Special Education and Inclusion Committee

WCPSS Choice Student Assignment Plan for Students with Disabilities

The Wake County Public Schools new student assignment plan gives parents the opportunity to choose the school their child will attend. The student assignment plan provides families access to quality schools based on achievement, proximity, stability and choice.

For students with disabilities, the Wake County student assignment plan is an inclusive plan that facilitates the delivery of equal access and equal educational opportunities. There are over 19,000 students with disabilities in WCPSS. The majority of our students with disabilities, or approximately 90%, are served in general education classrooms accessing the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS). These students are served in local programs, available at all Wake County Schools. Students with disabilities working on the NCSCOS may spend part of their school day in the following services:

- Consultation Service
- Resource class
- In-Class Resource
- Curriculum Assistance
- Occupational Course of Study (High School)

For parents whose children are in local programs, you will participate in Round 1 of the same plan as general education students. Please go to the WCPSS website to make your choice from January 17, 2012 thru February 24, 2012.

Approximately 10% of students with disabilities in WCPSS are served in regional programs. Regional programs are available in some schools across regions. Typically, students with disabilities in regional programs spend the majority of their school day with a special education teacher. Parents of children in regional programs will participate in a phased-in choice plan over the next three years.

If your child is enrolled in one of the following regional programs listed below, you will participate in a phased-in student assignment choice plan:

- Cross-Categorical Kindergarten (CCK)
- Intellectual Disability-Mild (ID Mild)
- Intellectual Disability- Moderate (ID Mod)
- Intellectual Disability- Severe (ID Severe)
- Multiple Disabilities (MU)
- Autism (AU)
- Seriously Emotionally Disabled (ED)
- Hearing Impairment (HI)
- Visually Impairment (VI)

If your child is entering Kindergarten or Grades 1-2 next school year (2012-2013), you will have the opportunity to choose your child's regional program next year in accordance with your child's IEP. For parents of children entering Kindergarten, you will work directly with your child's IEP team to determine the type of program that your child requires, as well as your school choices.

Students in Grades 1 and 2 whose program needs and levels do not change, and whose parents are satisfied, may stay in their current school assignment. These parents do not need to make a choice during the student assignment process and will receive the same school assignment they received for the 2011-2012 school year.

Parents who would like to access choice for their children in regional programs in Grades K-2 will participate in Round 2 of the choice application period, March 19, 2012 thru April 3, 2012. Since spaces in regional programs are reserved for students assigned to these programs, being in the second round will in no way decrease your options.

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Special Education Services Parent Information Center

WCPSS Special Education Services is pleased to provide the parents of Wake County with a new online special education resource! The Parent Information Center has a wide range of resources parents will find useful. The site includes information about the programs and services available for students with disabilities enrolled in WCPSS. In addition, there are directories so that parents can locate names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of Special Education Services staff. Parents will also find resources to assist them with planning for and participating in IEP meetings, details about upcoming events, and much more.

The Parent Information Center is a work in progress so new resources will continue to be developed in response to parents' needs. For example, materials to support transitions (from PreK to elementary school; elementary to middle school; middle to high school; and high school to adult life) are currently under development. Special Education Services hopes that all parents will regularly visit the parent information center which can be accessed from a link on the main special education website — http://www.wcpss.net/special-education.

WCPSS Special Education Services Parent Survey

WCPSS Special Education Services is currently involved in an **Assessment of the Quality of Special Education Services in the Wake County Public School System**. The purpose of this assessment is to better understand the quality of district-level and school-level special education services currently in place to meet the needs of approximately 19,000 students with disabilities in the Wake County Public School System. Within the broader purpose are three specific objectives for this assessment:

- 1. To identify the strengths and weaknesses of school-level and district-level special education services currently in place;
- 2. To assess the current levels of responsiveness and support provided to schools by the Office of Special Education Services; and
- 3. To identify key areas of focus that will guide the development of the Office of Special Education Services strategic plan, to be submitted to Superintendent Tony Tata in the spring of 2012.

The assessment includes surveys, interviews, and focus groups. One of the surveys was developed for parents of students with disabilities in WCPSS. The Parent Survey included questions related to school-level services, district-level services and community and/or agency resources. The Parent Survey was shared in an on-line version and paper copies were sent to every school in English and Spanish. The Parent Survey was open for the month of December and closed on December 30, 2011. Special Education Services received 2042 completed surveys from parents. The Special Education Services Parent Survey Team is in the process of analyzing the results to inform the SES Leadership team of important areas on which to focus. The results and areas of focus will be presented in the SES Strategic Plan submitted to Superintendent Tony Tata. The results will inform our actions as a department in planning for Professional Development, Programming and School Support for the 2012-2013 school year and future school years.

Wake SEIC Liaisons

Wake SEIC strives to have a liaison in every school to share information with the school's PTA as well as the parents and staff of special education students. Liaisons serve from June to July and we are currently looking for people to volunteer to fill this role. You do not need any previous training or experience to volunteer as a liaison at your school. Wake SEIC will provide a training workshop and any support you may need!

Liaisons are asked to attend 3-4 meetings/workshops per year so that they can share the information they are given with their school community. They are also asked to attend their schools' PTA meetings and be the voice of children with special needs and their families on the school PTA board making sure all events/decisions take into account the needs of all children and families in the school community.

Liaisons are the 'go to' person for parents by helping them identify and understand the key school personnel involved and the process to access services. Wake SEIC provides resource binders that contain information to assist liaisons serve in this role. Liaisons do NOT attend IEP meetings!

If you are interested in serving as a liaison in your school or would like additional information, please contact Katie Ramsdell at kmiley08@hotmail.com.

Choice Student Assignment Plan for Students with Disabilities

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If your child is entering Grades 3 through 12, your child will be assigned as in previous years, and you will receive an assignment form from your child's teacher in May. Students in grades 3 through 12 whose program needs and levels do not change, and whose parents are satisfied, may stay in their current school assignment. Years 2 and 3 of the choice plan will focus on students in grades 3 through 12. Parents of children in Grades 3-8 will be able to choose programs during the second year (2013-2014) of the choice plan and every year thereafter.

Parents of children in Grades 9-12 will be able to choose programs during the third year (2014-2015) of the choice plan and every year thereafter.

Over the course of the next three years, all parents of students with disabilities will be included in the district's student assignment plan. The way you will participate, however, depends on the type of program your child requires. The Student Assignment plan will provide all students in WCPSS the opportunity to access quality schools based on achievement, proximity, stability and choice.

More information on Special Education Student Assignments will be available at both the upcoming Special Education Open House (seacopenhouse.com) and the March 5th SEIC workshop (http://wake-seic.org/upcoming-events). Additional information can also be found on the WCPSS website at http://assignment.wcpss.net/special-education/.

5 Steps to Becoming Your Child's BEST Advocate!

- 1 Start with the assumption that you are an equal partner in your child's education.
- **Deal** with your perceptions or feelings about yourself as a parent of a child with special needs.
- **Acquire knowledge!** You don't have to memorize or know everything but be aware and ask questions. And don't be intimidated!
 - 1. Know about IDEA 2004 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004).
 - 2. Know that not all issues are controlled by the local school system.
 - 3. Know how "the system" operates.
 - 4. Know the people.

4 Improve your skills!

- 1. Communication
- 2. Documentation and Letter Writing
- 3. Record Keeping

5 Participate!

This is the most important thing you can do for your child! Participate in:

- 1. The development of your child's IEP (Individualized Education Program) share your ideas and attend all meetings!
- 2. Teacher conferences
- 3. Parent Group meetings
- 4. School functions

(Exceptional Children's Assistance Center)

Google Groups Online Community List Serve

Join the Special Education and Inclusion Committee free online list serve! Email us at wake-seic+subscribe@googlegroups.com to join.

Our Mission

Our mission is to create a network of parents, educators, and administrators who will work cooperatively and constructively to meet the needs of all students receiving special education services in the most integrated environment, with appropriate supports in place, to ensure that the students will learn and be valued members of their school community.