

PowerSchool Special Programs: End Users Experience Part 1

Join us as we take a tour through the eyes of teachers and staff who are responsible for monitoring caseloads. Learn how the day-to-day processing of documentation in Special Programs is keeping your state reporting accurate and your district compliant. Keeping up with timelines and collaborating as a team has never been easier.

In this course, you will:

- Use single sign-on to access Special Programs
- Explore what is available in Special Programs
- Use the search features to find information
- View and create messages and calendar events
- Access student profiles and documents
- Use caseload management features

Getting Started

Special Programs is a web-based application either installed on a server at your school district or hosted for your school district in a server facility that PowerSchool maintains. School administrators, staff, and teachers access Special Programs using a web browser on a variety of desktop or mobile devices with internet access. As a web-based application, Special Programs functions in real time, which means users see information immediately after it is updated in the system.

Special Programs provides tools for these four types of users in your school district:

- School administrators and staff members
- Teachers
- Contracted staff (non-employee)
- Students and parents

Special Programs is integrated with single sign-on from PowerSchool SIS and Unified Classroom.

Understanding Special Programs

Company: PowerSchool, LLC

Solution: PowerSchool Unified Classroom

Product: PowerSchool Special Programs

Module: Special Education, Service Capture, Section 504, Gifted and Talented, Response to Intervention, English Language Learners

Feature: Progress Monitoring

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The platform refers to the infrastructure of Special Programs and is the same across all states and providences. Models are made up of modules, which are specific to the state or region.

Special Programs Modules

Special Programs includes a variety of modules that can be purchased, depending on the state or province. Features, functionality, and navigation are the same, but the content within the modules are different. The modules include:

- Special Education
- Service Capture*
- Gifted and Talented
- Section 504
- Response to Intervention
- English Language Learners

*Special Education is a required module to utilize Service Capture

PowerSchool Special Programs is a collection of modules that provides a way to document special needs of students from identifying through planning. Special Programs collects information throughout the process to allow school systems to report on this data to the federal and state governments. Modules sold in many states and providences include:

- Special Education refers to a range of educational and social services provided by the public school system to individuals with disabilities who are between 3 and 21 years of age. Special education is designed to ensure that students with disabilities are provided with an environment that allows them to be educated effectively. There are specific requirements as defined by federal and state laws.
- Service Capture is a module designed to report services provided to a student capturing the service provided, date and time provided, and length of service. Some modules are set up to capture this documentation for Medicaid and can include reports that can be exported to provide to a billing company.
- Gifted and Talented refers to children's ability that is significantly above the norm for their age. Giftedness may manifest in one or more domains, such as intellectual, creative, artistic, leadership, or in a specific academic field, such as language arts, mathematics, or science.
- Section 504 is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Section 504 ensures that the child with a disability has equal access to education. The child may receive accommodations and modifications. Section 504 does not require a public school to provide an individualized educational program (IEP) that is designed to meet a child's unique needs and provide the child with educational benefit. Under Section 504, fewer procedural safeguards are available to the child with a disability and the child's parents than under IDEA Special Education.
- Response to Intervention is a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. Struggling learners are provided with interventions at increasing levels of intensity to accelerate their rate of learning.

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- English-language learners are students who are unable to communicate fluently or learn effectively in English, who often come from non-English-speaking homes and backgrounds, and who typically require specialized or modified instruction. English Language Learner is used to describe this population, because it highlights learning, rather than suggesting that non-native-English-speaking students are deficient.

Signing In from PowerSchool SIS

There are two ways a user can access Special Programs through PowerSchool SIS:

Teachers can access Special Programs from within PowerSchool SIS:

1. Sign in to PowerTeacher
2. Navigate to **PowerTeacher Pro**
3. On the menu bar, click **Apps**, then select **Special Programs Home**

Administrators and staff can navigate to My Home Page in Special Programs from within PowerSchool SIS:

1. In the dark blue border at the top of the page, click the Applications icon that looks like a box with an arrow to open the Applications drawer, then select **Special Programs Home**

Signing In from Unified Classroom

There are two ways a user can access Special Programs through Unified Classroom:

Teachers can access a student's Special Programs documents from within Unified Classroom:

1. Navigate to Students
2. Select a student and click **View Detail**
3. At the top of the page, click **Quick Links**
4. Under Special Programs, select **Student Documents**

Administrators, staff, and teachers can navigate to My Home Page in Special Programs from within Unified Classroom:

1. From the navigation menu, select **Quick Links**
2. Under Special Programs, select **Special Programs Home**

Activity 1 – Sign In to Special Programs

Sign in and navigate to Special Programs.

1. Sign in using the server and sign-in credentials provided by your trainer
2. Navigate to Special Programs as described above

Special Programs My Home Page opens in a new browser tab.

3. Take a moment to look around Special Programs
4. Click the PowerSchool Special Programs logo at the top-left corner to return to My Home Page

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My Home Page

My Home Page is your Special Programs dashboard. In the header, the PowerSchool Special Programs logo is a link to My Home Page. Whenever you see this icon, click it to return to My Home Page. Being able to return to My Home Page from almost anywhere in Special Programs comes in handy when you want to start a new task.

The Special Programs administrators control the security groups and user access roles that specify what users can view and edit in Special Programs. You will have specific options and panels on My Home Page based on those security settings. These panels can be collapsed and moved by dragging and dropping. This allows each user to customize their homepage so that pertinent information appears in a logical spot for each individual user.

Once you leave My Home Page for another page, the page names appear in the navigation toolbar. These linked page names are called the navigation path, or breadcrumbs. Click a link in the navigation path to return to that page.

Using the Search Features

Staff with location-wide or system-wide access can search students, classes, districts, locations, and classes by using Quick Search screens. Quick Search allows for multiple types of data in the search criteria.

An alternate to searching for students using the Quick Search menu is using the Search Students feature in the Quick Access area on the home page. Begin the search by typing in the student's first name, last name, or ID. As you begin typing, the system will begin searching for students who meet the requirement. The more characters you type, the more refined your search will become. Two icons will appear next to the student's name that you can use to access the student's profile or documents. Below the Quick Search area, Students Recently Worked With will appear after you have accessed at least one student's information.

Activity 2 – Search for a Student

Use Quick Search to answer the following question: How many students attend Apple Grove High (School ID 100) and have a last name that starts with a D?

1. On My Home Page, using the Search drop-down from the menu bar, select Student to access Quick Search.
2. Type in the letter D next to last name and then select lookup to the right of the School Box.
3. Type in the name Apple Grove and click Search
4. Click the blue SELECT button next to Apple Grove High School (ID 100)
5. In the top right hand corner click X Close
6. At the bottom of the Quick Search window, click the blue button Search
7. Click the PowerSchool Special Programs logo to return to My Home Page
8. Return to My Home Page

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Adding a General Education Student

The ability to add a General Education Student into Special Programs can become necessary when students are classified in different modules that are offered. Adding a student to Special Programs gives the user the ability to create new documents that need to be attached to the student profile.

Activity 3 – Add a General Education Student to Special Programs

Use the Search Button to add a General Education Student to Special Programs

1. From the Special Programs home page, click **Search**, then select **General Education Students**
2. Type in the letter G into the last name field and click Search.
3. At the top of the screen, click **Import General Ed Students**.
4. Click to fill in a check mark to the left of the student(s) name you wish to add to Special Programs.
5. Click the Blue Button labeled **Import General Ed Students**
**Notice the ability to add these students directly to your caseload.

Communication and Calendar

Your home page displays messages and announcements sent to you, as well as upcoming calendar events. Communication and calendar options are available within Special Programs. Under the Communication option from the menu, several functions are available.

Send Message

When sending messages to other users in Special Programs, you address the message by specifying the User ID of the recipients. Likewise, when someone sends a message to you, they must specify your User ID, which is the same User ID that you use to log in. You can also send messages to users directly from a document, which will link the message to the document. Unread messages appear on the home page. Like internet email, you can also add attachments to messages.

Messages

Like internet email, these are sent from one user to other specific Special Programs users. Features such as cc, bcc, and file attachments are supported. Messages are maintained internally in Special Programs. Subject to the school district's security policy, message receipt notifications can be automatically forwarded to the internet email address of recipients.

Announcements

Different from messages, users are not identified as recipients. Instead, an announcement is broadcast to a general group of users, such as all staff at a school, all staff in a particular security role, or system wide. Attachments can be added to announcements.

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- Immediate: Pops-up as the user logs in and is sent to end user as soon as it is created and saved in the system
- Calendar Based: Time released announcement that is set up by a user to be sent out on a specific day and time
- Red Alert: Displays on the user's homepage in red lettering and has the ability to require the user to acknowledge the alert was seen through a read receipt.

Discussion

Discussion is an area where groups of users are invited into a forum to contribute thoughts and suggestions regarding a specific topic. Unlike messages, content is not sent to specific users, information is entered directly to the discussion board for all users with the correct permissions to view and/or contribute to the discussion.

Calendar

Calendar is similar in functionality to that found in systems such as Microsoft Outlook and Google Calendar. The calendar supports such features as recurrence, required/optional attendees, scheduling assistance for conflict avoidance, and more.

Activity 4 – Send a Message

Use the Send Message option to send a message to Mark Adams asking him to complete writing the math goal for the student Rachel Green.

1. From the Special Programs home page, click **Communication**, then select **Send Message**
2. Click **To:** and select **Staff User ID**
3. Enter the User ID 14466, then click **Search**
4. Click **Select** for the staff name and then click **Close** on the top-right corner of the Staff Quick Search screen
5. Enter text in the Subject field (required)
6. Enter a few sentences in the Body field of the message (required)
7. Click **Send**
8. Refresh to return to your home page by clicking the PowerSchool Special Programs logo in the top-left corner

Help Menu

You can locate the following options under the question mark icon on the top-right corner of your screen. In this area there is documentation regarding the platform, state/providence release notes, and support. Your district or school may also add custom links in Other Resources.

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What's New

What's New contains information pertaining to platform updates, platform versions, and releases.

State or Province Help

The training database does not have a link to a specific state or province help space, but your state or province model will have a link called State Help or Province Help. This is where you can find release notes and information specific to the state or province.

User Help

You can access more information in the online documentation about how to work with Special Programs. To browse all of the help content available in this documentation space, use the links in the navigation pane along the left side, or use the Search bar to quickly find information on a specific topic. The User Help will open in a separate browser tab so that you can easily navigate between Special Programs and User Help. The User Help includes screenshots to assist with step-by-step instructions on the topic.

Support

Support can be customized and set up to allow administrators or other staff to receive support cases from users. All members of a security group with the permission "Receive Support Requests" granted will be listed under Request Support From. The message will appear on the home page under Unread Messages.

Activity 5 – Navigate the Help Menu

Search the User Help Guide for a specific topic and navigate the documentation outline on the left-hand side of the page.

1. At the top-right corner, roll your cursor over the question mark icon and select **User Help**
2. In the Search field, search for **Accessing Student Profiles**
3. From the list of search results, click **ACCESSING STUDENT PROFILES**
4. Explore the Help Guide by using the links in the navigation pane along the left side of the page
5. Close the browser tab to return to Special Programs

My Students

From your homepage, My Students shows the user all the students that have been assigned to their caseload. From this table, the user can manipulate which students they look at based on groupings. The user can also manipulate the column headers so customized information can be found at a glance.

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The table includes a series of icons which takes the user to new pages. To the far left of each student name the first icon resembles a contact card. This takes the user to the student's Profile. The next icon, which resembles a blue stack of papers, will take the user to the student's Documents.

From this table the user can also print their student list, download into excel or make edits to their caseload.

Caseload Management

Depending on how Special Programs has been configured, user caseloads may already be provided. If not, users will be assigned the security privilege that enables them to add and remove students from their own caseload.

Depending on their security/role, users may also have access to an option to add students to the case manager caseload. Users must be given the permission to search students. Special Programs allows multiple staff members to add a student to their caseload, but only one staff member can be the case manager for a student at a given point in time. For users to add students to their caseloads, the permission must be set to allow the users to search for students at a particular location or across the system.

Regardless of how a user's caseload is populated, users can access profiles and documents directly from My Students (i.e. caseload) on the home page. Users can also customize the view of My Students by saving sorts and creating caseload groups.

Standard Caseload Management

Standard Caseload is representative of a staff member who works with the student to provide Special Programs Services. Students who are added to a user's standard caseload appear on the My Students section of the home page. Many staff may have a single student on their standard caseload.

Case Manager Caseload Management

Case Manager Caseload is representative of one staff member assigned to one student and typically represents the staff member who is overseeing the student's Special Programs process, referral, placement, and plans. The Case Manager Caseload view on My Students on the user's My Home Page will display the student's row of information as bold and highlighted for the assigned Case Manager.

Activity 6 – Classifying Individuals into Caseload Management

Fill in an example for each category:

When would a student be on your Standard Caseload?	When would someone be assigned as a Case Manager?

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Adding Students to My Students

To add students to either Standard Caseload or Case Manager Caseload, a user will need the appropriate permissions. The user will edit My Students and choose **Add Students to**. After choosing the appropriate caseload, the user will look up the students and add individually or in mass. If a student has withdrawn, users will see "Must be Not Exited" and will not have the ability to add students.

Activity 7 – Add Students to Caseload (My Students)

Add Students to Standard Caseload and Case Manager Caseload given the following scenarios:

After a conversation with another staff member, you learn one of the exceptional education teachers was transferred from Apple Grove High (School ID 100). As a result, 2 students, who have last names that start with the letter S, have been added to your Standard Caseload. Add them in Special Programs.

1. On My Home Page, find My Students at the bottom of the page and click **Edit**
2. Open the **Add Students to** menu and select **Standard Caseload**
3. To clear out any values from previous searches, at the bottom of the page, click **Clear**
4. For Last Name, enter s
5. For School, click **lookup** and at the top of the Select Location window, click **A**
6. Select the first Apple Grove High School (ID 100), then at the top right corner of the page, click **Close**
7. At the bottom of the Quick Search page, click **Search**
8. Select 2 students by checking their rows
9. At the top of the page, click **Add Students Marked Below to Standard Caseload**
10. Return to the home page and view the student list under My Students at the bottom of the page

You also learned that you will serve as Case Manager for 1 student, who has a last name that starts with the letter T. Add them in Special Programs so that they appear on your My Students Table.

11. Next to My Students at the top of the student list, click **Edit**
12. Open the **Add Students to** menu and select **Case Manager Caseload**
13. At the bottom of the page, click **Clear** to clear out any values from previous searches
14. For Last Name, enter T
15. For School, click **lookup** and at the top of the Select Location window, click **A**
16. Select the first Apple Grove High School (ID 100), then at the top right corner of the page, click **Close**

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17. At the bottom of the Quick Search page, click **Search**
18. Select 1 student by checking their row
19. Click **Add Students Marked Below to Case Manager Caseload**
20. Return to the home page and view the student listed under My Students at the bottom of the page

The column for Case Manager now shows your staff name.

Creating Caseload Groups

If users have a significant number of students on their caseload or if they provide services to groups of students, it can be helpful to organize their caseload into groups of students as caseload groups. Student can be in more than one caseload group.

After the caseload groups are defined, users can use the Select Group field in the My Students panel of their home page to choose to show either the entire caseload or only students in a specific caseload group.

Activity 8 – Create a Caseload Group

Create a Caseload Group based on the following scenario: You want to organize your My Students table. Based on your servicing schedule, 2 of the students in your My Students table are in the same Gen Ed class that you visit. Group them together so that you can easily access their information separately from all other students.

1. On your home page, click **Edit** next to My Students
2. Select **New Caseload Group**
3. Enter the name of the Caseload Group
4. Check the checkbox next to 2 student names
5. Click **Accept**
6. Return to the home page and use the new Select Group menu under My Students to switch between All My Students and your groupings

Adding Fields and Sorting Caseload

You can add fields from the student profile sections as columns on the My Students list on your home page to help you track a variety of data without needing to go into each student profile to retrieve the information. ID, First Name, and Last Name are required. All remaining columns can be customized.

By default, the My Students list is sorted by Last Name but you can click a column heading to sort the list by that column. The next time you sign in to Special Programs, the system remembers your last list view of columns and sort order.

Activity 9 – Add a Column and Change the Sort Order

Add student data columns to your My Students list based on the following scenario:

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You want to access necessary information from your My Students table to make your specific position easier to do. On a regular basis, you need the information listed below to complete paperwork. Modify your My Students table so that you can see this information quickly from My Home Page.

- Birthdate
- Grade
- Exceptionality
- Annual Review Date
- Re Eval Due Date

1. On the home page, click **Edit** next to My Students
2. From the blue options above the list, select **Customize Columns**

The Customize Columns page appears with Student Information selected in the Customize Columns – Filter By Section menu at the top of the page. The checked fields indicate the columns on your My Students list.

3. Check the following fields:
 - a. Birth Date
 - b. Grade (under Enrollment Information)
4. At the top or bottom of the page, click **Save**
5. Open the Customize Columns – Filter By Section menu and select **Special Education Information**
6. Check the following fields:
 - a. Disability
 - b. Annual Review Due Date
 - c. Re Eval Due Date
7. Click **Save**
8. Return to the home page and review the new columns on your My Students list
9. Click the Annual Review Due Date column heading one time to sort the data in ascending order
10. At the top of the page, click **Save Home Page Configuration**
11. Click the PowerSchool Special Programs logo to refresh the page and verify that the configuration was saved

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User Options

Special Programs provides personal options that you can set to have the user interface work best for you—options such as Profile Search Options, Document Options, as well as other collateral. If options are set by the Admin and locked, a user cannot change the setting. If the option is not set by the Admin or it is not locked, a user can choose a preference.

Profile Search Options includes an option to view inactive students when searching for a student. If this option is not selected, by default you will not see information for inactive students. However, you can choose to include inactive students for a particular search by selecting the Show Inactive Students option when performing a search.

Document Options includes a feature to show an option directly in a document to view past documents. If the option is not selected in Document Options, you will not see the option while viewing documents. Another Document Option is to show Next/Previous buttons when in a document with multiple sections. With this option, you can use the buttons to move between sections of the document rather than using a menu to select a section of a document.

Student Profiles

A school district's Special Programs database includes a set of profiles that comprise the basic filing system of data on students, staff, classes, locations, and districts.

- Student profiles contain data about a student such as, but not limited to, demographic information, enrollment information, placement information, disability information, and information on services being received
- Staff profiles track personnel information
- Class profiles track class information in a specific location
- Location profiles track school/building information
- District profiles track district information in scenarios where students are sent to, or received from, other school districts

Profiles contain the most current information and are distinct from documents. In most instances, data flows back and forth between profiles and documents. Additionally, a subset of information tracked in profiles is imported from PowerSchool SIS (Student Information System).

After searching for a student and selecting the icon that resembles a contact card, roll your cursor over the Student Information profile to see different profiles containing specific types of information. User access to the different profiles is dependent on the security set for the security group the user is a member of. Each state or providence has different types of information on the profiles to meet the needs of the specific state.

Activity 10 – View Student Information in Profiles

Navigate and explore the Student Profile sections in order to answer these questions:

What grade is your student in?

What Exceptional Education Program are they part of?

What services do they receive?

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Who is their case manager?

How would you contact home for this child?

1. Select a student from your My Students table and click the Profile icon that resembles a contact card
2. Browse the Student Information profile
3. To select other profile sections, roll your cursor over Student Information on the top left of the screen below Profile
4. Navigate between profiles and explore the different types of data contained in a profile
5. Return to the home page

Student Documents

As a student moves through a Special Programs process, district or school staff use Special Programs to create documents that capture essential information at each stage of the process. Pre-referral, referral, eligibility determination, and plans are all examples of documents. Over a period of years, a number of documents can accumulate in a student's document history, and all of these documents are organized by year and category so that the appropriate staff members can readily access them.

With Special Programs, each type of process-related document (for instance, a referral or plan) is created from a template that specifies the design and layout of documents of that type. For example, referral documents are created from a referral template, and plan documents from plan templates. The templates are customizable, and new templates may be added to implement other processes employed by the district.

There are multiple ways to navigate to the documents section of Special Programs. Selecting the icon that looks like a piece of paper next to a student's name is one way to go to the document section for a student. Another way to access documents is from the student's profile by selecting the Documents option on the top of the page.

Once in the student's document section, users with permission to create documents can select from the menu the document they want to create. Other documents that might appear in the student's document section could be documents uploaded into this section as files, typically PDF files. Users with access to the student can open the file, which will open in a different tab in their browser.

Activity 11 – Access Student Documents

Navigate and explore the Student Documents section for a specific student in order to answer the following questions:

Which two Exceptional Education Programs does this student belong to?

How many finalized documents does this student have?

Which two documents have been modified?

1. Under Quick Access on the home page, find the student Dylan Dottore and select the Documents icon that resembles a piece of paper
2. Review what Documents already exist for this student

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3. Click **Select** to explore the types of documents that can be created
4. Click **Documents** on the top of the screen to go back to the student's documents section
5. Return to the home page

Key Points

- Getting started – Access and navigate Special Programs
- Using the search features – Search students, classes, districts, locations, and classes
- Communication and calendar – Create and view messages, announcements, and calendar events
- Help menu – Access online help guides
- User options – Set preferences
- Student profiles – View student information
- Student documents – Access current and historical documents for students
- Caseload management – View your caseload, add or remove students, and create caseload groups