

# The Solvay UFSD

## District Plan For Special Education

2013-14 to  
2014-15

2013 Prepared by:  
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# **Nature and Scope of Special Education Programs and Services**

## Mission Statement of Solvay UFSD

We develop confident, continual learners who are  
caring community members

### **I. Introduction**

The Solvay Union Free School District is committed to educating students with disabilities within its own school buildings. The Committee on Special Education and Committee on Pre School Special Education recommend programs and services that provide for a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment and based on the needs of each student. All school aged children are provided with the opportunity to participate in curricular and extracurricular activities and programs of the school district.

### **II. Least Restrictive Environment**

- a. In accordance with the NYS Commissioner of Education Regulations Part 200.1(cc) and in accordance to Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the district must provide each student with a disability an educational program in the Least Restrictive Environment.
- b. IDEA provides an assurance that 'to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular education classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.'
- c. The Solvay UFSD strives to provide educational programs for all students within their home school buildings and in the Least Restrictive Environment.

### **III. Screening**

All NYS school districts are required to screen all new entrants to the district to determine those students who are suspected of either being gifted or of having a disability. Each school building in Solvay has an evaluation team chaired by an administrator that determines if a child would benefit from additional education services, including remedial instruction, academic intervention, and/or counseling services. The NYS Commissioner's Regulations (Part 100) require that any student suspected of having a disability be referred to the Committee on Special Education

within 15 days of the required screening. Members of the screening teams review records and/or use standardized and informal screening tools with each student.

Each building has a Student Support Team that addresses, with a problem solving approach, concerns regarding students and their need for specific interventions. Each school building has a Response to Intervention plan in place to assist in the planning and implementation of research based interventions to address student concerns. This general education initiative meets the state requirement for districts to implement a multi tiered problem solving approach that identifies general education students struggling in academic and behavioral areas early and provides them with systematically applied strategies and targeted instruction. RTI is generally accepted as the model for addressing student learning before that student's needs rise to the level of disability and considered Special Education. The SST reviews the intervention supports as an alternative to any initial referrals to the Committee of Special Education. Information regarding the student's success or failure is utilized by the CSE to determine disability, and if deemed necessary, goals and service needs. As of July 2012, districts must have an RTI program in place as part of the process to determine a learning disability in the area of reading for students grades K-4.

#### **IV. Evaluations and Committee on Special Education Process**

- a. A referral for an initial evaluation may be made by a student's parent, a designee of the school district, the Commissioner or designee of a public agency, and/or a designee of an education program affiliated with a child care institution with Committee on Special Education responsibility. A request for referral for an initial evaluation may be made by a professional staff member of the school district in which the student resides, or the public or private school the student legally attends or is eligible to attend, a licensed physician, a judicial officer, a professional staff member of a public agency with responsibility for welfare, health, or deduction of children, or a student who is 18 years or older, or emancipated minor, who is eligible to attend Solvay UFSD.
- b. A student suspected of having a disability shall be referred in writing to the chairperson of the district's committee on special education or to the building administrator of the school which the student attends or is eligible to attend for an individual evaluation and determination of eligibility for special education programs and services. The school district must initiate a referral and promptly request parental consent to evaluate the student to determine if the student needs special education services and programs if a student has not made adequate progress after an appropriate period of time when provided instruction through the intervention program in place in the

- building. The evaluation process required for the CSE, once the referral is initiated is governed by the NYS Commissioner Regulations, Part 200.4.
- c. The members of the Solway UFSD Committee on Special Education and Committee on Preschool Special education are appointed annually by the Board of Education during the BOE's Reorganization Meeting. The Board of Education also receives the recommendations for review and provision from both committees.
  - d. Referral and evaluations that take place within the buildings are in compliance with both state regulations (Part 200.4) and with IDEA. A multi disciplinary team approach continues to be a component of the CSE assessment and evaluation. Special education teachers, general education teachers, Speech therapists, remedial teachers, psychologists, and school nurses take an active role in the assessment and evaluation. The building administrators and the CSE work collaboratively to ensure an effective team approach through the SST and CSE process.
  - e. Annual Review meetings for those students currently receiving special education services are conducted by subcommittees at each building level. The subcommittee may perform the functions of the committee on special education pursuant to the provisions of Education Law, section 4402, except when a student is considered for initial placement in: a special class; or a special class outside of the student's school of attendance; or a school primarily serving students with disabilities or a school outside of the student's district. The Solway UFSD District Committee on Special Education conducts CSE meetings in those circumstances.

## **V. Description of Special Education Programs and Services**

### **A. School-Aged Students**

The continuum of special education services in the Commissioner's Regulations and in the federal Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that the district provide each student with a disability an educational program in the Least Restrictive Environment. Regulations also mandate that, when regular educational services can meet the instructional needs of a student, special education intervention and services are not warranted. The Committee on Special Education determines whether the student's disability adversely affects his/her educational program and progress. The Committee on Special Education determines what services are appropriate to meet the student's needs and what disability category the student receives.

The Solway UFSD employs sixteen (16) Special Education teachers (2012/13) to provide special education services to the students with disabilities in the Solway UFSD 3 school buildings. The services they provide are inclusive of the continuum of special education services for school age students with disabilities.

The following summaries illustrate the continuum of special education services provided by the Solvay UFSD from least restrictive to most restrictive placement options. While these categories of services can stand alone, it should be noted that based on the individual needs of a student with a disability, the Committee on Special Education could recommend that a student receive a combination of services (e.g.: Resource Room, Special Class for 1 period, and Co teaching for 1 period). The services provided are determined by student needs, educational benefit, and disability at a Committee on Special Education meeting.

### ***Declassification Support Services***

Declassification Support Services are provided to students who no longer meet the criterion for receiving special education services, and have been declassified by the Committee on Special Education. When a student is declassified, he/she may need specific support through general education services (such as: guidance counselors, school psychologists, or building level programs) or special education services (such as: related services) in order to transition successfully to non-special education programs. These services are available for one year after declassification at all grade levels to any student exiting from special education.

### ***Related Services***

Related services are recommended by the Committee on Special Education to meet the specific needs of a student as indicated in the Individual Education Program (IEP). Related services include speech and language therapy occupational therapy, physical therapy, audiology, counseling, and other services as defined in the Commissioner's Regulations, Part 200. Related services may be provided in conjunction with a regular education program or other special education programs and services.

The Solvay UFSD currently contracts with licensed practitioners to provide occupational therapy and physical therapy services. A physician's prescription/order is required in order for a student to receive those services. For the 2012-13 School Year, the district employs three (3) speech therapists to provide speech treatment services to the students in the 3 buildings in the district. Solvay UFSD contracts with OCM BOCES to provide related services for the Visually Impaired, Audiology or other services that a student might require beyond Speech, OT, or PT.

Paraprofessionals throughout the district may provide support for students within the general education setting. Determination of specific support for a student is made by the Committee on Special Education, based on issues such as safety, performance within a general education or special education program, or health/medical reasons. Individual 1:1 assistance is determined through a thorough analysis of the student's schedule, needs, and programming. This

analysis includes detailed documentation addressed on the Request for 1:1 Teaching Assistant Support document.

### ***Consultant Teacher Services***

Consultant teacher services are defined as direct and/or indirect services provided to a school age student with a disability within the general education program of that student. Students with disabilities in the Solvay UFSD may receive direct consultant teacher services: specially designed instruction provided to a student that will aid the student in benefitting from general education class instruction; and/or indirect consultant teacher services: consultation provided to a general education teacher to assist that teacher in adjusting the learning environment for a student with a disability in his/her classroom. Consultant teacher services are provided for at least 2 hours per week. The Committee on Special Education determines a student's need for this level of service.

If Consultant teacher services are to be provided to an elementary student (k-5), the IEP would indicate the subject areas of instruction (e.g.: math, ELA, etc.). At the middle and high school levels (grades 6-12), the IEP would indicate the specific class subject where the service would be provided.

Consultant teacher services may be combined with other services for a student, depending upon that student's educational and programming needs.

### ***Resource Room Services***

The Resource Room program is designed primarily for the purpose of providing supplementary instruction in an individual or small group setting (no more than 5 students). Resource room programs supplement the general education or special education classroom instruction. Resource room services concentrate on specific skill development related to the disability that would support the student's progress in his/her educational program. The total number of students assigned to a special education teacher providing Resource room services cannot exceed 20 in grades k-6 or 25 in grades 7-12. Currently in the Solvay UFSD, the number of students requiring Resource Room services is well within these guidelines. Resource Room services are implemented at all grade levels for students requiring this level of service.

### ***Integrated Co-Teaching Model***

Integrated co-teaching services means the provision of specially designed instruction and academic instruction provided to a group of students with disabilities along side non disabled students in a general education classroom setting. The intent of this model is to increase students' with disabilities

participation in general education curriculum, assist them in meeting the demands of state assessments, and to provide them access to credit bearing course work that would increase their success in achieving a completion diploma (local or Regents). Groupings of students included in a Co-Teaching classroom can be up to 12 students with disabilities, or the number of non disabled students is more than or equal to the number of students with disabilities. The primary instructors in this model are the general education and special education teachers.

There is no minimum number of hours required in delivering integrated co-teaching services. The decision to provide integrated co-teaching services is considered according to the student's need and disability concerns. A student in the elementary levels could receive integrated co-teaching for a period of instruction in the designated area of weakness (e.g.: ELA or Math, etc.) In grades 6-12, the services would be indicated by the course in which integrated co-teaching takes place.

### ***Special Class Services***

Special class means a class consisting of students with disabilities who have been grouped together because of similarity of individual needs for the purpose of receiving specially designed instruction in a self contained (separate) classroom. Such students are receiving their primary instruction separate from their non disabled peers.

Solvay UFSD provides Special Class Services within the district for students requiring that level of service from Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, based on student needs.

Solvay UFSD Special Education department, in collaboration with the building administrators is striving to provide students with disabilities with access to the full spectrum of the core content curriculum. This enables those students to fulfill the requirements to receive a completion diploma, in addition, to providing the options for interaction and support within the general education environment. The placement of students in a Special Class setting is, therefore, considered only when the students' learning, management, or developmental issues require a small class setting.

### ***OCM BOCES***

Solvay UFSD has developed a strong, collaborative relationship with OCM BOCES. Within the district setting, Solvay contracts for services for Audiology, Teachers of the Visually Impaired, Teachers of the Deaf, and other related services that are not typically provided by district staff.

OCM BOCES provides special education services to district students who require specialized and individualized intensive programming. Solvay UFSD CSE will recommend placement at a specific program depending upon the needs of the students.

Students with disabilities from Solvay UFSD attend programs from OCM BOCES including: (2012/13):

- Special Education GED: 3
- TEAM, SKATE, Stellata programs for students with multiple disabilities, autism, or developmentally delayed: 1
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program: 3
- Severely Emotionally Disturbed: 18

Solvay UFSD students with disabilities also attend the Extended Year (summer program) provided by OCM BOCES for those students requiring an extended year program as designated by the CSE. Solvay UFSD does not operate an extended year program within the district.

### *Home and Hospital Instruction*

Students who are confined to the home, hospital, or other institution because of a disability must be provided with academic instruction. Students with disabilities must also be provided with services depending upon the CSE recommendations. A minimum of 5 hours per week of instruction at elementary level (k-6) and 10 hours per week of instruction at the secondary level (7-12) is required according to Part 100 of the Education law of NYS. These services are academic in nature, to be provided by a general education teacher, and in some cases of students, who are in special class placement, may be provided by a Special Education teacher. In addition to the academic requirements noted, Special Education services may also be provided (e.g.: consultant teacher, Resource Room, depending upon CSE recommendation).

### *Residential Placements*

Solvay UFSD supports residential programming for students who require this unusual and intensive setting. As of the 12/13 school year there weren't any students in residential programs. One student is anticipated to attend a residential program in the 13/14 school year.

#### B. Preschool Students

The provision of preschool special education services for three and four year old children is the responsibility of the Local Education Agency. The Board of Education of Solvay UFSD appoints a Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) to review evaluations and programs for those students identified as having a disability. The CPSE makes recommendations regarding services and placement to the Board of Education. The cost of preschool special education services is currently the responsibility of the Onondaga County Health Department. This department approves programs for preschoolers and assists the LEA in placement provisions.

The district receives referrals for evaluation and/or placement of preschool students primarily from parents and county agencies. Onondaga County and New York State approve the evaluators and the service providers. Children who have received Early Intervention services (ages 0-3) are also transitioned into the preschool arena once they turn 3 years of age. The CPSE meets to transition those students, determine if they qualify as a preschooler with a disability, and recommend services. Evaluations are reviewed by the CPSE and a determination is made as to appropriate programs and services if the child is identified.

The range of services available for preschoolers with disabilities includes Related Services: Speech Therapy, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Audiology, and other services identified under Part 200 of the Commissioner's Regulations. Whenever possible, these services are provided in typical preschool settings or at home in a natural environment. Special Education Itinerant Teacher services are also implemented when appropriate, in either a home or preschool setting. When more intensive services are required, children are placed in special education programs at an approved center-based setting. These programs are offered in an integrated setting with ratios of 12:1:1 and 8:1:1.

#### **VI. Number and Age Span of Student with Disabilities**

See Table #1 for details regarding the students with disabilities provided with services by Solvay UFSD, including classification, age, and number of students.

#### **VII. Evaluation of Program Goals and Objectives**

Special Education program goals for Solvay UFSD are developed at the building level with the staff and administration identifying the effectiveness of programming provided. This occurs on an annual basis at the district level as well. Effectiveness of services, accountability to the goals and services, and fidelity to student IEPs and goals are the main focus of the plan.

The CSE annual review process also provides information regarding the appropriateness of student placements and services, as well as accomplishment of their goals on their IEP. A continual review process of services, goals, and program modifications is necessary to insure accountability for students with disabilities.

#### **VIII. Allocation of Appropriate Space for Programs and Services**

All of Solvay UFSD students will be educated, to the fullest extent possible, in appropriate classroom space within the district buildings: Solvay Elementary School, Solvay Middle School, and Solvay High School. Those students who require education outside of those buildings will be educated in appropriate classroom space as designated by the OCM BOCES Space Plan, outlining appropriate space within districts or within OCM BOCES buildings.

OCM BOCES operates 2 programs within the Solvay UFSD school buildings. The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program is a K-12 program operated in all 3 school buildings. The TEAM program for students with severe disabilities is operated within the Solvay Middle school. Students from Solvay UFSD are enrolled in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program.

Preschool students with disabilities are provided services within state and county approved programs (if those classrooms/programs are designated as Special Class Integrated Settings). The Board of Education of Solvay UFSD is assured that services and programs are within the regulations and licensing of NYS.

#### **IX. Instructional Materials**

The Solvay UFSD strives to insure that all instructional materials used in each school are available in an alternative format based on student needs. Students with disabilities who require program modifications and alternative formats for instructional materials (e.g. textbooks, etc.) have those requirements noted on their IEPs. Alternative formats including audio recordings, large print, CD-Roms, and Braille are made available when required. We also work to assure that our special education teachers have the technological resources needed to effectively work with each student.

#### **X. Budgetary Support**

The estimated budget to support this plan is \$2,266,280. This does not include monies received through IDEA 611 and 619 grants.