

POLICY #11

HENRY-STARK COUNTIES SPECIAL EDUCATION DISTRICT

**LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT
FROM THE
RULES AND REGULATIONS TO GOVERN THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATION OF
SPECIAL EDUCATION
AND THE
PLACING HANDICAPPED STUDENTS IN THE
LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT
ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION 1980**

Article 1.05

Least Restrictive Environment:

To the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children are educated with non-handicapped children. Special classes, separate schooling or other removal of handicapped children from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap requires that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Article 3.04

Each local school district shall ensure that to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not handicapped, and that special classes, separate schooling or other removal of handicapped children from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Article 9.17.1

Recommendations for special education placement shall be based on the following:

- a. The child shall be placed in the educational program which is appropriate to the student's needs and least restrictive of the interaction with non-handicapped children.
- b. The special education placement must be based on the child's IEP, and located as close as possible to the child's home.
- c. Unless a handicapped child's IEP requires some other arrangement, the child must be educated in the school which he or she would attend if not handicapped.

- d. Consideration must be given to any potentially harmful effect on the child, on the quality of services which he or she needs, or that which impedes the education of other students in the environment.

The Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Policy of the Henry-Stark Counties Special Education District protects students from being indiscriminately placed in segregated programs because they are identified as handicapped. Placement decisions must be made on an individual basis.

Criteria to be considered are:

- 1) each placement must be based on the IEP which is reviewed annually
- 2) each placement must be evaluated not less than every year through an annual review
- 3) placement by category alone is considered inappropriate
- 4) placement decisions must be made by a group of persons knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation data, and the placement options
- 5) placement must be geographically as close as possible to the student's home. The student must be educated in the school he/she would attend if not handicapped unless the IEP requires some other arrangement.
- 6) placement outside the regular education environment must be documented to substantiate the appropriateness of the special education placement.

Placement options may be selected from several categories of educational environments. Options include:

- 1) placements in the school the student would attend if not handicapped
- 2) other school district placements available for students with specific handicapping conditions
- 3) joint agreement or regional program placements available for students with specific handicapping conditions
- 4) approved private school placements
- 5) state agency placements

The continuum of program options shall include, but not be limited to:

- 1) Standard Program with Modification
- 2) Alternate Standard Program
- 3) Standard or Alternate Standard Program with Resource Programs or Related Services

- 4) Special Program
- 5) Cooperative Program
- 6) Home/Hospital Program
- 7) State-Operated or Private Program

The process to determine the Least Restrictive Environment will be:

A. Student Analysis

The IEP is developed. It shall contain all elements required.

B. Program Analysis

The placement options are identified. Information is collected regarding the learning environment that each option can provide for the student. The degree of access to education with non-handicapped students offered by each placement option is established.

C. Decision Model Application

Each placement option is assessed for its capacity to meet all of the student's learning needs, including curriculum, special media and materials, and related services and other identified student needs. Other option or options are considered. When the list of options that have been determined to be appropriate for the student's special education needs are complete, the option providing the greatest access to non-handicapped or less handicapped students will be identified as the least restrictive environment.

Approved 01/27/83