



Special Education
in the
Vestal Central School District

*Helping each person realize
a lifetime of growth*

2015 - 2016



Mission Statement



The Vestal Central School District believes each student is unique and can learn. The District's mission is to provide instruction, programs, strategies and challenges in a caring, positive learning environment. Each student will become a critical thinker, a lifelong learner, and a responsible, contributing citizen in a changing global society. The Board of Education, staff, parents, students and community share a commitment to this mission.

District Goals

Challenge all Vestal students to meet ever-increasing standards of excellence in preparation for participation in the global society.

Support students' efforts to learn and grow by assuring all a positive educational environment.

Foster community pride in the Vestal schools by communicating openly and effectively about our students and the school program.

Invest fiscal resources responsibly and effectively to accomplish the District's mission.

Vestal Central School District
Vestal, New York 13850

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INTRODUCTION

Special Education has undergone much growth and activity since 1975. In 1975 Public Law 94-142, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act, was implemented. This law was designed to ensure that children with disabling conditions received a free and appropriate public education; that the rights of children with disabilities were protected; and it committed both local and state resources to the development and operation of special education programs.

From 1976 through 1987 numerous revisions of state laws, regulations and guidelines were developed for local school districts to direct and provide for services to students with disabilities. These efforts resulted in the implementation of Part 200 Regulation of the Commissioner of Education which provides a comprehensive system for the delivery of educational services to children with disabilities. In 1990, the Individual with Disabilities Act (IDEA) replaced the Education of All Handicapped Children Act as the compilation of the Part 200 in New York State. Provisions of IDEA have been revised a number of times since then.

The purpose of special education law and regulation is to ensure that each child with a disability has an equal opportunity to benefit from public education. The Vestal Central School District embraces this purpose and is committed to providing appropriate special education programs with this goal in mind.

The following pamphlet provides an overview of the special education program at the Vestal Central Schools. It includes a brief description of how students enter special education programs and a description of the various programs available. It is not intended to provide a comprehensive review of special education programs at Vestal.

If you would like more detailed information about the Vestal Special Education Program, please contact Anne Tristan, Special Education Director, at 757-2244.

COMMITTEE ON SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Committee on Special Education receives referrals and reviews all students suspected of having a disability. After such a review, the committee determines whether or not the student has a specific disability. If the Committee on Special Education determines the student is disabled, a consolidated Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) is formulated and forwarded to the Board of Education for final review. If in agreement, the Board of Education then authorizes the staff to arrange the appropriate placement and related services' recommendations contained in the plan.

Other responsibilities of the Committee on Special Education include monitoring student progress in the Special Education Program and conducting annual reviews on each student to determine whether placement should be continued. Students may also be referred to the Committee on Special Education if it is felt that a change in program is necessary.

Persons desiring to refer a student to the Committee on Special Education should submit their requests in writing to either the building principal or the chairperson of the Committee on Special Education. Referral forms are available from either the building principal or chairperson's office. Following receipt of the referral, the student's parents are notified that such a referral is made and then consent is requested to have the student evaluated. The Committee on Special Education must, by law, meet within 60 school days of receipt of the consent. Parents are always notified of the time of the meeting and their due process rights. The Vestal Committee on Special Education consists of the Chairperson of the Committee, parents of the student, a regular education teacher, a special education teacher, a school psychologist, the school physician, if the parent so requests, and any other people with knowledge about the student under review.

DESCRIPTION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The ability of a school district to provide individual pupils with appropriate programs and services rests with the availability of a continuum of such programs and services and a number of alternative placement options.

Following are descriptions of each alternative within the full continuum of program and service alternatives that may be required to meet the individual needs of disabled children.

CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

Regular Classroom Programs

In this setting, the pupil receives whatever services are available to all students. Consultation and/or training may be provided to the regular classroom teacher from instructional specialists, administrators or other members of the school staff.

Pupils with disabilities must be ensured access to all regular education programs offered by the school district. The amount of daily participation in regular class programs will depend on the extent to which the pupils' academic, social, physical and management needs are similar to those of their non-disabled peers. While placed in this setting, the pupil may require related services and/or supplementary services, such as direct consultant teacher or resource room instruction, to successfully achieve the goals of the regular education curriculum.

The pupil placed in the regular class program may also be enrolled in a special setting for a portion of the day to receive instruction in a specially designed curriculum.

Related Services

The pupil with a disabling condition may receive a variety of related or other support services. These specialized services are provided by appropriate specialists. Related services are those services required to assist a disabled student in benefiting from instruction provided in any of the regular, resource or special class programs. Typically, related services include physical or occupational therapy, speech pathology and counseling. When pupils receive this instruction in small groups, the number of pupils in those groups must not exceed five pupils per teacher or specialist. The extent of these services may range from regular daily sessions to less frequent contacts depending upon the pupil's individualized education program.

Consultant Teacher

Consultant teacher services means direct and/or indirect services, provided to a student with a disability in the student's regular education classes and/or such student's regular education teachers. Direct Consultant teacher services means specially designed individualized or group instruction provided by a certified special education teacher to a student with a disability to aid such student to benefit from the student's regular education classes. Indirect consultant teacher services means consultation provided by a certified special education teacher to regular education teachers to assist them in adjusting the learning environment and/or modifying their instructional methods to meet the individual needs of a student with a disability who attends their classes.

Resource Room Programs

Program Structure

When prescribed in the individualized education program, a resource room program is a special education service. It may be provided to a disabled pupil receiving primary instruction in either a regular or special classroom who requires additional specialized supplementary instruction. The instruction may take place in either an individual or small group setting for at least three hours per school week and for no more than 50% of each school day. Appropriate related services may also be provided. Resource room programs in which disabled pupils are placed must meet the following standards:

1. Instructional groups which include pupils with disabilities may not exceed five pupils per resource room teacher.
2. The composition of instructional groups which include pupils with disabling conditions must be based upon the similarity of the individual needs of such pupils according to:

- a. levels of academic or educational achievement and learning rates,
 - b. levels of social development,
 - c. levels of physical development, and
 - d. the management needs of the pupils in the classroom.
3. The total number of pupils with disabilities assigned to a resource room teacher is 20-25 depending on grade level.
 4. The resource room teacher must be a certified or licensed teacher of special education in the appropriate area.

Special Class Programs

Program Structure

These programs are designed for pupils whose special education needs require specialized instruction on a daily basis in a self-contained setting with other pupils who are similarly educationally disabled.

In all cases, the class size and composition of a special class must be based upon the similarity of educational needs of the enrolled pupils according to:

- a. levels of academic or educational achievement and learning rates,
- b. levels of social development,
- c. levels of physical development, and
- d. the management needs of the pupils in the classroom.

Pupils may be grouped together based upon similar levels of need with others having the same disabilities or with pupils having different disabilities.

12: 1: 1 Special Class

A special class of no more than 12 pupils, some or all of whose management or instructional needs interfere with their learning to the extent that an additional adult, either a teaching assistant or a teacher's aide, is needed within the classroom during each period of instruction to assist with the management needs of such pupils.

8: 1: 1 Special Class

A special class of no more than eight pupils whose management needs in educational, social and/or physical areas are similar and highly intensive. These needs could not, even with related services, be met in a special class of

more than eight pupils. They require a high degree of individualized attention and intervention with the assignment of at least one paraprofessional to assist the classroom teacher during each period of instruction.

12: 1: 4 Special Class

A special class of no more than 12 pupils who have severe multiple disabilities and whose instruction is primarily oriented toward habilitation and treatment programs due to the severity of their disabilities. In addition to the teacher, such classroom groups require the presence of one professional or paraprofessional staff person for each subgroup of three pupils in the classroom at any given time.

Except for classes in 12:1:4 settings, the chronological age range for special classes containing pupils who are less than 16 years of age may not exceed 36 months. The chronological age range for any other class of pupils, including 12:1:4 classes, is not limited.

6:1:1 Special Class

A special class of no more than six (6) pupils whose management needs in academic, social and/or physical is highly intensive. These needs could not, even with related services, be met in a special class of more than six (6) pupils. These students require a high degree of individualized attention and intervention within the assignment of at least one paraprofessional to assist the classroom teacher during each period of instruction.

The various program and service options just de-scribed are not mutually exclusive. Any one or combination of such services may be appropriate to meet the needs of a particular pupil as determined by the individualized education program approved by the board of education and consented to by the pupil's parents.

Approved Out-of-District Programs

The district's special education system is not confined to the school district's boundaries. Special programs and services may be provided by a variety of educational agencies which are approved to serve pupils in need of special education. Below is a listing of the various kinds of agencies which the school district may have to employ to provide a full continuum of programs and services:

..... The Board of Cooperative Educational Services Agency (BOCES).
BOCES provides the services for students needing Special Classes
12:1:1, 8: 1:1, 12:1:4 and 6:1:1 services,

- State-operated or state-supported schools (Appointment by Commissioner of Education),
- Approved day or residential private schools within or outside the state (approved by Commissioner of Education),
- The home or hospital for pupils so confined.

School-to-Work Transition Program

The Transitional Program is a vocational experience program designed to help disabled students develop pre-employment and entry-level job skills. It is structured as a combination of classroom instruction, vocational training and on-the-job experience. The major goal of the program is to help students acquire the post high school placement transitional skills, work habits and social skills necessary for successful employment.

Program Structure

The program is designed for students ages 16 to 21. Vocational options include vocational evaluation, in-school and community job opportunities, Occupational Education Programs (BOCES) and workshops.

For further information about any of the special education programs or services provided by the Vestal Central School District, contact Anne Tristan, Director of Special Education, or Rosalie Sullivan, CSE Specialist/CPSE Chair, at 607-757-2244.

Pre-School Special Education

Legislation and Regulations for the Provision of Special Education Services for Disabled Students Ages Three and Four

On July 5, 1989, the Governor signed Chapter 243 of the Laws of 1989, which removes the Family Court's responsibility for the provision of special education services for three- and four-year old children with disabilities and makes local school districts responsible for ensuring the provision of special education services to eligible children. This legislation was necessary to enable New York State to come into compliance with Federal Law.

The legislation establishes a system under which school districts are responsible for identifying preschool children with disabilities and arranging for the delivery of special education services. Each local school district Board of Education must establish a Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE). Each Committee will be responsible for developing Individualized Education Programs (IEP) for three- and four-year old children with disabilities and for

reviewing, at least annually, the status of each preschool child receiving services within the district.

After a written referral has been received by the CPSE chairperson and with the consent of the parent, the district provides for an evaluation. The parent must be given a list of approved evaluation sites within a geographic area from which the parent will select a program to conduct the evaluation. Upon completion and review of the evaluation, the CPSE will determine if the pupil has an educational disability and, if so, will recommend an appropriate private or public program from those approved by the State Education Department (SED). The CPSE will provide its recommendation to the Board of Education for determination of services.

*For more information,
contact the
Special Education Office
607-757-2244*