



Shrewsbury Public Schools

Office of Special Education
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Special Education ~ Shrewsbury High School Report to the Shrewsbury School Committee April 25, 2012

Introduction

Shrewsbury High School supports approximately 1,640 students in grades 9-12. The high school special education department provides service to 223 students through their Individual Education Program (IEP) in the least restrictive environments. This is approximately 14% of the high school population.

The department consists of one director, one transition specialist, one speech and language pathologist, two school psychologists, two life skills teachers, two nurses, 7.5 special educators, and 27.4 paraprofessionals. The staff works in conjunction with the regular education staff, guidance counselors and administration to ensure all students are part of the culture and life of the school.

Students have a variety of educational experiences available to them when they transition to the high school. Services can include a range of inclusion support in the general education classrooms to more intensive support in a life skills classroom.

Once a student turns eighteen, a “688 referral” is submitted to the state agency that is most likely to support the student once they graduate or turn twenty-two. Between the ages of 18 and 22, an eligible student can continue their special education services. These services include transition activities that assist the student in preparing for adulthood once they leave high school.

There are two laws that provide very different types of transition requirements for youth with disabilities. These different requirements can be confusing as they both are called “transition” and they involve many of the same participants (parents, school district, human service agency representatives, and the young adult); however, the two transition processes do very different things.

1) **IDEA** -- The federal special education law, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) contains a number of requirements related to transition, which focus on the **school district’s** obligation to provide transition services **before** a young adult graduates or turns 22 and

exits special education. These are school services that will help ensure that young adults will live, work, and/or go to post-secondary school as independently as possible when they leave public school.

2) **688** -- Chapter 688 (commonly referred to as the “turning 22 law”) establishes a planning process which identifies services or supports which may be needed through the adult service system once the student has graduated or turns age 22 and special education entitlements have terminated. If more than one agency seems appropriate, the 688 referral form, copies of the current IEP and the most recent assessments should be submitted to the Bureau of Transitional Planning. As part of the 688 process, an adult human service state agency will work with 688-eligible individuals to develop an Individual Transition Plan (ITP). 688 **IS** designed for the young adult with severe disabilities who, if provided appropriate support services, will continue to learn and develop throughout his/her life. Chapter 688 is **NOT** a continuation of special education, nor is it an entitlement that guarantees services after age 22. It is not intended for the many young adults who have received special education services and are now able to begin competitive employment, continue on to college and lead independent lives as adults.

The types of services provided through the special education department at SHS are outlined below.

Special Education Services

Inclusion Support: Special education teachers or instructional aides, who support mainstreamed students in their regular education classes, provide Inclusion support. Supports can range from assistance with organizational strategies, reading, writing, and math within the context of the curriculum being delivered. Students are assigned to supported classes, based upon their level of need and the service delivery of their Individual Education Program.

Learning Skills: Students are assigned one or two learning skills classes daily to develop learning and compensatory strategies that will enhance the progress that they make in their general education courses. Compensatory strategies are simply ways to use one’s strengths to compensate for one’s weaknesses. For example, reading compensatory strategies are thinking strategies that empower the reader to have a reflective cognitive learning style that renders interactive and meaningful dialogue between the reader and the printed page. Other areas addressed include test taking, study skills, and an emphasis on self-advocacy. Students are assigned a skills class, the teacher of which becomes that student’s liaison. Students in Learning Skills classes also work on transition skills with their liaisons. These include, but are not limited to: resume writing, career exploration, aptitude and interest surveys, and self-advocacy skills. Students earn elective credits for their participation in a Learning Skills class. A new program was introduced for students to have further exposure to life beyond high school. *Career Cruisers* was introduced to the students. This is a web-based program that enables the student to develop a portfolio of their interests, aptitudes and abilities. The program provides opportunities to complete interest inventories, complete resumes, explore colleges, majors, and jobs in the community through virtual interview and tours. Students can share their progress with their

parents as the program can be accessed from any computer. The student has access to their specific files throughout their high school experience.

Life Skills Program: There are fifteen students who receive their special education services through the life skills program. The focus of this program is to provide an age appropriate, functional and inclusive education for students with moderate to intensive special needs. The curriculum includes reading, writing, math, functional life skills (community based, work based, and independent living skills), activities of daily living (home based living skills), and pre-vocational training. Science and social studies are taught either in the life skills program or in the regular education setting with modifications and support from either a special education teacher or paraprofessional. Integration into the regular education setting is determined by the student's IEP.

Twice weekly, students are involved in a community based learning experience in which they are transported to local stores. Prior to any trip to the community the students prepare and plan for the trip. If they are going to the grocery store, a meal is planned, a shopping list and budget developed, and following the trip the students prepare the meal. Other trips are planned to purchase specific items at the pharmacy or the local department store. These trips are coordinated with parents so that the students may make meaningful purchases.

I.C.E. (Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment) Grant:

Shrewsbury High School participated in the I.C.E. Grant during the 2011- 2012 school year. The grant allowed two SHS students to participate in courses at Quinsigamond Community College, where they were provided gym memberships, participated in workshops, and also did career and interest inventories through QCC's online program. One of the students worked several hours per week on the QCC campus, as part of the grant program, as well. The students were provided lunch tickets so that they could participate in the campus life every week.

Mobile On Site Vocational Education (M.O.V.E): The thirteen high school students in Project M.O.V.E. have been recommended through the TEAM process and attend classes at the high school for part of the day and then attend the M.O.V.E. program for the remainder of the day. These students typically need direction in the areas of social/personal behavior, classroom achievement and/or appropriate attendance levels. M.O.V.E. is an alternative vocational training program and it is a site-based training in the food trade area. An additional job in the laundry was recently added to the on-site vocational opportunities for our students. The primary goal is to help students gain vocational skills and develop appropriate work behaviors to better equip them for the world of work. Students who participate in M.O.V.E. earn elective credits for their participation.

In-School Work Experience: The In-School Work Experience program provides each student enrolled the opportunity to have a hands-on work experience in various skill areas. The intent of this high school program is not to train the student for a specific job, but to build and master general employable skills.

These skills include following directions, responsibility and time management, completing a task, troubleshooting and quality of work. These are all areas that students must master to possess a job.

Summer School: Students who participate in the SHS special education summer school program are eligible for that service through the IEP Process. Eligibility is determined by calculating whether or not the student would substantially regress in the areas identified in their IEP.

The special education academic summer program is offered half days for four weeks. Students work on basic academics such as reading, writing, and math. The purpose of the academic program is to maintain the skills the student has acquired so they are ready to return to school in the fall with minimal regression. Many students work on their SHS summer reading requirements, as part of their summer program.

In addition, as part of the academic program, some students continue to participate in the M.O.V.E. Program two days per week.

The Life Skills Program has a summer component that is six weeks long. Some of the students attend summer program for half days and others attend full days. The student's I.E.P determines the length of time that a student participates in the summer program. Students in the Life Skills Summer Program participate in academics in the areas of reading, math, and writing, project-based learning, Independent Living Skills and Daily Living Skills. The students continue to be transported twice weekly to community based sites.