

# **Resource Room Program at Light of the World Academy (LOTWA)**

## **Overview of Special Education Services**

Resource Room programs fall under the federal guidelines established in the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Improvement Act, (IDEIA), the MARSE or Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education and the auspices of Wayne RESA, our local education authority. At LOTWA, there is one room and one Resource Room teacher dedicated to the service of students certified with a special need. There are 13 certifications that fall under the guidelines of IDEA. A student serviced in special education can only have one of these certifications. Hours of need and the services to be provided are identified in the student's IEP or Individualized Education Program.

## **Delivery of Services**

Students seen in the resource room are all certified with a special need, thus they all have an Individualized Education Plan or IEP. Resource Room teachers develop and maintain a schedule that will indicate when a student will receive assistance from them. Schedules display when the teacher will be available to give assistance in the classroom and when the teacher will take a student out of the classroom for instruction. The implementation of their service delivery is attained in two ways, Pullout and Push-in.

### **Pull-out**

When students are seen as a Pullout the following format can be observed. Student(s) come to the resource room individually or in groups of two to four students. Upon arrival they either sign in or are signed in. They receive instruction in remediation, which is work on identified skills of need listed in their IEP or assistance with a skill associated with classroom instruction. Pullouts can also be at a teacher's request when a student is displaying signs of frustration with behaviors of disruption. A call can be made to the Resource Room teacher, who will either escort the student or the student can be sent to their room. It is a collaborative effort, which is implemented on an individual basis. The resource room teacher maintains documentation for this service, it is reported on progress reports and in progress notes. (All speech therapy services are Pullout service delivery)

### **Push-In**

This service is provided when the teacher/case manager goes to the general education classroom and provides services to the student on the skills being taught. This includes observations of classroom behaviors, work and demeanor as well as collaboration with teachers on accommodations to be implemented, lesson plan developments and other instructional strategies that can be implemented to assist the student in his/her progress. The Resource Room teacher also maintains documentation of this service. Some Resource Room teachers have set times when they will push-in; others are more informal with their push-in time.

## **Identification Protocol – Referral Process**

The missing link in many educational systems is the establishment of a supportive, student-centered learning environment in which professional, school, and community resources are identified and linked to address barriers to learning that confront our students. Thus reframing student learning and realigning support staff roles and functions to develop comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive approaches is the

missing link. The Instructional Support Team [IST] is a school-based group of people with a common mission – to strengthen and support students in the regular classroom who are having difficulty in school. The goal of the Instructional Support Team is to provide strategies and support through a regular education setting for the student. Teachers, school counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, and administrators are examples of some of the people who comprise the group that meet on a regular basis. Parents are particularly critical to the team, both in their participation and their input.

### **LOTWA Instructional Support Team Members [IST]**

Generally, the IST Team includes:

- Building Administrator
- Referring Teacher
- Resource Room Teacher
- Support staff member (School Psychologist, School Social Worker, Speech Therapist, Nurse, etc.)
- Parent
- Title I Instructor

#### Roles and Responsibilities

Parents: Provide information about the child's performance outside of the school setting; assist in establishing goals; provide information regarding the child's development in speech, gross and fine-motor skills, social skills, medical background, previous school history, family history and dynamics as they relate to child; oversee home study habits; specify aspects of educational program that can be supported at home.

Current Classroom Teacher: Help devise strategies for successful mainstreaming; provide team with information, as a result of working with student, for placement and evaluation purposes; show work samples that demonstrate student's area of need; provide team with information about student's strengths, weaknesses, learning style, and habits; state specific concerns in observable, measurable terms; describe strategies that have/have not been successful in effecting a change in areas of concern thus far; describe student's previous and current school information regarding placement, performance, and observation data/comments.

Resource Room Teacher: Observe in classroom; serve as advocate for child; monitor services provided; assist in formulation of educational plan; assist regular classroom teacher in introducing pre-referral strategies or interventions designed to resolve areas of concern prior to initiating a formal referral to special education.

Other/Previous Classroom Teacher: Provide suggestions, recommendations, and opinions based upon previous experiences and insights/knowledge about dealing with similar areas of concern; offer specific assistance to student's teacher; assist team in developing successful mainstreaming program.

Administrator: Discuss available program options at school; provide additional details during IST regarding teacher's roles and responsibilities, laws, and rights that need to be considered in the process; serve as liaison between family and school.

School Psychologist: Consult and collaborate with other members of the IST; use a variety of observational and interview techniques to enhance understanding of academic and behavioral problems. Suggest various intervention techniques and assist in evaluation of the effectiveness of those interventions.

School Social Worker: Consult and collaborate with members of the IST; use a variety of observational and interview techniques for the purpose of understanding behavioral, emotional, environmental, and social areas, and implement various intervention techniques.

Speech Therapist: Consult and collaborate with members of the IST; use a variety of observational and interview techniques for the purpose of understanding language development, articulation, voice, and fluency; and implement various intervention techniques.

Title I Instructor: Engage in primary prevention by intervening proactively, before a disorder occurs. Identifying and assessing student needs based on collaborative efforts with the IST mitigate the need for special education teaching.

### **Responsibilities of the Instructional Support Team**

1. Coordinate and identify ways to improve existing resources and acquire additional resources.
2. Address and recommend changes in the classroom and school practices, procedures, and programs that promote a positive and productive school climate.
3. Provide and facilitate support services based on identified needs.
4. Develop intervention strategies to address individual student needs that support classroom instruction.
5. Assist in the development of intervention plans for students who have failed to achieve academic benchmarks.
6. Assist with implementing programs that support student and family transitions, i.e., new students and families, grade-to-grade moves, and before- and after-school activities.
7. Provide crisis prevention, intervention, and follow-up.
8. Review data to create, monitor, and assess programs and services.
9. Provide families with assistance, resources, and information to encourage and enhance total child development and learning.
10. Identify linkages with community programs that support and enable learning.
11. Provide pre-referral strategies and facilitate, where necessary, special education referrals and Section 504 referrals.
12. Monitor interventions and programs to ensure they are functioning efficiently and effectively.
13. Collaborate with families and community stakeholders to evolve systems for (a) promoting healthy development and preventing problems; (b) intervening early to address problems as soon after onset as feasible, and (c) assisting children and youth with chronic and severe problems.
14. Address school-wide global issues.

Student needs will be supported through the interventions determined by the Instructional Support Team [IST]. The IST process will identify whether the concern about the student is academic and/or behavioral in nature. Interventions will be established by the team and agreed upon by parents and teachers. The interventions will be in place for a minimum of 30 academic days. Students will be assessed weekly in order to monitor progress. After 20 academic days, students who make expected growth will no longer be a part of the intervention process and will continue to work with the teacher in the classroom. Students who do not make sufficient growth will either begin a different research-based program or spend more time working on the same program as a second intervention. The IST staff and parents will meet to discuss interventions and progress before the 30 academic day period begins. At the end of the second 30 academic days, the IST and parents will meet to discuss the outcomes and review evidence of student's progress. It should be noted that if the student's skills start to emerge the IST staff and parents could decide to continue with interventions for another 30 academic days.

### **Evaluation Process**

If the student does not make progress at this point, he/she will be referred for Special Education testing at the consent of the parent. A full and individualized evaluation will be conducted to determine whether the child has a disability and the nature and extent of the special education and related services that the child needs. The child will be assessed in all areas of need regardless of the suspected area of disability, including as needed: assessment of health, vision, hearing, social and emotional skills, general

intelligence, academic performance, communication skills and motor skills. The determination of needed screenings and evaluations is based upon the unique needs of the student and not solely on the requirements for the suspected disability category. Persons from varying disciplines including a school psychologist, speech and language therapist, physical therapist, audiologist and/or occupational therapist may conduct evaluations. In addition, persons trained in the area of hearing or visual impairment may also provide assessments services, if needed. Before making attributions of disability within the student, the evaluation team will consider all other factors that could explain the performance patterns and the lack of student response to instruction. The team will consider the student's progress in the context of his/her opportunity, past experiences, sensory, health, language culture, and developmental challenges.

The comprehensive evaluation of the student will include normative measures to advance the understanding of why the student continues to have difficulty. The student will also be tested with an individually administered standardized achievement test to validate the samples of classroom assessment data with normative data. The test data are then analyzed relative to research based clinical profiles of special education disabilities to determine a goodness of fit with existing models of disabilities. The assessment will then lead to the development of educationally, behavioral or medical relevant recommendations for the student, whether determined eligible as a student with a disability or not. The evaluation will lead to appropriate recommendations as to the best plan for instruction. Recommendations will not be limited to special education supports and programs and may include recommendations such as classroom accommodations or continued participation in response to intervention targeted small group instruction.

### **Multidisciplinary Team Meeting –**

Once the evaluation process is complete and the findings of the evaluation have been reported per federal and state guidelines, the information and recommendations are shared with the parents through an IEP/MET meeting. The proposed case manager or MET team leader will facilitate the meeting with the person who completed the psychological evaluation and as many of the multidisciplinary team members as needed (identified in MARSE). The parent is also present at this meeting. The outcome of all assessments will be reviewed and discussed with the parent. The group also discusses which eligibility will best meet the needs and recommendations for implementation. If eligibility is not substantiated, the parent is informed. They are given Procedural Safeguards with an explanation of their rights and responsibilities when the student is found eligible or ineligible. Each child in special education must have a three-year re-evaluation of services. This meeting is held whenever the REED dictates additional evaluation is needed to determine a student's eligibility for services.

### **IEP – Individual Education Plan**

The IEP is a legal document that includes the student's present levels of educational performance, a list of measurable goals and objectives; and related services, such as curriculum modifications and supplementary aids. Also included is an explanation of how often the student will participate in the general education population, when the services and modifications will begin, and the location of those services and modifications. Whether a student is found to be eligible or ineligible, an IEP is held for the student. If the student is ineligible, the first page of the IEP is completed and parents will be explained their rights and responsibilities as identified in the Procedural Safeguards. If the student is eligible, the IEP is completed with identified steps to be implemented to assure the student's needs are being addressed. An IEP can be called anytime that progress is not moving as expected or moving faster than expected but an IEP must be convened every 365 days. An IEP specifies the academic and behavioral plan that teachers and related staff will implement to ensure student progress. It is the academic and behavioral plan that specifies accommodations and specific strategies that will allow a student to reach their identified goals and objectives. Once these objectives are reached, revision is needed to provide

further growth. On the initial IEP, the parent must give authorization for implementation, on subsequent IEP's the parent's participation is requested but they don't have to authorize treatment. On every IEP the district must authorize services to be implemented. IEP's are always geared towards the student's needs.

Staff utilized with responsibilities

### **Special Education Director –**

- Oversees the work of every staff person providing services to students who are identified with a special need
- Ensure areas of compliance are met, including student counts
- Reviews the applications of students applying for enrollment
- Meets with administration to collaborate on services at the policy and procedure level
- Develops policies and procedures related to the delivery of special education services
- Facilitates professional development for all teachers, especially Resource Room
- Develops and implements budgetary items
- Participate in Human Resources activities
- Attends METs and IEPs and can serve as MET team leader and/or data representative

### **Special Education Coordinator –**

- Coordinates activities of staff and students
- Maintain calendar of REED/MET/IEP meetings schedule
- Checks electronic software for IEP compliance
- Reviews PLAAFPs and accommodations to ensure they are written for clarity
- Serves as a resource to teachers, special and general education
- Coordinates reports and information for the district
- Works with RtI Coordinator to identify students who are not making progress
- Completes reports
- Fills in for Special Education Director when unavailable
- Facilitates regular meetings with staff to update them on changes in procedure
- Attends IEPs and can serve as Data Representative
- Completes REED for all students being referred for special education services

### **Resource Room Teacher –**

- Serves students on his/her caseload
- Provides and implements accommodations and modifications
- Develops the IEP with goals and objectives in collaboration with related team members
- Maintains contact with parents, completes progress reports
- Schedules and chairs IEP meetings
- Completes REED for all students receiving special education services on caseload
- Collaborates with teachers on instructional planning
- Participates in professional development and facilitates professional development activities related to IEP implementation
- Delivers individual instruction to students

### **Special Education Para-professional –**

- Delivers individual and small group instruction as directed by general education and/or special education teachers in classroom and in the resource room

- Completes individual packets for students
- Provides individual tutoring and remediation with students

#### **Speech and Language Therapist –**

- Provides screenings and assessments to students referred by teacher's, parent's or the RtI team
- Member of the MET team
- Develops IEP if student is eligible from assessment information
- Develops goals and objectives related to language
- Consults with outside practitioners regarding a student's progress release must be signed by parent
- Services student as identified in IEP

#### **Social Worker –**

- Provides screenings and assessments to students referred by teacher's, parent's or the RtI
- Member of the MET team
- Collaborates with all stakeholders to provide social-emotional activities to increase positive outcomes in the classroom, school and/or home setting
- Available to see students who are not in special education
- Available to provide crisis intervention to individual students and small groups
- Facilitates professional development on ADHD, ADD and other behavioral concerns as presented
- Member of the Special Education team
- Develops goals and objectives for students during the IEP process