

**Morris Central School District**

**SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN**

**2024-2026**

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## Introduction

Commissioner's regulations 200.2 (c) require that each Board of Education prepare satisfactory special education plans as required by subdivision 10 of section 3602 of Education Law. Each plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- A description of the nature and scope of special education programs and services currently available to students and preschool students residing in the district;
- Identification of the number and age span of students and preschool students to be served by the type of disability and recommended setting;
- Method used to evaluate the extent to which the objectives of the program have been achieved;
- Description of the policies and practices of the Board of Education to ensure the continual allocation of appropriate space within the district for special education programs that meet the needs of students and preschool students with disabilities;
- Description of the policies and practices of the Board of Education to ensure that appropriate space will be continually available to meet the needs of resident students and preschool students with disabilities who attend special education programs provided by Boards Of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES);
- Description of how the district intends to ensure that all instructional materials to be used in the school district will be made available in a usable alternative format;
- Estimated budget to support the plan; and
- The date on which such plan was adopted by the Board of Education

This plan will meet the requirements indicated above for the period of 2024-2026

## **Morris Central School District Special Education Program Principles**

- The Morris Central School District is dedicated to the premise that all children can learn.
- Working cooperatively with the home and the community, Morris Central School will create a learning environment conducive to ensuring the success of all students.
- The skills and knowledge gained through education at Morris Central School will provide the foundation for lifelong learning.
- The Morris Central School will provide opportunities to prepare all students to become active and responsible citizens in a multicultural, democratic society.
- All children will have access to the general education curriculum to the maximum extent possible.
- All special education instruction will be based on The Next Generation Standards.
- Student data will be collected and analyzed to improve and implement instruction.
- All children will receive instruction designed to ensure that upon graduation they are college and career ready.
- The District encourages student independence and promotes and teaches self-advocacy and self-determination skills.
- In consideration of the child's unique and individual needs, the District will provide special education supports and services that are developmentally appropriate and capitalize on the student strengths, abilities, preferences, and interests. All supports and services will be planned and delivered in collaboration with a multi-disciplinary team specific to the individual child and delivered in a supportive learning environment.
- The Morris Central School respects the role of the child's family in the educational process and will encourage active participation in all aspects of educational planning and decision-making.
- The Morris Central School deeply respects the diversity within our community. The District recognizes that each family shares values, beliefs, ideas, attitudes, customs, traditions, and practices unique to the child's and family's background.



## **Description of District and Nature and Scope of Special Education Programs and Services**

The Morris Central School District is a rural school district of approximately 300 students located in the central region of New York State. It is equidistant between the cities of Norwich and Oneonta; each being approximately fifteen miles away along State Route 23. The education programs for Prekindergarten through Grade 12 and special education are housed in one main building. Socioeconomically, the Morris area is middle class to lower middle class and, consistent with other schools in our geographic area, is experiencing a decline in student enrollment. The Morris Central School, through its Board of Education, Committee on Special Education, Committee on Preschool Special Education and Section 504 Committee, provides a continuum of educational programs and services to students ages 3-21 in accordance with Part 200 of the Commissioner's Regulations and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. At all times, the Committee seeks to act in the best interest of children and in complete accordance with the rules, policies, and regulations established by the state of New York and the United States Department of Education pertaining to the education of students with disabilities.

The Morris Central School District is committed to providing a free appropriate public education to all students with disabilities (ages 3-21) in the least restrictive educational environment, consistent with federal and state laws and regulations. Least restrictive environment means that placement of students with disabilities in special classes, separate schools, and other removal from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that, even with the use of supplementary aids and services, education cannot be satisfactorily achieved. The placement of an individual student with a disability in the least restrictive environment shall: provide the special education needed by the student; provide for the education of the student to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of the student with other students who do not have disabilities; and be as close as possible to the student's home.

The Morris Central School District continues its commitment to educating children in the least restrictive educational environment through the provision of quality inclusive education. Inclusion is a broad term that refers to the opportunity for students with disabilities to have access to, inclusion in, and participation in all activities of the total school environment. It is a philosophy that embraces the importance of children with disabilities attending the school they would attend if they were not disabled. The commitment to educating children in their neighborhood school provides the child with

disabilities the opportunity to make friends in his/her home school and strengthen ties within the community.

The Morris Central School District has developed an educational system that values diversity and promotes the interaction of students with and without disabilities. It is our belief that inclusive educational programs ultimately prepare all students for full participation in a diverse American society.

Instruction for children with disabilities focuses on developing concepts, skills, and knowledge through access to the general education curriculum to the maximum extent possible. Beyond the realm of academic instruction, students also learn and practice the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills needed for success within and beyond the classroom setting. 21<sup>st</sup> century skills include critical thinking, creative thinking, collaborating, communicating, leadership, and social skills. Students with disabilities are given the opportunity to receive the instruction necessary to meet the New York Next Generation Learning Standards in English/Language Arts and Mathematics and the New York State Learning Standards in all other subjects. Consideration continues to be given to individual learning styles, abilities, developmental levels, long-term goals, interests, ambitions, and background of experiences in helping students to meet the rigor of the standards established by New York State. All students are given the opportunity to participate in the New York State assessments designed to measure student growth and achievement in grades 3-8 unless the student qualifies for NYSAA (New York State Alternate Assessment).

The Morris Central School annually appoints a Committee on Special Education. Members for the 2024-2026 school year are as follows:

- Committee on Special Education Chairperson
- School Psychologist
- Elementary School Counselor
- High School Counselor
- Nurse
- School Physician (if requested 72 hours in advance)
- Parent Representative (if requested 72 hours in advance)
  - A parent may be a representative up to two years after his/her child has graduated.
- The child's general education teacher \*
- The child's special education teacher and/or related service provider
- The child's parent(s) or guardian(s)
- The child with a disability, whenever appropriate

\*The child's teacher means at least one general education teacher of the child (if the child is, or may be, participating in the general education environment). This also means at least one special education teacher, or where appropriate, at least one special education provider (i.e., a related service provider) of the child.



The general education teacher of the child, as a member of the Committee, must, to the extent appropriate: participate in the development of the IEP of the child, including the determination of appropriate positive behavioral interventions and strategies.

Federal law requires membership by a representative of the local educational agency who is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities. Staff members who meet this requirement are April Vunk, Principal; Lindsey Gifford, Director of Pupil Personnel, Special Education Teacher, Caitlin Smith, Special Education Teacher, Richelle Lawton, Special Education Teacher, Jody Bolton, Special Education Teacher, Kyle Szokoli, Special Education Teacher, and Eileen Hartnett, Special Education Teacher. Further federal mandates require a representative who is knowledgeable about the general curriculum, which would include special education staff, general education staff, and school counselors. A representative who is also knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the local educational agency is also mandated.

Federal law also mandates that a member of the committee be an individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results, who may be selected from the child's regular or special education teacher or the representative of the local educational agency.

The committee may also include, at the discretion of the parent or the agency, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel as appropriate.

New York state law requires additional members on the CSE (a school psychologist, parent member, school physician, if requested by the parent at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting).

The Morris Central School District offers a continuum of special education supports and services designed to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities. In order to meet individual student needs, the district offers a range of special education programs, supports, and services. These services range from general education classes with supplementary aids and services, general education classes with related services, general education classes with consultant teacher services, general education classes with resource room support, a 12:1:1 Basic Academic Program for grades 1-3, a 12:1:1 Basic Academic Program for middle and high school students. Morris Central School students also have access to BOCES-operated programs and related services, including the Career Pathways Program, Basic Academic Program, Behavioral Adjustment Program, Therapeutic Learning Center, Behavioral Adjustment/Basic Life Skills Program, and the Trust Program. At times, the District contracts with neighboring school districts should the need for a program our district does not offer is needed. These recommendations are made in the best interest of our students. State-approved private school placements, residential day placements, and home/hospital instruction are services also available to students under certain unique circumstances.

The Morris Central School operates resource room programs at both the elementary and secondary levels. Resource room teachers are certified in special education and may also hold certifications in other areas of instruction. The resource room program serves students needing less than 50% of the school day in individual or small group intervention settings. The program is organized in accordance with Commissioner's Regulations 200.6. Resource room programs are for the purpose of supplementing the general education or special education classroom instruction of students with disabilities who are in need of such supplemental programs. This means that instruction is not provided in place of the student's regular academic instruction. An instructional group which includes students with disabilities in a resource room program cannot exceed five students per teacher. The total number of students with disabilities assigned to a resource room teacher cannot exceed 20 students, except that the total number of students with disabilities assigned to a resource room teacher who serves students enrolled in grades seven through twelve or a multi-level middle school program operating on a period basis cannot exceed 25 students. The Commissioner may approve a variance increasing the size of a resource room instructional group and the number of students assigned to a resource room teacher.

Resource room teachers work closely with the student's general education teachers, related service providers, and paraprofessionals in order to maximize learning. Special education teachers as well as general education teachers provide input at CSE meetings and are actively involved in the development of Individualized Education Programs. At the age of 15 or during the year in which the student turns 15, students with disabilities assist in the development of his or her individual transition plan. Students, whose Individual Education Programs specify the need for testing accommodations, are able to take state and local assessments in the resource room, if needed. Curriculums in use are designed to integrate specially designed instruction with the student's general education program, meet the New York Next Generation Standards, and provide the skills necessary to become college and career ready.

The Morris Central School operates one primary level Basic Academic Program (12:1:1) that is geared towards grades 1-3. This class is designed to focus on specialized instruction for students that are significantly below grade level. Students in the program are mainstreamed with their same age peers for lunch/recess, special area classes, at times science and social studies, and for activities that the grade level is doing where the student can actively participate with same aged peers. This program welcomes out-of-district students that the CSE feels would benefit from this program.

The Morris Central School operates a middle/high school level Basic Academic Program (12:1:1) for students that require specialized instruction in reading and/or math or that are eligible for NYSAA (New York State Alternate Assessment). Students are provided academic instruction as well as opportunities to learn life skills. Work based learning involves learning activities that take place in the workplace or in the school that prepare a student to enter the workforce upon completion of high school.



Students placed in self-contained special education classes are grouped by similarity of need and within a three-year age span. The academic, management, social and physical needs of the students are considered prior to placement, and students are placed in classes in accordance with the Part 200 regulations.

The District also provides skilled nursing services to students with disabilities. The school nurse administers medication to students as per a physician's prescription. Careful documentation of medicines needed, administration dates, and dosages are also kept on file on behalf of each student.

Related services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech and language therapy are also provided to the students. Service levels are determined by the provider and agreed upon by the Committee on Special Education.

Progress for each student is reported to the parent and CSE on a quarterly basis. In the spring of each school year, recommendations for the next school year are made for each student based on progress the student has made toward satisfying the goals established by the local CSE. This is referred to as a student's annual review and is required by law. Annual review means an evaluation, conducted at least annually by the Committee on Special Education, of the status of each student with a disability and each student thought to have a disability who resides within the school district for the purpose of recommending the continuation, modification or termination of the provision of special education programs and services for the student to the board of education.

## **DESCRIPTION OF BOCES PROGRAMS**

Students who need educational programs not offered by the District are sometimes recommended to attend educational programs operated by the Otsego-Northern Catskill BOCES Innovative Programs Department. These programs are housed in a variety of locations throughout the BOCES district and are organized in accordance with Commissioner Regulations 200.6.

Programming for students with disabilities is a cooperative effort among parents, classroom teachers, special education teachers, supplemental school personnel, and related service providers. For some students with disabilities programming also includes BOCES staff. New program needs are explored every year by both the local district's special education staff and by the staff at the Otsego-Northern Catskill BOCES. Continuing program development is a result of this collaborative exploration.

The Otsego-Northern Catskill BOCES Innovative Programs department offers a variety of programs and related service options. The program titles are listed as follows. A brief description of each program is offered.



TRUST Program  
(8:1:2 Special Class Placement)

This program is a service-intensive model for students with severe behavioral and/or social/emotional difficulties. This program, housed at the Otsego Area Occupational Center, includes full-time, on-site counseling, a highly structured learning environment, intensive behavior management, and inclusion in general education classes as recommended in a student's IEP.

BEHAVIORAL ADJUSTMENT (BA) PROGRAM  
(8:1:1 Special Class Placement)

This program provides educational experiences for the student with minimal learning problems and moderate behavioral and/or social/emotional difficulties. Elementary, middle, and high school students are instructed with appropriate mainstreaming opportunities provided in general education classes per each student's IEP. Secondary students ages 14-21 have the option to combine their academic classes with CTE classes or Career Pathways.

The program includes academic instruction and counseling. Classes are staffed by certified or licensed personnel who have been trained in behavior management strategies. In addition, BOCES has an adolescent and child psychologist consultant on staff to provide direct service and to support BOCES programs.

INDIVIDUALLY PACED BASIC ACADEMIC PROGRAM (BAP)  
(15:1:1 Special Class Placement)

This program provides educational experiences for the student with moderate learning difficulties and/or minimal social/emotional difficulties who is likely to attain the academic, social and/or vocational skills necessary for success, but who cannot maintain the pace of a traditional school program.

Academic instruction and vocational training are blended at the secondary level to provide the student with the necessary skills to assist him or her in making the transition from a school environment to independent living.

CAREER PATHWAYS

This is a custom designed, multi-year vocational program for students with disabilities between the ages of 14 and 21 who have been unsuccessful in traditional academic or vocational classes. First and second year students are actively involved in a

variety of career modules that provide prevocational training, critical thinking skills, job training, and other fundamental life skills.

Career Pathways is a half-day program that can be combined with another Innovative Program or with home-school district programs. Third year students have two career strands from which to choose - Career Pathways III or a Career and Technical Education program. Students recommended for CPIII, when ready, enroll in a half-day job-training placement in the community. A job coach provides support and/or supervision as needed.

The Career Pathways Program includes job coaches who provide job and task analysis prior to student placement in the community. The program also includes a Vocational Assessment Specialist who provides Level II assessments for all students in the program. The specialist furnishes valuable information regarding student's strengths and weaknesses in vocational areas and is helpful in developing students' transition plans.

#### BASIC LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM (BLS)/BEHAVIORAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM (12:1:1+3 Special Class Placement)

The Basic Life Skills Program (BLS) program has been combined with a Behavioral Adjustment program. The program provides educational experiences for the student with limited communication skills and severe learning difficulties. Students are instructed in special classes located in BOCES buildings. Learning activities are designed to include practical applications in daily life.

#### THERAPEUTIC LEARNING CENTER (TLC)

The Therapeutic Learning Center (TLC) is a comprehensive, transitional program linking the family, school district, local mental health providers, related services, and other outside agencies.

The TLC helps special needs children who are experiencing severe emotional crises by identifying and addressing related problems at home, at school, and in the community. It also assists students in making a stable transition from a hospitalization or other placement back to the community and home school district.

The TLC is an appropriate program for special needs children and adolescents with long-term functional problems who are in crisis and can be stabilized to pre-crisis levels.

#### ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION



An Adapted Physical Education program provides instruction in the development of physical fitness, perceptual motor functions, fundamental motor skills and patterns, rhythms, individual and group games, aquatics, and leisure time recreational sports skills. Adapted Physical Education consists of modified activities and exercises that are adapted according to the interests and abilities of students who may not safely or successfully engage in activities of the regular Physical Education programs.

Adapted Physical Education services are recommended by the local Committee on Special Education and must be approved by the local Board of Education as part of the student's IEP.

### **PRIVATE SCHOOL DAY RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENTS**

There are times when neither district-operated programs nor BOCES-operated programs are able to meet individual student needs. The District then seeks appropriate educational placements, programs, and services through contracts with Pathfinder Village School and Springbrook. Both of these private facilities offer a range of programs with a low student/teacher ratio, Adapted Physical Education, and related services. These programs are able to meet the needs of students in locations that are close to the homes of our students.

Pathfinder Village is a New York State-approved educational program for children ages 5 to 21 years with developmental disabilities such as autism and Down syndrome. Pathfinder Village offers individualized programs to meet the needs of students, hands-on learning and real-life learning opportunities, and the opportunity for students to build self-confidence and independence. Springbrook provides lifelong support to people of all ages with developmental disabilities. The learning environment at Springbrook extends from a traditional classroom setting for day students. The programs available provide opportunities for the student to achieve to the best of their ability while developing self-confidence and independence.

### **RELATED SERVICES**

Within the regular education program, BOCES Special Education Program, or a district operated special education program, a student with a disability may receive related services by appropriate specialists.

These services are recommended by the Morris Committee on Special Education and are approved by the Morris Board of Education. The frequency and duration of related services is based on related service providers' evaluations, reports, and professional recommendations. Services are provided through itinerant or shared service personnel. These services may involve direct contact with a student or consultation with the classroom teacher or both depending on the specific student's needs.

Related services include the following: speech and language therapy, visually impaired, hearing impaired, counseling, assistive technology, occupational and physical therapy. A brief program description is provided for each service.

## HEARING IMPAIRED

The ONC BOCES program for the Hearing Impaired serves children with medically diagnosed physiological hearing problems. Each student's program is based upon the amount of residual hearing. Students with hearing impairment in the mainstream are encouraged to be as independent as possible in the classroom.

Deaf and hearing-impaired students develop competency in the communication modes of speech, speech reading, audition, signing, finger spelling, reading and writing. Course work is presented using a total communication approach.

BOCES teachers work individually with their students following a resource room type format. The BOCES teacher also works with the student's other teachers. This includes providing a program within the student's classroom as well as in a pullout format. The BOCES teacher also works with the student's parents in order to facilitate follow up and drill at home.

## VISUALLY IMPAIRED

The ONC BOCES program for the Visually Impaired serves students with medically diagnosed physiological eye problems. Each student's program is based upon the amount of their remaining vision, their use of functional vision skills, and a combination of other factors such as need and ability. Students with visual impairment in the mainstream are encouraged to be as independent as possible in the classroom. They are instructed in the adaptive skills that are needed to complete tasks and assignments. Examples of such adaptive skills include Braille instruction, listening skills, orientation and mobility (including concept development and body awareness), accessing computers, state stylus, and improvement of functional vision skills. It is the responsibility of the vision program to obtain and provide students with special materials such as Braille and large print textbooks, dark lined paper, Braille rulers, and talking calculators.

## SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY

The Laurens Central School, through a contract with Otsego-Northern Catskill BOCES, operates a Speech and Language Therapy Program with a full time equivalent of .60. This program serves children identified as speech/language impaired by the Committee on Special Education due to articulation disorders; phonological processing



disorders; voice impairments; hearing impairments; phonemic awareness; pragmatic/social communication/social skill disorders; oral motor skill deficits for feeding/swallowing; fluency; auditory processing; or language disorders. In addition, the program provides speech as a related service to other students with disabilities who have speech/language deficits for the reasons noted above. The speech therapist also serves as a member of the screening team and, at times, as a member of the Committee on Special Education.

Speech and language services include evaluations, diagnosis, program planning and implementation, as well as consultation.

A child may be referred for evaluation from many sources including parents, classroom teachers, or other related service providers. This referral is made to the student's home school Committee on Special Education. Speech pathologists or teachers of the speech and hearing handicapped then administer a number of tests to determine whether a speech or language problem is present. These results are then reported to the Committee on Special Education, along with specific recommendations for therapy and program.

Speech and language therapists in the ONC BOCES area serve students with a wide range of communication problems which might result from physical disabilities, emotional disabilities, learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, or other environmental variables. There are increasing numbers of students utilizing prosthetic communication systems, ranging from basic picture or word communication boards to highly sophisticated computer systems. Progress reports are made quarterly to the parents and the Committee on Special Education.

Certified therapists work with students who have severe speech problems and who have been recommended for service by the district's Committee on Special Education.

## COUNSELING

A variety of counseling services are available to students whose behavior, emotional adjustment, or interpersonal relationships are causing them (or others) distress and/or interfering with learning. A referral for counseling can be initiated by a teacher, a parent, or other support staff, or the individual student. Following an evaluation of the student's current status and needs, the final decision of whether to include counseling in the educational program, is made by the Committee on Special Education. The elementary school counselor provides counseling services to elementary and secondary special education students. The district also contracts with Cooperstown Central School for a .5 counselor. The counselor provides counseling services to students with IEPs in district-operated special education programs and to other non-classified students who need the emotional/social/behavioral support counseling provides. BOCES provides certified counselors to work with Laurens students attending BOCES programs.



## PHYSICAL THERAPY

Physical therapy as a related service is directed toward the development and maintenance of the student's physical potential for optimal functioning in all educationally related activities. These students must require this service to benefit from their IEP or to be mainstreamed in the least restrictive environment.

To include physical therapy in the student's Individual Education Plan, the procedure of referral, evaluation, and level of services, follows the standard procedures of working through the Committee on Special Education in the student's home school. A written referral and consent of the parents are required before an evaluation can be done. Additionally, a prescription from a physician requesting the physical therapy evaluation is needed. PT services are provided with a doctor's prescription.

Working with the student's education team, the physical therapist recommends the level of therapy to be included within the student's Individual Education Plan.

Direct physical therapy services may include improving gross and fine motor activities, muscle strength, cardiovascular and cardiomuscular fitness, breathing techniques, gait and ambulation, skill care, posture, management of bowel and bladder control, increasing joint mobility, minimizing the possibility of contractures, developing daily living skills, and the use of adaptive equipment.

Physical therapy plays an essential role in the education program of students with disabilities by assisting them in reaching their highest physical potential, thus enabling them to benefit more fully from their educational programs.

At this time, the District is contracting with the Access Therapy Group to provide physical therapy services.

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Occupational therapy uses a variety of service delivery patterns. As a related service, occupational therapy is provided both on a direct and indirect basis. The therapist who provides training or consultation to teachers who work with a student on a regular basis is providing "indirect services." Services, which require the occupational therapist to plan and implement intervention with the student, are classified as a "direct service."

A referral may be requested to receive occupational therapy services by any member of the student's educational team, the district's Committee on Special Education, parents, a legal guardian, a physician or the agency responsible for the student. A written request for the evaluation must be given to the local Committee on Special Education. With approval from the Committee on Special Education, written parental consent, and the physician's prescription for an evaluation, a New York State Licensed Occupational

Therapist completes an Occupational Therapy Education Evaluation. Results are reported to the Committee on Special Education, along with specific program recommendations.

It may be determined that the student does not require any level of occupational therapy services to support the education program. However, when an educationally related therapy program is recommended to meet the student's individual needs, the therapist proposes a level of service consistent with educating the child in the "least restrictive educational environment." The recommendation may remain at the direct service level, or may progress to indirect service. All services are provided only with a doctor's prescription.

The occupational therapist incorporates into individually planned therapy programs some of the following skills: correct movement patterns, perceptual motor skills, fine motor skills, sensory integration, self-help skills, developing muscle strength, and range of motion. Using occupational therapy techniques, the student with special needs learns to function independently to his/her greatest ability.

The Morris Central School District currently contracts with the Gilbertsville-Mount Upon Central School District for occupational therapy services.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

School psychologists provide precise information on a student's academic, psychological, and emotional status. Psychologists administer a variety of individual educational tests to help teachers better understand the learning needs of the student.

The school psychologist is a mandated member of the Committee on Special Education and attends committee meetings as designated in the Part 200 regulations.

## SUPPORTS FOR TEACHERS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS

A conference day for all elementary and secondary teaching staff is devoted annually to discuss the needs of individual students and to review Individual Education Plans to ensure proper implementation. IEPs are disseminated as per the Part 200 regulations to all teachers working with students with disabilities in an online format.

The Morris Central School District supports high quality intensive personnel development for teachers who work with children with disabilities. Personnel development helps to ensure that teachers continue to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to help students meet developmental goals, and to the maximum extent possible, the learning standards established by New York State for all children.



## EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Morris Central School collaborates with neighboring school districts to provide a twelve-month special education program for students determined to be eligible in accordance with the Commissioner's Regulations. The purpose of all extended school year programs is to prevent substantial regression. Substantial regression is defined as a student's inability to maintain developmental levels due to a loss of skill or knowledge during the months of July and August of such severity as to require an inordinate period of review at the beginning of the school year to reestablish and maintain IEP goals and objectives mastered at the end of the previous school year. The summer program operates for at least 30 days during the months of July and August, except for those programs providing related services only. Related services are provided with the frequency and duration specified in the student's Individualized Education Program.

## TRANSITION PLANNING

Transition services as defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act means a coordinated set of activities for a student designed within an outcome-oriented process, that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living or community participation. The activities must be based upon the individual student's needs; take into account the student's preferences and interests; and must include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

In addition to defining transition services, IDEA requires that such services must be specifically addressed in a student's IEP. The federal definition of IEP has been amended by New York State to include:

A statement of the needed transition services including, when appropriate, a statement of interagency responsibilities or linkages (or both) before the student leaves the school setting. The federal government has designated 15 as the age when a transition plan must be developed while the state of New York has determined the transition plan to be implemented no later than the age of 14. The plan must be updated annually.

In order to create and implement this IEP, parents, the student, adult service agencies, and the CSE must jointly consider the total life needs of the student and identify transition services which both support the individual needs of the student in school and after the child leaves school.

The IEP must be outcome oriented. The educational program that includes transition services will prepare students for their roles as successful members of the adult community. Once the CSE has targeted adult outcomes/goals, the annual goals,

objectives and activities to reach these goals incrementally are then identified. Transition planning and services need to look comprehensively at preparing students for adult participation, in the areas of: recreation and leisure activities, legal and advocacy needs, financial and income considerations, personal skills and residential options, medical and health maintenance, employment preparation and options, post-secondary or continuing education, transportation accessibility, and other support needs.

Transition requirements are addressed at the local level through promoting involvement of students and families in the transition process; building interagency linkages to facilitate service coordination; developing comprehensive assessments of student's interests, abilities and special needs; developing comprehensive and functional curricula.

### ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Federal and state regulations now mandate that children with disabilities have access to technology services that assist disabled students in education, communication, mobility and independence. The need for such services must be discussed at each student's IEP meeting. This service also includes consultation to classroom teachers, as well as direct services to students. A technology specialist will provide expertise in evaluations and assessments of educational technologies for each teacher and student and assist in the acquisition of a variety of assistive devices, specialized hardware/peripherals, and software to provide the appropriate computer access for each student.

Some examples of the specific needs of students with disabilities using technology may include:

Laptop computers, Speech-to-Text software, Text-to-Speech software

Large pressure-sensitive keyboards for the student with physical disabilities who has deficiencies in fine motor strength.

Enlarged keyboard and on screen items for students with visual impairment.

Specialized software and graphics tables to assist a preschool or a moderately intellectual/multiple disabled student with cause and effect instruction (a prerequisite to successful computer-assisted instruction, and/or life skill training).

### MATERIALS AVAILABLE IN ALTERNATIVE FORMAT

The Morris Central School District will ensure that all instructional materials to be used in the school district are available in a usable alternative format for each student with a disability in accordance with the student's education needs and course selections at the same time that such materials are available to non-disabled students. Alternative format is defined as any medium or format for the presentation of instructional materials, other than a traditional print textbook, that is needed as an accommodation for a student



with a disability enrolled in the school district, including but not limited to Braille, large print, open and closed captioned, audio, or an electronic file. Any electronic files will be compatible with at least one alternative format conversion software program that is appropriate to meet the needs of the individual student.

The District will give preference in the purchase of the instructional materials it has selected for its students to those vendors who agree to provide such instructional materials in alternative formats.

The District will ensure that, when an electronic file is provided, it will convert to an accessible format for use by the student.

Prior to ordering new instructional materials, the District will contact the Director of Instructional Support Services to identify the needs of students with disabilities residing in the district for alternative format materials.

The District will ensure that ordering timelines for both alternative format materials and regular format materials are strictly adhered to so that materials are available to both disabled and non-disabled students at the time they are needed for instruction.

The District will initiate without delay the ordering of materials in alternative format for those students requiring such formats for students who move into the school district during the school year.

## **PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION**

The Morris Central School Board of Education has established a Committee on Preschool Education to assist in the identification, evaluation and provision of services to children with disabilities ages 3 and 4. The Committee on Preschool Special Education acts to assure the rights and due process protections designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act for preschool children with disabilities.

The Morris Central School, in compliance with Part 200 of the Commissioner's Regulations, has taken the following measures to implement the law and regulations:

1. Preschool children with disabilities are included in the register of students with disabilities maintained by the Laurens Board of Education.
2. The Board of Education has developed administrative practices and procedures to ensure that each preschool child with a disability has the opportunity to participate in appropriate preschool special education programs. These procedures are on file for public inspection.
3. The Board of Education has appointed a Committee on Preschool Special Education Committee (7/04) comprised of the following members:



\*Lindsey E. Gifford, Chairperson, and the local education agency representative who is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially-designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities who is knowledgeable about the general curriculum and about the availability of resources of the local educational agency and the individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results.

\*Parent Representative

\*A professional who participated in the evaluation of the child for any meetings prior to the initial recommendation for a child for whom services are first being sought.

\*Otsego County Representative, a person from the municipality who is an appropriately certified or licensed professional.

\*An appropriately licensed or certified professional from the Department of Health's Early Intervention Program for a child in transition from early intervention programs and services. This professional must attend all meetings of the CPSE conducted prior to the child's initial receipt of services.

\*The child's regular education teacher (if the child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment).

\*The child's special education teacher, or where appropriate, at least one special education service provider.

\*The child's parent(s)

4. Upon request, the Board of Education will provide the parents of a preschool child suspected of having a disability with a list of programs that have been approved by the State Education Department to conduct evaluations.
5. Upon consent of the parent, the Board of Education will arrange for the program provider that the parent has selected to conduct an evaluation.
6. Upon completion of the evaluation, within 30 days of obtaining parental consent, the CPSE will make a recommendation to the Board of Education. If the child is determined to be eligible, the CPSE may recommend for the Board's approval programs and services identified in accordance with Section 200.16(i) of the Regulations of the Commissioner. The CPSE will recommend a program on the list approved by the State Education Department that is appropriate for the child.
7. The CPSE will recommend for the Board of Education's approval a program,

public or private, from the SED list of approved preschool education programs.

8. If the child is receiving regular education services in a program approved or licensed by an appropriate governmental agency and the child requires an itinerant related service, the CPSE will recommend such an itinerant, related, service from a list of providers maintained by the municipality. In its recommendation to the Board, the Committee will identify the location at which the itinerant service will be provided. If the preschool child requires two or more itinerant services, the Committee will recommend a site or program.
9. With 30 days of the recommendation of the CPSE, the Board will make a determination and arrange for the preschool child to receive services. The Board will notify the parent, the appropriate municipality, the designated program, and the Commissioner of its determination.
10. The CPSE will complete a SED, STAC-1 form requesting special education, itinerant services(s), and maintenance, if appropriate, and sign the STAC-1 form attesting to the approval of the recommended services by the Board of Education. The CPSE will retain a copy for its records and submit the remainder of the copies to the municipality. It is the responsibility of the municipality to complete the transportation section of STAC-1 form, sign the attestation on the back, retain a copy for their records and submit copies to the education service provider and the SED. This STAC-1 form will serve as notification of determination of placement to the municipality. The Preschool Student Evaluation Summary Report Form will be completed by the evaluator and be provided to the child's parents, members of the CPSE, and the county prior to the CPSE meeting.
11. The CPSE will develop Individualized Education Programs for three and four year old children with disabilities. The CPSE will review, at least annually, the status of each preschool child receiving services within the district.

Currently, all preschool disabled students identified by the Morris CPSE are receiving special education itinerant services at the Head Start site in Morris, or the Prekindergarten program located in the Morris Central School. Preschool students may also receive special education itinerant services within his/her home. Kids Unlimited and Family Enrichment Network are additional early intervention programs for infants, toddlers and preschoolers with disabilities or other special needs. Whispering Pines Preschool also provides preschool students with a disability services that meet his/her educational needs. Individual programs are developed jointly among educators, parents and therapists and are tailored to each child's strengths and needs. Kids' Unlimited and Family Enrichment Network and all itinerant service providers are state-approved.



Children with special education needs ages 3-5 who require intensive levels of service are usually at Springbrook. These students are served in one of three classrooms on site. Each class is available 5 days a week for at least 5 hours per day. Small classes of 6-8 children are staffed by certified special education teachers and trained supplemental school personnel.

Services offered by Springbrook include:

- \*Therapy – Speech/Language; Physical; Occupational
- \*Individualized Education Program
- \*Consultation
- \*Information and Referral
- \*Advocacy
- \*Evaluations

Coordinators and staff work closely with parents to provide the most appropriate medical, educational and social services for each child.

They make follow-up visits to subsequent classes and attend Committee on Preschool Special Education meetings.

Otsego County, as well as a host of agencies in other counties, is also an evaluator for children referred to the Committee on Preschool Special Education. Otsego County assumes the financial responsibility for all evaluations and programs provided to children with disabilities at the preschool level. The District, however, is responsible for locating all service providers. Though the County bears the cost of the services, it is ultimately the responsibility of the Board of Education to ensure the delivery of all services and transportation recommended in a child's IEP.

### **BOE Policies to Ensure Classroom Space for Special Education Programs**

The Morris Central School Board of Education is currently providing space for 5.0 resource room/consultant teacher programs, one full-time teacher serves students in the elementary school through the provision of resource room services and direct consultant teacher services. Three full-time teachers serve students primarily in grades 7-12. One of these teachers is a secondary resource room teacher, while the other two teachers' schedules are mixed between teaching a special class in one or more subject areas and providing resource room services. One full-time teacher serves as the Basic Academic Program (12:1:1) teacher. Space is also being provided for counseling services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language therapy.

Mainstreaming opportunities are provided to all students with disabilities as designated in the IEP and whenever appropriate. The Morris Central School staff has participated in in-service training sessions to familiarize them with mainstreaming and inclusion.

The Special Education Department and the many children and parents it serves are thankful to the Administration and the Board of Education for its commitment to the education of students with disabilities within the Laurens Central School District.

Date Plan was Adopted by Board of Education

The Special Education Plan will be presented for adoption by the Board of Education at the July 11, 2024 meeting.