

Alpine Elementary Special Needs Policy

Drafted May 2015

Purpose

This Special Needs Policy outlines the programs and procedures that are in place to provide support for students with special needs.

Philosophy

It is the philosophy at Alpine and the St. Vrain Valley School District that students with disabilities should be educated with their peers in their neighborhood school unless their needs are better addressed through a more specialized educational environment. Alpine offers a continuum of services delivered by special education staff members ranging from consultation with regular education teachers to varying amounts of direct services to students with disabilities depending on need. These support services are provided through building level special education staff and itinerant related service providers (i.e. physical therapists, occupational therapists, etc.)

Identification

Alpine Elementary staff follow district, state and federal guidelines for the identification of students with special needs. The process involves data collection and analysis by multiple stakeholders to determine if classroom interventions can provide students with full access to master content and skills. If not, a series of increasingly targeted, then intensive interventions are put in place. Data is then used to determine the level of intervention needed for the student to make meaningful progress.

Instruction

The first point of instruction for all students at Alpine is the general education classroom. Students are provided with transdisciplinary learning experiences through units of inquiry. These units allow for differentiation of content, process and product based on student interest and ability. When remediation or re-learning is needed, classroom teachers and special education staff work together to create a plan to make this happen.

Special Education

The Special Education program at Alpine Elementary provides academic and behavioral support for those students who qualify for special education services. Students who have specific goals in the Individualized Education Plans receive support from the special education teacher in meeting these objectives. Special education staff work with classroom teacher and special education team to modify instruction and assessments in units of inquiry as well as stand alone classroom work.

Speech Therapy

Students who need extra support and have an Individualized Education Plan regarding speech language attend session with a speech therapist in order to meet their communication needs. The speech therapist works closely with classroom teachers and special education team to help identify students in need and to support needs seen in the school setting.

Physical Therapy

Students who need extra support and have an Individualized Education Plan regarding gross and fine motor needs attend session with a physical therapist in order to meet their physical needs. The physical therapist works closely with classroom teachers and special education team to help identify students in need and to support needs seen in the school setting.

Occupational Therapy

Students who need extra support and have an Individualized Education Plan regarding developing daily living and work skills attend session with an occupational therapist in order to meet their needs. The occupational therapist works closely with classroom teachers and the special education team to help identify students in need and to support needs seen in the school setting.

Assessment in Special Education

Assessment of academic and behavioral skills are crucial to ongoing, relevant, challenging, engaging and significant learning. Accurate assessment provides instructors with the knowledge needed to move each child forward in his/her academic career. Assessment allows for differentiated instruction for those students who are below or above the typical grade level expectations. It allows classroom and special education teachers to work collaboratively to determine who will need extra interventions and re-teaching in order to fully participate in units of inquiry, and where those interventions can best take place.

Alpine Elementary has developed a pyramid of interventions that will help students who are struggling in reading by providing alternate programs than those used for general instruction in the classroom:

Resources

Alpine Elementary allots a portion of its instructional budget to purchase materials needed to support the learning and remediation for students with special needs.

Additionally, the school district provides each school with intervention programs and assessments tools that are recognized as beneficial in supporting students with varied needs to participate in the general education program.

Communicating the policy and future review processes

The Special Needs Policy is communicated to staff members through collaborative dialog and is housed on a shared folder in our computer system.

The policy is communicated to Alpine families and community members in presentations about our school, through newsletters and brochures, and is available on our school web site.

School community members reviewed the Special Needs Policy as a part of the self-evaluation process, and plan to formally review it every five years. Adjustments to services provided and opportunities offered will occur annually in accordance with the tenets of the policy.

Documents Referenced

IB. 2010. Special educational needs within the international baccalaureate programmes. Cardiff, UK. International Baccalaureate Organization.