

# Parent Handbook

## Special Education Services in Blue Valley Schools



Blue Valley School District provides special education services for eligible students with giftedness or disabilities. This handbook provides information about Blue Valley's procedures, answers to frequently asked questions, and links to other resources.

The handbook is available online at [this link](#) for easy access to hyperlinks.

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## WELCOME

When a student is eligible for special education services, parents or guardians may feel overwhelmed by the amount of information and new terminology. Even if your child has been receiving services for several years, parents and guardians frequently have questions about services, programs, what to do, or where to go if they have concerns.

Blue Valley wants parents and guardians to have the information they need to be active participants in the special education process. We know that students make the most progress when families and schools work together as partners. We designed this handbook with Blue Valley patrons in mind.

Please let us know if you have questions or suggestions about how we can best support you and your student.

Sincerely,

*The Blue Valley Special Education Department*



# HOW SPECIAL EDUCATION WORKS IN KANSAS

The information in this section is from [Parents' Guide to Special Education in Kansas](#) and the Kansas [Special Education Process Handbook](#). Click on the links to access the complete guides.

## REFERRAL FOR INITIAL EVALUATION

Referrals for initial evaluation may come from a variety of sources. These include:

- Early Childhood Screening
- Part C Infant-Toddler Program
- General Education Intervention Team (if using an individual problem-solving team) or Grade/Content Area Collaborative Team
- Parents
- Self-referral by young adult student

A referral for an initial evaluation is made whenever it is suspected that a child may be a child with an exceptionality\*. For a preschool child, the referral may be a result of screening described in 91-40-7(b), or from a Part C Infant-Toddler program. A school age child would participate in general education interventions (GEI) prior to the referral. As a result of GEI, the school would have data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals, that indicate the instruction and educational interventions and strategies presented to the child in the general education setting were not adequate and indicated an evaluation for special education is appropriate (K.A.R. 91-40-7(b)(c); 34 C.F.R. 300.309(c)(1)). Additionally, **a parent or adult student may request an evaluation at any time.** \*\*

Upon referral for an initial evaluation, regardless of the source, the first action the school must take is to provide the parents, or the adult student, a copy of the [Parent Rights Notice](#) (procedural safeguards) available to them (K.S.A. 72-988(e); 34 C.F.R. 300.503).

Special education and related services are support services for students with an exceptionality. In order for a student to be eligible for special education and related services, the student must first be determined to have an exceptionality and need specialized instruction. Once eligibility is determined, an IEP is developed and special education and related services can begin. This section gives a very brief overview of the steps in the process. More information about each step can be found in the complete Guide and the [Kansas Special Education Process Handbook](#).

**\* The term "exceptionality" is used in Kansas to refer to a disability or giftedness.**

**\*\*In Blue Valley, contact your school psychologist, building principal, or director of special education to request an evaluation for special education.**

## CHILD FIND

Child Find is an ongoing process that school staff use in public and private schools to locate and identify students who may need special education services. In Kansas, "Child Find" for young children ages birth through age 5 is called "screening." Schools should provide screenings for children within 30 days of the request for a screening. Screenings may consist of observations, interviews, and assessments that would identify a disability or developmental delay in the areas of communication, thinking/reasoning development, social-emotional development, self-help/adaptive behavior, and/or physical development.

For children in kindergarten through 12th grade, Child Find usually begins with general education interventions. In most cases, when a child is determined to need support in addition to what the classroom teacher has provided, a team meeting is held and an intervention plan is developed. This team will use an individual problem-solving process known as general education interventions. The team is sometimes called a student support team, student improvement team, care team, or something similar.

The purpose of this team is to determine:

- which skills need further intervention,
- what interventions will be provided,
- how and by whom the intervention will be carried out,
- what data will be collected to determine if the intervention is working, and
- how often the team will meet to review the progress of the child.

If the general education interventions are significant, beyond what could be provided by the general education and the team suspects that the child may have an exceptionality, the team would refer the student for an initial evaluation.



## INITIAL EVALUATION AND ELIGIBILITY

Initial evaluation means the process of collecting information about a student for the following purposes:

1. To decide if the student has an exceptionality, based on eligibility criteria set by the Kansas State Department of Education;
2. To decide if special education services are needed for the student to benefit from an educational program; and
3. To identify the student's individual educational strengths and needs and to provide a basis for appropriate intervention.

The evaluation must assess the student's needs in all areas related to the suspected area of concern. The evaluation results will be used to decide the student's eligibility for special education and related services and to make decisions about an appropriate educational program for the student.

Parents will be provided prior written notice and be asked to provide written consent to allow the school to conduct the initial evaluation.

Parents are specifically named as members of the team that determines if a student is eligible for services. Eligibility has two components:

- the student must have an exceptionality; and
- the student must have a need for special education and related services.

The team must be sure that the concerns are not the result of a lack of instruction in reading or math, or because the student has limited English ability. Parents are to be given a copy of an evaluation report that documents the team's decision regarding eligibility and the reasons for that decision.

If it is determined that the student is not eligible for special education services, the student improvement team meets again to consider other services that might be appropriate (like migrant, bilingual, special reading, or math enrichment programs) or, a student may be eligible for services under Section 504.

## INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

The IEP is a written plan for each eligible student with an exceptionality. The IEP is considered to be important to ensure the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and better results for all students with an exceptionality. To create an effective IEP, parents, teachers, other school staff, and often the student, must come together to look closely at the student's unique needs. These individuals pool knowledge, experience, and commitment to design an educational program that will help the student be involved in, and progress in, the general curriculum. The IEP guides the delivery of special education supports and services for the student. Without a doubt, writing and implementing an effective IEP requires teamwork.

(See [Chapter 4 of the Kansas Special Education Process Handbook, Individualized Education Program.](#))

## IEP TEAM

The members of the IEP team include:

- the parent(s) (or education decision-maker);
- at least one special education teacher of the child;
- at least one general education teacher, if the child is, or may be, participating in the general education environment;
- representatives of the school with knowledge of available resources, curriculum, and special instruction;
- a person who can interpret what evaluation results mean for the student;
- other persons who are invited by the school or the parent because they know the child or have special expertise that would be helpful to the team; and
- the student at age 14 or earlier, if appropriate.
- IEP team members can serve in more than one role and can be excused by mutual agreement.

## **DEFINING THE IEP**

- The IEP is both a process and a document.
- An IEP is required for students ages 3 through 21 with exceptionalities who need special education services.
- As a process, the IEP meeting brings together people who work with a student. The meeting is for the parents, the student, and the school staff to talk about the student's strengths and needs. They also set goals, identify resources, and develop a plan for the student's education.
- As a document, the IEP serves as a blueprint that guides the student's day-to-day instruction, support, and related services.
- The IEP must be reviewed every year, or more often, if needed, to make sure the student is making progress in meeting goals.

Once the student is age 14, the IEP team, including the parent and student, will begin planning for the student's life after leaving the public schools. (See [Kansas Special Education Process Handbook, Chapter 4, Transition, page 80.](#))

## **DEVELOPING THE IEP**

The school must schedule the IEP meeting at least annually and at a time and place agreeable to the parents and the school. Schools must notify parents in writing regarding the IEP meeting, and who will be attending. They must also be informed that they may invite people to the meeting who have knowledge or special information about the student. If the parents agree, IEP team meetings may be conducted with the use of conference calls, video conferencing, or other alternative means.

The IEP team must discuss any significant behavior concerns they might have about the student. They must also consider any specific communication needs including receptive and expressive language delays, limited English proficiency, deaf or hard-of-hearing, or Braille for students who may be blind or visually impaired.

## **PLACEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

After the IEP is written, the team considers where the most appropriate setting might be for the student to receive services and make progress on the goals in the IEP. Services for



the student are to be in general education classes with students without disabilities unless the IEP team believes a different setting is necessary in order for the student to be successful. If the team thinks the student should be taught in a different setting, they must write their reasons in the IEP.

Parents must be provided prior written notice and asked to give written consent before the student's initial placement in special education or related services. If a parent refuses to give this consent, the school cannot begin the initial placement. ([See Chapter 6, Least Restrictive Environment.](#))

## REVIEWING AND REVISING THE IEP

The IEP must be reviewed, and if necessary, revised at least annually or more often if the parent or school asks for a review. If reviewed annually, this review must be on or before the anniversary date of the IEP (this is the date the IEP was written by the IEP team.) Parents, as a member of the IEP team, must be invited to attend these meetings.

The IEP team:

- determines if the student is making progress toward the measurable annual goals on the IEP;
- revises the IEP, if needed, to help the student progress in the general curriculum and achieve annual goals;
- reviews the results of any reevaluation;
- reviews any new information about the student;
- reviews the student's anticipated needs; and
- may change the IEP, after the annual review, without a meeting, if both parents and the school agree in writing.

## REEVALUATION

A reevaluation of the student's needs is to be conducted at least every three years unless the parent and the school agree that a reevaluation is unnecessary. A reevaluation may be conducted more frequently, if the student's parent or teacher requests a reevaluation. However, no more than one reevaluation may occur in one year, unless the parent and the school agree to more than one during a year. Parents must be provided prior written notice and asked to give their written consent before any reevaluation.

During a reevaluation, the IEP team must review the existing evaluation information about the student, including information provided by the parents. The team determines if more information is needed to decide if the student continues to have an exceptionality and determines the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance.

Additionally, the IEP team is to consider whether any additions or modifications to the special education and related services are needed to be sure the student can meet the measurable annual goals set out in the IEP and allow for participation, as appropriate, in the general education curriculum.

(See [Kansas Special Education Process Handbook, Chapter 3](#), Initial Evaluation Reevaluation and Eligibility.)

## COMMONLY USED TERMS IN BLUE VALLEY

### Titles for Special Education Personnel

*This is a short list of special education service providers and a brief description of the services they provide. Please note that special educators work collaboratively with teams that may include other special educators, general education teachers and paraprofessionals. The descriptions below give an overview only, not a complete description of the services.*

- **Audiologist**—Audiologists support students with hearing loss and work with schools and teams on hearing screenings for students in special education.
- **Assistive Technology (AT)**—AT specialists support students and staff in the use of low and high tech devices that promote access to the curriculum. Includes items such as pencil grips, adapted computers/keyboards, and electronic communication devices.
- **Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)**—a BIP defines the strategies and approaches team members will use in response to behaviors exhibited by a student in order to affect beneficial changes in behavior.
- **Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)**—BCBAs have advanced training in understanding the functions of behavior and interventions to promote positive behavior.
- **Case Manager**—Each child with an IEP has a service provider assigned as the case manager. Typically, it is the special educator who provides the most direct service.
- **Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS)**—provides services to students with visual impairments to assist them in navigating their environments, both at school and in the community.
- **Consultant**—Blue Valley has a team of special educators that serve as consultants to staff. Our consultants have expertise in curriculum, positive behavior supports, autism, and other areas.
- **Developmental Delay (DD)**—a disability category under IDEA that only applies to students ages 3 through 9 and must be replaced when a student is 9.
- **Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)**—a Functional Behavior Assessment is done to identify the functions of a student's behavior and to identify replacement behaviors and strategies for a behavior intervention plan (BIP)
- **Gifted Education Teacher**—provides gifted education services for students identified as intellectually gifted through the district's eligibility process
- **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**—an Individualized Education Program is the document that a team develops in order to define for a student the special education needs required for him or her to make progress in the general education curriculum
- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**—the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is the federal law that governs special education in the US.
- **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**—the least restrictive environment is the special education placement that allows a student access to same age peers without disabilities to the greatest extent possible. This is based on the student's individual needs and characteristics.
- **Music Therapist**—assists teams to use music in order to support student learning
- **Occupational Therapist (OT)**—OTs provide services to students with delays in fine motor or self-help skills. May be assisted by a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA).

- **Paraeducator/Paraprofessional/Para**—a special education employee who typically is not licensed to teach. They perform many instructional duties with students in a variety of setting under the supervision of a licensed special educator.
- **Physical Therapist (PT)**—Physical therapists provide support to students who require services due to gross motor needs and may be assisted by a Certified Physical Therapy Assistant (CPTA).
- **Prior Written Notice (PWN)**—a Prior Written Notice is provided to parents before any changes to the IEP are initiated; some changes require consent, while other elements of the IEP are not consent items.
- **Registered Behavior Technician (RBT)**—a member of the behavior team who assists team members in the implementation of strategies and replacement behaviors to help students change behavior patterns.
- **Special Education Teacher**—Special Education Teachers have special licensure to teach students who have been identified as eligible for special education. They also provide support to general education teachers to assist with structuring classrooms to support the needs of students.
- **Speech Language Pathologist (SLP)**—SLPs provide speech and/or language therapy; may also work on feeding issues, social skills and other areas related to speech and language.
- **School Psychologist**—School psychologists receive extensive training in the educational evaluation of students. They often lead eligibility and IEP meetings. School psychologists have expertise in analyzing data and assisting teams when they develop interventions for students.
- **Social Worker (SW)**—Social Workers enhance the social/emotional wellbeing and growth of students to support academic and personal success.
- **Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TSVI)**—TVIs are licensed to provide supports for students with visual impairments, such as Braille instruction, enlarged print, and other means to access the curriculum. They also work with other staff members such as general education teachers to assist in structuring classroom environments for students with visual impairments.
- **Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH/TOD)**—DHH teachers are licensed to provide supports for students with hearing impairments in order to develop communication, language acquisition, and social skills. They also work with other staff members such as general education teachers to assist in structuring classroom environments for students with hearing impairments.
- **Transition Specialist**—A special educator with expertise and training to assist students 14 and older prepare for work, community participation, and post-secondary education.

## BLUE VALLEY PROGRAMS AND DESCRIPTIONS

The settings for students who receive special education services are determined by the student's IEP team to meet their unique learning needs. Blue Valley provides a continuum of special education services for students. **Each building provides inter-related resource services (IRR), speech and occupational therapy, and gifted services. IRR services meet the needs of most students with mild to moderate learning needs.**

Center-based classrooms are available for students with more significant learning needs. They are not located in every building at every level. When students are served in center-based programs, they are included in general education classes for as much time as is appropriate for them. The descriptions of the center-based programs are general guidance and should not be viewed as strict criteria for consideration of a particular program.

Students may be placed in a **center-based program** outside of their attendance area due to availability, class size or other factors. We strive to place students in their home school, but it is not always possible. The district provides transportation when services outlined in the IEP are not available in the home school.

### **Intensive Resource—Available in selected elementary schools and at all middle and high schools**

- Students have significant learning needs and may have an intellectual disability.
- Some students may have behavior management needs.
- Students may need an alternate curriculum with academics taught in context of life skills.
- Some students may have multiple disabilities and/or use augmentive communication.
- Students are included in general education activities whenever possible with accommodations and/or modifications to meet their unique needs.

### **LIFT—Learning through Intensive Functional Teaching**

- Students have significant needs due to autism and/or other developmental disabilities.
- Many of the students are non-verbal or have minimal communication skills.
- Students need intensive support for basic learning and life activities.
- Students may have aggressive and/or self-injurious behaviors.
- Students are included in general education activities whenever possible with accommodations and/or modifications to meet their unique needs.

### **Social Emotional Resource (SER) and GEAR (Growth, Education and Reflection)**

- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances that interfere with learning (anxiety, aggression, property destruction and/or oppositional defiance)
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
- A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
- Students are included in general education activities whenever possible with accommodations and/or modifications to meet their unique needs.
- Direct instruction on social emotional learning and self-regulation

## Navigators

- Demonstrates deficits in executive functioning and social skills
- Misinterprets social cues and has a difficult time taking the perspective of others
- Demonstrates a high level of anxiety around misinterpreting social cues
- Low frustration threshold and difficulty self-regulating.
- Needs a safe environment to self-regulate when upset
- Needs direct instruction on social skills, social awareness, and self-regulation
- At or above grade level academically. Support in general education classes focuses on social/self-regulation first and then academics

## Early Childhood Special Education

- Program serves young children ages 3 to 5 who are eligible for an IEP.
- Each section enrolls approximately six typically developing peers, and the balance of the enrollment is made up of children who are found eligible for special education throughout the year.
- The program is usually a half-day program four days per week, although students may attend fewer days or extended days depending on the need.
- Some students are served through itinerant speech/language services, and some are served in their community preschool setting.
- Peers pay a fee to attend



## COMMON ACRONYMS USED IN BLUE VALLEY

<b>AAC</b>	Alternative Augmentative Communication
<b>ABA</b>	Applied Behavioral Analysis
<b>ADA</b>	Americans with Disabilities Act
<b>ADHD</b>	Attention Deficit/Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
<b>APE</b>	Adaptive Physical Education
<b>ASD</b>	Autism Spectrum Disorders
<b>ASL</b>	American Sign Language
<b>AT</b>	Assistive Technology
<b>BCBA</b>	Board Certified Behavior Analyst
<b>BD</b>	Behavioral Disorder
<b>BIP</b>	Behavioral Intervention Plan
<b>CBA</b>	Curriculum Based Assessment
<b>CF</b>	Cystic Fibrosis
<b>CP</b>	Cerebral Palsy
<b>DB</b>	Deaf-Blind
<b>DD</b>	Developmental Delay
<b>DHH</b>	Deaf & Hard of Hearing
<b>DOE</b>	Department of Education
<b>DS</b>	Down Syndrome
<b>ECSE</b>	Early Childhood Special Education
<b>ED</b>	Emotionally Disturbed
<b>ELL</b>	English Language Learner
<b>ESL</b>	English as a Second Language
<b>ESOL</b>	English for Speakers of Other Languages
<b>ESY</b>	Extended School Year
<b>FAPE</b>	Free and Appropriate Public Education
<b>FBA</b>	Functional Behavioral Assessment
<b>GE</b>	General Education
<b>HI</b>	Hearing Impaired
<b>ID</b>	Intellectual Disabilities
<b>IDEA</b>	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
<b>IEP</b>	Individualized Education Program
<b>IFSP</b>	Individualized Family Service Plan
<b>LD</b>	Learning Disability
<b>LEA</b>	Local Education Agency
<b>LEP</b>	Limited English Proficiency
<b>LRE</b>	Least Restrictive Environment
<b>LEA</b>	Local Education Agency
<b>MD</b>	Muscular Dystrophy
<b>NCLB</b>	No Child Left Behind Act
<b>OCD</b>	Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
<b>OHI</b>	Other Health Impairment
<b>OI</b>	Orthopedic Impairment
<b>O &amp; M</b>	Orientation and Mobility Services (for students with visual impairments)
<b>Part B</b>	Special Education—School-Aged Children
<b>PBIS</b>	Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports
<b>PBS</b>	Positive Behavioral Supports
<b>PD</b>	Physical Disability

<b>PDD</b>	Pervasive Developmental Disorder
<b>PLAAFP</b>	Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance
<b>PT</b>	Physical Therapist
<b>PWN</b>	Prior Written Notice
<b>RS</b>	Related Services
<b>SER</b>	Social Emotional Resource
<b>SAS</b>	Supplementary Aids and Services
<b>SB</b>	Spina Bifida
<b>SE</b>	Special Education
<b>Section 504</b>	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
<b>SLD</b>	Specific Learning Disability
<b>SLP</b>	Speech/Language Pathologist
<b>SPED</b>	Special Education
<b>TBI</b>	Traumatic Brain Injury
<b>VI</b>	Visual Impairment

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### WHAT DOES “SIGNING THE IEP” MEAN? IS PARENT CONSENT REQUIRED FOR ANY ACTION BY THE SCHOOL?

At the beginning of an IEP meeting, all members of the team are asked to sign the cover page of the IEP. This **only** indicates attendance at the meeting and **does not** indicate parental consent for the services proposed in the IEP. Once the IEP team agrees on the contents of the IEP, the parent or guardian must sign a Prior Written Notice giving their consent for the initial provision of special education services, or for any change of 25% or more of the current level of services or placement.

Parent consent is required for some, but not all special education actions. Please see the [Kansas Special Education Process Handbook](#), for more information.

### CAN THE IEP BE AMENDED OR REVOKED?

The IEP can be **amended** in several ways:

- If the school or the parent feel that the IEP should be amended, either party can request a meeting to discuss the proposed action.
- Some changes can be made without a meeting, but some actions requires parental consent even if a meeting is not required.
- Keep in mind that some changes can be made to the IEP without parent consent, but parents must be notified in advance of any changes, and the change cannot be 25% or more of a service or placement without consent.

Parents may **revoke** their consent for the entire IEP, or for particular services contained in the IEP, under certain conditions.

- If a parent wishes to revoke consent for the entire IEP, they may do so; however, the student is then considered a general education student and loses any protection as a student with a disability afforded by an IEP. When a parent revokes consent for services and subsequently requests services to resume, the school must conduct an initial evaluation for special education before re-enrolling the child in special education.
- A times, parents may wish to revoke consent for a particular service. The school may refuse if they believe the service is necessary for the student to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). If the parents still wish to revoke consent, they can pursue dispute resolution options.
- Please see the [Kansas Special Education Process Handbook, Chapter 8](#), for more information.

### HOW WILL I KNOW WHAT SERVICES MY CHILD IS RECEIVING?

The Service Plan section of the IEP lists each service. They are described in detail in the section entitled “Description of Specially Designed Instruction.”

### HOW ARE SERVICE TIMES DETERMINED?



Once the IEP team has agreed upon the IEP goals, they need to agree upon the amount of service time that they feel will be needed for the student to meet their goals. Parents are a part of the IEP team and are encouraged to provide input on all IEP matters, including the amount of service time needed.

### **WILL MY CHILD RECEIVE 1:1 SERVICES?**

Under state and federal laws, schools are required to provide services in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). A 1:1 setting is typically more restrictive than most students need and may prevent students from interacting with and learning from their peers. In most cases, students will be served in groups with other students.



### **WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DIRECT AND INDIRECT SERVICES?**

Direct services are those that are provided directly to the student such as reading instruction, speech therapy, or braille instruction. Indirect services are those that are provided to other professionals who work with the student. For example, a child with a visual impairment may need braille instruction (direct service) but the student's classroom teacher may need assistance in understanding how to adapt the child's environment and instructional activities (indirect service) to meet the needs of the student. In other words, a direct service is provided directly to the child; an indirect service is provided to others in order to support the student.

### **HOW DO CHILDREN QUALIFY FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION?**

Transportation is a related service, which means a service that is required for students to benefit from their special education service. If a student cannot get to and from school in the same manner that other students do, the IEP team must discuss if the student qualifies for special education transportation. A few students may qualify for an aide as well, particularly if there are significant medical needs or other reasons that a student would need that level of support.

### **WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN ANNUAL IEP AND A THREE-YEAR REEVALUATION?**

According to State and Federal laws, it is required that an IEP be reviewed at least annually. Additionally, we are required to reevaluate students at least every three years to determine if the student continues to qualify for special education services. In some cases, the IEP team may agree to waive the 3-year reevaluation requirement, but parents must provide their consent to do so.

### **WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN IEP AND A SECTION 504 PLAN?**

An IEP is developed for a student with a disability that requires specially designed instruction to address educational needs. A Section 504 Plan is developed for a student with a disability that requires academic, environmental, or other accommodations. For

example: two students have a diagnosis of ADHD. Student A needs quiet settings for tests and preferential seating, but is on grade level academically and requires no specially designed instruction. Student B has been unable to keep up academically because of his inattention and requires specially designed instruction to close the gap. He also requires a quiet setting for tests and preferential seating. It is likely that Student A would be served through a Section 504 Plan and Student B would be eligible for special education services through an IEP. Please note: This is a very simplified explanation. If you have further questions, please contact a special education administrator for more information.

## HOW DOES A STUDENT QUALIFY FOR EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR (ESY)?

Students between the ages of 3 and 21 with disability-based IEPs may be eligible for Extended School Year (ESY) services through the Special Education Department. The IEP team makes the decision for extending services into the summer or other lengthy school breaks.



The majority of students who attend ESY work on maintaining skills that they have attained during the school year. For these students, the team must consider data that indicates the student would lose skills over the break and that those skills could not be regained within a reasonable time upon returning to school unless extended services were provided. Students may also be considered for ESY based on other factors, such as the severity of the disability or if the student is in the process of attaining a critical skill, such as toileting or self-feeding, and an interruption in their instruction would delay the acquisition of the skill. [Please see the Kansas Special Education Process Handbook, Chapter 5](#), for more information.

## WHAT IS ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION?

Adapted Physical Education is physical education, which has been adapted or modified, so that it is as appropriate for the person with a disability as it is for a person without a disability. Sometimes APE may include instruction in the community such as at a swimming pool or bowling alley.

## WHAT IS AN EDUCATIONAL ADVOCATE?

There are two types of educational advocates.

- An education advocate (referred to as "surrogate parents" in Federal law) is appointed to act on behalf of the child when parents are unknown, unavailable, or parental rights have been severed. The State Special Education for Exceptional Children Act gives the Kansas State Board of Education (KSBE) the authority to appoint education advocates to act on behalf of the child, if parents are unknown, unavailable, or parental rights are severed.
- Parents may hire a private educational advocate for various reasons. At times, a parent may feel that they need more help to understand their child's educational needs or the special education process. Sometimes, parents and

the school do not agree on the needed services and parents may want to hire an advocate to assist them. Blue Valley welcomes educational advocates to attend IEP meetings and encourages parents to keep the following points in mind:

- When parents hire an advocate, they may bring the advocate to the IEP meeting at their expense.
- Advocates are not team members, but they may give input to the team.
- The IEP meeting is organized and run by the school, not by the advocate.
- Infrequently, advocates may become adversarial. Blue Valley Board Policy 6341, *Civility Toward Students and Employees*, prohibits uncivil behavior toward staff. On the rare occasion, that an advocate or parent becomes uncivil, Blue Valley will end the meeting.

## **WHY DO WE ASK PARENTS/GUARDIANS TO SIGN A MEDICAID WAIVER?**

School districts can claim Medicaid reimbursement for a limited number of services on the IEP for students who are Medicaid eligible. Some reimbursable services are speech therapy and nursing services. Students can become Medicaid eligible for various reasons such as socio-economic status and/or significant medical needs.

## **WHAT IS AN “ALTERNATE” OR “PARALLEL” CURRICULUM?**

All students must have access to the general education curriculum; however, for students with learning needs, the curriculum may require accommodations and/or modifications. An alternate or parallel curriculum goes a step beyond typical adaptations for instruction. Classroom teachers and special education teachers collaborate to identify the most important learning concepts for the students and work to reduce the complexity for students with more significant learning needs. For example, when students are required to write a story, a student with a significant disability may be asked to identify the characters in an existing story, or to sequence the events in a story. In math, while other students are working on long division, a student with a disability may work on basic math facts.

When teachers alter the curriculum in these ways, it may be referred to by various names, such as alternate, parallel, modified, or differentiated. Teachers sometimes use these terms interchangeably.

## **WHAT IS TRANSITION?**

Transition has several meanings in the context of special education. Transition can mean a child moving from one level to another, such as Early Childhood to Kindergarten, elementary to middle school, or from middle school to high school. In a more formal sense, Transition services are a coordinated set of activities that:

- Improve the academic and functional skills of the student in order to ease the student's movement from school to post-school activities such as postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living or community participation
- Are based on the individual student's needs, taking into account his or her strengths, preferences and interests

- Includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives and, when appropriate, the acquisition of daily living skills. Transition services often include a functional vocational evaluation.
- Blue Valley has Transition Specialists that assist with the process.

## WHAT ARE THE “ENTERPRISES?”

The Enterprises are “mini-businesses” Blue Valley developed to assist high school students attain skills that will be needed on the job. Our current Enterprises include a Bakery, Greenhouse, Light Industry, and Green Planet Awareness (Recycling). Enterprises provide opportunities to practice work-related skills that apply to all jobs, such as following directions, attention to detail, sales, and customer service.



## WHAT SHOULD PARENTS DO IF A CONFLICT OR CONCERN ARISES?

We strongly believe that students make the most progress when parents and the school work as partners. From time to time, a disagreement may occur and we are committed to working to find solutions.

- In most cases, contacting your student's case manager is the first step. Share the concern with the case manager and ask for assistance in resolving the issue.
- If that does not result in a solution, contact the building principal.
- Other contacts are the assistant directors for elementary and secondary special education and the director of special education. The main number for the special education department is 913-239-4057. The [district's special education website](#) contains contact information for individuals.

Parents also have more formal dispute resolution options. For more information, see the Kansas Special Education Process Handbook in chapters 10, 11, and 12.

## HOW CAN PARENTS CAN GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SPECIAL EDUCATION IN BLUE VALLEY?

For questions about individual students, parents and guardians can contact the principal, school psychologist, or special education teacher at their child's school. Other contacts are the assistant directors for elementary and secondary special education and the director of special education.

Visit the [special education page on the Blue Valley website](#) for contact information.



## **WHAT IS THE BLUE VALLEY SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL?**

The Advisory Council consists of a parent representative from each of the district's schools, special education staff, Board of Education members, building administration and District Office special education leadership. The Council includes approximately 50 people and is responsible for communication and advocacy. There are also four subcommittees chaired by council members: Mini Conference, Resource Fair, Parent Support Groups and Ability Awareness. More information is available on our [Blue Valley Special Education web page](#).

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

We used the following resources to develop this handbook. **They provide much more information** in their entirety and **we encourage you to review the documents** when you have questions about special education.

[The Kansas Special Education Process Handbook](#)  
[Parents' Guide to Special Education in Kansas](#)  
[Parents Rights Document](#)

### Other Important Resources

- **Families Together, Inc.** is the Kansas [Parent Training and Information \(PTI\)](#) & [Family-to-Family \(F2F\)](#) Center serving families of children, youth, and young adults with disabilities and/or special health care needs from birth through 26 years old.  
[topeka@famielstogethelnc.org](mailto:topeka@famielstogethelnc.org)  
**1-800-264-6343**
- **Kansas State Department of Education, [Special Education Services](#)**  
1-800-203-9462
- **[Disability Rights Center](#) of Kansas**  
1-877-776-1541
- **[Johnson County Developmental Supports](#)**  
913-826-2626

## THE BLUE VALLEY SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) consists of a parent representative from each of the district's schools, special education staff, Board of Education members, building administration, and special education administrators. The SEAC includes approximately 50 people and is responsible for communication and advocacy. There are four sub-committees chaired by members: Mini-Conference, Resource Fair, Parent Support Groups, and Ability Awareness.

At times, parents may want to speak with other Blue Valley parents who have students with exceptionalities. Parents may contact the SEAC chairperson(s) or their school's representative. Their names are listed on the [SEAC website](#).