

**Integrated Service Delivery Model for
Students with Disabilities, Students At-risk,
and Non-traditional Students**



Homestead High School

The mission of Homestead High School is to equip all students with transferrable skills, promote academic independence, foster social responsibility, and inspire a passion for learning.

Revised November 3, 2011

Guiding Principles behind Integrated Service Delivery

Students with disabilities, at-risk students, and non-traditional students sometimes have common needs that can be met through the same service or service model; at the same time, the needs of each population are unique and require different services as well. Because of these similarities and regardless of these differences, an integrated model in which all learning support services and related human and financial resources are aligned is expected; an integrated approach produces efficiencies across the system, reduces variability and confusion, increases productivity, and ultimately has the greatest positive impact on student learning.

As the future of curriculum and support services for students with disabilities, students at-risk and non-traditional students is defined, evaluated, and continually reviewed, the following considerations/beliefs will shape decision-making:

- Inclusion of all students in the general education population should occur to the greatest extent possible.
- Opportunities for all students to interact with a range of age-appropriate peers should occur to the greatest extent possible.
- Support from adults—general education teachers, special education teachers, at-risk teachers, and support staff—should be provided to the greatest extent possible.
- Support should be offered both in the traditional classroom setting and in other environments (Academic Success Center, Study Skills class), with a strong emphasis on support in the traditional classroom setting.
- Opportunities for differentiation of instruction and assessment, when necessary and appropriate, should exist.
- Formal interventions should be embedded into support services to the greatest extent possible.

The bulleted list above reflects a *service-oriented* approach to academic support, one in which academic assistance is provided to students in the traditional classroom setting as much as possible, that support being supplemented with out-of-class re-teaching, intervention, and academic preparation. A service-oriented approach differs from a *program-oriented* approach, in which students are removed from the traditional classroom setting to receive a modified curriculum and learning support. Homestead's current course leveling system, along with our allocation and placement of faculty and staff, reflect a program orientation.

Transitioning to an integrated, service-oriented approach to learning support reflects the values and beliefs inherent in Homestead's mission: to equip all students with transferrable skills, promote academic independence, foster social responsibility, and inspire a passion for learning.

Curriculum to Enable Integrated Service Delivery

Pending School Board approval, beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, “General” or “Paced” level courses will no longer be offered at Homestead High School. Students who would have been placed in these sections will be placed in the “regular” level alternative with considerable in and out-of-class learning support, which is outlined later.

Students taking classes in all core areas will have a traditional one or two trimester course, with one exception in mathematics. In mathematics students who would have been placed in Algebra I (a General Level Algebra I class) or Transitions to Algebra (a pre-algebra class) will have a three-trimester math experience. In the first trimester, students will take Algebra I Readiness. In the second and third trimesters, students will be placed in Algebra I. The adoption of an Algebra Readiness course also requires School Board approval.

Throughout this document, non-honors “regular” level courses will be referred to as “general education classes.” General education is in no way synonymous with Homestead’s current General Level.

Essential Elements of Integrated Service Delivery

In-class academic support is an essential element of a service-oriented approach to meeting the needs of all learners. Four key elements of Homestead's integrated service delivery model—co-taught classes, supported classes, out-of-class support, and research-based interventions—are explained below.

Element 1: Co-taught Classes

Co-teaching, a certified general education teacher and a special education teacher sharing responsibility for one or more sections of a general education course, is a foundational element of a service-oriented model. While Homestead has implemented co-teaching for the past several years, that approach, because it has been implemented in General Level courses which are not heterogeneous in make-up, has not produced optimal results in terms of student learning. Further, it has tracked select students, creating an exclusive as opposed to inclusive learning environment in the school.

In the co-teaching model, students with disabilities who are in need of additional academic support are identified and then placed in clusters into general education classes. Details about placement and scheduling include the following:

- Special education teachers collaborate to determine the criteria for placement in a co-taught section, relying heavily on students' reported present level of performance as identified in their IEP's.
- The ratio of students with disabilities compared to non-disabled peers is one-third/two-thirds, meaning that in a class of 28 students, approximately eight are students with disabilities.
- Non-disabled students are placed into the class by random assignment, as occurs in non-co-taught sections.
- Special education clusters are capped at eight students, with seven being the preferred target.
- Special education teachers hand-schedule students with disabilities into co-taught sections to ensure placement and class balance.
- Class size for a co-taught section is consistent with all other sections of that course.

The curriculum for a co-taught section of a course is identical to that of a non-co-taught section. But, two educators take responsibility for educating all students in the class, providing differentiation and modification and giving feedback to guide student learning.

In the co-teaching model, a special education teacher does as much of the following as possible, sharing responsibility with the general education teacher:

- whole-class teaching for some or all of a period
- small group instruction
- development of lesson modifications
- development of assessment modifications
- pull-out of student(s) for re-teaching
- working with students to organize/take class notes
- conferencing one-on-one with students during work time
- grading/assessment
- classroom management
- parent communication.

An effective working relationship between a general and special education teacher includes collaboration on lesson and assessment design and implementation, as well as establishing a classroom environment in which both teachers are seen as equals in the eyes of students.

Decisions about whether a special education teacher co-teaches a section(s) of any course are based on the degree of need among the students enrolled in the course, the age/independence level of those students, whether or not the course is required for graduation, and the availability of faculty.

In the trimester schedule, all cross-categorical special education teachers will co-teach two sections per trimester, for a total of six per year.

Courses preliminarily targeted for co-teaching are as follows and will include additional classes as student needs dictate and staffing permits:

English	Math	Science	Social Studies
English 9	Algebra I Readiness	Intro. to Chemistry & Physics	World Studies
American Literature	Algebra I	Biology	American History
Expository Writing and Literature	Geometry		Economics
	Algebra II		American Government

To the greatest extent possible, co-teaching partnerships are maintained from year to year, creating continuity for the instructors, enabling shared expertise in the curriculum, and fostering meaningful professional collaboration.

Element 2: Supported Classes

Just as co-teaching is a foundational element of a service-oriented approach to academic support, so, too, are supported classes. While a supported class does not include two classroom teachers, it does include a second adult who takes an active role in meeting the needs of students experiencing academic challenges.

Either a special education paraprofessional (to support students with disabilities) or a member of the general education learning support team (to support non-disabled students with a high degree of academic need) is scheduled into a supported class. Details about placement and scheduling of supported classes include the following:

- Special education teachers collaborate to determine placement for students with a disability into section(s) supported by a paraprofessional.
- The Pupil Personnel Committee collaborates to determine placement for at-risk/non-traditional students into sections supported by a learning support staff member. Criteria for placement in a supported section includes any of the following:
 - The student is considered at-risk based on the State of Wisconsin’s statutory language.
 - The student has social or emotional needs that have made success in the traditional academic classroom extremely difficult.
 - The student is recommended for involvement by counselor, administrator, or teacher.

- The student is concurrently enrolled in the Academic Success Center (mandatory).
- Special education or at-risk/non-traditional student clusters are capped at four students, with three being the preferred target. Only one cluster of students can be placed into a single class.
- All other students are placed into a supported class by random assignment, as occurs in non-supported classes.
- Special education teachers hand-schedule students with disabilities into supported sections to ensure placement.
- The At-risk Department Chair hand-schedules at-risk/non-traditional students into supported sections to ensure placement.
- Class size for a supported section is consistent with all other sections of the course.

So as to increase general education teachers' understanding of the at-risk/non-traditional students placed in their classes, a one-page data-sharing template will be created prior to the start of the 2012-2013 school year. That sheet—similar to an IEP summary or ESL service summary—will give teachers basic information about a student's academic history, learning challenges, primary in-school contacts, and pertinent personal information appropriate for sharing with faculty. Teachers will receive these sheets within the first week of a new trimester. The At-risk Department Chair, with assistance from the Pupil Personnel Committee, will be responsible for completing and disseminating these sheets.

In a supported class, the special education paraprofessional or learning support staff member does as much of the following as possible/necessary:

- small group instruction
- pull-out of student(s) for re-teaching
- working with students to organize/take class notes
- one-on-one conferencing with students during work time.

Unlike a co-taught class, a support staff member is not responsible for curriculum or assessment and is not involved in lesson design. Still, open communication between a classroom teacher and support staff member about expectations, student needs, and strategies for providing academic assistance is encouraged.

Decisions about whether a special education paraprofessional or general education learning support staff member supports a class are based on the degree need among the students enrolled in the course, the age/independence level of those students, whether or not the course is required for graduation, and the availability of staff.

Element 3: Out-of-class Support

While in-class support can assist students in meeting learning goals during the original teaching/learning experience, many students will still require out-of-class support for re-teaching, reinforcement, clarification, test preparation, and/or completion of assessments.

Study Skills and the Academic Success Center

Students with disabilities will continue to enroll in a Study Skills class as necessary and appropriate. Currently, that class period is dedicated primarily to homework completion and test/assessment preparation. Beginning in 2012-2013, Study Skills will include a formal curriculum, with special education teachers providing direct instruction on strategies aimed at improving student learning and increasing academic independence. Students will learn those

strategies in a mini-lesson format and apply them to their course work in and outside of Study Skills. The Special Education Department is proposing that Study Skills becomes a credited course beginning in 2012-2013.

The Academic Success Center (ASC) will remain a resource for at-risk/ non-traditional students who need learning support beyond what can be offered in the traditional classroom. Students may be assigned into the ASC based on their academic needs as determined by members of the Pupil Personnel Committee, primarily counselors and the At-risk Department Chair. Other students may access the ASC on a drop-in basis pending space availability in a given period.

In the trimester, students who receive academic assistance via the ASC or Study Skills will be enrolled in four other classes in a given term. As such, they will be able to receive more focused assistance during learning support time. Further, as class periods will be approximately 73 minutes long, students enrolled in the ASC or Study Skills will receive more learning support on a daily basis than they currently receive in the semester model.

Flex Time

With the implementation of the trimester schedule in 2012-2013, all students will have increased access to classroom teachers during the regular school day, as Homestead will be offering flex time for all students and faculty. Some targeted students will be required to participate in flex time with a specific teacher or in a learning support environment based on low academic performance. During the 2011-2012 school year, Homestead's assistant principals, in consultation with the Pupil Personnel Committee and other faculty members as appropriate, will develop stipulations regarding mandatory flex time participation.

Element 4: Research-based Interventions

While many students can make strong academic gains when given learning support like that outlined above, some students have knowledge and skill-related challenges that require more formal, research-based interventions.

Currently, Homestead, like many high schools, has few research-based interventions in place for struggling learners. In 2011, HHS piloted Empower3000, a computer-based non-fiction reading intervention, with a targeted group of freshmen and sophomores. Beginning in 2011-2012, Empower3000 is formally embedded into the General English 9 curriculum. Throughout the 2011-2012 school year, the administrative lead for Empower3000 will collaborate with select special education, English, and ASC faculty to determine how to screen students in need of this intervention and to provide it in 2012-13 and beyond, as General English 9 will cease to exist.

With the support of District administrators, Homestead needs to continue investigating research-based interventions to assist the most challenged students in making academic gains.

Staffing to Enable Integrated Service Delivery

The allocation and assignment of special education and general education teachers and support staff are critical to the success of a service-oriented approach to learning support.

Special Education

Cross-categorical Special Education Teachers FTE

Cross-categorical special education teachers will continue to provide considerable in and out-of-class learning support to students with disabilities. As mentioned earlier, when the trimester schedule is implemented in 2012-2013, each special education teacher will teach four of five classes per term, two of them being Study Skills and two being co-teaching assignments in the general education setting. Starting in 2012-2013, the Homestead Special Education Department will include seven cross-categorical special education teachers; currently six teachers provide those services.* With seven cross-categorical special education teachers on faculty, 42 co-taught sections will be offered beginning in 2012-2013.

** Resources to hire an additional faculty member, a staffing change that will reduce case loads and increase the total number of co-taught sections at Homestead, come from a reduction and re-organization of the Homestead special education paraprofessional staff. The paraprofessional group will be reduced by three overall (from 16 to 13) in order to secure the funds to hire an additional full-time cross-categorical special education teacher. Paraprofessional staffing will not be reduced in the Cognitive Disabilities program, transition services including OEP, assistive technology, or one-on-one student assignments.*

The remaining cross-categorical paraprofessionals will be organized in a "pool" model, in which they are assigned to support general education classrooms and/or Study Skills classes on an as-needed basis. In this model, an individual cross-categorical teacher will not be assigned a full-time paraprofessional. Paraprofessionals' classroom assignments will be made based on student need 9-12 across case managers; the Special Education Department Chair, in collaboration with fellow teachers, will make paraprofessional assignments.

Arrangement of Student Caseloads for Cross-categorical Special Education Teachers

For those students whose cases are managed by a cross-categorical teacher, caseloads will be arranged by grade level to the greatest extent possible. Teachers will be organized into two groups: 9/10 or 11/12. With the exception of students in the cognitive disabilities program, most students with a disability will transition to a new case manager between sophomore and junior years.

This arrangement allows special education teachers to develop a higher level of expertise regarding elements of student support that are grade-level specific. For example, by organizing case managers by grade level, special education teachers can develop deeper knowledge of the curriculum for most core courses that students take in a given grade, English 9 for example. Further, key topics like transition from middle to high school, transition from high school into post-secondary, and pre-college testing like the ACT are all points of emphasis at specific grades or grade ranges. Additionally, a grade level case manager assignment requires special education teachers to be closely networked with fewer teachers at any one time, allowing them to have a better understanding of their students' academic progress and needs. Finally, a transition between case managers during students' high school experience helps them to learn and hone skills related to self-advocacy, academic independence, and interpersonal communication.

As much as possible, special education teachers should co-teach courses that are consistent with their grade level case management assignment. For example, 9/10 case managers should co-teach classes like English 9 and Introduction to Chemistry and Physics.

General Education Learning Support

To provide the most comprehensive learning support possible for general education students, some current staffing allocations and assignments must shift, allowing the educators in those positions to fill different roles.

Title I Learning Support Staff

In a service-oriented academic support model, in-class learning support should occur as much as possible. To that end, current Title I staffing for learning support will be assigned differently than has historically occurred at Homestead.

While the Academic Success Center will remain intact, some staff currently working in that area will be deployed into general education classes to staff supported classes. The current Title I Math Aide position will be reconsidered in 2012-2013, with the individual in that role being primarily assigned as a classroom support assistant. The At-risk Department Chair and the assistant principals will collaborate to determine this staff member's schedule.

Pending available funds and based on need, the current Title I assistant staffing may be increased so as to hire an additional staff member in this role.

Staff Development, Training, and Collaborative Planning to Support Integrated Service Delivery

Understanding that staff development and training are essential to produce the intended results for student learning, the following plans are in place for 2011-2012 and beyond.

Co-teaching

In 2011-2012, Homestead secured the services of a trainer who specialized in co-teaching. She provided a one-day in-service for a group of current and prospective co-teachers in the winter of 2011, which was followed by collaborative planning for co-teachers on an early release day. In 2011-2012, that same trainer will provide another one-day in-service in late March. In 2012-2013, the trainer will return to Homestead for a day of observations followed by another one-day in-service. Moving forward, local/regional staff development resources/training opportunities will be pursued to the greatest extent possible.

As was the case in the summer of 2011, co-teachers will be assigned summer curriculum hours in 2012 (100 among all pairs) for collaborative planning.

To the greatest extent possible, co-teaching pairs will have a common planning period, as is the case in 2011-2012.

Special Education Paraprofessionals and General Education Learning Support

Each year, special education paraprofessionals must attend two of the six early release days on the MTSD calendar. Starting with the second day of the 2011-2012 school year, special education paraprofessionals will receive training related to supported classrooms as explained earlier. This training will be ongoing in future years.

In future years, the general education learning support staff member(s) will be included with paraprofessionals in training regarding best practices in a supported classroom. Further, annually in September, any new paraprofessionals or general education learning support staff will receive a basic training on supported classrooms, providing them with the general information and tools necessary to serve in their roles.

Instructional Practices

As resources permit, targeted faculty members, both special education and general education teachers, will be invited to attend discipline-specific AVID training in English, math, science, social studies, and/or critical reading to increase the understanding and use of common best practices across Homestead. AVID's emphasis on writing to learn, inquiry, collaboration, and reading (WICR) equip teachers with strategies and approaches to help all students experience greater levels of success in increasingly rigorous course work. In-building, school-wide staff development will emphasize WICR, reinforcing and extending out-of-building training and creating consistent learning experiences, common language, and aligned instructional practices among all faculty members.

Differentiation

The need for training on differentiation of instruction and assessment exists across the system. Beginning in 2012-2013, a greater emphasis will be placed on this topic in both in-building and outside staff development opportunities, both optional and mandatory.

The Homestead IMC offers a range of supports for teachers and students, including but not limited to leveled texts and assistive technology that can help meet the needs of individual learners. Looking forward, awareness-building activities need to be planned and

implemented so that faculty members and students can take better advantage of such resources.