

## **RESOURCES cont.**

### **The Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN)**

(800) 331-0688

[www.fcsn.org](http://www.fcsn.org)

### **The Disability Law Center**

(800) 872-9992

[www.dlc-ma.org](http://www.dlc-ma.org)

### **Massachusetts Advocates for Children**

Helpline: (617) 357-8431, ext. 224

[www.massadvocates.org](http://www.massadvocates.org)

### **Wrightslaw**

Wrightslaw is a leading website about  
Special Education law and advocacy.

[www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com)

These Services/ Organizations are resources for you to explore. They have not been endorsed by MCS. Please contact Michael Romanovitch at: (413) 782-2500 or [michaelro@mcsnet.org](mailto:michaelro@mcsnet.org) to comment on these listings or to suggest additional resources .

1000 Wilbraham Road  
Springfield, MA 01109



## **Special Education**



Educating students with special needs in a way that addresses their individual differences and needs.

### **MCS Office Locations**

**Springfield Office**  
1000 Wilbraham Road  
Springfield, MA 01109  
Tel : 413-782-2500

**Westfield Office**  
3 State Street  
Westfield , MA 01085  
Tel: 413-562-4885

**Holyoke Office**  
260 Westfield Road  
Holyoke, MA 01040  
Tel:413-534-3299

Visit our website at [www.mcsnet.org](http://www.mcsnet.org)



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[facebook.com/MCSofthePioneerValley](https://facebook.com/MCSofthePioneerValley)

Special Education is specially designed instruction and related services that are put into place to ensure that students with disabilities make effective progress and develop his/her individual potential.

Students with disabilities are entitled to a free and appropriate public education **(FAPE)** in the least restrictive environment **(LRE)** as defined by Federal Law Individuals with Disabilities Education Act **(IDEA)**.

### **Who is eligible for Special Education services?**

Children ages 3-21 with a defined disability who are unable to learn the general education program without special education or related services due to his/her disability.

### **The Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

According to state and federal special education laws, all children who have been found eligible for special education must have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP is a written plan that describes exactly what special educational services and accommodations your child will receive. It must be reviewed every year. Your child's IEP is developed by a team of people at the school and includes the parent as part of the IEP Team.

### **What is a 504 Plan?**

A 504 Plan helps a child with accommodation needs to fully participate in school. Usually, a 504 Plan is used by a general education student who is **not** eligible for special education services. A 504 Plan lists accommodations related to the child's disability and required by the child so that he or she may participate in the general classroom setting and educational programs.

### **Who is a part of the "TEAM"?**

IDEA states that each TEAM must include the child's parent/guardian, at least one special education teacher and/or provider, at least one regular education teacher (if the child is participating in the regular education environment), a person to interpret and explain the evaluation results, the child (if aged 14-22) and any other person or agency that has special expertise about the child.

### **The Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA)**

The Bureau conducts mediations, advisory opinions and due process hearings to resolve disputes among parents, school districts, and private schools. They are conducted by impartial mediators and hearing officers who do not have personal or professional interests that would conflict with their objectivity in the proceeding. A school district may not request a hearing on a parent's failure or refusal to consent to initial evaluation or initial placement of a child in a special education program or to written revocation of parental consent for further receipt of special education and related services.

### **Parent Advisory Council (PAC)**

The school committee of a city, town, or school district must, by law, establish a parent advisory council on special education. Membership is available to all parents of children with disabilities and other interested parties. The parent advisory council duties include advising the school committee on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities; meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school committee's special education programs.

### **Program Quality Assurance (PQA)**

Implements the Department's compliance monitoring and complaint management procedures for school districts, charter schools, educational collaborative, and approved public and private day and residential special education schools and provides technical assistance to school personnel and the public regarding the implementation of laws and regulations.

## **RESOURCES**

### **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) –**

#### **Special Education**

75 Pleasant Street

Malden, MA 02148

(781) 338-3375

[www.doe.mass.edu/sped](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped)