

NORWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Office of Student Services

Parents Rights Presentation
March 16, 2021

AGENDA

Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome/ Check-in
2. Feedback from COVID services
3. Extended School Year Services
4. Planning for 2021-2022 School year

Annual Parents Rights Presentation at 7:00

Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SEPAC)

1. The school district has established a district-wide parent advisory council on special education.
2. Membership on the council is offered to all parents of students with disabilities and other interested parties.
3. The parent advisory council duties include but are not limited to: advising the district on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities; meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school district's special education programs.
4. The parent advisory council has established by-laws regarding officers and operational procedures.
5. The parent advisory council receives assistance from the school committee without charge, upon reasonable notice, and subject to the availability of staff and resources.
6. The school district conducts, in cooperation with the parent advisory council, at least one workshop annually within the district on the rights of students and their parents and guardians under the state and federal special education laws.

State Requirements:

M.G.L. c. 71B, section 3. 603 CMR 28.03(1)(a)(4), 28.07(4).
Federal Requirements (IDEA-97)

SEPAC

The mission of the Norwell SEPAC is to work for the understanding of, respect for and support of all children with special needs in the community. To that end, they will work to:

- promote a network of parents of children with special needs and provide the forum to share information
- advise the Director of Student Services and School Committee on operations and development of special education programs, parent and teacher training needs, and help develop policy
- promote communications between SEPAC members, local, State and National organizations, councils and groups
- promote communication and programs within the community to encourage understanding, acceptance and inclusion

Who's Who in Special Education

- ❑ Cole School
 - Heather Benner, Assistant Principal
 - Anne Williamson, Building Coordinator
- ❑ Vinal School
 - Catherine Egan, Assistant Principal
 - Charleen Flynn, Building Coordinator
- ❑ Middle School
 - Sean McInnis, Assistant Principal
 - Jennifer Schad, Building Coordinator
- ❑ High School
 - Matthew Marani, Assistant Principal
 - Susan Boyer, Building Coordinator
- ❑ Early Childhood Coordinator, Leah Ciolkosz

What's New In Norwell

- All Students Returning to School March 30, 2021
- Services may look different. If so you will receive communication
- Compensatory Services
- Extended School Year
 - Vinal School 7/6/21-8/5/21
- Planning 2021-2022 School Year
- Tiered Focus Monitoring

What's New In Norwell

- ❑ Professional Development for Teachers
 - Assessment- PPE, Q Interactive
 - Remote meetings
 - IEP Writing- The IEP tells a story
- ❑ Targeted Professional Development
 - Lindamood-Bell, Orton Gillingham
 - Schoology
- ❑ Upcoming Dyslexia Task Force

Special Education Enrollment Analysis

ENROLLMENT ANALYSIS

	June 2015	June 2016	June 2017	June 2018	June 2019	June 2020
Total IEPs In-district	315	317	328	340	359	365
PK IEPs	31	33	30	34	36	43
K-12 IEPs	284	284	298	306	323	322
Total K-12 Enrollment	2263*	2217*	2213*	2198*	2210*	2216*
State % SPED (PK-12)	17.1%	17.2%	17.4%	17.7%	18.1%	18.4%
PK-12 % SPED	13.9%	14.2%	14.8%	15.4%	16.2%	16.5%
K-12 % SPED	12.5%	12.8%	13.5%	13.9%	14.6%	14.5%

Presentation Goal

- ❑ The goal of this presentation is to provide information so that:
- ❑ Parents will understand their rights regarding special education;
- ❑ Collaboration between family and school personnel will be enhanced; and
- ❑ Parents and school personnel will participate in special education matters as knowledgeable partners.

*Modified from DESE

Special Education Laws

- ❑ **The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act**
 - ❑ -- also known as IDEA.
 - ❑ Sometimes referred to as IDEA-04.

- ❑ **Massachusetts' Special Education Law**
 - ❑ Previously referred to as Chapter 766
 - ❑ Mass. General Laws at Chapter 71B. In Regulations at 603 CMR (Code of Massachusetts Regulations) Section 28.00
 - ❑ Under the purview of The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)
 - ❑ Governs much of what we do in special education

Related Laws

- ❑ The Massachusetts Education Reform Act, also known as “Ed. Reform”
- ❑ Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, also known as “Section 504”
- ❑ Chapter 688 of the Acts of 1983
- ❑ The Americans with Disabilities Act, also known as the “ADA”



One Source of Information

The Parent's Notice of Procedural Safeguards



Sent annually in September

When is a student eligible for Special Education?

- A student is eligible if **all three** of the following are true:
- The student has one or more disabilities.
- The student is not making effective progress in school as a result of the disability(ies).
- The student requires special education in order to make effective progress.

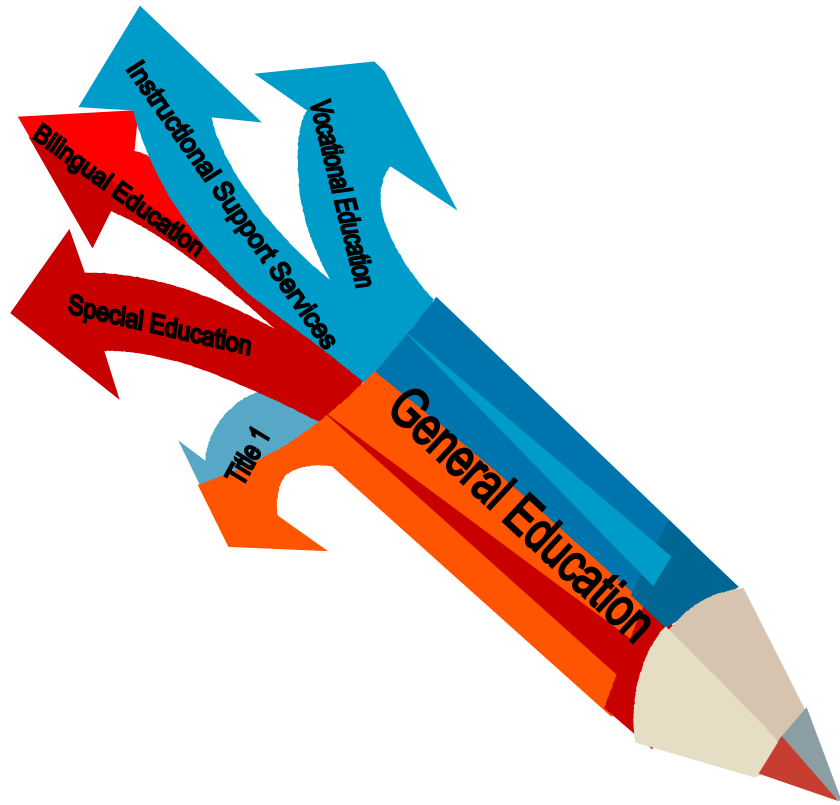


Types of Disabilities that may adversely affect educational progress

The 13 Disabilities Categories are defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).

1. Autism
2. Blindness
3. Deafness
4. Emotional Disturbance
5. Hearing Impairment
6. Intellectual Disability
7. Multiple Disabilities
8. Orthopedic Impairment
9. Other Health Impairment
10. Specific Learning Disability
11. Speech or Language Impairment
12. Traumatic Brain Injury
13. Visual Impairment

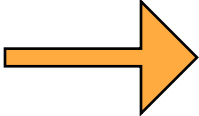
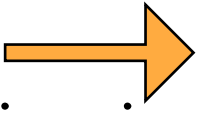
Special Education



Special Education - is

- ❑ specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of an eligible student, and/or
- ❑ related services necessary to access and make progress in the general curriculum.

How quickly can I get services?

- Consent to Evaluate  30 School Working Days (SWD) to Evaluate.
- Team meeting to determine eligibility no later than 15 SWDs later.  If eligible, development of IEP and determination of placement at a Team meeting.
- Proposed IEP & Placement to parent.
- Services upon parental consent.

 **45 School Working Days**

IEP Meetings

- **Initial Eligibility Meeting**
- **Three year Evaluation Meeting**
- **Progress Meeting**
- **Move-In Meeting**
- **Review of an Outside Evaluation**
- **Amendment Meeting**

The Six Principles

The federal and state special education laws and the rights of parents and students in special education are grounded upon six basic principles.

The Six Principles

1. Parent and Student Participation
2. Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
3. Appropriate Evaluation
4. Individualized Education Program (IEP)
5. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
6. Procedural Safeguards

Principle #1 - Parent and Student Participation

- ❑ Parents have the right to participate in all special education planning and decision-making activities.
- ❑ Students are the focus of special education and, as they grow older, students are expected to participate in planning for their own future as much as possible.
- ❑ It is the obligation of the school district to make strong efforts, in multiple ways, to ensure parental and student participation.

Areas of Education Where Parent and Student Participation is Guaranteed

- ❑ Referral
- ❑ Evaluation
- ❑ Eligibility Determination
- ❑ IEP Development
- ❑ MCAS Participation
- ❑ Placement Decisions
- ❑ Disciplinary Actions



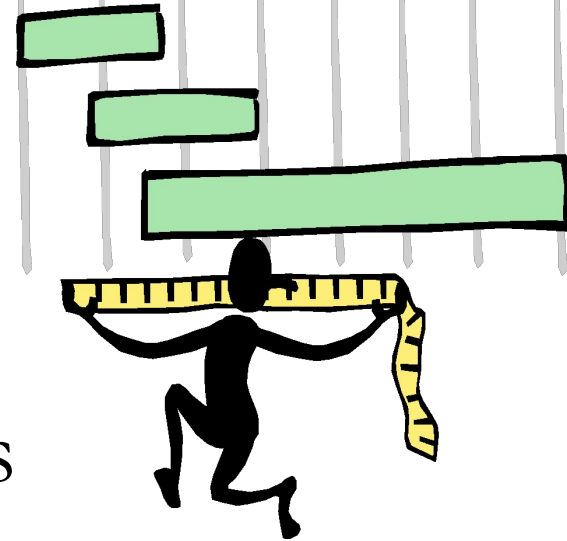
Principle #2 - FAPE

- ❑ **Free and Appropriate Public Education.**
- ❑ Free = At no cost to the parent.
- ❑ Appropriate = Services sufficient to enable the student to appropriately progress in education and advance toward achieving the IEP goals.
- ❑ Public = Provided by the public school district or under the direction of the public school district.
- ❑ Education = Preschool, elementary and secondary education, including extra-curricular and non-academic school activities.

Principle #3

Appropriate Evaluation

- ❑ Initial evaluation
- ❑ 3 year re-evaluation
- ❑ Individualized assessments
- ❑ Non-discriminatory assessments
- ❑ Includes a variety of tools and strategies, including information provided by the parent



Some Specific Evaluation Rights:

- ❑ Right to discuss both the proposed evaluations and evaluators prior to the evaluation.
- ❑ Right to an evaluation in the student's native language or mode of communication.
- ❑ If appropriate, right to an evaluation of need for Braille instruction.
- ❑ Right of parents to consent or refuse evaluation.
- ❑ Right to independent educational evaluation when parents disagree with the results of the evaluation done by the school district.
- ❑ Right to appeal a finding of "No Eligibility."

Principle #4 - Individualized Education Program (IEP)

- ❑ Written information on the parent's concerns and the student's skills.
- ❑ A written explanation of how the disability affects the student's ability to learn and to demonstrate his or her learning.
- ❑ An identification of specific, measurable goals which can be reached in a year's time.
- ❑ A listing of the services to be provided to the student.

Principle #5 - Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

- ❑ LRE means that to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities have the right to be educated in the general education environment & in the classroom they would have attended if they did not have disabilities.
- ❑ LRE means the student cannot be removed from the general education classroom solely because of needed curriculum modifications.
- ❑ LRE means that removal from the general education program occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in general education classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be satisfactorily achieved.

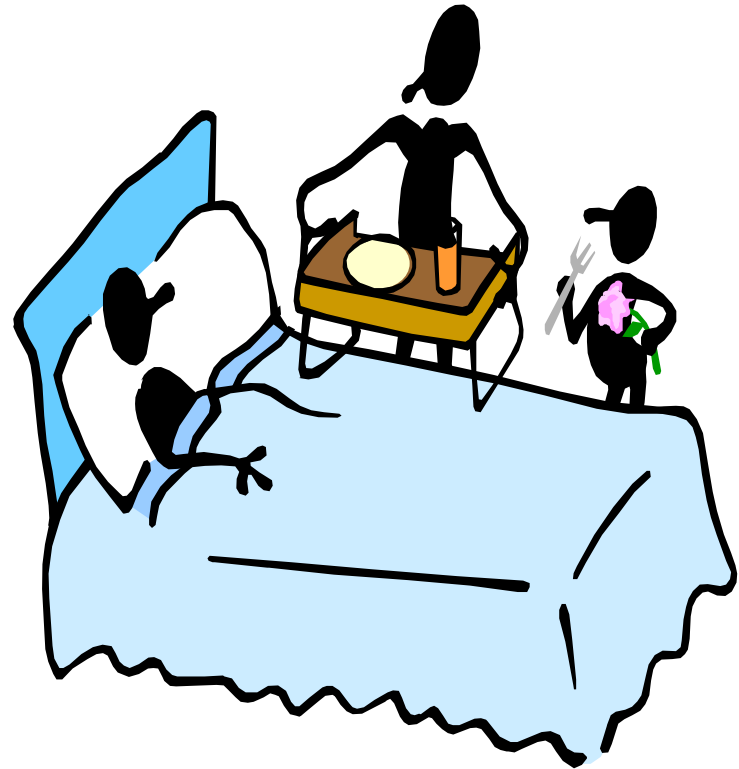
Principle #5 - Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

- ❑ In the public school building: the general education classroom, a learning center, or in some districts a substantially separate classroom
- ❑ Outside of the public school building: a separate or public day school or a separate residential school
- ❑ For young children (aged 3-5): a home-based or center-based early childhood program

Students have the right to receive special education services even when they are unable to attend school.

Sometimes students are unable to attend public schools for non-educational reasons. Students may be:

- In a hospital
- At home
- Or in an institutional setting run by a state agency



Principle #6 – Procedural Safeguards

- Right to written notice
- Right to consent/refuse
- Right to “stay put”
- Problem Resolution System
- Mediation and Due Process
- Timelines
- Confidential records
- Right to receive evaluations 2 days in advance of Team meeting, if requested

How the law can help with disputes

If you believe your rights or the rights of your child are not being appropriately provided you can:

- Discuss resolution with your school district.
- File a complaint with the Problem Resolution System (PRS)
- Seek resolution through the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA)
- Seek knowledgeable assistance elsewhere.

A few more things.....

Our Team Chairpersons are Assistant Principals

- Heather Benner, Cole Elementary School
- Catherine Egan, Vinal Elementary School
- Sean McInnis, Norwell Middle School
- Matt Marani, Norwell High School
- Annual reviews are often chaired by the case manager

The Team Chairperson always has the authority to commit the resources of the town

Resources

- ❑ Teachers and other staff at the local school district
- ❑ Members of your Parent Advisory Council
- ❑ The state Department of Education
- ❑ The Federation for Children with Special Needs
(1-800-331-0688) www.fcsn.org
- ❑ Disability rights organizations and other disability-related agencies and organizations

Ambiguity!

- Special education legislation is so elusive that schools and parents are often compelled to seek litigation to resolve issues.
- The Norwell Public School District develops **Individualized** Education Plans- It's impossible to compare plans with others.

Building Trust: Working Together

- ❑ We know that when parents and teachers work together, children do better in school.
- ❑ Teachers want to partner with you in your child's education.

Next Steps

- ❑ Continued

- ❑ Open communication

- ❑ Collaboration

- ❑ Cooperation

...among teachers, parents and students. All are essential to establish trust.

Do you have suggestions?

We are all ears!!!



Thank You!

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