



Andover Public Schools  
SPECIAL EDUCATION  
PARENT GUIDE

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## Introduction

The Andover Public Schools is committed to providing students with disabilities access to the curriculum and general education programs. In-district resources and necessary consultative services allow us to provide the instruction necessary to help students with disabilities close the gap between their skill abilities and their grade level expectations.

Special education support and services should not be viewed as a separate model, but instead as a part of the continuum of supports, services and interventions created to ensure that the general education environment is responsive to the diverse learning needs of all students. Working together, general education staff, special education staff and parents/guardians can ensure equal opportunity, full participation and increased outcomes for all learners, including students with disabilities.

This guide has been developed as a resource for the Andover community. It provides links to state and federal regulations and the processes of the Andover Public Schools. This document should not be considered a replacement for the Andover [Procedural Manual](#), located on our website.

**We would like to thank parents Jennifer Warren and Pam DeMichaelis for their hard work in helping to prepare this Guide.**

# Section 1: Resources for Parents

## Helpful links

### **The Federation for Children with Special Needs**

The [Federation for Children with Special Needs](#) provides information, support, and assistance to parents of children with disabilities, their professional partners, and their communities.

### **Parents' Guide to Special Education**

Written by the Federation for Children with Special Needs in collaboration with the [Massachusetts Department of Education](#), the [Guide](#) is meant to serve as a resource for parents, and the organizations that serve them. The Guide contains the most current and accurate information available regarding the special education system in Massachusetts. **The Guide is available via the link above and on the Andover website.**

### **Massachusetts IEP Process Guide**

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has produced an [IEP Process Guide](#). The Guide is designed to be read and reviewed with its companion document, [IEP Forms and Notices](#). IEP Forms and Notices contains a quick reference sheet, form and notice directions and copies of the coded forms and coded notices. **The IEP Process Guide and the Forms and Notices document are available via the links above and on the Andover website.**

### **Massachusetts Procedural Safeguards**

Under IDEA 2004 school districts must give this [Procedural Safeguards](#) once per year to all parents of eligible students with disabilities. In addition to the annual distribution of the PNPS, school districts must give the PNPS to parents when an initial evaluation of a student is requested by the parent or another person; upon the parent's request for a copy; and when a student with a disability is removed from his or her placement to an interim alternative education setting as a result of discipline. **The Procedural Safeguards are available via the link above and on the Andover website.**

### **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act**

[The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#) (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

### **Massachusetts Special Education Regulations**

[603 CMR 28.00](#) governs the provision by Massachusetts public schools of special education and related services to eligible students and the approval of public or private day and residential schools seeking to provide special education services to publicly funded eligible students.

### **Massachusetts Tiered Systems of Support**

Massachusetts has developed a blueprint outlining a single system of supports that is responsive to the academic and non-academic needs of all students. This blueprint, the Massachusetts [Tiered System of Supports](#) (MTSS), provides a framework for school improvement that focuses on system level change across the classroom, school, and district to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students, including students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are academically advanced. It guides both the provision of high-quality core educational experiences in a safe and supportive learning environment for all students and academic and/or non-academic targeted interventions/supports for students who experience difficulties and for students who have already demonstrated mastery of the concept and skills being taught.

### **Massachusetts Family Ties**

[Family Ties](#) is a resource network for parents and professionals supporting children and youth with special needs. They provide information and referral services, emotional support, and helpful training events.

## Section 2: Who are We?

The Andover Student Services team handles special education, nursing, and social work services. Each elementary school and the high school have Evaluation Team Facilitators (ETFs). The middle schools have Program Coordinators, who are both team facilitators and building based special education program administrators. The ETF or Program Coordinator, along with your child's case manager (often a special education teacher but may be a speech/language pathologist), are the primary contact people for questions and concerns about your child's special education services.

### **Elementary ETFs**

Bancroft: Karen Rudis - [krudis@aps1.net](mailto:krudis@aps1.net), 978-247-9505

High Plain Elementary School: Caitlyn Queenin - [cqueenin@aps1.net](mailto:cqueenin@aps1.net), 978-247-8605

Sanborn: Carolyn Fawcett - [cfawcett@aps1.net](mailto:cfawcett@aps1.net), 978-247-9705

South Elementary: Maryellen Florio - [mflorio@aps1.net](mailto:mflorio@aps1.net), 978-247-9805

West Elementary: Patricia Thomson - [pthomson@aps1.net](mailto:pthomson@aps1.net), 978-247-5305

### **Middle School Program Coordinators**

West Middle School: Cherilynn Barry Adams - [cbarry@aps1.net](mailto:cbarry@aps1.net), 978-247-5416

Wood Hill Middle School: Alison Rihani - [alison.rihani@andoverma.us](mailto:alison.rihani@andoverma.us), 978-247-8805

Doherty Middle School: Susanne Murphy - [susanne.murphy@andoverma.us](mailto:susanne.murphy@andoverma.us), 978-247-9405

### **High School ETFs** All programs:

Linda Burns - [lburns@aps1.net](mailto:lburns@aps1.net), 978-247-5505

Kim Serapiglia - [kserapiglia@aps1.net](mailto:kserapiglia@aps1.net), 978-247-5505

### **Department Heads**

Shawsheen Preschool: Carol Green - [cgreen@aps1.net](mailto:cgreen@aps1.net), 978-247-8200

Elementary Special Education: Angelique DeCoste - [adecoste@aps1.net](mailto:adecoste@aps1.net), 978-247-7057

Preschool, Elem. and Middle Intensive Programs: Heather Eigen - [heigen@aps1.net](mailto:heigen@aps1.net), 978-247-7054

High School—All programs: Jean Tarricone - [jtarricone@aps1.net](mailto:jtarricone@aps1.net), 978-247-5505

Transitions Opportunities Program (TOP-18-22 yr olds)—Jean Tarricone - [jtarricone@aps1.net](mailto:jtarricone@aps1.net)

Out of District Coordinator - Nancy Koch - [nancy.koch@andoverma.us](mailto:nancy.koch@andoverma.us), 978-247-7040

Social Work Services: Joe Yarid - [jyarid@aps1.net](mailto:jyarid@aps1.net), 978-247-7043

Nursing: Rita Casper - [rcasper@aps1.net](mailto:rcasper@aps1.net), 978-247-7042

### **Student Services: Central Office**

Student Services Director: Dr. Sara Stetson - [sara.stetson@aps1.net](mailto:sara.stetson@aps1.net), 978-247-7040

Student Services Assistant Director: Nancy Koch - [nancy.koch@aps1.net](mailto:nancy.koch@aps1.net), 978-247-7040

## Section 3: Overview of Special Education Process

The **Andover Special Education [Procedural Manual](#)** is located on the Student Services website. All information in this Parents' Guide is supplemental to, and not a replacement for, the Procedural Manual. Parents with questions about the special education process are encouraged to contact the Evaluation Team Facilitator for your child's school.

### Referral for Special Education

#### Referral for Initial Evaluation

A student may be referred for an evaluation by a parent or any person in a care-giving or professional position concerned with the student's development. The Multi-Tiered System of Supports can also be implemented in conjunction with a referral for evaluation. **The Andover process for referral is outlined in the Andover Special Education [Procedural Manual](#), located on our website.**

### Evaluation

Evaluations of the student must be made in all areas of suspected disability in order to determine eligibility for Special Education. **The Andover process for evaluation is outlined in the Andover Special Education [Procedural Manual](#), located on our website.**

#### Required Assessments for an Initial Evaluation

##### **Psychological Assessment (initial evaluation)**

An assessment to consider the student's learning abilities and style in relationship to his or her social/emotional development and skills. This includes the administration of psychological and/or educational tests and other assessment tools as well as the interpretation of assessment results.

##### **Specialist Assessment(s):**

##### **-Speech/Language Assessment**

An assessment to identify any speech, language, pragmatic social skill or cognitive-communication difficulties that affect the student's learning or behavior.

##### **-Occupational or Physical Therapy Assessment**

An assessment to identify whether a student has a physical, sensory or motor processing/coordination challenge that impacts his/her ability to participate fully in school and social situations.

##### **Educational Assessment**

An assessment that includes information about the student's educational history and overall progress, including current educational standing in key curriculum areas. This assessment should

also include information on the student's attention skills, participation behaviors, communication skills, memory, and social relations with groups, peers and adults.

### **Optional Assessments**

The administrator of special education/ETF may recommend or a parent may request one or more of the following:

#### **-Health Assessment**

An assessment to identify any medical problems that may affect the student's education.

#### **-Psychological Assessment (optional on re-evaluation)**

An assessment to consider the student's learning abilities and style; and/or social/emotional development and skills.

#### **-Home Assessment**

A home assessment may be conducted by a nurse, psychologist, social worker, guidance or adjustment counselor, or teacher and includes information on pertinent family history and home situation and may include a home visit, with the agreement of a parent.

### Independent Educational Evaluation

**The Andover process for Independent Evaluations is outlined in the Andover Special Education Procedural Manual, located on our website.**

### Re-Evaluations

A re-evaluation is conducted every three years or more frequently if recommended by the IEP team. The purpose of a re-evaluation is to determine continued eligibility. **The Andover process for re-evaluation is outlined in the Andover Special Education Procedural Manual, located on our website.**

## The IEP Team

- The student's parent(s);
- At least one general education teacher familiar with the student\*;
- At least one special education teacher familiar with the student;
- A representative of the district who has the authority to commit resources;
- An individual who can interpret evaluation results;
- Other individual(s) who have knowledge or expertise regarding the student;
- If appropriate, the student may be included; however after the student has turned 14, the student must be invited to his/her IEP Team meeting.

\*if the child is or may be participating in the regular education environment

The Andover Public Schools are dedicated to ensuring parental involvement in the TEAM process.

Every effort will be made to ensure this participation, however state regulations require the district to stay within federal and/or state mandated timelines. **The Andover process for IEP teams is outlined in the Andover Special Education [Procedural Manual](#), located on our website.**

## Eligibility

Eligibility determination is a multi-part process. In order to determine eligibility, the team must answer the following questions:

### **1. Does the student have a disability? If so, what type?**

#### Disability Categories in Massachusetts:

##### **Autism**

A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction. The term shall have the meaning given it in federal law at 34 CFR §300.8(c)(1):

(i) Autism means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3 that adversely affect a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.

(ii) Autism does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance, as defined in paragraph (c)(4) of this section.

(iii) A child who manifests the characteristics of autism after age three could be identified as having autism if the criteria in paragraph (c)(1)(i) of this section are satisfied.

##### **Communication**

The capacity to use expressive and/or receptive language is significantly limited, impaired, or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: speech, such as articulation and/or voice; conveying understanding, or using spoken, written, or symbolic language. The term may include a student with impaired articulation, stuttering, language impairment, or voice impairment if such impairment adversely affects the student's educational performance.

##### **Developmental Delay**

The learning capacity of a young child (3-9 year old) is significantly limited, impaired or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: receptive and/or expressive language; cognitive abilities; physical functioning; social, emotional, or adaptive functioning; and/or self-help skills.

### **Emotional Impairment**

As defined under federal law at 34 CFR §300.7, the student exhibits one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects educational performance: an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. The determination of disability shall not be made solely because the student's behavior violates the school's discipline code, because the student is involved with a state court or social service agency, or because the student is socially maladjusted, unless the TEAM determines that the student has a serious emotional disturbance.

### **Health Impairment**

A chronic or acute health problem such that the physiological capacity to function is significantly limited or impaired and results in one or more of the following: limited strength, vitality or alertness including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli resulting in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment. The term shall include health impairments due to asthma, attention deficit disorder (ADD) or attention deficit with hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, and sickle cell anemia, if such health impairment adversely affects a student's educational performance.

### **Intellectual Impairment**

The permanent capacity for performing cognitive tasks, functions, or problem solving is significantly limited or impaired and is exhibited by more than one of the following: a slower rate of learning; disorganized patterns of learning; difficulty with adaptive behavior; and/or difficulty understanding abstract concepts. Such term shall include students with mental retardation.

### **Neurological Impairment**

The capacity of the nervous system is limited or impaired with difficulties exhibited in one or more of the following areas: the use of memory, the control, and use of cognitive functioning, sensory and motor skills, speech, language, organizational skills, information processing, affect, social skills, or basic life functions. The term includes students who have received a traumatic brain injury.

### **Physical Impairment**

The physical capacity to move, coordinate actions, or perform physical activities is significantly limited, impaired, or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: physical and motor tasks; independent movement; performing basic life functions. The term shall include severe orthopedic impairments or impairments caused by congenital anomaly, cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures if such impairment adversely affects a student's educational performance.

## **Sensory Impairment**

The term shall include the following:

1. Hearing Impairment or Deaf - The capacity to hear, with amplification, is limited, impaired, or absent and results in one or more of the following: reduced performance in hearing acuity tasks; difficulty with oral communication; and/or difficulty in understanding auditorily-presented information in the education environment. The term includes students who are deaf and students who are hard-of-hearing.
2. Vision Impairment or Blind - The capacity to see, after correction, is limited, impaired, or absent and results in one or more of the following: reduced performance in visual acuity tasks; difficulty with written communication; and/or difficulty with understanding information presented visually in the education environment. The term includes students who are blind and students with limited vision.
3. Deaf-Blind - Concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes severe communication and other developmental and educational needs.

## **Specific Learning Disability**

Specific learning disability is defined as follows:

- (i) General. The term means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and developmental aphasia.
- (ii) Disorders not included. The term does not including learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

**2. If the student has a disability, is he/she making effective progress in school?**

**2b. Is the lack of progress a result of the student's disability?**

**3. Does the student require specially designed instruction in order to make effective progress in school or does the student require related services in order to access the general curriculum?**

Specially designed instruction is a requirement for students found eligible for special education. Related services necessary to access the general curriculum are considered special education in Massachusetts and may be provided alone, or in combination with specially designed instruction. Specially designed instruction is adapting content, methodology, or delivery of instruction, specifically to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability.

If the student only requires accommodations, that student is not eligible for special education.

**The Andover process for eligibility determination is outlined in the Andover Special Education Procedural Manual, located on our website.**

## IEP Development

Once a child is found to be eligible, the Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed using the evaluation data and current classroom performance to guide development of goals and benchmarks. **The Andover process for IEP development is outlined in the Andover Special Education Procedural Manual, located on our website. Parents should also refer to the Massachusetts [IEP Process Guide](#), located at this link and also on our website.**

The Massachusetts Bullying Prevention and Intervention Law

The Massachusetts Bullying Prevention and Intervention Law includes specific provisions for IEP development. **The Andover process for the [Massachusetts Bullying Prevention and Intervention Law](#) is outlined in the Andover Special Education Procedural Manual, located on our website.**

## Placement

**The Andover process for Placement is outlined in the Andover Special Education Procedural Manual, located on our website.**

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## Transition Services

**The Andover process for transition is outlined in the Andover Special Education Procedural Manual, located on our website.**

Age of Majority

Massachusetts has established 18 as the age of majority. **The Andover process for age of majority is outlined in the Andover Special Education Procedural Manual, located on our website.**

## Timelines and Forms

**The Andover process for timelines and forms is outlined in the [Andover Special Education Procedural Manual](#), located on our website.**

Timeline	Forms
<p>Within <b>5 school days</b> of receipt of referral</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Notice of Proposal (N1)</li> <li>● Evaluation Consent Form (N1A) (if applicable)</li> <li>● Procedural Safeguards for parents</li> </ul>
<p>Within <b>30 school days</b> from receiving parental consent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assessments must be completed in areas of suspected need</li> </ul> <p>Within <b>45 school days</b> of receiving parental consent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● TEAM meeting is held to determine eligibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meeting Invitation (N3)</li> <li>● Attendance Sheet (N3A)</li> <li>● Report summaries must be made available to parents <b>2 days prior</b> to the team meeting at parent request</li> </ul>
<p>At the TEAM meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Attendance</li> <li>● Eligibility Determination</li> <li>● IEP Development (if applicable)</li> <li>● Summary of IEP proposal or copy of IEP (if applicable)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Team Meeting Summary</a> Form</li> </ul>
<p>Within <b>3-5 school days</b> after the eligibility meeting, a <b>completed IEP</b> is submitted to the parent/guardian for signature, <b>unless the parent is given a summary of goals/services (Team Meeting Summary Form)</b> developed at the meeting.</p> <p>If the <b>parent is given a summary of goals/services (Team Meeting Summary Form)</b>, the district then has <b>10 school days</b> to send a proposed IEP for parent signature.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Individual Education Plan (IEP)</li> <li>● Notice of Proposal (N1)</li> <li>● TEAM Determination of Placement (PL1)</li>   <li>● Notice of School District (N2) Refusal to Act</li> </ul>

In the case of a TEAM determination of Non-eligibility, The **Notice of School District refusal to Act** is submitted to the parent/guardian within **10 school days**.

## Section 4: Special Education Programs in Andover

In order to best meet the individual needs of students within the least restrictive setting, the Andover Public Schools has developed the following programs for students ages 3-22. **Descriptions of our programs and our Preschool/Childfind services are also located on our website.**

### Preschool Services

The Andover Public Schools Preschool Program is an inclusive, multi-sensory prekindergarten program that serves both children with special needs and typically developing children from the community, often referred to as "peers". A language based developmental model is offered because all children learn differently and at differing rates. The hallmark feature of this model is the integration of children with varying abilities. Individual, as well as small and large group activities are designed to guarantee that all children are challenged and that all children learn. The classroom provides children with opportunities to flourish and to participate actively in activities that foster growth and development in a manner that seeks to stimulate and nurture a genuine love for learning. Although children who are not diagnosed with a disability are often referred to as community peers, it must be emphasized that we believe that every child truly possesses strengths and attributes that allow him or her to impact the education and development of another child in a very positive and tangible way. For example, a child who demonstrates a language delay may excel in cognitive, motor and/or social skills. Peer partnerships are indeed valuable educational resources as children learn best from other children. We envision that the children who participate in this program will recognize at an early age that while each individual is different, each individual nevertheless has much to offer, and thus belongs to our community. The Andover preschool program is located at the Shawsheen School.

### Preschool Screening/Childfind

The Andover Public Schools conducts a screening for three- and four-year-old preschool children in the community on the third Friday of every month.

The screening is voluntary and available to parents who have a concern about their child's development. The screening is conducted by members of the special education staff and provides information about a child's functioning in the areas of:

- Speech and language ability
- Fine and gross motor skills
- Overall cognitive growth
- Social development and play skills

Screening results help to indicate whether more specific information or evaluation in a particular area of development is needed. Please call Mary Kay at (978) 623-8850 to schedule an appointment.

### Language Enriched Academic Program (LEAP)

LEAP is available for grades 2-5 at Bancroft Elementary School, grades 6-8 at all middle schools, and Andover High School for grades 9-12.

Students in LEAP have average to above average intellectual abilities with dyslexia and/or related language based learning disabilities.

### Bridge Autism Program

The Bridge program is available for preschool at Shawsheen Elementary School, grades K-5 at West Elementary School, grades 6-8 at Wood Hill Middle School, and at Andover High School.

Bridge is a self-contained program for students on the Autism spectrum. The program is designed to increase students' social awareness, gain academic knowledge, develop social skills and achieve success in the public school. The program consists of a special education teacher, instructional assistants and a weekly BCBA consult. In addition, students may receive speech & language, occupational therapy, physical therapy services as determined by each IEP Team to meet each student's individual needs.

Methodology includes a combination of supported inclusion, discrete trial training and/or 1:1 instruction, small group activities, incidental teaching and community (middle/high school). The program is based on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) with a focus on reinforcement systems and consistent behavior management programs. The goal of the program is for students to increase their independent skills in all areas including academics, recreation, social, communication, self-care, motor, behavior management, as well as the generalization of these skills.

### Excel

The Excel program is available for grades K-5 at High Plain Elementary School, grades 6-8 at West Middle School, and at Andover High School.

Excel is a self-contained program for students diagnosed with a developmental delay, intellectual impairment and/or other complex learning needs. Students in the Excel program require specially designed instruction outside the general education setting in order to access a modified curriculum at each student's access point. Excel students benefit from a consistent, structured and nurturing environment.

The program focuses on providing functional academics as well as hands-on learning experiences that empower students to become as independent as possible. Reading skills address materials relevant to everyday life. Math activities assist students with money management as well as other basic math skills essential to daily living. The students' unique learning profiles create the need for highly individualized instruction with materials and methodology that differ from that of the general education classroom curriculum and instruction. Excel provides students opportunities to review and practice taught skills in

order to gain and generalize them. In addition, students receive specialized instruction in speech & language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, adaptive physical education as identified by the student’s IEP Team. Students in this program may also have goals that focus on organization, independence, self-care, social, and readiness skills. Many of the students in this program participate in the MCAS Alternative Assessment. Although, much of the specialized instruction for these students occur with the program, opportunities for inclusion in general education classes and activities, as well as reverse inclusion opportunities are provided as appropriate and are determined by each student’s IEP Team.

Students have the opportunity to explore their community through travel training (high school level), grocery shopping, and visits to key community resources such as the YMCA and town library.

Transitions Opportunities Program (TOP)

This program is a partnership between Andover Public and North Andover Public Schools. Students from both communities attend together.

TOP serves young adults with disabilities by enabling them to reach their full potential through the development of daily living skills, personal-social skills, and occupational skills. TOPs is located in the Andover Central Administration building.

The program provides transition services to post-high school students who have completed their high school experience, but have not received a high school diploma and have not met their transition goals. As part of the program, we strive to help students develop the skills required to be independent in living and traveling in the community, while fostering career and employment opportunities with local businesses and organizations.

An integral part of the program is participation in activities and courses on the campus of Northern Essex Community College in Haverhill, where students will enhance life skills, work skills, and foster life-long learning. Collaboration between educators, businesses, agencies, and parents is an essential component of the TOP.

Other Services Available at All Schools

Service	Description
Resource Room	Learning Centers provide students with specialized instruction in areas of need as identified on the student’s IEP, as well as instruction in developing compensatory skills so that that the student can access the general education curriculum. Learning Center teachers may also provide re-instruction in the core curriculum and test-taking skills in small groups, as needed. Learning Center teachers may provide support in both scheduled small group

Assisted Study	classes and/or as co-teachers in mainstream English Language Arts and Math classes. Teaching assistants may also provide academic, social and behavioral support and accommodations in all settings.
Special Education and Reading	The Special Education and Reading Departments collaborate to implement sequential, phonetically based instruction to meet the needs of identified special education students, either individually or in a small group. This instruction will focus on increasing student reading skills, specifically decoding, encoding and phonemic awareness skills. Depending on a student's identified area of disability, reading may be a general education service and not a special education service.
Related and Other Services	Other services in the areas of counseling, speech/language, occupational therapy, behavior analysis and physical therapy are available from the Andover Public Schools staff. These services are provided in accordance with the educational needs of individual students and as outlined in the student's IEP. Other services focus on the student's academic and functional needs so that a student may make effective educational progress in the least restrictive environment. Other service providers may push in to provide services, pull out if the disability requires it, provide modeling and consultation to the general education staff, and consult with families. Additional related services, such as vision services, orientation and mobility, auditory services or other services required by students with low incidence disabilities are available via contracts with the appropriate agency.
Consultative Services	Consultative services may be provided by specialists, related service providers, and/or teachers.

Observation of Programs

**The Andover process for observation is outlined in the Andover Special Education [Procedural Manual](#), located on our website.**

# Section 5: Common Language Used in the IEP Process

## A

### Ability Tests

Standardized tests used to evaluate a student's performance in areas such as cognitive, psychomotor, or physical functioning.

### Accommodations

Accommodations are changes made to accommodate how the student learns and/or accesses the curriculum. Accommodations do not fundamentally change the curriculum or what a test measures for the student. Accommodations are typically provided by general educators within the general education environment. They can be a service, provision, or adaptation to meet a specific need so the student can successfully demonstrate learning or access the curriculum. Examples of testing accommodations include variations in scheduling, setting, equipment, and presentation format. Examples of classroom accommodations include preferential seating, extended time on tests, and special equipment.

### Achievement Tests

Standardized tests used to measure knowledge and skills in academic subject areas such as math and reading.

### Activities of Daily Living

Activities related to personal care and basic everyday tasks such as bathing, dressing, toileting, eating, and moving around.

### Advisory Opinion

A process where the parent/guardian and the school each agree to present information in a limited amount of time to an impartial Hearing Officer. The Hearing Officer will give an opinion as to how the law would apply to the situation as presented. Advisory Opinions are not binding. Either party may proceed to a hearing if dissatisfied with the results.

### Advocate

A special education advocate is an individual trained in or familiar with special education law who helps families navigate the special education process.

### Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act is a civil rights law designed to protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination.

### Annual Goals

Annual goals are specific statements included in the IEP that describe the expected growth and achievement of a student's knowledge and skills over the course of the coming year as a direct result of the special education programs and services the student will receive. Goals are written based on the student's current performance levels, as discussed at the team meeting.

### Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

ABA is a systematic approach to the assessment and evaluation of a student's behavior in a given environment. ABA includes a systematic application of interventions designed to alter behavior.

### Aptitude Tests

These are tests used to measure an individual's overall knowledge and thinking ability and are often used to predict a student's learning potential.

### Assessment

The formal and informal processes used by experts to determine an individual's abilities and needs to assist with educational planning and to determine service eligibility. Assessments include aptitude tests, achievement tests, and screening tests. Assessments may also be referred to as an Evaluation. An alternate assessment refers to non standardardized means of assessing achievement, such as the review of work samples or portfolios.

### Assistive Technology Device

An assistive technology device refers to a tool or piece of equipment used to maintain or improve the independent capabilities of a child with a disability.

### Audiology

Audiology is a Related Service that includes the identification of children with hearing loss; the determination of the range, nature, and degree of hearing loss, including referral for medical or other professional attention for the habilitation of hearing; the provision of habilitative activities; the creation and administration of programs for prevention of hearing loss; the counseling and guidance of children, parents, and teachers regarding hearing loss, and the determination of children's needs for group and individual amplification, the selection and fitting of an appropriate aid, and the evaluation of amplification effectiveness.

### Autism

A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction. The term shall have the meaning given it in federal law at 34 CFR §300.8(c)(1):

(i) Autism means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3 that adversely affect a child's educational

performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. The term does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance, as defined in paragraph (b) (4) of this section.

(ii) Autism does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance, as defined in paragraph (c)(4) of this section.

(iii) A child who manifests the characteristics of autism after age three could be identified as having autism if the criteria in paragraph (c)(1)(i) of this section are satisfied.

## B

### Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)

This is a plan that incorporates positive behavioral interventions to manage student behaviors that interfere with his/her learning or the learning of others. A BIP incorporates the observations made during a Functional Behavioral Assessment. Examples of behavioral interventions include changes in the environment to prevent the behavior and providing positive reinforcement to promote good behavior. The BIP has its own goals and objectives and may be part of the IEP.

### Benchmark

A benchmark is a milestone for a student to reach in the process of achieving his/her annual IEP goals. Benchmarks enable parents, students, and educators to monitor the student's progress during the year towards meeting his/her annual IEP goals.

### Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA)

The BSEA is a state agency under the umbrella of the Division of Administrative Law Appeals (DALA). It is notified by the school system of all rejected IEPs. The BSEA provides dispute resolution services in the form of mediations, advisory opinions, and due process hearings to resolve disputes regarding special education among parents/guardians, school districts, private schools and state agencies.

## C

### Certified Special Educator

A certified special educator is an educator with a teaching certificate or license in the area of special education. A certified special educator may provide, design, and/or supervise special education services.

### Child Study Team

A Child Study Team is a group of individuals within each school, which may include teachers, administrators, psychologists, related service providers, and parents, that coordinates the response for a student who is experiencing academic or behavioral difficulties. The Child Study Team assesses the child's strengths and challenges, develops strategies and interventions to support the child, and establishes a timeframe within which to review the impact of these interventions on the student's performance.

### Communication Impairment

The capacity to use expressive and/or receptive language is significantly limited, impaired, or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: speech, such as articulation and/or voice; conveying understanding, or using spoken, written, or symbolic language. The term may include a student with impaired articulation, stuttering, language impairment, or voice impairment if such impairment adversely affects the student's educational performance.

### Comprehensive Reevaluation

An evaluation designed to determine eligibility for special education under one or more of the disability categories.

### Consent

Required, written agreement by a parent/guardian who has been fully informed of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought in his/her native language or other mode of communication, understands and agrees in writing to the carrying out of the activity, and understands that the granting of consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time. The consent form describes the activity and lists any records that will be released and to whom those records will be released.

### Counseling Services

Counseling Services are a Related Service provided by qualified social workers, psychologists, guidance counselors, or other qualified personnel.

## D

### Deaf/Blind

Deaf/Blind refers to an individual with concomitant hearing and visual impairments that cause severe communication and other developmental and/or educational needs to such an extent that the individual cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness. In Massachusetts this falls under the Sensory Impairment disability category.

### Deafness

Deafness refers to a hearing impairment so severe that a child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, which adversely affects the child's

educational performance.

### Developmental Delay

The learning capacity of a young child (3-9 year old) is significantly limited, impaired or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: receptive and/or expressive language; cognitive abilities; physical functioning; social, emotional, or adaptive functioning; and/or self-help skills.

### Disability

A disability is an impairment that substantially affects one or more major life activities. Disability categories in Massachusetts include: Autism, Developmental Delay, Intellectual, Sensory, Hearing, Vision, Deaf/blind; Neurological; Emotional, Communication; Physical, Specific Learning and Health

### Due Process

See Procedural Safeguards.

### Due Process Hearing

A due process hearing is one of a number of procedural safeguards available to parents/guardians and school districts. If a parent/guardian disagrees with the school about special education services/placement for their child, they may request a due process hearing with the Bureau of Special Education Appeals. At this hearing the parent and school district each present their cases to an impartial Hearing Officer who will issue a written, binding decision. There are a number of dispute resolution avenues open to parents and Districts that may occur before a due process hearing. A due process hearing is a complex legal procedure and parents and school districts may consult an attorney for representation.

## E

### Early Intervention

Parents may access early intervention services for children from birth to age three. Early intervention providers refer students to the public school prior to their third birthday. When children are eligible, they may begin receiving services from the school district on their third birthday.

### Effective Progress

To make documented growth in the acquisition of knowledge and skills, including social/emotional development, within the general education program, with or without accommodations, according to chronological age and developmental expectations, the individual educational potential of the student, and the learning standards set forth in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the curriculum of the district. The general education program includes preschool and early childhood programs offered by the district, academic and non-academic offerings of the district, and vocational programs and activities.

### Emotional Impairment

As defined under federal law at 34 CFR §300.7, the student exhibits one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects educational performance: an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. The determination of disability shall not be made solely because the student's behavior violates the school's discipline code, because the student is involved with a state court or social service agency, or because the student is socially maladjusted, unless the TEAM determines that the student has a serious emotional disturbance.

### Evaluation

An evaluation refers to the procedures and tests used to determine whether or not a student has a disability, whether a child is eligible for Special Education, and if so, the nature and extent of the special education and related services a child needs.

## F

### Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

FERPA is a federal statute regarding student privacy and access to education records.

### Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

FAPE is the requirement in federal and state law that ensures children with special needs are entitled to a free and appropriate, publicly funded education including related services, which must be provided in accordance with a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). The student's education must be under public supervision, meet state standards and be appropriate to meet the child's individual learning needs.

### Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)

A Functional Behavior Assessment is an evaluation and determination of the factors that impact particular student behavior(s). An FBA involves the observation of a student, the collection and analysis of data, and a study of the child's environment. The results of this assessment may lead to the development of a behavior plan for a child.

## H

### Hearing

See Due Process Hearing.

### Health Impairment

A chronic or acute health problem such that the physiological capacity to function is significantly

limited or impaired and results in one or more of the following: limited strength, vitality or alertness including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli resulting in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment. The term shall include health impairments due to asthma, attention deficit disorder (ADD) or attention deficit with hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, and sickle cell anemia, if such health impairment adversely affects a student's educational performance.

### Hearing Impairment

Hearing Impairment refers to a disability caused by a hearing impairment, whether permanent or fluctuating, which adversely affects a child's educational performance. This disability category covers hearing conditions that are not included under the definition of Deafness. In Massachusetts this falls under the Sensory Impairment disability category.

## I

### Inclusion

Inclusion refers to educating a child with special needs in local, general education classrooms with his/her peers while providing the necessary supports for that child to succeed. See also Least Restrictive Environment.

### IDEA

See Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004.

### IEP Objectives

See Objectives

### Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)

An independent educational evaluation is an evaluation that parents may request when they disagree with an evaluation conducted by the school district. **For additional information, reference the Andover Special Education Procedural Manual, located on our website..**

### In-District Program

An in-district program is a special education program operated in a public school building or other facility such as the eligible child's home, hospital, vocational program or work setting. In district programs provide educational services to students of comparable age, with and without disabilities.

### Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004)

IDEA is a federal law that protects the rights of children with special education needs and their parents/guardians. The law ensures that all children with special needs have the right to receive a free, appropriate public education designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further

education, employment and independent living. The law guides how states, school districts, and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services.

#### Individualized Education Program (IEP)

An individualized education program is a written statement, developed and approved in accordance with federal special education law in a form established by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) that identifies a student's needs and describes the services a school district shall provide to meet those needs.

#### Individualized Education Team

See Team

#### Intellectual Impairment

The permanent capacity for performing cognitive tasks, functions, or problem solving is significantly limited or impaired and is exhibited by more than one of the following: a slower rate of learning; disorganized patterns of learning; difficulty with adaptive behavior; and/or difficulty understanding abstract concepts. Such term shall include students with mental retardation.

#### Interpreting Services

Interpreting services are a Related Service when used to assist children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Interpreting services include: oral transliteration services, cued language transliteration services, sign language transliteration and interpreting services, and transcription services. This includes special interpreting services for children who are deaf-blind.

## L

#### Learning Center

A special education classroom setting that is separate from the general education classroom.

#### Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

To the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities, including students in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with students who are not disabled, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of students with disabilities from the general education environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the student's disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

## M

#### Manifestation Determination Review

A manifestation determination review is a meeting with relevant members of the student's IEP team (as determined by the district and parents) that is called after a child with a documented disability is recommended for suspension/expulsion that will result in removing the student from his or her IEP

placement for more than 10 days (cumulatively or consecutively). The manifestation determination meeting is to determine if the child's behavior was caused by his/her disability.

### Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) is the state's student testing program. Tests are given at different grade levels and are based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science & Technology/Engineering, History and Social Science. All students in Massachusetts receiving a public education must participate in this statewide assessment. Both IDEA and the Massachusetts Education Reform Act require that all students participate in MCAS or the MCAS Alternate Assessment.

### MCAS Alternate Assessment

MCAS is designed to measure a student's knowledge of key concepts and skills outlined in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. A small number of students with the most significant disabilities who are unable to take the standard MCAS tests, even with accommodations, participate in the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt). MCAS-Alt consists of a portfolio of specific materials collected annually by the teacher and student. Evidence for the portfolio may include work samples, instructional data, video, and other supporting information.

### Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

The Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks are the learning standards developed by the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for each grade that serve as a basis for all public school curricula from preschool through grade 12 in the state of Massachusetts.

### Mediation

Mediation is one of the procedural safeguards provided by IDEA to resolve special education disagreements between parents and schools. It is a voluntary and informal process where a parent/guardian and the school meet with an impartial mediator to resolve areas of disagreement. Mediation cannot be used to deny or delay right to a due process hearing and must be conducted by a qualified and impartial mediator who is trained in effective mediation techniques.

### Medical Services

Medical services are considered a Related Service under IDEA when they meet the following conditions: 1) they are provided by a licensed physician and 2) they are for diagnostic or evaluation purposes only that result in the child's need for special education and related services.

### Multiple Disabilities

Multiple Disabilities is one of the disability categories under IDEA. It refers to a student with concomitant impairments, the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in a special education program designed solely for one of the identified special education impairments. Note: this category does not include deaf-blindness.

## N

### Neurological Impairment

The capacity of the nervous system is limited or impaired with difficulties exhibited in one or more of the following areas: the use of memory, the control, and use of cognitive functioning, sensory and motor skills, speech, language, organizational skills, information processing, affect, social skills, or basic life functions. The term includes students who have received a traumatic brain injury.

## O

### Objectives

IEP objectives break skills within the Annual Goals into discrete components. Objectives provide measurable steps against which student progress can be assessed throughout the year.

### Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapy is a Related Service under IDEA. This service includes: improving, developing, or restoring functions impaired or lost through illness, injury, or deprivation; improving the ability to perform tasks for independent functioning if functions are impaired or lost; and preventing, through early intervention, initial or further impairment or loss of function.

### Orientation and Mobility Services

Orientation and Mobility services are Related Services under IDEA. These services are provided to blind or visually impaired children by qualified personnel to enable those students to attain systematic orientation to and safe movement within their environments in school, home, and community and includes teaching children the following, as appropriate: spatial and environmental concepts and use of information received by the senses (such as sound, temperature and vibrations) to establish, maintain, or regain orientation and line of travel; to use the long cane or a service animal to supplement visual travel skills or as a tool for safely negotiating the environment for children with no available travel vision; to understand and use remaining vision and distance low vision aids; and other concepts, techniques, and tools.

### Other Health Impairment

Other Health Impairment is a disability category recognized by Massachusetts' statute that refers to students having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness within the educational environment, due to chronic or acute health problems that adversely affect a child's educational performance.

### Orthopedic Impairment

Orthopedic Impairment refers to a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. This includes impairments caused by: a congenital anomaly, disease, and impairments from other causes. See Physical Impairment.

### Out-of-District (OOD) Program

An Out-of-District (OOD) program is a special education program that provides educational services to students outside of the general public education setting. Examples of out-of-district programs include special education day schools, collaborative programs, and special education residential schools.

## P

### PARCC

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers is a State/District-wide assessment of the general curriculum.

### Parent

The term parent refers to a child's biological or adoptive parent, guardian, or surrogate parent (see: Surrogate Parent) and may include a grandparent or stepparent with whom a child lives, as well as a foster parent.

### Parent Counseling and Training

Parent Counseling and Training is a Related Service under IDEA designed to assist parents in understanding the special needs of their child; provide parents with information about child development and help parents acquire the necessary skills to allow them to support the implementation of their child's IEP services.

### Parent Notice of Procedural Safeguards (PNPS)

The Parent Notice of Procedural Safeguards (PNPS) is a notice required by IDEA that provides parents/guardians with a full and easily understood explanation of all Procedural Safeguards afforded under the law. Once a year districts must give a copy of the PNPS to all parents of eligible students with disabilities. In addition to annual distribution of the PNPS, school districts must give a copy to parents when an initial special education evaluation is requested; upon the parent's request for a copy; and when a student with a disability is removed from his or her placement to an interim alternative education setting as a result of discipline.

### Physical Impairment

The physical capacity to move, coordinate actions, or perform physical activities is significantly limited, impaired, or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: physical and motor tasks; independent movement; performing basic life functions. The term shall include severe orthopedic impairments or impairments caused by congenital anomaly, cerebral palsy, amputations, and

fractures if such impairment adversely affects a student's educational performance.

### Physical Therapy

In the school setting, Physical Therapy is designed to address a child's posture, muscle strength, mobility, and organization of movement in educational environments in order for the child to access the curriculum.

### Positive Behavior Intervention Plan

See Behavior Intervention Plan

### Prior Written Notice

Prior written notice is one of the procedural safeguards provided by law. This requirement says that a school must notify parents in writing before taking a specific action or before refusing to take an action requested by the parents. The notice must be written in the parent's native language or communicated in other ways the parents understand unless this is not feasible. The written notice must include a detailed explanation of why the district is proposing an action or why the district is refusing to take a requested action.

### Procedural Safeguards (also known as "Rights")

Procedural Safeguards are specific procedures that school districts are required to follow under state and federal law. These safeguards are designed to protect the rights of children with special needs and their parents and ensure that appropriate procedures are followed throughout the special education process. They include: access to student records and the right to ask that those records be amended; the right to participate in meetings where decisions are made; notification requirements; and other safeguards relating to independent education evaluations, surrogate parents, and the age of student majority.

### Psychological Services

Psychological Services are a Related Service under IDEA, which include: administering psychological and educational tests and other assessments; interpreting assessment results; assessing behavior and conditions related to learning; planning and managing a program of psychological services including psychological counseling for children and parents; and assisting in developing positive behavioral intervention strategies.

### Program Quality Assurance (PQA)

Program Quality Assurance is a department within the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) that is tasked with implementing compliance monitoring and problem/complaint resolution. Parents can call PQA to ask a question regarding the laws and regulations pertaining to a specific special education concern or file a formal written complaint documenting an issue of non-compliance that the PQA will investigate and resolve.

## Public Law (PL) 94-142

Public Law (PL) 94-142 is the 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act.

# R

## Recreation Services

Recreation Services are a Related Service under IDEA intended to help children with disabilities learn how to use their leisure and recreation time constructively. Recreation services include the assessment of leisure function, therapeutic recreation services, recreation programs in schools and community agencies, and leisure education.

## Reevaluation/Three-year Reevaluation

A re-evaluation is conducted every three years or more frequently if recommended by the team. The purpose of a re-evaluation is to determine continued eligibility. **The Andover process for re-evaluation is outlined in the Andover Special Education Procedural Manual, located on our website.**

## Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a law designed to protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination. Section 504 of the Act requires all entities receiving federal funds to banish discrimination on the basis of disability from all aspects of their operations.

## Rehabilitation Counseling

Rehabilitation Counseling is a Related Service under IDEA. Rehabilitation services are provided by qualified personnel in individual or group sessions and focus on career development, preparation for employment, achieving independence, and integration into the workplace and community for students with disabilities.

## Related Services

Related Services are those services necessary for a child to benefit from special education. A statement regarding these services must be included in the IEP. Related services include: speech-language pathology and audiology services; interpreting services; psychological services; physical and occupational therapy; recreation, including therapeutic recreation; early identification and assessment of disabilities; counseling services; including rehabilitation counseling; orientation and mobility services; medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes; school health and school nurse services; social work services in schools; and parent counseling and training.

## Resource Room

A special education classroom setting that is separate from the general education classroom.

# S

## School Health Services and School Nurse Services

School Health Services and School Nurse Services are a Related Service under IDEA. These are health services designed to enable a child with a disability to receive a Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) as described in the child's IEP. School nurse services are health services provided by a qualified school nurse, whereas school health services may be provided by either a qualified school nurse or other qualified person.

## Section 504

Section 504 is part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which is a civil rights law designed to protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination. See Rehabilitation Act of 1973. While Section 504 offers a Team approach, a written plan, appropriate accommodations, services, programs, and a periodic review of services, it does not require that the school provide an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to meet the child's unique needs and provide the child with educational benefits. Nor does it offer as many procedural safeguards to children and parents as IDEA does.

## Section 504 Plan

A Section 504 plan is a written plan that documents accommodations and/or modifications for a student with a disability. Some examples of 504 accommodations are: support in non-academic and extracurricular activities, the use of adaptive equipment or assistive technology devices, an aide, assistance with health needs, school transportation or other related services. See Section 504.

## Sensory Impairment

The term shall include the following:

4. Hearing Impairment or Deaf - The capacity to hear, with amplification, is limited, impaired, or absent and results in one or more of the following: reduced performance in hearing acuity tasks; difficulty with oral communication; and/or difficulty in understanding auditorily-presented information in the education environment. The term includes students who are deaf and students who are hard-of-hearing.
5. Vision Impairment or Blind - The capacity to see, after correction, is limited, impaired, or absent and results in one or more of the following: reduced performance in visual acuity tasks; difficulty with written communication; and/or difficulty with understanding information presented visually in the education environment. The term includes students who are blind and students with limited vision.
6. Deaf-Blind - Concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes severe communication and other developmental and educational needs.

## Social Work Services in Schools

Social Work Services in Schools are a Related Service under IDEA that includes: preparing a social or developmental history on a child with a disability; group and individual counseling with the child and

family; working in partnership with parents and others on those problems in a child's living situation (home, school, and community) that affect the child's adjustment in school; mobilizing school and community resources to enable the child to learn as effectively as possible in his or her educational program; assisting in developing positive behavioral intervention strategies.

### Special Education

Special education is specially designed instruction and/or related services – at no cost to the family – that meet the unique needs of a child with a disability and allows the child to access the general education curriculum.

### Specific Learning Disability

Specific learning disability is defined as follows:

(i) General. The term means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and developmental aphasia.

(ii) Disorders not included. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

### Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)

Special Education Parent Advisory Councils (SEPAC) are volunteer organizations comprised of parents of special needs students and other interested individuals. Massachusetts state law requires that each school district has a Special Education Parent Advisory Council to advise the district on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities and meet regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development and evaluation of the school district's special education programs. In addition, SEPACs provide parents/guardians the opportunity to connect and share information around common areas of interest; provide a forum for parent support, social events and educational presentations or workshops on a variety of topics of interest to the community.

### Specially Designed Instruction

Specially designed instruction is a modification not typically provided for students in the general education program. Specially designed instruction includes modifications that affect content, delivery of instruction, methodology and/or performance criteria and are necessary to assist the student in participating and learning. This instruction is designed by an appropriately credentialed special education teacher or related service provider.

### Speech-Language Pathology Services

Speech-Language Pathology Services are a Related Service under IDEA. Speech-Language services are provided by speech-language professionals and speech-language assistants, in accordance with state

regulations, to address the needs of children with disabilities affecting either speech or language. These services include: identification, diagnosis and appraisal of speech or language impairments; referral for medical or other professional attention necessary for the habilitation of speech or language impairments; provision of speech and language services for the habilitation or prevention of communicative impairments; and counseling and guidance of parents, children, and teachers regarding speech and language impairments.

#### Special Education Records

A student's special education file contains evaluations, IEPs, and other information related to special education.

#### Speech or Language Impairment

See Communication.

#### Standardized Test

A standardized test is a norm-referenced test that compares a child's performance with the performance of a large group of similar children (usually children who are the same age).

#### State Education Agency (SEA)

State Education Agency refers to the state board of education or other agency or officer primarily responsible for the state supervision of public elementary and secondary schools. In Massachusetts this is the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

#### Stay-Put

Stay-put is a procedural safeguard under IDEA that ensures that during the pendency of any dispute regarding placement or services, the eligible student shall remain in his or her then current education program and placement unless the parents and the school district otherwise agree. In Massachusetts a parent can assert stay-put rights for their child if the district is proposing a change to services or placement with which the parent/guardian does not agree.

#### Supplementary Aids and Services

Supplementary aids and services are supports provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings, and in extracurricular and nonacademic settings, that enable children with disabilities to be educated with non-disabled children to the maximum extent appropriate for each child.

#### Surrogate Parent

In accordance with the direction of the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Special Education Surrogate Parent Program ensures that the special education rights of students who are in the care or custody of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or whose parents are unknown or unavailable are protected.

# T

## Team/IEP Team

The Team/IEP Team is a group of people who, together, discuss evaluation results, determine eligibility, develop or modify an IEP, or determine placement. The Team members include: parent(s)/guardian(s); at least one of the student's special education teachers and/or providers; at least one of the student's regular education teachers if the child is or may be participating in the regular education environment; a district representative who has knowledge of available resources and the authority to commit the resources; a person qualified to interpret evaluation results; and the student, if over 14 years of age. The Team includes parents/guardians and parents/guardians may invite others individuals to attend the Team meeting with them.

## Team Meeting

A Team Meeting is any convening of the Team for the purpose of decision-making related to a student's educational program, including but not limited to initial evaluations, reevaluations, and annual review of the student's IEP.

## Transition Plan

While federal law requires that by age 16 a student's IEP must contain a statement of transition service needs that focuses on the student's course of study beyond secondary education, Massachusetts state law requires that transition planning must begin at age 14. The transition plan should reflect the student's strengths, preferences, interests, and includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. Beginning at age 14, the student's IEP should contain a statement of the student's transition service needs.

## Transition Services

Transition Services are designed to improve the academic and functional achievement of the child to facilitate his/her movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, employment (including supported employment), adult services, independent living, and/or community participation.

## Transportation Services

Transportation services are a Related Service under IDEA. The IEP Team determines whether or not a child requires transportation services to benefit from his/her special education. IDEA defines transportation as: travel to and from school and between schools; travel in and around school buildings; and specialized equipment (e.g. special or adapted buses, lifts, and ramps), if required to provide special transportation for a child with a disability. Transportation services also include providing modification and supports so that a child with special needs may ride the regular school bus that transports children without disabilities to and from school.

### Traumatic Brain Injury

Traumatic Brain Injury is one of the Disability categories under IDEA that refers to acquired injury caused by external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affect a child's educational performance.

## V

### Vision Impairment Including Blindness

Vision Impairment Including Blindness refers to an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. This category includes both partial sight and blindness. In Massachusetts this falls under the Sensory Impairment disability category.