

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Question: I get confused by all the meetings. Can you explain the different types of meetings that occur before and after classification?**

Answer:

IRST Meeting: The IRST Team process is a collaborative school effort between district personnel and parents to intervene when a student has been identified as making minimal academic and/or emotional progress in the general education setting. The team or committee collects and evaluates relevant data in order to determine or identify specific barriers to student performance.

Identification Meeting: This meeting provides the opportunity for the school and/or parents to convey concerns related to the student's educational progress. The full CST is in attendance and will determine if an evaluation is warranted. If an evaluation is warranted, the CST will develop an evaluation plan and present it to the parents for their consent. If the parents consent to the plan, the CST has 90 days to complete the assessments, determine the child's eligibility, and have the child placed in a program.

Eligibility Meeting: At this meeting, the case manager presents the findings from the completed assessments, reviews the student's eligibility status, and if eligible, develops appropriate programming for the student in collaboration with the IEP team.

IEP Meeting: In this meeting, the IEP team reviews the student's progress in the current program and then plans for future programming based on the information presented.

2. **Question: At what point is my child considered classified?**

Answer: After the eligibility meeting is held that deems the student eligible for special education and related services.

3. **Question: Does my child have to be classified to have speech/language services?**

Answer: Yes, either as eligible for special education and related services or as eligible for speech/language services.

4. **Question: Should my child have goals and objectives for in-class support programs?**

Answer: No. Goals and objectives are for replacement and related services programming and in-class support follows the general education curriculum.

5. Question: I would like my child evaluated for special education eligibility by an outside agency. Can this be done?

Answer: Parents are entitled to an independent evaluation of their child at no cost if they are in disagreement with the evaluation provided by the district's CST. The independent evaluation would occur, however, after the district's CST has conducted its own evaluation. Districts often maintain a list of agencies that provide independent evaluations. It is important that the district's CST evaluate your child since it is in the best position to observe classes, speak to teachers and be knowledgeable of curriculum delivery in the child's school. The evaluation process also helps the CST become more knowledgeable of your child's needs and puts the CST in a better position to assist teachers and therapists who may be working with your child in the future.

6. Question: I have had a private evaluator assess my child and several recommendations are made in the evaluator's report. Will these be accepted by the district?

Answer: The district's CST must consider the findings of any evaluation provided by the parents of a student receiving special education or undergoing consideration for services. In some cases, the entire report may be accepted, in other cases a portion of the report, and in some instances the CST may not accept the findings of a report. The CST should provide you with its determination in this regard and the reasons for its determination.

7. Question: My child is receiving private services outside the school day and is responding well to the methodology that is used in this program. Will the school district adopt this methodology if I request it?

Answer: The fact that your child is responding to a particular strategy or method is important information of which the IEP team should be aware. To the degree possible, the district staff may wish to implement strategies that the parent identifies as productive for the child. The ability to adopt a particular method may be limited in many instances by factors such as environmental conditions (some methods that are successful in a non-school setting do not transfer to a classroom setting), specific training requirements, or a lack of supportive scientific research. For these reasons, districts are given the responsibility of choosing the method which they view to be most appropriate. However, particular methodologies are not a required component of an IEP.

8. Question: Are parents part of the team who decides eligibility for special education and related services?

Answer: No. Although parental input is utilized in making eligibility determinations, the CST is responsible for determining eligibility for special education and related services and consent is not required.

9. Question: What do I do if I just want occupational therapy?

Answer: Occupational therapy is a related service and is only required to be provided if a student is determined as eligible for special education and then found to be in need of occupational therapy, as determined by the IEP team based upon an occupational therapy evaluation.

10. Question: When is a child eligible for Extended School Year (ESY) services?

Answer: The IEP team determines eligibility for ESY services by reviewing several factors. One factor to be considered includes the regression/recoupment analysis which considers the amount of regression a student experiences as a result of an interruption in educational services over the course of the summer with the amount of time required to regain the prior level of skill upon the student's return to school in the fall. The IEP team may also consider other factors such as the nature and severity of the student's disability.

11. Question: As a parent, am I a member of the CST and IEP team?

Answer: The CST consists of a school psychologist, a learning disabilities teacher/consultant, school social worker, and when needed, a speech-language specialist, responsible for conducting evaluations to determine eligibility for special education and related services for students with disabilities. Parents are members of the IEP team. (See glossary for definition of IEP team.)

12. Question: What are related services?

Answer: Related services are services that are provided to help classified students benefit from special education. The services are specified in the student's IEP and are provided in conjunction with the special education program. Many times the related services to a special education program are provided in the classroom setting. Some examples of related services include:

1. counseling services
2. occupational therapy
3. physical therapy
4. speech/language services
5. transportation
6. parent training

13. Question: Once my child is classified, can my child have transportation if I live too close for the regular bus?

Answer: While transportation is a possible related service, most classified students are not eligible for transportation as part of their IEP. Transportation is only provided as a related service due to a condition of the student's disability and in accordance with specific needs of the student as detailed in their IEP.

14. Question: Who has access to pupil records?

Answer: The parent, adult student or their designated representative has access to inspect and review the contents of the pupil's records kept by the school district. The school district's certified staff who has educational responsibility for the student has access to the pupil records. Certified educational staff employed by approved private schools, outside clinics and agencies that the district employs and who has educational responsibility for the student also have access to the pupil records. Secretaries and clerical staff have limited access, under the supervision of certified staff, to access the pupil records so that they can enter or record data and conduct routine clerical tasks. Additionally, the district must obtain consent from the parent or adult student before releasing the pupil's records to a person or organization that is not otherwise authorized to see them.