

Westerly Public Schools is committed to providing a high quality education for every child. Recognizing that every student has unique learning needs, diversified learning opportunities are provided for all students throughout the district. Learning opportunities are enhanced with supplemental programs and services both in and outside of the classroom. Special education and related services are provided to support students with disabilities in achieving academic and functional performance.

A key element in the provision of Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for students with disabilities is the availability of highly qualified teachers, related service personnel, and support staff to implement each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Professional development and training will be available regarding the requirements and intent of all regulations and research based practices used to provide an appropriate education for all students.

Westerly Public Schools strives to improve continuously the quality of education to all students, and is dedicated to assess and evaluate the delivery of services to students with disabilities.

Westerly Public Schools staffing plan will ensure that appropriate personnel are available to deliver the services and instruction required to fully implement student IEPs and provide FAPE in the least restrictive environment. This plan will be based on the needs of students and will follow the guidelines outlined in this policy. The staffing plan will follow these principles:

- All children can learn and the academic and functional performance of all students will achieve adequate yearly progress.
- Due to the unique needs of individual learners, children must be provided with positive learning opportunities that are supported, when necessary and appropriate, with special education and related services that are specifically directed at the individual education needs of students with disabilities.
- A full continuum of special education and related support services must be available to students both in and outside of the classroom as necessary.
- All children must be provided access to the general curriculum and special education services are provided in the least restrictive environment.
- It is vital that parents or guardians participate in a child's educational program and in the development and implementation of an IEP for their child. Parent involvement will be a regular part of the special education program and school activities.
- Special education teacher caseloads and staffing decisions should be based on providing the services a student needs in order to be successful, rather than on a specific category of disability or severity of disability.
- The special education services required by the student's IEP will be considered in determining instructional and related service caseloads.
- There must be flexibility in special education staffing to address changes that may occur in a student's educational and functional needs throughout the school year.
- Staffing considerations should include the need to provide specific interventions to students without IEPs.
- Special education staffing must be compliant with federal and State law, regulation and policies governing special education.

Adopted: 11/19/08