



Ames<sup>TM</sup>  
COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Special Education Service Delivery Plan

2011-2016

***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 2011-2012 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 2011-2012:

10/17/11	Advisory member recruitment and approval of board
11/29/11	First committee meeting
12/20/11	AEA Special Education Director verified compliance and approval
01/09/12	Plan is available for public comment
02/06/12	Presentation to board on delivery plan
02/06/12	Board action on district delivery plan

Committee Members and Areas of Representation

Administration:

Darcy Cosens, Administration  
 Jody Klaver, Pre-K  
 Randy Podhaski, Elementary  
 Jeff Anderson, Middle School  
 Chris Paulson, High School

Parents:

Jennifer Tourtelotte, Pre-K  
 Paul & Samantha Soddors, Elementary  
 Joel & Tracy Johnson, Middle School  
 Tom Russell & Mary Brotherson, High School

Special Education Teachers:

Audra Watson, Pre-K  
 Beckie Steffen, Elementary  
 Julie Schuster, Middle School  
 Michelle Fuqua, High School

General Education Teachers:

Audra Watson, Pre-K  
 Anne Posegate, Elementary  
 Jeremie Knutson, Middle School  
 Jane Jurgensen, High School

AEA:

Wendy Robinson  
 Rhonda Weiss  
 Chris Rial

***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 and special education. The Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) 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.

**Transition:** Transition planning is part of the continuum of services. Most students will benefit from and only need the transition opportunities that are provided to all students. Some students will need individualized or additional transition support when transitioning from preschool to kindergarten, fifth grade to sixth grade, and eighth grade to ninth grade.

Transition meetings are to be held each spring for preschool students. The following people will meet to discuss the student's IEP and discuss what supports will be needed for the student to be successful in kindergarten: Preschool Teacher, Preschool Principal, AEA Team Members, Elementary Principal, Kindergarten Teacher, and the Elementary Special Ed Teacher. When recommended by the preschool principal the new teacher(s) will observe the student in the preschool setting.

The fifth grade and eighth grade special education teachers will determine the transition needs for their students. They will consult with parents and next year's special education teacher if they feel a transition plan is needed. Transition services could include: meeting with the current teacher(s), principal, AEA representative, next years teacher(s), and principal; one to three visits to the new building prior to school ending; new special education teacher visit/observe the student in their current

classroom; parents take their child to the new building during pre-service days at the beginning of the new school year.

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

Using the Special Education Delivery plan teachers, principals, and the Director of Student Programs will monitor special education caseloads. The teacher, building principal or Director of Student Programs may request a caseload review anytime during the school year. If after an informal meeting a teacher does not feel caseload issues have been adequately addressed he/she may make a formal written request and submit it to his/her principal.

**Early Childhood (3-5 yr.)**

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:

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

The caseloads of combined early childhood special education and general education programs will be determined by using a numerical formula based on assigned student weightings. The following weighted formula will be used to determine an individual dual teacher's caseload based on each child's support services provided.

- .25 General Ed Student
- 1.82 Level II Student
- 3.61 Level III Student

An early childhood teacher's caseload range would be between 18 & 20 points when you total the weightings of the general education students (.25), Level II students (1.82), and Level III students (3.61) and combine the morning and afternoon classes. There will be a maximum number of 6 special ed students on a full-time caseload.

The weightings of all students assigned to an early childhood 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 weighted ratio, the more intensive the level of support needed by the students.

To determine an early childhood teacher's caseload, the assigned level of service is multiplied by the weighted ratio for that service. For an early childhood teacher who serves 24 general education students, 5 level II students and 1 Level III student, the total caseload would be 18.71. This is determined in the following manner: 24 general ed students multiplied by .25 equals 6, 5 Level II

students multiplied by 1.82 equals 9.1, and 1 Level III student multiplied by 3.61 equals 3.61. By adding the three totals of 6, 9.1, and 3.61, we arrive at a total of 18.71, which is within the caseload range of 18 to 20 points.

### **School Age (5-21 yrs.)**

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</b>	<b>Weighted Ratio</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Points</b>
Level I	1.0	16-18	16-18
Level II	1.82	9-11	16-20
Level III	3.61	5-7	18-25

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 that 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 caseload, the 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 within the caseload range of 16-18 points for Level 1 students, and 16 to 20 points for Level II students.

#### ***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 when a teacher has a concern about his or her ability to effectively perform the essential functions of his or her job and or the caseload limit is or will be exceeded by 15% for a period of 9 weeks.

Prior to requesting a formal caseload review the teacher shall request and shall be granted a meeting with the building principal and Director of Student Programs to discuss caseload. Such meetings shall be informal in nature and solution-focused. The Director of Student Programs shall keep a record of the meeting date, teacher name, concerns, possible solutions, and any solutions agreed upon.

### **Resolution Procedures**

The following procedures are to be used to resolve concerns about special education caseloads:

1. 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
  
2. A written request for caseload review is submitted to the principal.
  
3. The building principal will convene a review committee within 10 working days to problem solve and listen to the concern from the referring teacher. The caseload will include: a special ed teacher from the same level (elementary/secondary), a principal from a different building and a representative from Heartland Area Education Agency. The committee may also include: the building principal, general ed teacher, behavior interventionist, special education instructional coach, and other members as appropriate
  - The review committee will review the teacher's information along with information provided by the principal and or Director of Student Programs. During the meeting, the review committee will consider available resources and scheduling possibilities. Corrective action may include: realigning students, reviewing assignments of educational assistants, assigning of a classroom educational assistance, reorganizing teacher resources, or prioritizing collaboration efforts to improve the delivery of service to all special education students.
  - Notice of action will be the responsibility of the building principal. The review committee will develop a written recommendation that will be given to the teacher within 5 working days of the review meeting. A copy will also be given to the Director of Student Programs.
  
4. If a special education teacher's concern is not resolved, the special education teacher will notify the Director of Student Programs, in writing, within 5 working days of receiving the written recommendation. During an additional 5-day working period a decision will be made and a written response will be issued to all parties involved.
  
5. If the special education teacher would like to appeal this decision a written request will be made to the Director of Student Programs within 5 working days. This request will be brought forth to the Superintendent for discussion. During an additional 5-day working period a final decision will be made and a written response will be issued to all parties involved

***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.