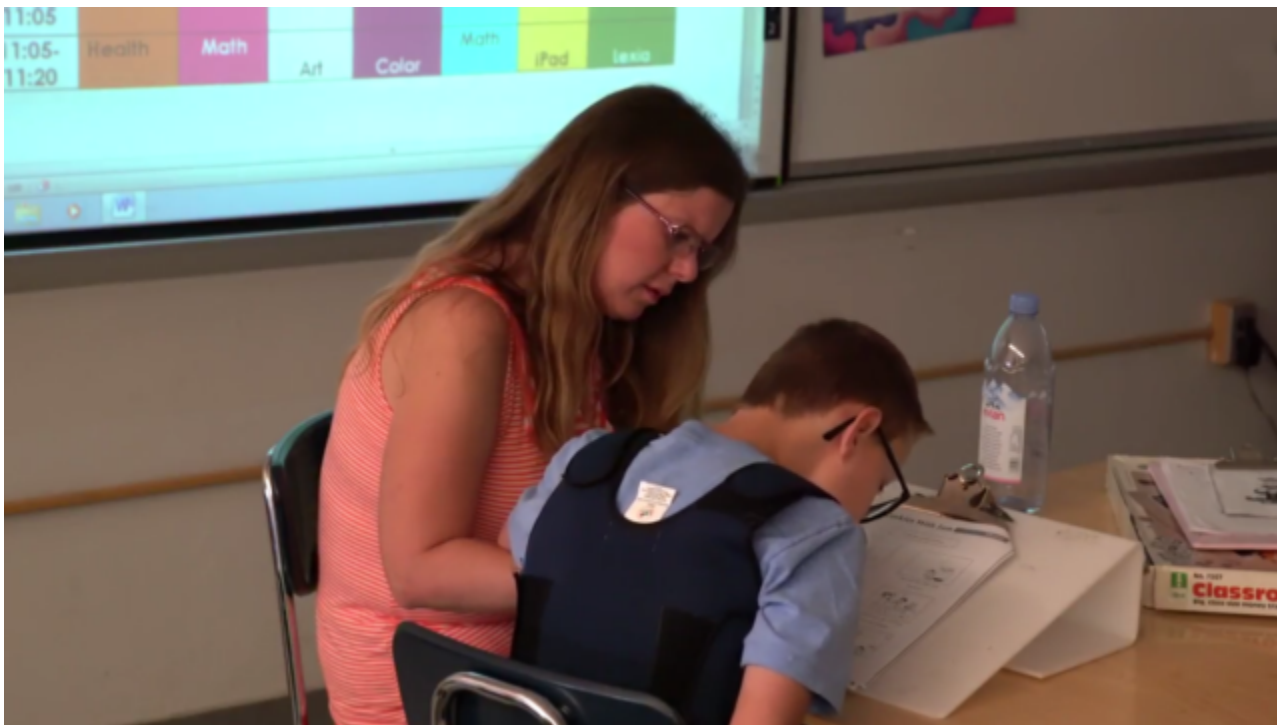


Focus on Finance: Special education and related services

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A Message from Dr. Lynda C. Andre, Superintendent

District 7 provides a full continuum of special education and related services for students with identified disabilities that adversely impact the student's education. The District currently employs 213 certified and classified staff to provide special education services to over 750 students with special needs.

Special education services are required to be delivered in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, also known as IDEA, for students ages 3

through 21. The District serves students with many different special needs. Students may require specialized instruction due a learning disability in the area of reading, math, or written expression. Other students may receive specialized supports to help them maintain attention and focus on classroom instruction.

Every effort is made to provide students with the services that he or she may require within their home school. Some students may receive academic or behavioral support services in the general education classroom. Other students may require a smaller classroom environment in order to receive specialized instruction or supports. Students may also be provided supports from special education teachers or related service personnel within the general education setting.

District 7 currently employs 64 special education teachers to provide specialized instruction to students with special needs. In addition to the classroom teacher, classified staff members are also employed to provide support through re-teaching, redirection, and additional assistance as needed. District 7 currently employs over 100 assistants to support those students who require assistance throughout the school day in order to best meet their health care needs or adapt to school routines. Students requiring an intensive level of support may be provided a one-on-one assistant to support them throughout the entire school day to assist with transporting them in and out of wheelchairs, as well as to provide assistance with the restroom and feeding.

As part of the continuum of services within the District, the District also provides highly specialized instruction in order to meet the needs of students with Autism who require a more therapeutic environment and instructional methodology to learn and develop. The CASTLE program was designed in 2012 in collaboration with Dr. Liz McKenney, professor at SIUE, to best meet the needs of students with Autism within the public school setting. The CASTLE program services over 30 students ages 5-21 at the elementary, middle, and high school level.

The Functional Life Skills program is designed to serve over 65 students with intellectual disabilities who require a highly specialized, structured program. The focus of this program is to teach functional academics in a context rich learning environment that allows students to generalize skills between home, school, and the community. Students participate in a community-based outings throughout the school year, as well as recreational/leisure opportunities such as swimming at the Chuck Fruit Aquatic Center.

Students who have recently moved to the United States or who have families that speak multiple languages may qualify for English Language Learning services. Students are provided additional support from two (2) English Language Learner teachers to help them access classroom instruction.

Students who have difficulty with speech articulation or language concepts may be eligible for speech/language therapy. District 7 employs 12 speech/language pathologists to deliver speech/language services to students.

District 7 employs an occupational therapist and three (3) certified occupational therapy assistants. These therapists provide direct services to students with fine motor delays such as handwriting, typing, and other activities of daily living. District 7 also employs one (1) physical therapist who works with students with gross motor delays and other students who may have limited mobility and require therapeutic services in order to access their education.

Students who have difficulty developing friendships, regulating their emotions, or require specialized instruction to develop appropriate coping skills and learn behavior management techniques may receive support from a school social worker. District 7 currently employs eight (8) school social workers. The District also utilizes school psychologists to provide counseling services to students as well as provide academic and behavioral interventions for students. District 7 currently employs 10 school psychologists.

District 7 nurses work in a variety of capacities to serve all students. Nurses dispense medications, develop emergency care plans to care for students with medical concerns, and provide care for all students when they are in need of medical attention. District 7 currently employs 13 nurses.

The full related service teams, which may include teachers, social workers, psychologists, speech/language therapists, nurses, and occupational and/or physical therapists, are also dedicated to completing needed components to help determine a student's eligibility for special education and related services. The related service personnel and special educators also work collaboratively with school staff and parents to develop comprehensive plans designed to address the individual needs of students.