculum: The things that most non-disabled students are studying. In Florida, the general curriculum is the Sunshine State Standards.

Gifted: Gifted students exhibit high cognitive abilities and need special learning experiences that allow them to make progress that reflects those abilities. It is possible for a gifted student to have a disability as well.

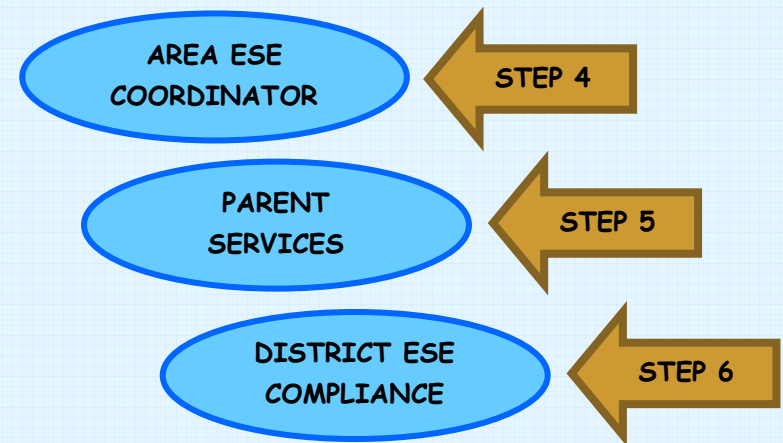
Homebound or Hospitalized: A student in this program must be taught at home or in a hospital for an extended period of time due to a severe illness, injury, or health problem.

Definitions adapted from *An Introduction to Exceptional Student Education*; Copyright 2001; 2005. State of Florida Department of Education. Available

through the Clearinghouse Information Center of the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS).

WHO TO TURN TO ...

Who do I speak with, beyond the school level, if I feel that my child's needs have not been met?



AREA ESE COORDINATOR:

Contact the Area ESE Office only when you feel your child's needs and your concerns have not been met at the school level.

PARENT SERVICES/PALS:

Parent Services/PALS personnel are available to answer questions, attend school meetings and assist parents.

DISTRICT ESE COMPLIANCE:

The District ESE Compliance person can assist with questions regarding IEP's, IDEA and Section 504.

GLOSSARY OF ESE TERMS

Accommodation: A different way of doing something that takes into account a person's disability. Accommodations are changes in how a student is taught or tested. Accommodations do not change the requirements of a course or the standards the student must meet. (Compare with "modification".)

Assessment: A way of collecting information about what a student knows and can do and what a student still needs to learn. Assessment may include testing, observing the student, and looking at a student's portfolio or work samples.

Autism Spectrum Disorder: Characterized by an uneven developmental profile and a pattern of qualitative impairments in social interaction, communication and the presence of restricted repetitive, and/or stereotyped patterns of behavior, interest and activities.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP): A plan that helps a student decrease his or her problem behaviors. The BIP includes strategies the student will be taught that will allow the student to stop the problem behaviors or replace them with other behaviors. The BIP also includes the method for determining the student's progress in decreasing the problem behavior.

Child Study Team (CST): A group of people who help teachers meet the learning needs of their students. The team may refer a student for an "evaluation."

Consent: Parents' agreement to let the school take an action that affects their child's education. Consent is usually shown by the parent signing a form.

Continuum of Services: The range of possible placements for students with disabilities. It includes services provided in a general education classroom, some services provided in a general education classroom and some in a special class, services provided in a special school, and other placements.

Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing: A student who has a loss of some or all of the ability to hear.

GLOSSARY (continued)

Developmentally Delayed: This program is for children ages birth to five years of age only. A child with a developmental delay is developing more slowly than his or her peers either mentally, emotionally, or physically.

Disability: A condition that makes it hard for a student to learn or do things in the same ways as most other students. A disability may be short-term or permanent.

Dismissal: A decision made at an IEP or an EP meeting to dismiss a student from ESE services because the student no longer needs those services. The CST team reviews evaluations and other information about the student before making this decision. Parents will receive written notice before services are stopped.

Dual-Sensory Impaired (DSI): A student who is deaf-blind and has such severe problems with both seeing and hearing that the student cannot learn well in either a program for the deaf or hard-of-hearing or in a program for the visually impaired.

Due Process Hearing: A formal meeting held to settle disagreements between parents and school districts about the evaluation, eligibility, placement, services, or IEP of a child with a disability. The meeting is run by an administrative law judge.

Education Plan (EP): A written plan describing the individual learning needs of a gifted student and the modifications that will be provided to the student.

Eligibility Criteria: The requirements a child must meet to be eligible for each exceptionality category (program). The eligibility criteria are listed in Florida's State Board of Education Rules.

Eligibility Staffing: A meeting at which the parents and a group of school staff members decide if a student is eligible for ESE services.

Eligible: Refers to a student who meets the requirements for and is in need of ESE programs and services.