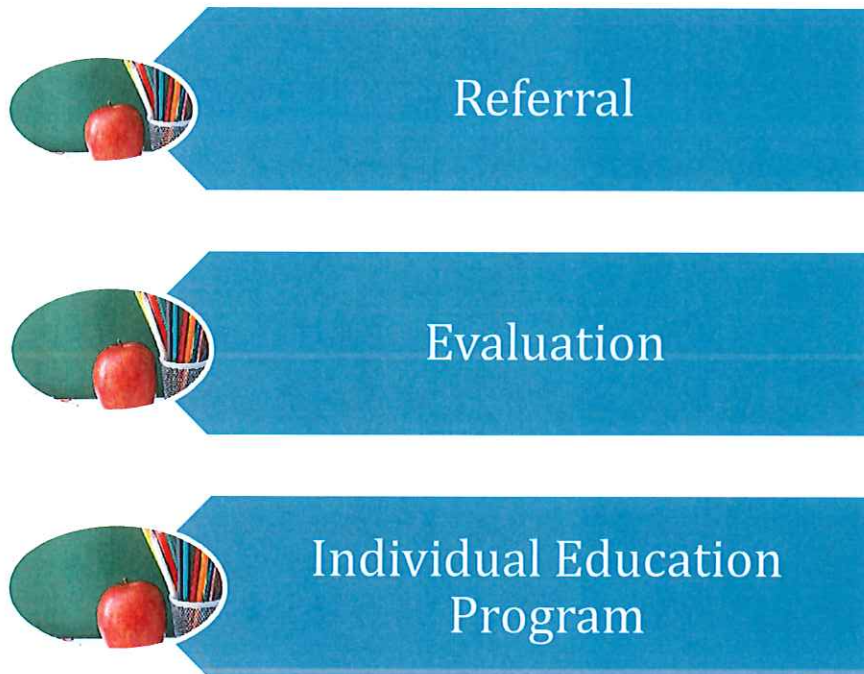


Switzerland of Ohio Local School District

Special Education Procedures And Guidelines



Revised 3-2-22

SWITZERLAND OF OHIO LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

Initial Evaluation Procedures

A formal request for an evaluation may be legally made by a parent/guardian, reading specialist, Title 1 teacher, general education teacher, or other educational staff member. This request can be a written request or a verbal one and needs to be presented to the Intervention Assistance Team. If the I.A.T. determines that an evaluation plan may be warranted, then a **referral form for evaluation (PR-04)** needs to be completed by the I.A.T. chairperson(s) from each respective building. Collaboration between the general education teacher and the I.A.T. chairperson is paramount in this process.

Referrals should include any relevant information from the classroom, communications with the parent, and RTI data. RTI data including scientific must be included in the evaluation of a student for all disability categories. Required Intervention data includes:

- Description of the research based intervention(s) used;
- How long the intervention was provided (how many weeks)
- Intensity of the intervention (how often and for how many minutes)
- Description of the results compared to the baseline data
- The decision that was made as a result of the interventions

After receipt of a referral for evaluation, the Principal, Assistant Principal, School Psychologist or I.A.T. chairperson will respond within 30 calendar days with a **Prior Written Notice (PR-01)** after compiling available data and communication with the parent/guardian by either:

- Developing an evaluation plan, obtaining parental consent and proceeding with an evaluation; or
- Refusing to initiate an evaluation and sending a prior written notice with written explanation for the refusal to initiate an evaluation

Parents will be provided a copy of **A Guide to Parent Rights in Special Education** during this process.

An evaluation plan for the initial evaluation will be drafted with input from relevant team members including the parent. This meeting may be conducted as an in-person meeting, Zoom or other digital format, or teleconference. Signatures will be obtained for meetings that are not conducted in-person. The Building Principal, Assistant Principal or the I.A.T. chairperson will monitor assessment activities to ensure compliance with timelines.

Any staff member listed on the evaluation planning form must complete the Individual Evaluator Assessment (IEA) page Part 1 (found in SameGoal). Areas of Assessment marked on the IEA page must reflect the planning form. Vision and Hearing forms (found in SameGoal) will need to be completed by the school nurse and will become part of the Evaluation Team Report (ETR) if indicated on the planning goal. All sections must be completed with specific and detailed information relating to the suspected disability including Summary of Assessment Results, Description of Educational Needs and Implications for Instruction. The team will summarize information from each of the IEA into the Team Summary Part 2.

An **ETR meeting** will be scheduled and held **within 60 calendar days from the date of parental consent.** This meeting will include a parent/guardian, general education teacher, intervention specialist, district

representative, and staff qualified to interpret the results of assessments at a minimum. ETR meetings may be held in-person, Zoom or other digital format, or by teleconference. Signatures will be obtained for meetings that are not conducted in-person. The team will determine whether a student is eligible for special education during this meeting by answering three questions:

Is the student's difficulty unrelated to a lack of appropriate instruction?

Does the student meet state criteria as documented by the information in the Evaluation Team Report for having a disability?

Does the student need individually designed instruction?

If the team determines that the answer to each question is 'yes.' The student has been found eligible for services and an IEP will be developed within 30 calendar days.

Re-evaluation Procedures

A student who previously qualified for special education services must be reevaluated triennially, meaning once per every three years. The Switzerland of Ohio Special Education Department begins to seek parental consent for reevaluation 90 days prior to the due date for the reevaluation. At this time, the evaluation team will develop a plan to compile all relevant data necessary to determine a student's educational needs. This evaluation planning meeting may occur in-person, by teleconference, or by Zoom or other digital format. Signatures will be obtained for meetings that are not conducted in-person. The Building Principal/IAT Chair will monitor assessment activities to ensure compliance with timelines.

After parental consent has been granted for reevaluation, relevant information will be gathered and assessments will be conducted. A meeting will be scheduled prior to the due date for the reevaluation with a goal of completing the reevaluation 14 calendar days prior to the due date unless a parent requests a later meeting.

Any staff member listed on the evaluation planning form must complete the Individual Evaluator Assessment (IEA) page Part 1 (found in SameGoal). Areas of Assessment marked on the IEA page must reflect the planning form. Vision and Hearing forms (found in SameGoal) will need to be completed by the school nurse and will become part of the Evaluation Team Report (ETR). All sections must be completed with specific and detailed information relating to the suspected disability including Summary of Assessment Results, Description of Educational Needs and Implications for Instruction. The team will summarize information from each of the IEA into the Team Summary Part 2.

The team determine whether a student continues to be eligible for special education during this meeting by answering three questions:

- Is the student difficulty unrelated to a lack of appropriate instruction?
- Does the student meet state criteria for having a disability?
- Does the student need individually designed instruction?

If the team determines that the answer to each question is 'yes.' The student has been found eligible for services and any relevant educational needs or changes recommended to services will be considered by the

IEP team and documented in a prior written notice (IEP reviewed and/or revised as part of the IEP Meeting or amendment process).

ETR Forms

There will be several forms involved in the referral and completion of an evaluation team report:

-PR-01 Prior Written Notice to Parents is sent to communicate specific events and related contacts between staff members, such as the development of an evaluation plan, a change in eligibility, or a refusal to change eligibility.

-PR-02 Parent Invitation is sent to communicate when and where a meeting will occur as a written reminder for the parent/guardian.

-PR-04 Referral for Evaluation is completed to refer a student for an initial evaluation and includes relevant educational trend data, background history, and data from RTI if the process has already begun for teacher initiated referrals.

-PR-05 Parent Consent for Evaluation is the written permission from a parent/guardian to conduct assessments with a student and must be obtained following reviewing of an evaluation plan to be considered informed written consent.

-PR-06 Evaluation Team Report is completed to document all data collected and assessments conducted as part of an evaluation. This document is commonly called the ETR. It also includes the evaluation planning form, which differs depending on if the evaluation is for a preschool or school-aged student. An ETR consists of five sections: section 1 involves an individual evaluator's assessment from each team member on the evaluation team who conducted an assessment or otherwise gathered information for the evaluation, section 2 is a team summary of all of the assessments written in parent friendly language, section 3 is specific to evaluation for specific learning disabilities and further expands on the information and rule-outs in an SLD evaluation, section 4 is the eligibility determination including a summary of the team decision and a response to each of the three eligibility questions, and section 5 is the team signatures pages which documents that a fully compliant team participated in the meeting (parent/guardian, district representative, professional who can interpret the results of assessments, intervention specialist, a general education teacher, and other staff as necessary such as related service professionals).

IEP Forms

The Office for Exceptional Children has directed school districts to use universal support found on the ODE website for training purposes. These documents and videos offer guidance on the new forms and compliance. You can also find these resources by going to the Ohio Department of Education website and enter "universal support materials" in the search field. The [dynamic IEP form \(revised July 2018\)](#) can also be downloaded from the ODE website by searching "IEP required forms". The dynamic form includes popup windows which share important information regarding compliance.

IEP Meeting Procedures

The goal of the IEP Annual Review is to compile a year's worth of intervention, observation, and data analysis into a report that will allow the student to seamlessly transition from one year to the next. When assembling the team, please make every effort to gather team members that are familiar with

the student and his or her interests, strengths, and needs. This document is a reflection of the dedication that you place on student progress, and should thoroughly represent your work with the individual. Even if the student is relatively new to you, effort should be made to learn as much as possible about the student before drafting the IEP Annual Review.

The following is a general outline of the annual review procedure:

1. Whenever possible, IEP Annual Review meetings should be scheduled for a date that is at least 14 days prior to the expiration date. This allows for rescheduling, if needed.
2. At least 14 days prior to the meeting send PR02 – Parent Invitation to parent. If a child is of Transition age, the student must be invited to the meeting as well, and this must be indicated on the invitation.
3. Add the event to your School's IEP Calendar and send an invite to all participants.
4. Draft the IEP - Data must include parent input, input from all staff who support the student's goals/objectives, progress reports, ETR, student work samples, assessment, observations, etc. Make sure all contributing Switzerland of Ohio team members have access to the IEP in SameGoal.
5. Peer review – provide a draft copy to your building Internal Monitor to review.
6. Update the IEP with any necessary changes from the Internal Monitor's review.
7. Confirm meeting appointment with parent 1-2 school day(s) prior to meeting.
8. Hold meeting – any changes must be made in SameGoal and reprinted prior to signing (no handwritten changes).
9. Provide parents with Procedural Safeguards, signed COPY of IEP and PR01 upon completion of the IEP meeting.
10. It is the responsibility of the intervention specialist of record to obtain all necessary signatures before delivering the IEP to the Special Education Department.
11. Ensure an ORIGINAL copy of all documents are given to the Special Education Office within 7 calendar days after the meeting.

IEP Compliance and Best Practices

The following includes guidance on compliance and best practices for individual sections of the IEP. Please note that this is not all inclusive, however, it does address areas that frequently raise questions and concerns. Please feel free to ask the Director of Special Education and/or Building Principal whenever you have questions or concerns. It's far better to ask questions than to make assumptions that could lead to problems needing correction at a later date.

PR-01 – Prior Written Notice

The PR01 serves as written notice of changes, or potential changes, to the services provided for a student with an IEP. Please review the Office of Exceptional Children's *Prior Written Notice Chart* included in the resources section of this handbook for further details. The PR01 must:

- Indicate the type of meeting
- Summarize details of the discussion and/or decisions made
- Note information that was discussed, but not included in the IEP
- Include specific data used to inform decisions
- If parent did not attend, document all attempts to contact
- Be complete (blank sections, not applicable, or n/a, is not acceptable)

PR-02 – Parent Invitation

According to Ohio's Operating Standards, we must make reasonable "varied" attempts to reach a parent before holding a meeting without them. This includes any meeting that the IEP team will convene to discuss the student's needs. Recommendations for meeting this requirement are:

- An initial phone call more than 10 calendar days prior to the expiration date of IEP.
- Students will always be invited when Transition will be discussed, otherwise when appropriate – decided by team and parent.
- Reminder phone call and/or email one school day prior to the meeting.
- Document all attempts on the OP-09 form found in SameGoal.

Cover Page

- Ensure all data is complete, correct, and up to date.
- Other information section – be careful not to share information that is non-relevant to the student's needs (i.e. medical information not related to the qualifying disability).
- All Form Status boxes should be checked once each section is completed.

Section 1 - Future Planning

This section should be viewed as the "vision" statement of the IEP. The student's and parent's goals for the student are indicated in this section and should be reflected throughout the IEP. In other words, if the student wants to be a construction worker or veterinarian, the team must consider the skills he or she will need to accomplish that goal, and how the services provided will develop those skills. A best practice is to include a statement that makes a link to future planning wherever

appropriate. For example, it is a good idea to add a statement of the impact of the strengths and weaknesses on the Future Planning in the Present Levels on Section 6.

Section 2 – Special Instructional Factors

All questions must be answered. Anything marked “yes” must be addressed in the IEP.

Section 3 - Profile

The profile must include a general description of the child, their strengths, needs, preferences, and an overview of data from the ETR that may not be addressed in Section 6. After reading the Profile, the team should have an overall picture of the student. This must also include a connection to the ETR with a summary of the findings (not a cut and paste). If the student has a Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan, it must be included in the profile. This is a good place to include interventions that have been attempted and their impact, if it is not addressed in Section 6, as well as Statewide assessment results.

Section 4 - Extended School Year (ESY) Services Procedure

Students with an identified disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) will be provided a free appropriate public education through special education services offered during the school calendar year. While most students, including those with disabilities, benefit from an extended break during the summer months, some students may experience significant regression with limited recoupment after long periods away from school. If data supports this need, Extended School Year (ESY) services for students with identified disabilities are designed to limit regression and/or increase recoupment between school years.

ESY services for students with disabilities are considered on an annual basis and are not automatically provided from one year to the next. This is an IEP team decision determined after a review of supporting data.

In determining ESY needs, the IEP team will consider all of the following:

- a. Without ESY services, will the child regress at a rate significantly higher than typical peers and other peers with disabilities?
- b. Is the child likely to fail to achieve the goals on the IEP due to the interruption of instruction between school years?
- c. Will the child regress during interruption of instruction between school years to the extent that skills and knowledge cannot be recouped in a reasonable amount of time?
- d. Is the regression caused by interruption of instruction between school years, or does the child regress periodically throughout the school year?
- e. Is the regression caused by interruption of instruction between school years, or are there other factors related to the regression?

In determining whether ESY services are necessary for an individual child, as appropriate, the following information should be reviewed:

- a. Parent provided information
- b. Teacher information and data including observation, informal and formal assessments
- c. Current and previous evaluations
- d. Current and previous IEPs
- e. IEP progress reports
- f. Student report cards
- g. Testing results- state, district, formal and informal assessments
- h. Discipline records, if applicable
- i. Attendance records
- j. Previous year-to-year growth
- k. Behavior and skill charts
- l. Work samples
- m. Conditions other than the interruption of instruction between school years (i.e. changes in medication, physical condition, home situation, etc.) which may negatively affect the attainment of goals
- n. Other information, as appropriate (i.e. medical and/or psychological reports)

If the IEP team determines that ESY services are required, the team must determine the specific goals that will be addressed and the amount of time required. This discussion may take place during the IEP annual review or an amendment meeting. A PR01 must be written to document the discussion and the team's decision.

Sections 5 – Transition

This applies to students who will turn 14 prior to the expiration of the IEP, or older. While uncommon, the team may address transition for younger students if appropriate. All data must be complete, accurate, and individualized based on current Age Appropriate Transition Assessment (AATA) data that includes the student's Preferences, Interests, Needs, and Strengths (PINS). The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (transitionta.org) is an excellent resource. Note: we are required to report on progress toward transition goals for all students who have a transition plan.

Section 6 – Present Levels

This section must include current (performance at the time of the IEP within the previous twelve months or school year) data from assessment, observations, classroom data, and work samples. This should come directly from the previous IEP's Progress Reports as well as any additional data collected. Both strengths and weaknesses should be evident, as well as any interventions attempted and their impact. Be sure that you include input from any other team members that may have data in this area. The information in this section must be understandable to all members, including parents, and must include baseline data that is directly correlated to the goal. The current performance measurement must directly relate to the goal measurement. All performance levels must be described in measurable terms of growth using the same conditions and behaviors as the goal. Best practice is to review the section with others who are involved with the student's education. This section must also include a statement that compares the student's present levels of performance to the grade level standards (make a connection to Ohio's Learning Standards). This is a good place to reflect on the future planning and transitions sections to ensure all needs are being addressed.

Section 6 – Goal and Objectives

All goals and objectives must be specific, measurable, and achievable. They must contain clearly defined behavior (1 verb or 1 specific action the child is expected to perform), the condition (setting, situation, or materials), and performance criteria (the level the student must demonstrate for mastery **AND** the number of times a student must demonstrate the skill or behavior). You should be able to observe a task, or give an assessment, that will provide the exact data that the goal and/or objective indicates. Best practice is to have an example of the assessment, rubric, chart, and/or task on hand while writing this section, and to present during the meeting. This will ensure that the goal or objective is measurable and will provide the feedback that the team needs to make future decisions regarding progress and interventions. As with the Present Levels, it is important to seek input from any other team members that work with the student in each area.

Section 7 – Specially Designed Instruction and Related Services

This section is a description of how you will work with the student to support each area of weakness so that they may achieve the goal. Describe the content (skills), methodology (instructional strategies) and delivery of instruction (ex. Small group, individual). This is a brief description of the work, or specially designed instruction, that you do (think learning styles and preferences). It should be as specific to the student's individual needs as possible. This may include a brief description of any tools, or assessments that you may use, but no proprietary names can be indicated.

All items in this section must be justified by the student's individual needs.

Assistive technology is defined as any time, piece of equipment or system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional abilities of the student. If you include assistive technology, the student must know how to use it. Any instruction on the use of assistive technology should be indicated in Section 7. Time and frequency does not need to be indicated in this section.

There needs to also be an explanation of under what circumstances the student will receive the accommodation. Describe the conditions for and the extent of each accommodation. Accommodations provide access to course content but do not alter the scope or complexity of the information being taught. In other words, the IEP should indicate examples of situations when this accommodation helped the student's performance, and/or that their progress was hindered without it. For example, if "extended time" is indicated, there must be data to support why this levels the playing field for the is indicated, there must be data to support why this levels the playing field for the student. The Profile and/or Present Levels (Section 6) is a good place for this supporting data. Make sure these are as defined as possible. For example, "read aloud" does not stand alone as an accommodation as the assumption could be made that everything should be read aloud.

Modifications means changes made to the content that students are expected to learn where the amount or complexity of materials is altered from grade level curriculum expectations. When an instructional or curriculum modification is being made, either the specific subject matter is altered or the performance expected of the student is changed. Curriculum modifications result in the student being taught the same information as the same age and grade level peers with less complexity. Describe how the curriculum is being modified. Reduced written assignments as a modification must be specifically defined.

Section 7 – Support for School Personnel

This section documents the needed support from adult to adult (example, when a paraprofessional supports a teacher in the classroom at the teachers' direction, or when an occupational therapist is providing training and guidance to teachers or certified occupational therapist assistant). For each support, the team must list the school personnel to receive the support, the specific support that will be provided and who will provide the support.

Section 8 – Transportation

All questions must be answered. Remember this need must be based on the qualifying disability.

Section 9 – Non-academic and Extracurricular Activities

Does the child's disability impact their ability to participate in activities and if so, what support will the child need.

Section 10 – General Factors

All questions must be answered and understood by all team members.

Section 11 – Least Restrictive Environment

If the child does not receive all services with their general education peers, this section must include a description of the LRE as well as explanation as to why services cannot be provided in the general education setting based on the student's needs.

Section 12 – Statewide and District Wide Testing

The **Ohio AASCD Participation Criteria document must be completed, signed, and included with the IEP for all students who qualify for the Alternate assessment.** This is an annual decision that is not automatically carried over from one year to the next. The team will review the Ohio AASCD Participation Criteria to determine if the student qualifies for Alternate Assessment and include a justification in Section 13. **Also, The Ohio’s Alternate Assessment Participation Decision-Making Tool must be completed with appropriate signatures before the student can participate in the Alternate Assessment program.**

Accommodations, and their use, are defined by Ohio’s Accessibility Manual, so it is essential that they are aligned with that guidance. All accommodations must be supported with data that indicates their need and only apply to areas of weakness addressed in the IEP. For example, a student who has a weakness in math calculation would not qualify for extended time on an ELA assessment. On the other hand, a student with a weakness in reading is not guaranteed to read aloud, as it depends on the extent of their needs. Best practice is to provide and report trials with and without the accommodation in the Profile and/or Present Levels section of the IEP that is tied to that area of weakness.

Section 13 – Exemptions

This section is addressed on an annual basis and is not automatically carried over from one year to the next. This decision is not to be taken lightly as the expectation is that most students should be able to pass statewide assessment with proper accommodations.

Third Grade Reading Guarantee (TGRG [See manual at this link](#)):

If a student has a significant cognitive disability, the child is not required to take the reading diagnostic assessment and is therefore removed from the provisions of the TGRG (including retention). The TGRG does not apply unless the student is approaching the testing window within the IEP term.

To be exempt from the retention requirement the IEP team must:

- 1 – Have documented data that aligns the reading improvement and monitoring plan with the IEP.
- 2 – Include data supporting the rationale for the exemption in Section 3-Profile or Section 6 – Present Levels. Outline assessment scores and/or progress in the reading curriculum (this would be true for all students K-3)
- 3 – Include a plan for clear, targeted reading interventions and progress markers for 4th grade.

Note: This is not an exemption from testing, rather an excusal from the consequences of not passing. Students still need to participate and put forth their best effort.

High school End of Course (EOC) exams, the team must determine if the student meets the specific requirements and each area that applies. Similar to accommodations, data must support each area to qualify for the excusal. There must be clear documentation indicating the reasons that area is being considered for the excusal.

Section 14 – Participants

Make sure all participants sign. Include signatures from any team members who provided information for the IEP, but did not attend. For example, if a co-teacher provided input for Present Levels, but will not be the General Education representative at the meeting, they will sign this section at the bottom where it indicates "People not in attendance who provided information and recommendations". The same would be expected of any service providers that will not or did not attend. This should be signed before the meeting. The Director of Special Education must recognize this situation and have the document completed and uploaded to SameGoal as well as have the original in the student's special education file.

Section 15 – Signatures

Be careful to have the parent sign on the appropriate line on this page. The parent must have the opportunity to choose whether they agree or not. The parents must always be provided with Procedural Safeguards.

Section 15 – Transfer of Rights at Majority

This will be addressed if the student will turn 17 before the expiration of the IEP. Inform the student and parent that once the student turns 18, educational rights transfer to the student.

Eye Exam

For Initial IEPs only! Print **Eye Exam for IEP notification form** (from SameGoal) and give it to parent to sign. Print **IEP eye exam doctor's form** (from SameGoal) to be given to parent at the meeting.

Scholarship Notice

Parents must be informed of the Jon Peterson and Autism Scholarship annually. This information can be found on the **last page** of the **Guide to Parent Rights in Special Education Notice**. The scholarship notification document is no longer required.

Amending IEPs

1. Amendments are done through SameGoal.
 - a. May be parent requested
 - b. May be due to a progress report
 - c. May be due to new data collection

d. May be due to other changes that are directly related to the students and their needs

2. Amendments must include the parents agreeing that a change is necessary based on what is best for the student.

3. The PR-01 for an amendment must be in place before the amended IEP can be implemented.

Internal Monitoring

SOLSD Internal Monitoring Team reviews ETR and IEP records on a routine basis to ensure compliance, identify professional development needs and identify needed changes to district special education procedures. The team follows the Internal Monitoring procedure and formal assessment tool to review identified records.

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