INTEGRATING SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS INTO REGULAR CLASSES

All students with special needs should be educated, to the maximum extent possible, in regular education classrooms.

Placement decisions should be made by a team, consisting of educators and parents, with the focus being on the strengths and needs of the student.

The determination of how a child is educated should be made on an individual basis.

A continuum of special education services should be available.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS:

MAINTREAMING
The selective placement of special education students in one or more “regular education classes.”

1. The student must be academically capable and be responsible to complete assigned work in order to be mainstreamed.
2. Students who are mainstreamed may be provided with accommodations as would any regular education student in order to help facilitate success.

INCLUSION
The commitment to educate each student, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom he or she would otherwise attend. It involves bringing the support to the student (rather than moving the student to the service) and requires only that the student will benefit from being in the class (rather than having to keep up with the other students).

1. Each included student has an Individualized Educational Program, which specifies what she or he needs to learn; that may mean the student will not be expected to learn the same things as the other students.
2. Heterogeneous grouping, team teaching, cooperative learning and peer tutoring are the primary methods used in inclusion classrooms.
3. While the determination of what supplementary services are needed, may be unique depending on the situation. The most common supports include consultation and training for the regular classroom teacher to have regular access to support staff who can help the teacher find equipment or procedures, which permit all children in the class to benefit from the instruction provided.
4. In team teachings situations, the responsibilities of the regular education teacher generally involve presentation of material, conferring with the learning support teacher
on upcoming lessons, projects, tests, etc., and providing the learning support teacher with a copy of lesson plans, presentation notes, tests, etc.

5. In team teaching situations, the learning support teacher responsibilities with the included students involve grading progress, dealing with behaviors, modifying tests, materials or assignments, and aiding with the completion of assignments.

6. When necessary, students may leave the classroom for such things as completion of assignments, test taking, reinforcement of concepts, help with reports or projects, etc.

**DIRECT INSTRUCTION**

When the needs of an exceptional student cannot be met through mainstreaming or inclusion, the student is served through direct instruction. Here, students with similar needs are educated in a classroom setting separate from the regular classroom.

1. The goal for students in the direct instruction classes is the transition to a less restrictive educational setting such as the inclusion or mainstreaming programs and, eventually, return the regular education program.

2. The emphasis for students in direct instruction classes is the improvement of academic, study and organizational skills along with the development of independent behaviors.

3. As students leave the elementary program and move on to the Middle and High School learning support programs, they will have available to them a full range of services designed to meet their needs.

A student may receive instruction in any one, two, or each of the programs described above. The determination of what the students program entails is made by participants at the Individualized Educational Program conference.

All special education students should be mainstreamed (integrated) to a maximum degree possible to provide the least restrictive environment for their education in the school of the Susquehanna Township School District.

**NON-ACADEMIC CLASSES**

All special education students should be integrated into homerooms and non-academic programs as soon as the school year begins. (Non-academic subjects shall be defined as, but not limited to, the following: library, physical education, art, music, home economics, industrial arts). All students should be placed within groups that are appropriate for their abilities and/or chronological age.

**ACADEMIC CLASSES**

All special education students should be placed in the school’s academic programs whenever they have demonstrated awareness to handle such work. Any student that was successfully integrated into a regular classroom or academic program in the preceding school year should be automatically placed in that particular subject during the current school year.

**NEW PLACEMENTS**

When the student has not received prior academic instruction from the regular classroom teacher, it shall be the Director of Pupil Services responsibility to serve as the liaison between the special
education teacher and the building principal (or designee) to insure that such integration does take place.

**PROBLEMS WITH A PLACEMENT**
Whenever a regular classroom teacher is having difficulty with a special education student, it shall be his/her responsibility to contact the special education teacher immediately. The special education teacher has the responsibility to supply the regular classroom teacher with the appropriate recommendations.

Whenever there is difficulty in supplying appropriate recommendations, the special education teacher should contact the Director of Pupil Services.

If the regular classroom teacher feels that the child can no longer cope with integration, he/she should notify the building principal (or designee). If the building principal (or designee) concurs with the teacher’s recommendation, he/she shall notify the special education teacher and the Director.

If the recommendation is that integration is to be discontinued, it shall be the responsibility of the special education teacher to arrange for an IEP conference.

Any changes in integration should be noted on the IEP. The date of change(s) should be documented on this form. The change(s) in integration should take place within five days after this conference.