



Special Education Parent Handbook

For Genesee County School Districts

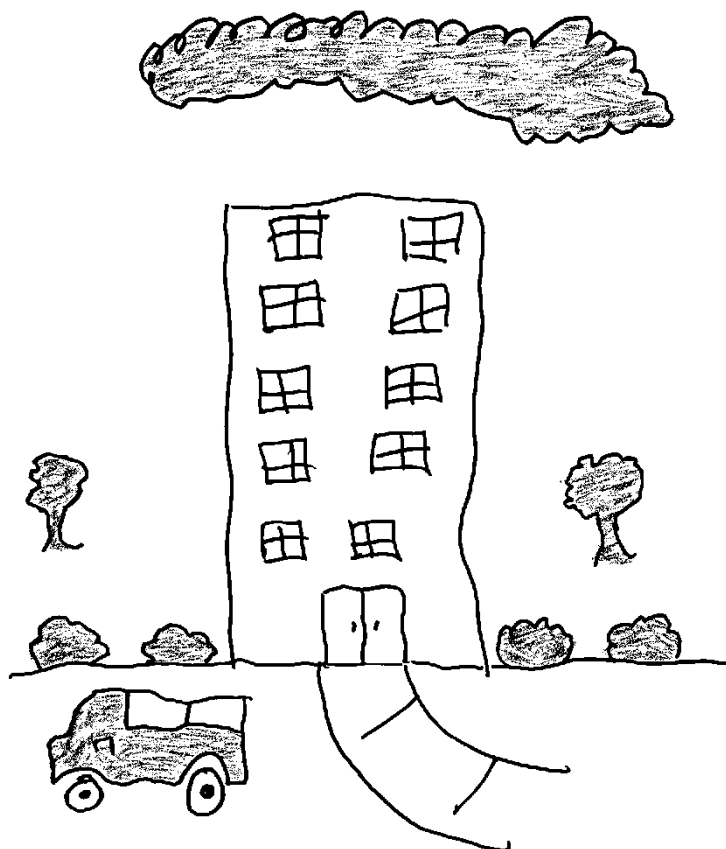
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Introduction

This handbook will acquaint you with Genesee County special education programs and services. It is designed as a reference that explains the steps taken to determine if your child has a disability and to plan and provide your child's special education program.



Genesee Intermediate School District Board of Education

Lawrence P. Ford
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February 2016

Parent Advisory Committee

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As the parent of a child being considered for special education or currently receiving special services, you may have many questions, especially as you wonder what the future holds. It may be helpful to know that others are there to provide assistance.

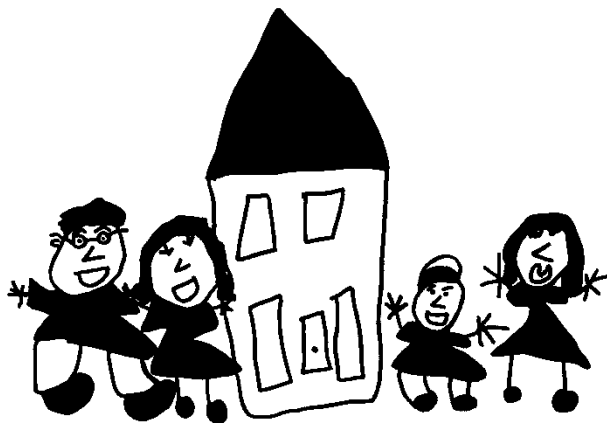
This handbook is a joint effort between representatives of the Genesee Intermediate School District (GISD) Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) and special education administrators in Genesee County school districts. It will acquaint you with Genesee County special education programs and services and is designed as a reference that explains the steps taken to plan and provide your child's special education program. It also explains and defines the terms used during the process. In Michigan, these services are free and available to eligible students from birth through 25 years of age, or until graduation from high school.

The Parent Advisory Committee consists of parents from GISD's local education agencies and public school academies. Each is the parent of a student with a disability and as a group, the PAC is representative of a cross section of the impairment areas. The purpose of the PAC is to represent the views of parents with children in special education. Monthly meetings are held at various GISD locations where information on relevant special education issues is addressed and to perform the advisory functions described in the Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education.

Of interest to you may be our PAC library housed at the Special Education Services office. The library is available for use by parents and educators. It offers a variety of resources about special needs topics. A web site is also available and may be accessed through the GISD web site at www.geneseeisd.org. PAC meetings are open to the public and we invite you to attend. Questions regarding the PAC or special education programs and services may be directed to any committee member. Names and telephone numbers of PAC members are available at the GISD Special Education Services office (810) 591-4881 or from your local school district special education administrator.

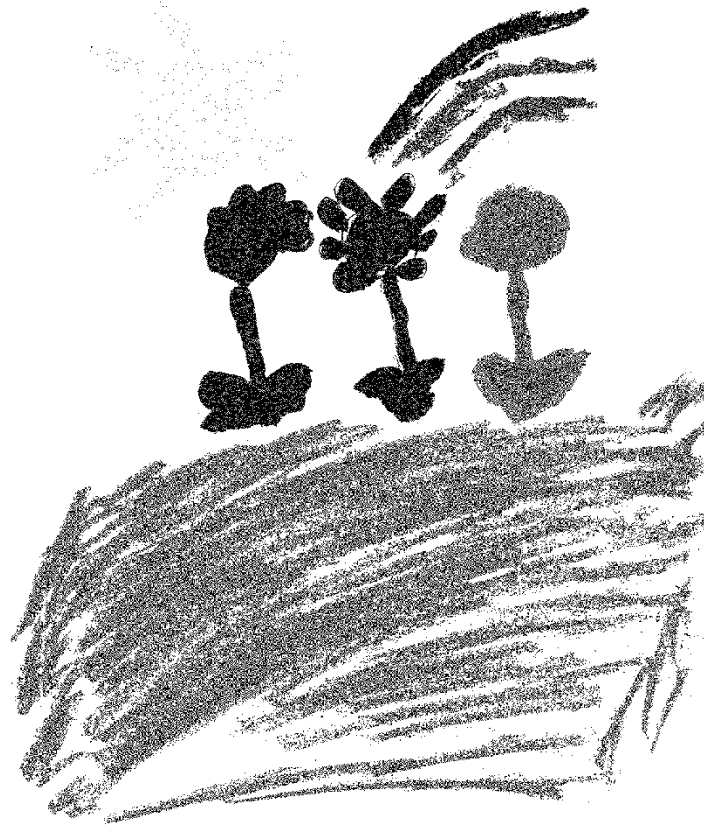
We hope the information in this handbook will be helpful to you, although your individual concerns and interests may vary depending on the age and the nature or severity of your child's disability. You are encouraged to make use of this handbook and to share its information freely.

Parent Advisory Committee
Genesee Intermediate School District



Special Education Overview

State and federal laws state that all children, including those with disabilities, have a right to a free, appropriate education. Special education includes classroom programs and other types of services that are designed especially for students with various types of disabilities or impairments. Rules based on these laws define each type of impairment, specify how each type shall be evaluated, and state what type of service must be available. The impairment must affect school performance to the degree that special education programs or services are needed. In Michigan, special education services must be provided to eligible students from birth through age 25, or until graduation from high school. Services to most eligible children may be offered within a general education classroom. The Revised Administrative Rules for Special Education state that each student is to be provided services in the “least restrictive environment (LRE),” wherever he/she will receive the most appropriate education.



What is Special Education?

Special Education is specially designed instruction, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, at no cost to the parent.

Why Does My Child Need an Evaluation?

The evaluation is done to answer these questions:

- Does the child have a disability that adversely affects his/her educational performance?
- How is the child currently performing in school?
- What are the child's educational needs?
- Does the child need Special Education and/or related services?
- What additions or modifications, if any, are needed to enable the child to meet annual goals in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and participate, as appropriate, in the general curriculum?

What is the Evaluation Process?

Before a child is evaluated for the first time, the school must contact the parent and describe any evaluation the school wants to conduct. The parent must give informed consent for the child to be evaluated. The process involves gathering and reviewing existing information on the child by an IEP Team. This includes consideration of current classroom assessments, observations, and information provided by the parent and school staff. A Review of Existing Evaluation Data (REED) is completed.

How is a Child Evaluated for the Presence of a Disability?

A team called the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET) will conduct the initial assessment of the child's strengths and needs by reviewing and analyzing all available information about his/her suspected disability, including school records, aptitude and achievement tests, teacher recommendations, physical conditions, adaptive behavior, medical history, parent input, and other considerations as appropriate. The testing is done individually in the child's native language. The standardized tests must be used correctly and fairly and be administered by trained, knowledgeable personnel. A variety of assessment tools may also be used.

Who Makes the Decision if a Child is Eligible for Services?

After the evaluation has been completed, the IEP Team, consisting of qualified professionals and the parent, will analyze the written evaluation reports and decide if the child has a disability that adversely affects his/her educational performance, and is eligible for special education services.

How Does a Parent Participate in the Decision-Making Process?

Parents are key members in all decision-making meetings including those that determine the identification, evaluation, education placement, reevaluation, and the appropriate education of the student. Parents give consent for initial evaluations and reevaluations and for the initiation of programs and services at the initial IEP. Parents will receive regular reports on their student's progress.

Who Is Considered To Be A "Child With A Disability?"

The definition includes the following requirements:

- Children from birth through age 25 who have not graduated with a regular high school diploma.
- Children who have the characteristics for a specific disability as defined in the Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education.
- Children who, because of that disability, need Special Education and related service support.

Areas of Disability

Students who have a disability meet Michigan Special Education Rules 340.1705 to 340.1717. This disability must adversely affect school performance to the degree that special education programs and/or services are needed. Michigan Rules define the following disabilities:

Autism Spectrum Disorder – (ASD) Rule 340.1715

Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder have a lifelong developmental disability that adversely affects a student's educational performance in one or more of the following performance areas: (a) academic. (b) behavioral. (c) social. Autism spectrum disorder is typically manifested before 36 months of age. Autism spectrum disorder is characterized by qualitative impairments in reciprocal social interactions, qualitative impairments in communication, and restricted range of interests/repetitive behavior.

Cognitive Impairment – (CI) Rule 340.1705

Students with cognitive impairments have a lack of development in the cognitive domain; have limited success at academic tasks and impairment in adaptive behavior. Depending upon intellectual functioning, these individuals may become vocationally trained, complete high school and may obtain gainful employment.

Deaf-Blindness – (DB) Rule 340.1717

Students who have a co-existence of both a visual and hearing impairment that causes severe communication and other developmental and educational needs.

Early Childhood Developmental Delayed – (ECDD) Rule 340.1711

Children with early childhood developmental delay are children through 7 years of age whose primary delay cannot be differentiated through existing criteria for any other special education classification and who manifest a delay in one or more areas of development equal to or greater than 1/2 of the expected development.

Emotional Impairment – (EI) Rule 340.1706

Students with emotional impairments demonstrate behavioral problems over an extended period of time which adversely affects their ability to learn. The problems result in behaviors manifested by one or more of the following characteristics:

- (a) Inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships within the school environment.
- (b) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
- (c) General pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
- (d) Tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

Hearing Impairment – (HI) Rule 340.1707

Students who suffer any degree of hearing loss that interferes with learning may have a hearing impairment. These persons may also be referred to as hard of hearing or deaf.

Other Health Impairment – (OHI) Rule 340.1709a

Students with an other health impairment exhibit limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, which results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment adversely impacting educational performance and is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder and diabetes.

Physical Impairment – (PI) Rule 340.1709

Students with a physical impairment have a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a student's educational performance. These physical limitations create challenges that affect their ability to learn and may require special materials or equipment.

Severe Multiple Impairment – (SXI) Rule 340.1714

Students with multiple impairments have more than one disability including intellectual and hearing, visual, physical or other health impairments.

Specific Learning Disability – (SLD) Rule 340.1713

Students with a specific learning disability are those who have a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations.

Speech and Language Impairment – (SLI) Rule 340.1710

Students unable to understand or use language may have speech or language impairments. These students have a communication disorder that adversely affects educational performance, such as a language impairment, articulation impairment, fluency impairment, or voice impairment.

Traumatic Brain Injury – (TBI) Rule 340.1716

Students who have a traumatic brain injury have an acquired injury to the brain which is caused by an external physical force and which results in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a student's educational performance.

Visual Impairment – (VI) Rule 340.1708

Students, who have problems seeing, whether partially sighted or blind, are often referred to as having a visual impairment which interferes with development or which may affect their learning. Among the characteristics is visual acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eye, after correction, a peripheral field of vision restricted to not more than 20 degrees, or a diagnosed progressively deteriorating eye condition.

What Happens After a Child is Found Eligible for Special Education?

Another role of the IEP Team is to develop the student's program or Individualized Education Program (IEP). As stated earlier, the IEP Team is comprised of parents, school professionals, and the student, when appropriate. After the IEP is developed and consent to begin services is obtained, the student will receive Special Education and related services.

What is an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?

An "Individualized Education Program" means a written program for a student with a disability that specifically identifies the special education and related services the student will receive. The IEP is developed at a meeting which is scheduled at a mutually agreeable time. The written document is a record of the IEP Team meeting. The IEP is reviewed and revised at least once a year.

What is Included in the IEP?

The requirements include:

- A statement of the student's present level of academic achievement and functional performance.
- A statement of measurable annual goals and short-term objectives that address:
 - how to help the student be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum,
 - how the student's progress toward the annual goals will be measured, and
 - how the parents will be regularly informed of that progress
- A statement of Special Education programs/services and supplementary aids to be provided to the student, and any accommodations, modifications or other supports to enable students with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled students to the maximum extent appropriate.
- The projected starting date for services, as well as the duration, anticipated frequency, and location of where programs and services will be delivered.
- An explanation of when the student will not participate with nondisabled children in the general education class and other activities.
- A statement of any accommodations the student would need to take the state-and/or district-wide assessment tests. If the IEP Team determines the test is not appropriate for the student, a different assessment may be used.
- A statement of transition services, designed to meet a child's unique needs and prepare them further for education, employment, and independent living. Transition services may be considered by age 13, but must be in effect by age 16.

Minor changes to a current IEP are made through an amendment. Minor changes include, but are not limited to:

1. Adding, modifying, or deleting instructional goals and objectives.
2. Modifying the amount of time in the current program.
3. Adding, modifying, or deleting related services or provisions related to supplementary aids/services, assessments, or transportation.

Can the Student be Involved in the IEP?

Students often provide valuable insights regarding their strengths, interests, and needs. When appropriate, each student has the option of being part of the IEP Team process. When they are involved in determining their own goals and objectives, they may be more committed to achieving them. Students can participate in their own annual transition planning by age 16, or younger as appropriate. Students who are age 17 are notified that their rights will be transferred to them upon reaching the age of majority (18). At age 18, both the student and parents are notified that the rights are transferred to the student, unless other legal decisions have been made.

Making the Most of the IEP Process

How Can You Prepare for Your Child's IEP Team Meeting?

- Talk with your child's teacher, observe your child in his/her present program, and review your child's records.

- Familiarize yourself with terminology used in IEP Team meetings.
- Make a list of your questions and concerns to be addressed at the IEP Team meeting.
- If possible, both parents should plan to attend the IEP Team meeting. You may also bring someone else with you who may be of assistance.

How Can You Best Participate at the IEP Team Meeting?

- Be prepared to share your child's strengths.
- Share your opinions and ideas about the educational needs and programs for your child.
- Ask for an explanation of any terms that are unfamiliar to you.
- Ask about various programs and/or related services (e.g., school social work, speech, etc.) that are proposed for your child.
- Ask what can be done at home to help reach educational goals. You and the other members of the IEP Team, working together, develop the student's services.

What Happens After the IEP Team Meeting?

- The superintendent or designee assigns the student to special education programs and services if determined eligible.
- If you are not in attendance at your child's IEP Team meeting, the superintendent or designee will provide you with written notice of the student's IEP within seven days.
- Special education programs and services are implemented for your child. However, at an initial IEP Team meeting, your signature is required in order to begin implementation of the IEP.
- Keep the IEP and all other pertinent special education records together and place them in a safe location.
- Attend all school open houses and scheduled parent conferences. Get to know the school personnel working with your child.
- Keep positive communication channels open between school and home. Share unexpected information that may affect your child's behavior (i.e., illness, divorce, a new baby, etc.).

What are Procedural Safeguards?

They are legal safeguards that protect the rights of students with disabilities and their parents. They provide the information parents need to make decisions about their child's education and explain the procedures used to resolve disagreements between parties. The Procedural Safeguards are from state rules and federal regulations. If you have any questions regarding them, please contact GISD, your local school district, or sources listed in this handbook.

Prior Notice to Parents

The public agency must provide prior written notice to the parents of a child with disabilities each time it proposes or refuses to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the student or the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to the student.

The written notice must:

1. Describe the action that the school district proposes or refuses to take;
2. Explain why the district is proposing or refusing to take the action;

3. Describe each evaluation procedure, assessment, record, or report the school district used in deciding to propose or refuse the action;
4. Include a statement that you have protections under the procedural safeguards provisions in Part B of the IDEA;
5. Tell you how you can obtain a description of the procedural safeguards if the action that the school district is proposing or refusing is not an initial referral for evaluation;
6. Include resources for you to contact for help in understanding Part B of the IDEA;
7. Describe any other choices that your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team considered and the reasons why those choices were rejected; and provide a description of other reasons why the school district proposed or refused the action.

The notice must be written in language understandable to the general public, and be provided in the native language of the parent or other mode of communication used by the parent, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so. If the native language or other mode of communication of the parent is not a written language, the public agency shall have the notice translated orally or by other means to the parent in his or her native language or other mode of communication so the parent understands the content of the notice. The public agency must maintain written evidence that these requirements have been met.

Notice of Nondiscrimination Policy

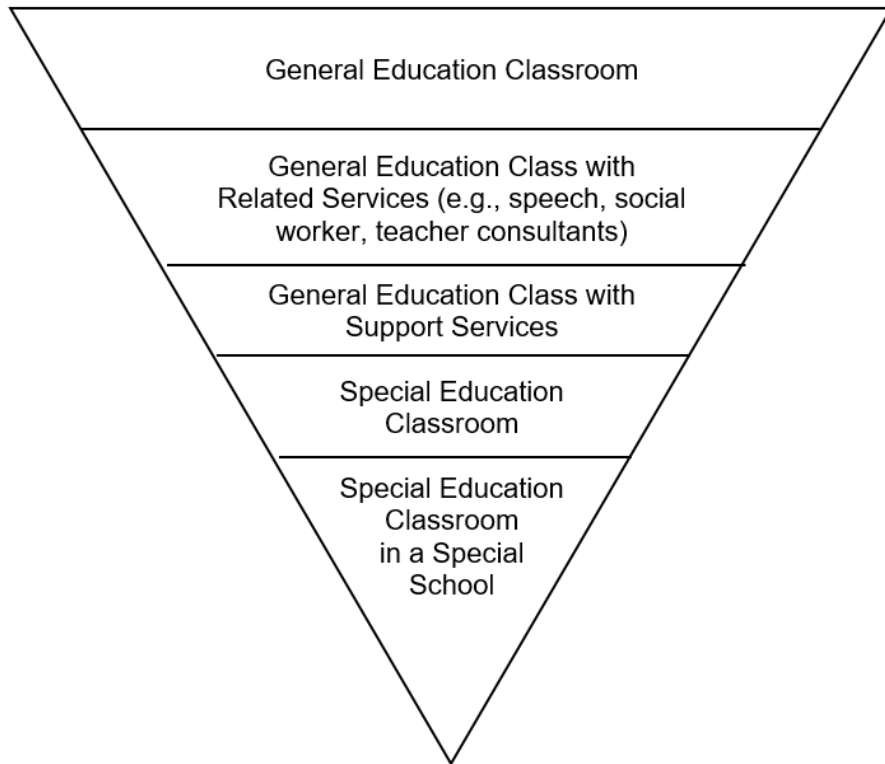
It is the policy of the school district that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed or ancestry, sexual orientation, disability, handicap, religion, age, height, weight, or marital status be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity and in employment. Any questions concerning Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, Title VI, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin, or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicap, should be directed to the office of the Assistant Superintendent of Special Education.

What is Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)?

The IEP Team determines the setting that is most appropriate for the student with a disability to receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). The law presumes that students with disabilities are most appropriately educated with their same-aged, nondisabled peers in the general education setting. Attending special classes or separate schools, or removing students with disabilities from the general education classroom occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability prevents the student from satisfactorily achieving program goals even when supplementary aids and services are used. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) describes the setting in which the student receives their education.

Continuum of Services

Local districts, in collaboration with Genesee ISD, provide a full continuum of services for students with disabilities. The objective is to provide special education support to the student in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Therefore, a continuum of special education programs and services should be considered.



What is Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)?

FAPE means education and related services are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge. The services provided must meet the standards of the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) for all students and be designed to meet the student's IEP goals and short-term objectives.

Dispute Resolution

Dispute resolution is available whenever a dispute arises with respect to Special Education. It includes, but is not limited to mediation, state complaint, due process complaint, and as part of the due process complaint procedures, a resolution session. Outside of the formal dispute resolution process, IEP Facilitation and Independent Education Evaluation may be requested. Additionally, contact may be made with the District Special Education Office, ISD Compliance Staff, or the Michigan Special Education Office for Compliance regarding concerns.

Resolution Session

The purpose of a resolution session is for parents to discuss their concerns with district staff so the parties have an opportunity to resolve the dispute. The district shall convene a meeting with the parents and relevant member(s) of the IEP Team who have specific knowledge of the facts identified in the complaint. The meeting shall:

1. Occur within 10 calendar days of receiving notice of the parent's complaint;
2. Include a representative of the agency who has decision-making authority on behalf of the agency;
3. Be a meeting where the parents of the child discuss their complaint.

A resolution is a required part of a due process hearing. Informal resolution is also encouraged during the state formal complaint.



What Transportation Service Does a District Provide for Special Education Students?

The same transportation services available to general education students are available to Special Education students. In addition, specialized transportation services are provided by school districts if the IEP Team determines the student needs those services to receive a free, appropriate public education (FAPE). The school district's responsibilities related to transportation include furnishing any specialized services documented on a student's IEP, and following appropriate safety, medical, and traffic rules and procedures.

School-Based Medicaid

Medically necessary services already provided by schools may be billed under the school-based Medicaid Program. Enrollment by a school district for billing to Medicaid is not expected to result in any change in your child's program or services elsewhere. Districts are responsible for obtaining parent consent prior to initiating billing to the Medicaid school-based program.



Genesee County Special Education Offices

Atherton Community School District

3454 South Genesee Road
Burton, Michigan 48519
810-591-0850

Flushing Community Schools

409 Chamberlain Street
Flushing, Michigan 48433
810-591-2320

Beecher Community School District

1020 West Coldwater Road
Flint, Michigan 48509
810-591-9867

Genesee Intermediate School District

2413 West Maple Avenue
Flint, Michigan 48507
810-591-4494

Bendle Public Schools

3420 Columbine Avenue
Burton, Michigan 48529
810-591-0007

Genesee School District

7347 North Genesee Road
Genesee, Michigan 48437
810-591-1649

Bentley Community School District

1150 North Belsay Road
Burton, Michigan 48509
810-591-9543

Goodrich Area Schools

8029 South Gale Road
Goodrich, Michigan 48438
810-591-5222

Carman-Ainsworth Community Schools

1300 North Linden Road
Flint, Michigan 48532
810-591-6687

Grand Blanc Community Schools

G-11920 South Saginaw Road
Grand Blanc, Michigan 48439
810-591-6372 or 810-591-6373

Clio Area Schools

430 North Mill Street
Clio, Michigan 48420
810-591-7482

Kearsley Community Schools

4396 Underhill Drive
Flint, Michigan 48506
810-591-7614

Davison Community Schools

1490 North Oak Road
Davison, Michigan 48423
810-591-0913

Lake Fenton Community Schools

11425 Torrey Road
Fenton, Michigan 48430
810-591-6555

Fenton Area Public Schools

3100 Owen Road
Fenton, Michigan 48430
810-591-8302

LakeVille Community School District

4775 Pine Street
Columbiaville, Michigan 48421
810-591-3357

Flint Community Schools
923 East Kearsley Street
Flint, Michigan 48503
810-767-6134, option 1

Linden Community School District
7205 West Silver Lake Road
Linden, Michigan 48451
810-591-0405

Montrose Community School District
303 Ray Street
Montrose, Michigan 48457
810-591-8887

Swartz Creek Community School District
8354 Cappy Lane
Swartz Creek, Michigan 48473
810-591-4347

Mt. Morris Consolidated Schools
1000 East Mt. Morris Street
Mt. Morris, Michigan 48458
810-591-0860

Westwood Heights Schools
G-3223 West Carpenter Road
Flint, Michigan 48504
810-591-8635

**Public School Academies
(Charter Schools)**

Burton Glen Academy (K-8)
4171 East Atherton Road
Flint, Michigan 48519
810-744-2300

Madison Academy (K-12)
6170 Torrey Road
Flint, MI 48507
810-655-2949

Eagle's Nest Academy (K-4)
5005 Cloverlawn Drive
Flint, Michigan 48504
810-869-6495

Northridge Academy (K-8)
530 West Pierson Road
Flint, Michigan 48505
810-785-8811

Genesee STEM Academy (K-12)
310 West Oakley Street
Flint, Michigan 48503
810-407-8782

The New Standard Academy (K-5)
2040 West Carpenter Road
Flint, Michigan 48505
810-787-3330

Grand Blanc Academy (K-8)
5135 East Hill Road
Grand Blanc, Michigan 48439
810-953-3140

Richfield Academy (PreK-8)
3807 North Center Road
Flint, Michigan 48506
810-736-1281

Greater Heights Academy (K-5)
3196 West Pasadena Avenue
Flint, Michigan 48504
810-854-5722

WAY Academy of Flint (7-12)
817 East Kearsley Street
Flint, Michigan 48503
810-412-8655

International Academy of Flint (K-12)
2820 South Saginaw Street
Flint, Michigan 48503
810-600-5223

Woodland Park Academy (K-8)
2083 East Grand Blanc Road
Grand Blanc, Michigan 48439
810-695-4710

Linden Charter Academy (K-8)
3244 North Linden Road
Flint, Michigan 48504
810-720-0515



Organizations to Assist Parents

Organization Name	Website	Phone
Autism Society of Michigan	autism-mi.org	800-223-6722
Autism Support and Resource Center	geneseeaautism.org	810-742-5404
Build Up Michigan	BuildUpMI.org	888-320-8384
Children and Adults with AD/HD (CHADD)	chadd.org	800-233-4050
Community Resolution Center	mediation-crc.org	800-873-7658
Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)	cec.sped.org	888-232-7733
Early On® of Genesee County	1800earlyon.org	810-591-KIDS (5437)
Easter Seals – Michigan	mi.easterseals.com	800-75-SEALS
Easter Seals - Michigan, Flint	mi.easterseals.com	800-75-SEALS
Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan	epilepsymichigan.org	800-377-6226
Genesee County Department of Human Services	michigan.gov/mdhhs	810-760-2200
Genesee Health System (GHS) - Developmental Disabilities Services	genhs.org	866-211-5455
Genesee Health System (GHS) Child and Family Services	genhs.org	Crisis Line: 877-346-3648
Genesee Intermediate School District, Special Education Services	geneseeisd.org	810-591-4494
GISD Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) Library	geneseeisd.org	810-591-4494
Learning Disabilities Association (LDA) of Michigan	ldaofmichigan.org	616 284-1650
Michigan Alliance for Families – Genesee/Tuscola Information	michiganallianceforfamilies.org	800-552-4821
Michigan Association for Children with Emotional Disorders	earlyondirectory.org	248-433-2200
Michigan Bureau of Services for Blind Persons	michigan.gov/bsbp	800-292-4200
Michigan Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, Flint Office	michigan.gov/bsbp	810-760-2030
Michigan Center for Educational Networking	cenmi.org	888-463-7656
Michigan Coalition for Deaf & Hard of Hearing People	michdhh.org	586-932-6090
Michigan Department of Civil Rights – (MDCR)	michigan.gov/mdcr	517-335-3165
Michigan Department of Education – (MDE)	michigan.gov/mde	517-373-3324
Michigan Protection & Advocacy Service, Inc.	mpas.org	800-288-5923
Michigan Rehabilitation Services – Genesee County Main Office	michigan.gov/mdhhs	877-620-7912
Michigan Speech-Language-Hearing Association	michiganspeechhearing.org	517-332-5691
Michigan’s Integrated Technology Supports - (MITS)	mits.cenmi.org	517-908-3930
Mott Children’s Health Center	mottchc.org	810-767-5750
The Arc Michigan	arcmi.org	800-292-7851
United Cerebral Palsy of Michigan	ucpmichigan.org	800-828-2714
Vocational Independence Program	viprogram.org	810-238-3671

Special Education Laws Overview

IDEA and Michigan Laws

The “Individuals with Disabilities Education Act,” or IDEA, is one of the laws affecting a student’s participation in special education. IDEA is the federal law (Public Law 105-17) that sets national standards for educating students with disabilities. IDEA is administered under the United States Department of Education through regulations. IDEA was re-authorized by the United States Congress in 1997 and again in 2004; Congress made some changes in the original law while creating IDEIA 2004, the “Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act,” which was signed into law by President Bush on December 4, 2004. The law became effective on July 1, 2005. IDEA continues to work to “improve educational results for children with disabilities” from birth to age 21.

IDEA requires local school districts to provide free appropriate public education (FAPE) for children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (LRE). IDEA addresses appropriate evaluations, eligibility for special education, and a child’s Individual Education Program (IEP), as well as many other special education related areas. It strengthens the role of families in their children’s education and ensures such children’s access to and involvement in the general curriculum to the maximum extent possible. Service aids and supports will be provided in the regular classroom, whenever appropriate. (Note: This parent handbook was written to help families understand the special education process and the IEP.)

In addition to IDEA, Michigan has its own law for the education of students with disabilities; Public Act 451 is Michigan’s Mandatory Special Education Act. It is part of a larger Michigan law called the “Michigan School Code of 1976” and is administered through Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE). Michigan’s law provides educational services to students with disabilities to age 26. (Note that this is a higher standard than is required by IDEA (age 21) and Michigan school districts through age 25, who have not graduated with a regular diploma, must meet this higher standard). Michigan schools must also comply with the federal laws such as IDEIA 2004.

Copies of these laws, regulations, and rules are available at libraries, intermediate or local school districts, through state or federal offices of special education, through state or federal legislators, or on the Internet. Both federal and state laws undergo periodic review and reauthorization.



Section 504

Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights law which prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in any program that receives federal financial assistance. Because schools in Michigan receive money from the federal government, they must comply with Section 504. In many respects, Section 504 is similar to the special education laws discussed in this handbook. However, Section 504 provides some important additional rights that may affect your child.

All children eligible for special education are automatically protected under Section 504. In addition, some children who do not qualify for special education may still qualify for Section 504 accommodations. For example; children with the following conditions (as well as many others) may qualify for 504 accommodations: ADD/ADHD, allergies, asthma, diabetes, hemophilia, a broken leg, prenatal alcohol or chemical dependency, obesity, etc.

Section 504 requires that a school district make “reasonable accommodations” for the special needs of a child with a disability or health condition. This means the school must try, within reason, to make all the services, programs, and activities that are available to nondisabled students accessible to students with disabilities as well. For example; a child using a wheelchair might need accommodations that allow him or her barrier-free access to school restrooms, or to the playground at recess. You can play a central role in asking for specific accommodations to make sure your child’s needs are met.

Special Education Acronyms

This is a partial listing of some of the acronyms with which you may come in contact during your child's education.

ACRONYM	PHRASE OR NAME
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AD(H)D	Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder
AG	Annual Goal
ALJ	Administrative Law Judge
AS	Asperger's Syndrome
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
BIP	Behavior Intervention Plan
CBE	Community Based Education
CI	Cognitive Impairment
COACH	Creating Options and Accommodations for Children
CP	Cerebral Palsy
DD	Developmental Disability/Delay
ECDD	Early Childhood Developmental Delay
EI	Emotional Impairment
ESY	Extended School Year
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
FBA	Functional Behavioral Assessment
FTE	Full Time Equivalency
HI	Hearing Impaired
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEE	Independent Education Evaluation
IEP	Individualized Education Program
IEPT	Individualized Education Program Team
IFSP	Individualized Family Service Program
ISD	Intermediate School District
LEA	Local Education Agency
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
MDE	Michigan Department of Education
MET	Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team
OHI	Other Health Impairment
O & M	Orientation and Mobility
OSE	Office of Special Education
OT	Occupational Therapist
PAC	Parent Advisory Committee
PI	Physical Impairment
PT	Physical Therapist
SEAC	Special Education Advisory Committee
SLD	Specific Learning Disability
SSW	School Social Worker
STO	Short Term Objective
SXI	Severe Multiple Impairment
TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
TC	Teacher Consultant
TSLI	Teacher of Speech and Language Impaired
VI	Visual Impairment

Special Education Terms and Definitions

Adaptive Behavior: A student's ability to perform the social roles appropriate for a person of his or her age and gender in a manner that meets the expectations of home, culture, school, neighborhood, and other relevant groups in which he or she participates.

Ancillary and Other Related Services: Services specially designed to meet the unique needs of persons with disabilities to age 26 and to assist a person with disabilities to benefit from special education, including the following: audiological, speech and language, or educational evaluation; occupational, physical, recreational, or other therapy; accommodations and modifications; assistive technology devices and services; mobility and orientation services; transportation; school psychological, school social work, and instruction provided by special education teachers designed to assist regular education students who are homebound, hospitalized, or placed in juvenile detention facilities.

Annual Goal: A measurable statement within an IEP that addresses the deficit area of a student and what the student will achieve within a 12 month period of time.

Assistive Technology Devices and Services: Items that increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of students with disabilities, or services that assist the student with the use of these items. IEP Teams are to make informed, data based decisions, regarding the effectiveness of assistive technology.

Behavior Plan: A plan developed by parents and staff to target individualized behavior goals and needed interventions for a student with inappropriate, disruptive, or disobedient behaviors.

Certificate of Completion: A certificate awarded to a student at the completion of a secondary special education program signifying the achievement of IEP goals.

Complaint: A specific written and signed allegation by an agency, private individual, or organization that there is an unresolved violation, misinterpretation or misapplication of the law, the State or ISD Programs, an individualized education program or hearing officer or court decision.

Comprehensive Evaluation: A series of assessments and observations, formal and informal, conducted for the purpose of determining eligibility for special education and related services and for determining the current level of educational performance.

Comprehensive Reevaluation (also known as "3-year reevaluation"): A three-year review of a student's special needs, progress, and current level of educational performance.

Consent: An agreement in writing to carry out an activity after being fully informed in one's native language of all information relevant to the activity.

Departmentalize: A delivery system in which two or more special education teachers group special education students by instructional content areas.

Disability, Person With: A person determined by an individualized educational program team (IEPT) or a hearing officer to have a characteristic or set of characteristics as defined in the descriptions of the disability and who, because of the disability, needs special education supports.

Dissenting Report: A written report that is attached to an IEP, which provides a perspective other than the consensus perspective.

Educational Records: Confidential written information about a student with a disability.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE): Special education and related services that are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge, including an appropriate preschool,

elementary school, or secondary school education; and are provided in conformity with an individualized education program (IEP).

Functional Behavior Assessment: Refers to a procedure used to examine behaviors to determine what happens before, during, and after behaviors occur. Behaviors are examined in terms of the purposes and functions that the behavior serves.

Inclusion: The placement of a student with a disability in a regular classroom with his or her peers, and with the supports necessary for his or her educational experiences. The program is designed to meet his or her individual needs.

Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE): An evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner(s), who is not employed by the public agency responsible for education of the student. A contracted agent for the purpose of conducting an independent evaluation is not considered an employee of the public agency.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): The federal law that sets national standards for educating students with disabilities.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): A written statement for each student with a disability that identifies the specially designed instruction and related services necessary to provide the student with an individually appropriate education.

Individualized Education Program Team (IEPT): A committee of parents and professionals appointed and invited by the superintendent or designee to determine a student's eligibility for special education and, if eligible and in need of special education, to develop an individualized education program. The IEP team also addresses decisions related to additional evaluations or re-evaluations, as well as student discipline.

Individualized Family Service Program (IFSP): A program of service developed by a team for a child with a disability between the ages of 0 and 3, who is eligible for Early On services. The plan identifies service coordination, child and family outcomes, and services necessary to meet individualized outcomes.

ISD: Intermediate School District.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): The requirement that each student with disabilities be educated as much as possible with nondisabled peers.

Manifestation Determination: An IEP team meeting to address the relationship between behavior problems and disability.

MDE: Michigan Department of Education.

Mediation: A process to help parents and school districts resolve disagreements.

Mobility and Orientation: Support to help a student with a visual impairment navigate a school-related environment.

Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET): A minimum of two persons, who are responsible for evaluating students suspected of having a disability.

Parent: As defined by the Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE) this includes:

- A biological or adoptive parent; a foster parent (unless otherwise prohibited from acting as a parent).
- A guardian authorized to make general or educational decisions (but not the state if the child is a ward of the state).

- An individual acting in the place of a biological or adoptive parent (including a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative with whom the child lives).
- A surrogate parent who has been appointed in accordance with R340.1725f.
- A person(s) identified by a judicial decree.
- The student when he or she reaches the age of 18 (if a legal guardian has not been appointed).

Parent Advisory Committee (PAC): A committee made up of parents of students with disabilities from each local educational agency within the Intermediate School District, appointed by the ISD Board. The PAC is responsible for participating in the development of the ISD Program and advising the ISD Board on matters relating to special education.

Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAPF): A statement within a student's IEP that describes the effect of the student's disability on academic or non-academic performance and determines a baseline for instructional planning.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS): Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports is a systematic positive approach that helps students learn appropriate behavior and social skills.

Procedural Safeguards: Legal safeguards that protect the rights of students with disabilities and their parents.

Public Expense: The public agency either pays for the full cost of the evaluation, program, or services, including transportation and room and board, or ensures that such is provided at no cost to the parent.

REED: Review of Existing Evaluation Data.

Resource Room: A special education classroom setting.

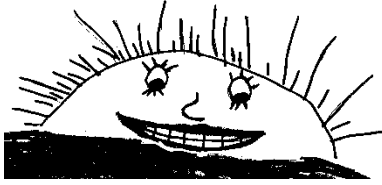
Short-Term Objectives (STO): Objectives which are written in measurable intermediate steps between the present level of educational performance and the annual goal within an IEP.

Special Education: Specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parent, to meet the unique educational needs of a student with a disability, and designed to develop the maximum potential of the student.

Special Education Advisory Committee: A committee appointed by the State Board of Education to advise the State Board of Education on matters relating to the delivery of special education.

Teacher Consultant: A certified teacher with teacher consultant approval who provides consultation and instructional support to students with disabilities. Instructional services are supportive of a general or special education teacher.

Transition Services: A coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that is designed to be within a results oriented process, which is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.



My Personal Directory

Name:

Special Education Administrator in my school district is:

Phone:

Fax:

My Parent Advisory Committee Representative is:

Phone:

My child's district and school:

School Principal:

Phone:

My child's eligibility for special education/disability is:

My child's bus driver is:

The bus garage number is:

Special Transportation:

My child's teacher's name(s) is (are):

Other names and phone numbers important to me include:

Counselor:

Phone:

Speech Therapist:

Phone:

Occupational Therapist:

Phone:

Physical Therapist:

Phone:

Social Worker:

Phone:

Teacher Consultant:

Phone:



GENESEE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Special Education Services

Dr. Lisa A. Hagel, Superintendent

Cherie A. Wager, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education Services

www.geneseeisd.org