

Admission, Review & Dismissal Committee

DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY

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Model operating procedures created by



Student Solutions

and

Thompson
& Horton_{LLP}

ATTORNEYS | COUNSELORS

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What is Required

After completion of student's FIE, the ARD Committee must determine whether the student has a disability and, by reason of the disability, the student needs special education and related services. If it is determined, through an appropriate evaluation, that the student has one of the disabilities, but only needs a related service and not special education, the student is not a student with a disability under the IDEA. See *FULL INDIVIDUAL AND INITIAL EVALUATION*.

The ARD Committee must draw upon information from a variety of sources, including aptitude and achievement tests, parent input, and teacher recommendations, as well as information about the student's physical condition, social or cultural background, and adaptive behavior. The committee must also ensure that information obtained from all of these sources is documented and carefully considered.

The ARD Committee must not determine a student is a student with a disability if the determinant factor for the Committee's determination is:

- Lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including the essential components of reading instruction as defined in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act which means explicit and systematic instruction in:
 - Phonemic awareness;
 - Phonics;
 - Vocabulary development;
 - Reading fluency, including oral reading skills; and
 - Reading comprehension strategies;
- Lack of appropriate instruction in math; or
- Emergent bilingual.

District Assessment Personnel must provide a copy of the evaluation report to the student's parent, and Campus Special Education Personnel must provide documentation of determination of eligibility to student's parent.

Definitions

A "child/student with a disability" means a child evaluated in accordance with the IDEA as having a/an:



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- intellectual disability [INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY];
- Hearing impairment (including deafness) [DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING];
- Speech or language impairment [SPEECH OR LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT];
- Visual impairment (including blindness) [VISUAL IMPAIRMENT];
- Serious emotional disturbance [EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE];
- Orthopedic impairment [ORTHOPEDIC IMPAIRMENT];
- Autism [AUSTISM];
- Traumatic brain injury [TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY];
- Other health impairment [OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRMENT];
- Specific learning disability [SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY];
- Deaf-blindness [DEAF-BLINDNESS]; or
- Multiple disabilities [MULTIPLE DISABILITIES]; and

by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.

“Special education” means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability including instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings, and instruction in physical education.

“Specially designed instruction” means instruction adapted, as appropriate, to the needs of the eligible student under the IDEA, which may include the content, methodology or delivery of instruction; addressing the unique needs of the student that result from the student’s disability; and ensuring access of the student to the general curriculum so that the student can meet the educational standards with the jurisdiction of the District that apply to all students.

“Related services” means a wide array of developmental, corrective, and other supportive services that are required to assist the student to benefit from special education. Related services do not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, the optimization of that device’s functioning (mapping), maintenance of that device, or the replacement of that device. Special education and related services are based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable. This means there is reliable evidence to demonstrate that the



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program or services are effective in meeting the needs of the student. Peer-reviewed research ensures that the quality of the research meets the established standard of the field. Peer-reviewed research may apply to academic, as well as nonacademic areas, such as behavioral interventions. Related services include, but are not limited to assistive technology, audiology services, counseling services, interpreting services, medical services, music therapy, occupational therapy, orientation and mobility services, parent counseling and training, physical therapy, psychological services, recreation, rehabilitation counseling services, school health services, social work services in school, speech-language therapy, and transportation.

Additional Procedures

District or Campus Assessment Personnel—which includes, but is not limited to, a licensed specialist in school psychology, an educational diagnostician or other appropriately certified or licensed practitioner with experience and training in the area of the disability, or a licensed or certified professional for a specific eligibility category or related service—is responsible for collecting and reviewing data in connection with the determination of the student’s eligibility. However, determination of eligibility itself is made by the student’s ARD Committee, including the parent and the qualified Assessment Personnel. See *ARD COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP*.

District or Campus Assessment Personnel will ensure a copy of the evaluation report is provided to the parent and the other members of the ARD Committee within a reasonable time before the ARD Committee meeting (at least one week before the ARD, if possible) so that all members can review, question, and fully understand the information provided. For an initial evaluation or when a reevaluation indicates a possible additional eligibility, the District or Campus Assessment Personnel will review the results of the evaluation prior to the ARD meeting in a face-to-face meeting with the parent, whenever possible. In addition, if feasible, the school members of the ARD Committee may meet with the District or Campus Assessment Personnel prior to the ARD to review and discuss the evaluation.

The ARD Committee must convene within the required timeframes under the law to determine eligibility. See *ARD COMMITTEE MEETING and EVALUATION PROCEDURES*. Typically, this must occur within 30 calendar days from the date of the completion of the written initial FIE report. However, the ARD Committee may wait to finalize eligibility decisions until the first day of classes in the fall if the 30th day falls during the summer when school is not in session, unless the initial evaluation indicates that the student will require Extended School Year services during that summer. See *EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR SERVICES and EVALUATION PROCEDURES*.

Determining eligibility under the IDEA is a two-part analysis. A student is eligible if (1) the



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student has one or more of the disabilities identified by the IDEA and (2) needs special education and related services. Thus, the ARD Committee must determine not only that a student has one or more of the disabilities identified in the IDEA, but must also find that the student's condition adversely affects educational performance to such an extent that the student needs special education and related services (as defined above). If a student has a disability, but the disability does not result in a need for special education services, the student is not considered a child/student with a disability eligible for services under the IDEA. While the need for special education and related services should be determined by the ARD Committee on an individualized basis, in most cases where a student is being educated in the regular classroom with only minor accommodations and is making educational progress (i.e. passing marks, advancement from grade to grade, minimal behavior issues, success on standardized tests, etc.), the student does not "need" special education and related services within the meaning of the law.

Determination of eligibility will not be based on a single criterion. In determining if the student has a disability and the educational needs of the student, the ARD Committee must document and carefully consider information from a variety of sources including:

- The strengths of the student;
- The concerns of the parent for enhancing the education of the student;
- The results of the initial evaluation or most recent evaluation of the student; and
- The academic, developmental and functional needs of the student.

If the student does not meet the eligibility criteria under the IDEA, or does not need special education or related services due to his/her disability, Campus Personnel should refer the student to the Campus or District Personnel responsible for compliance with Section 504 to determine whether the student is eligible for accommodations or services as a student with a disability under Section 504.

Likewise, not all struggling students have a disability. In these situations, the Campus Support Team may meet and recommend other general education services or programs in an effort to help the student. The Campus Support Team may also recommend additional interventions available to non-disabled students. Finally, the student's progress should be monitored to ensure that, in the future, the student does not need special education services. *See CHILD FIND DUTY.*

The District will maintain documentation requirements of compliance associated with Texas Student Data System (TSDS), Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), and State Performance Plan (SPP). District staff will provide training, with follow up, to ensure the documentation required is in place and compliant.



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Evidence of Implementation

- Intervention History Documentation
- Section 504 Documentation
- Referral Documentation
- Teacher Information
- Parent Information
- Minutes from Review of FIE with Parent/Staff
- FIE
- ARD/IEP
- Progress Documentation
- Documentation for the state in TSDS, PEIMS, and SPP

Resources

[The Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process: Determination of Eligibility - Region 18](#)

[Eligibility Determination - Learning Disabilities Association of America](#)

[Diagnosis vs Disability - Texas Project First](#)

[OSEP Letter to Clarke \(March 8, 2007\) - U.S. Department of Education](#)

[Eligibility - SPEDTEX](#)

CITATIONS

Board Policy EHBA; Board Policy EHBAA; Board Policy EHBAB; 20 U.S.C. 1021(7), 1401(3)(A), 1414, 6368(3), 7801(20); 34 CFR 300.8(a)(1-2), 300.27, 300.306 (a-b), 300.8(a)(1-2); 19 TAC 89.1050(a)