District 97 - Special Education Programs

Following federal mandate for Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), District 97 provides a full continuum of services to meet the needs of students from ages 3 – 14 who are found eligible for special education services.

**Early Childhood Special Education** – The Early Childhood Special Education Program is designed for 3-5 year old children with identified developmental delays in the areas of speech-language, social-emotional, motor, and/or cognitive functioning. This program provides services within a classroom setting through the use of Creative Curriculum.

**Speech and Language** – Speech and Language services are provided for students with an identified impairment in one or more of the following areas: articulation, voice, fluency, and or language delay/disorder which adversely affect their educational performance. Programs for students in need of speech support are located in each District 97 school. Early Childhood Special Education speech only services are provided at selected schools.

**Specially Designed Instruction Services** – This program is designed for students who require special education services less than 50% of their school day. This type of program can include collaboration between the special education teacher to the general classroom teacher and/or individual or small group direct instruction. Services are provided either within the grade-level classroom or in an alternative location within the school. Programs are located in all District 97 schools.

**Special Education Instructional Classrooms** – Instructional Classrooms are characterized by a small, structured classroom of students with varying learning needs that are instructed by a special education teacher for more than 50% of a student’s school day. Students in instructional classrooms are integrated with typical peers throughout their day as determined by the needs of each student. These classrooms have access to technology, instructional materials, and learning approaches that encourage the learner to move at their own pace in the curriculum. There are three levels of instructional classrooms:

- **Instructional Program** – The special education teacher utilizes mostly the general education curriculum with evidence based interventions as well as behavioral supports for skill development. Depending upon student’s abilities they can be integrated in general education for core subjects, social studies/science, lunch/recess, and “specials” (art, music, PE, Spanish, library). This program is currently located at Beye, Lincoln, Longfellow, and Whittier Schools.

- **Multi-Needs** - The special education teacher utilizes significantly modified curriculum rooted in general education that connects to the grade level Illinois Learning Standards Essential Elements. The students in this small class setting typically benefit from specialized curriculum, which is embedded throughout the day. Students have more repeated practice, and move at a slower pace of instruction as they master identified individual goals in reading, writing, and math. Students have opportunities to integrate with typical peers based on their individual needs. This program is currently located at Irving, Brooks and Julian schools

**Low Incidence Program (Hearing & Vision)** – Programs for students with mild/moderate hearing or vision challenges typically receive itinerant services through SASED (Special Education Cooperative for Low Incidence) while in their general or instructional classrooms. Students with a severe loss are enrolled in specialized programs through SASED, which are provided out of the district boundaries.

**Private Placements** – On rare occasions, students may have severe/profound academic, emotional and/or behavioral challenges, which are so unique that they may require intensive therapeutic interventions. In this case, the IEP team may recommend a private special education program out of the district boundaries to best meet their educational needs.

**Home/Hospital Instruction** – Instructional services are provided to any student with a medical condition that will cause an absence from school of more than 10 consecutive days. The medical condition must be verified by a written statement from a licensed medical examiner.