

***Question 1: What process was used to develop the special education delivery system for eligible individuals?***

*District Mission: To ensure that all learners develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and personal esteem necessary to grow in and shape a changing society.*

The delivery system was developed in accordance with Iowa Administrative Code rule 41.408(2)"c". The group of individuals who developed the system included parents of eligible individuals, special education teachers, general education teachers, administrators, and at least one representative of the Area Education Agency (AEA).

The primary task of the Special Education Advisory committee is to review, revise, and adopt the district delivery plan for special education to be implemented in the 2009-2010 school year.

The Committee, facilitated by co-chairs, will:

- Receive orientation and information on special education supports and services
- Review and revise district special education delivery plan
- Provide an opportunity for public comment on the district delivery system
- Present the delivery plan to the Ames school board for adoption.

Tentative timeline for process during 2009:

February 16 Advisory member recruitment and approval of board  
March 5 First committee meeting  
April 15 Plan is available for public comment  
May 11 AEA Special Education Director verified compliance and approval  
June 1 Presentation to board on delivery plan  
June 8 Board action on district delivery plan

Committee Members and Areas of Representation

Administration:

Liz Jurgensen, Administration  
Jody Klaver, Pre-K  
Carol Allgood, Elementary  
Pam Stangeland, Elementary  
Renee Rockow, Middle School  
Chris Paulson, High School

AEA:

Nina Rasmusson  
Rhonda Weiss  
Anne Manahl  
Chris Rial

Parents:

Jill Pretzer, Pre-K  
Kathy May, Elementary  
Rachel Christy, Middle School  
John Stafford, High School  
Leslie Kawaler, High School

Special Education Teachers:

Audra Watson, Pre-K  
Beth Harmelink, Elementary  
Deani King, Middle School  
Michelle Fuqua, High School

General Education Teachers:

Audra Watson, Pre-K  
Emily Bertness, Elementary  
Jeremie Knutson, Middle School  
Jane Jurgensen, High School

## ***Question 2: How will services be organized and provided to eligible individuals?***

### **Beliefs and Needs**

*Special education services will be organized and provided based on the following beliefs and needs:*

- All students do learn.
- Respect, responsibility, and acceptance of others can be taught in an environment that values individual differences.
- Parent/guardian involvement is central to student success.
- Education is a cooperative effort to meet the individual needs of all students.
- Student success is enhanced through creative, diverse, and quality instructional support provided in a variety of settings and styles.
- A student's motivation to succeed in school and society is central to his/her quality of life.

These beliefs are consistent with the district's mission. They reflect a student-centered and individual needs-based approach to education that builds student success.

To provide special education services that are compatible with these beliefs, the following are needed:

- All students have access to and participate in the general education curriculum to the maximum extent possible.
- Opportunities for students to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and personal esteem necessary to grow in and shape a changing society.
- Opportunities for educators to expand their knowledge and training in areas that will promote special education student success.
- A network of support, collaboration, and communication among parents, guardians, and stakeholders/providers encompassing the home, school, and community
- Integration of special education students and general education students in all settings within the school environment to promote mutual understanding and tolerance of differences, and to enable social growth of the entire school community.
- Facilities shall be at least equivalent in quality to general education classrooms in the system, located in buildings housing regularly enrolled individuals of comparable ages, and readily accessible to individuals with disabilities. (Special Education Administrative Rule 281-41.25.)

The full continuum of special education services for eligible individuals, including preschool, will be provided in general education and special education classrooms. Services for special education students will be determined by the needs of the individual student and provided in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). The continuum of special education services will be adjusted as the needs of the students change.

### **Continuum of Services**

**Consulting Teacher Services:** Consulting Teacher services are defined as indirect services provided by a certified special education teacher to a general education teacher in adjusting the learning environment and/or modifying his/her instructional methods using specially designed instruction strategies to meet the individual needs of a student with a disability who is receiving instruction in the general education classroom.

**Co-Teaching Services:** Co-teaching services are defined as the provision of specially designed instruction and academic instruction provided to a group of students with disabilities and non-disabled students. These services are provided in partnership with the special education teacher and general education teacher to meet the content and skill needs of students in the general education classroom.

These services take shape in a variety of manners. For example, teachers co-plan, divide the class, and provide the instruction to smaller groups, or teachers co-plan and then co-instruct different components of the content. The effectiveness of services provided through co-teaching has a strong research base.

**Collaborative Services:** Collaborative services are defined as direct, specially designed instruction provided to an individual student with a disability or to a group of students with disabilities by a certified special education teacher in a general education classroom to aid the student(s) in accessing the general education curriculum. These services are provided simultaneously with the general education content area instruction.

**Direct Services:** Direct services are defined as direct, specially designed instruction provided to an individual student with a disability, or a group of students with disabilities, by a certified special education teacher who provides supplementary instruction that cannot otherwise be made available during the student's regular instruction time. These services are provided in an individual or small group setting for a portion of the day. Direct services supplement the instruction provided in the general education classroom through Consulting Teacher services or Collaborative/Co-teaching services. The specially designed instruction provided in a pull out setting does **not** supplant the instruction provided in the general education classroom.

**Special Class:** Special Class services are defined as direct, specially designed instruction provided to an individual student with a disability, or a group of students with disabilities, by a certified special education teacher to provide instruction which is tied to the general education curriculum, but has been modified to meet the unique needs of the student(s) in a self-contained setting (including, but not limited to special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions). This means the student is receiving his or her primary instruction separate from non-disabled peers.

**Preschool:** Preschool aged children may be placed in Regular Early Childhood Programs, which means there are less than 50 percent children with disabilities or Early Childhood Special Education Program where there are more than 50 percent children with disabilities. The Regular Early Childhood Program may be taught by a general education teacher who holds a valid practitioner's license and an endorsement that includes pre-kindergarten. The Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) program, as well as the consultation and support in the regular early childhood program, will be provided by an ECSE teacher who holds a valid practitioner's license and an endorsement that includes ECSE. The ECSE teacher is responsible for monitoring the child's progress on IEP goals.

The Regular Early Childhood Program or the ECSE Program may be taught by a person who has a dual endorsement. If the child is served in the regular early childhood classroom with a teacher who holds a valid practitioner's license that includes pre-kindergarten and early childhood special education, the teacher is responsible for direct instruction, preparation of materials, adaptations, and accommodations as specified in the IEP. The teacher with the dual endorsement is responsible for implementing and monitoring the child's progress according to the IEP.

The district will provide access to this continuum for all eligible individuals based on their IEP. Services may be provided within the district, or through contractual agreement with other districts and/or agencies. If the district provides instructional services through a contractual agreement with another district or agency, the preschool services will be examined annually to determine the availability of regular early childhood programs within the district.

***Question 3: How will caseloads of special education teachers be determined and regularly monitored?***

The district’s regular early childhood program and early childhood special education programs will maintain the teacher-student ratios prescribed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation or Iowa’s Quality Preschool Standards (QPPS). The teacher ratios are as follows:

<b>Age of Student</b>	<b>Teacher/Student Ratio</b>
3	1:8
4	1:10

The caseloads of special education teachers will be determined by using a numerical formula based on assigned student weighting. The following weighted formula will be used to determine an individual teacher’s caseload based on each child’s support services provided. The district’s caseload recommendations for school age population (5-21) regarding maximum class size and teacher ratios are as follows:

<b>Assigned Level of Service from DE Approved Weighted Enrollment Matrix</b>	<b>Weighted Ratio</b>	<b>Caseload Range</b>
Level I	1.0	16-18
Level II	1.82	9-11
Level III	3.61	5-7

The weightings of all special education students assigned to a special education teacher’s class roster will be added to determine the teacher’s caseload. The numerical weighting reflects the intensity of the service which is provided to a student. The higher the weighed ratio, the more intensive the level of support needed by the student.

To determine a teacher’s minimum caseload, the AEA assigned level of service is multiplied by the weighted ratio for that service. For a teacher who serves 12 Level I students and 3 Level II students, the total caseload would be 17.46. This is determined in the following manner: 12 Level I students multiplied by 1.0 equals 12.0, and 3 Level II students multiplied by 1.82 equals 5.46. By adding the two totals of 12.0 and 5.46, we arrive at our 17.46, which is overweight by –1.46 for caseload of 16, but within the caseload range of 16-18 students.

To determine a teacher’s maximum caseload, the AEA assigned level of service is multiplied by the weighted ratio for that service. For a teacher who serves 1 Level I student, 1 Level II student, and 4 Level III students, the total caseload would be 17.26. This is determined in the following manner: 1 Level I student, multiplied by 1.0 equals 1.0, 1 Level II student, multiplied by 1.82 equals 1.82, and 4 Level III students, multiplied by 3.61 equals 14.44. By adding the three totals of 1.0, 1.82, and 14.44, we arrive at our 17.26, which is underweight by .74 of a maximum caseload of 18 students.

Caseloads will be tentatively set in the spring for the following year. They may be modified based on summer registration and actual fall enrollments. Caseloads will be reviewed at least twice during the school year by the building principal, special education teachers, and AEA building team.

***Question 4: What procedures will a special education teacher use to resolve caseload concerns?***

Caseloads will be tentatively set in the spring for the following year, but may be modified based on summer registration and actual fall enrollment. Caseloads will be reviewed at least twice during the school year by the building principal, special education teachers, and AEA building team. In addition to scheduled reviews, caseloads will also be reviewed under the following circumstances:

- When a specified caseload is exceeded. If the caseload limit is or will be exceeded by 15% for a period of 9 weeks, then a review may be requested in writing.
- When a teacher has a concern about his or her ability to effectively perform the essential functions of his or her job due to caseload.

**REQUESTING A CASELOAD REVIEW**

- All requests must be in writing.
- Requests should initially be given to an individual's principal/supervisor.
- A building committee will be appointed to serve as a review team in collaboration with the building principal/supervisor. The caseload committee may consist of another principal, a special education teacher (other than the teacher whose caseload is being reviewed), an AEA building representative, and other members as appropriate.
- The person requesting the review is responsible for gathering relevant information to support their request. This information might include, but is not limited to:
  - Individual Education Plans (IEP)
  - Schedule and instructional groupings
  - Collaborative/co-teaching assignments
  - Number of buildings

**PROCEDURAL STEPS**

1. Informal problem solving strategies in relation to caseload concerns have been exhausted.
2. A written request for caseload review is submitted to the principal/supervisor.
3. The request is reviewed for clarification with the principal/supervisor. The principal/supervisor tries to resolve the concern at this point.
4. If the caseload concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved, the request is then sent to the caseload committee.
5. Within 15 working days, the caseload committee will review the request and give a recommendation to the individual's principal/supervisor.
6. Upon receipt of the committee's recommendation, the principal will review the information and discuss it with the individual.
7. Within 10 working days, the principal will meet with the individual and provide a written determination.
8. If the person requesting the review does not agree with the determination, he or she may appeal to the Director of Special Education.
9. The Special Education Director will meet with personnel involved and will provide a written decision.

***Question 5: How will the delivery system for eligible individuals meet the targets identified in the state's performance plan and the LEA determination as assigned by the state? What process will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the delivery system for eligible individuals?***

The district will examine their State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Progress Report (APR) data to determine priorities and develop an action plan if needed.

If the district meets SPP/APR requirements, the delivery system will be considered effective. If the district does not meet requirements, the district will work in collaboration with the State and AEA to develop an action plan.