

Special Education at PV Schools

Identification

All kindergarten and newly-enrolled students are screened for possible disabilities in the areas of vision, hearing, speech, academic performance and social/emotional development. Screenings are conducted by appropriate school personnel. Students who are suspected of having a disability are referred to the Student Success Team for further assessment and assistance.

The Student Success Team consists of the parents, regular classroom teacher, special education teacher, nurse, psychologist, speech-language pathologist, and other specialists as necessary. Parents are encouraged to be involved in this process. Parents who suspect that their child is experiencing difficulty in the school environment may want to discuss the problem with the teacher or request a referral be made to the Student Success Team.

Some problems that students experience are resolved with assistance from the Student Success Team. Other problems may require further assessment or intervention.

Evaluation

The evaluation by school personnel may involve the use of one or more tests to help pinpoint the strengths or weaknesses that a child may be experiencing. The tests will be administered by appropriately certified school personnel, which may include teachers, school nurses, school psychologists, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists and other specialists. The tests fall into general categories.

- **Intelligence tests** — measure a student's ability to perform or to succeed in school activities.
- **Achievement tests** — measure actual functioning ability in specific subjects (i.e., reading, mathematics and spelling).
- **Auditory and visual-motor development tests** — measure the ways the student will learn best (by seeing, writing or hearing).
- **Personality / projective tests** — measure or give insight into the child's relationships with himself or others.
- **Behavior rating scales** — measure emotional factors that may affect the child's learning.
- **Language tests** — measure receptive and expressive language skills.
- **Speech testing** — measures the ability to articulate sounds clearly or to use appropriate rhythm or voice quality in speaking.
- **Hearing tests** — measure hearing and/or response of the middle ear to sound.
- **Sensory motor testing** — measures visual perception, motor ability and perceptual feedback as it affects the educational performance of the child.

Programs and Services

Following the individual student evaluation, a variety of recommendations are possible. The alternatives include:

1. **No Special Education Services** — The student would remain in the regular class and receive regular instruction/accommodations.
2. **In-Class Supplementary Instructional Services** — The student would remain in the regular class and receive supplementary instructional services in core academic areas as appropriate, or materials provided to the regular classroom teacher by academic specialists.
3. **Learning Center** — The student remains in his/her regular classroom for part of the day and is also scheduled to work with the special education teacher for a period of time for remediation in core academic areas as appropriate.

4. **Self-contained Programs** — Based on the nature and/or severity of a student's disability(-ies), he/she may benefit from spending the majority of the day with a special education teacher.

Self-contained Programs

PV schools offer specialized programs for students with significant cognitive, academic, adaptive, communicative, and/or sensory-motor impairments. These self-contained classrooms are designed to meet the needs of each student through a consultative team approach, which may include the special education teacher, school psychologist, speech/language pathologist, occupational and physical therapists, adaptive physical education teacher, nurse, Para educators, and administrator. Hearing, vision and orientation-mobility specialists are also part of the team when students present with these areas of need. As outlined in their Individual Education Program), students are instructed using a variety of multisensory strategies, behavior management techniques, and academic programs. Related services are provided for eligible students.

Structured Autism

Students identified for these classrooms demonstrate characteristics of Autism. Specialized programs are available on general education campuses across the district and are designed to meet individual needs of identified students. Programming focus includes communication, socialization, and sensory integration. Students' cognitive, academic, and adaptive needs are also addressed and managed by the special education team. Instruction for these programs includes a variety of research-based strategies.

Learning for Independence

Students identified for these classrooms have varying levels of cognitive and adaptive delays. Programming focuses on individual strengths and needs to enhance learning potential. In addition, related services are provided for eligible students with communicative, sensory/motor, and medical issues. These programs are on general education campuses to maximize participation in mainstream activities and instruction.

Communication Development

Students identified for these classrooms have average cognitive ability and language-based learning disabilities as the primary need area. Students demonstrate severe difficulty in understanding and/or in using spoken and/or written language. These difficulties must exist in the child's native language and inhibit adequate academic progress. The focus in these classrooms, which are on regular school campuses, is to address language-based learning disorders through a variety of instructional techniques and materials.

Choices Affect Behavioral Success

Students identified for these classrooms have emotional / behavioral needs that are the primary area of deficit. Classrooms are highly structured and use positive behavioral supports to encourage appropriate school behavior. Social skills are taught directly, both in the classroom and within small groups. For CABS classrooms on regular school campuses, students attend special area classes/electives and lunch/recess with regular education students, as appropriate. Roadrunner School is a separate facility for students with more significant emotional / behavioral needs.

Learning for Academic Success

Students identified for these classrooms have cognitive abilities measured within the average range but whose academic skills are significantly below their grade / age peers, despite a history of educational interventions in less restrictive settings. Lessons are prepared according to ability levels. Students are mainstreamed with grade / age peers in all areas where they can be successful.

Serving Unique Needs (SUN Kids) Preschool

Students identified for these programs are three and four year olds, and five-year-old children not yet eligible for kindergarten. Students are identified with special needs in the areas of cognition, language, fine and gross motor, behavior, self-help, and sensory motor development. Programs include generalized cross-categorical programs, as well as highly structured programs for students with Autism and with Visual Impairments. Classes are taught by certified early childhood/special education teachers. Licensed professionals (Speech, OT, PT) provide related services within the classroom. Developmentally appropriate, child-initiated activities focus on children acquiring skills through active engagement with their environment. The program includes children who have been identified with special needs AND children who are developing typically. Typically developing preschoolers are accepted as peer models and pay tuition.

Uniquely Gifted

Students identified for these classrooms have been identified as intellectually gifted based on results of an individually administered cognitive test, and who also have been identified with a disability as determined by Federal special education guidelines. The UG program provides a balance of activities that strengthen areas of need while challenging each student's intellectual potential. Students are mainstreamed with grade/age peers in all areas in which they can be successful. Students who meet district Honors criteria and who demonstrate comparable skills may also be eligible for participation in the regular education Honors classroom.