



Department of Special Services: *Policies and Procedures*

Pre-Referral Process

The rationale for systematic regular education intervention is to identify problems early and prevent them from becoming significant problems. Successful regular education interventions can negate the need for special education in the future by attending to the difficulties in the present.

Good instructional practices necessitate that teachers use specific strategies and techniques to assist students who are experiencing difficulties in the classroom. Teachers consult with other school staff members who have extensive knowledge of interventions.

Intervention and Referral Services

New Jersey requires that all school districts have a multidisciplinary team in each building that provides assistance to students who are experiencing academic, health, or behavioral difficulties. (N.J.A.C. 6A: 16-7 Intervention and Referral Services)

The Intervention and Referral Service (I&RS) team serves as a resource for teachers and is an integral part of the pre-referral process. I&RS members typically include, but are not limited to, the school principal, nurse, counselor, CST members and teachers. I&RS may also include other the school disciplinarian, the special education program coordinator, and other support staff when deemed necessary. The purpose of I&RS is to address any possible concerns teachers may have regarding a students' academic, behavioral, social, or emotional functioning; ONLY AFTER the teacher has exhausted all traditional intervention strategies.

Based on meetings with teachers, the I&RS team develops an 'Action Plan' which is comprised of case-specific strategies for use in regular education classrooms. Teachers then implement these strategies according to the Action Plan. Parent/guardian(s) are always notified when their child is referred to I&RS and should regularly be informed about the progress of their child through contact with the teacher. If the strategies are not effective, they may be revised or, if it is suspected that the student is potentially educationally disabled, a referral will be made to the

Child Study Team. Parent/guardians(s) may request their child be brought before the I&RS team by contacting the child's teacher or guidance counselor.

In addition, a parent/guardian can request a CST evaluation at any time; including before, during, or after the I&RS process. Requests must be submitted in writing and must include the following:

- Student's Name/Date of Birth
- Date of request
- Parent Signature
- Statement of consent to begin evaluation process

PLEASE SEE APPENDIX FOR SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING A CST EVALUATION

The Identification and Placement Process:

- *Referral*
- *Evaluation*
- *Eligibility*
- *Individualized Education Plan*
- *Educational Placement*
- *Related Services*

1. Referral

A student is generally referred for evaluation by school personnel through the I&RS team or by the child's parent/guardian. The referral should be made in writing, addressing the specific presenting concerns and the child's current strengths and needs. The referral is presented to the AULCS Child Study Team who assigns the referral to a designated case manager. The assigned case manager has responsibility for managing the initial referral process. At this point the parent/guardian of the child being referred will be provided with the case manager's name, contact information, and a timeline indicating what part of the process will occur next. The parent, the student's teacher, and the CST meet within 20 days of receipt of the referral to determine if an evaluation is warranted. The parent must provide written consent for the initial evaluation to proceed.

The Child Study Team (CST)

The Child Study Team is a multi-disciplinary educational team that is responsible to locate, identify, evaluate, determine eligibility, and develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for students suspected of having educational disabilities. This group of specialists is employed by the district to provide consultative, evaluative, and prescriptive services to teachers and parents. The team provides diagnostic services to children from age 11 to 21 that have been identified as having a potentially disabling condition. Counselling and consultative services are available for any school-aged student experiencing difficulty in learning or behavior.

The Child Study Team (CST) together with instructional staff, the IEP team, support staff, and in some cases school counselors and administrators make recommendations for programs and placements which will best address the needs of students who are experiencing school-related programs. The Child Study Team consists of a school social worker, learning disabilities teacher/consultant, school psychologist, special education program coordinator, and in some cases, a speech-language specialist.

School Social Worker

The social worker's primary responsibility is as a member of the Child Study Team. As such, the social worker contributes to the CST evaluation process by conducting a "social history evaluation." The social history evaluation is an assessment of bio psychosocial factors (social, emotional, physical, behavioral and cultural) that may impact a child's adjustment to and performance in school. The school social worker also provides counseling, crisis intervention and consultation services, as well as helping families' access community services.

Learning Disabilities Teacher/Consultant (LDT/C)

The Learning Disabilities Teacher-Consultant is a master teacher who functions in the school environment as an educational diagnostician, instructional programmer, Child Study Team member, educational consultant and instructional leader. The LDT/C is a certified professional who is trained to create and deliver assessments, analyses, and classifications of students' learning differences; understand and implement special education law. The key function of the learning disabilities teacher/consultant is to conduct the educational evaluation portion of the IEP; which encompasses both standardized and functional assessments to determine strengths and weaknesses related to academic achievement. This includes language, reading, writing, and math, as well as attention and executive functioning. The LDT/C then interprets the results of the educational evaluation, which is often the most crucial part in determining the child's eligibility. Parent/guardian(s) will receive a copy of assessment data and results regardless of the eligibility determination.

It shall include review of the student's educational history, conferences with the student's teacher(s), and an evaluation and analysis of the student's academic performance and learning characteristics.

School Psychologist

The school psychologist consults with the student's teachers and assesses the student's current cognitive (thinking and learning), social, adaptive, and emotional status. The activities involved in the evaluation vary at times from student to student but, in general, most children are given an intelligence test to determine a child's likelihood for success within the academic area.

Case Manager

In addition to their respective roles, the social worker, special education provider, and learning disabilities teacher consultant may also serve as case managers for students receiving special education services. Students are assigned a case manager at the time of the referral, however, periodically there are changes in assignments. The case manager coordinates the evaluation process and IEP development, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the IEP. The case manager facilitates communication between home and school, and coordinates the annual review and reevaluation process. The case manager is knowledgeable about the student's educational needs and program, as well as special education procedures and procedural safeguards, and is responsible for transition planning. A speech/ language specialist may also serve as a case manager.

Special Education Program Coordinator

The role of the Special Education Program Coordinator is to serve as the primary liaison between the CST and the child's teachers. The special education program coordinator assists the CST during the referral, evaluation, and identification process in order to create effective programming and placement for students with disabilities. This individual may collaborate with instructional staff at various stages of Individual Education Program (IEP) development, implementation, and monitoring and is essential to the instructional design, and decision-making process.

2. EVALUATION PROCESS

Initial Evaluation

A child must be evaluated in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional functioning, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities. In addition, the evaluation must be sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the child's special education and related services needs.

No single assessment procedure may be used as the sole criterion for determining whether a child has a disability or for determining an appropriate educational program. The evaluation materials must be technically sound and may assess the relative contribution of cognitive and behavioral factors, in addition to physical and developmental factors.

Evaluation of a child who may have limited English proficiency should assess the child's proficiency in English as well as in the child's native language to distinguish language proficiency from disability needs. Evaluation materials and procedures must be in the child's native language or other mode of communication unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.

The school nurse may perform an audiometric and vision screening and will provide the Child Study Team with a medical history.

THE EVALUATION PLAN

The CST, the parent, and the regular education teacher meet and review the existing data to determine what additional data is necessary and which CST members and specialists will conduct the evaluation. A minimum of two CST members is required to conduct an evaluation based on the presenting information. If necessary, a health appraisal or specialized medical evaluation will be recommended.

An evaluation plan is completed and the parent is given a copy.

Standardized testing

An initial evaluation to the CST requires the use of standardized testing. Standardized testing must be:

- Individually administered
- Valid and reliable
- Normed on a representative population
- Scored as either standard score with standard deviation or norm referenced scores with a cutoff score
-

Some examples of standardized tests used to measure achievement include the following:

- ✓ Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement (KTEA)
- ✓ Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT)
- ✓ Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Achievement Battery – Fourth Edition (WJ-IV)
- ✓ The Test of Written Language, 3rd Edition (TOWL-3)

Some examples of standardized tests used to measure cognitive ability include the following:

- ✓ Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children IV (WISC-IV)
- ✓ Woodcock Johnson Psychoeducational Battery Test of Cognitive Ability – 3rd Edition (WJ-III)

Some examples of speech and language tests include the following:

- ✓ Goldman-Fristoe Test of Articulation-2 (GPTA-2)
- ✓ The Listening Test
- ✓ The Language Processing Test
- ✓ The Phonological Awareness Test
- ✓ The Auditory Conceptualization Test
- ✓ Clinical Evaluation of Fundamental Language Preschool (CELF-Preschool)
- ✓ Preschool Language Scale
- ✓ Comprehensive Assessment of Spoken Language
- ✓ Photo Articulation Test
- ✓ Test of Language Development-Primary (TOLD-P)
- ✓ Test of Language Development-Intermediate (TOLD-1)
- ✓ Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised

Social and emotional growth and adaptive behavior is measured using the following instruments:

- ✓ Child Developmental Inventory
- ✓ Battelle Developmental Inventory
- ✓ Connor's Rating Scale
- ✓ Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale

Functional Assessment

A functional assessment must be completed by at least one of the evaluators, and the information needs to be included in the written report. Examples are:

- A minimum of one structured observation
- An interview with the student's parent
- An interview with the referring teacher
- A review of the student's developmental/educational history
- A review of the documented interventions
- One or more informal measures (i.e. checklists, survey)

Following are some examples of additional evaluations that may be recommended and why

they might be recommended:

- An occupational therapist evaluation to assess extent of fine motor difficulties
- A physical therapist evaluation to assess extent of gross motor difficulties
- A neurological evaluation to determine the extent of an attention deficit disorder
- A psychiatric evaluation to identify emotional and mental health problems
- A medical evaluation to evaluate health issues
- An audiological evaluation to measure acuity, central auditory processing, and to make appropriate recommendations for assistive listening devices
- An assistive technology evaluation to determine the need for communication support

Independent Evaluations

As described above, before receiving special education services, your child must receive an evaluation if a disability exists. If you disagree with the school's evaluation results, you can request an independent evaluation. This service is provided at the school system's expense and the testing is done by a licensed professional not employed by The Academy for Urban Leadership Charter School. The results of the independent evaluation must be considered by the IEP team.

Eligibility Conference/Determining Eligibility

After the evaluation process is completed a meeting is held. The purpose of the meeting is to determine eligibility for special education. If eligible, the student is classified as "Eligible for Special Education and Related Services."

The parents, the Case Manager, the special education teacher, general education teacher(s), and other appropriate persons are invited to attend the meeting. Ten days before the meeting the parents are sent a copy of the written reports.

If the parent agrees that the child should receive special education services, a program plan may be developed at the meeting. The parent must give written consent for the special education program and services to begin.

In order to qualify for services the student must meet the criteria in one or more of the following areas . In addition to the two members of the CST assessing the student other evaluations may be required. The speech and language evaluation may be one of the two.

Definition

Auditorily Impaired

An inability to hear within normal limits

Autistic

A pervasive developmental disability that impacts verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction

Cognitively Impaired

Significantly below average cognitive functioning with deficits in adaptive behavior and can be mild, moderate, or severe

Communication Impaired

A language disorder in the areas of morphology, syntax, semantics, and/or pragmatics/discourse

Emotionally Disturbed

An inability to build or maintain interpersonal relationships, inappropriate behaviors, depression, or physical systems of fears

Multiply Disabled

The presence of two or more disabling conditions

Orthopedically Impaired

A severe orthopedic impairment

Other Health Impaired

A disability characterized by having limited strength, vitality or alertness or heightened alertness

Socially Maladjusted

An inability to conform to normal standards of behavior

Traumatic Brain Injury

An acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force

Visually Impaired

An impairment in vision that is not helped with correction

Specific Learning Disability

A "Specific learning disability (SLD)" is a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations.

The term does not apply to students who have learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, general cognitive deficits, emotional disturbance or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

A specific learning disability is characterized by a severe discrepancy between the student's current achievement and intellectual ability in one or more of the following areas:

- Basic reading skills
- Reading comprehension
- Oral expression
- Listening comprehension
- Mathematical computation
- Mathematical reasoning
- Written expression

The district is required to adopt procedures that utilize a statistical formula and criteria for determining severe discrepancy. The state of New Jersey contracted with DB Enterprises to develop a software program and recommended it to be used by the CST members. The Estimator-NJ-Version 3.0 was copyrighted in 2004.

According to the manual, Estimator-NJ facilitates the use of a regression analysis discrepancy formula. The program contains reliabilities and test-to-test correlations required by the formula for several aptitude (IQ) and achievement tests, makes rapid and accurate calculations, and generates a report that summarizes discrepancy data for individual students and documents how that data was considered in eligibility decisions.

A severe discrepancy formula is only one procedure for making the SLD determination. Functional assessments must also be considered.

When a student is suspected of having a specific learning disability, the CST must include the following information in the written report(s):

- Whether the student has a specific learning disability
- The basis for making the determination
- The relevant behavior noted during the observation
- The relationship of the behavior to the student's academic performance
- Educationally relevant medical findings, if any
- The effects of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage, if any
- Whether there is a severe discrepancy between achievement and ability

Please refer to N.J.A.C. 6A: 14-3.5(c) for more detailed information.

3. INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is the written plan developed after the eligibility meeting that drives the student's program. It describes the special education and related services specifically designed to meet the unique educational needs of a student with disability. The IEP team meeting helps parents and educators work together as partners. The IEP is not a daily lesson plan. It is a long-term plan and, thus, will not tell you everything that a teacher will do with your child. The IEP is not a contract. The IEP describes things that you and school have agreed to do for your child, but it is not a guarantee that the interventions will work. The IEP is a fluid document. It can be changed as your child's needs change.

The IEP Team

- Student, if student is age 14 or older
- Parent
- Special education teacher,
- Regular education teacher, if the student is or will be participating in regular education
- Case Manager
- School Social Worker
- Others at the discretion of the parent or school district

IEP Content

- A statement of the student's present levels of educational performance (PLAAFP)
- A statement of measurable goals and benchmarks or short-term objectives
- A statement of how the student's progress toward the annual goals will be measured
- An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the student shall not participate with nondisabled students in the general education class and in extracurricular and nonacademic activities
- Modifications needed to participate in the administration of statewide or district-wide assessments
- A description of the placement decision, program, and related services
- The projected date for the beginning and ending of the program and services and the anticipated frequency, location, and duration of these
- Beginning at age 14, a statement of the state and local graduation requirements that the student shall be expected to meet
- A statement of student's transition from an elementary program to a secondary program
- A Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) for students experiencing significant behavior difficulties.
- Beginning at age 14, a statement of the transition service needs
- A statement of how the student's parents will be regularly informed of their student's progress toward the annual goals and the extent to which that progress is sufficient to enable the student to achieve the goals by the end of the year.
- In the case of a student whose behavior impedes learning, the inclusion of a behavior intervention plan

Please refer to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7 for more detailed information on the contents of the IEP.

CHANGING THE IEP

When an IEP meeting is held to change an IEP, the changes cannot be implemented before 15 days unless the parent gives written consent. After the 15 days the changes may be implemented. If the parent disagrees with the changes made to the IEP the parent must contact the school prior to the 15 days. Additionally, the changes cannot be implemented until the parent has been given a copy of the new IEP.

REEVALUATION

The purpose of a reevaluation is to determine if the student continues to be eligible for special education services. This determination must be made every three years or more often if necessary.

The IEP team meets to review the current data and decides whether additional testing is required to determine eligibility. If everyone agrees that the student continues to be eligible (or ineligible) no additional testing is required. If the parent disagrees with the decision made by the IEP team, the parent can request additional testing to determine eligibility (or ineligibility) for special education.

The school must obtain parental consent before conducting any testing as part of a reevaluation. However, if the school can demonstrate that it tried to get parental consent, and the parent did not respond, the school may proceed with the reevaluation as planned.

A reevaluation is conducted by at least two members of the CST using functional assessment and when appropriate, standardized tests.

A reevaluation meeting is required upon a student exiting a preschool program. The IEP participants make the decision whether additional testing is required to continue eligibility or to terminate eligibility.

ANNUAL REVIEW

The IEP Team meets once a year, or more if necessary, to review and revise the IEP. The Team discusses strengths, weaknesses, and the progress of the student. The IEP must be completed, written, and given to the parent by the anniversary date of the last IEP meeting. Parents shall be given written notice of a meeting early enough to ensure that they will have an opportunity to attend. Meetings shall be scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time and place. If a mutually agreeable time and place cannot be determined, the guardian(s) shall be provided the opportunity to participate in the meeting through alternative means, such as videoconferencing and conference calls.

Timelines

Annual Review: The student's IEP must be reviewed once a year and more often if necessary.

CST Referral: When a child is referred to the CST team, a meeting must be held within 20 days

(excluding school holidays, but not summer vacation) to determine whether an evaluation is warranted.

Evaluation:

Day 1 - Date of determination meeting

Parent provides written consent for meeting.

by Day 65- Parents are sent a copy of the evaluation reports.

by Day 75- A meeting is held to determine eligibility for special education.

- If the child is eligible, an IEP meeting is held.

by Day 90- The student is placed in the special education program.

The entire evaluation process may not take longer than 90 days.

Written Notice: When the district proposes or declines an action, the district must give the parent written notification. If the district does not hear from the parent within 15 days, the district may proceed with the action. At any time the parent can give approval by signing a form, and the action can then be implemented sooner.

Examples of when the district must notify the parent before taking action:

- Change of placement as a result of an IEP meeting
- Decision to evaluate a student

Reevaluation: A determination whether a child still qualifies for special education must be made every three years or more often if necessary.

4. EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENT / LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Once the IEP team makes a decision to classify a student as Eligible for Special Education and/or Related Services, an appropriate program is selected. The program selected must be considered the least restrictive environment for that student. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) means that students with disabilities are educated to the maximum extent possible with children who do not have disabilities. Removal of children from the regular education classroom should occur only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes or other natural environments with the use of supplementary aids cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

5. RELATED SERVICES

Some students will need services in addition to the Special Education program. These services might include, but are not limited to the following:

- ✓ speech and language therapy
- ✓ physical therapy
- ✓ occupational therapy
- ✓ counseling
- ✓ school health services
- ✓ adaptive physical education
- ✓ sign language interpreter for the hearing impaired
- ✓ reader services for the visually impaired
- ✓ orientation and mobility instruction
- ✓ special transportation
- ✓ assistive technology services

A service may be a benefit to a child with a disability, but this does not automatically qualify it as a related service. There are services that may be of benefit to such a child, but may not be the responsibility of the district to provide because the services are not required for a child to benefit from special education. For example, a student with a speech impairment that does not adversely affect his/her educational performance would not require speech and language services.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

Students who are classified as “Eligible for Special Education and Related Services” may receive speech and language instruction as a related services from the Speech-Language Specialist. Students who do not require special education but require speech and language services are classified as “Eligible for Speech and Language Services.”

To receive speech and/or language services one or more of the following disorders must apply:

A speech disorder

- **Articulation/phonology:** On a standardized articulation or phonology assessment, the student exhibits one or more sound production error patterns beyond the age at which 90 percent of the population has achieved mastery, according to current developmental norms, and misarticulated sounds consistently in a speech sample.
- **Fluency:** The student demonstrates at least a mild rating, or its equivalent, on a formal fluency rating scale, and in a speech sample, the student exhibits disfluency in five percent or more of the words spoken.
- **Voice:** On a formal rating scale, the student performs below the normed level for voice quality, pitch, resonance, loudness, or duration, and the condition is evident on two separate occasions,

three to four weeks apart, at different times.

A language disorder

- The problem must be demonstrated through functional assessment of language in a setting other than a testing situation and performance below 1.5 standard deviations, or the 10th percentile, on at least two standardized oral language tests, where such tests are appropriate.

Additionally, the student's teacher must provide evidence that the speech problem is causing a negative educational impact.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

An "assistive technology device" means any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of children with disabilities.

The IEP team considers any device (from a simple pencil grip to computerized equipment) that may help the child learn. The team may get information from a specialist to help them with the child's needs.

The following are examples of assistive technology:

- FM devices
- Voice recognition products
- Keyboard filters
- Speech synthesizers
- Touch screens
- Word prediction programs
- Technological tools for improving reading, writing, and math
- Communication devices

SUPPLEMENTARY AIDS AND SERVICES

Supplementary aids and services are provided to students who require it. Some examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Computer assisted instruction
- Modified grading
- Classroom aide
- Modified evaluation testing procedure
- Use of audio visual aids
- Alternate tests
- Student-directed small group instructional settings
- Cooperative learning groups
- Peer tutor
- Before/after school assistance

- Supportive instruction

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

OUT-OF-DISTRICT PLACEMENT

In extreme cases where the IEP Team determines that the student's needs cannot be met with the programs that are available in the district, the student may be sent to a program outside of the district. The program selected must be considered the least restrictive environment for that student. Following are examples of out-of-district programs listed from least to most restrictive:

- Program in another public school
- Regional day school
- Program in a private school
- Public residential placement
- Private residential placement

STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

The majority of special education students will be expected to participate in the statewide tests. This includes all state tests that students are expected to take in order to fulfill district graduation requirements.

Students with disabilities eligible for special education and related services and those students eligible under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act may have accommodations and/or modifications during the administration of the statewide assessments. A copy of the state recommended accommodations and modifications is included in the Appendix.

The Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA) is a portfolio assessment designed to measure progress toward achieving New Jersey's state educational standards for those students with severe cognitive disabilities who are unable to participate in the statewide tests.

EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAM

Some children may require the provision of services beyond the traditional school year. Such services are known as Extended School Year (ESY) services. An Extended School Year (ESY) program is provided when regression during extended breaks from school is so severe that a student is unable to recoup the losses in a reasonable period of time. The New Jersey Department of Education has put together a technical assistance document to help districts determine when an ESY program is appropriate for a particular student. This document is available on the following website: <http://www.nj.gov/njded/specialed/esy/esy2.htm>.

TRANSITION

Supports are provided to students to ensure successful adjustments as they transition from one level to the next. At the IEP meeting specific suggestions are made depending upon the needs

of the student. Following are some examples:

From the middle school to the high school

- Parents and student meet with the high school CST.
- Parents and student meet with the guidance counselor to make high school course selections.
- Students that require it visit the high school over the summer.
- Students attend an orientation program at the high school in the spring.

For students who are 14, or who will turn 14 over the life of the IEP, transition planning must be included as part of IEP. The purpose is to ascertain the student's interests and preferences as they begin to plan their high school program. Students are personally invited to attend the meeting to discuss their future goals. Parents are encouraged to discuss these issues with their child prior to attending an IEP meeting where transition needs will be discussed.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

When a classified pupil transfers from one district to another, the pupil will continue to get special education services. The Academy for Urban Leadership Charter School will send for the current IEP and evaluations from the old school. The paperwork is updated and a new IEP written. The process is expedited when the parents immediately inform the school that their child was in special education, bring a copy of the IEP and most recent evaluations, and provide the name and telephone number of a contact person from the previous school.

DISMISSAL FROM SPECIAL EDUCATION

When a student no longer requires special education programs and related services he/she must be considered for declassification from special education. A reevaluation meeting is held, and the IEP participants decide whether additional testing is required to determine ineligibility for special education.

RESOLVING DISAGREEMENTS

There may be a time when you and the school district disagree over the identification, evaluation, classification, educational placement or the provision of a free, appropriate public education. Many disagreements can be resolved by communication with your child's teacher, case manager, the school principal, or other school district personnel. There are also procedures established under state and federal law to address your concerns, such as complaint resolution, mediation or a due process hearing. Refer to the PRISE booklet, page 15, for further details regarding dispute resolution.

APPENDIX

Parental Rights in Special Education (PRISE)

English: <https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/form/prise/prise.pdf>

Spanish: https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/form/prise/prise_s.pdf

SAMPLE PARENT LETTER: REQUEST FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION EVALUATION

Today's Date (include month, day, and year)

Your Name

Street Address

City, State, Zip Code

Daytime telephone number

Department of Special Services
Academy for Urban Leadership Charter School
612 Amboy Ave.
Perth Amboy, NJ 08861

Dear Special Services Coordinator,

I am writing to request that my son/daughter, **(child's name)**, be evaluated for special education services. I am worried that **(child's name)** is not doing well in school and believe he/she may need special services in order to learn. **(Child's name)** is in the (_) grade at AULCS.

Specifically, I am worried, because **(child's name)** is having difficulty with **(give a few direct examples of your child's problems at school)**.

We have tried the following to help **(child's name)**:

(If you or the school have done anything extra to help your child, briefly state it here).

I understand that I have to give written permission in order for **(child's name)** to be evaluated. Before the evaluation begins, I have some questions about the process that I need to have answered **(list any questions you may have)**. I would be happy to talk with you about **(child's name)**. You can send me information or call me during the day at **(daytime telephone number)**. Thank you for your prompt attention to my request.

Sincerely,

(Sign your name here)

Accommodations and Modifications of Test Administration Procedures for Statewide Assessments

In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), students who are receiving special education services must participate in the statewide assessment system with the following exception:

"Students with disabilities shall participate in the Alternate Proficiency Assessment in each content area where the nature of the student's disability is so severe that the student is not receiving instruction in any of the knowledge and skills measured by the general statewide assessment and the student cannot complete any of the types of questions on the assessment in the content area(s) even with accommodations and modifications. (New Jersey Administrative Code Chapter 6A:14-4.11[a]2)."

Students with disabilities eligible for special education and related services and those students eligible under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act may have accommodations and/or modifications during the administration of the statewide assessments. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 team makes decisions about accommodations/modifications. Information about test content and item types from the directories of test specifications can be used to make these decisions.

Accommodations that will be utilized during statewide assessments for a student must be listed in the IEP or 504 plans. Accommodations used during statewide testing should be consistent with instructional and assessment procedures used in the classroom.

These accommodations also appear in the test coordinator and/or examiner manuals distributed to districts prior to each test cycle using terminology that applies to the specific test. Please refer to the specific test manual for additional instructions regarding the use of accommodations and for logistical considerations. The use of accommodations must be recorded on the student's test booklet or answer folder according to the instructions in the test coordinator's manuals.

Advanced planning is integral to implementing accommodations/modifications effectively and ensuring that the security of test materials is maintained. If a student requires an accommodation or modification that is not listed below, contact the Supervisor of Special Services.

A. Setting Accommodations

1. Administering the assessment:
 - a. individually in a separate room
 - b. in a small group in a separate room
 - c. in the resource room
 - d. in a special education classroom
 - e. using carrels
 - f. at home or in a hospital (this will depend on the nature of the assessment task)
2. Seating the student in the front of the room near the examiner or proctor
3. Seating the student facing the examiner or proctor
4. Providing special lighting

5. Providing special furniture (e.g., desks, trays, chairs)

B. Scheduling Accommodations

1. Adding time as needed
2. Providing frequent breaks
3. Terminating a section of the test when a student has indicated that he or she has completed all the items he/ she can

C. Test Materials Modifications

1. Administering the large-print version of test materials
2. Administering the Braille version of test materials
3. Allowing separate additional continuation pages for writing tasks. These pages MUST be properly marked to link them to the correct student for credit

D. Test Procedures Accommodations/Modifications

1. Administration accommodations/modifications:
 - a. reading directions out loud
 - b. reading test questions aloud (you may not read aloud or sign the reading passages in Language Arts Literacy- you may read the reading questions.)
 - c. providing and ensuring that amplification (hearing aid and/or FM system) is in working order
 - d. using a sign language or cued speech interpreter for administration of directions or questions but not reading passages masking a portion of the test booklet and/or answer folder to eliminate visual distractions or providing reading windows
 - e. repeating, clarifying, or rewording directions
 - f. providing written directions on a separate sheet or transparency
 - g. using an examiner who is familiar with the student
 - h. using an examiner who can communicate fluently in sign language (American Sign Language or a form of Manually Coded English)
 - i. providing manipulatives for math items
 - j. using graph paper for math section
 - k. using a Braille ruler and talking calculator
 - l. using tactile or visual cues for deaf or hard of hearing students to indicate time to begin, time remaining, and time to end a particular part of the test
2. Response accommodations/modifications:
 - a. having an examiner record the student's identifying information on the test booklet or answer folder (see test manuals for specific information)
 - b. dictating oral responses to a scribe (person who writes from dictation) -student must indicate all punctuation and must spell all keywords
 - c. using a Braille writer to record responses
 - d. signing responses to sign language interpreter (student must indicate all punctuation and must spell all keywords)
 - e. recording responses on a word processor (tools, e.g., spelling and grammar tools are not

permitted)

- f. using large face calculators (except for non-calculator section)
- g. using talking calculators (except for non-calculator section)
- h. using an augmentative communication device
- i. using a larger diameter or modified special grip #2 pencil
- j. masking portions of the test booklet to eliminate visual distractions
- k. marking answers in the test booklet (an examiner will transfer the answers to an answer folder)

Other Considerations

Ensure that:

- a. any medication has been appropriately adjusted so it will not interfere with the student's testing.
- b. functioning eyeglasses are used if needed.
- c. hearing aids, FM systems, augmentative communication devices, word processors, or other equipment are functioning properly.
- d. source and strength of light are appropriate.
- e. all students can clearly see and hear the examiner.
- f. all deaf or hard of hearing students who communicate aurally/orally are watching the examiner when instructions are given.
- g. responses to open-ended questions, writing tasks, and the writing project that are written or typed on separate sheets of paper by students eligible for this accommodation must be placed into the fluorescent orange envelope provided. Each of these pages must include at the top of the page the student's name, answer folder number, birth date, district name and code, and school name and code. If these procedures are not followed, the student's responses cannot be linked to their responses on the other sections of the test and he/she will receive incomplete scores. Copies of these pages should be made and retained on file by the school district until scores are received.
- h. students using the large-print test booklets:
 - 1. mark their answers on the large-print test booklets.
 - 2. may be instructed to skip some questions. The spaces for these questions must be left blank in the student's large-print test booklet or answer folder included in the large-print kit.
 - 3. who dictate responses on open-ended items and writing tasks indicate all punctuation and spell key words.
- i. students using Braille test booklets:
 - 1 are instructed to bring a Braille ruler and a talking calculator to the test session.
 - 2 are instructed to skip some items identified in the Braille instructions. The spaces for these items must be left blank on the student test booklet or answer folder included in the Braille kit.
- j. student answer folders are transcribed from Braille version by the examiner.
- k. students dictate their answers to the examiner or use a device that produces Braille. For dictations and responses recorded in Braille:
 - 1. students must indicate all punctuation and must spell all keywords.
 - 2. examiners must transcribe the Braille responses into the regular answer folder included in the

Braille kit.

I. students who communicate using sign language:

1. will have an interpreter interpret oral directions and test items (but not the reading passages in the Language Arts Literacy sections of the test). The interpreter should be able to communicate in the mode used by the student, American Sign Language or a form of Manually Coded English. The interpreter should be instructed to interpret so as not to give the answer to the student through the use of a particular sign or finger spelling.

2. for open-ended writing task responses will sign the responses to the interpreter who will interpret them into spoken English and a scribe will record the responses in the test booklet or answer folder.

3. will sign/cue to the interpreter who will transliterate (word for word) into spoken English and a scribe will record the responses.