

# Special Education and Inclusion Committee

**NEW** Wake County PTA Special Education and Inclusion Committee website [www.wake-seic.org](http://www.wake-seic.org)

## Dear Parents,

Since becoming superintendent of the Wake County Public School System in January, I've spent a great deal of time out in the community and in our schools. I've visited with community leaders, principals, teachers, students and of course many parents. During that time, I've met with parents of special education students to hear their thoughts about how we are meeting the needs of their children and how we can better serve their families.

I want to thank the Special Education and Inclusion Committee of the Wake County PTA which invited me to answer some questions concerning special education and IEP issues.

**Q: What can WCPSS do to keep children who are in self-contained classrooms, such as Autism classes, tracking to grade level standards toward a diploma?**

A: We do not maintain students on the standard course of study in self-contained classrooms unless there are specific and/or unique situations that prevent the student from being educated in the general education classroom. These situations would be determined by the IEP team and could include unique circumstances pertaining to a student with multiple disabilities that pose significant challenges.

**Q: Principals have a great deal of autonomy, which could lead to uneven resource distribution at the school level. What plans are there for increasing accountability for special education programs at the school level?**

A: With respect to distribution of resources, an allotment formula is used to distribute special education personnel equitably across all schools. With regard to principal autonomy, as directed in our Curriculum Management Audit, there are decisions, which are centrally determined, and decisions that are site-based. To ensure that all schools adhere to the Policies Governing Services for Students with Disabilities, Central Services staff audits confidential records as recommended by the Department of Public Instruction and provides support to ensure compliance with all state and federal regulations. Special Education staff is assigned to schools to provide staff training and consult with teachers and administrative staff in addressing student issues. In addition, they conduct school-level audits as directed by our internal auditing department. Principals have site-based responsibility to determine what available resources are used to meet the needs of their students.

**Q: Some parents feel that the curriculum is not as effective as it could be, suggesting special education programs are not being used as designed. What can be done to make pull-out classes more beneficial?**

A: Regarding pull-out programs and the instruction that is provided: The least restrictive environment is carefully determined for each student by the IEP team including parents. Removal of special education students from the general education classroom occurs only when the nature of the disability is such that education in general education classes, with use of supplementary aids and services, cannot meet the goals and objectives as outlined in the IEP. Resource classes provide research-based supplemental instruction. We align instructional materials with researched-based practices, identified by the literacy and math curriculum specialists and Special Education staff. We developed these proven practices from our participation in two state demonstration grants in the areas of literacy and mathematics. We then make the training and materials available to all schools.

**Q: Are classroom teachers in the early grades trained to spot children who could benefit from special education services and to advocate for screening for those children? What other steps are being taken to ensure that children who need special education services are receiving them as soon as possible?**

Yes, training is provided in the following ways:

- All classroom teachers are trained to do universal screenings and to focus instruction based on the screening results.
- Teachers are trained how to monitor student progress over time, to review and interpret the data and to do in depth assessments when data reflects the need.
- Student Support Teams at each school are trained in identifying specific instructional and behavioral strategies based on data presented.
- Training is provided to Student Support Teams and special education staff regarding the process to initiate referrals.
- The referral process training also includes the process to follow when parents make a direct request to have a student evaluated.

We must work to meet the needs of every student who enters the Wake County Public School System.

I appreciate and respect the passion and commitment our Special Education community brings, not only supporting their children, but all children.

I share that same passion and commitment.

Sincerely,

**Anthony Tata**

## Wake County Special Education Resources

### Who's out there beyond your school?

#### Assistive Technology Department

provides the following services:

- **Assistive Technology Evaluations as referred by the IEP team ...**

During the assessment process we look at what are the student's current abilities, strengths, and needs.

What are the demands of the curriculum, classroom activities, and IEP goals in the current educational setting?

Whether there are assistive technology devices or systems necessary for the student to access their educational curriculum. We look at the continuum of modifications including no tech, light tech, and high tech options.

We try to match the needs of the student to the features of technology.

- **Equipment/software trials and loans per recommendations**
- **Equipment training and implementation support to student, school staff, and family**
- **Consultation to teacher and other service providers ...**

Teachers may request consultation without a referral.

- **Maintenance and repair of AT devices used to access student's education**
- **Coordination of services with other service providers**

#### Behavior Specialist Team mission:

**To build capacity in the WCPSS Staff in the area of behavioral student support.**

Through direct instruction and consultation, the Behavior Specialist Team's goal is to provide insight into the function of student behavior and to teach behavioral strategies and techniques that support students' behavioral success.

The Behavior Specialist Team consists of seven members; each assigned regionally. There are Behavior Specialist Teams in every middle and high school in Wake County.

#### Coordinating Teacher (K-12 Program Support for SES)

**Provide support, behavioral support, and instructional support to schools.**

Primary responsibilities include:

- Observation and intervention strategy support
- Promote high quality reading, math, and writing instruction
- Support building capacity for schools that aligns and enhances WCPSS goals including site-based management
- Support compliance and procedural guidelines and safeguards along with leading audits of special education files
- Regularly visit schools to assess support needs
- Serve as a contact for parents to direct them to appropriate resources and personnel
- Plan and deliver identified staff development needs
- Assist in the creation and updating of class rosters in separate/self-contained classes
- Support LRE data collection and review LREs submitted
- Support Senior Administrators with allocations and staffing
- Assist with Childcount
- Support teacher retention

#### Low Incidence Support Teachers

**Provide program, behavioral, and instructional support to teachers working with students with autism and low incidence disabilities:**

- Provide support to teachers serving students with autism and low incidence disabilities through school visits, observations and provision of follow-up information and/or materials
- Work to update and provide educational and resource materials as needed for specific teachers: i.e. new teachers, lateral entry teachers, teachers setting up new classrooms
- Assist with educational planning for specific students through communication with teacher, appropriate senior administrator, attending IEP meetings as requested by senior administrator and/or school administrator, and through consultation with outside agencies as needed
- Develop and implement workshops for staff development and training for school personnel as identified by special education staff

## 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](mailto:wake-seic+subscribe@googlegroups.com) to join.

## Check out the new Special Education and Inclusion Committee website!

Check us out online at [www.wake-seic.org](http://www.wake-seic.org) for resources on preparing for your child's IEP, liaison information, a list of all Wake County School liaisons, calendar of events, and other local, state, and national resources that provide information, support, and services to families and educators of children receiving special education services.

## SEIC Event and IEP Workshop

co-sponsored by *Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC)*  
hosted by *Wake Med Rehab at WakeMed Raleigh Campus*

**Monday, April 11**

**Liaison Training 6:30pm-7:00pm**

The Special Education and Inclusion Committee of the Wake PTA Council offers liaison training for all Wake County school liaisons and parents. This will be an opportunity to get a better understanding of the role liaisons are serving and information on Wake County's Special Education Services. Liaisons will be provided with online resources, notebooks, and guidelines for interacting with families.

**IEP Workshops 7:00pm-9:00pm**

Two free workshops held by the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC)  
*Writing Effective IEPs: 101* and *Writing Effective IEPs: Beyond the Basics*

For more information, please see the Wake SEIC website *Upcoming Events* page at:  
[www.wake-seic.org/events](http://www.wake-seic.org/events)