



Special Education

By Patty Cummings, FPS Assistant Director of Special Education

What's Next After Qualification?

In a [Feature Column by FPS Director of Special Education Patty Cummings](#) published last month, the three prongs to qualify for special education services were described. So, what happens after a student qualifies for special education services?

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) requires Individual Education Plan (IEP) teams to review individual student data to create goals that focus on building student skills. These goals can be academically or behaviorally based. Specially designed instruction (SDI), which is designed and monitored by certified special education teachers and/or speech-language pathologists, is the vehicle for students to build the lagging skill.

IDEA Sec. 300.39 (b) (3) states, "Specially designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate, to the needs of the child, the *content, methodology, or delivery of instruction*:

- To address the unique needs of the child that results from the child's disability; and
- To ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that he or she can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children."

According to IDEA, the intent of SDI is to allow students in special education access to the same grade level standards as their non-disabled peers. SDI can be provided in the traditional model that many of us are accustomed to, that is, delivered in a special education setting by a special education teacher.

SDI can happen in other ways too. Although it must always be designed and monitored by certified special educators, SDI may be provided by general education teachers. The services can take place in a variety of settings, including the general education setting. In fact, IDEA mandates that teams consider that SDI takes place in the general education classroom before considering removing students identified with special needs from their peers and from access to the general education curriculum.

IEP teams should consider all possible options of ensuring students with special needs are educated in their least restrictive environments including when and from whom they will receive specially designed instruction.



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IDEA Sec. 300.116 (1) states, “IEP teams should not remove a child with a disability from education in age-appropriate regular classrooms solely because of needed modifications in the general curriculum.”

Special education teachers are experts in their field, that is why they design and monitor SDI. It is important to realize that all teachers are experts at the job of teaching and can implement SDI anytime and anywhere.

