

## **A Message to Parents**

Eligibility criteria for special education services and the qualifications necessary for special education programs can often be complicated, time-consuming, and confusing. Yet the right match between a child's needs and the appropriate special education program can sometimes be the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful school experience.

Informed and involved parents are essential in the success of any school program, and the web page is designed to give parents basic information about the special education process and the types of services and programs that are available in District 70. Three areas will be addressed throughout the web page's contents:

1. Interventions and services provided through Response to Intervention Process (RtI)
  - a. What is RtI?
  - b. How are services determined?
  - c. What interventions and supports can be utilized?
2. *Section 504* of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
  - a. Legal process and procedures used for evaluation and eligibility
3. Special Education (The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or *IDEA*)
4. Gifted and Enrichment Services, and the eligibility process

We hope this information is helpful when considering the educational needs of your child. As active partners with school staff in your child's education, your input is valuable and assists school staff in providing the best possible learning environment and services.

Following are some answers to frequently asked questions about *Special Education* in general:

### **What is our service population?**

Children, ages three through eighth grade, who currently reside in and attend District 70 schools, are served by District 70's special education department. In addition, District 70 must conduct child find for all students who attend private schools or home schools within District boundaries. Limited special education services to some or all of those identified students may also be provided.

### **What special education services are available in District 70 schools?**

- Diagnostic or comprehensive evaluation services
- Direct services to students within (inclusionary) and outside of (resource setting) the general education environment
- Consultative services to building staff
- Special instructional classrooms at specific grade levels
- Speech/language therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Social work or psychology services
- Nursing
- Physical therapy

- Special transportation
- Itinerant and contractual services such as audiology, teachers for hearing or vision impaired students, behavior consultation, etc.

### **Who provides special education services in District 70?**

District 70 employs a staff of eleven (11) full and part time special education resource teachers and five (5) full time instructional classroom teachers, three (3) in grades first – five and two (2) at Highland Middle School (Gr. 6-8). In addition, the District employs seven (7) speech and language pathologists and two (2) occupational therapists for the school age population (K-8). Seven (7) social workers and four (4) school psychologists are also part of the Special Education Department. At the early childhood level (ages 3 to 5), the district employs one (1) full time early childhood teacher and one (1) speech and language pathologist. Twenty-four (24) paraeducators are also vital members of our special education team. They provide support for the students with disabilities in the general education environment, and in limited cases, may also provide personal support for children with physical limitations.