



**DECORAH COMMUNITY
SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL EDUCATION
SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN**

2024

SECTION I:

DECORAH COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

The vision of the Decorah Community School District is to create a student-centered environment where...

- ... individual needs are addressed
- ... cooperation and teamwork are valued
- ... competent professionals lead
- ... community partnerships flourish
- ... a commitment to excellence prevails,
- ... and lifelong learning continues.

Education is the responsibility of all residents of the Decorah Community. We believe in creating a student-centered environment, where individual needs are addressed, and students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.

We value cooperative teamwork among students, teachers, support staff, parents, administrators, and community. This begins with an openness and mutual respect, honest listening and expression, the flexibility to respond to change, and the ability to compromise. The strengths of each school and community member should be recognized and used to their fullest potential.

We believe that community resources should be maximized to meet student needs and professional development of school staff should be encouraged. All citizens of the Decorah Community School system should have a commitment to excellence and a shared responsibility to support lifelong learning.

Decorah Community School District recognizes that some students have unique learning needs. The District will provide an appropriate educational program and related services to students entitled to Special Education from preschool to graduation and/or twenty-one (21) years of age, in accordance with Iowa State Law. Entitled students will be non-categorical, and disabilities will not be identified. All students shall be educated to the maximum extent appropriate in the general education setting as determined by the students' Individualized Education Program (IEP), where activities, instruction, and remediation naturally occurs for students of similar ages without learning differences. Entitled students will be provided equal opportunity to participate in co-curricular activities. The appropriate education for each entitled student shall be determined by the IEP team and written in the student's IEP. The District intends to provide educational programs enabling all students to be successful learners. If progress cannot be made within the District's program, then the District may secure an appropriate program outside the District through a contractual agreement.

Children from birth through age 2 with significant developmental delays or a known condition that has a high probability of causing developmental delays are served through Early ACCESS, Iowa's system of Early Intervention Services coordinated by the Keystone Area Education Agency (AEA). These children are provided services through the AEA and other community partners, such as Child Health Specialty Clinics and the Department of Human Services. The school district will work with the AEA to plan for appropriate services for children eligible for early childhood special education services at the time of transition from Early ACCESS. This is done to ensure a smooth

transition. Children ages 3 through 5 who are eligible are provided comprehensive special education services through the public education system.

Decorah Community School District provides a cooperative Special Education program with surrounding school districts in Keystone AEA. If one of these districts does not offer an educational program to meet the unique needs of a student(s), Decorah Community School District may consider the provision of educational service for the student(s) through a contractual agreement on a tuition basis.

The Superintendent and the Area Education Agency Director of Special Education shall be responsible for providing and making provisions for appropriate Special Education Programs. The Superintendent is responsible for filing the District's Special Education policies and procedures with the AEA. Where applicable, the Special Education Procedures and Guidelines developed by Keystone AEA, and adopted by the District, will be used to implement this policy. This plan is a District-wide initiative and applies to all students.

Students entitled to Special Education shall be required to meet the requirements stated in the Board policy and their IEPs for graduation.

SECTION II:

DECORAH COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT SPECIAL EDUCATION CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

General Education with Consultation: Consulting Teacher services are indirect services provided by a certified special education teacher to a general education teacher in adjusting the learning environment and/or modifying instructional methods using specially designed instructional strategies to meet the individual needs of a student(s) with an IEP receiving instruction in the general education classroom.

Co-Teaching Services: Co-teaching services are specially designed instruction and core academic instruction provided to students with and without IEPs. The special education teacher and general education teacher provide these services in partnership to meet the content and skill needs of students in the general education classroom. These services take shape in a variety of manners. For example, teachers co-plan, divide the class, and provide instruction to smaller groups, or co-plan and then co-instruct different content components. Co-teaching services provide access to the general education curriculum with the necessary support for student success while continuing to provide core instruction in the general education setting.

General Education with Direct Special Education support outside the General Education Classroom: Services are specially designed direct instruction provided to an individual student with an Individual Education Plan or a group of students with Individual Education Plans by a certified special education teacher. These services are to provide additional instruction via the general education curriculum as documented in the student's IEP.

Special Education Services with support in the General Education Classroom: Services are specially designed direct instruction provided to an individual student with an IEP or a group of students with IEPs by a certified special education teacher. The student will receive their education in the general education and special education classrooms. One or more of the general education skill areas are taught in the special education classroom with goals and expectations aligned with the IEP. Students served through this model are involved in the general education curriculum, as appropriate, and receive specially designed instruction as documented in their IEP.

Special Education Services in a Special Education Classroom: Services are specially designed with direct instruction provided to an individual student with an IEP or a group of students with IEPs by a certified special education teacher in a special education setting. It is designed to provide a curriculum based on the unique needs of the student(s) as documented in their IEPs. Students have access to the general education curriculum and may participate in the general education setting with the necessary support.

Alternative School Settings:

1. Services may be provided through home instruction, hospital, and residential settings as determined appropriate by the student's IEP Team and considering other extenuating circumstances.
2. Crossroads Academy provides educational services for students needing social and behavioral support in a separate facility on a tuition basis. Enrollment in this setting is based on the need determined by the student's IEP Team and/or as an emergency alternative school placement. Each student's IEP Team will meet regularly to determine his/her progress and plan gradual integrated educational services into the public school setting, as appropriate. Integration experiences via general and/or special education will be provided by the Decorah Community School District until the student is ready to transition back into his/her home school district. (DCSD establishes a 28E agreement with Crossroads Academy, a division of Clinicare

Corporation, annually. Crossroads Academy will accept students from the DCSD, and both parties may mutually agree to admit students from other school districts in the area.)

3. Additional alternative educational settings in the area may also be utilized. These programs may provide more tailored, educational approaches to meet student needs. An example includes, but is not limited to, Key Connect in Lansing, Iowa.

Note:

Students may receive different services at multiple points along the continuum or a combination of services, based on their IEP. The options available may vary at any given time based on the student population's needs.

DCSD PRESCHOOL CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

Definitions:

The definitions for “general education” and “special class”, as used in school age, do not accurately define the classroom or service required for preschool children. The Decorah Community School District must adhere to the following terms and definitions to describe instructional services and placements for preschool children:

- **Early Childhood Special Education Program** – More than 50% children with IEPs.
- **Regular Early Childhood Program with Teacher holding Dual Endorsements:** The child is served in the regular early childhood classroom with a teacher who holds a valid practitioner’s license issued by the Board of Educational Examiners that includes prekindergarten and early childhood special education. The teacher is responsible for direct instruction, preparation of materials, adaptations, and accommodations as specified in the IEP. The teacher with the dual endorsement is responsible for implementing and monitoring the child’s progress according to the IEP.

The Decorah Community School District will provide access to this continuum for all eligible individuals based on their IEPs. Services will be provided within the district’s preschool program, the Head Start program, and/or a community based preschool with a teacher who has the appropriate endorsements. When instructional services are provided through a contractual agreement with other districts and/or other agencies, the district will examine preschool services annually to determine the availability of regular early childhood programs within the district.

Preschool Program Standards

The Iowa Department of Education has defined the Preschool Program Standards as the following:

1. Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (QPPS);
2. Head Start Program Performance Standards; or
3. National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation

Early childhood special education and regular early childhood programs providing instructional services to children on an IEP must implement Preschool Program Standards as defined by the Iowa Department of Education. The Decorah Community School District will provide instructional services through both Regular Early Childhood programs and Early Childhood Special Education programs that meet Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards or Head Start Program Performance Standards.

DCSD PRESCHOOL-AGED CASELOAD DETERMINATION GUIDE

Preschool-aged classroom caseload determinations will follow the QPPS guidelines.

Teacher–Child Ratios Within Group Size

(Includes teachers, assistant teachers, and associates)

Group Size	Adult to 3 and/or 4 Year Old Student Ratio
12	1:6
14	1:7
16	1:8
18	1:9
20	1:10

Notes:

- In a mixed-aged preschool class of 2.5 year-olds to 5-year-olds, no more than four children under the age of 4 years old may attend school in the same classroom at the same time. The ratios within group size for the predominant age group apply. If infants and toddlers are in a mixed age group, the ratio for the youngest child applies.

- Ratios are to be lower when one or more children in the group needs additional assistance to fully participate in the program:

- Because of ability, language fluency, developmental age or stage or other factors **or**
- To meet other requirements of QPPS Verification.

- A group or classroom refers to the number of children assigned for most of the day to a teacher or a team of teaching staff and who occupy an individual classroom or well-defined space that prevents intermingling of children from different groups within a larger room or areas.

- Group sizes as stated are ceilings, regardless of the number of staff. Student specific associates are not considered in the teacher to child ratios. Regardless of a specific student’s associate needs, the child is counted in the maximum group size.

DCSD SCHOOL-AGED CASELOAD DETERMINATION GUIDE

Caseloads will be tentatively set in the spring for the following year by the building principals and other administrative staff. Caseloads may be modified based on summer registration and actual fall enrollments. In determining special education teacher caseloads, the Decorah Community School District will use the following values to assign points to the programs of each eligible individual receiving an instructional program in the district.

A teacher assigned a caseload with more than twenty-five (25) total points will need to review the caseload needs with the building principal and the special education director.

SECTION III:

DCSD SPECIAL EDUCATION CASELOAD MONITORING

Caseloads will be reviewed and monitored to determine that each student's educational needs are being met. The District Special Education Director and the Building Principal shall monitor teacher caseloads. Reviews will take place as follows:

- a. Prior to the onset of a school year
- b. When there is a change in a teacher's caseload
- c. At the end of each school year
- d. By teacher request

PROCEDURAL STEPS FOR CASELOAD CONCERNS:

1. Attempt informal problem solving strategies with the district's special education director and/or building principal in relation to caseload concerns.
2. A written request for caseload review is submitted to the building principal and special education director.
3. The request is reviewed for clarification with the building principal/special education director. The building principal tries to resolve the concern at this point.
4. If the caseload concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved, the request is then sent to the caseload review team. (A caseload review team will consist of all the building special education teachers, the building administrator, the district special education director, and an AEA representative.)
5. Within 10 working days, the caseload review team will review the request and make recommendations to the individual's building principal.
6. Upon receipt of the caseload review team's recommendation, the building principal will meet within 5 working days to review the information and discuss it with the individual. The written determination will be provided to the individual.
7. If the person requesting the review disagrees with the determination, he or she may appeal to the Decorah Community School District Superintendent of Schools.
8. The Superintendent will meet with the personnel involved and provide a written decision.
9. If the person requesting the review disagrees with the determination, he or she may appeal to the AEA Director of Special Education.
10. The AEA Director/designee will meet with personnel involved and will provide a written recommendation to the Decorah Community School District Board of Education for their consideration.
11. The Decorah Community School District Board of Education will meet with personnel involved and will provide a written decision.

In reviewing a teacher's caseload concerns, the answers and dialogue generated by the questions in the: **DCSD SPECIAL EDUCATION CASELOAD MONITORING FORM** (page 10) of this document, will be considered for the recommendation.

DCSD SPECIAL EDUCATION CASELOAD MONITORING FORM

How many IEP students are on your roster? _____ **(1 point each)**

(Each IEP for which you are the roster teacher, responsible for IEP writing, IEP meetings, entering progress monitoring and reporting to parents.)

How many students on your roster require 3 or more hours/periods of direct instruction per day?

(This does not include co-teaching.) _____ **(1 point each)**

How many shared students do you serve? _____ **(.5 points each)**

(Responsible for writing a goal, progress monitoring or providing specially designed instruction, and reporting to parents. This includes Crossroads students. This does not include students who are on your roster.)

How many students on your roster have a three-year Re-evaluation? _____ **(.25 points each)**

How many students on your roster require a Senior Exit in addition to review or three year Re-evaluation meeting? _____ **(.25 points each)**

How many students on your roster have transition assessments? _____ **(.25 points each)**

(Students 13 years and older)

How many periods do you co-teach? _____ **(1 point each)**

How many paraprofessionals require supervision and collaboration? _____ **(.5 points each)**

How many students on your roster participate in Iowa Alternate Assessment? _____ **(.5 points each)**

How many students on your roster participate in the Early Literacy Alternate Assessment? _____ **(.5 points each)**

How many students on your roster have a Behavior Intervention Plan? _____ **(1 point each)**

How many students on your roster require Assistive Technology that you manage? _____ **(.5 point each)**

(If another school/AEA employee is responsible for this please indicate.)

In reviewing teacher caseload concerns, these are items that will also be considered:

How many grade levels do you serve?

How many goal areas do you monitor for each student?

How many preparation periods do you have?

How many buildings do you serve?

How much time per week is devoted to assistive technology needs?

How many associates, with whom you work, are in a new position?

How many students require completion of Medicaid paperwork?

How many students require more than one IEP meeting per year?

How many IEPs have you had to amend during the school year?

How many students depend on an adult to take care of physical and/or health needs? (i.e. feeding, toileting)

How many general education periods/classes do you teach?

How many students receive additional services, in which you need to consult with providers, and provide supportive instruction for these services? This includes work experience, speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, vision services, hearing services, and social work services.

SECTION IV:

DECORAH COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESS FOR DETERMINATION OF SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN EFFECTIVENESS

The Decorah Community School District will examine Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) data, district-wide assessment data, and student progress on IEP goals to determine the effectiveness of the service delivery plan. If the district meets the requirements or shows growth in each area, the delivery system will be considered effective. If the district does not meet the requirements, the district will work in collaboration with the State and AEA to develop an action plan.

Individual student progress on IEP goals will be reviewed and discussed on a regular and on-going basis (at minimum every 2 weeks) by the special education and general education teacher(s) along with the AEA consultant and school administrator as appropriate. This review aims to determine if adequate progress is being made, if any adjustment in instruction is needed, or if other targeted or intensive interventions are needed. (Note: Goals, proficiency criteria, or LRE changes must occur through an IEP team meeting.)

Each school in the district will review student progress monitoring, formative, and/or summative evaluations. IEP subgroup growth and achievement data will be reviewed and discussed by teams including special education and general education teachers. Each school will develop a school-based plan to close the achievement gap. These plans will be monitored regularly at the school level and at the district level at least annually. If this process creates the need to revise the DDSDP, the district will follow the process to revise and readopt the DDSDP.

District and AEA Special Education Director Checklist for Requirements

District	Requirements	AEA Special Education Director
	Development of the committee with appropriate representation	
	AEA represented by Director appointee	
	Description of special education instructional services include full continuum	
	Caseload descriptions includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A definition of teacher caseload (e.g., number of students, number of points) · Who will monitor caseloads · How often caseloads will be monitored 	
	Description of procedures for resolving caseload concerns	
<hr style="width: 40%; display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"/> AEA Special Education Director Signature <hr style="width: 40%; display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"/> Date		
	Description of how the district will address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Individual student progress monitoring and analysis of achievement data ● IEP subgroup achievement data ● SPP/APR targets ● LEA determinations ● Plan evaluation and effectiveness 	
	Final approval by the school board including input from public comments	
	Plan entered in C-Plan and certified by September 15 of the year following the site visit	
	AEA certifies the plan in C-Plan	
	Assurances certified by the district annually by September 15	
	Assurances certified by the EA only for the year the district has reviewed and readopted their plan	

SECTION V:

**PROCESS UTILIZED TO DEVELOP
SPECIAL EDUCATION DELIVERY SYSTEM**

1. The delivery system was developed in accordance with Iowa Administrative Code rule 41.408(2)c.
2. Members selected for the committee were:
 - Brad Hurst, High School Principal
 - Carolin Remmen, Carrie Lee Elementary and Middle School Special Education Teacher and Behavior Interventionist
 - Chelsey Kephart, Parent
 - John Dunt, High School Special Education Teacher
 - Jonathon Koch, Carrie Lee Elementary Special Education Teacher
 - Kelly Farley, Middle School General Education Teacher
 - Megan McWilliams, AEA Representative
 - Megan Reinhardt, John Cline Elementary Special Education Teacher and Interventionist
 - Sarah Elsbernd, Special Education Director
 - Sara Hopkins, AEA Representative
 - Shannon Tieskoetter, John Cline General Education Teacher
 - Shanna Putnam Dibble, Early Childhood Director
3. The first meeting was held November 9, 2023. A rough draft was reviewed and edited with members of the committee.
4. The copy of the rough draft was sent to team members for review.
5. The second meeting was held December 4, 2023. Members discussed and edited the plan.
6. The opportunity for the public to view the plan at the DCSD Central Administration Office and provide comment on the plan was posted on the DCSD website and published in Decorah Newspapers between December 6, 2023 and January 10, 2024. No public comment was given.
7. The completed plan was submitted to Keystone AEA for approval on January 17, 2024. Annette Hyde, Keystone AEA, Director of Special Education approved the plan on January 21, 2024.
8. The plan was submitted to the Decorah Community School Board for approval. The Decorah Community School District School Board approved the completed plan on February 12, 2024.