

## Special Education at the Ferndale Area School District:

The K4-6 building has an outstanding inclusion program. Students are included for Science, Social Studies, Math, English, and Reading/Language Arts with appropriate adaptations and modifications. The Elementary building (K4-6) utilizes a developmental reading model. Students in K4-1st grade participate in reading instruction within their homeroom settings. However, students in grades 2-6 are grouped homogeneously to be instructed on their individual level. Teachers are trained to administer the DRA-2 (Developmental Reading Assessment) to students, so they are placed accurately into classrooms that will meet their individual needs. The District employs a full-time Reading Specialist along with a full-time paraprofessional (who is a certified teacher). The Reading Specialist and the paraprofessional work collaboratively with classroom teachers to provide a guided reading environment to support students who have various reading needs within the regular education classroom setting. They also work collaboratively within the kindergarten and first grade classrooms to offer support to the classroom teachers along with expertise in the area of reading. There is a special education teacher at the elementary level to provide support for students who need Autistic and/or Emotional Support(s). Each Learning Support classroom has a full-time paraprofessional who have all been certified as highly qualified. The K4-6 building utilizes a Family Support Program, with a dedicated teacher, to help at-risk students. The Family Support Program serves as the vehicle through which interventions are implemented in the regular education classroom, before referrals are made to the special education office. This program targets students who are academically, socially, or behaviorally at-risk and provides adaptations and modifications to the curriculum that are viable alternatives to the multidisciplinary evaluation process, in conjunction with a strong parent communication component.

Inclusion practices are also evident throughout the Jr./Sr. High School building. Co-teaching environments have been established in some of the Science, Social Studies, English, Reading, and Math courses. These teaching environments allow Special Education students to participate with their non-disabled peers in almost all educational situations. There is strong collaboration between the regular education teachers and the special education staff. The District employs two highly qualified paraprofessionals, as well as four highly qualified Special Education Teachers that are utilized in the regular education classroom to support inclusion at the High School level. Many of the high school students that receive Special Education Service also attend the Greater Johnstown Career and Technology Center on a part-time basis. The Special Education staff (at Ferndale) and the GJCTC staff have built a positive working relationship and collaborate on a regular basis to ensure success of the students that attend both schools. Ferndale Area employs a Transition Coordinator, who meets with all students aged 14 and above to ensure that post secondary goals and career aspirations are addressed. The Transition Coordinator is responsible for meeting with students either individually or in a small group setting to ensure that the transition portion of the students' IEP is accurate and meets all requirements set forth in the Chapter 14 Regulations. The Transition Coordinator is a certified Special Education teacher utilized in the co-teaching environment at the Jr./Sr. High School. The District employs a full-time Emotional Support/Autistic Support teacher who is dedicated to working with students in grades 7-12 in need of those services.

The District employs a full-time Coordinator of Special Education, a full-time School Psychologist, a Special Education Secretary, and a full-time Speech and Language Therapist. There are three Guidance Counselors (one at the Elementary level, one at the Middle level, and one at the High School level) to provide counseling services to students in the district. The District works closely with outside service providers to monitor and ensure appropriate programming for our students being serviced. Special Education teachers, along with the Special Education Coordinator and School Psychologist, collaborate on a regular basis with out of district placements.