

File: I13

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ELIGIBLE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

In keeping with the philosophy that the City, through its public school system, is responsible for the education of all its children, and further, that every child is entitled to equal educational opportunity, the School Committee shall provide programs for the appropriate instruction of children whose needs are over and above those of others because of temporary or permanent intellectual, sensory, emotional, and/or physical difficulties.

The requirements of Chapter 71B of the Massachusetts General Laws shall be followed in the identification of children with special needs, in referrals for their evaluation, in prescribing for them suitable programs, and in assessing their educational progress. In keeping with this Act, all persons with special needs between the ages of 3 and 21, meaning up until an individual's 22nd birthday, who have not attained a high school diploma or its equivalent shall be eligible for special education.

The School Committee believes that most children with special needs can be educated in the regular school program if they are given special instruction, accommodations, and the support they need. These children should also be given the opportunity to participate in the school system's non-academic and extracurricular activities.

However, the Committee recognizes that the needs of certain children are so great that special programs, special classes, or special schools may be necessary. When appropriate programs, services, or facilities are not available within the Chicopee Public Schools, the Committee shall provide these children with access to schools where such instruction and accommodations are available.

It is the desire of the Committee that the school works closely with parents in designing and providing programs and services to children with special needs. Parents shall be informed, and conferred with, whenever a child is referred for evaluation. In event of any disagreement concerning diagnosis, program plan, special placement, or evaluation, the parents shall be accorded the right of due process.

The Superintendent shall secure properly trained personnel to work with the children with special needs. Since the financial commitment necessary to meet the needs of all of these children is extensive, the Committee shall make every effort to obtain financial assistance from all sources.

Legal Refs.: Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975
Rehabilitation Act of 1973
MGL. 71B:1 et seq.

1st reading: Reg SC Mtg 4/16/08

2nd reading: Reg SC Mtg 5/7/08