

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Special Class, Mild/Moderate Disabilities

Instruction for students participating in these classes is based upon the general education core curriculum using modified and/or alternative instructional strategies. An alternative curriculum is used only if the general education core curriculum is determined to be inappropriate by the Individual Education Program (IEP) team. A teacher with a credential authorizing instruction of students with mild to moderate disabilities and at least one instructional aide staff each class. The primary goal is to return the students to full-time enrollment in the general education program.

Special Class, Moderate Disabilities

The District believes that the most effective method of instructing most students with moderate disabilities is through a curriculum that focuses on applied or functional academics. This alternative curriculum teaches basic academics as they apply to daily living. This may involve instruction in community sites off of the school campus. As the student approaches high school, prevocational skills become a key component of the curriculum as well. A teacher with a credential authorizing instruction of students with moderate disabilities and at least one instructional assistant staff each class.

Special Class, Moderate/Severe Disabilities

Students in these classes are instructed through the use of a curriculum that focuses on life skills and is functional, chronologically age-appropriate, taught in natural environments, and in integrated settings. Each student's individualized education program must be developed in collaboration with the student and his/her family and must reflect their interests and needs. Through use of this method, students become prepared to function effectively in current and future home, school, community, and work environments. A teacher with a credential authorizing instruction of students with severe disabilities and two or more instructional assistants staff each class.

Special Class, Emotional Disabilities

It is the philosophy of the Pajaro Valley Unified School District that the most effective method of instructing students with emotional disabilities is through provision of a therapeutic classroom environment where the primary focus is on behavior control and social/emotional development. As soon as inappropriate behavior is under control, students are provided with instruction in the general education core curriculum using modified and/or alternative instructional strategies when necessary. An alternative curriculum is used only if the general education core curriculum is determined to be inappropriate by the IEP team. The primary goal is to return the students to full-time enrollment in the general education program. A teacher with a credential authorizing instruction of students with emotional disabilities and two or more instructional assistants staff each class. All students are offered counseling as part of their school program.

Autism Intervention Program

Students with an autism spectrum disorder have a wide range of cognitive abilities and academic achievement levels. For this reason, the Autism Intervention Program provides a variety of services and support options for eligible students. Described below are the primary placements options available within PVUSD.

Inclusion

Some students participate in a full inclusion program at their neighborhood school. Students participating in an inclusion program (primary placement in a general education class) are instructed using the PVUSD curriculum standards for general education. Accommodations and/or modifications are provided as appropriate and necessary. These students are provided with one-to-one assistants when determined necessary by the IEP team.

Autism Intervention Class

Autism intervention classes are available at the preschool and early elementary levels. Most students in the elementary level class are instructed in the core academic subjects using the PVUSD curriculum standards for general education. Students enrolled in the preschool class participate in typical preschool activities. Accommodations and/or modifications are provided as appropriate and necessary. All students participating in this type of class are instructed throughout the day using techniques specifically designed for children with autism.

Other Special Education Classes

Students enrolled in other special education classes are grouped with students who exhibit a variety of special needs and are instructed using either a modified version of the PVUSD curriculum standards for general education or the special education life skills curriculum. Students are instructed using specialized techniques designed for children with autism, although these strategies are not used for the entire class throughout the day.

Early Childhood Education

The early years of life are critical, as this is the time that the human mind and body develop most rapidly. The PVUSD Early Childhood Education Program believes that these young children should be viewed within the context of familial, cultural, socio-economic, and community systems. The IFSP or IEP is developed in collaboration with the child's family and reflects their interests and needs. The program is based at Duncan Holbert School but provides support services to children at sites throughout the community including homes, hospitals, Head Start programs, private preschools, child-care facilities, play groups, and other natural environments. Each teacher has a credential authorizing instruction of special needs children from birth through preschool and is assisted by an appropriate number of Instructional Assistants. Designated Instruction and Services including speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, adapted physical education, nurse/health services, community liaison services, and services for children with low incidence disabilities are available for children identified as requiring those services on their IFSP or IEP. The adult-child ratio for the center never exceeds 1:5.

Resource Specialist Program

Pajaro Valley Unified School District believes that the most effective method of instructing students placed into the Resource Specialist Program is to provide instructional accommodations and modifications that will allow greater access to the general education core curriculum. This may be provided to the student through consultation with the student, parent, and general education staff; direct instructional services to the student within the general education classroom; and/or, direct instruction to the student using a "pull-out" approach. The primary goal is to return the students to full-time enrollment in the general education program. The majority of students enrolled in the RSP have been identified as having learning disabilities. A few students have been identified as having other disabling conditions. Each school site has at least one Resource Specialist assigned to it. Each Resource Specialist has a credential authorizing instruction in a Resource Specialist Program. An instructional Assistant has been assigned to each Resource Specialist. Caseloads generally include 24 to 28 students.

Designated Instruction and Services (DIS)

Speech and Language Therapy

For students with speech, language, or hearing disabilities, specialized support and/or instruction is sometimes a necessary component of their regular or special education curriculum. This may be provided through consultation with the student, parent, and school staff; direct instructional services to the student within the regular or special class; and/or, direct instruction to the student using a pull-out approach. The primary goal is to maximize the student's ability to be a successful communicator within their current and future school, home, and work environments. Each school site has an LSH Specialist assigned to it. Each LSH Specialist has a credential authorizing therapy in the areas of language, speech, and hearing. Caseloads average 55 students per specialist and are a combination of special and general education students.

Occupational Therapy

Students with varying disabilities leading to difficulty in the areas of fine and gross motor skills, visual-motor integration and organization, and visual perception may require specialized support and/or therapy from an occupational therapist in order to benefit from their educational program. This may be provided through consultation with the teacher and parent, monitoring of the student's progress, or direct service to the student. Each student may receive each type of service over time depending on his or her current level of need. OT services are discontinued when the student no longer needs them or are not able to benefit from them. In Pajaro Valley Unified School District the occupational therapists are itinerant and work with students throughout the District. Each OT is licensed and carries a caseload of approximately 25-35 students.

Adapted Physical Education

For students with medical conditions, gross motor delays, or emotional disabilities, specialized support and/or instruction in physical education is sometimes a necessary component of their general or special education curriculum. This may be provided through consultation with the student, parent, and school staff; direct instructional services to the student within the regular or special class; and/or, direct instruction to the student using a "pull-out" approach. The primary goal is to maximize the student's ability to develop and maintain physical fitness and recreation/leisure skills that can be applied within the student's current and future environments. An APE specialist is available to each of the district schools. Each APE specialist has a credential authorizing instruction in the areas of adapted physical education. The caseload for this program is approximately 25-35 students per full-time specialist and is a combination of special and general education students.

Vocational Education

The Vocational Education Team coordinates and provides career/vocational and transition services. The team includes an Assistant Director, a Program Specialist, Career Development Specialists, and Vocational Specialists. The team works together to assist IEP teams in providing career, vocational, and transition services for students 14 years of age and older, and younger, when needed. Vocational programs such as Project WorkAbility and the Transition Partnership Program (TPP) are available to support this effort.

Low Incidence (OH, VH, HI)

Students who have orthopedic, visual or hearing disabilities (OH, VH, HI) are provided with support services from low incidence specialists as determined by their IEPs. These specialists are itinerant and services are generally provided using a consultation or collaboration model. Students who require a special class designed specifically for students with visual impairments are referred to programs outside of the SELPA.

Other Support Services

Additional support is available, as necessary, from the following programs and individuals:

- School Psychologists
- School Nurses
- Special Education Transportation
- Mental Health Counseling (Through the Santa Cruz County Mental Health Department)
- Medically Necessary OT/PT (Through California Children's Services)