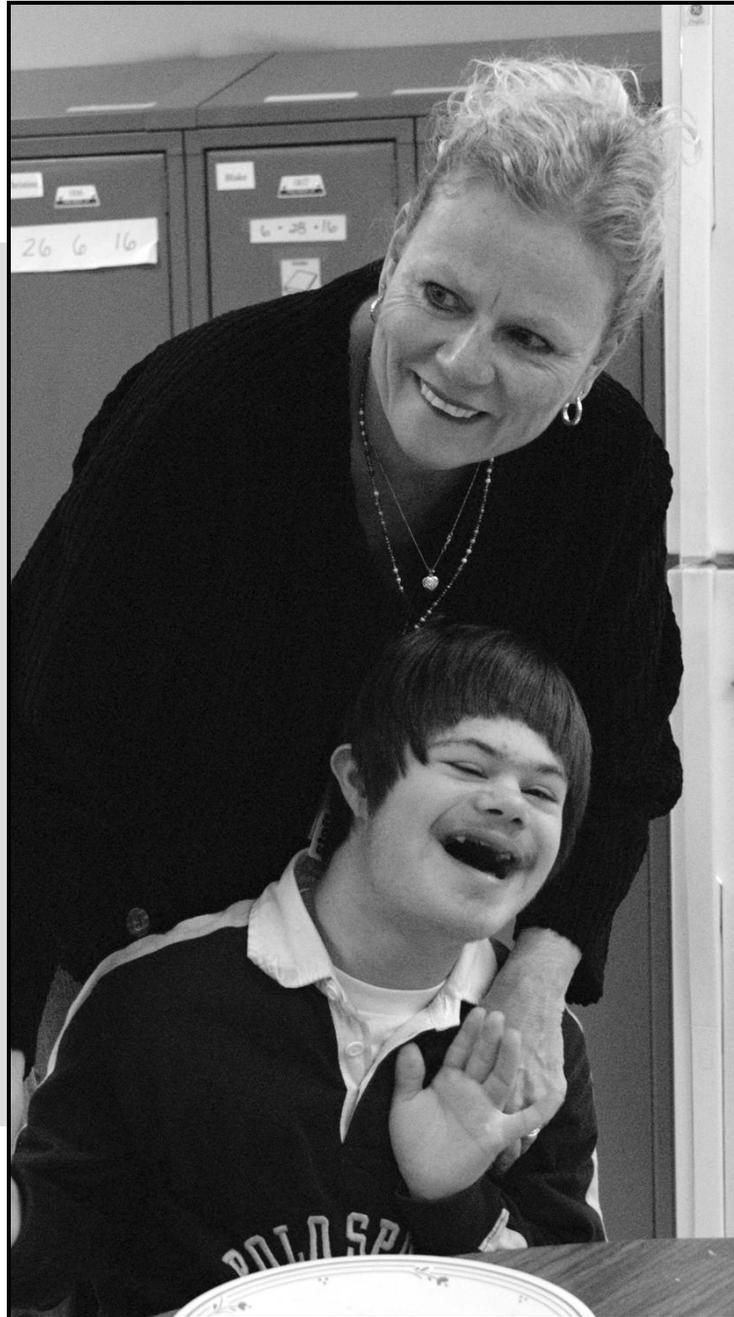


Lake Washington School District

Guide to Special Education



Lake Washington School District mission
Each student will graduate prepared to lead a rewarding, responsible
life as a contributing member of our community and greater society

Welcome to Lake Washington School District

The goal of this special education guide is to provide information about special education services in Lake Washington School District (LWSD). This guide provides important resources and information on how you can get involved and stay connected to your student’s school community.

It’s important to remember that special education is not a “place,” in Lake Washington School District, but rather it’s a set of services. At times, the journey in special education can be confusing and overwhelming, but information can provide you with a set of powerful advocacy tools that can help every student realize their potential and enhance the unique nature of each child.

The creation of this handbook was a collaborative effort between the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) and district staff.

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Getting Started

District and special education terms and definitions

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act Civil rights law that protects people with disabilities from discrimination.
DDD	Division of Developmental Disabilities Public agency that offers various services to qualified individuals with disabilities. (more on page 6)
ESY	Extended School Year services
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education Legal requirement for school districts to provide free appropriate public education to qualified students with disabilities, regardless of disability.
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Federal law ensuring services to children with disabilities. Governs how states and public agencies provide education to youth with disabilities.
IEP	Individual Education Program Personalized education plans for students with disabilities. (more on page 3)
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment Requirement to educate special needs children with children who are not disabled, to the extent possible.
LWSD	Lake Washington School District
OSPI	Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction Oversees public education in Washington state. (more on page 6)
OT	Occupational Therapy Focuses on daily living, fine motor skills and sensory integration.
PAC	Parent Advisory Committee Group of parents/guardians and district staff who work on special needs issues and projects. (more on page 5)
PT	Physical Therapy Evaluation and treatment of physical disabilities to improve the use of bones, muscles, joints and nerves through exercise.
PTSA/PTA	Parent Teacher Student Association/Parent Teacher Association Advocacy organization that promotes the improvement of health, welfare and education of children. (more on page 5)
Related Services	Specialized services provided by the district for qualified students, such as physical therapy (PT) and occupational therapy (OT). (more on page 3)
SDI	Specially Designed Instruction Appropriate instructional adaptations that meet the needs of eligible students. (more on page 3)

Section 504	Part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that protects qualified individuals from discrimination based on their disability. Allows for accommodations and/or modifications so that children with disabilities can participate in the general education classroom with access to general education curriculum.
SLP	Speech Language Pathology Therapy that focuses on improvement of communication problems.
WASL	Washington Assessment of Student Learning Standards-based test for public school students in Washington state.

More information

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

The federal laws in the reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004, lay out the rules and regulations for the Individual Education Program (IEP). An IEP is created for a student when the special education evaluation reveals areas of need. A team makes decisions about the student's IEP. The IEP team consists of:

- parent(s)/guardian(s)
- special education teacher(s)
- general education teacher(s) – if student participates in regular education environment
- representative of local educational agency
- individual who can interpret instructional implications of evaluation results

The team may also include a counselor, therapists, behavior specialist and the student, when appropriate. The team works together to create Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) and goals for the student. The IEP is reviewed at least once every year to measure the student's progress. Parent(s)/guardian(s) can request an IEP meeting at any time.

Related Services

Some students qualify for one or more related services, including:

- speech language pathology (SLP)
- occupational therapy (OT)
- physical therapy (PT)
- vision therapy
- audiology services
- psychological services
- counseling
- orientation and mobility services
- school health services
- social work services
- transportation
- recreation
- parent/guardian counseling and training

These are supportive services to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education. Related services are carried out at the student's school, but may include pullout, direct service or consultation and/or collaborative work with the student's team.

Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)

Specially Designed Instruction is organized and planned instruction, which adapts, as appropriate, to the needs of eligible students. The content and methodology or delivery of instruction addresses the unique needs that result from the student's disability. SDI is provided by either qualified special education staff or designed and supervised by staff and carried out by general education staff, as determined by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Student progress is monitored and evaluated by special education staff.

Navigating

Preparation and participation

Preparation

Research

There are many resources on the Web to help you learn about special education laws and advocacy. Local and national organizations also provide resources. See the “Road to Resources” section (page 7) of this guide for suggested Web sites and organizations.

Meet the teachers

Get to know your student’s teachers at the beginning of the school year. Communicate with them early on by sending a letter to introduce yourself and your child. Consider making a “Me Book” about your child with photographs and brief descriptions of his/her interests and strengths. Talk to the teacher(s) about what works and doesn’t work with your child.

Participation

Transition process

As your student transitions through elementary and secondary schools, you will receive information that is appropriate to the child's transition age. It will help to guide you through the transition process and provide information on the curriculum for the next level. When the child transitions from a birth-to-three program into the school setting the emphasis switches from a medical model to an educational model.

Measurement of student progress

Student progress and attainment of goals is reported to parents/guardians at the same time that the general education students receive progress reports, unless otherwise noted in the student's IEP. Contact your student’s teacher and/or IEP team any time if you have questions about how your child is doing. Keep records of progress reports, tests, IEPs and communications with staff. Evaluations are done every three years.

Participate in student development

Your input is important! Be involved in your child’s development by collaborating with educational staff and building relationships with your child’s IEP team. To get involved in your student’s education:

- Identify the PTSA special needs liaison at your school and attend monthly PTSA Special Needs Group meetings (see page 5)
- Attend your student’s IEP meetings regularly
- Join PTSA, attend class field trips, participate in school activities and volunteer in the school
- Join a local parent/guardian support group (see pages 6 and 7)

Dealing with concerns and dispute resolution

Follow the Ladders of Support when you have questions or concerns regarding your student.

Ladders of Support

1. Start with the special education and/or general education teacher and/or school therapist
2. School principal
3. Special Services Learning Community Coordinator*
4. Director of Special Education
5. Superintendent
6. Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

*The district divides the schools into learning communities based on the high school into which they feed. The four learning communities are: Eastlake, Juanita, Lake Washington and Redmond. Each learning community has a special services learning community coordinator.

Avenues of Involvement

District connections

Groups for parents/guardians

Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

The Parent Advisory Committee consists of LWSD parents/guardians whose children receive special services and/or classroom support. District special education staff is also part of the committee. Anyone who wishes to give input on matters concerning students with special needs or wants to assist with projects is welcome to attend.

Visit the district Web site: www.lwsd.org for meeting dates and times and for PAC contact information. Go to For Parents > Special Education.

PTSA Special Needs Group

The Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) Special Needs Group consists of LWSD parents/guardians whose children receive special services and/or classroom support. The goals of the group include:

- parent/guardian networking and support
- parent/guardian education and advocacy
- support for and collaboration with district staff

Everyone is welcome to attend the informative PTSA Special Needs Group monthly meetings.

Dates: Fourth Tuesday of every month (except December and June)
Time: 7-8:30 p.m.
Location: L.E. Scarr Resource Center
16250 NE 74th St., Redmond, WA 98052
Phone: (425) 702-3200

PTSA Special Needs Group contact information: www.lwsd.org. Go to For Parents > Special Education.

E-mail group for parents/guardians

The Arc of King County, an organization serving individuals with disabilities and their families, has an e-mail group of local parents/guardians with special needs children. The e-mail group serves as a tool for sharing ideas and resources. To join the group, send an e-mail to p2p@arcofkingcounty.org.

Contact information

Lake Washington School District
16250 N.E. 74th Street, Redmond, WA 98052
Phone: (425) 702-3200
Web: www.lwsd.org

District and school contact information, as well as information about transitioning from school to the community after graduation is on the school district Web site.

PTSA Special Needs Liaison

Every school has a liaison between the PTSA Special Needs Group and the parents/guardians of students who receive special services on that campus. Liaisons also help direct families to the resources that they need. They keep families informed about monthly meetings and also work with the school PTSA to ensure that special needs students have access to campus programs.

Road to Resources

Local and national organizations

Information and resources for families and children with disabilities.

Local organizations

The Arc of King County

Provides resources and support for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families

Web site: www.arcofkingcounty.org

Phone: (206) 364-6337 or (877) 964-0600

- Parent-to-Parent program connects those with similar disabilities: (206) 957-7080
- Community Connections resource guide www.arcofkingcounty.org/guide
- King County Parent Coalition www.arcofkingcounty.org/kcpc
- information and referral service
- support for families of different ethnicities
- information for adults with disabilities/supported living services

Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)

Provides services to qualified individuals with disabilities, such as Medicaid, family support and respite (care-taking)

Web site: www1.dshs.wa.gov/ddd

Phone: Region 4 – (206) 568-5700 or (800) 314-3296

- resources and trainings
- rules and laws
- State Advisory Council
- Informing Families Building Trust: www.informingfamilies.org, a coalition of DDD and other key organizations

The Father's Network

Local group that supports fathers of special needs children

Web site: www.fathersnetwork.org

Phone: (425) 747-4004

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

State agency that oversees public education in Washington

Web site: www.k12.wa.us (Go to Programs > Special Education)

Phone: (360) 725-6075

- procedural safeguards, Federal IDEA 2004 regulations
- Special Education Ombudsman (a support and resource person)
- recent news in the field of special education and resource links
- dispute resolution information

Sibshops – Sibling Support Project

Support for siblings of children with special needs

Web site: www.seattlechildrens.org (Go to: Child Health & Safety > Classes & Events. Click on Sibshops link under the heading: Children with Special Needs classes).

Phone: (206) 297-6368

Washington PAVE (Parents Are Vital in Education)

Provides information, training and support for parents/guardians and individuals with disabilities

Web site: www.washingtonpave.com

Phone: 1-800-5-PARENT (1-800-572-7368)

- understanding the educational system
- support and transition to adult life

National organizations

2-1-1 Call Center

A national help line that connects people with community services and volunteer opportunities

Web site: www.211.org

Phone: 2-1-1

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

Organization dedicated to improving educational outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities, including disabilities

Web site: www.ccc.sped.org

Phone: (703) 620-3660

- 17 divisions for specialized information
- special education publications, conferences and conventions

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities

National organization with disability information for all ages

Web site: www.nichcy.org

Phone: 1-800-695-0285

- resource information, publications
- resources to help locate organizations and agencies that address disability-related issues
- IDEA and No Child Left Behind information, as related to children with disabilities
- research-based information on effective educational practices

National Organization on Disability (NOD)

National organization that raises disability awareness through numerous programs

Web site: www.nod.org

Phone: 1-800-293-5960

- community involvement programs
- economic participation and access to independence information

Parent Advocacy Coalition for Education Rights (PACER) Center

National organization that helps to expand opportunities and enhance quality of life for children and young adults with disabilities and their families

Web site: www.pacer.org

Phone: (952) 838-9000

Wrightslaw

Leading Web site about special education law and advocacy

Web site: www.wrightslaw.com

- advocacy, federal laws, No Child Left Behind, IDEA 2004
- thousands of articles and free resources
- trainings and seminars
- Section 504 and IEP information

Yellow Pages for Kids with Disabilities

Service that enables you to find professionals, programs, organizations and support groups for people with disabilities in your state

Web site: www.yellowpagesforkids.com

- information and how to connect with other parents/guardians and professionals
- organizations and support groups in each state