

Timberlane Regional School District	Policy Code: ADA
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SPECIAL EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The School District's Philosophy of Education applies to all students of the (Preschool-grade 12) Timberlane Regional School District. The Board sets forth this supplemental statement due to the nature and complexity of special education to address special considerations relative to students with disabilities.

The goal of education is to develop successful members of society. "Success" is defined as the ability to live a satisfying, self-sufficient, and productive life, contributing to society in accordance with one's unique talents and abilities. To this end, the District offers a variety of learning experiences designed to encourage students to become successful citizens and to develop their full potential.

Students with disabilities have a wider range of learning needs than their non-disabled peers. The District, therefore, provides more highly specialized programs of instruction so that students with disabilities will be afforded the same degree of full educational opportunity to reach their potential as non-disabled students.

As with non-disabled students, the Board recognizes that the outcome of participation in appropriate learning experiences is based in part on the degree to which a student chooses to take advantage of those opportunities to learn and grown.

The School District recognizes and willingly accepts responsibility for educating students with disabilities. Its goal is to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to each student with disability under its jurisdiction. "Appropriate" is defined as the type, level, and amount of service determined to be necessary by each student's IEP (Individual Education Plan) Team acting in accordance with the policies and procedures set forth by Federal, State, and District authorities.

Just as with its regular educational programs, the District is dedicated to providing quality special education programs and services.

The heart of the special education planning process is each student's IEP Team, which has the responsibility for making diagnostic and individual program planning decisions for each student with a disability. The Team, considering information from a variety of sources, determines the meaning of "appropriate" programming, and sets the balance between remedial instruction and the development of compensatory skills. The District strives to set forth a collaborative tone of communication between the parents and the School District during the often complicated process of diagnosing a student's special

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education needs and planning to meet those needs. Because the parents of students with disabilities are members of their child’s IEP Team, Team meetings are a major setting for interaction with the School District. The Board is, therefore, committed to the development of responsible, well-trained, and professionally competent IEP Teams.

In its efforts to achieve the goal of providing appropriate learning experiences for each student with a disability, the Board also recognizes the importance of:

- Consistency in identification, evaluation, programming and placement procedures;
- The provision of a continuous program of information for parents with respect to identification, evaluation, programming and placement criteria, local policies, procedures, programs, State and Federal requirements, procedural safeguards, participation in State and District-wide assessment, and the protection of confidential information
- Providing students with disabilities full educational opportunities and access to the regular educational curricula in the least restrictive environment (LRE) possible.
- The provision of a continuous program of teacher training and support to ensure that the professional staff has the skills necessary to meet a wide variety of educational needs for students with disabilities;
- A continuum of educational services on the local level so that students with disabilities can be educated with non-disabled students in typical settings to the maximum extent appropriate.

Finally, the District has goals for students with disabilities in addition to those listed in its general philosophy statement. These are that each student with a disability will be afforded full educational opportunity and be encouraged to acquire:

- A strong sense of dignity and self-worth, coupled with a recognition and respect for the dignity and self-worth of others;
- An understanding of his/her disability in terms of abilities, potential and limitations; and
- A desire to achieve as much independence and self-sufficiency as possible.