



## What Special Education Programs Are Available?

### Emotional Support

Emotional Support Services within Special Education is available to those students who are determined to be in need of the service. This determination is typically supported by mental health diagnosis from outside providers (psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, pediatricians, or other medical professionals) in addition to a significant impact on the student's learning or the ability of other students to learn.

When behavior of an Emotional Support student negatively impacts academic progress, a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and resulting Positive Behavior Support Plan (PBSP) must be developed by the IEP team.

Westmont Hilltop School District has two Emotional Support Teachers – one at the Elementary School and one who services the Middle and High School. Both staff also have additional job responsibilities outside of Emotional Support services and may service other regular education or special education students in those roles. It should be noted that Emotional Support Teachers are not counselors and do not provide therapy to the students but can discuss the behavior, factors that contribute, and teach the student how to better respond to those factors.

Emotional Support Services at the Elementary School target the specific problem behavior in both an inclusive (in class) and pull out model of support using behavior modification and skill instruction. With recess and the use of cooperative groups in all grades within the building, social skills such as sharing, turn taking, and tolerance are often need areas for Elementary students. These skills and related strategies can be taught in pull out settings with the Emotional Support Teacher, practiced in a pull out setting with a few peers, and then reinforced in the regular classroom by the Emotional Support teacher assisting the student.

Emotional Support Services at the Middle and High School level target the specific problem behavior after observation in the regular classroom setting, observation in a cooperative learning group situation, or when the student or teacher expresses a concern. Depending on the frequency and severity of the target behavior, a weekly or daily behavior report card is utilized to monitor the behavior of concern and teach replacement behavior at the Middle School level. At the High School level, an independent self-monitoring checklist is created for the student to complete and then discuss in a follow-up session with the Emotional Support Teacher. At the Middle School level, social skills to improve peer interactions are taught in cooperative learning groups during scheduled lunch times. At the High School level, strategies to assist with improving social skills are discussed during individual sessions. The Emotional Support program at the High School level focuses on scheduling, credit completion, career exploration, and employment.