

Special Education Frequently Asked Questions

District Organization

What types of support does the district offer to students with special needs?

The district supports a full range of potential student needs, either through resources within the district or, when necessary, by accessing resources outside of the district. In all cases, we are committed to educating students in the least restrictive environment.

Like other districts within our SELPA, EUSD offers a full continuum of services to address student needs, from services that are “pushed in” (received within the student’s classroom) to “pull out” services (received in a specialized setting). In addition to services, the district also offers a continuum of placement options within the district, from Learning Resource Centers (LRC) available at each school site, to a variety of Special Day Classes designed to cater to specific student needs. We currently offer Special Day Classes (SDC) at Mission Estancia, Olivenhain Pioneer and La Costa Heights, designed to support students in grades K-6 with significant learning challenges. At Park Dale Lane we offer the Personal Development and Learning Program, designed to support students with behavioral and self-regulatory needs, rather than academic needs.

The district accesses programs throughout the SELPA when we are unable to support a student’s needs within district, for example SEAS (Social-Emotional Academic Skills) programs and, if needed, we are also able to access specialized programs outside of the SELPA. The district also operates an Early Intervention Program for students ages 3-5. This program is located on the campus of Flora Vista Elementary School.

What is the difference between the Special Day Classes (SDCs) and the Learning Resource Centers (LRCs)?

Students who receive support in the Learning Resource Centers typically spend the majority of their school day with their general education peers and receive specialized academic instruction from the LRC staff as needed.

Special day classes support needs of students who typically require more significant learning support and, as a result, may require a smaller more flexible environment with a higher teacher to student ratio. The SDC’s operate just like a classroom, and serve as the child’s primary learning environment. The students enrolled in SDC programs access the general education setting for inclusion.

Who is my child's IEP case manager?

Once a student becomes eligible for an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) a case manager will be assigned. Typically, this will be an Education Specialist, but it might also be a Speech Pathologist if speech and language is the only service the child receives.

How are special education programs supervised by the district administrative staff?

Administrative oversight for the SDC and LRC programs is provided by the individual school Principals and the Director of Pupil Personnel Services. Additionally, It is typical for a Program Specialist to serve as the administrator at the IEP meetings of SDC students, and to provide program support to SDC staff. For SDC classrooms, the Program Specialist serves as the initial point of administrative contact for parents. Parents are always welcome to contact the school principal or Director of Pupil Personnel Services as well.

The Early Intervention Program is supervised by the Director of Pupil Personnel Services in collaboration with the Principal of Flora Vista Elementary school. A School Psychologist generally serves as administrative representative at IEP meeting in the early intervention program.

What kind of training is offered for SPED staff?

Special education staff receive a wide range of ongoing professional development. The Educational Services department offers teacher trainings a minimum of 4 times a year, with customized sessions offered for special education staff. The Pupil Personnel Services department assists with developing the training for special education staff, and with developing trainings for general education staff that address special education topics. Additionally, Principals offer site-specific professional development regularly.

Special education staff work together in Professional Learning Communities, and meet regularly with the Director of Pupil Personnel Services to receive updates on best practices and legal issues, as well as for consultation. Monthly trainings are offered to our Instructional Assistants including topics such as behavior, academics, data collection, and social facilitation. Recent training topics included: technology use, social facilitation, curriculum modification, common core state standards, and more. Both special and general education staff benefit from attending NCCSE sponsored trainings offered on a variety of SPED topics throughout the year. All sites maintain a team of professionals trained in CPI (Crisis Prevention Intervention) strategies. These teams receive twelve hours of initial training and bi-annual refresher trainings.

Finally, our district is fortunate to collaborate in a variety of research with local universities, providing additional training opportunities to staff.

What is the district's Quality Assurance process in special education programs?

The district reviews assessment data regularly to assure student growth. State testing is part of this review, as is the systematic review of progress on IEP goals. School Principals review student report cards to assure progress, as well. Special education teachers are evaluated by the school Principal with input from the Director of Pupil Personnel Services.

The IEP Process

Approximately how many students in the district have IEPs?

The national average is between 10-15% of the entire student population and EUSD falls within this average.

What can parents do to prepare for an IEP meeting? What resources are available via NCCSE and EUSD to prepare for IEP meetings?

*NCCSE offers a useful resource for this topic. You can access it at:
<http://www.nccse.org/parents/parent-resources/guide-to-special-education>*

Who can a parent contact when they have questions about their child's placement or special education services?

It is wise to start by contacting the child's case manager. If, after speaking with the case manager, the parent has additional questions or concerns they should be directed to the school Principal, the Director or Pupil Personnel Services or, in the case of students enrolled in Special Day Classes, the Program Specialist.

What is assistive technology? How can I get help from the district in getting the right AT for my child?

Assistive technology refers to an "item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability." It does not include a medical device. Assistive technology assets include a continuum of resources from low tech to very high tech. Your district IEP team staff have knowledge of AT resources and may make recommendations for supports for a student at an IEP meeting. The district also works with the AT Specialists at NCCSE, where professionals are available to provide consultation to IEP teams, conduct formal AT assessments and provide

equipment for student trials. For more information regarding assistive technology please go to <http://www.assistivetechologyguide.org>.

What if I reach an impasse with my IEP team? What is the resolution process?

Reaching out to the Director of Pupil Personnel Services or the Program Specialist will result in collaborative effort to resolve any issues. For additional help, if needed, contact the Resolutions for Student Success (RSS) coordinator at 619 594-7383, or Lisa Houghtelin, NCCSE parent liaison at 760-761-5120. You can read about the RSS process at <http://www.nccse.org/parents/resolving-disagreements-rss>.

Inclusion

How does inclusion work in the district?

Students in LRC programs are assigned to a general education classroom and receive specialized academic instruction from special education staff. All students in special day classes are assigned a general education class for inclusion opportunities. Students in SDC programs are considered full members of both classrooms. For example, they are included in class parties, field trips, and special events in both classrooms, to the extent appropriate. IEP teams discuss inclusion opportunities at the IEP meeting, and determine the best times and activities for the student to join in the general education setting and the accommodations or modifications the student will require in the general education setting. Students in the early intervention program are included with students in a general education YMCA program on site at Flora Vista.

What inclusion programs are offered at various school sites?

Inclusion is not a “program” it is a mindset. We believe that our students should be included and be full participating members of their school. Toward that end we offer special opportunities to maximize inclusion, such as the SOAR program (Sharing our Acceptance and Respect), Bunch of Friends, Lunch Bunch, and other peer-support programs in which a student with special needs is paired with one or more buddies for playground time and other events. We also offer Ability Awareness events at the school sites throughout the school year with the support of our Community Advisory Committee (CAC) representatives and parent liaisons.

Who is responsible for inclusion at my school site?

General education and special education teachers collaborate to promote best practices in inclusion at their school sites, under the supervision of the Principal.

If my child is assigned to an SDC class, how can I best communicate with the teacher in the general education classroom to which my child is assigned?

Reach out by phone or email, or set up a time to meet face to face!

How does inclusion happen during programs set up for the entire student population (eg Jog-a-thon, fall/spring festivals, yearbook, etc)?

The case manager collaborates with the general education teacher to coordinate student participation. Parents are encouraged to explore ways that they can help support these events at their school site

How can I get involved in supporting the development of a specific inclusion program?

Contact one of EUSD's CAC parent representatives, or your school PTA's Special Needs Parent Liaison.

What does the district's Ability Awareness initiative entail? How can I get involved to promote better understanding between peers in special ed and general ed?

Each school site develops the ability awareness activities for their individual site. Contact your school's PTA Special Needs Parent Liaison or speak with your child's case manger to let them know you are interested in helping with ability awareness activities.

Parent Resources

What is NCCSE and what events/workshops do they organize for free to families?

NCCSE stands for North County Consortium for Special Education, a special education local planning area (SELPA) made up of 14 school districts in North San Diego County from Del Mar to Oceanside and inland to Fallbrook and Rancho Santa Fe. NCCSE offers a variety of events and workshops available to families of student with special needs.

Please go to www.nccse.org for up to date information, including video recordings from past NCCSE monthly CAC meetings as well details on upcoming events.

How can a parent of a child on an IEP get involved in the PTA, to address special education topics/issues?

Attend a PTA meeting and let them know you are interested! Ask your school office how to contact your site's PTA Special Needs Parent Liaison. If your site PTA has not yet filled this position, you may suggest to the PTA that they consider supporting this position.

What activities and events does the district organize for families? How can I volunteer?

Each year the district offers several parent events, collaboratively sponsored by the pupil personnel services office where special education programs are managed and our CAC representatives. The EUSD CAC team usually plans an annual family picnic and will organize a few other weekday evening events throughout the school year, where a presenter(s) discuss(es) a topic of interest and where parents can mingle. Child care is provided at these events.

Information about upcoming events is communicated via email, if you have provided an email address to your child's case manager, or through flyers that come home in your child's backpack. Information will also be posted on this website. If you would like to volunteer for an event, please contact a CAC parent or staff representative.

What extracurricular activities via the school are available to my child?

Community groups offer a variety of after school activities to students. Each school site offers slightly different options. Check at your school site to see what is available.

What parent-to-parent resources are available?

In addition to the annual family picnic and other events described above, the district has two CAC parent representatives that can address questions you may have. See our [**Contacts page**](#) for their contact information.

What summer educational programs are available to my child?

The district offers an extended school year (ESY) program for students who qualify for this service. It is a 4 week, half day program, typically offered in July. IEP teams determine student eligibility for this service, which is designed for students who have demonstrated significant loss of skills over extended breaks. All students lose skills over summer break, and ESY is for students who exhibit significantly greater regression that would require significantly greater time to restore in the new school year.

Community Resources

| Where can I get a list of current after school activities in the wider community suited to my child?

NCCSE posts this information on their website at www.nccse.org. You might also contact the NCCSE Parent Liaison, Lisa Houghtelin. 760-761-5120.

| **Can I post information about a good extracurricular program that my child has participated in for the benefit of other families?**

The district has a review process for any community resource flyers or promotional material. You can submit material to Maria.waskin@eusd.net. Flyers will be reviewed and posted if they meet district guidelines.

| **What summer recreational resources are available to my child?**

NCCSE hosts an annual resource fair in the Spring, where vendors and community organizations provide parents resource material about the programs and services they offer. A wide variety of vendors and organizations participate including those that organize camps, individualized instruction such as swim lessons, etc. You might also contact Lisa Houghtelin, NCCSE Parent Liaison at 760-761-5120.