

Special Education

In conjunction with the Parkway School District, the Special School District (SSD) of St. Louis County (SSD) provides special education staff, services, and programs for Parkway students with disabilities. A student qualifies for special education when it is determined, through evaluation, that there is an educational disability which “adversely affects educational performance” and requires special education services.

All decisions regarding a student’s “free appropriate public education” (FAPE) and “individualized education program” (IEP) are to be made by the student’s IEP Team, which includes the student’s parent(s) and, as appropriate, the student. Emphasis is on keeping the student in the “least restrictive environment” (LRE) and supporting the student in Parkway’s general education curriculum. The types and amounts of special education and related services, service delivery models, settings in which the services are delivered, curriculum modifications, accommodations, and all other educational decisions related to the student’s disability are to be made by the IEP Team. Certain procedural safeguards, which include the right to appeal diagnostic and IEP decisions, are available to students with disabilities and their parents.

The opportunity to participate in a Parkway general education classroom, earn credit toward graduation, and a high school diploma is available to all students, regardless of the nature and severity of their disabilities. With appropriate accommodations and supportive services, most students are able to meet standard curriculum objectives and be graded on the expectations set for all students.

Depending upon a student’s individual special needs, diploma requirements may be modified, waived and/or added. The student’s IEP team must formally determine, authorize, and document (in the student’s records) waived, modified, and added requirements, modification of curriculum, and any individualized grading methods (e.g., pass/fail instead of letter grade).

Modification of a general education curriculum/course may be done when, despite accommodations and supportive services, a student is unable to achieve the standard learning objectives defined for each course and therefore requires the essence of the Parkway course to be changed (modified) to allow them the opportunity to participate in and benefit from the general education instruction. Grades are to be based on the extent to which the modified requirements, expectations, and competencies/skills are met, not met, or exceeded by the student, as well as other variables (i.e., class participation, homework completion) used by teachers to determine grades. The amount of credit earned will be the same as for a non-modified course and will count toward earning a Parkway diploma.

When a general education course is modified for a student, the course title will include an asterisk (*) and, possibly, a different course number on the transcript. The following notation will appear on Parkway transcripts: (*) = Modified Curriculum. Modified course grades are averaged in the same manner as regular course grades to compute grade point averages and determine eligibility for extracurricular activities. Eligibility for extracurricular activities is determined in the same manner for all students. To determine potential implications for eligibility in high school or college competitive interscholastic athletics/activities, refer to the Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA), the NCAA Clearinghouse, and/or the school guidance counselor and athletic director.

When a student with an IEP earns the normally required number of credits for a diploma, but the IEP team recommends that the student’s individually prescribed course of study should include additional special education programming (i.e., Vocational Skills Program), the diploma is to be awarded after completion of all the student’s prescribed programming. However, the student may participate in their high school graduation ceremony with classmates, as deemed appropriate by the IEP team.

Special education services can be provided in a variety of ways.

Special Education Services In A General Education Setting

CO-TEACHING/COLLABORATIVE INSTRUCTION

Special education services are provided through collaborative planning and co-teaching involving a Parkway content area teacher and a special education teacher. Co-teaching is not offered in all content areas, grade levels, or classrooms. Placement in a co-taught class will depend upon student needs identified through the IEP process and consideration of other service delivery options. Co-taught courses are listed in a student's schedule like any other course, with no indication/notation that it is a co-taught section/course. To determine if your child is enrolled in a co-taught course, contact your child's case manager and counselor.

WORK EXPERIENCE (WORK EXP)

Students gain training in job skills in the classroom +/- school building or at a local community job site under the direct supervision of an on-site special education staff. Post-secondary transition goals developed by the IEP team drive the job site selection and job skills taught through the work experience program. Work Experience courses count toward the required elective credits for graduation. (This is a special education course and the setting is considered general education.)

Special Education Services In A Special Education Setting

STRATEGIES CLASSES (E.G., WRITING STRATEGIES, READING STRATEGIES, MATH STRATEGIES)

These courses follow specific research-based curricula and instruction tailored specifically; to a student's learning objectives to teach reading, writing, and math strategies designed to meet the student's individual goals. Skills taught in strategies classes will support the student in their general education courses.

Strategies classes count toward the required elective credits for graduation.

ALTERNATIVE COURSES (E.G., ALT MATH, ALT ENG)

These courses involve direct instruction by a special education teacher in content areas (i.e., math, reading, writing) that is tailored specifically to a student's learning objectives, IEP goals, and instructional needs. The curriculum in alternative courses may be the standard Parkway content area course curriculum in whole or part, or an alternative curriculum may be utilized to meet the student's unique needs.

INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION (INDINSTRUCT)

These courses involve a curriculum which is individualized for a student by the IEP team to address IEP goals/objectives. The individualized curriculum does not relate to a specific content area or Parkway course. Rather, it is based on materials, activities, and elements of established curriculums identified by the special education teacher to support the student in achieving his/her IEP goals/objectives. Individualized instruction does NOT mean 1-to-1 instruction; students are in a classroom with peers and all activities are individualized to each student's needs/goals/objectives. Individualized Instruction courses count toward the required elective credits for graduation.

For more details regarding the curriculum and course objectives for each special education course, use the Online Curriculum Guide on the Parkway Teaching, Learning, & Accountability department website.