

c. that homeless children and youths shall be provided comparable services, including transportation services, educational services, and meals through school meals programs; and

d. that homeless children and youths should not be stigmatized by school personnel

ESL Services

22 PA. Code §4.26 states: Every school district shall provide a program for each student whose dominant language is not English for the purpose of facilitating the student's achievement of English proficiency and the academic standards under § 4.12 (relating to academic standards). Programs under this section shall include appropriate bilingual-bicultural or English as a second language (ESL) instruction.

The term "program" refers to: (1) planned instruction by a qualified ESL/bilingual teacher, (2) adaptations/modifications in the delivery of content instruction by all teachers based on the student's language proficiency level and the Pennsylvania English Language Proficiency Standards (PA ELPS) for ELLs as well as Pennsylvania's academic standards. Each LEA must have a written ESL Program that addresses the key components of the Program that an LEA must provide to every ELL. The Basic Education Circular Educating Students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and English Language Learners (ELL) provides LEAs with the requirements and interpretations of the legal mandates governing the education of students with LEP, also known as ELLs.

What do the numbers say?

Special Education: 252

Gifted: 19

ESL: 3

504: 22

Homeless: 5 reported this year

Counselors Support: The Mount Union Area School District has a large at-risk population with significant instances of generational poverty. Our school district enrollment currently is 1,495, of this amount 788 are elementary students and 707 are junior/senior high school students. Of the 788 elementary students, 287 (66%) receive free/reduced lunches. Of the 707 Junior/Senior High School students, 224 (53%) receive free/reduced lunches.

Staffing

Special Education Teachers: 20

Para Professionals: 26

Behavior Specialist: 1

School Psychologist: 1

Guidance Counselors: 3

ESL/Gifted: 1

Virtual: 1

Secretaries: 2

The Special Education and Pupil Services Department is committed to working with parents to provide our students with quality educational experiences that will encourage them to be successful life-long learners.



MRS. DIANNE THOMAS,
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DISTRICT

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Special Education Programs and Services are made available to children who meet the qualifications for one of the following

Exceptionality Categories under the IDEA:

1. Autism
2. Deaf-Blindness
3. Deafness
4. Emotional Disturbance
5. Hearing Impairment
6. Intellectual Disabilities
7. Multiple Disabilities
8. Orthopedic Impairment
9. Other Health Impairments
10. Specific Learning Disability
11. Speech or Language Impairment
12. Traumatic Brain Injury
13. Visual Impairment including Blindness

Continuum of Services

To enable students with disabilities to be educated with non-disabled students to the maximum extent appropriate, specially designed instruction and supplementary services may be provided in the regular class, including, as appropriate, providing related services, resource room programs and special class programs within the regular education classroom.

504 Service Agreements

The MUASD provides services for students who have disabilities that impact major life activities. Through accommodations to the learning environment students with handicapping conditions are able to access general education. A student who qualifies for services will receive services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Section 504 is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education (ED). Section 504 provides: "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States... shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance"

Some examples of conditions that may qualify a student for a Section 504 Service Agreement include diabetes, epilepsy, disorders of attention, disorders of bowel function, and allergies. Other disabilities such as low vision, poor hearing, heart disease or chronic illness may not be obvious, but if they substantially limit a major life function that impacts the ability to receive an appropriate education as defined by Section 504, they may also be qualifying conditions for services.

Gifted Education Services

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Chapter 16 Regulations for Gifted Learners, in order to qualify as gifted, a student must meet two requirements: the student must be mentally gifted (IQ of 130 or higher on an individually administered test of intellectual functioning or other multiple criteria strongly indicate gifted ability) and must be found to require specially designed instruction not ordinarily provided in the regular education program in order to meet identified gifted needs. Determination of gifted ability may not be based on IQ score alone.

The Mount Union Area School District's gifted programming is intended for children with very superior cognitive abilities who need more than the general education curriculum provides.

The Gifted Support Teacher may provide pull-out or push-in support to eligible students, depending upon their gifted needs. During pull-out support, students meet with peers of similar ability and participate in enrichment and extension activities that broaden the regular education curriculum. The emphasis is on strengthening critical thinking skills. During push-in support, gifted students are provided extra academic challenges within the regular education setting.

Sometimes a child's gifted needs may be met through consultation and differentiation in the regular education classroom. Reading groups based upon current level, math enrichment groups, and small groups working on individual areas of growth such as higher-level thinking, problem solving, and technology use also may be employed. The general education teachers meet the needs of gifted students through specially designed instruction. Examples of gifted specially designed instruction may include: subject or grade level acceleration; enrichment math classes; enrichment language arts classes; participation in gifted sponsored competitions in math problem solving, word analogies, and geography challenges; modification of the content, process, or product; working with gifted peers; and consultation with the gifted support teacher.

School Counseling Services

Counselors serve students, parents, and teachers in all elementary and secondary schools. Counselors are vital members of the education team. They help all students in the areas of academic achievement, personal/social development and career development, ensuring today's students become the productive, well-adjusted adults of tomorrow.

Homeless

The No Child Left Behind Act and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §11431 et seq., require that homeless children and youth have full and equal access to an appropriate public education and that they experience success in school. The District recognizes its obligation to ensure that homeless students have access to the same educational programs and services provided to other District students. The District's policy must ensure the District's compliance with federal and Pennsylvania law and regulations pertaining to homeless children and youth.

School of origin is key: defined as the school the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled.

The district shall ensure:

- a. the choice of schools homeless children and youths are eligible to attend;
- b. that no homeless child or youth is required to attend a separate school for homeless children or youths;