
“Getting Started”



*Special Education as Part
of a Unified Service
Delivery System*

(Continuum of Services)

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OVERVIEW

Special Education as Part of a Unified Service Delivery System (Continuum of Services) was adopted by the Board of Education on June 21, 2000. The new Continuum changes the way in which special education services are provided to students with disabilities. Rather than special education being a separate system, isolated from general education, it must be viewed as a support for students with disabilities who require special education services to be educated in the least restrictive environment. It assumes that general education and special education staff can work together in a unified system that embraces all students and accommodates their diverse needs and talents. The implementation of the new Continuum requires schools to restructure not only special education services but to be successful, it requires schools to create an environment where all students are accepted and instructional practices in general education are responsive to student diversity.

The new Continuum requires that:

- ❖ Schools respect all students and support all students to achieve high standards.
- ❖ Schools have operational Pupil Personnel Teams and provide an array of non-special education services to support students.
- ❖ Students with disabilities, to the greatest extent possible, attend the school they would attend if not disabled with their age appropriate peers.
- ❖ The first considerations for students with disabilities is to receive services in the general education classroom with the supports they need to be successful.
- ❖ Teachers who serve students with disabilities receive support necessary to teach all students.
- ❖ Resources necessary to support a student with a disability follow the child.
- ❖ Parents be provided with meaningful participation in the education of their child.

The new Continuum is **not** about:

- ❖ Full inclusion of all students with disabilities in general education without consideration of whether the student can meet his/her IEP goals in the general education setting or the effect on the education of other students.
- ❖ Placing students with disabilities in general education classrooms without providing necessary supports.
- ❖ Ignoring the unique needs of students and providing only one model for supporting students.
- ❖ Ignoring the IEP Team process when considering any type of change of services (e.g. location of service).
- ❖ Saving money at the expense of quality educational services provided to students.

Successful implementation of the new Continuum and creation of schools that are responsive to the needs of all students will require thoughtful planning, professional development and technical assistance to schools. The information contained herein is designed to provide assistance and guidance for providing services consistent with the new Continuum. To further support the transition to the new Continuum, the Board's Standard Operating Procedures Manual (SOPM) for the evaluation and placement of school-age students with disabilities, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Manual, a description of Specialized Public School Services and the Parents Guide to Special Education have been aligned with the new Continuum. These documents will be provided to superintendencies under separate cover. Until such time that these revised documents including documents relating to the evaluation and placement of English Language Learners (ELLs) are issued all current procedures outlined in the documents must be adhered to. In the case of any inconsistency between this document and the documents listed above, the procedures in the documents listed above shall govern. In addition, negotiations/discussions with the United Federation of Teachers are ongoing to address issues such as staffing, procedures for selection of assignments and the impact of licensure requirements related to the new Continuum. Once completed, this information will be provided to all schools.

TIMEFRAME

September 2000 – January 2001

- ❖ Establish Pupil Personnel Teams in all schools.
- ❖ Establish Least Restrictive Environment committees in all schools to develop a plan to address new or changes in service delivery.
- ❖ Initiate District/School Planning for bringing students to their home zone schools.
- ❖ Initiate Professional Development Activities (professional development must be ongoing).
- ❖ Conduct Parent and School Leadership Team Information Sessions.

February 2001 – June 2001

- ❖ Begin revising student IEPs consistent with the new Continuum for students whose annual review or triennial becomes due, as well as initials and requested review initiated during this time.

July 2001 – August 2001

- ❖ Reorganize special education services consistent with student IEPs.
- ❖ Begin movement to home zone schools for identified students.

September 2001 – June 2002

- ❖ Convene IEP Teams meetings for each student whose annual review and triennials becomes due, as well as initials and requested reviews. IEPs should be written consistent with the new Continuum.
- ❖ School LRE Teams continue to review special education services and make additional changes in service delivery consistent with student IEPs.
- ❖ Ongoing professional development.
- ❖ Continue efforts to identify students to be moved to home zone schools.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- ❖ Reduce the need for referrals for special education services by increasing the range of services available in general education to support students and teachers.
- ❖ Increase the number of students with disabilities whose IEP Team determines that they are to be educated with their non-disabled peers.
- ❖ Increase the number of students with disabilities educated in their home school/district.
- ❖ Increase in the rate of students appropriately decertified from special education by the IEP Team.
- ❖ Improve student outcomes.

GETTING STARTED DISTRICT/SCHOOL PLANNING

ESTABLISHMENT OF PUPIL PERSONNEL TEAMS

The Regulations of the Chancellor regarding promotion standards (A-501), issued October 14, 1999, identifies a Pupil Personnel Team (PPT) in each school. It further states that the team “will be organized so that appropriate staff provide the supports necessary for all students to reach the higher standards, particularly those at risk of retention.” This creates the opportunity to re-examine the formation of school-based teams so that they may function most effectively.

Early identification of students in need of support and discussion of those needs in a supportive setting allows for the development of a comprehensive plan to address those needs. A Pupil Personnel Team is a standing committee within each school that uses a non-judgmental, collaborative and confidential approach to review and evaluate the needs of specific students who are not demonstrating success in their current educational program. As a result of this process, the Pupil Personnel Team is in a unique position to identify issues that either positively or adversely affect student success. This information can play an important role in the development of the school Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) and subsequent allocation of resources when the efforts of the Pupil Personnel Team are firmly linked with those of the School Leadership Team (SLT). Despite the PPT process, a parent, or professional staff member may refer a student for a special education evaluation by the Committee on Special Education at any time. In addition, PPTs cannot be used as a precondition for referral of students who are suspected of having a disability.

The Pupil Personnel Team uses a multidisciplinary approach to examine why an individual student is demonstrating significant academic, social or physical needs and then develops supportive strategies and services. The Pupil Personnel Team is in a unique position to look at the resources within each school and recommend the assignment of those resources in the best interests of individual students. When appropriate resources are not in place, the team, through the School Leadership Team, may make specific requests of the district for additional resources. If the Pupil Personnel Team is of the opinion that changes in special education services may be appropriate these changes may only be made by the IEP Team.

The guidelines for establishing Pupil Personnel Teams including creating a team, team meetings, etc. are outlined in the Continuum. Participation on the Pupil Personnel Team is voluntary. UFT represented employees are mutually agreed upon by the Principal and the UFT Chapter Leader and should be experienced and credible within the school community. In the event that agreement regarding UFT membership on the PPT cannot be reached, the Superintendent in consultation with the UFT District Representative will resolve the issue. In the event that a resolution can not be reached at the local level, the Chief Executive of the Office of School Programs and Support Services will assist in resolving the matter. Please note, while SBSTs can participate as members of a PPT and provide intervention services, their first priority is the completion of required assessments.

All Pupil Personnel Teams should develop a list of the school’s resources and supports that are available to assist students. This list should be disseminated to all staff and should be used by the Pupil Personnel Team when considering interventions for students. Pupil Personnel Teams should meet regularly as well as on an emergency basis as needed (e.g. student crisis) or when a student’s behavior is so disruptive as to negatively impact on the instruction to the student and on the other students in the class. Sample forms that may be used to request Pupil Personnel Team Consultation, Pupil Personnel Team Summary sheets, and an Intervention Plan for your consideration as well as suggested interventions and strategies are provided on the following pages.

SAMPLE

Request For Pupil Personnel Team Consultation

Student: _____ Class: _____ D.O.B: _____

Date of request: _____ Teacher: _____

Reason for request (please indicate all that apply):

(a) Academic _____ (b) Behavioral _____ (c) Physical/Health _____
(d) Attendance/Lateness _____ (e) Family Issues _____

Indicate latest citywide test scores(s):

ECLAS ___ Date _____ CTB ___ Date _____ LAB ___ Date _____ CAT ___ Date _____

Prior CSE referral? Yes No Date _____ EPAL _____

Has child been held over? Yes No Indicate grades _____

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Indicate all intervention strategies you have implemented:

Peer Support Change of class
 Change of Seat Peer Mediation
 Small Group Positive Reinforcement
 Alternative Assignments Buddy teacher support
 Parent Contact(s) (letter; telephone) Dates Other (specify):

Comments: _____

OUTCOME OF PPT CONSULTATION

Student: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Teacher requesting consultation: _____

Referral to: Guidance Counselor _____ ERSSA _____ At Risk Resource Room _____

At Risk Speech _____ Title I _____ Project Read _____ CSE Referral _____

Community Based Health/Mental Health Facility _____ Other _____

Comments: _____

Case Coordinator: _____

Date for Follow-up: _____

SAMPLE

PUPIL PERSONNEL TEAM INTERVENTION PLAN

Student Name: _____ Date: _____
Age: _____ Grade: _____
Teacher: _____ Case Coordinator: _____

1. Describe the area(s) in which this student needs support or accommodation.
2. Describe student strengths.
3. What are the goals for this student?

The following modifications or adaptations and support services will be implemented to further support school achievement:

SIGNATURES

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| _____ Principal | _____ Teacher |
| _____ Service Provider | _____ Case Coordinator |
| | _____ Date for Follow-up |

This should be completed by the Case Coordinator and maintained in the files of the PPT Team, the guidance counselor and the teacher.

SUGGESTED INTERVENTIONS AND STRATEGIES

The following are some intervention strategies that may be suggested by the Pupil Personnel Team to successfully maintain the student in their current educational setting:

- A. Modify academic tasks to meet the needs of the specific student.
Examples may include:
- Individualize instruction
 - Task analyze assignments and teach concepts in small steps that are manageable for the student
 - Provide shorter problems or fewer assignments on a page
 - Allow extra time for the student to complete tasks
 - Read and explain directions so they are clear to the student
 - Provide manipulative and concrete material
 - Utilize visual and auditory aids
 - Use a highlight marker to identify key words, phrases, or sentences
 - Tape record material/tests for the student
 - Teach the child organizational skills in a step by step manner
 - Utilize high interest material which is meaningful to the student
- B. Determine the student's academic strengths and utilize them to address the student's area of need.
- C. Determine and utilize the student's learning style (e.g. visual, auditory, tactile, multi-sensory, etc).
- D. Design a behavior modification system or behavioral program, which meets the needs of the specific student.
For example:
- Set up written contract for certain behaviors
 - Utilize praise and positive attempts
 - Schedule activities using the Premack Principle (alternate high priority activities with low priority activities)
 - Utilize a token economy
 - Ignore negative behavior, whenever possible
 - Create a structured, predictable environment for the child which rewards accomplishments
 - Establish clearly defined limits
 - Utilize nonverbal cues to signal student
 - Utilize proximity control
 - Intervene early when any form of conflict occurs
 - Utilize time-out
 - Avoid confrontations with the student
 - Reduce any sense of group competitiveness
- E. Assign a classmate who can model appropriate behavior to serve as a buddy and/or peer tutor.
- F. Modify the environment to meet the needs of the specific student.
Examples may include:
- Change student's seat, possibly closer to the teacher
 - Minimize auditory and visual distractions
 - Utilize headphones when appropriate
 - Seat student close to positive role models
- G. Consult with all current teachers, as well as former teachers, to determine extent and duration of difficulties currently being exhibited.
- H. Conduct a parent conference to address concerns and/or to coordinate school and home programs.

- I. Give the student some type of responsibility in the classroom, when appropriate.
- J. Be sure that the student is aware of the teacher's expectations.
- K. Provide opportunities for student success.

PLANNING FOR BRINGING STUDENTS TO THEIR HOME ZONE SCHOOLS

The cornerstone of the new Continuum is the provision of special education services in the student's home zone or neighborhood school. While not every student may be appropriately served in his/her home zone school, on an individual student by student basis, decisions should be made for the student to attend the school he/she would attend if not disabled. If this principle guides the placement of students with disabilities, the number of students with disabilities will become more uniform across the district. Currently, schools that have traditionally housed most of the district's self-contained classes will have difficulty moving students (if appropriate), based on the recommendation of the IEP Team, to general education classes with supplementary aids and services as there will be an insufficient number of general education classes to accommodate the need. Additionally, schools that have had no self-contained special education classes need to be prepared to develop these services, if necessary, to accommodate the needs of their students who traditionally were placed outside of the school.

Districts must, therefore, develop a plan for serving students in their home zone school, understanding that this process will take several years to complete. The following questions need to be addressed to assist in formulating a plan.

- ❖ Should students currently attending other than their home zone schools be brought back to their home zone schools?
- ❖ Are home zone schools prepared to serve these students?
- ❖ Should students be moved to home zone schools when articulating to the next level (e.g. elementary to middle)?
- ❖ Should you begin with students whose parents express interest in moving?
- ❖ Should you begin with newly identified students eligible for special education services and ensure that students are served in their home zone school?

These are a few options to be considered. Each district will develop their own plan keeping in mind that the goal is to have as many students with disabilities as possible attend the home-zone school. Keep in mind the following:

- ❖ While home zone schools are the preferred placement, if appropriate services are not available in the home zone school or district, an appropriate placement must be secured in a school other than the home/district school.
- ❖ Maximum efforts must continue to offer students in out of districts placements appropriate placements in their home district when appropriate services become available. Parents do, however, retain the option of accepting the district placement or continuing in the out of district placement until the student articulates to the next level (e.g. elementary to middle/junior high school.)

District strategies for home zone schooling and the development of a specific plan for returning students to home zone school should begin in the Fall 2000. This plan must be incorporated into the District Comprehensive Educational Plan (DCEP) for the 2001-2002 school year. In addition to students with disabilities served by

Community School Districts and High Schools, Superintendencies must consider students served in specialized public schools administered by District 75.

Superintendencies will be expected to provide appropriate space within their schools to house classes serving students who live in the district but require special education services (i.e. special classes) in a specialized public school (District 75). As many specialized District 75 programs are currently clustered in only a few schools, the movement of these students, if appropriate, based on the recommendation of the IEP Team to general education classes with supplementary aids and services will quickly overwhelm the general education classes in the building where they are housed. Therefore, as students served by District 75 are identified as able to be moved to general education with supplementary aids and services, it is expected that these students will be placed in their home zone neighborhood school or district, to the maximum extent feasible. This will require collaboration between District 75 staff (i.e. D. 75 School LRE Committee) and district staff to ensure that the home zone school is prepared to serve the student.

ESTABLISHMENT OF LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT SCHOOL COMMITTEES

Each superintendency has participated in the Least Restrictive Environment Initiative. Selected schools in each superintendency have implemented a variety of innovative programs to provide students with disabilities increased opportunities in the general education classroom with appropriate supplementary aids and services. This process was supported by careful planning and the shared decision making process. All schools must now undertake this planning process. Local successes within the district should be highlighted. Opportunities for staff to visit these schools, observe classes and receive technical assistance from their colleagues are essential. These schools can offer guidance necessary for planning and implementing the services described in the new Continuum.

The planning process must address:

- ❖ How new service delivery models will be established for students currently in self-contained classes for whom it has been determined that general education with supplementary aids and services is appropriate;
- ❖ How services will be developed to accommodate newly referred students eligible for special education services; and
- ❖ How staff will work and plan together.

Planning must involve all stakeholders, general and special education personnel and parents. Attention to special education students and staff alone is insufficient as the responsibility for all students must be shared among all school staff. Each school including Citywide Programs (D. 75) schools must create a Least Restrictive Environment Committee. The Least Restrictive Environment Committee can be a subcommittee of another school committee, such as the Pupil Personnel Team or be combined with the functions of an already existing committee's such as the Mainstreaming Committee. Please note while these committees may be combined, the mainstreaming committee's responsibilities established in Special Circular No. 1 1989-1990 on mainstreaming requirements must be adhered to. Students with disabilities must be mainstreamed in accordance with their IEPs. The core members of the Least Restrictive Environment Committee include the principal or designee, the UFT Chapter Leader or designee and a general education and special education classroom teacher mutually agreed upon by the Principal and UFT Chapter Leader. In the event that agreement regarding UFT membership on the LRE Committee cannot be resolved, the Superintendent in consultation with the UFT District Representative will resolve the issue. In the event that a resolution can not be reached at the local level, the Chief Executive of the Office of School Programs and Support Services will assist in resolving the matter. Additional members may include assistant principals, school based support team members, related service providers, guidance counselors, parents, etc. at the discretion of the core team. The efforts of the Least Restrictive Environment Committee must be firmly linked with the School Leadership Team (SLT). The Least Restrictive Environment Committee is in a unique position to look at resources within the school and recommend the assignment of resources to achieve the objectives of their plan.

Schools must form a Least Restrictive Environment Committee and must develop a plan for supporting the new Continuum by February 2001. This plan will be incorporated in the school Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) for the 2001-2002 school year. Teams should address the following:

- ❖ Planning for the number and type of supplementary aids and services available or reconfiguring current services to accommodate the projected needs of the current student population (e.g. increasing the number of Collaborative Team Teaching classes at each grade level or department, increasing Special Education Teacher Support Services by assigning a special education teacher to a group of general education classrooms at a grade level to provide special education teacher support services).
- ❖ Designing new service delivery models or reconfiguring current models to meet the projected needs of the current student population and newly referred students (e.g., creation of special education class services part-time and general education with supplementary aids and services part-time whereby students are served in a special class for mathematics and reading in the mornings and are served in a general education class for social studies/science, literature/writing supported by the special education teacher in the afternoons).
- ❖ Designing professional development and parent involvement/knowledge building activities based on the expressed needs of school staff and parents and determining the frequency with which these activities will occur.
- ❖ Planning and conferring about the time that will be provided to educators (general education/special education, monolingual/bilingual) and related service providers who share the same student. A key issue, which surfaces consistently, is the need for common planning time for teachers and other school staff. This planning time is essential to delivering the instructional program and monitoring its success. School plans need to describe how planning time will be arranged (e.g. scheduling common preparation periods, use of Circular 6R, voluntary before or after the school day per session).
- ❖ Identifying the transitional services that will be available to school staff to support the movement of students with disabilities to less restrictive settings.
- ❖ Establishing supports that will be made available for students with disabilities who are experiencing temporary difficulty functioning with their new recommended services (e.g. in an integrated setting or in a special class setting).
- ❖ Addressing the needs of English Language Learners with disabilities.
- ❖ Protecting the due process rights of students and parents/guardians.
- ❖ Supporting teachers of special classes in delivering the general education curriculum.
- ❖ Creating self-assessment criteria to determine effectiveness of the services and student outcomes.

When implementing the new Continuum and organizing new service delivery models and classes, schools must be mindful of the following:

- ❖ All decisions must be individually based for a student with a disability. Prior to changing the student's recommended services an IEP meeting must be convened and all due process afforded to parents.
- ❖ Collaborative Team Teaching classes and classes where students with disabilities are included must adhere to the general education class size limits. The only exception is that Collaborative Team Teaching classes that normally have a class size limit of twenty students will increase to twenty-five students, with a maximum of ten students having disabilities.
- ❖ A State Education Department Innovative Waiver is required in certain circumstances to implement any variations from the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education found in Sections 200.1 and 200.6. Please note: The provision of any of the models in the new Continuum do not require the district to request an innovative waiver. In instances where a district/school is unsure if an innovative waiver is required the appropriate SED Regional Associate should be contacted.
- ❖ Students with disabilities grouped together for the purposes of receiving special education services (i.e. Special Education Teacher Support Services or Special Class Services) must be grouped by similarity of the needs of the students including academic or educational achievement, learning characteristics, levels of social development, levels of physical development and the students management needs.
- ❖ Negotiations/discussions with the United Federation of Teachers are ongoing to address staffing issues, including procedures for selection of assignments and the impact of licensure requirements related to the new Continuum. Once completed, this information will be provided to all schools.
- ❖ Students recommended for bilingual instruction must continue to be served by appropriately licensed providers.
- ❖ Students in special classes with IEPs recommending mainstreaming must be appropriately mainstreamed in accordance with their IEPs.

SCHOOL PLANNING CHECKLIST

In preparing schools for transitioning to the new Continuum, the following school checklist may be helpful in providing some structure to the planning process:

- Does the school have a mission statement that expresses the belief that professionals and other staff strive to meet the needs of all students?
- Have teachers had opportunities to discuss their concerns about including students with disabilities in general education and have steps been taken to address these concerns?
- Has planning for integrated services included classroom teachers, special education teachers, other support staff, administrators, parents and students?
- Have expectations for students with disabilities who will be integrated into general education classrooms been clarified?
- Has shared planning time been arranged for teachers?/Related Service Providers?
- Are staff members comfortable working collaboratively?
- Has the plan for creating integrated services addressed the needs of all students, not just those with identified disabilities?
- Have start-up resources been allocated if necessary, by the School Leadership Team for the creation of integrated classes?
- Have school staff, even those who may not participate in teaching students integrated into general education classes, learned that integration works best as part of a schoolwide belief system?
- Have students without disabilities had opportunities to learn about all types of diversity, including individuals with disabilities?
- Have teachers and other staff identified benchmarks so that they have attainable goals to celebrate after one year? Two years? Three years?

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

In support of school restructuring and implementing *Special Education Services as Part of a Unified Service Delivery System*, the Division of Student Support Services and the Division of Instructional Support's SETRC Office have created a series of professional development initiatives centrally for the 2000-2001 school year.

To ensure that all districts and school staff are familiar with *Special Education Services as Part of a Unified Service Delivery System*, the agenda for the professional development days scheduled for the 2000-2001 school year will include a presentation on the new Continuum and will also be the theme during ongoing professional development. Superintendents were provided with a training package consisting of a facilitator's guide, overheads, a power point presentation and participant materials for use at these sessions. Districts are encouraged to use these materials to provide information sessions to parents and School Leadership Teams.

Parents are a primary group affected by the change in the Continuum of Services. Principals must establish forums for sharing information on the implementation of the new Continuum with parents and allow for open discussion of their concerns. Parents, like teachers, are concerned about the availability of adequate supports for their children in general education classes. Parents of all students who attend the school must be informed of the upcoming changes and given an opportunity to ask questions and express concerns. It is important that the information presented focuses on the benefits to the total school community.

Meetings with School Leadership Teams must also be initiated. This meeting should focus on concrete ways that Special Needs/Academic Intervention Services resources can be utilized to create a more individualized learning environment for all students. In addition, there should be discussions on how resources will be allocated for the implementation of new service models and intervention/prevention and academic intervention services.

The Division of Student Support Services and the Division of Instructional Support's SETRC office have scheduled a series of conferences for selected district/school staff. The issues identified as being critical to the implementation of the new Continuum and the success of creating a unified service delivery system are: (1) instructional strategies and curricular adaptations that can be utilized in the classroom to meet the diverse needs of both general and special education students; (2) effective strategies for supporting positive behavior. Toward this end, the professional development conferences being offered primarily focus on these two outcomes. In addition, three mandated days of professional development for all assessment professionals (i.e. CSE and SBST staff) have been scheduled. The professional development sessions will focus on decision-making and the new Continuum and linking assessments to classroom instruction. Conference information and registration forms are included.

In addition to the Centrally offered professional development, superintendencies have been allocated additional funds to provide ongoing professional development to general education and special education teachers in support of implementing the new Continuum.

These funds may be utilized for:

- ❖ A variety of professional development activities at the superintendency and school level based on the identified needs of school staff;
- ❖ Coverages for school day participation in professional development activities using replacement/coverage teachers;
- ❖ Per session/training rate for teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals and other members of the school community for activities conducted before or after school hours;

- ❖ Reimbursement to parents for local travel and child care expenses for participation in parent knowledge and skill building activities;
- ❖ Materials and supplies related to the provision of professional development;
- ❖ Consultants and/or contracts with external organizations for training/technical assistance;
- ❖ Subscriptions to or purchases of professional materials and resources;
- ❖ Local travel for inter-visitations;
- ❖ Contracts with local conference center/hotels, etc. to conduct large group professional development activities; and
- ❖ Evaluation of the staff development program.

Non-Allowable Expenses:

These funds may not be used to cover the following expenses:

- ❖ Direct services for students before, during or after school;
- ❖ Instructional supplies and materials for student use;
- ❖ Capital expenditures (remodeling, etc.);
- ❖ Classroom positions except for coverages.

To assist Superintendencies in providing continuous professional development at the local level a Request for Proposals was promulgated to identify colleges, universities and educational institutions who could assist in providing professional development on a variety of topics including the development of meaningful IEPs, classroom strategies, literacy approaches etc. A listing of the vendors that have been awarded contracts, the area(s) in which they can provide professional development and their unit price will be sent under separate cover.

Ongoing professional development for school staff (e.g. administrators, general and special education teachers, related service providers, assessment professionals, and paraprofessionals) to support students with disabilities in the general education classroom must be addressed in each school CEP and in each district CEP.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) MEETINGS

No changes to a student's special education services may be implemented including the type of services, the intensity of the services or the location in which they are provided (e.g. in the general education classroom, separate location) without convening an IEP Team meeting and following all due process procedures for parental notification and consent. Starting February 1, 2001, districts will conduct assessments and make service recommendations consistent with the new Continuum (as students come up naturally for an IEP review.) Changes may be made for students as part of their Annual Review, their triennial review or a requested review. So as not to interrupt student services and to systematically reorganize classes during Summer 2001, new service recommendations may be deferred until September 2001. In cases where services are deferred Page 1 of the IEP must indicate in the section entitled Recommended Programs/Services the current program that the student will continue in until June and the new service recommendation for September (e.g. MIS I through June 2001, Collaborative Team Teaching as of September 2001.) In addition, a Page 7 for the current year through June 2001 and a Page 7 for the new service recommendations for September must be completed (i.e. two Page 7s must be completed). Page 2 of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) must also indicate September 2001 as the projected service start date and all due process rights must be adhered to.

Please note, it is not expected that every disabled student will have an IEP meeting between February 2001 and June 2001. During the 2001-2002 school year as students come up for an IEP review, IEPs should continue to be written consistent with the new Continuum. The goal is that by June 2002, all students receiving special education services will have IEPs consistent with the new Continuum.

In districts where involvement in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Initiative has created availability of new Continuum services already (i.e. Collaborative Team Teaching) students may continue to be recommended for these programs during the Fall 2000.

Many changes to a student's recommended services can be made at IEP Team meetings convened at the school level with the participation of the special education teacher, the general education teacher, the parent, the district representative, and the student, if appropriate. When consideration is given to a substantial change in the student's current IEP, an Educational Planning Conference including the SBST, the special education teacher, the general education teacher, the parent, the district representative, etc. may be required. For some cases, the CSE Review Team must conduct the IEP meeting.

The following describes the required membership of the IEP Team and decision-making process (i.e. the level at which a decision may be finalized) and the new Continuum. Specifically it outlines which IEP changes consistent with the new Continuum can be made at Annual Review, an EPC including the SBST or a CSE Review meeting. All other levels of decision-making for recommending services remain unchanged. Please note initial referrals to special education or initiation of Related Services or a new Related Service must be submitted to SBST/CSE.

During the IEP process parents must be provided an opportunity to express their concern. The IEP Team should address parental concerns openly and should focus on the supports that students need. Parents must be provided with all due process.

The IEP Team membership is as follows:

| | School Level Annual Review | Educational Planning Conference Conducted by School Based Support Team | | CSE Review | |
|--|----------------------------|--|--------------------|------------|--------------------|
| | | Initials | Reviews/Triennials | Initials | Reviews/Triennials |
| Special Education Teacher/Related Service Provider | ✓ | ✓ (4) | ✓ | ✓ (4) | ✓ |
| General Education Teacher(1) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Parent (2) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Student (3) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| District Representative | ✓ | ✓(5) | ✓ (5) | ✓ (5) | ✓ (5) |
| Education Evaluator | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| School Psychologist | N/A | ✓ | (6) | ✓ | ✓ |
| School Social Worker | N/A | ✓ | (7) | ✓ (8) | ✓ (8) |
| Parent Member | N/A | N/A | N/A | ✓ | ✓ |

Notes:

- (1) A general education teacher is a required participant if the student is, or may be, participating in the general education curriculum.
- (2) The parent must be invited to participate; however, the meeting may proceed without the parent provided that appropriate outreach was conducted.
- (3) The student, where appropriate, should participate.
- (4) The education evaluator serves as the designated special education teacher for all initial cases.
- (5) For initial cases, annual reviews, reevaluations and triennials the school social worker, school psychologist, or education evaluator may serve as the district representative as well as others such as the special education teacher, supervisor, CSE Chairperson who meet the criteria for the district representative.
- (6) A school psychologist is required to participate in a requested review/triennial meeting whenever a new psychological evaluation is reviewed or a change to a more intensive staffing ratio is considered.
- (7) The school social worker may participate in a Subcommittee meeting for a requested review or triennial if involved in any aspect of the evaluation process.
- (8) School social workers are to attend all types of CSE Reviews (initial, requested reviews and triennials) except in extraordinary circumstances.

The following changes may be made at the school level without SBST/CSE involvement. Please note: This does not preclude the participation of SBST/CSE (e.g. district representative).

| CURRENT CONTINUUM PROGRAM | CHANGE TO | NEW CONTINUUM SERVICE RECOMMENDATION |
|--|-----------|---|
| • Consultant Teacher or Resource Room. | → | • Special Education Teacher Support if the service exists or will exist in the current school. |
| • General Education with Supplementary Aids and Services of an integrated model (e.g. MIS IV integrated, MIS I integrated, team teaching). | → | • General Education with Related Services only (if student was previously recommended for Related Services), Special Education Teacher Support or Collaborative Team Teaching if the services exists or will exist in the current school. |
| • Self-contained Special Class in CSD/High School (MIS I-MIS V) | → | • Movement to a less restrictive service recommendation of Special Education Teacher Support, Collaborative Team Teaching, if the service exists or will exist in the current school.* Special Class Services with the same staffing ratio if the staffing ratio exists in the current school. (Note: students formerly recommended for MIS I with a staffing ratio of 15:1 may be recommended for a special class with a ratio of 12:1 at Annual Review.) |
| • Self-contained Special Class in a specialized school (D. 75) | → | • Movement to a Special Class with the same staffing within a D. 75 specialized school if the staffing ratio exists or will exist in the current D. 75 school. (Note: students formerly recommended for a SIE VI with a staffing ratio of 12:1:2 may be recommended for a special class with a ratio of 12:1:1 at Annual Review.) |

*If the IEP Team participants do not believe that they can make a decision and need additional input a referral to SBST/CSE may be made.

Requires SBST Involvement

| CURRENT CONTINUUM PROGRAM | CHANGE TO | NEW CONTINUUM SERVICE RECOMMENDATION |
|--|------------------|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Related Service(s) only. | → | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiation of Special Education Teacher Support and/or initiation of a new Related Service. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-contained class in CSD/High School. | → | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Related Services only. • Special class with a less intensive staffing ratio if it exists in the current school. • Special class with a more intensive staffing ratio if the service exists in the current school. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-contained class in D. 75 | → | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special class with a less intensive staffing ratio within a D. 75 specialized school if it exists in the current school. • Movement to a special class with a more intensive staffing ratio within a D. 75 specialized school if the service exists in the current school. |

(Please note Decertification of special education services can be finalized at EPC)

Requires CSE Review

| CURRENT CONTINUUM PROGRAM | CHANGE TO | NEW CONTINUUM SERVICE RECOMMENDATION |
|---|------------------|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Related Service(s) only, Consultant Teacher and/or Resource Room. | → | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement to a Special Class (full or part-time). • Collaborative Team Teaching |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-contained class in Community School Districts/High Schools. | → | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special class with a less intensive staffing ratio if it does not exist in the current school. • Special Class with a more intensive ratio if it does not exist in the current school. • Special class in a specialized public school (D. 75), a non-public school or Home/Hospital Instruction. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-contained class in D. 75 | → | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special class services in a CSD/High School with a staffing ratio of 15:1, 12:1 or 12:1:1 or General Education with Related Services only, Special Education Teacher Support or Collaborative Team Teaching in CSD/High School. • Special Class with a less intensive staffing ratio if it does not exist in the current D. 75 school. • Special class with a more intensive staffing ratio if it does not exist in the current D. 75 school. • Special Class Services in a non-public school or Home/Hospital Instruction. |

Pendency

A student with disabilities will be recommended for a new continuum service recommendation as a result of an Annual Review, Triennial Review or requested review according to the timeframes and required participation in the IEP meeting listed in these guidelines. An expedited review should be considered for a student who is moved to a new Continuum recommendation and a different or additional services may be necessary. Parental participation and all parental due process rights remain in effect. In concert with IDEA, students with disabilities have pendency rights in the event that parents invoke their due process rights to an impartial hearing or mediation regarding a new Continuum service recommendation.

As the program categories identified in the old continuum will not exist, in the event that a parent institutes an impartial hearing to contest a new Continuum program recommendation, a program similar in nature and type, with similar or lower class size and maximum student/teacher ratios and students grouped based upon education needs will be the pendency placement. (For example, a parent contests the service recommendation of Collaborative Team Teaching for a student with disabilities who is currently in a MIS III self-contained class. The pendency placement for that student would be a special class with a 12:1:1 staffing ratio.)

CHILD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CAP)

CAP is the computer system that tracks New York City Public School students who are referred for evaluation and possible placement in special education programs/services. CAP also tracks the delivery of services to students found to be in need of special education programs/services as well as the cessation of those services due to decertification, discharges, etc. In order to ensure that the new services recommended are consistent with the new Continuum of Services for Students with Disabilities, several enhancements in the CAP system have been implemented.

Once a student is referred to the Committee on Special Education, the information reflecting the referral and placement process is entered into the CAP system. Student specific information as well as information about a district's Special Education classes are available from CAP. In addition, many reports both weekly and monthly are generated from the CAP System.

With the new Continuum, CAP will continue to provide the same information as before but reflecting the new Service recommendations, staffing ratios and the new class codes. This will allow superintendencies to assess the movement of students to the new continuum. Under the new continuum, a student can be recommended for Special Education Services, which include, Collaborative Team Teaching Class, a Special Education Teacher Support Service, Related Services, a Special Class in various locations (e.g. specialized District 75 Public School) or a combination of these services. New CAP codes are listed below which reflect the new continuum changes. Class Register reports will be altered to indicate the exact combinations students are receiving and whether they are moving to less restrictive services consistent with the new Continuum.

| <u><i>New Continuum of Services</i></u> | <u><i>New CAP Codes Program Codes</i></u> |
|---|---|
| Special Class | (SE)(SS for D75 schools) |
| Collaborative Team Teaching | (TT) |
| Special Education Teacher Support Service | (ST) |
| Related Service Only | (RS) |

| <u>Special Class Staffing Ratios for (SE/SS) New Cap Program Codes</u> | |
|---|----|
| SPECIAL CLASSES 12:1 | 1R |
| SPECIAL CLASSES 15:1 (HIGH SCHOOL ONLY) | 2R |
| SPECIAL CLASSES 12:1:1 | 3R |
| SPECIAL CLASSES 8:1:1 | 4R |
| SPECIAL CLASSES 6:1:1 | 5R |
| SPECIAL CLASSES 12:1:4 | 6R |

In addition to the Continuum of Services changes, there is other information that is now available in CAP.

CAP Enhancements for the Continuum

1. Home Zoned School = Y (yes) or N (no)
2. Promotional Codes = S= Standard, M= Modified, N= Excluded from Promotional Policy.

- Environmental Codes (Env.)= Number of periods that a student will be receiving related services or Special Education Teacher Support in the General Education Environment.

Please find below a sample Detail Placement CAP Inquiry Screen that reflects the new Continuum Changes.

A student is recommended for special class services for half of the day (20 periods per week) and special education teacher support for five (5) periods a week in the general education class.

DETAIL PLACEMENT INQUIRY SCREEN

NYC ID#: 262627201 STUD NM: CONTINUUM NEDDY DOB: 07 11 92 SEX: M
 ADDRESS: 130 HOOKER PLACE STATEN ISLA , NY 10302 HDIST: 31
 PHONE: PARENT: FUTURE PEGGY LANG: EN STAT:
 EVAL TY: P REF DT: 02 24 99 COMP DTS: ORIG 20: ADJ 20:
 ORIG 30: 04 16 99 ADJ 30: 04 16 99 ORIG 60: 05 28 99 ADJ 60: 05 28 99 1
 CONF TYPE: C CONF DT: 03 08 99 OUTCOME CD: R
 ABR: A B1/B2: IN/CL : DAY/RES : REC DISAB 3 **QUAL RECM : 2**
 MATH LVL:04.0 READ LVL: 05.0 TRANSP ELG: A BILINGUAL : N AMBUL CD : 1
 RS 2 TEST MODS : 1 2 **PR: M** 12 MONTH :
 REY MAINSTREAM RCP: SB: RCP: SB: RCP: SB: RCP: SB:
 LAB SCORES: ENGLISH: NR **SP** 4 NR ADM DT:
RECM: SE FN TY: O FN DT: 03 09 99 **BACK DT: 03 09 99** AUTH CD: AE
 SCHOOL: R 31 P 003 PD/DAY:10 **HOME ZONED: Y** < AUTH > < FIRST > < LAST >
SE: 1R PD/WK: 20 D/OBJ: NDP: LN: EN CL: E10 09 05 00 09 11 00
ST: ST PD/WK: 05 GP SZ:01 ENV:05 LN: EN CL: R01 09 10 00 09 11 00 6
 AT DATA: 5
 PC CD: DISC DT: REASON : CASE#: 31-0212

Explanation of Boxes

- This field gives information as to how many service recommendations a student has
- This field gives information as to what is the main recommended service.
- This field gives information as to the promotional standard for the student.
- This field gives information as to whether the school the student is attending his/her home-zoned school.
- This field gives information as to the main service that the student is recommended for.
- This field gives information as to what the number of periods a week the student is receiving Special Education Teacher Support and the location of the service. (This student is receiving 5 periods a week in the general education class.)

RESOURCES

To support the new Continuum, the Division of Budget Operations and Review (DBOR) has developed a new Special Needs/Academic Intervention Services formula. The new allocation formula supports “whole school” approaches which create a single, unified and efficient service delivery system for all students, disabled and non-disabled alike. These approaches create an environment where all students are offered access to an array of services to achieve high educational outcomes. The new Continuum emphasizes the provision of services to disabled students in the general education classroom in the home zone school as the first option to be considered.

In order to support our special education reform efforts, forty-four individual allocations recognizing various special needs of students were consolidated into one comprehensive Special Needs/Academic Intervention Services allocation for Community School Districts. In addition, DBOR will transfer funds for special education suspension hearings from a central allocation to the Special Needs/Academic Intervention Services formula. This brings the consolidated formulas to forty-five. The redesign of the special education formula is built upon six guiding principles:

- **simplify** the formula allocation process;
- **add flexibility** in combining resources to design programs and services;
- **ensure stable funding** to allow prevention/intervention, as well as mandated programs;
- **enable financial planning** through retention of tax levy accruals (assuming compliance is maintained);
- **break down barriers** between different service categories; and
- **broaden focus** from special education students to students with special needs.

The new allocation methodology supports whole school approaches and provides flexibility in using dollars from different funding sources to design programs that address the needs of all students. When combining available dollars, careful attention must be given to the parameters of the funding sources. The funding requires Community School Districts and schools to meet the IEP mandates of disabled students as well as providing an array of non-special education supports and professional development activities. For example:

- The district can utilize funds to institute Collaborative Team Teaching classes which can meet the IEP mandates of disabled students as well as providing the requirement of Academic Intervention Services for students without IEPs in the same class.
- The district can utilize funds to support the activities of Pupil Personnel Teams (PPTs) that provide early identification of students in need and the development of supportive strategies with school-based resources.
- The district can create whole positions, rather than itinerant or part-time positions, by allowing staff to provide services to non-mandated “at-risk” students as well as IEP mandated services. A full Teacher of Speech Improvement position could be allocated to a school to deliver school-wide non-mandated speech services as well as providing IEP related services for part of a day. The allocation of full positions to schools will facilitate the eventual return of many students with disabilities to their home-zone schools.

The continuum represents a major change in our service delivery system. Its implementation, therefore, raises a host of ongoing issues that require specific expertise including issues related to budget, labor relations, licensure, staff development, legal interpretation, monitoring and regulatory and judicial mandates. To deal with these issues as they arise, a Central Board of Education Standing Committee has been assembled to provide expertise in various areas affecting implementation. Accordingly, implementation and operational information will be disseminated to the field on a regular basis.

CALENDAR OF KEY DATES

| FORM/INFORMATION | DATE | COMMENT |
|--|------------------------------|---------|
| Board of Education adoption of the new Continuum entitled <i>Special Education Services as Part of a Unified Service Delivery System</i> . | June 21, 2000 | |
| Scheduling of the Special Needs/Academic Intervention Services allocation | August 18, 2000 | |
| Ongoing District Planning for home zone schooling. | Beginning September 2000 | |
| Board mandated professional development (all staff). | Beginning September 28, 2000 | |
| Professional development for school staff. | Ongoing | |
| Parent and School Leadership Team information sessions. | October to December 2000 | |
| Establishment of Pupil Personnel Teams (PPT) in all schools. | December 2000 | |
| Formation of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) School Committee in all schools. | December 2000 | |
| Development of a school plan by the LRE Committee. | February 2001 | |
| Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings to recommend services consistent with the new Continuum. | Beginning February 1, 2001 | |
| Movement of identified students to home zone schools. | September 2001 | |
| Initiation of new Continuum of Services for students whose IEP's have been amended | September 2001 | |

ANSWERS TO COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NEW CONTINUUM

An array of questions regarding the *Special Education Services as Part of a Unified Service Delivery System* (Continuum of Special Education Services) has emerged from the borough forums conducted in Spring 2000 and subsequent meetings with parents, school staff and administrators. Listed below are representative questions and answers. We will continue to field questions and disseminate answers throughout the implementation process.

Q. Under the new Continuum, will students continue to be classified as learning disabled, autistic, etc.?

A. Yes. During the student's IEP meeting, the IEP Team must determine if the student is eligible for special education services. A critical factor in this determination continues to be the student meeting New York State criteria for one of the thirteen disabilities. A student may not be determined to be a student with a disability if the determining factor is limited English proficiency or lack of instruction in reading and math. The student's disability must be specified in the IEP. The student's disability classification, however, should not be viewed as a deterrent for the student's participation in general education with appropriate supports or functional groupings with students with different disabilities.

Q. Will all related services and special education teacher support services be provided in the general education classroom? Who will decide the location of these services?

A. No. The IEP Team at the student's Annual Review meeting or IEP Conference will assess the need for these services and the optimal environment for their provision. It is expected that the appropriateness of these services provided in the general education classroom will be considered in consultation with the general education teacher, special education teacher and Related Service provider, or for initial cases, the evaluators in collaboration with the general education teacher. The location of the services must be specified in the IEP.

Q. Are there any criteria for determining which students receive supplementary aids and services in the general education environment and which receive special class services?

A. Yes. The least restrictive environment (LRE) principle guides the determination of the environment in which the recommended special education services are to be provided to each student. A student's LRE is the environment where that student can receive an education designed to meet his or her special education needs while still being educated with his non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. The first option considered by the IEP Team is general education with supplementary aids and services prior to recommending the student's removal, full or part-time, from the general education environment. The IEP Team should consider special class services for students whose needs cannot be met within the general education class even with the use of supplementary aids and services. If the disabled student, with supplementary aids and services requires so much of the teacher's time that the teacher cannot give adequate attention to the needs of other students in the classroom, is so disruptive in the classroom that the education of the student or other students is significantly impacted, and/or requires the curriculum to be modified so

significantly that it bears little relation to the instruction in the classroom and the student could not meet his/her IEP goals, the general education classroom may not be an appropriate setting for the student..

Q. What professional development will be provided to assist general education teachers in providing services to students with disabilities?

A. A variety of staff development opportunities will be promulgated by the Division of Student Support Services and the Division of Instructional Support, beginning in September 2000 for district and school level follow-up by the superintendency professional development center. These offerings, which include a number of nationally recognized organizations and educators, are aimed at providing increased capacity for creating integrated models and assimilating diverse learners in the classroom. In addition to these offerings, the new Continuum will be a theme throughout the school year during designated professional development days. Assessment professionals (i.e. CSE and SBST staff) will be provided with three mandated professional development days on the new Continuum and decision-making and relating assessments to instruction. Superintendencies have been provided with funding to expand these professional development opportunities at the local level.

Q. How will students populate the Collaborative Team Teaching class? What will be the maximum number of students with disabilities in the class?

A. The number of students with IEPs in the Collaborative Team Teaching class shall not exceed forty percent of the total class register. Collaborative Team Teaching classes must adhere to general education class size limits. However, classes that normally have a class size limit of twenty students will increase to twenty-five students, with a maximum of ten students with IEPs.

Q. Will all students be served in their home-zone schools?

A. It is anticipated that at IEP meetings, a discussion regarding the ability of the home-zone school to provide appropriate educational services will be conducted. Obviously, if those needs can be met in the home-zone school, those students should remain in the school to receive special education services. Schools and districts are expected to expand capacity to serve more and more of their students including students with severe disabilities in their home-zone school. In the event that a student with disabilities cannot be provided appropriate services in the home-zone school, a school as close as possible to the home-zone school in the student's home district should be identified.

Q. How will parents be informed of changes in their child's educational program?

A. No student may be moved from his current special education program without an IEP meeting at which the parent is a fully participating member. All procedural safeguards and parental due process rights and parent notification continue to be in effect.

Q. Will the Pupil Personnel Teams (PPTs) be used to avoid providing evaluations and special education services for students with disabilities?

A. No. A Pupil Personnel Team is mandated in each school. Its goal is to consider every existing resource at the school level to review and meet the needs of every student who is demonstrating difficulty in his/her current educational program. The PPT, however, may **not** be used as a precondition for a referral of a student who is suspected of having a disability.

Q. How can you include emotionally disturbed disruptive students in general education classes and still ensure that students meet established standards?

A. Prior to considering a student for special class services, the IEP Team must consider the range of supports that could be provided in the general education class to support the student. As such, the management needs of students should not preclude them from receiving services in the general education classroom provided that environmental modifications, adaptations or human or material resources required to meet the needs of the student does not consistently detract from the opportunities of other students in the class to benefit from instruction.

Q. What is the plan to reorganize self-contained class placements currently in existence?

A. Except for instances where districts are already providing new Continuum services as part of their LRE initiative (i.e. Collaborative Team-Teaching), reorganization may not be feasible until September, 2001 when enough students have had IEP meetings in order to form new classes.

Q. What authority does the principal have to make a decision regarding what special education services a student receives?

A. The principal is a key participant in creating a climate where all students are accepted, for successful implementing of Pupil Personnel Teams and for creating innovative models in the school to serve all students. However, the Principal may not unilaterally decide what services a student will receive. The legal responsibility for service recommendations lies with the IEP Team of which the principal may or may not be a participant.

Q. What plans are there to evaluate the effectiveness of these changes?

A. The Child Assistance Program (CAP) has been amended to reflect the new services in the Continuum. Reports will be available, therefore, indicating registers, environment where services are provided (general or special education), movement to LRE placements, etc. Various central offices including the Divisions of Student Support Services, Budget Operations and Review, Assessment and Accountability, Human Resources and the Office of Monitoring and School Improvement, etc. will continue to collaborate on a regular basis to provide support to these initiatives and to review student progress.

Q. There is concern that moving to a system that is more inclusive will result in students not getting the services listed on their IEPs. How can we ensure that this does not happen?

A. The Office of Monitoring and School Improvement will continue to monitor the provision of IEP mandated services.

Q. Will all schools have every special education service listed in the new Continuum?

A. It is the goal to increase the special education services available to both monolingual and bilingual disabled students at schools throughout the City. However, it is unlikely that all schools will be able to accommodate the unique needs of all students and have all services available in the new Continuum.

Q. Who makes the decision that a student requires special class services in a specialized public school (D. 75)?

A. The IEP Team based upon the student's needs makes the determination of the location of special class services. To be served in a specialized public school (D. 75), a student's IEP must indicate the determination that his or her needs can only be met in a special class full-time in a specialized D. 75 school. The IEP must state in the service recommendation section: special class in a specialized D. 75 school.

- Q. You have indicated that staff in schools will be utilized to provide services to both students in general education and to students with disabilities with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Do students with IEPs receive priority in receiving their IEP-driven services?**
- A.** Yes. Appropriate staff (e.g. related service providers, etc.) must provide IEP driven mandated services to students with disabilities as a first priority. To the extent that they have time remaining in their schedules, they should provide non-mandated services to students in the general education population.
- Q. Who gets to decide what students will be placed together in a special class?**
- A.** The organization of special classes is the responsibility of Principals, Supervisors and the Committee on Special Education Placement Officers. Special classes may be composed of students with the same disability or with different disabilities but with similar education/functional needs. The needs include but are not limited to age, academic or educational achievement, learning characteristics and styles, social development, physical development and the management needs of the students in the classroom.
- Q. How will parents be involved in the implementation of the new Continuum?**
- A.** Parents are key members of the IEP Team. The IEP Team must consider parents' concerns and information about the student provided by the parent. If parents disagree with the IEP recommendation they have the right to seek resolution of any disagreements through mediation or by initiating an impartial due process hearing.
- Q. Who is responsible for implementing the new Continuum?**
- A.** The successful implementation of the new Continuum will require the full support and leadership of superintendents and principals and the cooperation of all school staff. The successful implementation of these initiatives in schools and districts will be become part of leadership's performance review.

CENTRAL OFFICE CONTACTS

| DIVISION/OFFICE | CONTACT PERSON | TELEPHONE |
|---|--|----------------|
| School Programs and Support Services | Francine B. Goldstein Chief Executive | (718) 935-4042 |
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| Division of Student Support Services | Vincent B. Giordano Executive Director | (718) 935-3252 |
| Division of Student Support Services | Judith Tarlo Deputy Executive Director | (718) 935-3415 |
| Division of Student Support Services | Linda Wernikoff Special Education Initiatives | (718) 935-3248 |
| Division of Instructional Support SETRC Office | Regina Zacker | (718) 935-3898 |
| Child Assistance Program (CAP) | Rosemary McQuade | (718) 935-3389 |
| Division of Budget Operation and Review | Marjorie Blum | (718) 935-3637 |
| Division of Budget Operation and Review | Marshall Goldman | (718) 935-3709 |
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| Office of Monitoring and School Improvement | Ronald Woo | (718) 935-3700 |
| Office of Monitoring and School Improvement | Nilda Soto-Ruiz | (718) 935-3281 |