



**Special Education Services Plan
September 2024-2027**

District Policies, Practices and Procedures
for
Ensuring Appropriate Educational Services
and
Due Process in Evaluation and Placement of Students with Disabilities

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Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District
Mission Statement

The Dobbs Ferry School District strives to develop independent, curious, and open-minded learners who think critically, work collaboratively, act ethically, and are knowledgeable about the world around them.

In support of our mission, we are committed to:

- Providing a high-quality and challenging curriculum with the depth, breadth, and relevance appropriate to each learner.
- Respecting the unique abilities and cultural background of each student.
- Utilizing the most effective and innovative instructional approaches and technological advances.
- Encouraging students to meet their challenges—whether academic, athletic, or artistic—with openness, enthusiasm, and a willingness to take risks.
- Recruiting, retaining, and developing high-quality teachers and staff.
- Celebrating and learning from the diversity of our students and the greater Dobbs Ferry community.

Regulations Governing the district plan- 8 NYCRR 200.2¹

School districts have certain responsibilities in preparing special education district plans according to Section 200.2 (C) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. The district plan shall include, but need not be limited to, the following:

1. A description of the nature and scope of special education programs and services currently available to preschool and school-age students residing in the district;
2. Identification of the number and age span of school-age and preschool students to be served by type of disability, and recommended setting;
3. The method used to evaluate the extent to which the objectives of the program have been achieved;
4. A description of the policies and practices of the Board of Education to ensure the continual allocation of appropriate space within the district for special education programs that meet the needs of preschool and school-age students with disabilities;
5. A description of the policies and practices of the Board of Education to ensure that appropriate space will be continually available to meet the needs of resident school-age and preschool students with disabilities who attend special education programs provided by Board of Cooperative Educational Services;
6. A description of how the district intends to ensure that all instructional materials to be used in the schools of the district will be made available in a usable alternative format, as such term is defined in Part 200.2 (b)(1) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, for each student with a disability at the same time as such instructional materials are available to non-disabled students;
7. The estimated budget to support such plan; and
8. The date on which such a plan was adopted by the Board of Education.

¹ District Policy [4321](#) reiterates this requirement

Statement of Assurances

The Board of Education of the Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District, as a part of a long-standing commitment to excellence in education for all students, supports the provision of special education and related services for students with disabilities, offered in the least restrictive placement appropriate, to meet the needs of its students under the auspices of the Committee on Special Education and the Committee on Preschool Special Education.

In full support of State and Federal laws and regulations pertaining to students with disabilities, it is the intent of this Board of Education to assure that the educational needs of students with disabilities are met. To this end, and in full compliance with the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, the Board has reviewed this plan for special education services.

By action of the Board of Education in a regularly scheduled meeting, the Board has adopted the Special Education Services Plan.

1/22/25

Date



President, Board of Education

Program Objectives for Students with Disabilities

The district is committed to the provision of an appropriate education for resident students with disabilities and has established the following special education program objectives:

- To ensure the establishment of a plan and policies for implementing school-wide approaches and pre-referral interventions in order to remediate a student's performance prior to a referral to special education;
- To provide a free appropriate education in the least restrictive environment for all district students with disabilities between the ages of three (3) and twenty-one (21)², or until a high school diploma has been achieved by the student, whichever shall occur first;
- To ensure that students with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in school district programs to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of each student, including access to the general education curriculum and extracurricular programs and activities, which are available to all other students enrolled in the public schools of the district.
- To maintain a Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE), a Committee on Special Education (CSE), and appropriate Subcommittees on Special Education for the purpose of evaluating students suspected of having disabilities and for placement of students with disabilities in appropriate programs. The CPSE and CSE will monitor the progress of all students with disabilities;
- To have high expectations for all preschool and school-age students with disabilities, and to ensure that they have the opportunity to participate in all district programs to the maximum extent appropriate considering the needs of all students in a proposed setting;
- To ensure that policies and procedures for establishing and operating special education programs are clearly defined and that the special education program is an integral part of the district's educational program;

² While the federal [Individuals with Disabilities Act \(IDEA\)](#) states that "Children and youth ages 3 through 21 receive special education and related services under IDEA Part B", NYSED's Office of Counsel issued a [formal opinion](#) on July 6, 2023 in which they recommend that "school districts consider providing such services through the end of the school year in which the student turns 22 or upon receipt of a high school diploma, whichever occurs first." NYSED's ruling is currently being challenged in litigation.

- To provide the human and material resources necessary to implement a continuum of special education programs and services to meet the academic, social, physical, and management needs of district students with disabilities;
- To support high-quality, evidence-based professional development for all personnel who work with students with disabilities;
- To build close working relationships among all stakeholders in the special education community;
- To provide meaningful opportunities for parent/guardian participation in the special education decision-making process;
- To provide, to the greatest extent appropriate, adaptation and modification of instructional materials and techniques, and collaborative models of instruction, to enable students with disabilities, as appropriate, to benefit from instruction within the general education setting, pass state assessments, and meet diploma requirements;
- To ensure that procedures are in place for disciplining students with disabilities that promote and support responsible student behavior, protect the right of students with disabilities to a free appropriate public education, and promote collaboration and communication among school personnel and the Committee on Special Education;
- To ensure the establishment of plans and policies for the appropriate declassification of students with disabilities;
- To ensure the confidentiality of personally identifiable data, information or records pertaining to students with disabilities. Such information will not be disclosed except in accordance with regulations.

Continuum of Services: Committee on Preschool Special Education

The CPSE must consider the appropriateness of services to meet the student's needs in the least restrictive environment in the following order:

- related services only
- special education itinerant services only
- related services in combination with special education itinerant services
- an integrated special education preschool program
- a half-day preschool program
- a full-day preschool program

The Committee shall first consider providing special education services in a setting where age-appropriate peers without disabilities are found.

The following is a listing of preschool programs and services that are available to district students who have been identified as preschool students with disabilities. These programs and services are funded by the County, but administered by the district Committee on Preschool Special Education. Early Childhood settings are designed primarily for children without disabilities and can include private preschool programs and childcare facilities. Early Childhood Special Education settings are settings designed primarily for students with disabilities.

Related Services Only

For those students whose needs require related services only, the Committee on Preschool Education offers speech and language therapy, audiological services, psychological services, physical therapy, occupational therapy, counseling services, medical services as defined by regulation, parent/guardian counseling and training, school health services, and/or social work services. Related services are provided at a site determined by the Board of Education including, but not limited to: an appropriate or licensed pre-kindergarten, a Head Start Program, the worksite of the provider, the child's home, a hospital, a state facility, or a childcare location.

Special Education Itinerant Teacher (SEIT) Services

Services provided by a certified special education teacher of an approved program on an itinerant basis at a site determined by the Board of Education including, but not limited to: an approved or licensed pre-kindergarten, the work site of the provider, a Head Start program, a student's home, a hospital, a state facility, or a childcare location. The purpose of Special Education Itinerant Services is to provide individual or group instruction and/or direct services to preschool students with disabilities. Related services may be provided in addition to SEIT services in accordance with the student's IEP.

Integrated Special Class

A special class in an integrated setting may be provided in a class of no more than twelve (12) preschool students with disabilities staffed by a special education teacher and a teaching assistant/aide which is housed in the same special space as a preschool class with non-disabled students taught by another teacher.

Special Class (Half or Full Day)

A special class is defined as a class consisting of students with the same disabilities who have been grouped because of similar individual needs for the purpose of being provided a special education program in a special class. Special classes are currently available in approved private preschools. Classes range from six to twelve identified children. These classes are staffed by a special education teacher and one or two teaching assistants/aides.

Chronological age range within special classes shall not exceed 36 months.

Twelve-Month Special Service and/or Program (Extended School Year)

Twelve-month special services and/or programs are provided to students to prevent substantial regression, and when a student's management needs are highly intensive and require a high degree of individualized attention and intervention

Preschool Students by Program

As of 7/1/24

Program	Number of Students
Related Services Only	17
SEIT Only	1
SEIT and Related Services	9
Special Class	12

Continuum of Services: Committee on Special Education

The district operates a variety of programs and services that are currently available to meet the academic, social, physical, and management needs of students with disabilities. These services are provided to district residents at no cost and in the least restrictive environment upon the recommendation of the Committee on Special Education and with the approval of the Board of Education. These services are available to students with disabilities through the end of the school year during which their 21st birthday occurs, or until a regular high school diploma has been attained, whichever shall occur first.

In-district Programs and Services:

Related Services

Related services are those that assist a student in benefiting from other special education services or assist the student in accessing the general curriculum. Related services means developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a student with a disability. Related services include, but are not limited to speech and language therapy, hearing services, vision services, counseling, physical therapy, occupational therapy, parent/guardian counseling and training, school nurse services, and assistive technology services. When a related service is provided to a number of students at the same time, the number of students in the group cannot exceed five students per teacher or specialist. There is no regulatory minimum frequency/duration for related services to be provided to a student with a disability

Consultant Teacher (CT) Services

Consultant Teacher Services are provided to students in grades K-12. These services allow students with disabilities to participate in a full-time general education program and receive services from a special education teacher for a designated period of time. Consultant Teacher Service may be direct, indirect, or a combination of both. Direct Consultant Teacher Services are specially designed individualized, or group instruction provided by a special education teacher to students with disabilities in general education classes. The instruction is designed to enable the student to better access and benefit from the general education program. Indirect Consultant Teacher Services provides consulting services to general education teachers to help them adjust the learning environment or modify instruction to meet the needs of students with

disabilities in their classes. Students with disabilities recommended for Consultant Teacher Services receive direct and/or indirect services for a minimum of two hours per week.

Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT)

Integrated Co-teaching classes are available to students in grades K-12. ICT means the provision of specially designed instruction and academic instruction in a general education class to a group of students with disabilities and non-disabled students by a special education teacher and a general education teacher. The vision for integrated co-teaching services is a general education teacher and a special education teacher jointly providing instruction to a class to meet the diverse learning needs of all students in the class. The maximum number of students with disabilities receiving integrated co-teaching services shall not exceed twelve (12) students.

Resource Room

The district provides resource room services to students with disabilities in grades 6 through 12. Resource Room provides specially designed instruction in a small group, no more than five students, for a portion of the school day. Resource room programs are for the purpose of supplementing the general education or special education classroom instruction of students with disabilities who need such supplemental programs. This means that instruction is not provided in place of the student's regular academic instruction. Resource Room is recommended on the IEP for a minimum of three hours per week, and not more than 50% of the school day. If the student is also recommended to receive consultant teacher services, the minimum number of hours of the combined resource room and consultant teacher services is three hours per week.

Special Class

Special class means a class consisting of students with disabilities who have been grouped together because of the similarity of individual needs for the purpose of receiving specially designed instruction in a self-contained setting, meaning that such students are receiving their primary instruction separate from their non-disabled peers.

- *Special Class 8:1+1 (Grades K-2)*

Students receive special education instruction in a small class setting that utilizes research-based methodologies. Activities of daily living, social skills training, behavioral regulation strategies, executive functioning support, transition planning, health instruction, community-based instruction, travel training, internships, and vocational coaching are provided. Students will attend non-academic classes (e.g., art,

music) in a setting that provides a small teacher-to-student ratio. Students will work on developing daily living skills to promote independence and address significant deficits in adaptive functioning. Inclusion opportunities are available, if appropriate to students' developmental levels.

- *Special Class 12:1+1 (K-2) and (Grades 3-5)*

Students in this class have been grouped together based on the similarity of individual needs, ensuring they receive the specially designed instruction necessary to achieve their IEP goals. The instruction is aligned with the general education grade-level curriculum but is tailored to support students with disabilities who require slower pacing, more repetition, and alternative instructional methods to master the grade-level content at their instructional levels. The class is limited to no more than 12 students and includes one special education teacher and a classroom teaching assistant. Students in this program are expected to participate in the same state and local assessments as their grade-level peers, with the appropriately recommended testing accommodations.

- *Special Class 15:1 (Grades 6-8)*

Students with similar individual learning and management needs are grouped in this program. It is departmentalized and students are provided specially designed instruction to allow access to the general education curriculum in ELA and Mathematics. Students in this program are pursuing a NYS Regents or Local Diploma. ELA and Math classes with a 15:1 ratio are taught by appropriately certified special education teachers. Students may be recommended for one or more of the special classes depending on their individual needs.

- *Special Class 12:1+1 (Grade 6- Age 21)*

Specially designed instruction is provided to students based on the consideration of their similar needs, including levels of knowledge and development in subject and skill areas (e.g., activities of daily living, intellectual functioning, adaptive behavior, and expected rate of progress.) Independent living and social skills are taught and integrated throughout the program. Students in this program meet the New York State requirements for Alternate Assessment. In this class, students will build pre-vocational skills within district-based work-based learning activities. Students will participate in recreational activities within the community that serve to generalize the skills they are learning in the classroom and therapy setting. Students can remain in this program until the age of 21 and will graduate with a Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential.

Twelve-Month Special Service and/or Program (Extended School Year)

Twelve-month special services and/or programs are provided to students to prevent substantial regression, and when a student's management needs are highly intensive and require a high degree of individualized attention and intervention

Out-of-District Programs and Services:

The district offers a full continuum of special education programs and services in district schools and is committed to the policy of placing students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (LRE) consistent with their needs. Generally, continued placement in a general education setting in the district is the first consideration of the CSE when planning for the educational needs of a student with a disability. The CSE considers removal from a general education setting in the district only when, because of the nature and severity of a student's disability, the education of the student cannot be satisfactorily achieved, even with a provision of supplementary aids and services. In some cases, the CSE will recommend placement in another public school district, a BOCES program, or a NYS approved private school program. The following is a description of programs in which the Dobbs Ferry CSE has recommended placement of a student with a disability in an out-of-district program.

Other Public School Programs: Special education programs in other public school districts are considered for district students with disabilities when an appropriate in-district program is not available.

Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) The district may provide services not available within the district through the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). The district currently has students with disabilities in special education programs at Southern Westchester BOCES and Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES. BOCES services may be provided in another public school district or on a BOCES campus

Approved Private Day Schools: When the needs of a student with a disability cannot be met in a program operated by the district, another public school district, or a BOCES program, the district may, with the approval of the NYS Education Department, utilize more restrictive approved private day or residential placements. These schools are approved by the NYS Education Department and provide highly individualized programs with intense supervision and structure.

Home/Hospital Instruction: Some students with disabilities who are unable to attend school due to medical conditions (physical or psychiatric) receive their educational program at home or in a hospital setting. Home and hospital instruction shall only be recommended if such

placement is in the least restrictive environment and must be provided: a minimum of ten hours per week at the elementary level and a minimum of fifteen hours per week at the secondary level.

Residential Program The determination that a residential school placement is the least restrictive environment for the student, thus removing a child from his/her home and community, must come only after a committee on special education (CSE) has made the least restrictive environment considerations required for all placement recommendations. In accordance with State law and regulations, school districts must also consider the availability of community support services where students could access additional support for families and the supports and service that may be available from other State agency resources.

2024-2025 Students with Disabilities

As of 7/1/24

Classification	In-district	Out-of-district	Parentally Placed	Tuition In	TOTAL
Other Health Impaired (OHI)	64	4	4	0	72
Learning Disability	67	0	5	0	72
Autism	24	7	2	0	33
Speech Impaired	13	0	2	0	15
Emotional Disability	6	7	1	0	14
Multiple Disabilities	6	2	0	1	9
Deafness	0	1	0	0	1
Hearing Impairment	2	0	0	0	2
Intellectual Disability	2	0	0	0	2
Orthopedic Impairment	2	0	0	0	2
Deaf-Blindness	0	0	0	0	0
Traumatic Brain Injury	0	0	0	0	0
Visual Impairment	0	0	0	0	0
	186	21	14	1	222

Evaluation of Program Objectives

In evaluating the extent to which program objectives have been achieved, the Office of Special Education Services will review performance data and information, from a variety of sources, regarding the provision of special education programs and services to Dobbs Ferry UFSD students with disabilities. Among the information to be analyzed are the following;

- Special education data collected through the Student Information Repository System (Special Education Snapshot, School Enrollment, Student Demographic, and Program Facts templates)
- Special education data collected in connection with the State Performance Plan (Indicators 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14)
- Performance of Dobbs Ferry UFSD students with disabilities on State assessments
- Dobbs Ferry UFSD universal screeners and other district-wide assessment data
- Utilization of the annual review process to establish that individual goals and objectives are met
- Analysis of the individual diagnostic re-evaluations to gather data regarding academic and social and emotional growth
- Review of input, both formal and informal, from parents/guardians and students
- Assessment of the educational and/or vocational outcomes of students with disabilities who have graduated

Space Allocation for Special Education Programs

It is the policy and practice of the Board of Education to ensure, to the fullest extent possible, that students with disabilities residing in the district shall be educated within the school district.

It is the policy and practice of the Board of Education to ensure, to the fullest extent possible, the allocation of appropriate space within the district for special education programs that meet the needs of school-age students with disabilities. Special education services shall not be denied simply because of a lack of appropriate space.

Further, it is the policy and practice of the Board of Education to ensure, to the fullest extent possible, that appropriate space will be available to meet the needs of resident students with disabilities who attend special education programs provided by the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). At least once per year, a representative of the Special Education Department will visit the placement of each resident student who attends a BOCES special education program to ensure the appropriateness of the space allocated for that placement.

The district will continue to provide space, to the extent available, for school-age students from other school districts who need special class programs and services not available in their home schools.

The district will also consult and collaborate, upon request, with Southern Westchester BOCES in determining the adequacy and appropriateness of facilities' space housing special education programs and develop a special education space requirements plan in accordance with Education Law, section 1950 (17). This plan, completed every five years, shall provide a framework for the allocation of instructional space, on a regional basis, to meet the current and future special education program and service needs, to provide access to the general education curriculum, and to serve students with disabilities in settings with non-disabled peers.

Alternative Format Procedures

In accordance with Chapter 377 of the Laws of 2001 and amendments to Section 200.2 of the Regulations of the Commissioner, the district has implemented procedures to ensure that every student with a disability who needs his or her instructional materials available in an alternative format will receive those materials at the same time that they are available to non-disabled students. "Alternative format" is defined to mean any medium or format for the presentation of instructional or assessment materials, other than traditional print materials, that is needed as an accommodation for a student with a disability enrolled in the school district. It would include, but not be limited to, Braille, large print, open and closed caption, audio, or an electronic file.

Alternative Format Procedures:

- Alternative format is defined as any medium or format for the presentation of instructional or assessment materials, other than traditional print materials, that is needed as an accommodation for a student with a disability enrolled in the school district. It would include, but not be limited to, Braille, large print, open and closed caption, audio, or an electronic file.
- The need for alternative format materials will be determined by the Committee on Special Education and specified in the student's IEP or by the Section 504 Team and specified in the student's Accommodation Plan.
- The CSE or the Section 504 Team will identify a case manager who will be responsible for obtaining alternative format materials, including State assessments.
- Materials in alternative formats will be ordered or produced with sufficient lead time to ensure that they will be available at the same time as regular format materials are provided to other students.
- Materials in alternative formats will be ordered or produced with sufficient lead time to ensure that they will be available at the same time as regular format materials are provided to other students.

Special Education Personnel: Administrative Practices and Procedures

The district has the responsibility to recruit, hire, train, and retain highly qualified personnel, as defined in the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its accompanying regulations, and in Article 89 of New York State Education law and its accompanying regulations, to provide mandated special education programs and services. In addition, the Board is committed to appointing appropriately qualified personnel to the Committee (and subcommittee) on Special Education (CSE) and Committee (and subcommittee) on Preschool Special Education (CPSE).

The district will fulfill these obligations by taking measurable steps including, but not limited to the following:

- Actively recruit personnel who possess prior experience working with students with disabilities.
- Seek candidates with appropriate qualifications in education, certification and experience.
- Seek candidates for teaching positions who are duly certified, one of which should be in special education, to the extent possible.
- Ensure that every member of the professional staff participates in annual professional performance reviews and professional development plans.
- Provide appropriate ongoing training and professional development to CSE and CPSE members, and other special education program and service providers, to ensure their continuing awareness of their legal obligations and responsibilities.

The Superintendent is responsible for ensuring that the professional staff is appropriately certified, licensed, and trained and that they meet the “highly qualified” standard established in federal and state law. If highly qualified individuals are not available, despite the best efforts of the administration, the Board recognizes its responsibilities to meet the alternative standards established by the State Education Department.

Budget

Each year the Office of Special Education Services prepares a budget to support the needs of the students with disabilities. The budget includes materials, supplies, equipment, contractual expenses, tuition, preschool apportionment, and special education settlements. The budget is reviewed and approved as part of the district's budget process.

The following table is a summary of special education program costs for district accounts from the 2024-2025 budget.

Account Name	Budget
Special Ed Instructional Salary	\$6,672,780
Special Ed Non-Instructional Salary	\$247,791
Special Ed- Equipment	\$15,000
Special Ed- Contracted Services	\$254,695
Special Ed Materials & Supplies	\$33,500
Special Ed- Tuition	\$1,702,579
Special Ed- BOCES	\$762,969