

Special Education

PHILOSOPHY

The New Trier Special Education Department recognizes that each student learns in a unique way. As such, we provide a full continuum of services to students who have been found eligible for special education. The Special Education Department is committed to providing a supportive environment in which our students can develop academic, social, emotional, vocational, and life skills. Our goal is for all students to develop self-awareness, self-advocacy, and independence.

Following best practices as well as state and federal mandates, students who receive special education services are educated alongside their peers in the general education environment to the greatest extent possible. If the IEP team, which includes the parents and student, determines that the student would benefit from specialized instruction due to academic and/or social-emotional reasons, the team will work collaboratively to identify the instruction that will occur within the special education environment. Such classes will be reflected on the IEP.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for services is determined by procedures established by federal and State of Illinois Special Education Rules and Regulations. The New Trier Special Education Department serves students who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

Most students learn in the general education classroom; however, some students require classroom accommodations, curricular modifications, or a specialized curriculum. Special education services are provided within the least restrictive environment to the greatest extent possible. Please refer to page seven of this document for a description of general education course levels from College Prep, level 2 and associated co-taught (CT) classes, to High Honors, level 4 classes. A continuum of services is used to address students' needs on an individual basis by his/her IEP team. Enrollment in the special education courses listed below is based upon the IEP team's recommendation. During the registration process, special education case managers work in conjunction with advisers and in partnership with families to ensure that each student is provided the least restrictive environment possible, and any specialized classes, as determined through the IEP process, including co-taught classes, are clearly communicated. Students in special education who meet graduation requirements earn a standard New Trier diploma.

Special Education Courses

RESOURCE SEMINAR

In Resource Seminar, case managers work with students to develop strategies related to goals and objectives identified in their Individualized Education Plans (IEP). The case manager provides academic and emotional support to students on his/her caseload in a supportive environment, oversees the IEP, and communicates with parents, general and special education teachers, as well as other service providers. Through skill development and relationship building, Resource Seminar is geared

toward facilitating student independence in school, at work, in personal relationships, and within the community. Time spent with the case manager is determined based on student need and is structured in small groups to allow for individualization.

INSTRUCTIONAL CLASSES

Instructional classes are offered in many of the subject areas and are designed to parallel the curriculum presented in general education classes while offering the highest degree of individualized instruction. For students with significant learning challenges, these classes offer a modified curriculum that may include instruction in prevocational and life skills. Special section instructional classes are offered based upon student need and may vary from year to year but may include English, Mathematics, Social Studies and Learning Strategies. For the purposes of the transcript and grade point average, all special education courses are weighted at level 2.

English

This course incorporates reading and writing remediation with systematic and explicit instruction. During freshman and sophomore years, students read and write about literature across genres and for a variety of purposes. Junior year, the students develop and build research and analytical skills through the completion of the junior theme research paper. Senior year builds upon previous skills with additional emphasis on post-high school essay writing and evaluation of contemporary sources of information. Across all four years, the curriculum parallels that of more traditional language arts instruction with significant practice in more advanced vocabulary building, literature analysis, the writing process, and public speaking.

Mathematics

Courses offered in Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, and College Algebra/Trigonometry are designed to parallel the general curriculum and teach essential concepts. These courses provide students with extra support and continuous review and repetition to foster confidence in their skills and to build a foundation for future math courses.

Social Studies

History courses are survey classes that trace the historic and social developments of societies around the world. Students enrolled in a special section social studies course will study key political, economic, geographical cultures, and interactions of civilizations around the world. Students will also develop an understanding of the value systems and interactions of the many ethnic groups found in America and the world. Students will be taught through small group instruction that is tailored to meet specific student needs. Through their studies, students will focus on developing their reading comprehension, organization, self-advocacy, writing, and research skills.

Transition Seminar

Transition Seminar is available to students with IEPs who may benefit from direct instruction related to the four key components of the transition plan: education, training, employment, and independent living. Students will gain a better sense of themselves as students and future employees, receiving guidance and support while exploring and planning for life after high school based on their interests, needs, aptitudes, and skills. Students will explore post-high school options, including working, taking college courses, attending college, and volunteering.

LEARNING STRATEGIES

Learning Strategies, offered on both campuses at New Trier High School, is designed to serve special education students who require a smaller, more structured environment for learning due to emotional or behavioral concerns. The goal is to provide students with the academic and social emotional tools they need to be successful in general education classes as well as preparation for their post-secondary goals.

New Trier Learning Center

New Trier Learning Center, located at the Northfield Campus, provides a positive, therapeutic environment for students who have experienced difficulty in educational, social, and/or emotional development. The goal of the program is to guide students toward fulfillment of the academic requirements for a high school education and to develop the skills needed to become an independent, functioning adult. The New Trier curriculum forms the basis of the academic program. For most students, the aim is to help them gain the necessary skills to return to the general education program at New Trier. Students who graduate from the Learning Center graduate with a New Trier diploma.

- Support classes are offered in the areas of literacy and math skills depending upon student IEP needs. Classes vary from year to year.
- Enrollment in special education courses is based upon the IEP team's recommendation.

Other Services

Transition Services

Beginning at age 14 ½, the IEP team will begin to discuss and develop a transition plan to include post-secondary goals in the areas of education, employment, and independent living. Each plan is highly individualized and based on the strengths, needs, and interests of the student as determined through a variety of transition assessments. The Special Education Department partners with Post-High School Counseling and the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS), when appropriate, to bridge the gap between high school and post-secondary life. Additionally, a transition coordinator as well as a vocational coordinator are available to assist in developing a unique schedule of services and supports. For students who qualify and demonstrate a willingness to participate, additional services beyond their four-years at New Trier are available through Extension of Services (EOS) to support the attainment of independent living and employment skills.

Extended School Year Services (ESY)

Extended school year services are provided during the summer months for students who qualify under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Related Services

These services include but are not limited to speech and language, social work, assistive technology, physical and occupational therapy, orientation and mobility, adaptive physical education, psychological services, and support from instructional assistants.