

Special Education at Sunrise Middle School

At Sunrise Middle School, we believe that every student deserves access to meaningful learning and opportunities to grow. Our special education services support students with disabilities in gaining equal access to grade-level curriculum through individualized instruction, classroom accommodations, and collaborative support. We work to foster an inclusive school environment where every student's strengths, cultures, and identities are valued and celebrated.

We are committed to meeting students where they are and providing services that fit their unique learning needs. In accordance with state and federal guidelines, Sunrise Middle School actively identifies, evaluates, and supports students with disabilities, including students who are unhoused, in foster care, or enrolled in private or homeschool programs. Special education referrals are considered when a student has received targeted interventions over time and continues to need additional support.

If you have concerns about your child's learning or development, we encourage families to begin the conversation with your child's teacher, school counselor, or school administration. Our Student Success Team (SST) process helps determine what types of supports or assessment steps may be appropriate.

If your student is new to Sunrise and already has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), please share a copy with the school office so that services can be coordinated as smoothly as possible.

Requesting Special Education Records

Please email info@sunrisemiddle.org to request special education records.

Special Education Process at Sunrise Middle School

The purpose of the special education assessment process is to determine whether a student has a disability that impacts their learning and, if so, to identify the types of supports and services that will help them succeed. The process includes five major steps.

1. Referral for Consideration

A referral for a special education assessment may come from parents/guardians, teachers, school staff, or through the Student Success Team (SST) process. At Sunrise, we are dedicated to supporting students in the least restrictive environment, meaning we begin by strengthening supports in the general education classroom.

Before moving to a special education evaluation, the school must show that instructional interventions and supports have been tried over time through a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). If concerns remain, families may request an assessment verbally or in writing, although we encourage starting with a conversation with the teacher, counselor, or principal.

2. Response to the Referral

Once a referral is made, Sunrise Middle School will review the request along with the student's records, academic data, classroom observations, and any relevant information.

Within 15 school days (not counting extended school breaks), families will receive either:

A written explanation that an assessment is not appropriate, or

An Assessment Plan that outlines what areas will be evaluated.

A parent/guardian must sign and return the Assessment Plan before testing can begin.

Once the signed plan is received, the school has 60 calendar days (not counting breaks longer than five days) to complete the evaluation and hold an IEP meeting.

3. Evaluation and Determining Eligibility

The assessment may include:

- Interviews with the student and family,
- Classroom observations,
- Review of school work and history,
- Standardized testing and other evaluation tools.

The goal is to determine whether the student has a disability that significantly affects their educational progress and whether they need specialized instruction. Eligibility decisions are made by the IEP team following state and federal criteria.

4. Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting

After the evaluation, an IEP meeting will be scheduled. Families will receive written notice with the time, date, location, and purpose of the meeting.

During the meeting, the team will:

- Review assessment results,
- Determine eligibility for special education,
- If eligible, create an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that includes learning goals, services, accommodations, and supports designed for the student.

The IEP will start once a parent/guardian signs consent.

The IEP team often includes:

Parent/guardian,

A school administrator or representative,

A general education teacher,

A special education teacher,

School psychologist/assessor or another staff member familiar with the evaluation,

Other individuals invited by the family or school.

5. Ongoing Review and Reassessment

IEP teams meet at least once a year to review progress and adjust supports.

Every three years, students are re-evaluated to determine continued eligibility and needs.

Families are encouraged to stay in communication with the staff working with their student. At any time during the school year, a parent/guardian or school staff member may request:

An IEP meeting, or

A reassessment (with parent consent).

Once requested in writing, the school must hold the meeting within 30 days (not counting breaks longer than five days).

Special Education Resources for Families

At Sunrise Middle School, we want families to feel informed and supported throughout the special education process. We encourage parents and guardians to learn about their rights and the laws that guide special education services. These protections ensure that students with disabilities receive the services and supports they need to learn and participate in school.

Families may find it helpful to review:

The [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#), which outlines the rights of students with disabilities and their families.

The [Parent Handbook](#) created by our local Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) through the El Dorado County SELPA.

The [Procedural Safeguards](#), which explain your rights during the assessment, eligibility, and IEP process.

Understanding Procedural Safeguards

Educational law places a strong emphasis on **family involvement**. Parents and guardians are recognized as essential partners in making educational decisions. Planning for a student's learning needs is meant to be a **collaborative process** between families, school staff, and others who know the student well.

Your voice matters. Your questions, observations, and insights help ensure your child receives an educational plan that meets their unique strengths and needs.

You may review the procedural safeguards using the links below:

[Procedural Safeguards \(English\)](#)

[Procedural Safeguards \(Español\)](#)

El Dorado County SELPA

<https://charterselpa.org/>

Section 504 Support at Sunrise Middle School

[Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#) is a federal civil rights law that protects students with disabilities from discrimination in schools. It requires schools that receive federal funding to provide access to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for eligible students.

A student may qualify for a 504 Plan if they have a physical or mental health condition that substantially limits a major life activity—such as learning, concentrating, breathing, walking, communicating, or other daily activities. A student may also be eligible if they have a documented medical history of such a condition, or if school staff determine that the student is being regarded as having a disability that impacts their school functioning.

At Sunrise Middle School, we are committed to ensuring that students who qualify under Section 504 receive the accommodations and supports they need to participate fully in the classroom and school environment.

If you think your child may benefit from a 504 Plan, please reach out to the school principal to begin the conversation.

For questions regarding an existing 504 Plan, please contact:

504 Coordinator

Phone: 408-659-4785

Email: info@sunrisemiddle.org

