

**Egg Harbor City Public Schools
Parent Advisory Group**

Information

Special Projects Department

DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL PROJECTS

Gina Forester, Ed.D.

SPECIAL PROJECTS SECRETARY

Darlene Hagel

CHILD STUDY TEAM OFFICE

EARLY CHILDHOOD SUPERVISOR / LEARNING DISABILITIES TEACHER – CONSULTANT (LDT-C)

Tara Macchione, MAED

CERTIFIED SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST (CSP)

Ana Cabral, M.Ed.

CERTIFIED SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER (CSSW)

Jennifer Connelly, MSW

CERTIFIED SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER (CSSW)

Nicole Goodwin, MSW

SPEECH-LANGUAGE SPECIALIST (S-LS)

Tiffany Giordano, MS

Special Education Services in the Egg Harbor City Public School District

PROGRAMS

Special Education Learning Resource Centers (LRC) (in-class resource)

We have several LRC instructors district wide. At times, instructors are shared between buildings (CLS and EHCCS). We also have PS inclusion classrooms.

Special Education Special Class Programs (Self-contained multiple disability/SCMD)

We have several SCMD classrooms district wide.

Special Education Extended School Year

This program was implemented to afford district-classified students in need of this service the opportunity to participate. This program is four weeks, with all related services (OT, PT, S/L, Counseling and Transportation as per the student's IEP) being provided, as well as specific goals/objectives as per each student's Individualized Education Plan.

RELATED SERVICES

Speech Therapy Services

We have one full-time Speech-Language Specialist who delivers speech language services to our district's students at CLS and EHCCS.

Occupational Therapy Services

These services are contracted through Therapeutic Learning for Children.

Physical Therapy Services

These services are contracted through Milestone Physical Therapy.

Nursing Services

These services have been available through private contractors hired by district, and our own school nurses.

Counseling

Counseling has been provided through the district guidance counselors, school social worker and school psychologist, outside counseling referrals are also made for students by these staff.

Child Study Team Duties

There are full team duties where all participants are needed:

- Identification/Evaluation meetings
- Initial eligibility meetings
- Annual IEP meetings
- Triennial evaluation plan meetings

There are also case manager duties – that are assigned to a specific team member for specific students.

CST members are the only staff members to have access to edit student's evaluation plans and eligibility documents. They are also responsible for all components of a student's IEP. Instructional staff only have permission to view documents and enter goal/objective information.

There are also job specific duties. Each member's primary job tasks as they relate to their specialized role are addressed below and in their job description.

DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL PROJECTS

Consultation with administrative staff, staff supervision/teachers, monthly county meetings, policy/procedure writing, weekly district administration and child study team meetings, monthly instructional and reading coach, as well as ESL meetings. Completion of federal/state/county reports, federal/state/county activities (e.g., Child Find Activities, Early Intervention Initiatives, etc.), grants, agency contacts, determine supply needs, determine staffing needs, investigate new programs, attend board meetings, provide staff with educational/informative resources (researching, gathering, translating into user-friendly material, and distributing), 504 Compliance Officer, Homeless Liaison, English as a Second Language Coordinator, CST and Instructional/Reading Coach Supervisor, Curriculum and Instruction Coordinator, including General Education, Special Education and Gifted and Talented Education Programs.

LEARNING DISABILITIES TEACHER – CONSULTANT (LDT-C)

Must conduct assessments (initial and re-evaluations: learning/perceptual), observations, results analysis/report writing, consultation with teachers, consultation with administrative staff, ARC

meetings, manifestation determinations and meet with parents. Must perform case management duties.

CERTIFIED SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST (CSP)

Must conduct assessments (initial and re-evaluations: cognitive/psychological, results analysis/report writing, crisis intervention, behavior intervention planning, ARC meetings, manifestation determinations, counseling/related service, consultation with teachers, and consultation with administrative staff. Must perform case management duties.

CERTIFIED SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER (CSSW)

Must conduct assessments (initial and re-evaluations: social history), counseling/related service, consultation with teachers, consultation with administrative staff, home visits, ARC meetings, manifestation determinations, crisis intervention and meet with parents. Must perform case management duties.

SPEECH-LANGUAGE SPECIALIST (S-LS)

Must conduct assessments (initial and re-evaluations: speech/language), observations, results analysis/report writing, speech/language sessions, consultation with teachers, consultation with administrative staff, and meet with parents. Must perform case management duties.

SPECIAL PROJECTS DEPARTMENT INCLUDES

CHILD STUDY TEAM (CST) –

The members of the child study team function as a unit. They conduct evaluations on students who have been brought to their attention through the referral process. The referral process may be initiated through the Intervention and Referral Services Committee, school administrator, school nurse, or parent. The reason for referring a child to the team is to establish whether or not the child has learning disabilities and/or behavior concerns, which may need specialized services.

Members of the CST include a Learning Disabilities Teacher-Consultant (LDT-C), Certified School Psychologist (CSP), Certified School Social Worker (CSSW), and Speech/Language Specialist (S/LS). Members of the CST serve as case managers for each identified student. The CST Secretary is also an active participant in this department. All CST staff can be reached by calling 965-1034 x 136.

All pupils with disabilities, who are in need of special education and related services, including pupils with disabilities attending non-public schools, regardless of the severity of their disabilities, are located, identified and evaluated in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.3. Parent initiated referrals involve the following: a parents written request for an evaluation to determine eligibility for special education services, which will be dated by the district recipient. The

written request will immediately be forwarded to the CST. The CST will create a referral file. The CST will request a summary from the school nurse, which includes pertinent health and medical history. Within twenty calendar days of receipt of the written request for evaluation, the CST will schedule and convene an initial evaluation planning meeting in collaboration with parents and school staff to determine what, if any, formal evaluation procedures are necessary. The CST will mail parents a written invitation, "Notice of a Planning Meeting", to confirm the meeting date. Also, included with the invitation will be a copy of the "Parental Rights in Special Education" (PRISE) handbook. For more information regarding special education and the referral process, contact the Special Projects Department at 965-1034, x 136.

COUNSELING –

The district provides counseling services and outside referrals for students and families who require assistance. For more information all inquires can be directed to the CLS or EHCCS Guidance Counselor, if needed they will refer to the Special Projects Department.

CHILD FIND –

The Egg Harbor City Public School System seeks to identify students ages 3 to 21 that may be in need of Special Education and Related Services. Parents, medical personnel, and other concerned individuals may call the Special Projects Department at 965-1034, x 136 to make a referral.

DISTRICT STRENGTHS

District-wide programs and services that benefit the special education students and regular education students, alike, and which promote inclusion:

Periodic assessments are conducted, which allow teachers and administrators to monitor the effectiveness of instruction and plan accordingly.

District-wide and state assessments are being used to identify individual student strengths and weaknesses.

An instructional approach has been taught to the teachers to allow for more individualized differentiated teaching to meet the needs of individual students.

Staff have received training in theory and application of differentiated learning techniques and unique student learning styles. The principles of brain-based learning allow for better understanding of learning styles, which allow for teachers to address a number of disabilities.

The skill-streaming program is implemented district-wide in order to promote character education and address behavioral concerns.

Collaboration and on-going communication between the special education and regular education teaching staff is expected. Training for special and regular education teachers with regards to special services programs (special education, gifted and talented, English as a second language, 504 plans, etc.) is provided. Clear responsibilities with regards to special education students are stated for all special education teachers, as well as regular education teachers. Regular education teachers who have special education students that require modifications with in their classroom are given specific details and are expected to review and provide all noted modifications as per the student's IEP. Specific expectations include the following: be aware of classified students, review each classified student's reports and IEP, note modifications and responsibilities with regards to these modifications, consult continuously with the special education teacher and case manager working with individual students.

Special education program developments that benefit the special education students and allow for enhanced staff situations:

The EASY IEP System (computer program) has been introduced to allow for child study team staff access to various student mandated documents (e.g., IEPs) and notes regarding student needs. The EASY IEP System enhances the production of IEPs as collaborative documents with input from regular education teachers, special education teachers, relevant specialists, and the child's case manager. The district has developed EASY IEP templates that are conformed to state standards and which help reduce mistakes since the input fields only allow entry of designated information. Through email and the EASY IEP system, there is enhanced collaboration and communication among staff members. EASY IEP also supports the functioning and data collection for SEMI (Special Education Medicaid Initiative).

GENERAL INFORMATION

All pupils with disabilities, who are in need of special education and related services, including pupils with disabilities attending nonpublic schools, regardless of the severity of their disabilities, are located, identified, and evaluated in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.3.

The link for the SPED code - <https://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap14.pdf>

The link for PRISE –

Special Education Parent Advisory Group Additional Information

A **Special Education Parent Advisory Group**, or SEPAG is a state-mandated, district-level, parent-driven group charged with providing input to the local school district on system-level challenges in special education and related services.

What is The Purpose of a SEPAC?

- To provide direct input on the policies, programs, and practices that impact services and supports for children with disabilities and their families.
- To increase the involvement of families of children with special needs in making recommendations on special education policy.
- To advise on matters that pertain to the education, health and safety of children with special needs.
- To advise on unmet needs of children with disabilities.

Who Should Attend SEPAC Meetings?

- Anyone with a student or students in the school district with different learning needs; be they physical, emotional, or behavioral.
- Anyone with a student or students eligible for or receiving services under an IEP or 504 plan.

What Happens at SEPAC Meetings?

- Concerns related to a group of students are shared and discussed
- Updates will be provided related to Special Services in the district and at the State and National Levels
- Parents will have adequate time to discuss issues among themselves and plan the agenda for the next meeting.
- Speakers, other District Representatives, and Individual Staff members may be invited.

What Can I Do Before the next SEPAC Meeting?

- Volunteer to be a parent representative regarding issues and concerns raised at your individual school.
- Contact any Child Study Team member with questions or concerns.

Our district has organized a Special Education Parent Advisory Committee as a forum for parents to provide input to the district on issues concerning students with disabilities. We welcome the participation of all parents.

Please note that this is **not** the forum for a discussion about individual students or your child's IEP. Topics are limited to those that impact all students or a group of students.

In EHC public schools we hold 2 yearly meetings with this group that are organized each year in different ways depending on the availability of parents, speakers, etc. Many times these meetings are in conjunction with other parent support information evenings, which offer a variety of resources to parents. All communication regarding these meetings is sent to parents in a letter and flyer.

Resources and Links

Many resources and information shared with parents at these meetings can also be accessed below.

The link to access the **Statewide Parent Advisory Groups and Advocacy** information, as well as the **SEPAG Manual** is below:

<https://www.state.nj.us/education/specialed/resources/SEPAGManual.pdf>

In addition, information specific **SPAN** for more resources can be accessed in the following link:

<https://spanadvocacy.org/programs/start/groups/>

NJDOE SPED Resources can be accessed through this link –

<https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/resources.shtml>

Information regarding the **ARC of NJ Developmental Disabilities Services** can be found in the following link –

<https://www.arcnj.org/>