

The Public Schools of Dover and Sherborn

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Special Education Team Considerations

Assistive Technology (SE.35)

Assessment, Identification and Training for Students with Disabilities

The IEP team must consider the assistive technology needs of all students with disabilities. Many students with disabilities have difficulties with reading, writing, and math. Some children have problems with vision, hearing, listening and/or communicating. Others have physical, mobility, and motor problems. Assistive technology helps children use their strengths to compensate or "work around" weaknesses caused by the disability. Assistive technology includes "devices" and "services." The IEP team makes decisions about assistive technology devices and services based on a student's unique needs so that he/she/they can be more confident and independent. The law requires schools to use assistive technology devices and services to maximize accessibility for children with disabilities.

When a team is considering whether specific technology will be required in order to assist a student with access to the general education curriculum or participate more fully in the school day, the team may request an assistive technology evaluation. In most cases, members of the student's Evaluation team will collaborate on this evaluation. This evaluation may include input from

the Special Educator, a General Educator, the Speech and Language Pathologist, the Occupational Therapist, or the Physical Therapist.

Occasionally, the evaluation team may feel that there is more technological expertise required for the evaluation than they have immediately available to them. In that case, a request is made to the Administrator of Special Education for an Assistive Technology Evaluation to be contracted. The Administrator of Special Education will assist the Evaluation team in making the determination as to the evaluator or agency to complete such an evaluation. An assistive technology evaluation may include a functional evaluation of the student in school or at home. The evaluation will be considered in the development of the IEP.

Assistive Technology is any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability.

Assistive Technology service is any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. Such term includes:

- a) the evaluation
- b) purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices
- c) selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing
- d) coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices
- e) training or technical assistance for such child, or the family of such child
- f) training or technical assistance for professionals

Assistive Technology Training

The Public Schools of Dover and Sherborn will provide assistive technology training for the teachers, employers, service providers, the child, and family when identified. The student's teachers may need training so they know how to use a device. The student and the family may need assistive technology services so they can learn to use a device. Additional service providers or individuals substantially involved in the life of the student may also require training in the identified technology. Assistive technology services, including training, may be written in the student's IEP.

Bullying (SE 18A)

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Whenever the IEP Team evaluation indicates that a student's disability affects social skills development, or when the student's disability makes him or her vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing, the IEP must address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. (G.L. c. 71B, §3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010.) For students identified with a disability on the autism spectrum, the IEP Team must consider and specifically address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. (G.L. c. 71B, §3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010.)

Because the IEP serves as a vehicle for improving the educational experience and achievements of a student with disabilities, the IEP Team uses a variety of information sources, including evaluations, assessment information, and its discussions of the student's present level of educational performance and social acumen, to inform the development of the IEP. The IEP Team's discussion focuses comprehensively on the student's educational needs and on the student's overall involvement in the school, including participation in the general curriculum and in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities. In this process, the IEP Team considers the student's disability and the impact of the disability on the student's interaction and communication with others.

- For all three groups of students with disabilities named in the bullying prevention and intervention law, the IEP Team must consider how the student's disability affects his/her learning the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. Many students will receive support in developing appropriate skills and proficiencies through general instruction. In such cases, the Team should include in the IEP any supports the student needs to learn the needed skills through the existing curriculum. As appropriate, the Team should include in the IEP needed accommodations to the general education program, or goals and objectives and special education services related to student's learning the necessary skills.
- Because of the nature of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), progress in positive social skill development is already a likely focus within the IEP of every student with ASD. Social skills instruction should be at the student's skill level and appropriate for his/her age. The focus of the IEP in relation to the bullying

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intervention and prevention law will be to aid the student in accessing social and emotional learning to handle more effectively challenges in his/her academic, social, and communication realms.

- IEP Teams should consider ways that the age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention and intervention incorporated into the school's general curriculum already assists a student with a disability in these areas and should reflect this discussion in the IEP. As noted earlier, the IEP should address those skills and proficiencies that the Team has determined the student would be unlikely to learn solely within the general curricular program, or any supports the student needs to make learning possible in the general curricular program.
- IEP Teams should consider whether modifications or services are needed for students with all types and severities of disabilities to be involved and progress in the school's or district's bullying prevention and intervention program that is incorporated into the school's or district's general curriculum. Also, Teams should ensure that students can participate fully in all procedures related to the reporting and investigation of bullying incidents. The district must ensure that the IEP Team includes a member of the school's staff who is knowledgeable about the school's bullying prevention and intervention general education curriculum when those issues are discussed at a Team meeting.
- Incorporated within the Team meeting process and the Team's discussion of a student's skills and proficiencies to respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing may also be education for families about the district's bullying prevention and intervention plan, the general education curriculum the school is using to instruct all students about bullying prevention and intervention, and the reporting mechanisms that are in place within the school.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention, ASD

For students identified with a disability on the autism spectrum, the IEP Team must consider and specifically address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. (G.L. c. 71B, §3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010.)

- **Self-Awareness:** accurately assessing one's feelings, interests, values, and strengths/abilities, and maintaining a well-grounded sense of self-confidence.
- **Self-Management:** regulating one's emotions to handle stress, control impulses, and persevere in overcoming obstacles; setting personal and academic goals and then monitoring one's progress toward achieving them; and expressing emotions constructively.
- **Social Awareness:** taking the perspective of and empathizing with others; recognizing and appreciating individual and group similarities and differences; identifying and following societal standards of conduct; and recognizing and using family, school, and community resources.
- **Relationship Skills:** establishing and maintaining healthy and rewarding relationships based on cooperation; resisting inappropriate social pressure; preventing, managing, and resolving interpersonal conflict; and seeking help when needed.
- **Responsible Decision-making:** making decisions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, appropriate standards of conduct, respect for others, and likely consequences of various actions; applying decision-making skills to academic and social situations; and contributing to the well-being of one's school and community.

Equal Opportunity (SE48)

In the Public School of Dover and Sherborn, all students receiving special education, regardless of placement, have an equal opportunity to participate in and, if appropriate, receive credit for the vocational, supportive, or remedial services that may be available as part of the general education program as well as the non-academic and extracurricular programs of the school.

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Programs, services, and activities include, but are not limited to:

- Art and music;
- Work study and employment opportunities;
- Counseling services available at all levels in the district;
- Health services;
- Transportation;
- Recess and physical education, including adapted physical education
- Athletics and recreational activities;
- School-sponsored groups or clubs;
- Meals.

Through the IEP team process, the Public Schools of Dover and Sherborn assures that all students are able to participate in, and if applicable, receive credit for, all vocational, supportive, and remedial courses and services that are available to non-disabled peers as part of the general education curriculum and overall life of the school. IEP teams determine if services or supports (such as transportation or staffing) are needed for an individual student with a disability to access any educational or nonacademic activities.

As determined by the IEP Team, the district has arranged and provided adult support to special education students to participate in school sponsored after school activities such as:

- Participation on and off the stage of plays and musicals
- Participation on varsity sports teams
- Participation in afterschool clubs