

COVENTRY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Coventry, Rhode Island

SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFFING PLAN GUIDANCE

PURPOSE:

To maintain compliance with No Child Left Behind and Amendments to the Rhode Island Special Education Regulations (effective July 1, 2008) which require districts to adopt a policy that guides special education staffing patterns.

STIPULATIONS:

The policy will be filed with the Rhode Island Department of Education and must include evidence of the relationship between anticipated needs of students, including the delivery of a Free and Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment, and the determination of number and types of personnel. Additionally, there must be an opportunity for public input into the development/finalization of the district policy.

The policy guides the development of a formal staffing plan that is adjusted annually or as otherwise required based on the changing needs of students or the addition/withdrawal of students from the Coventry Public Schools. The staffing plan is submitted to the Rhode Island Department of Education with the Consolidated Resource Plan application by June of each year.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Coventry School Department is committed to providing high quality education for every child. Recognizing that every student has unique learning needs, diversified learning opportunities are provided for all students throughout the district. Learning opportunities are enhanced with supplemental programs and services both in and outside of the classroom. Special education and related services are provided to support students with documented disabilities or other identified learning needs in achieving academic and functional performance.

A key element in the provision of a Free and Appropriate Public Education for all students is the availability of highly qualified teachers, related service personnel, and support staff to implement each student's Individualized Education Plan or Response to Intervention Plan. Professional development and training will be available regarding the requirements and intent of all regulations and research based practices used to provide an appropriate education for all students.

The Coventry School Department strives to continuously improve the quality of education to all students, and is dedicated to assess and evaluate the delivery of services to students with disabilities.

The Coventry School Department staffing plan will ensure that appropriate personnel are available to deliver the services and instruction required to fully implement student's Individualized Education Plans or Response to Intervention Plans and provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education in the least restrictive environment.

STAFFING PLAN GUIDELINES:

The staffing plan of the Coventry Public Schools will follow these principles:

- All children can learn and will achieve adequate yearly progress in terms of their individual academic and functional needs.
- Due to the unique needs of individual learners, children will be provided with positive learning opportunities that are supported, when necessary and appropriate, with special education and related services that are specifically directed at the individual education needs of students with disabilities.
- A full continuum of special education and related support services will be available to all students both in and outside of the classroom as necessary.
- All children will be provided access to the general curriculum and special education services are provided in the least restrictive environment.
- Professional development consistent with the goals established through the District Strategic Plan for Unified Learning Services will be provided to all teachers, related service providers, and teacher assistants to maximize skill levels necessary to deliver quality instruction and services as indicated in each child's Individualized Education Program.
- It is vital that parents or guardians participate in a child's educational program and in the development and implementation of an Individualized Education Program for their child. Parent involvement will be a regular part of the special education program and school activities.
- Special education teacher caseloads and staffing decisions are based on providing the services a student needs to be successful in the least restrictive environment.
- The special education services required by the student's Individualized Education Program will determine instructional programming as well as instructional and related service caseloads.
- There will be flexibility in special education and related service personnel staffing to address changes that may occur in a student's educational and functional needs throughout the school year.
- Special education teacher and related service personnel staffing considerations will include the need to provide specific interventions to students without Individualized Education Plans.
- Related service personnel staffing considerations will include the need for collaboration and consultation with general education teachers so that appropriate interventions are available in the least restrictive environment.

- Yearly consultation with building-level administration and the district's Strategic Planning Committee for Unified Learning Services will play an important role in determining the special education teacher, related service provider and teacher assistant staffing needs.
- Special education staffing will be determined based solely on student/district needs, guidance set forth in this policy, and decisions of the Coventry School Committee.
- Special education staffing will be compliant with federal and State law, regulation, and policies governing special education.

PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS:

The Coventry Public School Department gathered input from the public prior to finalizing this policy. Public input opportunities included two School Committee meetings where the policy was read and opened for discussion (4/22/2008 and 5/13/2008); an open discussion at the May 14, 2008 meeting of the Local Advisory Committee; monthly meetings of the district Strategic Planning Committee for Unified Learning Services, a committee that is represented by administrators, regular education and special education teachers, related service personnel, union representation and parents; and the May 5, 2008 meeting of the district related service providers. Additionally, the policy was made available on the Coventry Public Schools web site for public comment and review from 4/17/08 through 5/13/08.

1ST Reading: 4/22/08
2nd Reading:

ADOPTED: