



SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN

School Board Approval » June 9, 2025

Keystone AEA Approval » June 23, 2025

Q1: What process was used to develop the delivery system for eligible individuals?

The delivery system was developed in accordance with Iowa Administrative Code rule 41.408(2)“c”. The group of individuals who developed the system included parents of eligible individuals, general education teachers, school counselor, special education teachers, administrators, a paraprofessional, district special education staff, and representatives of Keystone Area Education Agency (AEA). The Dubuque Community School District (DCSD) selected a committee of representatives of the various roles listed above to develop the Special Education Service Delivery Plan (DDSDP).

The District Developed Service Delivery Plan was approved by Keystone Area Education Agency on June 23, 2025 and the Dubuque Community School District Board of Education on June 9, 2025. The plan will be shared with administrators and teachers via an email communication from the Executive Director of Special Education. It will also be shared with staff, parents and community stakeholders by posting the plan on the district website.

Committee Members

Parents

Judy Byrne
Lacey Gremmels

Special Education Teachers

Julie Farni – D/HH
Rosette (Rosie) Godel – Elementary
Jennifer Hogrefe – Elementary
Shelby Kelchen – Middle School
Kristie Ostrander – Elementary
Lorlie Ryan – Elementary
Kiersten Schumacher – Middle School
Julie Sear – Middle School
Kristi Skemp – Elementary
Heather Speer – Elementary
Rhonda Thole – Middle School

Early Childhood/Special Education Teacher

Peggy Gaul

General Education Staff

Elias Hinrichsen – Middle School Teacher
Alexandra (Allie) Horchak – Elementary Teacher
Lisa Schroeder – Middle School Counselor

Special Education Coach/Dept Chairs

Jayne Culbertson – Elementary SE Instructional Coach
Aimee Macfarlane – High School Department Chair
Molly Powers – Elementary SE Instructional Coach

Building Administrators

Bobbie Jones – Middle School Administrator
Kathy McCarthy – High School Administrator
Chris Nugent – Elementary Principal
Andy Peterson – Elementary Principal

Paraprofessional

Susan Jordan

AEA Representatives

Barb Pline – AEA Regional Administrator
Shelby Schumacher – AEA Consultant

District Special Education Staff

Lori Anderson – Transition Facilitator
Angie Breitbach – Elementary Lead
Ashley Caldwell – Lead School Social Worker
Brenda Duvel – Executive Director of Special Education
Mary Fink – Secondary Lead
Lynn Glaser – Preschool Lead

Overview of Steps in Completing the Service Delivery Plan:

Step 1: The district selects the committee.

Step 2: The committee develops the plan.

Step 3: The draft plan is available for public comment.

Step 4: Keystone Area Education Agency (AEA) verifies plan compliance.

Step 5: The district school board approves the plan prior to adoption.

Step 6: The plan is included in the designated area of the Consolidated Accountability and Support Application (CASA).

Step 7: The plan is reviewed in connection with the five-year accreditation cycle or earlier if required by determination given by the state.

Q2: How will services be organized and provided to eligible individuals?

Context in the Development of the Continuum of Services

A learner eligible for special education services in Iowa is entitled to Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) at no cost to the family to meet his/her unique needs as a student with a disability. This includes adapting as appropriate the content, methodology or delivery of instruction to address the needs that result from a disability and to ensure access to the general curriculum, so that he/she can meet the educational standards that apply to all children (IAC 41.39). These special education and related services must be designed to meet the learner's unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living (CFR300.1; IAC 41.1).

The General Education Curriculum

The general education curriculum includes the curriculum expected of all children, which in Iowa includes the Iowa Core Standards, Iowa Core Essential Elements, the Iowa Early Learning Standards, school-based expectations, and a unique post-secondary vision for each learner.

Foundational Beliefs

It is essential school teams believe that all students can learn at high levels. Teams must share collective responsibility for all students' learning. General and special education teachers must be involved in collaborative team meetings and/or Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) taking ownership of every learner mastering targets.

The following foundational beliefs are key as we work together to improve our special education outcomes, services, and Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) for our learners:

- Learners receiving special education services are general education learners first and always.
- Highly effective special education services and outcomes are dependent on highly effective Universal Instruction and a school-wide intervention system.
- Effective SDI is designed through collaboration between families and highly qualified educators.
- SDI is delivered by special education and general education teachers and professionals in various settings across the day.
- The Iowa Core Standards, Iowa Core Essential Elements, Early Learning Standards, and school-based expectations should drive diagnosis, design, and delivery of SDI.
- Highly effective SDI flows from high-quality and specific assessment information.
- SDI supports learners to use tools, materials, and strategies to access Iowa Core Standards and reach grade-level aligned goals.
- SDI helps learners to address their unique needs as a result of the individual's disability.

(Department of Education; Iowa's SDI Framework, Revision, August 2018; Logo Update, 2019; Guiding Principle Update June 2022)

Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) in a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Framework

Learners eligible for special education services are entitled to SDI to address their unique needs and to ensure access to the general curriculum so they can meet educational standards. Therefore, in many cases, learners with disabilities will need additional supports including targeted and/or intensive interventions. These supports may include accommodations, modifications, services, and related services within and across a continuum of educational supports.

Introduction to the Continuum of Services

Special Education Services are provided in a variety of ways to meet the individual needs of eligible individuals. The least restrictive environment (LRE) is the educational environment that enables learners with disabilities to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and provides the learners with maximum opportunities for interaction with peers without disabilities.

The general education environment is the setting where students with and without disabilities receive core instruction together. Removal from the general education environment may occur only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes (with the use of supplementary aids and services) cannot be achieved satisfactorily. [41.114(2)b] Supplementary aids and services are aids, services, and supports that enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate. [41.42]

Therefore, a continuum of services is provided. The continuum includes services for eligible individuals ages 3 to 21. Services may be provided within the district, or through contractual agreement with other districts and/or agencies. Learners may receive different services at multiple points along the continuum based on the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

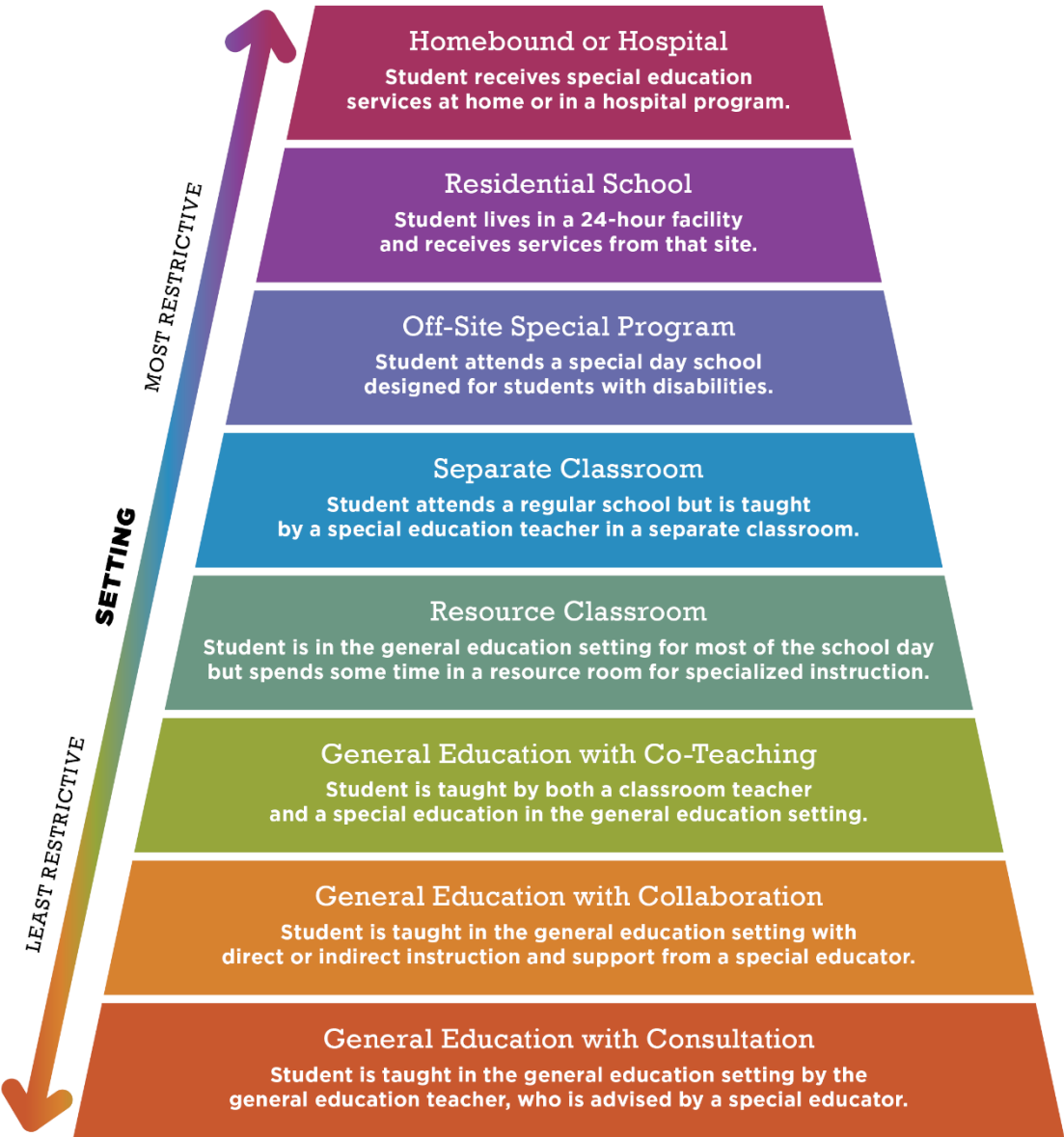
When developing an eligible individual's IEP and placement, the team shall consider the following questions, as well as any other factors appropriate under the circumstances, regarding the provision of special education and related services [41.116(4)a.]:

- 1) What accommodations, modifications, and adaptations does the individual require to be successful in a general education environment?
- 2) Why is it not possible for these accommodations, modifications, and adaptations to be provided within the general education environment?
- 3) What supports are needed to assist the teacher and other personnel in providing these accommodations, modifications and adaptations?
- 4) How will receipt of special education services and activities in the general education environment impact this individual?
- 5) How will the provision of special education services and activities in the general education environment impact other students?

Throughout the continuum of services, learners with disabilities require access to Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), Instruction, Curriculum, Assessment, Resources, Environmental Supports, and Extra-curricular & Co-curricular Enriching Experiences.

Each service delivery model along DCSD's continuum is described on the following pages, including specific roles and responsibilities of the general and special educators supporting the eligible individual within each model.

DUBUQUE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Special Education Continuum



Students may receive different services at multiple points along the continuum based on the IEP.

Inclusive Preschool Program

The Dubuque Community School District offers an inclusive early childhood program with the teacher holding dual endorsements, meaning the teacher provides both general and special education services. General education students attend preschool either in the AM or the PM. Students receiving special education services may receive those required services during the part day programming, or as determined by IEP teams, may require an extended portion of the day. Individualized plans are created to support the child's transition to the school setting.

Transition 4+ Program

The Dubuque Community School District offers a continuum of services for students with disabilities ages 18-21 who have unmet IEP goals connected to living, learning and/or working. Participation in the Summit program follows completion of the Iowa Core requirements and district graduation requirements. Students in this transition program continue to work on the development of skills in living, learning, and/or working in a variety of settings with special education supports and services to meet their postsecondary expectations for adult life.

General Education with Consultation

The learner is served in the general education classroom with consultation and support from the special education teacher. A special education teacher serves in a consultative role while the general education teacher carries the primary responsibility for collaboratively designed instruction. The model allows a special education teacher to partner with multiple general education teachers without being physically present in the same classroom at the same time (indirect service).

General Education Teacher Role/Responsibilities	Special Education Teacher Role/Responsibilities
• Deliver collaboratively designed content instruction in the general education class • Provide accommodations and modifications needed to enable access • Consult regularly and frequently with the special education teacher • Complete progress monitoring	• Monitor and document the learner's progress on IEP goals • Assist the general education teacher with the instructional design, preparation of materials, and application of skills in the general education setting, as well as accommodations and/or modifications as outlined in the IEP (indirect services) • Engage in regular and frequent consultation with general education teacher to oversee the provision of accommodations, modifications, SDI, data collection, and data analysis
General Education AND Special Education Teacher Responsibilities	
• Engage in ongoing communication regarding instruction, accommodations and modifications, as well as progress monitoring	

General Education with Collaboration

The learner is served in the general education classroom in which the special education teacher pushes into the general education classroom at targeted times to share responsibility. In collaboration, both teachers provide supports and services that include SDI, accommodations, and/or modifications to allow the learner to access the general education curriculum and for skill building. Collaboration results in an increased capacity of general educators to differentiate and execute IEP services.

General Education Teacher Role/Responsibilities	Special Education Teacher Role/Responsibilities
• Collaboratively provide SDI within specific skill areas and instructional activities during targeted times • Consult regularly and frequently with the special education teacher	• Monitor and document the learner's progress on IEP goals • Provide direct and collaboratively designed instruction (or other assistance as documented in the IEP) to the learner or group of learners in the general education classroom at targeted times • Shared responsibility to provide SDI and as well as oversee the provision of SDI and goal progress within specific skill areas and instructional activities • Consult regularly and frequently with the general education teacher
General Education AND Special Education Teacher Responsibilities	
• Collaboratively implement high-quality instructional and differentiation practices • Collaborative provision of accommodations and modifications needed to enable access	

General Education with Co-Teaching

The learner receives direct special education support in the general education classroom through the co-teaching model. This model utilizes both special and general education teachers to meet content and skill needs through the provision of accommodations and/or modifications, and delivery of specially designed instruction within a least restrictive environment.

General Education Teacher Role/Responsibilities	Special Education Teacher Role/Responsibilities
• Consult regularly and frequently with the special education teacher • Collaboratively provide SDI	• Monitor and document the learner's progress on IEP goals • Collaboratively provide and oversee the provision of specially designed instruction, goal progress within specific skill areas, and instructional activities • Consult regularly and frequently with the general education teacher
General Education AND Special Education Teacher Responsibilities	
• Co-plan, co-deliver, co-assess instruction within the general education classroom • Collaborative provision of accommodations and modifications needed.	

Multicategorical/Supplemental

The learner receives specially designed instruction and support aligned to the general education curriculum. When the services cannot be appropriately provided in the general education setting, the learner may receive some services in a special education setting for a portion on the day.

General Education Teacher Role/Responsibilities	Special Education Teacher Role/Responsibilities
Consult regularly and frequently with the special education teacher	- Monitor and document the learner's progress on IEP goals - Provide specially designed instruction that aligns with the students' IEP goals and the Iowa Core outside of the general education classroom as needed - Consult regularly and frequently with the general education teacher
General Education AND Special Education Teacher Responsibilities	
Collaborative provision of accommodations, modifications and transition planning needed.	

Comprehensive/Structured

The learner receives specially designed instruction and support aligned to the general education curriculum. When the services cannot be appropriately provided in the general education setting, the learner may receive services in a separate special education classroom. The special education teacher will provide the specially designed instruction and the general education instruction. The general education curriculum may be modified based on identified student needs. The general education teacher will collaborate with the special education teacher to support the instruction that aligns with the Iowa Core.

General Education Teacher Role/Responsibilities	Special Education Teacher Role/Responsibilities
Consult regularly and frequently with the special education teacher	- Monitor and document the learner's progress on IEP goals - Provide general education and Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) that aligns with the student's IEP goals and the Iowa Core - Consult regularly and frequently with the general education teacher
General Education AND Special Education Teacher Responsibilities	
- Collaborative provision of accommodations, modifications and transition planning needed - Co-plan and co-assess when the general education teacher is required to be the teacher of record	

Off-Site Special Program

When the services cannot be appropriately provided in the learner's home school, a learner may need to attend an off-site program to receive the supports and services identified through the IEP process, including specially designed instruction and general education that aligns with the Iowa Core.

General Education Teacher Role/Responsibilities	Special Education Teacher Role/Responsibilities
• Oversee all general education instruction • Consult regularly and frequently with the special education teacher	• Monitor and document the learner's progress on IEP goals • Provide general education and SDI that aligns with the student's IEP goals and the Iowa Core • Consult regularly and frequently with the general education teacher
General Education AND Special Education Teacher Responsibilities	
• Collaborative provision of accommodations, modifications, and transition planning needed • Co-plan and co-assess when the general education teacher is required to be the teacher of record	

Residential School

When the services cannot be appropriately provided in the learner's home school or district, a learner may be placed at a residential school through the IEP process. IEP teams determine supports and services the student will receive including specially designed instruction and general education that aligns with the Iowa Core, or the standards of the residential school's state.

General Education Teacher Role/Responsibilities	Special Education Teacher Role/Responsibilities
• Oversee all general education instruction • Consult regularly and frequently with the special education teacher	• Monitor and document the learner's progress on IEP goals • Oversee the SDI that is provided by the residential school to assure that it aligns with the student's IEP goals and the Iowa Core • Consult regularly and frequently with the general education teacher
General Education AND Special Education Teacher Responsibilities	
• Collaborative provision of accommodations, modifications, and transition planning needed	

Homebound or Hospital

When an individual's physical, mental health, or medical condition impedes participation in general and special education, an IEP team may consider alternative settings such as homebound or within a hospital. IEP teams determine supports and services the student will receive including specially designed instruction and general education that aligns with the Iowa Core.

General Education Teacher Role/Responsibilities	Special Education Teacher Role/Responsibilities
• Coordinate with DCSD Visiting Teacher to develop a plan to support the student with general education instruction • Consult regularly and frequently with special education teacher	• Monitor and document the learner's progress on IEP goals • Provide SDI and other supports and services in the home or virtually based on IEP team decisions • Consult regularly and frequently with general education teacher and DCSD Visiting Teacher
General Education AND Special Education Teacher Responsibilities	
• Collaborative provision of accommodations, modifications and transition planning needed	

Q3: How will caseloads of special education teachers be determined and regularly monitored?

Caseloads for special education teachers will be tentatively set in the spring for the following school year. Caseloads will likely be modified based on summer registration and actual fall enrollment. The Principal/designee at each building will review each special education teacher's caseload in both the fall and the spring. The Dubuque Community School District will use the following values to assign points to the caseloads of each special education teacher in the district.

Consideration	Point value per student
Number of students for whom you are case manager	1
Number of students with paraprofessional support who have a fade plan documented in the IEP	.5
% of SDI	0-25%: .25 26-50%: .5 51-75%: .75 76-100%: 1
Number of students who are dependent upon an adult for their physical daily living needs as outlined in the individual health plan or IEP (intensive support for at least two of the following areas: toileting, feeding and mobility)	.25
Number of students requiring Assistive Technology services, software and devices requiring ongoing collaboration and support with team members	.25
For students requiring Alternate Assessment:	
Number of students requiring Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)	.25
Number of students requiring Early Literacy Alternate Assessment (ELAA)	.25
Number of students requiring a Behavior Intervention Plan	.5

Each PK teacher's roster should be valued at no more than 21 points. Each K-12+ special education teacher's roster should be valued at no more than 26 points. The process for resolving caseload concerns is described in the next question.

Q4: What procedures will a special education teacher use to resolve caseload concerns?

The Dubuque Community School District's leaders are committed to assure special education teacher rosters are manageable. Caseload reviews will be scheduled and are also available on an as needed basis. During a review, if a teacher's caseload exceeds the established limit, the teacher and the principal/designee, will meet to discuss whether the teacher is able to provide the services and supports specified in his or her students' Individualized Education Programs. If the teacher can do so, no further action is needed. If not, the principal/designee will work on a solution to adjust rosters.

Scheduled caseload reviews will occur at least twice per year by individual LEA special education teachers with their building principal/designee. These reviews will happen in the fall (September/October) and again in the early spring (February/March).

In addition to scheduled reviews, caseloads will also be reviewed under the following circumstances:

- When a specified caseload is exceeded for a period of 4 weeks
- When a teacher has a concern about his or her ability to effectively perform the essential functions of his or her job due to caseload

Requesting a Caseload Concern Review Meeting

- All requests must be in writing.
- Requests should be given directly to the building principal.
- The person requesting the review is responsible for gathering relevant information to support their request. This information may include, but is not limited to IEPs, schedule and instructional groupings, collaborative/coteaching assignments, or other relevant data.

Caseload Review Meeting

- Within 15 school days of receipt of the request for the Caseload Concern Review, the principal/designee shall review the caseload calculation of the presenting teacher in comparison to other caseload calculations in the building.
- The principal/designee will promptly investigate and determine a resolution.
- If the caseload concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved, either party may send a request for a caseload review to the Executive Director of Special Education.
- Within 15 school days of the receipt of the request, the Executive Director of Special Education will review and provide a recommendation to the principal/designee.
- Upon receipt of the Executive Director of Special Education's recommendation, the principal will review the information and discuss it with the teacher.
- If the person who requested the review does not agree with the determination, he or she may send a written request for an appeal to the Superintendent.
- The Executive Director of Special Education and the Superintendent will meet with personnel involved and will provide a written decision within 15 school days of the receipt of the request.

Q5: How will the delivery system for eligible individuals meet the targets identified in the state's performance plan and address needs identified by the state in any determination made under Chapter 14? In addition, what process will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the delivery system for eligible individuals?

Special education accountability will be addressed in the following ways:

- Individual student IEP goal progress monitoring
- Examination of disaggregated subgroup achievement on the Iowa School Performance Profile
- State Special Education Designation Planning

Individual student progress on IEP goals will be reviewed and discussed by the special education teacher(s) and the AEA core team member(s) on a regular basis, approximately every 6 weeks. The purpose of this process is to determine if adequate progress is being made or if potential changes are needed. Team members will establish action steps to address concerns. This may include adjusting instruction or scheduling an IEP meeting to consider changes to identified supports and services.

At least once per year, district and building staff will examine their special education subgroup progress indicators per building as outlined in the Iowa's School Performance Profile (ISPP). Schools will review both proficiency and growth. Schools that are targeted or comprehensive in the area of special education will work with district special education staff to determine how to include support into school plans. In addition, the district will review their special education designation and follow state protocols to develop and implement their IDEA-DA plan.

Glossary:

Accommodation: Support that allows access for a student to participate in instruction and activities while maintaining the same expectation (e.g., use of fidget, reading material aloud, preferential seating).

Adaptation: Change in the use of different teaching strategies, methods, or supports for a student to access instruction and activities (e.g., visual schedule, checklists, breaking work into smaller tasks).

Case Manager: The special education teacher responsible for the development and oversight of a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Co-curricular: Activities that are outside of, but complement the regular curriculum (e.g., clubs, band, orchestra, drama).

Consolidated Accountability and Support Application (CASA): An electronic application that is utilized to submit information to the Iowa Department of Education.

Differentiation: the use of a variety of teaching techniques that educators use to instruct a diverse group of students with diverse learning needs in the same course, classroom, or learning environment. It involves modifying instruction and curriculum to match the individual needs of students, considering their abilities, interests, and prior knowledge.

Environmental Supports: Changes or enhancements to improve the educational environment for student success (e.g., air conditioning, alternate lighting, sensory area).

Extra-curricular: Activities that take place outside of the regular curriculum, offering opportunities to explore interests and develop skills (e.g., athletics, clubs).

Modification: Changes that adjust the learning expectation or task for a student to participate in instruction and activities (e.g., shortened assignments, changes in learning standards).

MTSS (Multi-tiered System of Support): a proactive and preventative framework that integrates data and instruction to maximize student success from a strengths-based perspective.

PLC (Professional Learning Community): A data-driven process used to make educational decisions that improve student outcomes.

Progress Monitoring: Process of regularly assessing a student's performance towards specific goals to inform instructional decision making.

SDI (Specially Designed Instruction): Individualized instruction that is tailored to meet the unique needs of a student.