

Programs and Services for Children with Disabilities at Keystone Academy Charter School

At Keystone Charter School we believe that our students' well-being depends upon our ability to meet their individual needs. The Special Education Department plays an important role in meeting those needs for students with disabilities. Once a student has been identified as eligible for special education and related services, an IEP team of people knowledgeable about the student, including parents, will decide on the most appropriate program and related services to best meet his/her needs. Keystone Academy Charter School offers a variety of educational services, which are based on the needs of individual students and dictated by the IEP. These are provided to students with disabilities at no cost to parents, in accordance with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The Special Education Program and the work of the Special Education Department at Keystone Academy Charter School are governed by the rules and processes outlined in the Intermediate Unit 26 Policies and Procedures..

Keystone Academy Charter School, in conjunction with the parents, determines the type and intensity of special education and related services that a particular child needs based exclusively on the unique program of special education and related services that the school develops for that child. This program is called an Individualized Education Plan –the IEP- and is different for each student. An IEP Team consists of educators, parents, and other persons with special expertise or familiarity with the child. The participants in the IEP Team are dictated by IDEIA 2004.

The parents of the child have the right to be notified of and to be offered participation in all meetings of their child's IEP Team. The IEP is revised as often as circumstances warrant but reviewed at least annually. The law requires that the program and placement of the child, as described in the IEP, be reasonably calculated to ensure meaningful educational benefit to the student. In accordance with IDEIA 2004, there may be situations in which the

school may hold an IEP team meeting if the parents refuse or fail to attend the IEP meeting.

IEPs generally contain: (1) a statement of present levels of academic achievement and functional performance; (2) a statement of measurable annual goals established for the child; (3) a statement of how the child's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured and when periodic reports will be provided; (4) a statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services and a statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided, if any; (5) an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with non-disabled children in the regular class and in activities; (6) a statement of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on State and school assessments; and (7) the projected date for the beginning of the services and modifications and the anticipated frequency, location and duration of those services or modifications.

Special education services are provided according to the educational needs of the child, not the category of disability. Types of service that may be available, depending upon the child's disability and needs include, but are not limited to: (1) learning support; (2) life skills support; (3) emotional support; (4) deaf or hearing impaired support; (5) blind or visually impaired support; (7) autistic support; and (8) multiple disabilities support.

Related services are designed to enable the child to participate in or access his or her program of special education. Examples of related services that a child may require include but are not limited to: speech and language therapy, transportation, occupational therapy, physical therapy, school nursing services, audiologist services, counseling, or training. Related services, including counseling, are provided at no cost to parents.

Keystone Academy Charter School ensures that children with disabilities are educated to the maximum extent possible in the regular education environment or "least restrictive environment." To the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities are educated with students who are not

disabled. Special classes, separate schooling or other removal of students with disabilities from the general educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in general education classes, even with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. Programs and services available to students with disabilities, might include: (1) regular class placement with supplementary aides and services provided as needed in that environment; (2) regular class placement for most of the school day with itinerant service by a special education teacher either in or out of the regular classroom; (3) regular class placement for most of the school day with instruction provided by a special education teacher in a resource classroom; (4) part-time special education class placement in a regular public school or alternative setting; and (5) special education class placement or special education services provided outside the regular class for most or all of the school day, either in a regular public school or alternative setting, such as an approved private school or other private facility licensed to serve children with disabilities. Some students may also be eligible for extended school year services if determined needed by their IEP teams in accordance with Chapter 711 regulations.

Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 14, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP Team, and updated annually, thereafter, the IEP must include appropriate measurable postsecondary goals and transition services needed to assist in reaching those goals. Keystone Academy Charter School must invite the child to the IEP team meeting at which the transition plan is developed.

Services for Protected Handicapped Students, Other Than Special Education Services

Under Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, some school age children with disabilities who do not meet the eligibility criteria outlined above might nevertheless be eligible for special protections and for adaptations and accommodations if they have a mental or physical disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program and otherwise qualify under the applicable laws.

Keystone Academy Charter School must ensure that qualified handicapped students have equal opportunity to participate in the school program and activities to the maximum extent appropriate for each individual student. In compliance with applicable state and federal laws, Keystone Academy Charter School provides to each qualifying protected handicapped student without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities and to the extent required by these laws.

These services and protections for "protected handicapped students" may be distinct from those applicable to eligible or thought-to-be eligible students. Keystone Academy Charter School or the parent may initiate an evaluation if they believe a student is a protected handicapped student. For further information on the evaluation procedures and provision of services to protected handicapped students, parents should contact the school's Principal