

SEPTA

Special Education

Parent Handbook

Pelham Public School District

*Understanding the
Special Education Process*

2015-2016

A Warm Welcome from Pelham SEPTA

This guidebook was put together with special education parents with recent experience with the special education process and the 2015-2017 SEPTA co-presidents. It was created with the purpose of assisting Pelham families through the complex process of federal and state regulations for assessing and securing services for students with special needs.

Navigating the special education process can be a daunting experience. It can be a very confusing process that leaves many parents feeling like they are lost and isolated. This handbook was created to try to alleviate some of the confusion and to assist you in navigating the system.

You are part of a wonderful community here in Pelham. You are not the first to feel overwhelmed by this process and you are not alone. We sincerely hope that you will find this guide helpful as you navigate the Special Education process. Should you need additional support please do not hesitate to contact SEPTA Co-Presidents Linda Woodward lwoodward1030@gmail.com and Jeanmarie Ward jgtcward@gmail.com

*****Disclaimer*****

*The purpose of this booklet is to educate and inform parents. It was put together by parents for parents. We have tried to make this booklet as complete and accurate as possible. However, it should not be relied upon as a substitute for or an alternative to legal advice. In the event that you are in need of assistance beyond the scope of this booklet, we recommend that you consult an advocate or an attorney. It is further noted that this is a product of the PTA and **is not** an official school district document. It is not endorsed by the Pelham Public School District.*

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Overview of Special Education

What federal legislation pertains to students with disabilities?

The Individual with Disabilities Act of 1990, commonly referred to as "IDEA", requires school districts to provide children ages 3-21 who have various disabilities with special education services. In 1975, IDEA, formerly known as the Education for All Handicapped Children's Act, was passed entitling "handicapped individuals to a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment." In 1997 and 2005, IDEA was reauthorized.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which includes Section 504, designates that a student or adult can be afforded accommodations and services through the educational system without the specific classifications furnished under IDEA. Later amendments to this Act in 1986 and 1992 provided that recipients of federal financial assistance could not discriminate against individuals with handicaps.

Additional information on IDEA, as well as other legislation, is available through ACCES-VR, the Adult Career and Continuing Education Services – Vocational Rehabilitation at www.acces.nysed.gov/vr, or NICHY, the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities, at www.nichcy.org.

Who is eligible for Special Education Services?

All children learn differently and have varied strengths and weaknesses. However, only students who are considered disabled under the law are entitled to special education services. Students are considered disabled when the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) or the Committee on Special Education (CSE) determines that a child's educational difficulties are the result of a disability that adversely affects educational performance. This determination is based on a multidisciplinary evaluation. Students with medical diagnoses who do not qualify for specific special education services may be entitled to certain accommodations under a Section 504 Plan. PPS (Pupil Personnel) office oversees the 504 process. Parents should contact this office for more information 738-3434.

How can information and services be accessed?

If you suspect that your preschool child has a disability, there are many resources available:

- You should contact your child's pediatrician for information about appropriate developmental milestones.
- You should discuss your concerns with your child's preschool teacher.
- If you have not received services through Early Intervention, you can make a written request for an evaluation to the Committee on Preschool Special Education. The Committee on Preschool Special Education will contact children who are transitioning from Early Intervention.

If you suspect that your child between the ages of 5 and 21 has a disability, there are many resources available:

- You should contact your child's pediatrician for information about appropriate developmental milestones.
- You should discuss your concerns with your child's teacher.
- You should talk with the school psychologist who can bring together a team of professionals to discuss your child's needs. The school psychologist can assist you in understanding the referral process if you think your child requires special education services.
- You can contact SEPTA for some guidance.

What is "Due Process"?

Every parent has certain rights by law to protect their child's education. The Special Education office will provide you with a copy of your due process rights. Contained within the Procedural Safeguards Notice. They can be found at pelhamsepta.org

Beginning the Process

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled by law to special education and related services that will meet their needs at no cost to their parents. Special education assures that each student will have the necessary programs and services to access a free and appropriate public education.

Early Intervention (EI) -- Birth to age 3

The Westchester County Department of Health provides assistance, evaluations and services for this age group. For more information, call the Early Intervention Program (EI) at 914-813-5094. A caseworker will be assigned to guide you through the process. If your child continues to need services at the age of 3, he/she will then transition to the CPSE (Committee on Pre-school Special Education). Your EI caseworker will help you with this process.

The Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE)--ages 3-5

What is the CPSE?

The CPSE coordinates the entire preschool education process for three and four year old children who live in the Pelham School District. However, it is the Westchester County Department of Health, not the school district, which is responsible for placement and programs for children ages 3-4.

The CPSE is a multidisciplinary team (see below) who meet to determine if a child is eligible for preschool special education services according to New York State regulations. If a child is eligible, the CPSE develops an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) and implements its' recommendations. Parents have the legal right (see Due Process above) to agree or disagree with any recommendation, goals or objectives recommended for their child.

What is the process for a preschool child to get services?

The process begins with a written referral. A referral may be made by a parent or a designee of the school district. Proof of residency will be required before the evaluation takes place. The child must be formally evaluated at an evaluation site approved by Westchester County. The Special Education office will provide you with a list of approved sites from which you can select one. Once the evaluations are completed and the district has received the written reports, a formal meeting of the CPSE will be scheduled. The CPSE will discuss the results, determine if the child is eligible for services and develop an Individual Education Plan, called an IEP, for the child, when appropriate. The CPSE is responsible for implementation of the specific recommendations in the plan.

Who attends the CPSE meeting?

- The CPSE chairperson (who represents the school district)
- The child's parent(s) and or legal guardian(s)
- A representative from Westchester County's Department of Health
- Your child's pre-school teacher if applicable
- A representative from the agency that provided the evaluation of your child
- Early Intervention Representative, if applicable
- Any person(s) invited by the parents who have knowledge or special expertise regarding your child, including related services personnel. If you intend to do so, you need to inform the CPSE Chair.

When and where is the CPSE meeting held?

CPSE meetings are usually held at the PPS office located at 18 Franklin Place, Pelham. Upon receipt of all evaluations, the Special Education office will schedule the CPSE meeting.

What happens after preschool?

At the age of five, a child "ages out" of the CPSE and may be declassified or referred to the CSE, for ages 5-21. If your child has been receiving services through the CPSE, you will be invited to a Transition Meeting to explain the CPSE to CSE process. If the CPSE determines that your child may be eligible for school age services, a referral to the CSE will be made. If no special education services are determined to be appropriate in kindergarten, the child's CPSE records will be sealed and kept confidential. If your child has not been in the CPSE process, he/she is still eligible for a referral to CSE.

The Committee on Special Education (CSE), ages 5-21

What is the CSE?

The CSE coordinates and administers the entire school education process for students ages 5 to 21 who reside in the Pelham School District. The CSE, like the CPSE, is a multidisciplinary team who meet to determine if a student is eligible for special education services according to New York State regulations. The committee oversees initial evaluations, placements, annual reviews and reevaluations for all Pelham District students. Like the CPSE, if a child is eligible, the CSE develops an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) and implements its recommendations. Parents have the legal right (see Due Process above) to agree or disagree with any recommendation, goals or objectives recommended for their child. This committee meets for the initial referral and at least annually regarding every child receiving special education services.

The Board of Education annually appoints the employees of the district by their titles that are qualified and may serve on a CSE. The Board also appoints those parents who may serve as parent members of a CSE.

Who attends the CSE meeting?

- CSE Chairperson or subcommittee. Chairs can be other administrators, psychologist
- The school psychologist
- A special education teacher
- A parent or legal guardian of the child
- A regular education teacher
- Other professionals may attend when appropriate
- Parents are entitled to invite other individuals to the CSE meeting who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel. If parents intend to do so they need to inform the special education director before the scheduled CSE meeting.
- When appropriate, the child may be invited to attend the CSE meeting.

When and where do CSE meetings occur?

Initial CSE meetings take place at the PPS office. Parents are notified by mail of the exact time, date and location. CSE meetings take place for all initial evaluations and if a change in program or IEP is being considered. Depending on the change, this type of meeting may only require a subcommittee. The CSE meets for an Annual Review in the latter part of the school year. The purpose of these meetings is to review progress and make recommendations for the following year. Notification of these meetings is sent to parents via regular mail, as well as e-mail.

What is a parent member/parent member declination?

This is a parent of another child residing in the district who is classified as eligible to receive Special Education services. In order to serve as a parent member of a CSE, a parent must receive training in Special Education law, regulations and policy including the need to maintain confidentiality and be appointed by the Board of Education. If you would like a parent member to attend your child's CSE meeting, you must notify the PPS office in writing at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

The Process

How is a referral initiated?

Referrals can be initiated in a variety of ways:

- As a parent, if you have concerns about your child, meet with your child's teacher(s), the school psychologist, the guidance counselor or the school principal who will help you determine if a referral to Special Education is appropriate for your child.

- Federal and State law requires the school to implement intervention services and or accommodations to remediate a student's performance prior to a referral to special education. Often, prior to referring to the CSE, a classroom teacher refers a child to response to Intervention Team (RTI) when a problem arises. The team may consist of a building psychologist, school nurse, special education teacher, classroom teacher and other administrator, school support staff (i.e. reading teachers, speech/language therapists). After an RTI meeting is held, a pre-referral intervention plan with strategies and types of instruction is implemented. The RTI meets again to assess the success of the plan and determine if further recommendations are necessary. These may include a formal referral to CSE.
- If appropriate, the RTI team will begin the formal referral to the CSE for evaluations.
- You may also contact the Special Education Department at 914-738-3434 for additional assistance.

What is Consent for Evaluation?

In order for an evaluation be done on your child, your written consent is required. A consent form will be sent to you. The evaluation process cannot begin until the parental consent form is signed and received in the Special Education office. Consent for reevaluation will be requested by office of PPS.

What is the evaluation process?

When a child is referred to the CSE, a team will evaluate him or her in order to provide a comprehensive assessment to determine whether or not a disability that impacts education exists. Testing is administered by the school psychologist, a special education teacher and other district professionals, if necessary (i.e. Speech/Language, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist). The testing is reviewed at a formal CSE meeting.

What evaluations are required?

- Social History - a parent interview or questionnaire
- Psychological - done by the school psychologist
- Educational Evaluation - done by a special education teacher
- Classroom Observation
- Physical - can be done by the child's pediatrician
- Other evaluations as needed
- Parents may submit private evaluations prior to the start of the evaluation process. The CSE will review them and determine what additional assessments are needed. It is important to note that many assessments cannot be used within the same year so coordination between private and school evaluations is necessary.

How does a child become classified?

When a student is referred to the CSE for an initial evaluation a consent form is sent to the parents. Once the form is signed and returned to the special education office, the evaluation team has 60 school days to conduct a formal CSE meeting, develop an IEP and make a placement. Parents should share all reports or relevant information with the CSE chair prior to the meeting. At the formal CSE meeting, the results of the evaluation are reviewed, including testing by the school psychologist, special education teacher and other professionals. After reviewing all the information, the committee discusses the data and comes to a consensus. The committee determines if the child has a disability and if so, what his/her classification will be, i.e., learning disabled, speech impaired, autistic, other health impaired, etc. If a child is given a

classification at his/her initial CSE meeting, an IEP is written which includes the program, related services, testing modifications, program modifications, and goals and objectives.

What is the reevaluation?

The CSE arranges for an appropriate reevaluation of each student with a disability at least every three years by a multi-disciplinary team or group of persons, including at least one teacher or other specialist with knowledge in the area of the student's disability. The reevaluation shall be sufficient to determine the student's continued eligibility for classification, individual needs, educational progress and achievement and the student's ability to participate in instructional programs in general education. If a child is declassified the child may continue to receive a recommended level of support for one year.

What is Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)?

Least Restrictive Environment means that placement of students with disabilities in special classes, separate schools or other removal from the general educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that even with the use of supplementary aids and services, education cannot be satisfactorily achieved.

The placement of an individual student with a disability in the Least Restrictive Environment shall:

- Provide the special education needed by the student
- Provide for education of the student to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of the student with other students who do not have disabilities
- Be located at the student's home school or as close as possible to the student's home

What services and programs are offered by Pelham Union Free School District?

Pelham School District offers a variety of programs to meet the needs of students based upon the continuum of services designated by the laws of New York State. The programs range from less restrictive to more restrictive. Less restrictive refers to keeping special education students in general education settings as often as possible. More restrictive settings include special classes and out of district placements. Less restrictive settings are always looked at before more restrictive settings are considered. Students are placed in programs based upon their needs.

The following services are listed from less restrictive to more restrictive:
(It should be noted that not all services are available at all levels.)

- Related Services Only
- Consultant Teacher Service (direct and indirect)
- Integrated Co-teaching for one or more academic classes
- Resource Room
- Special Class for one or more academic subjects (Social Studies, Science, Math, Language Arts/English, Reading)
- Self-Contained Class
- Out of District

The needs of the students indicate the specific services they receive based upon the committee's decision. Instructional techniques vary depending on the needs of the students. Students can be moved from one type of service to another at any point in the school year through the CSE process.

Can my child receive services without being classified?

Students can receive extra support through building level services (reading, speech/language therapy, and counseling) based upon individual needs. These services are discussed and determined at each building's RTI team. Accommodations may also be available through a 504 plan if appropriate. (See section on 504 plans)

What is Response to Intervention (RTI)?

RTI provides additional instruction in reading and math to assist all students in meeting state standards. The services are supplemental to the instruction provided in the regular education classroom. Students who are classified by the CSE may not be excluded from receiving RTI. NYS regulations state that a student cannot be classified with a Learning Disability in the area of Reading in grades K-4 without documentation that the student has gone through a formal RTI process.

What other support services are available?

Through a screening process, children may be recommended for speech improvement to address mild articulation and language delays. Counseling is available to all students on an as-needed basis. Some schools conduct social skills groups. Occupational Therapists and Physical Therapists are available to consult with classroom teachers to assist in making appropriate accommodations and modifications in the classroom.

The Individualized Education Program (IEP)

This is the name of the plan developed by the CPSE/CSE to meet a child's unique needs once it is determined that the child is eligible for special education services and/or programs. The plan includes critical information about the child's special education program. It provides a framework for instruction in the areas of the child's disability. The IEP is developed at a CPSE/CSE meeting. Parents are members of this committee and are part of the process of developing an IEP along with other members of the committee.

The IEP development process must consider:

- Your child's strengths
- Your concerns for your child's education
- The results of your child's individual evaluation
- The results of any standardized assessments;
- Any unique needs related to your child's disability (such as communication, behavior, etc.)

IEPs are developed annually. However, IEPs may be amended within the year, if appropriate, by convening a CPSE/CSE meeting. A teacher, related service provider or parent may make a request for a CPSE/CSE meeting.

As parents you have a very important role in the development of your child's IEP. You have firsthand knowledge of your child's abilities. Sharing this information is an important contribution to the IEP process.

The following components are a part of all IEP's:

1. Recommended Classification
2. Evaluation Results and Current Levels of Performance—including parent concerns and student's strengths and needs in the areas of academic, social, physical, and management
3. Effect of Student Needs Relating to Special Factors—this includes needs such as positive behavioral interventions, communication, and assistive technology.
4. Post-Secondary Measurable Goals When 15 years and older.

5. Measurable Annual Goals includes Benchmarks for CPSE and NYSA.
6. Recommended Programs and Services – notes the recommended special education program and services set forth in section 200.6 of the Regulations of the Commissioner, such as special class, resource room, resource room/consultant teacher services, and consultant teacher. Related services usually include speech and language, occupational therapy, counseling and physical therapy.
7. Program Supports and Modifications/Accommodations/Supplementary Aides and Services – This section provides a statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided for the students to:
 - Advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals
 - Be involved and progress in the general curriculum
 - Be educated and participate with other students in the general education classes, state and local assessments and general education programs
8. Assistive Technology Devices/Services – Equipment or product systems needed for a student to benefit from education, based on an evaluation and the decision of the CPSE/CSE.
9. Extended School Year eligibility and program recommendations. This is for students who would experience substantial regression without summer services.
10. Testing Accommodations – The student’s modifications are determined by the CSE. Modifications are designed to help the student compensate for the impact of their disabilities.
11. Determination of modifications is based on demonstrating needs and consistent use. Students are not entitled to, nor do they receive all of the modifications available. Students are entitled to only those modifications that are indicated by their IEP’s. It should be noted that not all accommodations will be available on state tests.
12. Coordinated Set of Transition Activities for those 15 and older.
13. Participation in State and District Assessments. The student either participates in alternate assessment or regular assessments administered to general education students.
14. Participation with Students without Disabilities—this area of the IEP describes when the child will be removed from the general education setting to a special setting. Foreign language exemption is also found here. Physical Education - specifies regular or adapted PE
15. Transportation – special transportation needs of the student as appropriate.

What is an IEP Progress Report?

Every student receiving special education services will receive an IEP Progress Report each time they receive a report card in elementary school or a report card in middle school/high school. Special Education teacher and related service providers assess the student’s progress towards meeting their IEP goals and objectives.

What is a Service Case Manager?

The service case manager is the person responsible for coordinating the program and services for each child receiving special education. (S)he will oversee the IEP, meetings, and necessary forms and documentation. Parents can contact their child’s service case manager for information and discuss any aspect of their child’s program. The service case manager facilitates procedures for each student receiving special education.

Special Education Continuum of Services

General Education Classes - This program consists of non-special education classes that provide instruction to both non-classified and classified students who receive supplementary aids and supports as appropriate, in the least restrictive environment. General education teachers teach general education classes.

Response to Intervention – RTI is a general education program that provides small group instruction to non-classified and classified students who are struggling with mainstream academics and are performing below district standards and are at risk of not meeting state standards.

Building Level Support Services – Related services are provided to non-classified students when the RTI deems it appropriate. The related services most frequently offered are speech therapy, counseling and reading support.

Declassification Support Services – DSS may be provided to the student and/ or the student's teachers when it has been determined that a student no longer needs special education services and can be placed in a general education program. These services shall not continue for more than one year after the student is declassified.

Related Services Only - Some special education students may only receive related services (speech language, OT, PT, counseling) in conjunction with their general education classes to assist them in their total education program. These students receive all their instruction in general education but are provided with related services as recommended on their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Consultant Teacher Services – A special education teacher provides direct service (direct instruction to the classified student), and/or indirect service (consultation with the student's general education teacher(s), to students within the general education classroom. This program is structured in the same way at all levels, as follows. Students are provided with a minimum of two hours of service, which may be direct, indirect, or a combination of both. The model is characterized by collaboration between the general and special education teacher, as well as the option for the consultant teacher to provide support to non-classified students in addition to classified students. Under CPSE, a Special Education Itinerant Teacher (SEIT) provides this service.

Resource Room/ Consultant Teacher Services - (Resource and Consultant Services can be combined) Small group instruction designed to enable the student to benefit from learning in general education academic classes. Direct service, including remediation of basic skills and study and organizational strategies to reinforce primary instruction. Consultation with general education teachers to assure that modifications and adaptations will be provided as necessary.

ICT - The co-teaching model is comprised of a special education teacher and a general education teacher working cooperatively. The amount of time that a special education teacher provides instruction within the general education class varies. Paraprofessionals provide additional adult support in the general education classroom. Under CPSE, this program is called a Special Class in an Integrated Setting (SCIS).

Special Classes – In this program, students receive primary instruction in a special education class. Students may receive primary instruction in one or more academic subjects or may spend most of their day in a self-contained classroom. Students/teacher/aide ratios vary depending on the needs of the students. (i.e. 8:1:2; 12:1:2; 15:1:1) Students may be "mainstreamed" to general education programs, as appropriate. The curriculum in the special class follows district guidelines with appropriate modifications made based on the individual student's needs. These classes include classes for children on the autism spectrum, children with developmental disabilities, or emotional disabilities as well as classes for children with significant learning disabilities.

Out of District – A student is recommended for an out of district placement only when the CSE determines that the Pelham School District does not have an appropriate program for the student. Due to state regulations, the district is required to seek placement in other public school districts and BOCES programs. If no appropriate public school setting is found, the district considers private New York State approved settings. Out of district placements are generally reserved for students with severe disabilities or students with low incidence disabilities.

Services to Parentally Placed Private School Students with Disabilities

District of location responsible for the following with respect to parentally placed nonpublic school students with disabilities attending nonpublic schools located in the geographic region of the school district:

- Consultation process
- Child find, including evaluations
- CSE meetings
- Delivery of special education and related services
- Due process

Parents of privately placed students with disabilities must submit a written request for services to the district of residence by June 1st preceding the school year for which the request for services is made. Parent consent is required to forward such request to district of location.

Regulations prohibit the sharing of educational records by the district of location and the district of residence without consent (including the initial request for services and billing records)

Consent required before sharing personally identifiable information with the private school.

Preschool students are not eligible for 3602-c services. New requirements for services plans are not applicable unless the preschool that the child attends meets the definition of an elementary school set forth at 34 CFR 300.13.

Section 504 Plans

Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act provides that:

“No otherwise qualified individual with handicaps in the United States ...shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance....”

The definition of disabled under Section 504 is broader than the definition of a child with a disability under IDEA and NYS Education Law. Under the Rehabilitation Act, a disabled person includes anyone who

- has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities,
- has a record of such an impairment, or
- is regarded as having such an impairment.

A student may be referred to the 504 committee by school personnel, the parent(s)/guardian(s), or by the CSE, if the student is found ineligible for special education.

The Pelham School District has a designated 504 team. The members may include the principal, evaluator, child's teacher, parent, and additional staff as appropriate. The parent must sign consent for evaluation. Upon completion of the evaluation(s), a meeting convenes to determine eligibility as per 504 and a 504 Accommodation Plan is developed. Each 504 Student Accommodation Plan is reviewed by the committee and the parent(s)/guardian(s) on an annual basis to determine continuing needs, modifications, or additions.

The child may receive modifications and/or accommodations including, but not limited to, extra time for tests, preferential seating, frequent breaks, visual aids, and behavior intervention plans. The actual accommodations recommended will be based on the individual's specific needs.

Glossary

Alternate Assessment: Assessment for students who are profoundly disabled with severe cognitive impairments. The Alternate Assessment is a datafolio (portfolio) assessment in which students demonstrate their performance toward meeting the alternate performance indicator level of the New York State learning standards.

Annual Goals: Goals written on the IEP that describe what a child is expected to achieve in academic, social, physical and management areas.

Annual Review: A review of a special education student's program and progress that is completed at least once each school year by the Committee on Special Education. Program changes may be recommended at this time.

Bilingual Evaluation: An assessment conducted in both English and a child's other than English language by professionals who understand both languages. A Board of Education bilingual assessment provider, a contract agency evaluator, an independent evaluator or a monolingual evaluator may conduct the assessment with an interpreter.

Classification: An official term for the type of disability that affects a student's education. State regulations require that one of the following classifications be used:

Autism
Deafness
Deaf-blindness
Emotional disturbance
Hearing impairment
Learning disability
Intellectual Disability
Multiple disabilities
Orthopedic impairment
Other health impairment
Speech or language impairment
Traumatic brain injury
Visual impairment including blindness

*All preschoolers are classified as "preschooler with a disability".

Committee on Pre-School Special Education (CPSE): A multi-disciplinary team established to determine eligibility for special education for a pre-school child ages 3 and 4 and to develop the IEP if the child is classified.

Committee on Special Education (CSE): A multi-disciplinary team established to determine eligibility for special education, ages 5- 21 and to develop the IEP if the student is classified.

Confidentiality: The obligation of the school system to maintain the student's CSE records in a locked records room or password protected secure computer environment with access allowed only to authorize personnel who need the information. Requests for material from outside the system require parental consent.

Continuum of services or program options:

- Declassified Support Services (no goals and objectives)
- Related Services Only
- Consultant Teacher
- ICT
- Resource Room
- Special Class English, Social Studies, Science and/or Math
- Self-contained Class
- Out of District

Declassification: A CSE determination that a student no longer needs special education services.

Due Process: The provision in law that guarantees and protects the rights of both parents and students during the referral, evaluation, and placement process and ensures the appropriate delivery of instructional services.

Evaluation: The process of collecting information about a student's strengths and weaknesses to improve his/her educational program. The information collected through tests, observations, and interviews will assist the team in determining the levels of functioning and educational needs.

Exemption: A student with an educational disability may be considered exempt from participating in a requirement that must be met by non-handicapped students. Exemptions must be supported by CSE recommendations. However, there are no exemptions from state assessments.

General Education: Non-special education classes and programs.

Home Instruction: An educational service provided at home for students with severe medical, physical, or emotional disabilities that prevent them from attending school.

Hospital Instruction: An educational service provided to special education students who are hospitalized for long-term medical conditions.

CDOS: students with disabilities will be able to earn a New York State (NYS) Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential

Integrated Classrooms: Integrated classrooms include both general and special education students. Non-integrated classrooms consist of only special education students.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): A plan developed by the CSE, that describes the student's level of functioning and the special education services and goals necessary to address specific academic, social, emotional, physical and management needs.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): Least restrictive environment means that placement of students with disabilities in special classes, separate schools or other removal from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that even with the use of supplementary aids and services, education cannot be satisfactorily achieved.

Mainstreaming into General Education Classes and Services: Children who are identified as having an educational disability will have access to general education classes when appropriate, according to CSE recommendations. Mainstreaming is the placement of a child who is in a special education class in a general education program for part of the school day. A child may be mainstreamed into an academic program such as math, language arts, science or social studies; or a nonacademic program such as music or art.

Modifications: Program Modifications are provided to students with disabilities and are determined by the CSE. Modifications provide equal opportunity for demonstrating acquired skills that may otherwise be impeded by the student's disability. Specific student modification appears in the IEP.

Parent Member: A parent of a child in the district who is classified as eligible to receive Special Education services and who is appointed by the School Board and specially trained to be a member of the CPSE/CSE.

Parent Member Declination: A decision in writing by the parent of a special education student to decline the participation of a parent member at the CPSE/CSE meeting. This signed declination must be in place prior to the meeting in order to proceed without a parent member.

Pre-Referral: A request by a teacher or parent for a student to be reviewed by a building level Instructional Support Team (IST). This request should be made to the student's guidance counselor or school psychologist.

SACC: Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential. The diploma that is given to students who reach age 21 and have successfully completed the educational goals that are specified on the IEP.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

NATIONAL RESOURCES

Autism Speaks

1 East 33rd Street
4th Floor
New York, NY 10016
Phone: (212) 252-8584
Fax: (212) 252-8676

<http://www.autismspeaks.org/>

Autism Speaks aims to bring the autism community together as one strong voice to urge the government and private sector to listen to our concerns and take action to address this urgent global health crisis.

Children & Adults with Attention Deficit Disorders (CHADD)

8181 Professional Place - Suite 150
Landover, MD 20785
Tel: 301-306-7070 / Fax: 301-306-7090

www.chadd.org

This national organization services children, adults and families with ADD. They hold a yearly conference, advocate at the federal and local level, foster research and have publications.

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

2900 Crystal Drive, Suite 1000
Arlington, VA 22202-3557
Toll-free: 866/509-0218
Local: 703/620-3660
TTY: 866/915-5000
FAX: 703/264-9494

www.cec.sped.org

This is the only professional organization in the world dedicated to advancing the quality of education for all exceptional children and improving the conditions under which special educators work.

Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD)

(888) 232-7733

www.dldcec.org

International Dyslexia Association

(212) 691-1930

www.interdys.org

National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD)

381 Park Avenue, Suite 1401
New York, NY 10016
(212) 545-7510

www.NCLD.org

Formerly the Foundation for Children with Learning Disabilities. They foster awareness about learning disabilities, neurological disorders, and deficits that can be a barrier to literacy. They offer resources and referrals on a national level to a wide range of volunteers and professionals.

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY)

1825 Connecticut Ave NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20009
1.800.695.0285 (Toll-free, Voice/TTY)
202.884.8200 (Voice/TTY)
202.884.8441 (Fax)
www.nichcy.org

NICHCY is the center that provides information to the nation on disabilities in children and youth; programs and services for infants, children, and youth with disabilities; IDEA, the nation's special education law; and research-based information on effective practices for children with disabilities.

National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS)

(202) 707-5100
www.loc.gov/nls
1-888-657-7323

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services Department of Education

400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20202-7100
(202) 245-7468
www.2.ed.gov

The International Dyslexia Society (Formerly the Orton Dyslexia Society)

www.interdys.org

They offer specialized training to treat dyslexia utilizing the Orton method as well as addressing issues related to learning disabilities and dyslexia.

Learning Ally (Formerly Recordings for the Blind)

20 Roszel Road
Princeton, NJ 08540
800-221-4792
www.learningally.org

Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD)

(913) 491-1011
www.cldinternational.org

The LDC addresses issues affecting children and adults with learning disabilities. Includes newsletter and forum.

International Dyslexia Association

(410) 296-0232
www.interdys.org

Wrightslaw

www.wrightslaw.com

Wrightslaw is a Special Education Law & Advocacy group dedicated to providing resources and reliable information about special education law to parents, educators, advocates and attorneys for children with disabilities.

Learning Disabilities Assn. of America (LDA)

(412) 341-1515
www.LDAmerica.org

STATE RESOURCES

New York State Department of Social Services

Westchester County Local Office (914) 995-5000
www.health.ny.gov

New York State Education Department, Westchester Division Office of Special Education Services

The Gleeson-Israel Gateway
Center 265 Saw Mill River Road
Hawthorne, NY 10532
914.949.9300
www.westchesterarc.org

Offers technical assistance and complaint resolution and monitoring services; provides written materials to help learn new information for parents, teachers, and students.

New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)

Public Affairs
Office 44 Holland
Avenue
Albany, NY 12229
(518) 474-6601
<http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/>

Office for the Disabled

(914) 995-2957
<http://disabled.westchestergov.com/>
Programs, special events, newsletter, free informational guides, and a speaker's bureau.

LOCAL RESOURCES

Adult Career and Continuing Education - Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR)

New York State Education
Department 55 Church Street
Room 300B
White Plains, NY
10601 (914) 946-
1313
<http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/>

Westchester County Early Intervention Program (serves children from birth to 3)

(914) 813-5094
<http://www.wceed.com/earlyintervention.html>

Holistic Learning Center

222 Westchester Avenue
Suite 103
White Plains NY
10604 914-793-
9100
www.holisticlc.com

The Holistic Learning Center is a gentle center for children, caregivers, and professionals seeking strategies for cognitive/linguistic growth, increased sensory processing skills, and nutritional consultation.

Pelham School District Contact Information:

Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services

Rosemary Matthews
rmatthews@pelhamschools.org

CSE/CPSE Chairperson/Supervisor of Special Education K-5

Lauren Ribeiro
lribeiro@pelhamschools.org

Coordinator of Special Education 6-12

Regina Ricci
rricci@pelhamschools.org

PPS Office Assistant

Sally Tedesco
stedesco@pelhamschools.org

Phone: 914-738-3434 ext. 3

Fax: 914-633-6503

18 Franklin Place

Pelham, NY 10803

Support Staff

Counseling Services

Eugene Farrell, Director - 738-8101 ext. 2

High School Counseling Office

Gena Archer - 738-8110 ext. 1104

Luis Barcelo - 738-8110 ext. 1219

Katelin Cuccia - 738-8110 ext. 1210

Terence Huvane - 738-8110 ext. 1102

Carla Matus - 738-8110 ext. 1103

Middle School Counseling Office

Scott Brown - 738-8190 ext. 1192

Lisa Cornacchia - 738-8190 ext. 1138

Maria Sutherland: 738-8190 ext. 1248

School Psychologists

Colonial: Paul Farrell - 738-2680

Hutchinson: Elizabeth Belanfonte - 738-3640

Prospect Hill: Sarah De Soye - 738-6690

Siwanoy: Paul Farrell - 738-7650

Middle School: Tricia Joseph - 738-8190 ext. 1197 and Tiziana Didonna - 738-8190 ext. 1147

PMHS: Jeanean Hergenrother - 738-8110 ext. 1125 and Dena Delfino: 738-8110 ext. 1190

Speech and Language Services

Colonial: Diana LaScalia: 738-2680

Hutchinson: Monique O'Hare: 738-3640

Prospect Hill: Rebecca Reina: 738-6690

Siwanoy: Rebecca Reina: 738-7650

Middle School: Adriene Flynn and Danielle Gerardi : 738-8190 ext. 1165

PMHS: Danielle Gerardi: 738-8190 ext. 1165

Occupational Therapy

Vanessa Tessitore: 738-6690
Paola Gogliormella: 738-2680

Physical Therapy

Teresa Belmont: 738-2680

Student Assistance Counselor- Drugs and Alcohol Prevention and Intervention

Christina Konior: 738-1205 ext. 1205

Joe Torre's Margaret's Place- Peer Relations

Sharon Charles: 738-8190 ext. 1218

