

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**DIVISION OF K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**BUREAU OF EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION AND STUDENT SERVICES**

**School District**

Pinellas

**EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (SP&P)**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:**

2014-2015 through 2016-2017 school years

**SIGNATURE PAGE**

School District: Pinellas

Administrator of Exceptional Student Education: \_\_\_\_\_

This document is effective for the 2014-2015 through 2016-2017 school years.

**CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby certify that each of the statements below are true:

Signature of Superintendent of School District or Authorized Representative of Governing Body or Agency	Date of Approval

**SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND PROCEDURES**

The district's Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Policies and Procedures (SP&P) document was approved by the governing body for submission to the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) on the date indicated.

The contents of this document that were prepared by the FDOE have not been altered in any way.

The school district shall implement the requirements of any statutes or State Board of Education rules affecting programs for exceptional students during the effective dates of this document.

The school district shall implement the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its implementing requirements at Section 300 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

**SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Any district-produced policy and procedures documents that meet the following criteria have been submitted to the FDOE with the SP&P. Such documents:

- Supplement the information contained in the district's SP&P
- Address school district exceptional student education procedures or policies
- Are adopted by the school board as school district policy

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**Part I.**  
**General Policies and Procedures**

## Part I. General Policies and Procedures

### Section A: Legal Requirements

#### Statutory and Regulatory Citations

Title 34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §300.641  
 Sections 1003.57, 1003.571, and 1003.573, Florida Statutes (F.S.)  
 Rules 6A-6.03411 and 69A-58.0084, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.)

#### Requirement Related to ESE Policies and Procedures

For a school district to be eligible to receive state or federal funding for specially designed instruction and related services for exceptional students, it shall do the following:

1. Develop a written statement of policies and procedures for providing an appropriate program of specially designed instruction and related services for exceptional students
2. Submit its written statement of policies and procedures to the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (Bureau) for approval
3. Report to FDOE the total number of students in the school district receiving instruction in each special program for exceptional students in the manner prescribed by FDOE

The IDEA corresponding federal regulations, state statutes, and State Board of Education rules relating to special programs for exceptional students serve as criteria for the review and approval of the district's SP&P document.

The school district will submit the SP&P document in accordance with the timelines established in s. 1003.57, F.S., s. 1003.573, F.S., and Rule 6A-6.03411, F.A.C.

#### Requirement Related to the Use of Restraint and Seclusion

In accordance with s. 1003.573, F.S., *Use of restraint and seclusion on students with disabilities*, the district submitted policies and procedures related to the use of restraint and seclusion by January 31, 2012.

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The district has made **no** changes to their policies and procedures regarding the use of restraint and seclusion.
- The district has made changes to their policies and procedures regarding the use of restraint and seclusion.
- This section is not applicable for the district.

#### District and School-Based Standards for Documenting, Reporting, and Monitoring the Use of Manual, Physical, or Mechanical Restraint and Seclusion Developed by the FDOE

##### District Level Standards

#### Districts shall:

- Have written procedures for reporting incidents of restraint and seclusion using the FDOE web-based reporting system.
- Have policies and procedures for restraint and seclusion on file with the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services.
- Have training for personnel on the use of restraint and seclusion and maintain records of such trainings. The records maintained should include, but not be limited to:
  - Names of personnel trained
  - Description of training received
  - Dates of trainings
- Have a written plan for reducing restraint and seclusion

## District Monitoring Standards

### Districts shall:

- Have written policies and procedures for monitoring the use of restraint and seclusion for students with disabilities at the classroom, building, school, and district levels.
- Have a plan for reviewing restraint and seclusion data and effectiveness of instructional and behavioral practices used to reduce the use of restraint and seclusion, to include when, where, and why the restraint or seclusion occurred.
- Have policies and procedures for monitoring the use of restraint and seclusion on file with the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services.
- Implement a plan for the purpose of reducing the use of restraint and seclusion **that includes activities, skills and resources**.
- Ensure that rooms used for seclusion meet the requirements of Rule 69A-58.0084, F.A.C.

## School Level Standards

### Schools shall:

- Have written school-based procedures for reporting incidents of restraint and seclusion using the FDOE web-based reporting system.
- Have school-based personnel who are trained to enter and report incidents using the FDOE web-based reporting system.
- Follow procedures for written notification of incidents of restraint and seclusion on the day of the incident, including, but not limited to:
  - Providing parents with a notification in writing of any incident of restraint or seclusion. This written notification must include the type of restraint used and any injuries occurring during or resulting from the restraint.
  - Making reasonable efforts to contact the parent via telephone or email on the day of the incident.
  - Obtaining the parent's signed acknowledgement of receipt of the notification.
  - Maintaining the documentation of the parent's signed acknowledgement of notice.
- Follow procedures for written incident reporting, including, but not limited to:
  - Providing parents with a written incident report generated by the FDOE web-based reporting system by mail within three (3) school days of any incident of restraint or seclusion.
  - Obtaining the parent's signed acknowledgement of receipt of the incident report.
  - Maintaining the documentation of the parent's signed acknowledgement of receipt of the incident.
- Make a minimum of two (2) attempts to obtain written parent acknowledgement when parents fail to respond to initial notices or incident reports.

## District Policies

1. Physical restraint – One of the following must be selected:
  - In addition to this SP&P document, the district **has** a written policy regarding **allowable use or prohibition** of physical restraint. This policy is included in Appendix D.
  - This SP&P document is the district's only written policy regarding the **allowable use or prohibition** of physical restraint.
2. Seclusion – One of the following must be selected:
  - In addition to this SP&P document, the district **has** a written policy regarding **allowable use or prohibition** of seclusion. This policy is included in Appendix D.

- This SP&P document is the district's only written policy regarding the **allowable use or prohibition** of seclusion.

### **Assurances**

1. School personnel will **not** use a mechanical restraint or a manual or physical restraint that restricts a student's breathing.
2. School personnel will **not** close, lock, or physically block a student in a room that is unlit and does not meet the requirements for seclusion time-out rooms provided in State Fire Marshal Rule 69A-58.0084, F.A.C.

### **Documentation and Incident Reporting**

1. Schools are required to notify the parent or guardian each time manual or physical restraint or seclusion is used with a student with a disability. Such notification will be in writing and provided before the end of the school day on which the restraint or seclusion occurred. In accordance with standards developed by FDOE, the notice must include the type of restraint used and any injuries occurring during or resulting from the restraint. Additionally, reasonable efforts will be taken to notify the parent or guardian by telephone or email, or both, and those efforts will be documented.
2. The school will obtain, and keep in its records, the parent's or guardian's signed acknowledgement that he or she was notified of the student's restraint or seclusion. In accordance with standards developed by FDOE, the district must make a minimum of two attempts to obtain written parent acknowledgement of receipt of the notification when the parent fails to respond to the initial notice.
3. The school will prepare an incident report within twenty-four (24) hours after a student is released from restraint or seclusion. If the student's release occurs on a day before the school closes for the weekend, a holiday, or another reason, the incident report will be completed by the end of the school day on the day the school reopens. The school will provide the parent with the completed incident report in writing by mail within three (3) school days after the student was manually or physically restrained or secluded.
4. The school will obtain, and keep in its records, the parent's or guardian's signed acknowledgement that he or she **received a copy of the incident report**. In accordance with standards developed by FDOE, the district must make a minimum of two (2) attempts to obtain written parent acknowledgement of receipt of the incident report when the parent fails to respond to the initial report.
5. The following will be included in the incident report:
  - a. The name of the student restrained or secluded
  - b. The age, grade, ethnicity, and disability of the student restrained or secluded
  - c. The date and time of the event, and the duration of the restraint or seclusion
  - d. The location at which the restraint or seclusion occurred
  - e. A description of the type of restraint used in terms established by the FDOE
  - f. The name of the person(s) using or assisting in the restraint or seclusion of the student
  - g. The name of any nonstudent who was present to witness the restraint or seclusion
  - h. A description of the incident, including the following:
    1. The context in which the restraint or seclusion occurred
    2. The student's behavior leading up to and precipitating the decision to use manual or physical restraint or seclusion, including an indication as to why there was an imminent risk of serious injury or death to the student or others
    3. The specific positive behavioral strategies used to prevent and deescalate the behavior
    4. What occurred with the student immediately after the termination of the restraint or seclusion
    5. Any injuries, visible marks, or possible medical emergencies that may have occurred during the restraint or seclusion, documented according to district policies



## 6. Evidence of steps taken to notify the student's parent or guardian

6. Incidents of restraint and seclusion are reported to FDOE via a website developed for this purpose, in a manner prescribed by FDOE.

**District Procedures**

The district has in place policies and procedures that govern (1) parent notification, (2) incident reporting, (3) reporting of district data review, (4) monitoring, (5) training programs, to include a plan for the selection of personnel to be trained, and (6) the district's plan for reducing the use of restraint and seclusion. (*Charter schools, DJJ facilities, and contracted residential facilities must be included.*)

1. Describe the district's procedures for providing the parent with a copy of the **written notice on the day of the incident**.

Describe how parents are provided written notice on the day the restraint or seclusion occurred.

On the day the incident occurs the 'Parent Notification Form' is provided via direct contact with the parent/guardian or sent with student the same day

Specify personnel (by role or title) responsible for preparing the written notice.

Principal or Principal designee

Describe how reasonable efforts are made on the day of the incident to contact the parent by phone or email or both.

On the day the incident occurs the Principal or Principal designee makes contact regarding the incident via direct contact with the parent/guardian, phone contact or phone message, or email.

Describe how records of the parent's acknowledgement that the written notice was received are retained, and actions that are taken in the event the parent does not provide a signed acknowledgement of the initial written notice.

Schools record on the 'PCSB School Documentation of Physical Restraint and/or Secured Seclusion' which outlines

the documentation process. The form must be completed and includes initial notification, initial incident report, attempts for parent signature, etc. The form is kept with the copies of the initial report and notification and maintained in the designated area for restraint seclusion in the school.

2. Describe the district's procedures for providing parents with a copy of the **incident report within three (3) school days** of the incident.

Specify personnel (by role or title) responsible for preparing the incident report.

Principal or Principal designee

Describe how the parents are provided a copy of the incident report within three (3) school days of the incident.

The completed/finalized incident report is printed out. A copy is sent home via US Mail within 3 days. A copy of the report is also maintained in the school's designated restraint seclusion records area

Describe how records of the parent's acknowledgement that the written report was received are retained, and actions that are taken in the event the parent does not provide a signed acknowledgement of the initial incident report.

Schools record on the 'PCSB School Documentation of Physical Restraint and/or Secured Seclusion' which outlines the documentation process. The form must be completed and includes initial notification, initial incident report, attempts for signature. The form is kept with the copies of the initial report and notification and maintained in the designated area for restraint seclusion in the school.

How does the district monitor the implementation of restraint and seclusion practices to include reporting requirements in the following?

- Charter schools
- DJJ facilities
- Contracted residential facilities

Charter schools: District staff will review FDOE database on a monthly basis to determine school data entry. District staff will work with schools to train on data entry and data entry information is available on the PCSB eLearning site.

DJJ facilities: DJJ follows the state reporting procedures as per the DJJ Quality Assurance Standards. District staff will review the FDOE database on a monthly basis to determine school data entry. District staff will work with DJJ facilities to train on data entry and data entry information is available on the PCSB eLearning site.

Contracted residential facilities: Pinellas County School teachers are CPI trained for safety and security purposes only. Residential facility-employed security staff are in classroom/onsite provide the interventions, when warranted.

3. Describe the district's **review of data** and reporting procedures.

Specify personnel (by role or title) responsible for collecting **data in the web-based reporting system within the school, and to whom it is reported at the school and district level.** (e.g., principal, ESE director, superintendent).

School Based: Principal or Principal designee

District Based: District Restraint Seclusion monitoring team (ESE Executive Director, Low Prevalence Coordinator, ESE District Resource Teacher, ESE Compliance Specialist, ESE Student Assignment, CPI District Coordinator) and District Leadership team.

Provide information regarding the timelines, process and documentation for review of data and reporting within the district.

Data are disaggregated on a monthly basis and reviewed by the District Restraint Seclusion monitoring team and shared with district staff and school administrators (if needed). Upon reviewing data, documentation of data review occurs with district action plan being developed, implemented and reviewed. Aggregated data may also be reviewed more frequently and shared with district staff, based on the review of data- communication to specific schools may

occur.

4. Describe the district's procedures for monitoring data collection and reporting and the use of restraint and seclusion at the classroom, building, and district level. These monitoring procedures must address when, where, and why students are restrained or secluded and the frequency of the occurrences of restraint or seclusion, including prone and mechanical restraint. (*Charter schools, DJJ facilities, and contracted residential facilities must be included.*)

Describe how the district will monitor school practices related to the data collection and reporting to parents, including (a) data entry into the FDOE web-based system; (b) content of the written notice; (c) email or telephone attempts to contact parents on the day of the incident; (d) provision of written notice and incident reports to the parent within the required timelines; (e) maintaining documentation of the parent's acknowledgements of the receipt of written notices and reports; and (f) making additional attempts to obtain written parent acknowledgement when the parent fails to acknowledge the initial written notice or incident report.

- a) District staff will review FDOE database on a monthly basis to determine school data entry. District staff will work with schools to train on data entry and data entry information is available on the PCSB E-Learning site  
 b) District staff will ask Principals or Principal designees to complete and maintain copies of the 'PCSB School Documentation of Physical Restraint and or Secured Seclusion' which documents the attempts to contact on the day of the incident, ensuring timelines are followed for written notice, and parent's acknowledgement of receipt of notice. District staff may review that form if requested  
 c, d, e, f) Content, attempts to contact, timelines, acknowledgement of receipt of notices and reports, and additional attempts if necessary are all logged on the 'PCSB School Documentation of Physical Restraint and or Secured Seclusion'. Random sample activities will occur quarterly throughout the year. District staff will review that form if requested.

Describe how the district will monitor school practices related to when, where, and why students are restrained and secluded at the classroom, building, and district level.

- a) Classroom: the district will review restraint/seclusion data on a monthly basis and provide information to Principals or Principal designee and/or district staff  
 b) Building: the district will review restraint/seclusion data on a monthly basis and provide information to Principals or Principal designee and/or district staff. Additionally a School-Based Action Plan is available for the Principal/Principal designee to review and monitor school-based data  
 c) District: the district will review restraint/seclusion data on a monthly basis and create specific follow-up procedures (professional development, observation, behavior support, etc.) as needed

Describe how information about restraint and seclusion data is (a) shared with school and classroom personnel directly involved in the use of restraint and seclusion and (b) reviewed to assess, **develop or revise and implement** effective behavioral strategies and instructional practices for students who are frequently restrained or secluded.

Information about restraint/seclusion will be shared with school classroom personnel through data shared with school administrators, behavior support personnel, and district staff. Administrators may choose to use the School-Based Action Plan to review data on a monthly basis and share those data with school-based staff. Data will

be reviewed monthly by the District Restraint/Seclusion team to assess effective behavioral strategies and instructional practices for frequent incidents of restraint/seclusion through district staff working with school based behavioral support staff, observing classrooms/students, FBA/PBIP reviews and additional professional development opportunities. Schools with Low Prevalence programs and those who report zero incidents of restraint will also be visited this year to review best practices.

Based upon the monthly monitoring data review, District staff will review school practices related to the data collection and reporting to parents, data entry into FDOE website, content of parent notifications, attempts to contact parents, notification of parents with the provisional timelines, maintaining documentation of parent acknowledgement.

Each month monitoring occurs at sites involving a restraint and/or a seclusion incident by a member of the District Restraint/Seclusion Team and/or a District Behavior Specialist/Resource Teacher. Data, documentation and Information about restraint/seclusion will be shared with school administrators, behavior support personnel, crisis team members and district staff. Feedback is provided to staff involved in restraint and/or seclusion incidents. District staff may provide additional training, FBA/PBIP supports, preventative strategies, behavioral supports, instructional practices and additional professional development. An action plan is developed and follow-up occurs with school administration. The ESE Department will provides reports monthly to the Area Superintendents and School Administrators so that restraints can be carefully monitored.

5. Describe the district's training for personnel on the use of restraint and seclusion and how records of such trainings are maintained. The records maintained should include, but not be limited to, names of personnel trained, description of training received, and dates of trainings. (*Charter schools, DJJ facilities, and contracted residential facilities must be included.*)

Describe the programs the district uses to train personnel with regard to the use of restraint and seclusion; if multiple programs are used within the district, describe how decisions are made with regard to when a particular program is selected.

The district uses Nonviolent Crisis Intervention® training which is a training process that focuses on teaching preventative techniques and strategies, personal safety, and verbal deescalation. Select trainers have been trained in advanced CPI courses, such as: Trauma Informed Care, Autism, Applied, Enhancing Verbal Skills and various refresher options.

Describe how the district implements professional development on the selected training program(s).

Staff in the EBD and ASD classrooms will be trained in CPI- Level 1 (verbal interventions) and possibly CPI- Level 2 (physical interventions). It is recommended each school with EBD and ASD classrooms have a crisis team so they are trained in restraint in the event there is a need. Principals will be able to include any additional staff at their discretion. In addition, any school may request CPI training for their staff.

The district has a CPI Coordinator that works with schools and administrators to set up and schedule the necessary training based on needs. Certified CPI trainers deliver the content and district staff follow-up or provide additional supports if needed.

Describe how the district maintains records on the training of personnel with regard to restraint and seclusion.

The CPI training facilitators are asked to maintain records of each training, participants, and certification. In addition, all participants will monitor their training via Pinellas County LMS. The Crisis Prevention Institute© also maintains records

If the training program used requires periodic "refresher training," indicate the intervals at which this occurs and how.

Level 1 initial trainings occur throughout the year. Participants are required to take a refresher course every other year. If the refresher courses are not taken within 2 years, participants are required to take the full level 1 training again

Level 2 trainings occur throughout the year. Participants are required to take a refresher every year. If the refresher courses are not taken within a year, participants are required to take the full Level 2 training again

Describe the district's plan with regard to the selection of personnel to be trained in restraint and seclusion.

Staff in the EBD and ASD classrooms will be trained in CPI 1 and possibly CPI 2. Principals will be able to include any additional staff at their discretion. Any school may request CPI training for their staff. Personnel that respond to crisis situations in the school are asked to create a crisis team of 3-5 persons (typically including the administrator, behavior specialist, social worker, guidance counselor, deans, etc.). Persons requesting the Level 2 training are expected to have administrator approval.

Indicate whether all charter schools in the district use the same crisis management program as that described for use in district-operated schools.

All charters schools in the district use the same program as district-operated schools, Nonviolent Crisis Intervention©. Each charter school has staff trained in accordance with district procedures.

If no, indicate by charter school the name of the crisis management program used?

n/a

6. The district is required to have a plan for reducing the use of restraint and seclusion, particularly in settings where it occurs frequently or with students who are restrained repeatedly, and for reducing the use of prone restraint and mechanical restraint. The plan must include a goal for reducing the use of restraint and seclusion and must include activities, skills, and resources needed to achieve that goal. Charter schools, DJJ facilities, and contracted residential facilities must be included. Activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:
- a. Additional training in positive behavioral support and crisis management
  - b. Parental involvement
  - c. Data review
  - d. Updates of students' functional behavioral assessments (FBAs) and positive behavioral intervention plans (PBIPs)
  - e. Additional student evaluations
  - f. Debriefing with staff
  - g. Use of schoolwide positive behavior support
  - h. Changes to the school environment

In the text box below, include the total number of incidents of **restraints** for the 2012-13 school year and the 2013-14 school year. Provide a rationale for the district's **increase** or **decrease** in incidents when comparing the data related to the number of incidents of **restraint**. In addition, provide comparative data for the primary exceptionality, race or ethnicity and types of restraints involved.

Total # of restraints 2012-13: 720

Total # of restraints 2013-14: 410

	2012-13	2013-14
ASD	176	71
DD	2	6
EBD	298	198
H/H	1	0
IND	197	76
LI	8	6
OHI	24	29
SLD	2	9
SI	4	12
504	8	3

Race	2012-2013	2013-2014
Asian	4	0
Black/African American	184	106
Hispanic/Latino	197	50
Two or more races	19	33

White	316	221
Type Restraint	2012-2013	2013-2014
Null	32	0
Immobilization	230	57
Mechanical	14	53
Prone	175	45
Seated	19	8
Standing	250	246
Supine	0	1

The district continues to work to reduce both the number of students restrained and the overall number of restraints. Training in CPI, as well as behavior interventions, have helped reduce the numbers of overall restraints. In addition, the monthly monitoring with immediate and ongoing support to schools, teachers and students with repeated restraints, has helped reduce the restraints needed. As part of the monthly monitoring, the district team reviews the number, location, time of day, students and other demographic data and then responds to the school, teacher and/or student accordingly with training and support. The district also shares the restraint data regularly with principals and other staff. This increased awareness of the data and the review and response process enables the district to prevent situations and behaviors from escalating, puts proactive supports in place, and resulted in the overall reduction of restraints.

Does the district prohibit the use of restraint?

- Yes
- No

If not, specify the district's measurable annual goal for reducing the number of incidents of restraint (goal must include a percentage for reduction).

The district's goal is to decrease the number of incidents of restraint by 10%, which would be approximately 369 total incidents for 2014-15.

Does the district have a policy in place that prohibits the use of prone restraint?

- Yes
- No

If not, describe how and when prone restraint is being used.

Rarely used, but in extreme behavioral circumstances the use of prone may occur with district approval. The use of prone restraint involves prior approval by the Executive Director of ESE. The plan includes monthly monitoring, implementation input as well as separate parental input. Oversight by district staff of the FBA/PBIP and use of prone with a plan outlining when this procedure is used, with observations occurring for implementation fidelity. Additional CPI training is provided in Applied Physical Restraint techniques, for staff approved to implement plan.

Prone restraint may also occur in the contracted residential facility with ongoing monitoring.



If there is no policy that prohibits the use of prone restraint, include a plan for reducing the use of prone restraint.

In extreme circumstances if prone is approved, the plan must include a plan to fade/reduce the use of prone, a functionally equivalent replacement behavior, additional staff training and support from district staff

Does the district have a policy in place that prohibits the use of mechanical restraint?

- Yes
- No

If not, describe what mechanical restraints are being used and how they are being used.

Per Pinellas County School Board Policy 5630.01, A mechanical restraint may only be used on a student with a disability residing at a contracted residential facility and only if the student's treating physician has authorized the use of the mechanical restraint before the restraint is applied. Use of handcuffs or other mechanical restraints by law enforcement officers for law enforcement purposes does not require authorization from a student's treating physician. A mechanical restraint shall be applied and supervised by a staff member who is trained and competent to apply and supervise the specific mechanical restraint utilized. While a student with a disability is subject to a mechanical restraint, a staff member shall continuously monitor the student and the impact of the mechanical restraint on the student. If a mechanical restraint is used pursuant to this provision, the physician who authorized or approved the restraint or an attending physician must examine the student with a disability as soon as practicable following application of the restraint. A student with a disability who has been mechanically restrained must be given the opportunity to move and exercise the body parts that are restrained at least ten (10) minutes every sixty (60) minutes of restraint unless ordered otherwise by the physician who authorized or approved the mechanical restraint. If a mechanical restraint is used pursuant to this provision, a staff member shall loosen or discontinue the restraint every fifteen (15) minutes to determine if the restraint is still necessary and its implementation is not endangering the health of the student with a disability. A mechanical restraint shall be stopped immediately if a staff member determines that the student with a disability will stop or control his/her inappropriate behavior without the use of the restraint, the restraint restricts the student's respiration or blood flow, or the degree of the student's resistance to the mechanical restraint is likely to result in serious bodily injury to the student.

If there is no policy that prohibits the use of mechanical restraint, include a plan for reducing the use of mechanical restraint.

Students who attend residential programs in which mechanical restraints are used, have a specific FBA/PBIP to address the positive behavior supports needed for the student and track all behavioral incidents on a daily basis.

Describe the data reviewed (which must include primary exceptionality and race or ethnicity of students restrained and type of restraint used) and the problem-solving process used to develop the district's plan to reduce the use of restraint, particularly in settings in which it occurs frequently or with students who are restrained repeatedly. Describe how the data reviewed and the problem-solving process informed changes to your district's plan and the percentage of rate reduction for the use of restraint for the 2014-15 school year.

The District Restraint Seclusion Team reviews data on a monthly basis. Based on the review of the data from the FDOE

database, using the problem solving process, the team identifies settings, students, grade levels, primary eligibility, duration, etc. In schools identified as at risk or in need of additional supports (having either a high number of incidents in any area or a low number in any area), the administrator is contacted with information provided to other district leadership. District staff may provide additional training, FBA/PBIP supports, behavioral supports, and professional development. The District Restraint/Seclusion Team meets monthly to discuss the findings and create action plans.

The district continues to work to reduce both the number of students restrained and the overall number of restraints. Training in CPI, as well as behavior interventions, have helped reduce the numbers of overall restraints. In addition, the monthly monitoring with immediate and ongoing support to schools, teachers and students with repeated restraints, has helped reduce the restraints needed. The largest percentage of students restrained were students with a primary eligibility of EBD (48%), which was higher than the previous school year (41%). There was a significant reduction in the total number of restraints (43% reduction), with significant reductions in students with a primary eligibility of ASD and InD. 54% of those students restrained were white, while 26% were black/African American. While the overall number of restraints were reduced, this ratio remained constant. As part of the monthly monitoring, the district team utilizes the problem solving process and reviews the number, location, time of day, students and other demographic data and then responds to the school, teacher and/or student accordingly with training and support. The district also shares the restraint data regularly with principals and other staff. This increased awareness of the data and the review and response process enables the district to prevent situations and behaviors from escalating, puts proactive supports in place, and resulted in the overall reduction of restraints.

The following are examples of activities that may be considered for the purpose of reducing the use of restraint.

- Implement student-specific strategies such as: reviewing individual educational plans (IEPs) and Section 504 plans; conducting evaluations or reevaluations and FBAs; evaluating the effectiveness of PBIPs and health care plans specific to individual students' responses and progress
- Implement district and school strategies for increasing parental involvement
- Introduce or strengthen multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), which could include schoolwide positive behavioral support
- Provide additional professional development training in positive behavioral support and crisis management
- Problem solve with school administrators to make data-driven decisions regarding school environments

Describe activities that are a part of the district's plan to reduce the use of **restraint**.

The district continues to work to reduce both the incidents and students secluded, with a goal of eliminating seclusion except in potentially extreme situations. Activities in place to reduce the use of restraint include:

- Professional development on Functional Behavior Assessment/Positive Behavior Intervention Plans
- Monthly behavior specialists training include topics on prevention and environmental strategies to reduce restraint/seclusion
- Administrator and District Leadership increased awareness at Area meetings
- ESE 3 Day Summer Institute to increase Disability Awareness
- Monthly Data review meetings by District Restraint/Seclusion Team
- Development of a cross functional team for behavior training offered in our district
- School wide positive behavior supports to include the following: Provide verbal redirection, give a physical prompt, give the student choices, consider biological factors (is the student hungry, sick?), consider modifying the student schedule, use various types of praise, increase the rate and/or quality of reinforcement, use positive relationships with the student, give the student frequent feedback delivered promptly, remind the student of their preferred activity.

In the text box below, include the total number of incidents of **seclusion** for the 2012-13 school year and the 2013-14 school year. Provide a rationale for the district's **increase** or **decrease** in incidents when comparing the data related to the number of incidents of **seclusions**. In addition, provide comparative data based on the primary exceptionality and race or ethnicity of the students.

Total # of seclusion 2012-13: 365  
Total # of seclusion 2013-14: 263

	2012-13	2013-14
ASD	55	45
DSI	0	1

EBD	298	200
H/H	1	0
IND	4	1
OHI	7	16

Race	2012-2013	2013-2014
Asian	0	0
Black/African American	146	123
Hispanic/Latino	10	0
Two or more races	17	15
White	192	195

The district continues to work to reduce both the incidents and students secluded, with a goal of eliminating seclusion except in potentially extreme situations. Ongoing monthly monitoring, professional development and sharing of the data have contributed to the overall reduction in incidents of seclusion. In the monthly monitoring meetings, the district team reviews the number, location, time of day, duration and individual students secluded and then provides support to the school, teacher and/or student accordingly. The seclusion data is also shared with the principals regularly so they are also aware of the data. This process enables the district to prevent situations and behaviors from escalating, puts proactive supports in place, and resulted in the overall reduction of seclusion incidents.

Does the district prohibit the use of seclusion?

- Yes
- No

If not, specify the district's measurable annual goal for reducing the number of incidents of seclusion (goal must include a percentage for reduction).

The district's goal is to decrease the number of incidents of seclusion by 10%, which would be approximately 237 total incidents for 2014-15.

Describe the district's procedures for ensuring that seclusion rooms meet the requirements of State Fire Marshal Rule 69A-58.0084, F.A.C., by addressing each of the following:

Who coordinates the inspection conducted by the Fire Marshal?

Pinellas County Schools employs a Fire Marshal, under the authority of the State Fire Marshal, who oversees all State Requirements for Educational Facilities (SREF) annual inspections. SREF specifically references the Florida Fire Prevention Code and Florida State Fire Marshal's Rule Chapter 69A-58, F.A.C., and are adhered to accordingly.

How is the safety of the seclusion rooms monitored?

The use of seclusion is only permitted at Center schools. The safety of seclusion rooms is monitored by all staff authorized to use them. Locking mechanisms on seclusion rooms are designed and installed allowing egress from the room at all times in the event of an emergency. The electro-magnetic locking device will disengage when not in contact with a human hand applying pressure to it.

How are the results of the inspection reported to the district?

SREF inspections are conducted annually and a report of the inspection is submitted to each facility within ten (10) days of the inspection. Immediate life safety concerns are reported at the time of the inspection to ensure corrective action is appropriately taken and the safety of all students and staff is maintained.

Describe the district's procedures for correction when a seclusion room is found to be in violation of State Fire Marshal Rule 69A-58.0084, F.A.C.

If a seclusion room is found to be in violation of State Fire Marshal Rule Chapter 69A-58.004, F.A.C., its use is discontinued immediately. All corrections must be reinspected before a facility may resume use of the seclusion room.

Describe the district's use of seclusion rooms by addressing each of the following.

How many seclusion rooms does the district have that meet State Fire Marshal Rule 69A-58.0084, F.A.C.?

Calvin Hunsinger:4  
Richard Sanders:7  
Paul Stephens:2  
Nina Harris:7

Where are the schools in which the seclusion rooms are located?

4 ESE Center campuses (as above)

When are the seclusion rooms used?

In emergency situations when an imminent risk of serious injury or death to the student or others exists, and the crisis team determines physical restraint is not appropriate.

How are the seclusion rooms used?

The seclusion room must meet the requirements identified in Rule 69A-58.0084 and use an electro-magnetic lock which requires constant human contact. The room must include a window panel that meets the dimensions of Rule 69A-58.0084 and allow for a staff member to continuously monitor and keep the student under observation. The room must be free from potentially hazardous conditions or unnecessary equipment or fixtures. Staff trained in the use of CPI must be present in or immediately outside the seclusion room continually monitoring the student and assessing the student's physical and psychological well-being, in a manner that is age and developmentally appropriate. An FBA/PBIP will be developed if one does not currently exist to ensure interventions are being developed to deter the need for seclusion.

Describe the data reviewed (which must include primary exceptionality and race or ethnicity of students secluded) and the problem-solving process used to develop the district's plan to reduce the use of seclusion, particularly in settings in which it occurs frequently or with students who are secluded repeatedly. Describe how the data reviewed and the problem-solving process informed changes to your district's plan and the percentage of rate reduction for the use of seclusion for the 2014-15 school year.

The District Restraint/Seclusion Team reviews the data on a monthly basis. Based on the review of the data from the FDOE database, using the problem solving process, the team identifies settings, students, grade levels, primary eligibility, duration, etc. If a school is identified as at risk or in need of additional supports (having either a high number of incidents in any area or a low number in any area) the administrator is contacted, with information going to other district leadership. District staff may provide additional training, FBA/PBIP supports, behavioral supports and professional development. The District Restraint/Seclusion Team meets monthly to discuss the findings and create an action plan.

The district continues to work to reduce both the incidents and students secluded, with a goal of eliminating seclusion except in potentially extreme situations. Ongoing monthly monitoring, professional development and sharing of the data have contributed to the overall reduction in incidents of seclusion. As part of the monthly monitoring, the district team utilizes the

problem solving process, the district team reviews the number, location, time of day, duration and individual students secluded and then provides support to the school, teacher and/or student accordingly. The number of incidents of seclusion were reduced by 28% from the 2012-13 to the 2013-14 school year. The largest percentage of students secluded continued to be students with primary disability of EBD. While the number of black/African Americans were reduced, the number of white students with incidents of seclusion increased minimally. The seclusion data is also shared with the principals regularly so they are also aware of the data. This process enables the district to prevent situations and behaviors from escalating, puts proactive supports in place, and resulted in the overall reduction of seclusion incidents.

The following are examples of activities that may be considered for the purpose of reducing the use of seclusion.

- Implement student-specific strategies such as: reviewing IEPs and Section 504 plans; conducting evaluations or reevaluations and FBAs; evaluating the effectiveness of PBIPs and health care plans specific to individual students' responses and progress
- Implement district and school strategies for increasing parental involvement
- Introduce or strengthen MTSS, which could include schoolwide positive behavioral support
- Provide additional professional development training in positive behavioral support and crisis management
- Problem solve with school administrators to make data-driven decisions regarding school environments

**Describe activities that are a part of the district's plan to reduce the use of seclusion.**

The district continues to work to reduce both the incidents and students secluded, with a goal of eliminating seclusion except in potentially extreme situations. Activities in place to reduce the use of restraint include:

- Professional development on Functional Behavior Assessment/Positive Behavior Intervention Plans
- Monthly behavior specialists trainings include topics on prevention and environmental strategies to reduce restraint/seclusion
- Administrator and District Leadership increased awareness at Area meetings
- ESE 3 Day Summer Institute to increase Disability Awareness
- Monthly Data review meetings by District Restraint/Seclusion Team
- Development of a cross functional team for behavior trainings offered in our district
- School wide positive behavior supports to include the following: Provide verbal redirection, give a physical prompt, give the student choices, consider biological factors (is the student hungry, sick?), consider modifying the student schedule, use various types of praise, increase the rate and/or quality of reinforcement, use positive relationships with the student, give the student frequent feedback delivered promptly, remind the student of their preferred activity.

## Part I. General Policies and Procedures

### Section B: Assurances

#### **Full Educational Opportunity Goal (FEOG)**

The district assures provision of full educational opportunity to all children with disabilities, aged three (3) through twenty-one (21), using the kind and number of facilities, personnel, and services necessary to meet this goal. A free appropriate public education (FAPE) is available to all students with disabilities upon determination of need.

#### **Information to be Provided at Initial Meeting of a Student's IEP Team**

In accordance with section 1003.57(1)(j), F.S., the district school board shall provide each parent with information regarding the amount that the school district receives from the state appropriation for each of the five exceptional student education support levels for a full-time student. The school district shall provide this information at the initial meeting of a student's individual educational plan (IEP) team.

**Ages of Students Served** - One of the following **must** be selected.

For students with disabilities who have not graduated with a standard diploma, the district will:

- Provide services until the day the student turns twenty-two (22)
- Provide services until the end of the semester in which the student turns twenty-two (22)
- Provide services through the last instructional day of the school year for all students in the district in which the student turns twenty-two (22), provided that the student was twenty-one (21) years old on the first instructional day of school for all students in the district

Indicate if the district (including charter schools) serves infants and toddlers with disabilities, ages birth through two (2), in collaboration with Local Early Steps:

One of the following **must** be selected:

- Yes
- No

**Note:** Districts may provide FAPE to a child who will turn three (3) during the school year. If this is the only circumstance for which the district would provide services to a child who is two (2) years of age, **no** should be checked.

Indicate if the district (including charter schools) serves prekindergarten children with disabilities, ages three (3) through five (5):

One of the following **must** be selected

- Yes
- No

#### **Parental Input and Meetings**

In accordance with section 1002.20 (21) (a), F.S., Meetings with school district personnel, parents of public school students may be accompanied by another adult of their choice at any meeting with school district personnel. School district personnel may not object to the attendance of such adult or discourage or attempt to discourage, through any action, statement, or other means, the parents of students with disabilities from inviting another person of their choice to attend any meeting. Such prohibited actions include, but are not limited to, attempted or actual coercion or harassment of parents or students or retaliation or threats of consequences to parents or students.

1. Such meetings include, but are not limited to, meetings related to: the eligibility for exceptional student education or related services; the development of an individual family support plan (IFSP); the development of an IEP; the development of a 504 accommodation plan issued under s. 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the transition of a student from early intervention services to other services; the development of postsecondary goals for a student with a disability and the transition services needed to reach those goals; and other issues that may affect the educational environment, discipline, or placement of a student with a disability.
2. The parents and school district personnel attending the meeting shall sign a document at the meeting's conclusion

stating whether any school district personnel have prohibited, discouraged or attempted to discourage the parents from inviting a person of their choice to the meeting.

### **Collaboration of Public and Private Instructional Personnel**

Section 1003.572, F.S., provides:

1. As used in this section, the term "private instructional personnel" means:
  - a. Individuals certified under s. 393.17 or licensed under chapter 490 or chapter 491 for applied behavior analysis services as defined in ss. 627.6686 and 641.31098.
  - b. Speech-language pathologists licensed under s. 468.1185.
  - c. Occupational therapists licensed under part III of chapter 468.
  - d. Physical therapists licensed under chapter 486.
  - e. Psychologists licensed under chapter 490.
  - f. Clinical social workers licensed under chapter 491.
2. The collaboration of public and private instructional personnel shall be designed to enhance but not supplant the school district's responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The school as the local education agency shall provide therapy services to meet the expectations provided in federal law and regulations and state statutes and rules. Collaboration of public and private instructional personnel will work to promote educational progress and assist students in acquiring essential skills, including, but not limited to, readiness for pursuit of higher education goals or employment. Where applicable, public and private instructional personnel shall undertake collaborative programming. Coordination of services and plans between a public school and private instructional personnel is encouraged to avoid duplication or conflicting services or plans.
3. Private instructional personnel who are hired or contracted by parents to collaborate with public instructional personnel must be permitted to observe the student in the educational setting, collaborate with instructional personnel in the educational setting, and provide services in the educational setting according to the following requirements:
  - a. The student's public instructional personnel and principal consent to the time and place.
  - b. The private instructional personnel satisfy the requirements of s. 1012.32 or s. 1012.321.

For the purpose of implementing this subsection, a school district may not impose any requirements beyond those requirements specified in this subsection or charge any fees.

4. The provision of private instructional personnel by a parent does not constitute a waiver of the student's or parent's right to a free and appropriate public education under IDEA.

### **Written Agreements**

1. The district assures that written agreements are on file in the district for multi-district programs and for the assignment of instructional personnel to a facility operated by another agency or organization. These written agreements have been developed and approved by all participating school boards or agencies. Each such agreement, in accordance with Rule 6A 6.0311, F.A.C., includes but is not limited to:
  - a. Designating responsibilities for the implementation of district procedures
  - b. Providing transportation
  - c. Providing program and staff supervision
  - d. Funding programs
  - e. Dissolving the agreement
2. Written agreements are on file for the provision of special education and related services **to this district's** exceptional students through multi-district programs.



- Yes
- No

If **yes**, include the name(s) of the district(s) providing services and the types of ESE services provided by each district.

Hernando and Pasco. These districts provide VE support as outlined on the IEP and counseling through Hernando and Pasco County Teachers implementing the IEP's at the Eckerd Youth Alternative Program.

3. Written agreements are on file for the provision of special education and related services to exceptional students **from other districts** through multi-district programs.

- Yes
- No

If **yes**, include the name(s) of the district(s) receiving services and the types of ESE services provided for each district.

Polk, Hardee, Highlands, and Manatee students are served in Pinellas County's Department of Juvenile Justice programs. VE support as outlined on the IEP and counseling as outlined on the IEP are provided. Related services are also provided if on IEP.

4. Agreements for assigning instructional personnel to a facility operated by other agencies or organizations are on file in this district.

- Yes
- No

If **yes**, include the name of each agency and the instructional personnel assigned for each facility.

Charles Britt Academy, Daniel Memorial Academy, Juvenile Detention Center, Operation PAR (Parent Awareness Program)/Alpha, PACE (Practical, Academic, and Cultural Education) for Girls, Pinellas County Jail, Associated Marine Institute - Kids Pinellas - All are provided VE Teachers  
Creative Clay - Teacher and Teacher Associate  
Headstart - Speech/Language Pathologist

## **Department of Juvenile Justice Facilities**

### **Statutory and Regulatory Citations**

Section 1003.52, F.S.

Rule 6A-6.05281, F.A.C.

The district school board of the county in which the residential or nonresidential Department of Juvenile Justice facility is located shall provide appropriate educational assessments and an appropriate program of instruction and special education services, including all services and documentation required by federal and state laws. Districts have the option of providing the educational services directly or may enter into a contract with a private provider to provide educational services.

In accordance with section 1003.01(11)(b), F.S., "Juvenile justice provider" means the Department of Juvenile Justice, the sheriff, or a private, public, or other governmental organization under contract with the Department of Juvenile Justice or the sheriff that provides treatment, care and custody, or **educational programs** for youth in juvenile justice intervention, detention, or commitment programs.

How does the district provide educational programs for students with disabilities in the district's county jail?

ESE students receiving educational services in the PC Jail are assigned an ESE-certified teacher as Case Manager. The ESE Specialist obtains and reviews student IEPs and implement/amend the IEP as required. Students are in the general education classroom receiving appropriate and allowable accommodations and/or modifications on the consultative model and monitored by their Case Manager. Teachers are provided student IEPs as in any school and attend IEP meetings as needed. Students on a special diploma track receive one to one documented student support by ESE case manager weekly as documented on the IEP. Alternate Assessment is administered to those identified per IEP. Counseling is provided by our DOP Social Worker as documented on the IEP. The DOP Guidance Counselor schedules students as per transcript reviews. All students are administered entry assessments (usually transferring from JDC). The entry assessments include SRI, STAR Math and CHOICES career inventory. Exit assessments are completed upon ample DOC notice of release.

Districts that enter into a contract with a private provider are responsible for oversight. For exceptional students, districts should ensure that exceptional students have a current individual educational plan (IEP), that the IEP contains measurable annual goals (including academic and functional), that the IEP is being implemented, that parents are invited to the IEP team meeting, and that the appropriate team members are present at the meeting.

### **Placement in a residential facility of a student with a disability by a public agency other than the school district**

- a. In accordance with s. 1003.57(3), F.S., an exceptional student with a disability may be placed in a private residential care facility by the Department of Children and Families, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, or Agency for Health Care Administration. For this purpose, "placement" is defined as the funding or arrangement of funding by an agency for all or a part of the cost for an exceptional student with a disability to reside in a private residential care facility and the placement crosses school district lines.
- b. The private residential care facility, or a residential facility that is operated, licensed, or regulated by a public agency shall ensure that, within ten (10) business days of a student with a disability being placed in the facility, written notification of the placement is provided to the school district where the student is currently enrolled and counted for funding purposes under s. 1011.62, F.S. (sending school district), and the school district where the residential facility is located (receiving school district). If the student is not currently counted for funding purposes in the school district in

which the legal residence of the student is located, the school district in which the legal residence of the student is located also shall be notified by the residential facility in writing within the required timeline. The placing agency shall collaborate with the residential facility to determine how that notification will be provided within the required timeline.

- c. In accordance with subsection (3) of Rule 6A-6.0334, F.A.C., the sending school district shall take reasonable steps to promptly respond to the residential facility's request for transmittal of the student's educational records. If the student's placement in the residential care facility occurs while the notification and procedures regarding payment are pending, the student shall remain enrolled in the sending school district and the sending school district shall collaborate with the residential care facility to ensure that the student receives a free and appropriate public education, special education, and related services, including services comparable to those described in the current IEP, until the notification and procedures regarding payment are completed.

Each school district is responsible for assuring the proposed program at the nonpublic school or community facility is appropriate to meet the educational needs of the exceptional student with a disability, or early intervention needs of the infant or toddler with a disability, placed through a contractual agreement. This is not meant to limit the responsibility of agencies in the state other than the district school boards from providing or paying some or all of the cost of a free appropriate public education or early intervention services to be provided to children with disabilities ages birth through twenty-one (21) years old.

### **Contractual Arrangements with Private Schools**

#### **Statutory and Regulatory Citations**

Rules 6A-6.0361, F.A.C.

1. Each school district shall provide special education and related services to an exceptional student with a disability through a contractual agreement with an approved nonpublic school or community facility under **any** of the following circumstances:
  - a. When the school district determines that no special educational program offered by the district, a cooperating school district, or a state agency can adequately meet the educational program needs for a student
  - b. For the provision of the educational component of a residential placement for an exceptional student with a disability when such a placement is made by another public agency for the primary purpose of addressing residential or other noneducational needs. The student's IEP may reflect that the residential placement is not required for the student to benefit from special education that could otherwise be provided by the school district during the day
  - c. For the provision of a non-residential interagency program for an exceptional student with a disability that provides educational programming in accordance with the student's IEP
  - d. In collaboration with the Part C Early Steps Program for the provision of early intervention services for an infant or toddler with a disability when the school district has determined that a nonpublic or community facility can provide appropriate services for the infant or toddler in accordance with an individualized family support plan (IFSP)

The requirements of this subsection do not apply when a school district provides educational assessments and a program of instruction and special education services to students in the custody of Department of Juvenile Justice programs who are served in residential and nonresidential care facilities and juvenile assessment facilities located in the school district in accordance with section 1003.52(3), F.S.

#### **District Responsibilities**

1. Before the school district executes a contract with a nonpublic school or community facility, the school district will determine that the school or facility:
  - a. Has qualified personnel as defined in Rule 6A-1.0503, F.A.C., or appropriate licensing entities and appoints noncertified instructional personnel according to the policies required in Rule 6A-1.0502, F.A.C. Personnel in an out-of-state nonpublic school or community facility shall be certified or licensed in accordance with the standards established by the state in which the nonpublic school or community facility is located.
  - b. Provides instructional school day and year consistent with s. 1011.61, F.S, taking into account the number of school hours or school days provided by the school district.
  - c. Maintains current sanitation and health certificates and fire inspections for each appropriate building and will be open for inspection by appropriate authorities.

- d. Protects the confidentiality of student records and information and assures the provision to the parent or student whose rights have transferred upon reaching the age of majority (age 18), the right of access, copies, amendments, and hearings as specified in Rule 6A-1.0955, F.A.C.
- e. Designates staff member to be responsible for the administration of the provisions of the contract and supervision of the educational program provided to each student, or early intervention services provided to each child age birth through two (2), under the contract.
- f. Has written procedures for admission, dismissal, and separation of students, if appropriate.
- g. Has a written description of the support services that are available and will be provided to each student placed under a contract in accordance with each student's IEP or each child's IFSP.
- h. Has written policies concerning: care of the student in emergencies; clinical and administrative records; personnel policies; staff duties; fee schedules; food services; and insurance coverage.
- i. Complies with requirements of: the Office for Civil Rights (OCR); the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act (Section 9525 of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001).
- j. Files reports with the Department of Education as prescribed in s. 1002.42, F.S., if applicable.

### **Contents of Contract**

- 1. A contract between a district school board and a nonpublic school or community facility to provide educational programs for an exceptional student with a disability, or early intervention services to a child with a disability age birth through two, shall not extend beyond the school district's fiscal year, and shall include at least the following:
  - a. Written assurance that the nonpublic school or community facility is staffed by qualified personnel as defined by rule 6A-1.0503, F.A.C., or an appropriate and identified licensing entity.
  - b. A description of the scope of service provided by the nonpublic school or community facility and how it relates to the IEP of the exceptional student with a disability or the IFSP of the infant or toddler with a disability.
  - c. Provision for reporting to appropriate school district personnel and the parent on the student's progress in meeting the annual goals in accordance with the IEP or the child's and family's progress in meeting the major outcomes in accordance with the IFSP.
  - d. Provision for appropriate school personnel to review the program provided by the nonpublic school or community facility and to confer with the staff of the nonpublic school or community facility at reasonable times.
  - e. Provision for reporting to appropriate school district personnel any non-attendance of the exceptional student with a disability or the infant or toddler with a disability.
  - f. Provision for notifying appropriate school district personnel and the parent of the use of seclusion or restraint of the student, in accordance with section 1003.573, F.S.
  - g. The method of determining charges and sharing costs with other agencies for the placements under the contract, including the projected total cost to the school district.
  - h. Identification of financial responsibility.
  - i. Method of resolving interagency disputes. Such methods may be initiated by district school boards to secure reimbursement from other agencies.
  - j. A schedule for review of the program being provided to the exceptional student with a disability or the infant or toddler with a disability, through the contract.
  - k. Provision for terminating the contract.
  - l. Written assurance of compliance with applicable provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1974, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

### **Additional District Responsibilities**

When contracting with a nonpublic school or community facility, in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0361, the school district shall be responsible for at least the following:

1. Selecting an appropriate nonpublic school or facility in consultation with the parent and other appropriate agency personnel
2. Providing for transportation for students age three (3) through twenty-one (21)
3. Maintaining a case file including progress reports and periodic evaluations of the exceptional student with a disability, or infant or toddler with a disability
4. Verifying that the child is a resident of the school district and is enrolled in, or has made application for admittance to, a school district program
5. Providing for the cost of the student's educational program or early intervention services as specified in the contract
6. Maintaining documentation of the qualifications of personnel in nonpublic schools or community facilities as required in Rule 6A-6.0361, F.A.C., or by the appropriate licensing entity, including the out-of-field notification requirements of s. 1012.42, F.S.
7. Providing an appropriate educational program for the student in the least restrictive environment based on an annual or more frequent review of the student's IEP, or early intervention services in a natural environment based on a six-month or more frequent review of the child's IFSP
8. Maintaining copies of the IEPs or IFSPs in the district and providing copies of the IEPs of students who are in residential placements to the Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
9. Reporting, data collection, and monitoring the use of seclusion or restraint of the student, in accordance with s.1003.573, F.S.

### **Florida Educational Finance Program (FEFP) Funds**

When an exceptional student with a disability, or infant or toddler with a disability, is enrolled in a nonpublic school or community facility program under contractual arrangement for providing a special educational program or early intervention services as provided herein, the student, or infant or toddler, shall generate FEFP funds for the school district in the appropriate cost categories as established in s. 1011.62, F.S., as outlined below.

1. The nonpublic school or community facility program meets the criteria referenced under **District Responsibilities**.
2. The student is regularly attending the program, and the length of the school day and minimum number of days are in compliance with Rule 6A-1.045111, F.A.C.
3. The student is appropriately identified as an exceptional student with a disability by the school district, or the infant or toddler has been determined eligible as an infant or toddler with a disability by the Part C Early Steps Program, but does not include students identified solely as gifted.
4. An IEP or IFSP for the student has been developed as required.
5. Full-time equivalent student membership for each exceptional student with a disability, or infant or toddler with a disability, under a contractual arrangement is included in the school district's report of membership.
6. Annually and prior to the first report of full-time equivalent membership for a student in a residential placement in a nonpublic or community facility program, a copy of the contracts signed by all participating parties shall be filed with the Department of Education, Division of Public Schools, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, 325 West Gaines Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399.

When a school district contracts for the educational component of a residential placement for a group of students, one (1) contract with student names or individual contracts shall be filed.

### **Notes:**

When an exceptional student with a disability is offered an appropriate educational program by the school district and the parent waives his opportunity in favor of a nonpublic program selected by the parent, the parent shall assume full financial

responsibility for the student's education.

Section 1003.57(2)(a), F.S., states, "an exceptional student with a disability who resides in a residential facility and receives special instruction or services is considered a resident of the state in which the student's parent is a resident." The statute further indicates that nonresident students with disabilities being serviced in residential facilities "may not be reported by any school district for FTE funding in the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP)."

The district contracts for special education and related services with nonpublic schools, residential facilities, or community facilities.

One of the following **must** be selected:

- Yes
- No

If **yes**, describe the district's procedures for the following:

Determining that the school or facility meets the required criteria before a contract with a nonpublic school or community facility is completed.

The ESE Office of Compliance will contact the school/facility to arrange a meeting in order to ensure all requirements are met prior to developing a contract. District ESE staff make periodic visits to the residential facility to monitor IEP implementation.

Maintaining documentation of the qualifications of personnel in nonpublic schools or community facilities as required in Rule 6A-6.0361, F.A.C., or by the appropriate licensing entity, including the **out-of-field notification requirements** of s. 1012.42, F.S.

Each year, upon agreeing to a contract, the district will receive the qualifications of the staff serving the students with disabilities of the district. Should there be a change in staff, the residential school shall provide the district with the new staff member's qualifications. This documentation will be maintained on file along with the records of each student served in the residential school. If the identified staff are not properly certified or Highly Qualified, notification will be mailed to the parent/guardian from the ESE department (in collaboration with our district credentialing department).

Maintaining copies of the IEPs or IFSPs in the district and providing copies of the IEPs of students who are in residential placements to the Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services.

The Exceptional Student Education, Office of Compliance coordinates the contracts for residential placements. The Office of Compliance ensures that IEPs, progress reports, behavioral data and any other relevant records are maintained and that there is a district case manager that participates in IEP meetings with the residential facility via conference call. The case manager also oversees proper maintenance of records. Copies of contracts, IEPs and Reports of Residential Contracts are sent yearly as required or when a new student contract is developed to FDOE.

### Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Students

The school district assures that LEP students who are also students with disabilities have programming and services pursuant to federal and state laws and regulations

### Child Find

1. The State has assigned to local school districts and the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) Associate Centers the responsibility for fully informing parents about the requirements of identifying, locating, and evaluating students with disabilities in accordance with 34 CFR 300.111 and ss. 1006.03 and 1003.57, F.S.
2. The focus for FDLRS's child find activities is children birth to five (5) years of age and children attending **nonpublic** schools. FDLRS also serves as a link between school districts and the identification, location, and evaluation services of the local Early Steps Programs, county health units, Head Start, Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (FSDB), and the individual school districts.
  - a. In addition to these functions, FDLRS Centers have been authorized to provide testing and evaluation services to nonpublic school pupils or other children who are not enrolled in public schools and to assist districts in providing testing and evaluation services for high-risk or infants and preschool children with disabilities.
3. For parentally-placed private school students, the district in which the private school is located has the responsibility for child find if the private school is **nonprofit**. If the private school is **for-profit**, the district of the student's residence has the child find responsibility.

### Confidentiality of Student Records

In accordance with 20 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 1232g, 34 CFR §§300.613–300.621, section 1002.22, F.S., and Rule 6A-1.0955, F.A.C., the district assures that a formal policy is in place to guarantee the confidentiality of student records. This policy includes the following:

1. Access rights
  - a. The district will permit parents to inspect and review any educational records relating to their children that are collected, maintained, or used by the district, without unnecessary delay and before any meeting regarding an IEP, IFSP, or educational plan (EP), or any hearing relating to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child, or the provision of FAPE to the student, and in no case more than thirty (30) days from the request. The parent has the right to:
    - A response from the district for reasonable explanation and interpretation of the records
    - Request that the district provide copies of the records if failure to do so would deprive the parent of the right to review the records
    - Have a representative of the parent inspect and review the records
  - b. The district presumes that the parent has authority to inspect and review records relating to that parent's child unless otherwise advised that the parent does not have such authority.
  - c. The district keeps a record of parties obtaining access to student records, other than the parent or authorized district or school employees, which includes the name of the party, the date access was given, and the purpose

for which the party is authorized to use the records.

- d. When the educational record includes information about more than one student, the parent may review the information relating only to that parent's child.
- e. The district will provide the parent, upon request, a list of the types and locations of educational records relating to that parent's child.
- f. The district may charge a fee for copies of records if the fee does not prevent the parent from accessing the records. A search or retrieval fee may not be charged.

## 2. Amendment of student records

- a. The student's parent who believes that information within the student's educational records contains inaccurate or misleading information, or violates the privacy or other rights of the child, may request that the district amend the information.
- b. The district will decide whether to amend the information in accordance with the request within a reasonable period of time.
- c. If the district refuses to amend the information, it will inform the parent of the refusal and advise the parent of the right to a hearing, in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974.
- d. If, as a result of the hearing, the district decides that the information is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the child, it will amend the record accordingly and inform the parent in writing.
- e. If, as a result of the hearing, the district decides that the information is not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the child, it will inform the parent of the right to place in the record a statement commenting on the information or setting forth any reason for disagreement with the decision of the district.
- f. Any explanation placed in the student's record will be maintained by the district as part of the student's record as long as the district maintains the record or the contested portion. If the record is disclosed by the agency to any party, the explanation will also be disclosed.

## 3. Consent

- a. Parental consent will be obtained before personally identifiable information is disclosed to anyone other than officials of the district or other party with a legitimate interest in the record, or as specifically authorized by FERPA and s. 1002.22, F.S.
- b. Parental consent or the consent of an eligible student, who has reached the age of majority, must be obtained before personally identifiable information is released to officials of participating agencies that provide or pay for transition services.
- c. Parental consent or the consent of an eligible student, who has reached the age of majority, must be obtained before any personally identifiable information about a child is released between school district officials where a private school is located and officials in the school district of the parent's residence in situations involving parentally placed private school students.

## 4. Safeguards

- a. The district will protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information during the collection, storage, disclosure, and destruction of records.
- b. The principal or designee at each school assumes responsibility for ensuring confidentiality of student records.
- c. All persons using or collecting personally identifiable information must receive training in confidentiality procedures.
- d. The district will maintain for public inspection a current listing of the names and positions of those employees within the district who have access to personally identifiable information.



## 5. Destruction of information

- a. The district will inform parents when personally identifiable information is no longer needed to provide education services to the student. This information must be destroyed at the request of the parent.
- b. A permanent record of the student's name, address, telephone number, grades, attendance record, classes attended, grade level completed, and year completed may be maintained without time limitation.

## 6. Annual written notice to parents

- a. The district will provide annual written notice to inform the adult student, or the parent or guardian, of the rights defined in s. 1002.22, F.S., and 34 CFR 99.7. Items to be included in the notice are:
  - The right to review and inspect the student's education records, including the procedures to exercise this right
  - The right to seek amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights, including the procedures to request an amendment
  - The right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA and state statute permits disclosure without consent
  - The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of FERPA
- b. The district will have developed alternate methods of notice for informing adult students or the parent or guardian unable to comprehend a written notice in English.

## 7. FAPE

The district assures that FAPE is available to all students with disabilities residing in the district between the ages of three (3) and twenty-two (22), including: students with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school; students with disabilities who have graduated with a special diploma or certificate of completion, but have not attained the age of twenty-two (22); students in the care and custody of DJJ, and students with disabilities who attend public charter schools. FAPE is also available to students identified as gifted in kindergarten through grade 12.

## 8. Transition from Part C to Part B

Children participating in early intervention programs under Part C, who will participate in prekindergarten programs under Part B, will experience a smooth and effective transition to the prekindergarten program for children with disabilities. By the child's third birthday, an IEP or IFSP is developed and implemented. A representative of the school district participates in transition planning conferences arranged by Children's Medical Services (CMS), and Local Early Steps, the designated lead agency for Part C.

## 9. Funding formula

The district assures that, in accordance with s. 1011.62, F.S., in order to generate funds using one of the two weighted ESE cost factors, a new matrix of services form is completed by trained personnel at the time of initial placement and at least once every three years. Additionally, the district ensures that matrices reflect current services. If services change as the result of an IEP team decision, a new matrix will be completed. The nature and intensity of the services indicated on the matrix is consistent with the services described in each student's IEP, IFSP, or EP. Nothing listed in the matrix limits the services the school district provides in order to ensure that exceptional students are provided a free appropriate public education.

Students identified as exceptional who do not have a matrix of services will generate funds on the basis of full-time equivalent student membership in the FEFP at the same funding level per student as provided for basic students. These students will be reported at 111 for grades prekindergarten through 3, 112 for grades 4 through 8, and 113 for grades 9 through 12. Additional funding for these students is provided through the ESE Guaranteed Allocation component of the FEFP.

### **Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS)**

**IDEA regulations, 34 CFR §300.226, permit an local educational agency (LEA) to voluntarily use up to 15% of Part B funds to develop and implement coordinated early intervening services.** CEIS is for students who have not been

identified as students with disabilities under IDEA, but who have been identified as needing additional academic and behavioral supports to succeed in general education.

CEIS may be used for:

- Direct instruction of students in kindergarten through grade 12, with a particular emphasis on students in kindergarten through grade three (3);
- Professional development for teachers and other school staff for the delivery of scientifically based academic instruction and behavioral interventions, including scientifically based literacy instruction and instruction in the use of adaptive and instructional software; and
- Educational and behavioral evaluations, services and supports.

Any LEA that uses Part B funds for coordinated early intervening services must annually report to the State educational agency (SEA) the number of students served by CEIS.

**The SEA may require an LEA to reserve 15% of its Part B funds for CEIS**, when significant disproportionately based on race or ethnicity is determined according to IDEA regulations 34 CFR §300.646(b)(2).

#### **National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC)**

#### **Statutory and Regulatory Citations**

34 CFR §300.172

1. The school district assures compliance with the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS) to provide instructional materials to blind persons or other persons with print disabilities in a timely manner.
2. Instructional materials may be purchased through the NIMAC in the same manner and conditions as authorized by the State.
3. School districts may choose not to coordinate with the NIMAC, but must ensure that children with disabilities who need instructional materials in accessible formats receive those materials in a timely manner.

## Part I. General Policies and Procedures

### Section C.1: Exceptional Student Education Procedural Safeguards

#### Statutory and Regulatory Citations

34 CFR §300.500–300.536

Sections 1003.57 **1003.571**, 1002.22 and **1008.212**, F.S.

Rules 6A-6.03311, 6A-6.03313, and 6A-1.0955, F.A.C.

#### Procedural Safeguards

Parents of exceptional students are entitled to information about their rights. These rights, or *procedural safeguards*, are intended to ensure that parents have the opportunity to be partners in the educational decisions made regarding their children.

The procedural safeguards notice must be written in language understandable to the general public and provided in the native language of the parent or other mode of communication used by the parent, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so. If the native language or other mode of communication of the parent is not a written language, the district must take steps to ensure that the notice is translated orally or by other means to the parent in his or her native language or other mode of communication, that the parent understands the content of the notice, and that there is written evidence that these requirements have been met.

#### 1. Procedural safeguards for students with disabilities

This applies to students with disabilities enrolled in public schools and to students with disabilities enrolled by their parents in nonprofit private schools.

The district **assures** that the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards for Parents of Students with Disabilities* is made available to parents at least one time a school year. In addition, a copy also must be given to the parents:

- Upon initial referral or the parent's request for an evaluation
- In accordance with the discipline procedures when a change of placement occurs
- Upon receipt of the first State complaint in a school year
- Upon the receipt of the first request for a due process hearing in a school year
- Upon the parent's request to receive a copy
- In accordance with the provisions of **s. 1008.212, F.S.**, upon the school district superintendent's recommendation to the commissioner of education that an extraordinary exemption for a given state assessment administration be granted or denied.

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The district will use the Department of Education's *Notice of Procedural Safeguards for Parents of Students with Disabilities*, as posted on the Department's website, **to inform the parents as required**.
- The district will use a different notice of procedural safeguards for parents of students with disabilities **to inform the parents as required**. A copy of this notice is located in **Appendix A.1**

## 2. Procedural safeguards for exceptional students who are gifted

The district **assures** that the notice of the *Procedural Safeguards for Exceptional Students who are Gifted* is made available to parents of a child who is gifted, and must be given to the parents, at a minimum:

- Upon initial referral for evaluation
- Upon refusal of a parent's request to conduct an initial evaluation
- Upon notification of each educational plan meeting
- Upon receipt of a request for a due process hearing by either the school district or the parent

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The district will use the Department of Education's *Procedural Safeguards for Exceptional Students who are Gifted*, as posted on the Department's website **to inform the parents as required**.
- The district will use a different notice of procedural safeguards for parents of students who are gifted **to inform the parents as required**. A copy of this notice is located in **Appendix A.2**
- This section is not applicable for the district.

## **Part I. General Policies and Procedures**

### **Section C.2: Parental Revocation of Consent for Special Education and Related Services**

#### **Statutory and Regulatory Citations**

34 CFR §§300.9 and 300.300

[Section 1003.4282, F.S.](#)

#### **Procedures**

A parent of a student with a disability who has been receiving specially designed instruction and related services may revoke consent for such services.

1. The parent's request for revocation must be in writing.
2. The district will provide the parent with written notice under 34 CFR §300.503 before ceasing the provision of special education and related services.
3. The district may not continue to provide special education and related services to the child.
4. The district will not use mediation or due process procedures to challenge the parent's revocation of consent.
5. The district is not required to convene an IEP team or develop an IEP for further provision of special education and related services for the student.
6. The district is not required to amend the child's education records to remove any reference to the child's previous receipt of such services.
7. The district will not be considered to be out of compliance with IDEA for failure to provide a FAPE to an otherwise eligible child.

#### **Requirements or Options No Longer Applicable**

When a parent of a student with a disability revokes consent for services, the requirements that previously applied solely as a result of the student's status as a student with a disability will no longer apply. Examples include:

1. The revocation applies to all services the student is receiving as a student with a disability, including instructional and testing accommodations; the revocation cannot be for some services but not others.
2. The procedural safeguards that apply to students with disabilities, including disciplinary protections, will no longer apply to the student.
3. [The options in accordance with s. 1003.4282 \(11\), F.S., for a student with an individual educational plan to satisfy the standard high school diploma requirements will not be available.](#)

## **Part I. General Policies and Procedures**

### **Section C.3: Transfer of Parental Rights at Age of Majority**

#### **Statutory and Regulatory Citations**

34 CFR §300.520 and §300.320

Section 393.12, F.S.

Rules 6A-6.03028 and 6A-6.03311, F.A.C.

#### **Procedures**

1. When a student with a disability reaches the age of eighteen (18), except for a student with a disability who has been determined incompetent under State law or who has had a guardian advocate appointed to make educational decisions as provided by s. 393.12, F.S., all rights afforded to parents under Rules 6A-6.0311 through 6A-6.0361, F.A.C., transfer to the student. However, the right to notice under Rules 6A-6.0311 through 6A-6.0361, F.A.C., is retained as a shared right of the parent and the student.
2. At least one year before the student's eighteenth (18th) birthday, the district will inform the student of his or her rights under Part B of the IDEA, if any, that will transfer from the parent to the student on reaching the age of majority, which is eighteen (18) years of age. The student's IEP will include a statement that the student has been informed of the rights, if any, that will transfer to the student at eighteen (18) years of age.
3. The school district will notify the student and the parent of the transfer of rights when the student attains the age of eighteen (18); this notice is separate and distinct from the notice that was provided to the student and the parent at least one year before the student's eighteenth (18th) birthday.
4. For a student with a disability who has attained age eighteen (18) and is incarcerated in a juvenile justice facility or local correctional facility, all rights accorded to parents under Part B of the IDEA transfer to the student, including the right to notice.
5. For students incarcerated in state correctional facilities, all rights accorded to parents under Part B of the IDEA transfer to the student, including notice, regardless of the age of the student.
6. If a student with a disability has reached the age of majority and does not have the ability to provide informed consent with respect to his or her educational program, procedures established by statute may be used by the parent to take one of the following actions:
  - a. Have the student declared incompetent and the appropriate guardianship established in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 744, F.S.
  - b. Be appointed to represent the educational interests of the student throughout the student's eligibility for FAPE under Rules 6A-6.03011 through 6A-6.0361, F.A.C.
  - c. Have another appropriate individual appointed to represent the educational interests of the student throughout the student's eligibility for FAPE under Rules 6A-6.0311 through 6A-6.0361, F.A.C., if the parent is not available in accordance with s. 393.12, F.S.

## Part I. General Policies and Procedures

### Section D: Surrogate Parents

#### Statutory and Regulatory Citations

34 CFR §300.519

Sections 39.0016 and 1002.22, F.S.

Rule 6A-6.0333, F.A.C.

#### Definition

A surrogate parent is an individual appointed to act in the place of a parent in educational decision-making and in safeguarding a student's rights under IDEA and s. 39.0016, F.S., when no parent can be identified; the student's parent, after reasonable efforts, cannot be located by the school district; the student is a ward of the State under State law; the student is an unaccompanied homeless youth; or a court of competent jurisdiction over the student has determined that no person has the authority, willingness, or ability to serve as the educational decision maker for the student without judicial action.

#### Procedures

1. A surrogate parent appointed by the district school superintendent or the court:
  - a. Must be at least 18 years old.
  - b. Must have no personal or professional interest that conflicts with the interests of the student to be represented.
  - c. Must not be an employee of the FDOE, the local school district, a community-based care provider, the Department of Children and Families (DCF), or any other public or private agency involved in the education or care of the student.
    - This prohibition includes group home staff and *therapeutic* foster parents.
    - A person who acts in a parental role to a child, such as a foster parent or relative caregiver, is not prohibited from serving as a surrogate parent if he or she is employed by such agency, willing to serve, and knowledgeable about the child and the exceptional student education process.
    - The surrogate parent may be a court-appointed guardian ad litem or a relative or nonrelative adult who is involved in the child's life regardless of whether that person has physical custody of the child.
  - d. Must have the knowledge and skills acquired by successfully completing training using materials developed and approved by the FDOE to ensure adequate representation of the child.
2. Appointment of a surrogate parent for a student who has or is suspected of having a disability
  - a. A surrogate parent for a student who is eligible for or who is suspected of being eligible for special programs made available through a school district or agency under contract with the school district shall be appointed by the district's school superintendent not more than thirty (30) days after the school district determines that the student needs a surrogate parent.
  - b. The surrogate parent for a student who is eligible for or who is suspected of being eligible for special programs made available through a contract from the FDOE shall be appointed by the individual specified in the contract.
  - c. In the case of a student who is a ward of the State, the surrogate parent alternatively may be appointed by the judge overseeing the student's case, provided the surrogate meets the qualifications above.
  - d. If a guardian ad litem has been appointed for a child, the district school superintendent must first consider the child's guardian ad litem when appointing a surrogate parent.
    - The district school superintendent must accept the appointment of the court if he or she has not previously appointed a surrogate parent.
    - The court must accept a surrogate parent duly appointed by a district school superintendent.

- e. A surrogate parent appointed by the district school superintendent or the court must be accepted by any subsequent school or school district without regard to where the child is receiving residential care so that a single surrogate parent can follow the education of the child during his or her entire time in state custody.
  - f. Nothing in s. 39.0016, F.S., or in Rule 6A-6.0333, F.A.C., shall limit or prohibit the continuance of a surrogate parent appointment when the responsibility for the student's educational placement moves among and between public and private agencies.
  - g. For a child known to the DCF, the responsibility to appoint a surrogate parent resides with both the district school superintendent and the court with jurisdiction over the child.
    - If the court elects to appoint a surrogate parent, notice shall be provided as soon as practicable to the child's school.
    - At any time the court determines that it is in the best interests of a child to remove a surrogate parent, the court may appoint a new surrogate parent for educational decision-making purposes for that child.
  - h. The surrogate parent shall continue in the appointed role until the occurrence of one of the following circumstances:
    - The child is determined to no longer be eligible or in need of special programs, except when termination of special programs is being contested
    - The child achieves permanency through adoption or legal guardianship and is no longer in the custody of the department
    - The parent who was previously unknown becomes known, whose whereabouts were unknown is located, or who was unavailable is determined by the court to be available
    - The appointed surrogate no longer wishes to represent the child or is unable to represent the child
    - The superintendent of the school district in which the child is attending school, the FDOE contract designee, or the court that appointed the surrogate determines the appointed surrogate parent no longer adequately represents the child
    - The child moves to a geographic location that is not reasonably accessible to the appointed surrogate
  - i. The appointment and termination of appointment of a surrogate shall be entered as an order of the court with a copy of the order provided to the child's school as soon as practicable.
3. The person appointed as a surrogate parent:
- a. Must be acquainted with the child and become knowledgeable about his or her disability and educational needs
  - b. Must represent the child in all matters relating to identification, evaluation, and educational placement and the provision of a free and appropriate education to the child
  - c. Must represent the interests and safeguard the rights of the child in educational decisions that affect the child
4. The responsibilities of the person appointed as a surrogate parent shall not extend to the care, maintenance, custody, residential placement, or any other area not specifically related to the education of the child, unless the same person is appointed by the court for such other purposes.
5. A person appointed as a surrogate parent shall enjoy all of the procedural safeguards afforded a parent with respect to the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of a student with a disability or a student who is suspected of having a disability.
6. A person appointed as a surrogate parent shall not be held liable for actions taken in good faith on behalf of the student in protecting the special education rights of the child.
7. A school district may compensate persons appointed as surrogate parents. A person acting as a surrogate parent is not an employee of the school district or FDOE-contracted program solely because he or she is paid by the school district or FDOE-contracted program to serve as a surrogate parent.



8. In the case of a student who is an unaccompanied homeless youth, appropriate staff of emergency or transitional shelters, independent living programs, and street outreach programs, as well as McKinney-Vento liaisons or other school district staff, may be appointed as temporary surrogate parents without regard to the requirements until a surrogate can be appointed who meets all of the requirements.

This section is not applicable for the district.

Describe the district's procedures for determining when a student with a disability needs a surrogate parent, including documentation of reasonable efforts to locate or contact the parent, if applicable. (i.e., no clear evidence that parental rights have been terminated).

Upon entering Pinellas County Schools, the Data Management enters the parent/guardian information in the student data system. If a surrogate parent is need, the information is entered into the Foster Home field. If parental/guardianship changes throughout the year, the information is updated in the student information system by the DMT. The case manager for the student and/or school designee will verify the need for a surrogate parent by checking in the FOCUS Student Information System (district data system) under the foster home field. The case manager will contact the Department of Children and Families Agency case worker to verify. If the student is a ward of the state, the school designee will obtain court documentation verifying status. The minimum verification could include DCF agency email indicating the student is a ward of the state while documents are located and then provided to the school. Attempts to locate the parent will be documented by the case manager. This would include all agency contacts made in an attempt to locate the parent.

Describe the district's procedures for recruiting and training surrogate parents, including those surrogates appointed by a judge.

Recruitment of surrogate parents occurs in several ways:

1. School-based staff may know of someone who volunteers and is interested in becoming a surrogate parent.
2. Quarterly parent newsletters contain information about becoming a surrogate parent and it goes out to parents of students with disabilities and community members through the district's email distribution list. This information is also sent to schools to include in their school newsletters.
3. Recruitment takes place through the courts. The district collaborates with the courts who have a goal of 100% of Guardian Ad-Litem trained as surrogate parents. The district provides the training at the courthouse.

Training is offered two times per year. Once in the fall and once in the spring. If there is an abundance of volunteers, training may be offered more often as needed.

## Part I. General Policies and Procedures

### Section E: Individual Educational Plans and Educational Plans for Transferring Exceptional Students

#### Statutory and Regulatory Citations

34 CFR §300.323

Sections 1003.01 and 1003.57, F.S.

Rule 6A-6.0334, F.A.C.

#### Definition

A transferring exceptional student is one who was previously enrolled as an exceptional student in any other school district or agency and who is enrolling in a different Florida school district or in an educational program operated by the Department of Education through grants or contractual agreements in accordance with s. 1003.57, F.S.

#### Procedures

##### 1. IEPs or EPs for students who transfer school districts within Florida

If an exceptional education student who had an IEP or EP that was in effect in a previous Florida school district transfers to the school district and enrolls in a new school, the new school district (in consultation with the parents) will provide FAPE to the student, which includes services comparable to those described in the child's IEP or EP from the previous Florida school district, until the school district does **one** of the following:

- a. Adopts the child's IEP or EP from the previous school district.
- b. Develops, adopts, and implements a new IEP or EP that meets the applicable requirements of Rule 6A-6.03028 or 6A-6.030191, F.A.C.

##### 2. IEPs or EPs for students who transfer from outside Florida

If an exceptional education student who had an IEP or EP that was in effect in a previous school district in another state transfers to the school district and enrolls in a Florida school district within the same school year, the new Florida school district (in consultation with the parents) will provide the student with FAPE (including services comparable to those described in the student's IEP or EP from the previous school district) until the school district does **both** of the following:

- a. Conducts an initial evaluation in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C., or determines that evaluation is not necessary.
- b. Develops, adopts, and implements a new IEP or EP, if appropriate, that meets the applicable requirements of Rules 6A-6.03011 through 6A-6.0361, F.A.C.

If a student is being evaluated to determine if the student has a disability and needs special education and related services, the timeline of sixty (60) days of student attendance does not apply.

If a transfer student enters the school district with a specific methodology or curriculum on their IEP that was provided through therapy as a related service (e.g., Handwriting without Tears®, sensory integration, neurodevelopmental treatment), and the particular program stated on the IEP is not used in the new school district, another comparable strategy or intervention can be used until the new school district is able to conduct an evaluation, if determined necessary, and develop, adopt and implement a new IEP, if appropriate.

##### 3. Parental consent

The student's new school district is **not** required to obtain parental consent for the initial provision of services for transferring exceptional students determined eligible for services. However, written informed parental consent is required before the new school district can conduct an initial evaluation to determine if a student has a disability and needs special education and related services.

##### 4. Transmittal of records

To facilitate the transition for a student described in subsections 1 and 2 above, the new school district in which the

student enrolls will take reasonable steps to promptly obtain the student's records, including the IEP or EP and supporting documents and any other records relating to the provision of special education or related services to the student, from the previous school district in which the student was enrolled, in accordance with 34 CFR §99.31; and the previous school district in which the student was enrolled must take reasonable steps to promptly respond to the request from the new school district.

## Part I. General Policies and Procedures

### Section F: Access to a Student's Public Benefits or Insurance

#### Statutory and Regulatory Citations

34 CFR §300.154

Rule 6A-6.03028, F.A.C.

#### Procedures

The school district may use the Medicaid or other public health benefits or insurance programs in which a student participates to provide or pay for services required under Rules 6A-6.03011 through 6A-6.0361, F.A.C., as permitted under the public benefits or insurance program, except as noted below:

1. With regard to services required to provide FAPE to an eligible student under the IDEA, the school district:
  - a. May not require parents to sign up for or enroll in public insurance programs in order for their student to receive FAPE under Part B of the IDEA.
  - b. May not require parents to incur an out-of-pocket expense such as the payment of a deductible or co-pay amount incurred in filing a claim for services provided pursuant to the IDEA— the district may pay the cost that the parent otherwise would be required to pay.
  - c. May not use a student's benefits under a public insurance program if that use would (any of the following):
    - Decrease available lifetime coverage or any other insured benefit.
    - Result in the family paying for services that would otherwise be covered by the public benefits or insurance program and that are required for the student outside of the time the student is in school.
    - Increase premiums or lead to the discontinuation of benefits or insurance.
    - Risk loss of eligibility for home and community-based waivers, based on aggregate health-related expenditures.
  - d. Prior to accessing the student's or parent's public benefits or insurance for the first time, and after providing notification to the student's parent as described in Rule 6A-6.03028(3)(q)1.e., F.A.C., the school district must obtain written, parental consent that specifies each of the following:
    - The personally identifiable information that may be disclosed, such as records or information about the services that may be provided to the student
    - The purpose of the disclosure, such as the purpose of billing for services
    - The agency to which the disclosure may be made
    - The parent understands and agrees that the school district may access the insurance to pay for the services required under Rules 6A-6.03011 through 6A-6.0361, F.A.C.
  - e. Prior to accessing a student's or parent's public benefits for the first time, and annually thereafter, the school district must provide written notification consistent with requirements found in Rule 6A-6.03311(1)(a) and (b), F.A.C., to the student's parents that includes all of the following:
    - A statement of the parental consent provision in Rule 6A-6.03028(3)(q)1.d., F.A.C.
    - A statement of the no cost provisions of Rule 6A-6.03028(3)(q)1., F.A.C.
    - A statement that the parents have the right to withdraw their consent to disclose their child's personal identifiable information to the agency responsible for the administration of the State's public benefits or insurance at any time.

- A statement that the withdrawal of consent or refusal to provide consent to disclose personally identifiable information to the agency responsible for the administration of the State's public benefits or insurance program does not relieve the school district of its responsibility to ensure that all required services are provided at no cost to the parents.

2. With regard to students with disabilities who are covered by private insurance, a school district may access a parent's private insurance proceeds to provide services required under the IDEA only if the parent provides written informed consent.
  - a. Each time the school district proposes to access the parent's private insurance proceeds, the agency must obtain parental consent and inform the parents that their refusal to permit the school district to access their private insurance does not relieve the school district of its responsibility to ensure that all required services are provided at no cost to the parents.
  - b. If a school district is unable to obtain parental consent to use the parents' private insurance, or public benefits or insurance when the parents would incur a cost for a specified service required to ensure a FAPE, the school district may use its IDEA Part B funds to pay for the service. To avoid financial cost to parents who otherwise would consent to use private insurance, or public benefits or insurance if the parents would incur a cost, the school district may use its IDEA Part B funds to pay the cost that the parents otherwise would have to pay to use the parents' benefits or insurance (e.g., the deductible or co-pay amounts).

## Part I. General Policies and Procedures

### Section G: General Education Intervention **Procedures**

#### Statutory and Regulatory Citations

34 CFR §§300.302, 300.306, and 300.308–300.310  
Sections 1008.25 and 381.0056, F.S.  
Rules 6A-6.03018, 6A-6.0331 and 6A-6.03411, F.A.C.

#### Definitions

General education intervention procedures are activities conducted by a district for kindergarten through grade twelve (12) students enrolled in public schools who need additional academic or behavioral support to succeed in the general education environment. These activities are embedded in the district's responsibility to implement a multi-tiered system of supports that is integrated into a continuum of evidence-based academic and behavioral interventions. In implementing a data-based problem-solving process designed to develop a coordinated continuum of evidence-based instruction and intervention practices, a district may engage in activities that include educational and behavioral evaluations, services, supports, evidence-based literacy instruction and professional development for teachers and other school staff, and where appropriate, instruction on the use of adaptive and instructional technology.

#### General Education Intervention Procedures

##### 1. Parent involvement in general education intervention procedures

The district must provide opportunities for parents to be involved in a data-based problem-solving process to address the student's academic or behavioral areas of concern. There must be discussion with the parent regarding the data used to identify the problem, the plan for addressing the problem through intervention, the plan for monitoring student progress, the student's responses to instruction and interventions, modification of the interventions when needed and anticipated future action to address the student's learning or behavioral needs. The district must maintain documentation of parental involvement and communication.

##### 2. Observations of student in the educational environment

The school district conducts observations of the student in the educational environment and, as appropriate, in other settings to document the student's academic or behavioral areas of concern. At least one observation must include an observation of the student's performance in the general education classroom.

##### 3. Review of data

The school district reviews social, psychological, medical, and anecdotal records and achievement data in the student's cumulative folder and demonstrates through data that the student was provided appropriate instruction in the regular education settings, which was delivered by qualified personnel. Attendance records are reviewed and used as one indicator of a student's access to instruction.

##### 4. Sensory screenings and diagnostic assessments

- a. Hearing and vision screenings are completed for the purpose of ruling out sensory deficits that may interfere with the student's academic and behavioral progress. Additional screenings and assessments are conducted to assist in determining academic or behavioral interventions, as appropriate. Student screenings to determine instructional and behavioral intervention strategies are not considered to be an evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services.
- b. Hearing and vision screenings are conducted in accordance with the school district's school health plan. In certain circumstances, a current evaluation by a medical professional may be used as the screening report.

##### 5. Implementation of evidence-based interventions

- The school district implements evidence-based interventions addressing the identified areas of concern in the **general education environment**.
- The interventions selected for implementation should be determined by a team through a data-based problem-

solving process that uses student performance data to identify and analyze the area(s) of concern, select and implement interventions, monitor effectiveness of the interventions and modify intervention or intensity when needed.

- o Interventions must be implemented as designed for a period of time sufficient to determine effectiveness, and with a level of intensity that matches the student's needs.
- o The district must collect pre-intervention and ongoing progress-monitoring data regarding academic or behavioral areas of concern and communicate the data to the parents in an understandable format, which may include, but is not limited to, graphic representation.

#### 6. Exceptions to requirement for general education interventions

- o Not required for children younger than kindergarten entry age.
- o Not required for students suspected of being gifted as described in Rule 6A-6.03019, F.A.C.
- o Not required for students who are being considered for eligibility for specially designed instruction for students who are homebound or hospitalized as described in Rule 6A-6.03020, F.A.C.
- o Not required for students who are **not** enrolled in a public school.
- o May not be required for students suspected of having a disability if the student demonstrates a speech disorder; or severe cognitive, physical, or sensory disorders; or severe social or behavioral deficits that require immediate intervention to prevent harm to the student or others, and a team comprised of qualified professionals and the parent determines that these general education interventions are not appropriate.

#### 7. The activities above do not apply to children who are below mandatory school age and who are not enrolled in kindergarten. For those children, the requirements below will be followed:

- a. Review existing social, psychological, and medical data. Refer for a health screening when needed.
- b. Conduct vision and hearing screenings for the purpose of ruling out sensory deficits.
- c. Conduct additional screenings to assist in determining interventions as appropriate.

Describe district policies and procedures for integrating a data-based, problem-solving process within a multi-tiered system of supports.

The district operates within a multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) for system-level and school-level improvement. Our district's data based problem solving process guides implementation and progress monitoring of Digital Classroom Plan goals through a multi-tiered system of supports. The purpose of the system is to ensure each student masters grade-level/course standards and expectations. Accordingly, the district provides instruction based on student need along the continuum and organizes and allocates resources in direct proportion to student need. The district's areas of focus for multi-tiered instruction include closing existing knowledge and skill gaps, focusing on gaps that would prevent engagement and/or success with core instruction and promoting and maintaining student engagement. MTSS concepts and framework are communicated, discussed and embraced:

- High quality core instruction
- Scientific research-based tiered interventions aligned to student need
- Frequent monitoring of student progress to make results-based academic and/or behavioral decisions
- Application of student response data to important educational decisions

Problem Solving is the process utilized to guide and develop effective instruction and interventions and to make data-based decisions. It occurs at different levels and is more complex as the resources needed to solve the problem increase. The problem solving process is applied to the student (e.g., academic and/or behavior problem), classroom (e.g., discipline, returning homework), grade level (e.g., low academic skill performance), building (e.g., bullying, attendance), district (e.g., over-/under representation), and system (e.g., problem common to many students in building) levels. There is a Pinellas County Schools MTSS Plan that is used to guide problem solving at the school level. Additionally, there are implementation guides for use at the elementary and secondary levels which detail processes and procedures.

Describe how school-based teams (leadership and individual problem-solving teams) operate. Include how team membership is determined, how parents are engaged in data-based problem solving and how student progress is shared with parents (frequency and format).

Each school will establish an MTSS School Based Leadership Team (SBLT). This team will develop the MTSS infrastructure, develop the School Improvement Plan, and address Differentiated Accountability requirements at the school level. The SBLT includes key stakeholders such as administrator(s), content area specialists/instructional coaches, student services (school psychologist, educational diagnostician, social worker, school counselor), and teachers (both regular education and ESE). SBLTs describe the roles and responsibilities of the members, including how they serve as instructional leaders and practice shared decision making. School-based teams are defined and documented within each school's individual SIP. The SBLT will identify a designated meeting time to complete the following problem solving activities:

- Align functions of mandated school-based teams/committees (e.g., Child Study Team, Reading Leadership Team, FLPBS Team, Foundations Team)
- Identify processes and resources for data management
- Review of student data (i.e., Universal Screening, Progress Monitoring)
- Development of a resource map of interventions and strategies currently available at the school
- Within the resource map, identify the interventions and strategies to be used as standard protocol in Tier 2
- Planning for accommodation to instruction and/or interventions for students
- Review of MTSS data utilizing Self-Assessment of Problem Solving Implementation (SAPSI) –(Professional Development and document provided in Spring to begin gathering self-assessment in May)
- Review of staff skill assessment data (assessment currently being identified)
- Planning for staff professional development/technical assistance for the implementation of MTSS

The Tier 3 Problem Solving Team is comprised of at least 2 members of the SBLT (one of whom is highly trained in problem solving), the teacher and the parent. It is suggested that one member from the SBLT be the educational diagnostician and/or school psychologist if the concern is academic skills or academic behaviors. If the concern is social behavior skills, a PCS trained FBA facilitator (school psychologist, school social worker, or behavior specialist) must be one of the SBLT members assigned to the team. If the student is experiencing severe behavior and academic concerns, the team must include the FBA facilitator and a member who can address the academic problem solving as well. As needed, the team may include other staff as well. The parent will be invited to the Tier 3 Problem Solving meeting which will be held at a convenient time for the parent and teacher. If there is no time that the parent can attend, alternate methods to ensure participation are expected, such as conference calls. All attempts to ensure parent participation is documented.

Parents are invited to participate in the problem solving process and data is shared graphically, as well as fully explained by the team. Parent input is encouraged and sought throughout all stages of the intervention. SAC meetings, newsletters, and PTA meetings are used as vehicles for the communication of school-based data and data accessibility within the district student reporting system. Specifically, parents are provided with access to FOCUS and Performance Matters so that they have ongoing and consistent access to their child's data. Hard and soft reminders are sent home with students monthly to detail means of accessing student data.

**Describe the universal screening and progress-monitoring tools and data used to identify students needing academic or behavioral supports (beyond core instruction and universal supports), and monitor student response to interventions.**

Tier 1: All students receive high quality, research based instruction in academic skills, academic behavior, and social/interpersonal skills within the general education curriculum. This provides the foundation that students continue to receive and upon which supplemental (Tier 2) and intensive (Tier 3) interventions are built. Problem-solving at Tier 1 for academic areas will occur during data chats that will be scheduled 3 times a year following the benchmark/universal assessment windows. Tier 1 problem solving for behavior and attendance should also occur 3 times a year or more often if the data suggests that it is necessary. Possible sources of Tier 1 data include universal assessment across domains, accountability assessments (e.g., FCAT, Florida Assessment), classroom assessments, grades, trend data, discipline referrals, and attendance. The data obtained from these assessments can be found in EDS, Performance Matters, Decision ED Data Warehouse, and FOCUS; and should be utilized for Tier 1 Problem Solving at the school, disaggregated group, grade, and class levels.

Tier 2: Supplemental intervention is provided to students in need of more time or narrower focus on particular skills. Students that are identified as needing supplemental support are serviced in a systematic way, integrating supplemental support with core instruction. Tier 2 problem solving is the responsibility of the Rt/MTSS School Based Leadership Team. As a result of Tier 1 problem solving and once core instruction is evaluated as effective (approximately 20% or less students are not meeting expectations), students that require additional support will be identified and Tier 2 problem solving will occur. Supplemental instruction is delivered through the use of "standard protocol" interventions selected from the Resource Map developed by the school. This instruction is provided to groups of students with common needs. Specific interventions are not identified as belonging to a tier and instead are matched to the instructional skills being focused. Data related to student levels of performance will be collected on an ongoing basis (e.g., every 2-4 weeks) in the area of concern, so that the planned interventions/ supports can be evaluated. These curriculum-based assessments used for ongoing progress



monitoring of students must be:

- sensitive to small, incremental growth
- matched to the identified academic or behavioral area of need
- selected to measure growth based on implementation of identified intervention (e.g., reading – oral reading fluency probe, math – multiplication and division fluency probe, behavior – number of call-outs during whole-group instruction)

Tier 3: Intensive intervention is provided to help students overcome significant barriers to school success. Data driven progress monitoring is done to identify students not responding to Tier 2 supports - students that would benefit from an individualized plan. If a student needs intensified instruction, all tiers are intensified. Interventions at Tier 3 can be characterized as diagnostic and are delivered individually or in a very small (i.e., 2:1 or 3:1 ratio) group setting with progress monitoring occurring more frequently, i.e., weekly for academic skills and daily for behavior. The Tier 3 Problem Solving Team will review the Tier 1 and Tier 2 data and determine what additional information might be needed to answer the questions of Tier 3. For students who continue to demonstrate severe social behavior difficulties with observations to document the implementation with fidelity of Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports and interventions, Tier 3 will include a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) which will result in a Positive Behavior Improvement Plan (PBIP).

**Describe how the problem-solving cycle, including analysis of data, evidence-based interventions, support for effective implementation with fidelity, and student response to intervention, are documented.**

Tier 1 problem solving should be documented on an action plan such as the (this is not a PCS form) Tier 1 Problem Solving Worksheet. Documentation of implementation of Tier 2 interventions is captured on the Intervention Documentation Worksheet. Through the development and implementation of the Tier 2 support and fidelity sections on the Tier 2 PSW, the School Based Leadership Team will monitor the implementation of the interventions on a frequent basis to assure fidelity of the plan, i.e., the intervention is delivered as prescribed, the data is collected on schedule, etc. The progress monitoring data will be reviewed by the SBLT at the appropriate frequency (e.g., every 8 to 12 weeks) so as to a) evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention selected and b) assess students' responses to the intervention to inform further instruction. The results of the review of data will be documented on the Tier 2 Problem Solving Worksheet. It is suggested that line graphs be utilized to determine the students' response to interventions provided; these should be attached to the worksheet.

In order to know if interventions are working for groups of students identified as needing Tier 2 supports as well as if there are individual students that may require additional, more intensive supports, the following data must be identified:

- Current Level of Performance (trendline of ongoing progress monitoring data points)
- Expected Level of Performance
- Aimline (a line drawn from current level of performance at initiation of intervention to the established goal/desired level of performance)

The SBLT decision to increase the intensity of intervention to a Tier 3 level for some students should be reflected in the results section of the Tier 2 Problem Solving Worksheet. If the SBLT considers a student for Tier 3 Individual Problem Solving, the student's Tier 2 data is summarized on the Tier 3 Problem Solving Worksheet. Individual student problem solving is then done by the Tier 3 Problem Solving Team. The RIOT/ICEL summary sheet can be used to guide the collection of information. As much information as possible should be gathered before the initial meeting so that problem solving can be as efficient as possible.

**Describe how frequently student progress is monitored and the guidelines used to inform decisions about intensifying or fading interventions, and when to initiate an evaluation for special education.**

An intervention is defined as effective when 70% or more of the students within a given intervention group have a positive response to intervention. If less than 70% respond favorably to the intervention, recycling through problem-solving would be appropriate to identify a better match of intervention to student needs. The first step in decision making is to determine if the intervention was implemented as intended. If the intervention was not implemented as intended, then the team should employ strategies to increase the fidelity of the intervention plan.

Intensity of intervention can be increased by modifying the following:

1. Frequency of intervention – how often will group meet?
2. Duration – for how many minutes will intervention take place?
3. Focus – what will be taught?
4. Size of group – how many students will be in the instructional/intervention group?

Within the group of students that require intense intervention (Tier 3), some students may be identified as students with disabilities and require specially designed instruction to be successful. Problem solving continues for students who are determined eligible for ESE services at the same level of intensity as for students requiring Tier 3 interventions who do not

have a disability. If a student is suspected of having a disability, an evaluation is requested, as outlined in Section H.1.

## Part I. General Policies and Procedures

### Section H.1: Initiating an Evaluation to Determine Whether a Student Is a Student in Need of Exceptional Student Education

- This section is not applicable for the district.

#### Statutory and Regulatory Citations

34 CFR §§300.300–300.305

Chapter 490, Sections 1003.57 and 1003.575, F.S.

Rules 6A-1.044, 6A-1.0502, 6A-4.0311, 6A-6.0331 and 6A-6.03411, F.A.C.

#### Definition

The school district must ensure that all students with disabilities or who are gifted and who are in need of exceptional student education (ESE) are identified, located, and evaluated, and FAPE is made available to them if it is determined that the student meets the eligibility criteria.

#### Procedures for Initiating an Evaluation

Each school district must conduct a full and individual initial evaluation before the initial provision of ESE services. Either a parent of a kindergarten through grade 12 student, or child age three (3) to kindergarten-entry age, or a school district may initiate a request for initial evaluation to determine if the student is a student with a disability. Either a parent of a kindergarten through grade 12 student or a school district may initiate a request for initial evaluation to determine if a student is gifted. The request for an evaluation is documented on the district's Consent for Evaluation form.

The school district must seek consent from the parent or guardian to conduct an evaluation whenever the district suspects that a kindergarten through grade 12 student, or a child age 3 to kindergarten-entry age, is a student with a disability and needs special education and related services. Circumstances that would indicate that a kindergarten through grade 12 student may be a student with a disability who needs special education and related services include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. When the kindergarten through grade 12 student's response to intervention data indicates that intensive interventions implemented are effective but require a level of intensity and resources to sustain growth or performance that is beyond that which is accessible through general education resources;
2. When the kindergarten through grade 12 student's response to interventions implemented indicates that the student does not make adequate growth given effective core instruction and intensive, evidence-based interventions; and
3. When a parent requests an evaluation and there is documentation or evidence that the kindergarten through grade 12 student or child age three (3) to kindergarten-entry age may be a student with a disability and needs special education and related services.

Within twenty (20) school days of a school-based team's determination that a circumstance described in subsections 1. and 2. above exists for a student in grades kindergarten through grade 12, the school district must request consent from the parent to conduct an evaluation, unless the parent and the school agree otherwise in writing.

If a parent requests that the school conduct an evaluation to determine the eligibility of a kindergarten through grade 12 student or child age three (3) to kindergarten-entry age for special education and related services as a student with a disability, the school district must within twenty (20) school days, unless the parent and the school agree otherwise in writing:

- a. Obtain consent for the evaluation; or
- b. Provide the parent with written notice in accordance with Rule 6A-6.03311, F.A.C., explaining its refusal to conduct the evaluation.

Prior to a school district request for an initial evaluation for students in grade K through 12, school personnel must make one of the following determinations:

- a. Whether the general education intervention procedures have been implemented as required under Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C., and that the data indicate that the student may be a student with a disability who needs special education and related services;
- b. The evaluation was initiated at the parent's request and the general education activities will be completed concurrently with the evaluation but prior to the determination of the student's eligibility for special education and related services; or

- c. The nature or severity of the student's areas of concern makes the general education intervention procedures inappropriate in addressing the immediate needs of the student

Describe the district's procedure for obtaining parental consent for an evaluation when, through the FDLRS or school district child find process, it is suspected that a child ages three (3) to kindergarten-entry age may be a child with a disability and the parent is requesting an evaluation. In addition, describe how the district will ensure that the parent will be given the opportunity to provide consent within twenty (20) school days of the parent's request.

When a parent of a child, aged three to kindergarten who is not enrolled in a district program, requests an evaluation, the child will be scheduled for a screening either via Pre-K Assessment Team, Head Start services, FDLRS, or at a community screening event. If, after a formal screening evaluation tool has been administered, or other evidence has been provided, consent to evaluation is obtained within 20 days by the Pre-K Assessment Team.

For those students age three to kindergarten entry age who are enrolled in a district program, and it is suspected that the child has a disability, a meeting would be scheduled to review evidence of the suspected disability, address concerns, and provide an opportunity for obtaining parental consent. If the team has the adequate documentation to support the decision that formal evaluation is not warranted and the parent disagrees, a written notice of refusal will be provided. Upon conclusion of the meeting, if the parent or the team or both suspect a disability, the team will obtain consent, and provide the parent with Procedural Safeguards. If the parent changes their mind about wishing to move forward with an evaluation, then a conference form capturing the agreements is signed by all parties and placed in the student's record.

Describe the district's procedures for responding within twenty (20) school days to a parent who requests that an evaluation be conducted to determine the student's eligibility for special education and related services.

When a parent makes a verbal request for evaluation, the school designee will complete the Parental/Guardian Request for Evaluation form in order to document the request. When a parent makes a written request for evaluation, the school designee will staple the request to the Parental/Guardian Request for Evaluation form, in order to maintain a consistent process for documenting these requests. Upon receipt of the request, a meeting will be scheduled within 20 school days to address the concerns indicated on the form or in writing by the parent. The meeting will also provide an opportunity for obtaining parental consent. If the parent indicates that s/he does not wish to participate in the meeting, the team will proceed. If the team has the adequate documentation to support the decision that formal evaluation is not warranted and the parent disagrees, a prior written notice of refusal will be provided. If, at the conclusion of the meeting, the parent, team, or both suspect a disability, the team will request to obtain consent for initial evaluation, and provide the parent with Procedural Safeguards. If the parent is not in attendance, the team will send documents home for signature, along with the Procedural Safeguards. If the parent changes their mind about wishing to move forward with an evaluation, then a conference form capturing the agreements is signed by all parties and placed in the student's record.

Describe the district's procedures for requesting an initial evaluation for students who may have disabilities and students who may be gifted who are enrolled in the school district.

Gifted: A nomination may be made by a parent/guardian, classroom teacher or other school personnel.

- Parent Nomination: The Gifted Nomination by Parent/Guardian (PCS 2-3121) is completed by the parent and submitted to the classroom teacher. This form is used to initiate a request for: 1) screening; 2) re-evaluation in the case of a student who was previously determined not eligible for gifted services; 3) review of gifted eligibility from another Florida district, previous Pinellas County enrollment, or from another state; and, 4) consideration of private intellectual evaluation results.
- Teacher/School Personnel Nomination: The Gifted Nomination Alert Form (PCS 2-3120) is completed by the teacher and submitted to the Tier 3 coordinator. The teacher completes: I. Student Information and II. Prior Gifted Referral Data. If applicable, the Gifted Nomination by Parent/Guardian (PCS 2-3121) form is attached.

Describe the district's procedures for requesting an initial evaluation for students who may have disabilities and students who may be gifted who are **enrolled in nonpublic schools or agency programs**.

Parents may initiate a request by contacting the gifted office. Information is available on the department website. The district Private/Home Education Liaison will serve as the case manager for non-public school students completing the responsibilities of the Tier 3 coordinator and gifted teacher in the referral process.

Describe the district's procedures for requesting an initial evaluation for students who may have disabilities and students who may be gifted who are **not enrolled in any school** .

Parents may initiate a request by contacting the gifted office. Information is available on the department website. The district Private/Home Education Liaison will serve as the case manager for non-public school students completing the responsibilities of the Tier 3 coordinator and gifted teacher in the referral process.

## Part I. General Policies and Procedures

### Section H.2: Conducting Student Evaluations and Reevaluations

#### Statutory and Regulatory Citations

34 CFR §§300.300–300.305

Chapter 490, Sections 1003.57 and 1003.575, F.S.

Rules 6A-1.044, 6A-1.0502, 6A-4.0311, 6A-6.0331, and 6A-6.03411, F.A.C.

#### Definitions

1. Evaluation means procedures used to determine whether a student has a disability or is gifted and in need of specially designed instruction and related services, and the nature and extent of the exceptional student education (ESE) that the student needs.
2. Reevaluation of a student with a disability is the process whereby existing evaluation data about the student is reviewed and additional data collected (if necessary) to determine whether the student continues to have a disability and be in need of specially designed instruction and related services, and the educational needs of the student.

#### Procedures for Evaluation

1. Responsibility for evaluation
  - a. The school district is responsible for conducting a full and individual initial evaluation necessary to determine if the student is eligible for ESE services and to determine the educational needs of the student.
  - b. Evaluations are conducted by qualified examiners (e.g., physicians, school psychologists, psychologists, speech language pathologists, teachers, audiologists, and social workers) as evidenced by a valid license or certificate to practice in Florida. In circumstances where the student's medical care is provided by a physician licensed in another state, at the discretion of the school district administrator for exceptional student education, a report of a physician licensed in another state may be accepted for the purpose of evaluation and consideration of eligibility as a student with a disability.
  - c. Tests of intellectual functioning are administered and interpreted by a professional person qualified in accordance with Rule 6A-4.0311, F.A.C., or licensed under Chapter 490, F.S.
  - d. **Unless statutory restrictions apply, the responsibility for determining who is qualified to administer and interpret a particular assessment instrument lies with the local school district. In determining qualified evaluators, districts may consider the following:**
    - **State Board of Education rules and the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**
    - **Testing standards (e.g., *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*)**
    - **User qualifications recommended by the publisher in the test manual**
    - **Level of training, supervision, experience, and certification of the individual administering or interpreting the instrument**
    - **Purpose of the evaluation (e.g., eligibility or educational planning)**
2. Evaluation timelines
  - a. Based on Rule 6A-6.0331(3)(d), F.A.C., the school district must make one of the following determinations, documented in the student's educational record, prior to the request for an initial evaluation:
    - **General education interventions have been implemented and indicate that the student may be a student with a disability who needs special education and related services**

- The evaluation was initiated at parent request and the general education interventions must be completed concurrently with the evaluation but prior to the determination of the student's eligibility for special education and related services.
    - The nature or severity of the student's areas of concern makes the general education intervention procedures inappropriate in addressing the immediate needs of the student
- b. Based on Rule 6A-6.0331(3)(b) F.A.C., if a parent requests that the school district conduct an initial evaluation prior to the completion of the general education interventions, the school district must respond within twenty (20) school days by:
  - Obtaining consent for and conduct the evaluation and complete the general education interventions concurrently with the evaluation but prior to the determination of the student's eligibility; or
  - Providing the parent with written notice of its refusal to conduct the evaluation.
- c. The school district ensures that initial evaluations of students suspected of having a disability are completed within sixty (60) school days (cumulative) as defined in Rule 6A-6.03411(1)(h), F.A.C., of which the student is in attendance, after the school district's receipt of the parental consent for evaluation. For prekindergarten children, initial evaluations must be completed within sixty (60) school days after the school district's receipt of parental consent for evaluation.
- d. The determination of whether a student is "in attendance" must be made consistent with the school board's policies implementing Rule 6A-1.044, F.A.C., which requires the reporting of students' attendance.
- e. The 60-day timeline for evaluation does not apply if:
  - The parent repeatedly fails or refuses to produce the student for the evaluation
  - A student's school district of enrollment changes after the timeline has begun and prior to a determination by the student's previous school district as to whether the student has a disability

This exception only applies when the current school district is making sufficient progress to ensure a prompt completion of the evaluation and the parent agrees to a specific time when the evaluation will be completed.

Assessments of students who transfer within the same school year must be coordinated between schools to ensure prompt completion of evaluations.
- f. The school district will ensure that students suspected of being gifted are evaluated within a reasonable time as defined in the district's ESE Policies and Procedures document as required by Rule 6A-6.03411(2), F.A.C., but no more than ninety (90) school days that the student is in attendance after the school district's receipt of parental consent for the evaluation.

Describe the district's timeframe to ensure completion of gifted evaluations.

Evaluations for students suspected of being gifted will be completed within 90 days of the district's receipt of the parental consent for evaluation.

- This text box is not applicable for the district.

### 3. Parent consent

- a. The school district will provide the parent written notice to the parent that describes any evaluation procedures

the school district proposes to conduct. The school district will obtain informed consent from the parent of a student to determine whether the student is a student with a disability or is gifted **and needs ESE**.

**Parental consent is not required before reviewing existing data as part of an evaluation or administering a test or other evaluation that is administered to all students unless, before administration of that test or evaluation, consent is required of parents of all students.**

Parental consent for evaluation is not construed as consent for initial provision **of exceptional student education services**.

- b. **The school district must make reasonable efforts to obtain the informed consent from the parent for an initial evaluation to determine whether the student is a student with a disability or gifted. In the event that the parent fails to respond to the district's request to obtain informed written consent, the district must maintain documentation of attempts made to obtain consent.**
- c. Based on 34 CFR §300.300(a)(2), the school district is not required to obtain informed consent from the parent for an initial evaluation if the child is a ward of the State and is not residing with the parent if:
- The school district cannot discover the whereabouts of the parent,
  - The rights of the parent have been terminated, or
  - The rights of the parent to make educational decisions have been subrogated by a judge and consent for initial evaluation has been given by an individual appointed by the judge to represent the student.

Based upon the definition of parent in Rule 6A-6.03411 **(1)(bb)**, F.A.C., "Parent means" **any** of the following:

1. A biological or adoptive parent of a student
2. A foster parent
3. A guardian generally authorized to act as the student's parent, or authorized to make educational decisions for the student (but not the State if the student is a ward of the State)
4. An individual acting in the place of a biological or adoptive parent (including a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative) with whom the student lives, or an individual who is legally responsible for the student's welfare
5. A surrogate parent who has been appointed in accordance with Rules 6A-6.03011 through 6A-6.0361, F.A.C.

d. If the parent refuses consent for an evaluation to determine eligibility as a student with a disability, the school district may continue to pursue consent for the evaluation by using the mediation or due process procedures. A district is not required to pursue an initial evaluation when the parent refuses consent and does not violate its child find or evaluation obligations if it declines to do so.

e. The school district may not use a parent's refusal to consent to initial evaluation to deny the parent or student any other service of the school district, except as provided by Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C.

#### 4. Evaluation procedures

a. **As part of an initial evaluation, a team of qualified professionals and the parent, as appropriate, must take the following actions:**

1. Review existing evaluation data on the student, including:
  - Evaluations and information provided by the student's parents,
  - Current classroom-based, local, or State assessments and classroom-based observations, and
  - Observations by teachers and related services providers.
2. Identify, on the basis of that review and input from the student's parents, what additional data, if any, are needed to determine the following:



- Whether the student is a student with a disability
  - The educational needs of the student
3. The group conducting this review may do so without a meeting.
  4. The school district shall administer tests and other evaluation measures as may be needed to produce the data that is to be reviewed under this section.
  5. If the determination under this section is that no additional data are needed to determine whether the student continues to be a student with a disability and to determine the student's educational needs, the school district shall notify the student's parents of:
    - That determination and the reasons for the determination; and
    - The right of the parents to request an assessment to determine whether the student continues to be a student with a disability and to determine the student's educational needs. The school district is not required to conduct the assessment unless requested to do so by the student's parents.
  6. In conducting an evaluation, the school district:
    - Uses a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information about the student within a data-based problem-solving process, including information about the student's response to evidence-based interventions as applicable, and information provided by the parent. This evaluation data may assist in determining whether the student is eligible for ESE and the content of the student's IEP or EP. The evaluation should include information that enables a student with a disability to be involved and progress in the general curriculum (or for a preschool child, to participate in appropriate activities) or identifies the needs beyond the general curriculum of a student who is gifted.
    - Does not use any single measure or assessment as the sole criterion for determining eligibility or educational programming.
    - Uses technically sound instruments that assess the relative contribution of cognitive and behavioral factors, in addition to physical and developmental factors.
- b. The school district ensures that assessments and other evaluation materials and procedures used to assess a student:
- Are selected and administered so as not to discriminate on a racial or cultural basis
  - Are provided and administered in the student's native language, or other mode of communication, and in the form that most accurately measures what the student knows and can do
  - Are used for purposes for which the measures are reliable and valid
  - Are administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the assessments
- c. Assessments are selected and administered to best ensure that, if administered to a student with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills, the assessment results accurately reflect the student's aptitude or achievement level, or whatever other factors the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the student's sensory, manual, or speaking skills, unless those are the factors being measured.
- d. Assessments and other evaluation materials and procedures include measures that assess specific areas of educational need rather than those merely designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient. The school district uses assessment tools and strategies that provide relevant information that directly assists in determining the educational needs of the student.
- e. The student is assessed in all areas of the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, health; vision, hearing, social emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities. The evaluation is sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the student's ESE needs, whether or not commonly linked to the suspected disability.

A [Web-based Evaluation Resource](http://sss.usf.edu/resources/topic/ese/ESE_Eval/General/General.html) developed to assist districts in selection of instruments for conducting diagnostic assessments, eligibility evaluations and for screening and progress monitoring is available at [http://sss.usf.edu/resources/topic/ese/ESE\\_Eval/General/General.html](http://sss.usf.edu/resources/topic/ese/ESE_Eval/General/General.html).

5. If the parent obtains an independent educational evaluation at their own expense, the results shall be considered by the school district when making decisions regarding the student, if the evaluation meets school district criteria.
6. Following completion of the student's evaluation, the school district shall not unreasonably delay the determination of a student's eligibility for **ESE services**.

Describe the district's procedures for ensuring that a student's eligibility for **ESE services** is determined within a reasonable time following completion of the student's evaluation.

An ESE compliance staff member is assigned to each school. At the elementary level, the Compliance Educational Diagnostician (CED) is regularly scheduled at assigned schools. At the secondary level (middle and high school), a full time Teacher on Special Assignment (TSA) is assigned on a daily basis. That compliance staff member (will be referred to as designee from this point forward) has oversight responsibilities designed to ensure that a student is evaluated and found eligible in a timely manner. The designee will monitor the student information system during the 60 day timeline and upon completion of the evaluation, will ensure that the school staff prepares all the necessary documents and submits to the designee within a reasonable time frame in order to schedule an eligibility meeting. The timeline from consent to completion of eligibility will be tracked and monitored by the designee who will ensure that training is provided to ensure staff compliance with all requirements.

### **Procedures for Reevaluation**

1. **Reevaluation is required in the following circumstances.**
  - a. **Reevaluations must occur at least every three (3) years, unless the parent and the school district agree that reevaluation is not needed.**
  - b. **Reevaluation is required whenever** the educational or related services needs of the student warrant a reevaluation or if the student's parent or teacher requests it.
  - c. **Reevaluation is required prior to the determination that the student is no longer a student with a disability in need of specially designed instruction and related services.**
  - d. **Reevaluation of the student may not occur more than once a year, unless the parent and the school district agree otherwise.**
  - e. **Reevaluation is not required for a student before termination of eligibility due to graduation with a standard diploma or exiting upon reaching the student's 22nd birthday. However, the school district will provide the student with a summary of the student's academic achievement and functional performance, including recommendations to assist the student in meeting the student's postsecondary goals.**
  - f. **Based on 34 CFR §§300.130 and 300.131, the district is responsible for reevaluation of students with disabilities attending:**
    - Nonprofit private schools located within the district
    - For-profit private schools and are residents in the district
    - Home education

### **2. Reevaluation procedures**

**As part of any reevaluation, the IEP team and other qualified professionals, as appropriate, must take the following actions:**

- a. **Review existing evaluation data on the student, including evaluations and information provided by the parents of the student and the student; current classroom-based district or state assessments and classroom-based**

observations by teachers and related services providers.

- b. Identify, on the basis of the review and parent input, what additional data, if any, are needed to determine the following:
  - Whether the student continues to have a disability;
  - The educational needs of the student;
  - The present levels of academic achievement and related developmental needs of the student;
  - Whether the student continues to need special education and related services; and
  - Whether any additions or modifications to the special education and related services are necessary to enable the student to meet the measurable annual goals set out in the student's IEP and to participate, as appropriate, in the general curriculum.
- c. The IEP team may conduct the review of existing evaluation data without a meeting.
- d. If the IEP team determines that no additional evaluation data are needed to determine whether the student continues to be a student with a disability, and to determine the student's educational needs, the reevaluation is complete and the school district shall notify the student's parent(s) of the following:
  - The determination and the reasons for that determination and
  - The right of the parents to request an assessment to determine whether the student continues to be a student with a disability and determine the student's educational needs.

The school district is not required to conduct the assessment unless requested to do so by the student's parents.

- e. Reevaluation is not required for a student before termination of eligibility due to graduation with a standard diploma or exiting upon reaching the student's 22nd birthday. However, the school district will provide the student with a summary of the student's academic achievement and functional performance, including recommendations to assist the student in meeting the student's postsecondary goals.
- f. The following rules require the administration of specific assessments as a part of a student's reevaluation:
  - Rule 6A-6.03013, F.A.C., Students Who Are Deaf or Hard-of Hearing
  - Rule 6A-6.03014, F.A.C., Students Who Are Visually Impaired
  - Rule 6A-6.03022, F.A.C., Students Who Are Dual-Sensory Impaired

For students determined eligible under these rules, the administration of formal assessments at reevaluation must be completed in accordance with the requirements of these rules.

### 3. Parental consent when additional data are needed

- a. The school district must obtain informed parental consent prior to conducting any reevaluation of a student with a disability.
- b. Informed parental consent for reevaluation need not be obtained if the district can demonstrate that it made reasonable efforts to obtain such consent and the student's parent failed to respond.

### 4. Reevaluation timelines

- a. The district must complete a reevaluation every three (3) years unless the parent and the school district agree that a reevaluation is unnecessary.
- b. If the IEP team identifies the need for additional data, the additional data collection must be completed within a reasonable time and prior to reevaluation due date if a triennial evaluation.
- c. If an IEP team makes a recommendation for a student with a disability to receive an assistive technology assessment, that assessment must be completed within sixty (60) school days after the team's recommendation.

Describe the district's procedures for ensuring that a reevaluation is conducted at least every three (3) years.

Each case manager is responsible for ensuring that the consideration of the need for reevaluation is conducted, as required by law. The case manager schedules an IEP meeting where the team reviews existing data and determines if there are additional student needs that require formal assessment. If the IEP team feels more information is needed, a re-evaluation is opened. Upon completion of formal evaluation, the IEP team reconvenes to review the evaluations and determine if any additional supports or services are needed; the re-evaluation would then be closed by the IEP team. If after reviewing existing data, the IEP team determines no formal evaluation is needed, the IEP team will open and close re-evaluation. Additionally, the reevaluation procedures are detailed in the ESE Handbook and are reviewed annually through the delivery of training focused on case management procedures. A Reevaluation Process Checklist is available to all case managers in the Appendix of the ESE Handbook.

To ensure timely completion, the reevaluation date is listed on the first page of the IEP (part of the PEER system) and an FTE report is sent to all case managers 3 times a year to ensure compliance with identified due dates and time frames for reevaluation. It is a requirement that the team meet prior to the reevaluation due date to consider the need for a reevaluation. Tracking documents are provided to ESE teachers to track and monitor progress toward the completion of the reevaluation. District staff pull lists of students' IEP and reevaluation dates two times per year to monitor compliance with due dates, and follow up with schools to ensure re-evaluation is addressed. In addition, folders are randomly selected and monitored on a monthly basis to check the IEPs for compliance.

Describe the district's procedures for ensuring that assessments and other data collection procedures are completed within a reasonable time following the review when the IEP team determines that additional data are needed.

Each case manager is responsible for monitoring of timely completion of reevaluations. To ensure enough time for completion of all formal instruments and written reports deemed necessary for reevaluation, the ESE Handbook indicates that team members should submit a request for reevaluation 4-6 months prior to the due date. As evaluations are completed, the case manager sends copies of all reports to the parent prior to the IEP meeting. Prior to the re-evaluation due date the case manager checks the progress of the evaluation and schedules an IEP meeting. Team members are provided with a Reevaluation Process Checklist detailing the processes and timelines associated with a reevaluation. Additionally, case managers utilize a Reevaluation Information Sheet which specifies information and dates pertinent to the reevaluation process, including the areas to be evaluated. Furthermore, student services and evaluators are provided with an internal timeline which indicates that the reevaluation must be completed 10 days prior to the due date specified on the IEP. ESE Compliance staff members provide annual training to ESE teachers on the reevaluation process to ensure that procedures and timelines are followed.

Note: When a parent requests a reevaluation, the school's IEP team may request a meeting with the parent for the purpose of reviewing existing data and to determine what additional data may be needed. The school may then, at that meeting, obtain parental consent for reevaluation, if appropriate. If the parent refuses to meet in a timely manner, the school must send the parent one of the following:

- A Prior Written Notice of Consent for Reevaluation form indicating what assessments will be administered based on the IEP team's review of data, or
- A Prior Written Notice of Refusal.

Describe the district's procedures in place when a parent requests a reevaluation.

An IEP amendment meeting is required to open reevaluation. It is mandatory that all service providers (ESE and Related Services) attend this meeting. The participation of all service providers must be indicated by their signature and title documented on the Meeting Participants form of the IEP. Once a parent requests a reevaluation, the case manager will initiate the IEP meeting to review the request with the team. A Notice of Meeting is sent to the parent to invite their participation in the IEP amendment meeting. Documented attempts to gain input from parent are mandatory before proceeding with the Reevaluation Process. This input can be obtained informally through phone conversation, face to face conversation or written input. Once parent input has been obtained, or attempts to obtain have been documented, the ESE Case Manager will schedule an IEP amendment meeting for the purpose of opening reevaluation. ESE Informed Notice and Consent for Reevaluation or Prior Written Notice of refusal is provided to parent.

Describe the district's procedures for ensuring that an assistive technology assessment is completed within sixty (60) school days after an IEP team makes the recommendation.

At such time that the IEP team determines the need for an Assistive Technology evaluation, the team will request consent for reevaluation. The Informed Notice and Consent for Reevaluation and Communication Disorders Program Request for Evaluation (internal forms) will be completed and sent to the Assistive Technology Team Specialist assigned to the particular school making the request. The Assistive Technology Specialist will begin the assessment when notified a consent has been obtained. The Assistive Technology Specialist will gather information and/or arrange for student observations with school team, caregivers, and parent/guardian. The Assistive Technology Specialist will contact the student's case manager to schedule date to complete the evaluation within the 60 school day timeline. If parent requests an assistive technology evaluation and the team disagrees with the parent's request, the parent will be provided with a prior written notice of the team's refusal to conduct the evaluation as required by law.

5. Determination of continued need for **special education** and related services

- a. A meeting of the individual educational plan team is convened to review all available information about the student, including reports from the additional evaluations, and to determine whether the student continues to be a student with a disability in need of **special education** and related services. If the student continues to be an eligible student, the student's individual educational plan is reviewed and revised, as appropriate, to incorporate the results of the reevaluation.
- b. If the reevaluation indicates that the student is no longer a student with a disability or that **special education** and related services are no longer needed, the parent must be provided prior written notice that these services will be discontinued.
- c. If the reevaluation indicates that the student's disability has changed (i.e., adding, deleting, or changing a disability category), the applicable eligibility staffing procedures are followed.

## Part I. General Policies and Procedures

### Section I: Independent Educational Evaluations

#### Statutory and Regulatory Citations

34 CFR §300.502

Rule 6A-6.03311, F.A.C.

#### Definition

Independent educational evaluation (IEE) means an evaluation conducted by a qualified evaluation specialist who is not employed by the school district responsible for the education of the student in question.

#### General

1. The parents of a student with a disability have the right to an IEE at public expense if the parent disagrees with an evaluation obtained by the school district.
2. The parent of a student with a disability is to be provided, upon request for an IEE, information about where an IEE may be obtained and the school district criteria applicable to IEEs.
3. Public expense means that the school district either pays for the full cost of the evaluation or ensures that the evaluation is otherwise provided at no cost to the parent.
4. Whenever an IEE is conducted, the criteria under which the evaluation is obtained, including the location of the evaluation and the qualifications of the evaluation specialist, shall be the same as the criteria used by the school district when it initiates an evaluation, to the extent that those criteria are consistent with the parent's right to an IEE.
5. The school district may not impose conditions or timelines for obtaining an IEE at public expense other than those criteria described in rule 6A-6.03311, F.A.C.
6. If a parent requests an IEE at public expense, the school district **must**, without unnecessary delay, **either** :
  - Ensure that an IEE is provided at public expense.
  - Initiate a due process hearing under this rule to show that its evaluation is appropriate or that the evaluation obtained by the parent did not meet the school district's criteria. If the school district initiates a hearing and the final decision from the hearing is that the school district's evaluation is appropriate, then the parent still has a right to an IEE but not at public expense.
7. If a parent requests an IEE, the school district may ask for the parent to give a reason why he or she objects to the district's evaluation. However, the explanation by the parent may not be required, and the school district may not unreasonably delay either providing the IEE at public expense or initiating a due process hearing to defend the district's evaluation.
8. A parent is entitled to only one IEE at public expense each time the school district conducts an evaluation with which the parent disagrees.
9. If the parent obtains an IEE at public expense or shares with the school district an evaluation obtained at private expense:
  - The school district shall consider the results of such evaluation in any decision regarding the provision of FAPE to the student, if it meets appropriate school district criteria described in Rule 6A- 6.03311, F.A.C.
  - The results of such evaluation may be presented by any party as evidence at any due process hearing regarding that student.
10. If an administrative law judge requests an IEE as part of a due process hearing, the cost of the evaluation must be at public expense.

Describe the district's policies and procedures for responding to a parent's request for an IEE at public expense.

1. Parents' requests for an Independent Educational Evaluation should be in writing. This can be done in a school meeting on a conference form or by providing a letter to the school or district requesting an IEE. The information will be forwarded to the Office of ESE Compliance in a timely manner.
2. The Office of ESE Compliance will contact the parents outlining the process and providing information regarding independent examiners in the area along with a release form to contract with an independent examiner
3. Independent Educational Evaluations must be conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the public agency responsible for the education of the child in question.
4. Evaluators must practice within Pinellas or Hillsborough County unless unique circumstances require an examiner outside of the area. Parents must justify the unique circumstances to the district to justify a waiver of the criteria.
5. A fee criterion has been established by the district per federal regulation 34 CFR 300.502 (e) and will be shared with parents upon request. The district will not be required to bear the cost of unreasonably expensive IEE's
6. Parents must communicate their choice of examiner and provide the signed release form in a timely manner so as not to delay the process indefinitely.
7. Parents may not set up an appointment with the examiner until an approval confirmation is received from the districts Office of ESE Compliance.
8. Once the evaluation is complete, the examiner will provide a copy to the parent as well as the district. The district will review the evaluation for conformity of procedures and provide copies to the school. The school will schedule a meeting with the parent and relevant team members to review the results of the IEE.

Describe the district's policies and procedures for consideration of the results of an IEE obtained at private expense.

The district will consider any IEE obtained by the parent at private expense. The parent shall provide a copy of the evaluation report to the school staff. The school staff will ensure that the copy is provided to the necessary evaluation specialist for review (ie. school psychologist, social worker, OT, PT, SLP, etc). Upon review, a meeting with the parents will be scheduled and the evaluation report discussed to include whether it meets the appropriate school criteria. The team will consider whether the results indicate a need for a decision regarding FAPE.

**Part II.**  
**Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities**



## **Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities**

### **Section A: Instructional Program**

The following applies to the instructional program for students with disabilities in general. In addition to the philosophical, curricular, and instructional support issues included here, there are disability-specific expectations or requirements for certain categories of disability. That information is provided in the relevant *Exceptional Student Education Eligibility* sections of this document.

#### **Philosophy**

1. Each student with a disability is entitled to receive FAPE in the least restrictive environment that will enable the student to progress in the general curriculum to the maximum extent possible.
2. Special education, which refers to specially designed instruction and related services, is provided to meet the unique needs of the student that result from the student's disability and to prepare the student for further education, employment, and independent living. Related services are defined in Rule 6A-6.03411(1)(dd), F.A.C.
3. Specially designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction.
4. Specially designed instruction may employ universal design for learning, assistive technology, accommodations, or modifications.

#### **Curriculum**

1. To maximize accessibility to the curriculum, students will access the State standards through appropriate programming, support from special education and regular education teachers, support in the use of assistive technology, and through the use of universal design principals.
2. For most students with disabilities, these supports provide progress toward a standard high school diploma.

#### **Instructional Support**

1. Students receive instructional support through specially designed instruction and related services as determined through the IEP process.
2. Teachers are trained in designing and implementing individualized programs to address the learning needs of each student.
3. Teachers are provided with administrative support to assure reasonable class size and workload, adequate funds for materials, and professional development.
4. Teachers instruct students in the unique skills necessary to access and benefit from the core curriculum. These skills may include, but are not limited to, curriculum and learning strategies, compensatory skills, independent functioning, social emotional behavior, use of assistive technology, and communication.
5. A range of service delivery options is available to meet the student's needs: consultation, itinerant instruction, resource room, special class, separate school, residential placement, homebound or hospitalized, and community-based or home-based services.
6. School districts may provide professional development for teachers in coordination with community agencies, the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, discretionary projects funded by the Department of Education and other agencies of state and local government, including, but not limited to, the Division of Blind Services, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Children and Families, and the Department of Health, Children's Medical Services, as appropriate.

## **Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities**

### **Section B.1: Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

#### **Statutory and Regulatory Citations**

34 CFR §300.8

Sections 1003.01 and 1003.57, F.S.

Rules 6A-6.03023 and 6A-6.0331, F.A.C.

#### **Definition**

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is defined as a range of pervasive developmental disorders that adversely affects a student's functioning and results in the need for specially designed instruction and related services. ASD is characterized by an uneven developmental profile and a pattern of qualitative impairments in social interaction, communication, and the presence of restricted repetitive, or stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests, or activities. These characteristics may manifest in a variety of combinations and range from mild to severe. ASD may include Autistic Disorder, Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified, Asperger's Disorder, or other related pervasive developmental disorders.

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

A student is eligible for specially designed instruction and related services as a student with ASD if evidence of **all** of the following criteria are met:

1. Uneven developmental profile as evidenced by inconsistencies across or within the domains of language, social interaction, adaptive behavior, or cognitive skills
2. Impairment in social interaction as evidenced by delayed, absent, or atypical ability to relate to people or the environment
3. Impairment in verbal or nonverbal language or social communication skills
4. Restricted repetitive or stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests, or activities
5. The student demonstrates a need for special education

#### **Student Evaluation**

1. In addition to the provisions in Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C., regarding general education intervention procedures, the evaluation for determining eligibility shall include the following:
  - a. Documented and dated behavioral observations conducted by members of the evaluation team targeting social interaction, communication skills, and stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests, or activities, across settings; general education interventions and activities conducted prior to referral may be used to meet this criterion, if the activities address the elements identified in this section;
  - b. A comprehensive social developmental history compiled with the parents(s) or guardian(s) that addresses the core features of autism spectrum disorder;
  - c. A comprehensive psychological evaluation to identify present levels of performance and uneven patterns of development in language, social interaction, adaptive behavior, and cognitive skills
  - d. A comprehensive speech language evaluation; and
  - e. The consideration of medical information provided.

#### **Unique Philosophical, Curricular, or Instructional Considerations**

1. While students with ASD share instructional needs with other students, there are characteristics that are specific to ASD, including the development and use of language and communication skills, the development of appropriate social skills, and the development of appropriate behavioral skills. The need to tailor instruction to the individual learning styles and

needs of each student requires that teachers of students with ASD be knowledgeable in a variety of educational strategies.

2. Inherent in a program for students with ASD is the recognition that ASD is a developmental disability that adversely impacts the student's communication, social, and behavioral skills. It is important to take into consideration the student's strengths and needs in all three areas when tailoring educational services for the student.

**The school district has the option to include additional information regarding evaluations, qualified evaluators, or unique philosophical, curricular, or instructional considerations for students with autism spectrum disorders.**

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The school district has provided additional information for this section in **Appendix B** of this document.
- There is no additional information for this section.

## **Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities**

### **Section B.2: Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing**

#### **Statutory and Regulatory Citations**

34 CFR §§300.8, 300.34, and 300.113  
Sections 1003.01(3), 1003.55, and 1003.57, F.S.  
Rules 6A-6.03013 and 6A-2.0010, F.A.C.

#### **Definition**

A student who is deaf or hard-of-hearing has a hearing loss, aided or unaided, that impacts the processing of linguistic information and which adversely affects performance in the educational environment. The degree of loss may range from mild to profound.

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

A student is eligible for specially designed instruction and related services as a student who is deaf or hard-of-hearing if the following criteria are met:

1. Medical: An audiological evaluation documents a permanent or fluctuating hearing threshold level that interferes with progress in any one of the following areas: developmental skills or academic performance, social-emotional development, or linguistic and communicative skills as evidenced by:
  - a. 25 decibel (dB) + or - 5 dB or greater based on pure tone average or average of 500, 1000, and 2000 Hz unaided in the better ear; or
  - b. A high frequency hearing threshold level of 25 dB + or - 5 dB or greater based on pure tone average of 1000, 2000, and 3000 Hz unaided in the better ear; or
  - c. A unilateral hearing threshold level of 50 dB + or - 5 dB or greater based on pure tone average of 500, 1000, and 2000 Hz unaided; or
  - d. Auditory Evoked Potential responses evidencing permanent hearing loss at multiple frequencies equivalent to or in excess of the decibel hearing loss threshold criteria for pure tone audiometric testing specified above,  
and
2. The student demonstrates a need for special education.

#### **Student Evaluation**

In addition to the provisions in Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C., regarding general education intervention procedures, the minimum student evaluation shall include **all** of the following:

1. Audiological evaluation
2. Evaluation of developmental skills or academic achievement, including information on the student's academic strengths and weaknesses
3. Evaluation of social development
4. Evaluation of receptive and expressive communication
5. A comprehensive nonverbal assessment of intellectual functioning or developmental scales, if more appropriate, for children under age seven (7)

Selection of assessment instruments shall take into consideration the student's functioning level, degree of hearing loss, and method of communication.

#### **Student Reevaluation**

A reevaluation will occur at least every three (3) years and will include at a minimum an audiological evaluation and, if appropriate, any other formal evaluations addressed in the initial evaluation in accordance with the Student Evaluation section above.

### **Unique Philosophical, Curricular, or Instructional Considerations**

1. All students who are identified as deaf or hard-of-hearing will be screened for Usher syndrome at least one time between grades 6 and 12. Qualified evaluators include: teachers of the deaf or hard-of-hearing, speech language pathologists, audiologists, teachers of the blind or visually impaired, and school health personnel who have been trained in Usher's screening procedures.
2. Students shall have access to instruction using the method of communication most readily understood by the student. Each student who is deaf or hard-of-hearing shall have the opportunity to develop expressive and receptive language skills using any or all of the following:
  - a. Residual hearing
  - b. Speech reading
  - c. Manual communication systems
  - d. Speech
  - e. Appropriate amplification
3. Rule 6A-6.03028(3)(g), F.A.C., requires the use of the Model Communication Plan adopted by the State Board of Education during the development of the IEP for students who are deaf, hard of hearing or dual sensory impaired. Use of this plan will ensure that IEP teams are considering the instructional needs of these students in a more comprehensive manner. The school district shall consider the communication and language needs of students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, including opportunities for direct communication with peers and professional personnel in the student's language and communication mode, academic level, and full range of needs, and opportunities for direct instruction in the student's language and communication mode.
4. Routine checking of hearing aids worn in school by students with hearing loss and the external components of surgically implanted medical devices (i.e., cochlear implants) is required to ensure that these devices are functioning properly.
5. Assistive technology and related services do not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, or the replacement of such device. Although cochlear implants are not considered assistive technology, children with cochlear implants maintain the right to receive related services that are determined by the IEP team to be necessary for the student. School districts are responsible for providing appropriate services for the students. However, appropriate services do not include maintaining, optimizing (i.e., mapping), or replacing cochlear implants.
6. Interpreting services includes the following, when used with respect to children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing: oral transliteration services; cued language transliteration services; sign language transliteration and interpreting services, and transcription services, such as communication access real-time translation (CART), C-Print; and TypeWell; and special interpreting services for children who are deaf-blind.
7. Each learning environment shall have appropriate acoustic treatment, lighting, and auditory amplification equipment to meet the individual needs of each student. Auditory equipment shall be made available through the school district (e.g., Personal or Soundfield FM systems, infrared systems, induction loop systems, and other assistive listening devices). Auditory equipment will be calibrated annually, maintained, and considered for replacement on a five (5)-year cycle. Visual alarm devices shall be provided in all areas where students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing may be separated from persons with normal hearing—group bathrooms, corridors, specific areas designated for the deaf, etc., in accordance with Rule 6A-2.0010, F.A.C.
8. The school district will provide information describing the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind and all other programs and methods of instruction available to the parent of a student with sensory impairments. This information will be provided annually.

**The school district has the option to include additional information regarding evaluations, qualified evaluators, or unique philosophical, curricular, or instructional considerations for students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.**

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The school district has provided additional information for this section in **Appendix B** of this document.
- There is no additional information for this section.

## Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities

### Section B.3: Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Prekindergarten Children who are Developmentally Delayed

- This section is not applicable for the district.

#### Statutory and Regulatory Citations

34 CFR §§300.8 and 303.21

Sections 1003.01, 1003.21, and 1003.57, F.S.

Rules 6A-6.03027 and 6A-6.03031, F.A.C.

#### Definitions

1. For an infant or toddler from birth through two (2) years of age, developmental delay is defined as delay in one (1) or more of the following developmental domains: adaptive development; cognitive development; communication development; social or emotional development; or physical development.
2. For a child three (3) through five (5) years of age, developmental delay is defined as a delay in one or more of the following areas: adaptive or self-help development; cognitive development; communication development; social or emotional development; or physical development, including fine, gross, or perceptual motor.

#### Eligibility Criteria

1. For a child three (3) through five (5) years of age

A child is eligible for specially designed instruction and related services as a student with developmental delay when the following criteria are met:

- a. The child is three (3) through five (5) years of age.
- b. There is documentation of **one** of the following:
  - A score of two (2) standard deviations (SD) below the mean or a 25 percent delay on measures yielding scores in months in at least one area of development
  - A score of 1.5 SD below the mean or a 20 percent delay on measures yielding scores in months in at least two (2) areas of development
  - Based on informed clinical opinion, the eligibility staffing committee makes a recommendation that a developmental delay exists and exceptional student education services are needed
- c. The eligibility staffing committee or multidisciplinary team, which includes the invited parent(s), makes a determination concerning the effects of the environment, cultural differences, or economic disadvantage.

2. For a child birth through two (2) years of age (below thirty-six (36) months)

An infant or toddler is eligible for exceptional student education when a team of qualified professionals and the parent or guardian, in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331(6), F.A.C., determine that **all** the following criteria are met:

- a. The child is below the age of thirty-six (36) months;
- b. There is documentation of **one** of the following:
  1. A score of 1.5 standard deviations below the mean in two or more developmental domains as measured by at least one appropriate diagnostic instrument and procedures, and informed clinical opinion; or
  2. A score of 2.0 standard deviations below the mean in one developmental domain as measured by at least one appropriate diagnostic instrument and procedures, and informed clinical opinion; or
  3. Based on informed clinical opinion a determination has been made that a developmental delay exists.

- c. The requirements of Rule 6A-6.0331(2), F.A.C., have been met;
- d. There is written evidence that the Department of Health, Children's Medical Services, Part C Local Early Steps has determined that the infant or toddler has a developmental delay as defined in section (2)(b) of this rule; and,
- e. The infant or toddler needs early intervention services as defined in Rule 6A-6.03411(1)(i), F.A.C.

### **Child Evaluation**

In addition to the provisions in Rule 6A-6.0331(2), F.A.C., regarding procedures prior to initial evaluation for prekindergarten children, the evaluation for determination of eligibility shall include the following:

Procedures for evaluation for children three (3) through five (5) years:

- a. Delay is documented by a multidisciplinary team using multiple measures of assessment, which include the following:
  - o Standardized instruments, judgement-based assessments, criterion-referenced instruments, systematic observation, functional skills assessments, or other procedures selected in consultation with the parent(s); or
  - o Informed clinical opinion using qualitative and quantitative information to determine the need for early intervention services; and
  - o Parent report, which can confirm or modify information obtained and describe behavior in environments that the district may not be able to access.
- b. When a developmental delay cannot be verified by the use of standardized instruments, the delay(s) may be established through observation of atypical functioning in any one or more of the developmental areas. A report shall be written documenting the evaluation procedures used, the results obtained, the reasons for overriding those results from standardized instruments, and the basis for recommending eligibility.

### **Continued Eligibility for ESE Services**

1. For a child three (3) through five (5) years of age, continued eligibility as a student with a disability under another category will be determined before the child is six (6) years old.
2. For a child birth through two (2) years of age (below thirty-six (36) months), continued eligibility as a child with a disability will be determined before the child's third birthday.

### **Unique Philosophical, Curricular, or Instructional Considerations**

1. For a child three (3) through five (5) years of age
  - a. As appropriate, the individualized family support plan (IFSP) or individual educational plan (IEP) shall be developed through interagency collaboration with the family and other providers of services to the child and family and in accordance with Rules 6A-6.03026, 6A-6.03028, and 6A-6.03029, F.A.C.
  - b. Because of the rapid development of young children, on-going observations and assessments shall be conducted as needed to plan for IFSP or IEP modifications.
2. For a child birth through two (2) years of age (below thirty-six (36) months)
  - a. The IFSP shall be developed in collaboration with the family and other providers of service to the child and family and in accordance with Rules 6A-6.03026, 6A-6.03029, and 6A-6.0331, F.A.C.
  - b. Because of the rapid development of young children and the changing needs of families, ongoing observations or assessments shall be conducted at least every six months for the purpose of completing the periodic review of the IFSP.

**The school district has the option to include additional information regarding evaluations, qualified evaluators, or unique philosophical, curricular, or instructional considerations for prekindergarten children with developmental delays.**

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The school district has provided additional information for this section in **Appendix B** of this document.



- There is no additional information for this section.

## **Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities**

### **Section B.4: Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students who are Dual-Sensory Impaired**

#### **Statutory and Regulatory Citations**

34 CFR §§300.8, 300.34, 300.113, and 300.172  
Sections 1003.55, 1003.57, and 1003.575, F.S.  
Rule 6A-6.03022, F.A.C.

#### **Definition**

Dual-sensory impairment is defined as impairment affecting both vision and hearing, the combination of which causes a serious impairment in the abilities to acquire information, communicate, or function within the environment, or a degenerative condition which will lead to such an impairment.

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

A student is eligible for specially designed instruction and related services as a student with a dual-sensory impairment if the following criteria are met:

1. One or more of the following visual impairments:
  - a. A visual acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eye after best correction;
  - b. A peripheral field loss;
  - c. A progressive vision loss; or
  - d. Other documented visual conditions, including, but not limited to, extreme light sensitivity or lack of contrast sensitivity;

and

2. One or more of the following hearing impairments:
  - a. Hearing impairment of 30 dB or greater unaided in the better ear;
  - b. Other documented auditory conditions including, but not limited to, monaural loss or an inability to screen out auditory background sounds; or
  - c. A progressive hearing loss;

and

3. A combination of the visual and auditory impairments as specified above that adversely affects, or has the potential to adversely affect, the student's abilities to acquire information, communicate, or function within the environment, unless special instruction, materials, adaptations, or counseling are provided; or
4. A diagnosed degenerative condition or syndrome that will lead to dual-sensory impairment and is likely to adversely affect the areas listed above; and
5. The student demonstrates a need for special education.

#### **Student Evaluation**

The minimum student evaluations include:

1. For students with a suspected degenerative condition or syndrome that will lead to dual-sensory impairment: a medical statement confirming the existence of such a condition or syndrome and its prognosis
2. For children who are under the age of three (3) years:

- a. A medical eye exam describing etiology, diagnosis, and prognosis;
  - b. Documented observation of functional vision that includes possible impediments to visual use;
  - c. An audiological exam; and
  - d. Documented observation of auditory functioning.
3. For students who are over the age of three (3) years:
- a. A medical eye exam describing etiology, diagnosis, and prognosis;
  - b. Documented observation of functional vision which includes possible impediments to visual use;
  - c. An audiological exam;
  - d. Documented observation of auditory functioning;
  - e. An assessment of speech and language functioning which includes a differential diagnosis of the student's linguistic abilities and of modality strengths and preferences; and
  - f. An assessment of intellectual functioning, developmental level, or academic functioning.

### **Student Reevaluation**

1. A reevaluation shall occur at least every three (3) years and shall include, at a minimum, the following:
  - a. A medical eye exam describing etiology, diagnosis, and prognosis
  - b. Documented observation of functional vision that includes possible impediments to visual use
  - c. An audiological exam
  - d. Documented observation of auditory functioning
  - e. Any other evaluations specified by an evaluation specialist and an exceptional student teacher after examination of available information in all areas addressed in the initial evaluation or in subsequent reevaluations of the student in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C.
2. The medical aspect of reevaluation for students with bilateral anophthalmia may be waived by a written recommendation of a physician.

### **Qualified Evaluators**

The following are qualified evaluators for specialized evaluations:

1. Medical eye exam: optometrist or ophthalmologist
2. Functional vision assessment: teacher of the visually impaired, orientation and mobility specialist, or low vision specialist
3. Audiological evaluation: audiologist
4. Functional auditory observation: teacher of the deaf or hard-of-hearing, speech and language pathologist, or audiologist

### **Unique Philosophical, Curricular, or Instructional Considerations**

1. All students with visual impairments, including students with dual-sensory impairment, are registered for services from the Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Impaired. Additionally, information regarding all students who are dual-sensory impaired shall be submitted to the state's registry of students with dual-sensory impairments.
2. In accordance with 34 CFR §300.324, students will be provided with instruction in braille unless otherwise determined by the IEP team. This determination is based upon the student's present reading and writing skills, functional vision assessment, and learning media assessment, as well as documentation indicating the need for instruction or use of braille in the future.

3. Orientation and mobility is a related service provided to blind or visually impaired students if determined necessary by the IEP team that enables those students to attain systematic orientation to and safe movement within their environments in school, home, and community. Orientation and mobility instruction encompasses skill and conceptual awareness that includes, but is not limited to: spatial awareness, use of sensory information to maintain orientation, the use of mobility devices (i.e., long cane, distance low vision aids, assistive technology), and other skills and techniques used to travel safely and efficiently across a variety of settings.
4. **Rule 6A-6.03028(3)(g), F.A.C., requires the use of the Model Communication Plan adopted by the State Board of Education during the development of the IEP for students who are deaf, hard of hearing or dual sensory impaired. Use of this plan will ensure that IEP teams are considering the instructional needs of these students in a more comprehensive manner.** School districts shall consider the communication and language needs of students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, including opportunities for direct communication with peers and professional personnel in the student's language and communication mode, academic level, and full range of needs, including opportunities for direct instruction in the student's language and communication mode in accordance with 34 CFR §300.324.
5. Students shall have access to instruction using the method of communication most readily understood by the student. Each student who is deaf or hard-of-hearing shall have the opportunity to develop expressive and receptive language skills using any or all of the following:
  - a. Residual hearing
  - b. Speech reading
  - c. Manual communication systems
  - d. Speech
  - e. Appropriate amplification
6. Routine checking of hearing aids worn in school by students with hearing loss and the external components of surgically implanted medical devices (i.e., cochlear implants) is required to ensure that these devices are functioning properly.
7. Assistive technology and related services do not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, or the replacement of such device. Although cochlear implants are not considered assistive technology, children with cochlear implants maintain the right to receive related services that are determined by the IEP team to be necessary for the student. School districts are responsible for providing appropriate services for the students. However, appropriate services do not include maintaining, optimizing (i.e., mapping), or replacing cochlear implants.
8. Interpreting services include the following, when used with respect to children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing: oral transliteration services; cued language transliteration services; sign language transliteration and interpreting services; transcription services, such as CART, C-Print, and TypeWell; and special interpreting services for children who are deaf-blind.
9. Each learning environment shall have appropriate acoustic treatment, lighting, and auditory amplification equipment to meet the individual needs of each student. Auditory equipment shall be made available through the school district (e.g., personal or Soundfield FM systems, infrared systems, induction loop systems, and other assistive listening devices). Auditory equipment will be calibrated annually, maintained, and considered for replacement on a five (5)-year cycle. Visual alarm devices shall be provided in all areas where students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing may be separated from persons with normal hearing, such as group bathrooms, corridors, specific areas designated for the deaf, etc., in accordance with Rule 6A-2.0010, F.A.C.
10. The school district will provide information describing the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind and all other programs and methods of instruction available to the parent of a student with sensory impairments. This information will be provided annually. Additionally, in accordance with Rule 6A-6.03014, F.A.C., cooperative planning with the Division of Blind Services (DBS) may occur for students eligible for DBS services, with parent participation and agreement.

**The school district has the option to include additional information regarding evaluations, qualified evaluators, or unique philosophical, curricular, or instructional considerations for students with dual-sensory impairment.**

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The school district has provided additional information for this section in **Appendix B** of this document.
- There is no additional information for this section.

## **Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities**

### **Section B.5: Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disabilities**

#### **Statutory and Regulatory Citations**

34 CFR §300.8

Sections 1003.01 and 1003.57, F.S.

Rule 6A-6.03016, F.A.C.

#### **Definition**

A student with an emotional or behavioral disability (EBD) has persistent (is not sufficiently responsive to implemented evidence-based interventions) and consistent emotional or behavioral responses that adversely affect performance in the educational environment that cannot be attributed to age, culture, gender, or ethnicity.

#### **Evidence-based Interventions in General Education**

Prior to an evaluation, the district must meet the general education requirements in Rule 6A-6.0331(1), F.A.C., including the responsibility to implement evidence-based interventions for students requiring additional academic and emotional or behavioral support in the general education environment. General education activities and interventions conducted prior to an evaluation in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331(1) F.A.C., may be used to satisfy the requirements of Rule 6A-6.03016.

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

A student is eligible for specially designed instruction and related services as a student with emotional or behavioral disabilities if the following criteria are met:

1. A student with an emotional or behavioral disability demonstrates an inability to maintain adequate performance in the educational environment that cannot be explained by physical, sensory, socio-cultural, developmental, medical, or health (with the exception of mental health) factors; and one or more of the following characteristics:
  - a. Internal factors characterized by:
    - Feelings of sadness, or frequent crying, or restlessness, or loss of interest in friends or school work, or mood swings, or erratic behavior; or
    - The presence of symptoms such as fears, phobias, or excessive worrying and anxiety regarding personal or school problems; or
    - Behaviors that result from thoughts and feelings that are inconsistent with actual events or circumstances, or difficulty maintaining normal thought processes, or excessive levels of withdrawal from persons or events; or
  - b. External factors characterized by:
    - An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers, teachers, and other adults in the school setting; or
    - Behaviors that are chronic and disruptive such as noncompliance, verbal or physical aggression, or poorly developed social skills that are manifestations of feelings, symptoms, or behaviors as specified in section 1.a) above.
2. The characteristics described above are present for a minimum of six months duration and in two or more settings, including but not limited to, school, educational environment, transition to or from school, or home and community settings. At least one setting must include school.
3. The student demonstrates a need for special education.
4. In extraordinary circumstances, the general education requirements in Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C., and the criteria for eligibility relating to duration and setting described in 2. Above may be waived when immediate intervention is required to address an acute onset of an internal characteristic listed above in 1. a) of the Eligibility Criteria section.

5. The characteristics described below are not indicative of a student with an emotional or behavioral disability:
- Normal, temporary (less than six (6) months) reactions to life event(s) or crisis, or
  - Emotional or behavioral difficulties that improve significantly from the presence of evidence-based implemented interventions, or
  - Social maladjustment unless also found to meet the criteria for an emotional or behavioral disability

### **Student Evaluation**

In addition to the provisions in Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C., regarding general education intervention procedures, the minimum student evaluation shall include **all** of the following:

- A functional behavioral assessment (FBA) must be conducted. The FBA must identify the specific behavior(s) of concern, conditions under which the behavior is most and least likely to occur, and function or purpose of the behavior. A review and, if necessary, a revision of an FBA completed as part of general education interventions may meet this requirement if it meets the conditions described in this section. If an FBA was not completed to assist in the development of general education interventions, one must be completed and a well-delivered scientific, research-based behavioral intervention plan of reasonable intensity and duration must be implemented with fidelity prior to determining eligibility.
- The evaluation must include documentation of the student's response to general education interventions implemented to target the function of the behavior as identified in the FBA.
- A social developmental history compiled from a structured interview with the parent or guardian that addresses developmental, familial, medical, health, and environmental factors impacting learning and behavior, and which identifies the relationship between social developmental and socio-cultural factors, and the presence or nonpresence of emotional or behavioral responses beyond the school environment.
- A psychological evaluation conducted in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C. The psychological evaluation should include assessment procedures necessary to identify the factors contributing to the development of an emotional or behavioral disability, which include behavioral observations and interview data relative to the referral concerns, and assessment of emotional and behavioral functioning, and may also include information on developmental functioning and skills. The psychological evaluation shall include a review of general education interventions that have already been implemented and the criteria used to evaluate their success.
- A review of educational data that includes information on the student's academic levels of performance, and the relationship between the student's academic performance and the emotional or behavioral disability; additional academic evaluation may be completed if needed.
- A medical evaluation must be conducted when it is determined by the administrator of the exceptional student program or the designee that the emotional or behavioral responses may be precipitated by a physical problem.

### **Unique Philosophical, Curricular, or Instructional Considerations**

- When making a distinction between students with internalized or externalized characteristics, the IEP team will consider these presenting manifestations as they determine the needs of the students when recommending: goals and short-term objectives or benchmarks, if appropriate; specially designed instruction and related services; and the location of such services.
- Services for students with EBD provide an integrated curriculum of academic, affective, and behavioral interventions. These services are designed to support the improvement of academic and social functioning through academic (e.g., differentiated instruction, mastery learning), affective (e.g., individual or group counseling, parent education and support), and behavioral (e.g., behavior support; consultation from mental health, medical, or other professionals) interventions. Student improvement is measured through continuous progress monitoring of responses to intervention. A critical component of effective EBD services is parent involvement and on-going communication about implementation and outcomes of interventions.

**The school district has the option to include additional information regarding evaluations, qualified evaluators, or unique philosophical, curricular, or instructional considerations for students with emotional or behavioral disabilities.**

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The school district has provided additional information for this section in **Appendix B** of this document.
- There is no additional information for this section.

## Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities

### Section B.6: Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Infants or Toddlers Birth through Two (2) Years Old who have Established Conditions

This section is not applicable for the district.

#### Statutory and Regulatory Citations

34 CFR §§303.21 and 303.300

Sections 1003.01, 1003.21, and 1003.57, F.S.

Rules 6A-6.03030 and 6A-6.0331, F.A.C.

#### Definition

An infant or toddler with an established condition is defined as a child from birth through two (2) years of age with a diagnosed physical or mental condition known to have a high probability of resulting in developmental delay. Such conditions shall include genetic and metabolic disorders, neurological disorders, a severe attachment disorder, an autism spectrum disorder, a sensory impairment (vision or hearing), or the infant's birth weight was less than 1,200 grams.

#### Eligibility Criteria

An infant or toddler is eligible for exceptional student education when a team of qualified professionals and the parent or guardian in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331(6), F.A.C., determine that **all** the following criteria are met:

1. The infant or toddler is below the age of thirty-six (36) months;
2. The requirements of Rule 6A-6.0331(2), F.A.C., have been met;
3. There is written evidence that the Department of Health, Children's Medical Services, Part C Local Early Steps has determined that the infant or toddler has an established condition as defined in section (1) of rule 6A-6.03030, F.A.C.; and,
4. The infant or toddler needs early intervention services as defined in Rule 6A-6.03411(1)(i), F.A.C.

#### Continued Eligibility

Continued eligibility for exceptional student education programs will be determined before the child's third birthday.

#### Unique Philosophical, Curricular, or Instructional Considerations

The individualized family support plan (IFSP) shall be developed with the Local Early Steps, the family, and other providers of service to the child and family, and shall include services to provide the parent, guardian, or primary caregiver the opportunity to acquire specific skills and knowledge that will enable them to enhance the child's cognitive, physical, social, communication, and adaptive behavior. In the provision of an appropriate educational program for eligible children with disabilities ages birth through two (2) years, home instruction may include direct instruction of the parent, guardian, or primary caregiver.

**The school district has the option to include additional information regarding evaluations, qualified evaluators, or unique philosophical, curricular, or instructional considerations for children birth through two (2) years old with established conditions.**

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The school district has provided additional information for this section in **Appendix B** of this document.
- There is no additional information for this section.



## Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities

### Section B.7: Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students who are Homebound or Hospitalized

- This section is not applicable for the district.

#### **Statutory and Regulatory Citations**

34 CFR §300.115

Sections 1003.01 and 1003.57, F.S.

Rule 6A-6.03020, F.A.C.

#### **Definitions**

1. A homebound or hospitalized student is a student who has a medically diagnosed physical or psychiatric condition that is acute or catastrophic in nature, or a chronic illness or a repeated intermittent illness due to a persisting medical problem, which confines the student to home or hospital and restricts activities for an extended period of time. The medical diagnosis shall be made by a licensed physician.
2. Licensed physician is defined in Chapters 458 and 459, F.S., as one who is qualified to assess the student's physical or psychiatric condition.

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

A student is eligible for specially designed instruction and related services as a student who is homebound or hospitalized if the following criteria are met:

1. A licensed physician must certify:
  - a. That the student is expected to be absent from school due to a physical or psychiatric condition for at least fifteen (15) consecutive school days (or the equivalent on a block schedule), or due to a chronic condition for at least fifteen (15) school days (or the equivalent on a block schedule), which need not run consecutively;
  - b. That the student is confined to home or hospital; and
  - c. That the student will be able to participate in and benefit from an instructional program.
2. The student is under medical care for illness or injury that is acute, catastrophic, or chronic in nature.
3. The student can receive instructional **services** without endangering the health and safety of the instructor or other students with whom the instructor may come in contact.
4. The student is in kindergarten through twelfth grade and is enrolled in a public school prior to the referral for homebound or hospitalized services, unless the student meets criteria for eligibility under Rules 6A-6.03011, 6A-6.03012, 6A-6.03013, 6A-6.03014, 6A-6.03015, 6A-6.030151, 6A-6.030152, 6A-6.030153, 6A-6.03016, 6A-6.03018, 6A-6.03022, 6A-6.03023, and 6A-6.03027, F.A.C.
5. A parent, guardian, or primary caregiver signs parental agreement concerning homebound or hospitalized policies and parental cooperation.
6. The student demonstrates a need for special education.

#### **Student Evaluation**

The minimum evaluation for determining eligibility shall include:

1. An annual medical statement from a Florida physician(s) (i.e., licensed in accordance with Chapter 458 and 459, F.S.) that includes a description of the disabling condition or diagnosis with any medical implications for instruction. This report must state that the student is unable to attend school, describe the plan of treatment, provide recommendations regarding school re-entry, and give an estimated duration of condition or prognosis. The team determining eligibility may

require additional evaluation data. This additional evaluation data must be provided at no cost to the parent.

2. A physical reexamination and a medical report by a licensed physician(s) may be requested by the administrator of exceptional student education or the administrator's designee on a more frequent basis than required in this rule, and may be required if the student is scheduled to attend school part of a day during a recuperative period of readjustment to a full school schedule. This physical examination and medical report shall be at no cost to the parent.

### **Procedures for Providing an Individual Educational Plan (IEP)**

1. The IEP shall be developed or revised prior to assignment to the homebound or hospitalized program placement.
2. A student may be alternatively assigned to the homebound or hospitalized program and to a school-based program due to an acute, chronic or intermittent condition as certified by a licensed physician.
3. This decision shall be made by the IEP team in accordance with the requirements of Rule 6A-6.03028, F.A.C.

### **Instructional Services**

The following settings and instructional modes, or a combination thereof, are appropriate methods for providing instruction to students determined eligible for these services:

1. Instruction in a home. The parent, guardian or primary caregiver shall provide a quiet, clean, well-ventilated setting where the teacher and student will work; ensure that a responsible adult is present; and establish a schedule for student study between teacher visits that takes into account the student's medical condition and the requirements of the student's coursework.
2. Instruction in a hospital. The hospital administrator or designee shall provide appropriate space for the teacher and student to work and allow for the establishment of a schedule for student study between teacher visits.
3. Instruction through telecommunications or computer devices. When the IEP team determines that instruction is by telecommunications or computer devices, an open, uninterrupted telecommunication link shall be provided, at no additional cost to the parent, during the instructional period. The parent shall ensure that the student is prepared to actively participate in learning.

**The school district has the option to include additional information regarding evaluations, qualified evaluators, or unique philosophical, curricular, or instructional considerations for students who are hospitalized or homebound.**

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The school district has provided additional information for this section in **Appendix B** of this document.
- There is no additional information for this section.

## **Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities**

### **Section B.8: Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students with Intellectual Disabilities**

#### **Statutory and Regulatory Citations**

34 CFR §300.8

Sections 1003.01 and 1003.57, F.S.

Rule 6A-6.03011, F.A.C.

#### **Definition**

An intellectual disability is defined as significantly below average general intellectual and adaptive functioning manifested during the developmental period, with significant delays in academic skills. Developmental period refers to birth to eighteen (18) years of age.

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

A student is eligible for specially designed instruction and related services as a student with an intellectual disability if the following criteria are met:

1. The measured level of intellectual functioning is more than two (2) standard deviations below the mean on an individually measured, standardized test of intellectual functioning.
2. The level of adaptive functioning is more than two (2) standard deviations below the mean on the adaptive behavior composite or on two out of three (3) domains on a standardized test of adaptive behavior. The adaptive behavior measure shall include parental or guardian input.
3. The level of academic or pre-academic performance on a standardized test is consistent with the performance expected of a student of comparable intellectual functioning.
4. The social developmental history identifies the developmental, familial, medical, health, and environmental factors impacting student functioning and documents the student's functional skills outside of the school environment.
5. The student demonstrates a need for special education.

#### **Student Evaluation**

1. In addition to the procedures identified in Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C., the minimum evaluation for determining eligibility shall include all of the following:
  - a. A standardized individual test of intellectual functioning individually administered by a professional person qualified in accordance with Rule 6A-4.0311, F.A.C., or licensed under Chapter 490, F.S.
  - b. A standardized assessment of adaptive behavior to include parental or guardian input.
  - c. An individually administered standardized test of academic or pre-academic achievement. A standardized developmental scale shall be used when a student's level of functioning cannot be measured by an academic or pre-academic test.
  - d. A social developmental history that has been compiled directly from the parent, guardian, or primary caregiver.
2. Eligibility is determined by a group of qualified professionals and the parent or guardian in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C. The documentation of the determination of eligibility must include a written summary of the group's analysis of the data that incorporates the following information:
  - a. The basis for making the determination, including an assurance that the determination has been made in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C.
  - b. Noted behavior during the observation of the student and the relationship of that behavior to the student's academic and intellectual functioning.

- c. The educationally relevant medical findings, if any.
- d. The determination of the group concerning the effects on the student's achievement level of a visual, hearing, motor, or emotional or behavioral disability; cultural factors; environmental or economic factors; an irregular pattern of attendance or high mobility rate; classroom behavior; or limited English proficiency.
- e. The signature of each group member certifying that the documentation of determination of eligibility reflects the member's conclusion. If it does not reflect the member's conclusion, the group member must submit a separate statement presenting the member's conclusion.

**The school district has the option to include additional information regarding evaluations, qualified evaluators, or unique philosophical, curricular, or instructional considerations for students with intellectual disabilities.**

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The school district has provided additional information for this section in **Appendix B** of this document.
- There is no additional information for this section.

## **Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities**

### **Section B.9: Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students with Orthopedic Impairment**

#### **Statutory and Regulatory Citations**

34 CFR §300.8

Sections 1003.01 and 1003.57, F.S.

Rule 6A-6.030151, F.A.C.

#### **Definition**

Orthopedic impairment means a severe skeletal, muscular, or neuromuscular impairment. The term includes impairments resulting from congenital anomalies (e.g., including, but not limited to, skeletal deformity or spina bifida) and impairments resulting from other causes (e.g., including, but not limited to, cerebral palsy or amputations).

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

A student is eligible for specially designed instruction and related services as a student with an orthopedic impairment if the following criteria are met:

1. There is evidence of an orthopedic impairment that adversely affects the student's performance in the educational environment in any of the following: ambulation, hand movement, coordination, or daily living skills.
2. The student demonstrates a need for special education.

#### **Student Evaluation**

In addition to the provisions in Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C., regarding general education intervention procedures, the minimum student evaluation shall include all of the following:

1. A report of a medical examination, within the previous twelve (12)-month period, from a physician(s) licensed in Florida in accordance with Chapter 458 or 459, F.S., unless a report of medical examination from a physician licensed in another state is determined by the district to be permitted in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331(3)(c), F.A.C. The physician's report must provide a description of the impairment and any medical implications for instruction
2. An educational evaluation that identifies educational and environmental needs of the student.

**The school district has the option to include additional information regarding evaluations, qualified evaluators, or unique philosophical, curricular, or instructional considerations for students with an orthopedic impairment.**

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The school district has provided additional information for this section in **Appendix B** of this document.
- There is no additional information for this section.

## **Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities**

### **Section B.10: Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students with Other Health Impairment**

#### **Statutory and Regulatory Citations**

34 CFR §300.8

Sections 1003.01 and 1003.57, F.S.

Rule 6A-6.030152, F.A.C.

#### **Definition**

Other health impairment means having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that is due to chronic or acute health problems. This includes, but is not limited to, asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, Tourette syndrome, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and acquired brain injury.

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

A student is eligible for specially designed instruction and related services as a student with an other health impairment if the following criteria are met:

1. There is evidence of a health impairment that results in reduced efficiency in schoolwork and adversely affects the student's performance in the educational environment.
2. The student demonstrates a need for special education.

#### **Student Evaluation**

In addition to the provisions in Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C., regarding general education intervention procedures, the minimum student evaluations shall include all of the following:

- a. A report of a medical examination, within the previous twelve (12)-month period, from a physician(s) licensed in Florida in accordance with Chapter 458 or 459, F.S., unless a report of medical examination from a physician licensed in another state is determined by the district to be permitted in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331(3)(c), F.A.C. The physician's report must provide a description of the impairment and any medical implications for instruction
- b. An educational evaluation that identifies educational and environmental needs of the student.

**The school district has the option to include additional information regarding evaluations, qualified evaluators, or unique philosophical, curricular, or instructional considerations for students with other health impairment.**

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The school district has provided additional information for this section in **Appendix B** of this document.
- There is no additional information for this section.

## Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities

### Section B.11: Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students with Traumatic Brain Injury

#### Statutory and Regulatory Citations

34 CFR §300.8

Sections 1003.01 and 1003.57, F.S.

Rule 6A-6.030153, F.A.C.

#### Definition

A traumatic brain injury means an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects educational performance. The term applies to mild, moderate, or severe open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem solving; sensory, perceptual and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; or speech. The term includes anoxia due to trauma. The term does not include brain injuries that are congenital, degenerative, or induced by birth trauma.

#### Eligibility Criteria

A student is eligible for specially designed instruction and related services as a student with a traumatic brain injury if the following criteria are met:

1. There is evidence of a traumatic brain injury that impacts one or more of the areas identified in the definition.
2. The student demonstrates a need for special education.

#### Student Evaluation

1. In addition to the provisions in Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C., regarding general education intervention procedures, the minimum student evaluations shall include all of the following:
  - a. A report of a medical examination, within the previous twelve (12)-month period, from a physician(s) licensed in Florida in accordance with Chapter 458 or 459, F.S., unless a report of medical examination from a physician licensed in another state is determined by the district to be permitted in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331(3)(c), F.A.C. The physician's report must provide a description of the traumatic brain injury and any medical implications for instruction
  - b. Documented evidence by more than one person, including the parent, guardian, or primary caregiver, in more than one situation. The documentation shall include evidence of a marked contrast of pre- and post-injury capabilities in one or more of the following areas: cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing or speech
  - c. An educational evaluation that identifies educational and environmental needs of the student.
2. The evaluation may also include a neuropsychological evaluation when requested by the exceptional student education administrator or designee.

**The school district has the option to include additional information regarding evaluations, qualified evaluators, or unique philosophical, curricular, or instructional considerations for students with traumatic brain injury.**

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The school district has provided additional information for this section in **Appendix B** of this document.
- There is no additional information for this section.

## Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities

### Section B.12: Exceptional Education Eligibility for Students with Specific Learning Disabilities

#### Statutory and Regulatory Citations

34 CFR §300.8

Section 1003.57, F.S.

Rule 6A-6.03018, F.A.C.

#### Definition

A specific learning disability is defined as a disorder in one or more of the basic learning processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest in significant difficulties affecting the ability to listen, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematics. Associated conditions may include, but are not limited to, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, or developmental aphasia. A specific learning disability does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of a visual, hearing, motor, intellectual, or emotional or behavioral disability, limited English proficiency, or environmental, cultural, or economic factors.

#### Eligibility Criteria

A student is eligible for specially designed instruction and related services as a student with a specific learning disability if all of the following criteria are met:

1. Evidence of specific learning disability

The student's parent(s) or guardian(s) and group of qualified personnel may determine that a student has a specific learning disability if there is evidence of each of the following:

- a. When provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the student's chronological age or grade-level standards, in accordance with Rule 6A-1.09401, F.A.C., the student does not achieve adequately for the student's chronological age or does not meet grade-level standards as adopted in Rule 6A-1.09401, F.A.C., in **one or more** of the following areas based on the review of multiple sources that may include group or individual criterion or norm-referenced measures, including individual diagnostic procedures:
- Oral expression
  - Listening comprehension
  - Written expression
  - Basic reading skills
  - Reading fluency skills
  - Reading comprehension
  - Mathematics calculation
  - Mathematics problem solving

The school district has the **option** of requiring that an individually-administered, standardized test of achievement be administered by a qualified evaluator in accordance with Rule 6A-6.03018(4)(b)2., F.A.C., as one of the evaluation procedures used to address the requirements of Rule 6A-6.03018(4)(a)1., F.A.C.

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The district **requires** that an individually administered, standardized test of achievement (that addresses the relevant areas of concern as identified by the team) be given by a qualified evaluator after obtaining parental consent for an evaluation.
- The district **does not require** that an individually administered, standardized test of achievement be given by a qualified evaluator after obtaining parental consent for an evaluation. The team responsible for the evaluation may determine the need for an individually administered, standardized test of achievement on an individual



**student basis.**

- b. The student does not make adequate progress to meet chronological age or grade-level standards adopted in Rule 6A-1.09401, F.A.C., in one or more of the areas identified in section 1.a) (above) as determined through:
    - A process based on the student's response to scientific, research-based intervention, consistent with the comprehensive evaluation procedures in Rule 6A-6.0331 F.A.C.
  - c. The group determines that its findings under paragraph a) of this subsection are not primarily the result of one or more of the following:
    - A visual, hearing, or motor disability
    - Intellectual disability
    - Emotional or behavioral disability
    - Cultural factors
    - Irregular pattern of attendance or high mobility rate
    - Classroom behavior
    - Environmental or economic factors
    - Limited English proficiency
2. The student demonstrates a need for special education.

**Student Evaluation**

The evaluation procedures shall include the following:

1. The school district must promptly request parental or guardian consent to conduct an evaluation to determine if the student needs specially designed instruction in the following circumstances:
  - a. The student does not make adequate progress when:
    - Prior to a referral, the student has not made adequate progress after an appropriate period of time when provided appropriate instruction and intense, individualized interventions; or
    - Prior to referral, intensive interventions are demonstrated to be effective but require sustained and substantial effort that may include the provision of specially designed instruction and related services;

and
  - b. Whenever a referral is made to conduct an evaluation to determine the student's need for specially designed instruction and the existence of a disability.
2. Observation requirement
 

In determining whether a student needs specially designed instruction and has a specific learning disability, and in order to document the relationship between the student's classroom behavior and academic performance, the group must do the following:

  - a. Use information from an observation in routine classroom instruction and monitoring of the student's performance that was completed before referral for an evaluation; or
  - b. Have at least one member of the group conduct an observation of the student's performance in the student's typical learning environment, or in an environment appropriate for a student of that chronological age, after referral for an evaluation and parental or guardian consent has been obtained.
3. In addition to the procedures identified in Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C., the evaluation must also include the district's procedures as specified in the SP&P as required by Rule 6A-6.03411, F.A.C. The evaluation must adhere to the timeframe required by Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C., unless extended by mutual written agreement of the student's parent(s)

or guardian(s) and a group of qualified professionals.

## **Procedures**

### 1. General education intervention procedures and activities

a. In order to ensure that lack of academic progress is not due to lack of appropriate instruction, a group of qualified personnel must consider the following:

- Data that demonstrate that the student was provided well-delivered scientific, research-based instruction and interventions addressing the identified area(s) of concern and delivered by qualified personnel in general education settings; and
- Data-based documentation, which was provided to the student's parent(s) or guardian(s), of repeated measures of achievement at reasonable intervals, graphically reflecting the student's response to intervention during instruction.

b. General education activities and interventions conducted prior to referral in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331(1), F.A.C., may be used to satisfy the requirements of this rule.

### 2. Members of the group determining eligibility

The determination of whether a student suspected of having a specific learning disability is a student who demonstrates a need for specially designed instruction and related services and meets the eligibility criteria must be made by the student's parents or guardians and a group of qualified professionals, which must include, but is not limited to, all of the following:

- a. The student's general education teacher; if the student does not have a general education teacher, a general education teacher qualified to teach a student of his or her chronological age;
- b. At least one person qualified to conduct and interpret individual diagnostic examinations of students, including, but not limited to, a school psychologist, speech-language pathologist, or reading specialist; and
- c. The district administrator of exceptional student education or designee.

### 3. Documentation of determination of eligibility

For a student suspected of having a specific learning disability, the documentation of the determination of eligibility must include a written summary of the group's analysis of the data that incorporates the following information:

- a. The basis for making the determination, including an assurance that the determination has been made in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C.
- b. Noted behavior during the observation of the student and the relationship of that behavior to the student's academic functioning
- c. The educationally relevant medical findings, if any
- d. Whether the student has a specific learning disability as evidenced by response to intervention data confirming each of the following:
  - Performance discrepancy  
The student's academic performance is significantly discrepant for the chronological age or grade level in which the student is enrolled, based on multiple sources of data when compared to multiple groups, which include the peer subgroup, classroom, school, district, and state level comparison groups
  - Rate of progress  
When provided with well-delivered scientific, research-based general education instruction and interventions of reasonable intensity and duration with evidence of implementation fidelity, the student's rate of progress is insufficient or requires sustained and substantial effort to close the achievement gap with typical peers or academic expectations for the chronological age or grade level in which the student is currently enrolled; and

- Educational need

The student continues to need interventions that significantly differ in intensity and duration from what can be provided solely through general education resources to make or maintain sufficient progress.

- e. The determination of the group concerning the effects on the student's achievement level of a visual, hearing, motor, intellectual, or emotional or behavioral disability; cultural factors; environmental or economic factors; an irregular pattern of attendance or high mobility rate; classroom behavior; or limited English proficiency
- f. Documentation based on data derived from a process that assesses the student's response to well-delivered scientific, research-based instruction and interventions, including the following:
  - Documentation of the specific instructional interventions used, the support provided to the individual(s) implementing interventions, adherence to the critical elements of the intervention design and delivery methods, the duration and frequency of intervention implementation (e.g., number of weeks, minutes per week, sessions per week), and the student-centered data collected
  - Documentation that the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) were notified about the state's policies regarding the amount and nature of student performance data that would be collected and the general education services that would be provided; interventions for increasing the student's rate of progress; and the parental or guardian right to request an evaluation
- g. The signature of each group member certifying that the documentation of determination of eligibility reflects the member's conclusion; if it does not reflect the member's conclusion, the group member must submit a separate statement presenting the member's conclusions

Describe how the district documents a student's response to intervention data to determine eligibility as a student with a specific learning disability, including the progress-monitoring tools used to measure the student's response to intervention and how the team determines the adequacy of the student's response to intervention.

Documentation of student's response to intervention data to determine eligibility as a student with a specific learning disability is captured on the student's individual intervention plan (Problem-Solving worksheet). Progress monitoring tools used are AIMSweb and DIBELS Next probes to measure student's response to intervention. Teams determine response to intervention by analyzing the data to determine if whether gaps between the student's performance and expected levels of performance is closing at a rate that will allow the mastery of grade-level standards consistent with their grade level.

Describe how parents are engaged as team members in the problem-solving process (include the frequency and graphic format for sharing student progress data with parents).

Parents are invited to participate and the data is shared graphically as well as fully explained by the team. Parent input is encouraged and sought throughout all stages of the intervention process. Data is shared visually through AIMSweb or EXCEL graphs and is provided at least at every review meeting. Frequency is determined by the student's response to intervention and ranges between 8-12 weeks.

Describe the types of data used to make comparisons to other students and how teams determine the findings are not primarily due to the exclusionary factors outlined in Rule 6A-6.03018, F.A.C., lack of instruction in reading or math or limited English proficiency.

Data comparisons are made at the state, district, and school levels and is documented on the Specific Learning Disability/Language Impaired (SLD/LI) Team Summary form. Teams determine the findings are not primarily due to exclusionary factors based on data collected during evaluation (interviews, demographic data, assessment data, and observations).

**The school district has the option to include additional information regarding evaluations, qualified evaluators, or unique philosophical, curricular, or instructional considerations for students with specific learning disabilities.**

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The school district has provided additional information for this section in **Appendix B** of this document.
- There is no additional information for this section.

## **Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities**

### **Section B.13: Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students with Speech Impairments**

#### **Statutory and Regulatory Citations**

34 CFR §§300.8, 300.34, and 300.306  
Sections 1003.01 and 1003.57, F.S.  
Rule 6A-6.03012, F.A.C.

#### **Definitions**

1. Speech impairments are disorders of speech sounds, fluency, or voice that interfere with communication, adversely affect performance or functioning in the educational environment, and result in the need for exceptional student education.
  - a. Speech sound disorder. A speech sound disorder is a phonological or articulation disorder that is evidenced by the atypical production of speech sounds characterized by substitutions, distortions, additions, or omissions that interfere with intelligibility. A speech sound disorder is not primarily the result of factors related to chronological age, gender, culture, ethnicity, or limited English proficiency.
    - Phonological disorder. A phonological disorder is an impairment in the system of phonemes and phoneme patterns within the context of spoken language.
    - Articulation disorder. An articulation disorder is characterized by difficulty in the articulation of speech sounds that may be due to a motoric or structural problem.
  - b. Fluency disorder. A fluency disorder is characterized by deviations in continuity, smoothness, rhythm, or effort in spoken communication. It may be accompanied by excessive tension and secondary behaviors, such as struggle and avoidance. A fluency disorder is not primarily the result of factors related to chronological age, gender, culture, ethnicity, or limited English proficiency.
  - c. Voice disorder. A voice disorder is characterized by the atypical production or absence of vocal quality, pitch, loudness, resonance, or duration of phonation that is not primarily the result of factors related to chronological age, gender, culture, ethnicity, or limited English proficiency.

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

A student is eligible for specially designed instruction and related services as a student with a speech impairment if the student meets the following criteria for one or more of the following disorders as determined by the procedures prescribed in this rule and subsection 6A-6.0331(6), F.A.C.

##### **1. Speech sound disorder**

A student with a speech sound disorder is eligible for exceptional student education if there is evidence, based on evaluation results, of a significant phonological or articulation disorder that is characterized by the atypical production of speech sound(s). The atypical production of speech sound(s) may be characterized by substitutions, distortions, additions, or omissions. Evaluation results must reveal all of the following:

- a. The speech sound disorder must have a significant impact on the student's intelligibility, although the student may be intelligible to familiar listeners or within known contexts
- b. The student's phonetic or phonological inventory must be significantly below that expected for his or her chronological age or developmental level based on normative data
- c. The speech sound disorder must have an adverse effect on the student's ability to perform or function in the student's typical learning environment, thereby demonstrating the need for exceptional student education
- d. The speech sound disorder is not primarily the result of factors related to chronological age, gender, culture, ethnicity, or limited English proficiency

## 2. Fluency disorder

A student with a fluency disorder is eligible for exceptional student education if there is evidence, based on evaluation results, of significant and persistent interruptions in the rhythm or rate of speech. Evaluation results must reveal all of the following:

- a. The student must exhibit significant and persistent dysfluent speech behaviors. The dysfluency may include repetition of phrases, whole words, syllables, and phonemes; prolongations; blocks; and circumlocutions. Additionally, secondary behaviors, such as struggle and avoidance, may be present.
- b. The fluency disorder must have an adverse effect on the student's ability to perform or function in the educational environment, thereby demonstrating the need for exceptional student education.
- c. The dysfluency is not primarily the result of factors related to chronological age, gender, culture, ethnicity, or limited English proficiency.

## 3. Voice disorder

A student with a voice disorder is eligible for exceptional student education if there is evidence, based on evaluation results, of significant and persistent atypical voice characteristics. Evaluation results must reveal all of the following:

- a. The student must exhibit significant and persistent atypical production of quality, pitch, loudness, resonance, or duration of phonation. The atypical voice characteristics may include inappropriate range, inflection, loudness, excessive nasality, breathiness, hoarseness, or harshness.
- b. The voice disorder does not refer to vocal disorders that are found to be the direct result or symptom of a medical condition unless the disorder adversely affects the student's ability to perform or function in the educational environment and is amenable to improvement with therapeutic intervention.
- c. The voice disorder must have an adverse effect on the student's ability to perform or function in the educational environment, thereby demonstrating the need for exceptional student education.
- d. The atypical voice characteristics are not primarily the result of factors related to chronological age, gender, culture, ethnicity, or limited English proficiency.

## 4. The student demonstrates a need for special education.

### **Student Evaluation**

The provisions in Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C., regarding general education intervention procedures must be implemented.

#### 1. For a speech sound disorder, the evaluation must include all of the following:

- a. Information gathered from the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) and teacher(s), and, when appropriate, the student, regarding the concerns and description of speech characteristics. This may be completed through a variety of methods, including interviews, checklists, or questionnaires.
- b. Documented and dated observation(s) of the student's speech characteristics conducted by a speech-language pathologist to examine the student's speech characteristics during connected speech or conversation. Observation(s) conducted prior to obtaining consent for evaluation may be used to meet this criterion.
- c. An examination of the oral mechanism structure and function.
- d. One or more standardized, norm-referenced instruments designed to measure speech sound production administered to determine the type and severity of the speech sound errors and whether the errors are articulation (phonetic) or phonological (phonemic) in nature.

#### 2. For a fluency disorder, the evaluation must include all of the following:

- a. Information gathered from the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) and teacher(s), and, when appropriate, the student, to address the following areas regarding the speech behaviors: motor aspects, student's attitude, social impact, and educational impact. This may be completed through a variety of methods, including interviews, checklists, or questionnaires.
- b. A minimum of two (2) documented and dated observations of the student's speech and secondary behaviors

conducted by a speech-language pathologist in more than one setting, including the typical learning environment. For prekindergarten children, the observations may occur in an environment or situation appropriate for a child of that chronological age. Observations conducted prior to obtaining consent for evaluation may be used to meet this criterion, if the activities address the areas identified in subsection d) below.

c. An examination of the oral mechanism structure and function.

d. An assessment of all of the following areas:

- Motor aspects of the speech behaviors
- Student's attitude regarding the speech behaviors
- Social impact of the speech behaviors
- Educational impact of the speech behaviors

e. A speech sample of a minimum of 300–500 words collected and analyzed to determine frequency, duration, and type of dysfluent speech behaviors. If the speech-language pathologist is unable to obtain a speech sample of a minimum of 300–500 words, a smaller sample may be collected and analyzed. The evaluation report must document the rationale for collection and analysis of a smaller sample, the results obtained, and the basis for recommendations.

3. For a voice disorder, the evaluation must include all of the following:

- a. Information gathered from the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) and teacher(s), and, when appropriate, the student, regarding the concerns and description of voice characteristics. This may be completed through a variety of methods, including interviews, checklists, or questionnaires.
- b. Documented and dated observation(s) of the student's voice characteristics conducted by a speech-language pathologist in one or more setting(s), which must include the typical learning environment. For prekindergarten children, the observation(s) may occur in an environment or situation appropriate for a child of that chronological age. Observation(s) conducted prior to obtaining consent for evaluation may be used to meet this criterion.
- c. An examination of the oral mechanism structure and function.
- d. A report of a medical examination of laryngeal structure and function conducted by a physician licensed in Florida in accordance with Section 458 or 459, F.S., unless a report of medical examination from a physician licensed in another state is permitted in accordance with paragraph 6A-6.0331(3)(c), F.A.C. The physician's report must provide a description of the state of the vocal mechanism and any medical implications for therapeutic intervention.

### **Unique Philosophical, Curricular, or Instructional Considerations**

1. Speech services

- a. A group of qualified professionals determining eligibility under requirements of this rule and subsection 6A-6.0331(6), F.A.C., must include a speech-language pathologist.
- b. A speech-language pathologist shall be involved in the development of the individual educational plan for students eligible for speech services, whether as special education or as a related service for an otherwise eligible student with a disability.
- c. Speech therapy services shall be provided by a certified speech-language pathologist pursuant to Rule 6A-4.0176, F.A.C., or a licensed speech-language pathologist pursuant to Section 468.1185, F.S., or a speech-language associate pursuant to Rule 6A-4.01761, F.A.C.

2. Speech-language associate (SLA)

- a. Speech therapy services provided by an SLA as specified in Rule 6A-4.01761, F.A.C., will be under the direction of a certified or licensed speech-language pathologist with a master's degree or higher in speech-language pathology. Services can be provided for a period of three (3) years as described in Section 1012.44, F.S., in districts that qualify for the scarcity supplement as described in Section 1011.62(7), F.S. **For more information on**

the responsibilities and duties of an SLA, go to: <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-4662/TAP2007-137.pdf>.

- b. The district shall submit a plan to the Department of Education for approval before implementation of Rule 6A-4.01761, F.A.C. The components of the plan found in Rule 6A-6.03012(7), F.A.C., will include a description of:
- The model, specifying the type and amount of direction, including direct observation, support, training, and instruction
  - The rationale for using this model
  - The manner in which the associate will be required to demonstrate competency
  - The process for monitoring the quality of services
  - The process for measuring student progress
  - The manner in which the speech-language associate will meet the requirements of the annual district professional development plan for instructional personnel

**The school district has the option to include additional information regarding evaluations, qualified evaluators, or unique philosophical, curricular, or instructional considerations for students with speech impairments.**

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The school district has provided additional information for this section in **Appendix B** of this document.
- There is no additional information for this section.



## **Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities**

### **Section B.14: Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students with Language Impairments**

#### **Statutory and Regulatory Citations**

34 CFR §§300.8, 300.34, and 300.306  
Sections 1003.01 and 1003.57, F.S.  
Rule 6A-6.030121, F.A.C.

#### **Definitions**

Language impairments are disorders of language that interfere with communication, adversely affect performance or functioning in the student's typical learning environment, and result in the need for exceptional student education. A language impairment is defined as a disorder in one or more of the basic learning processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language. These include:

1. Phonology. Phonology is defined as the sound systems of a language and the linguistic conventions of a language that guide the sound selection and sound combinations used to convey meaning.
2. Morphology. Morphology is defined as the system that governs the internal structure of words and the construction of word forms.
3. Syntax. Syntax is defined as the system governing the order and combination of words to form sentences, and the relationships among the elements within a sentence.
4. Semantics. Semantics is defined as the system that governs the meanings of words and sentences.
5. Pragmatics. Pragmatics is defined as the system that combines language components in functional and socially appropriate communication.

The language impairment may manifest in significant difficulties affecting listening comprehension, oral expression, social interaction, reading, writing, or spelling. A language impairment is not primarily the result of factors related to chronological age, gender, culture, ethnicity, or limited English proficiency.

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

1. For prekindergarten children

A prekindergarten child is eligible as a student with a language impairment in need of specially designed instruction and related services if all of the following criteria are met:

- a. There is evidence, based on evaluation results, of significant deficits in language. The impairment may manifest in significant difficulties affecting one or more of the following areas:
  - i. Listening comprehension
  - ii. Oral expression
  - iii. Social interaction
  - iv. Emergent literacy skills (e.g., vocabulary development, phonological awareness, narrative concepts)
- b. One or more documented and dated behavioral observation(s) reveals significant language deficits that interfere with performance or functioning in the typical learning environment.
- c. Results of standardized norm-referenced instrument(s) reveal a significant language deficit in one or more of the areas listed in 1.–5. of the Definitions section above, as evidenced by standard score(s) significantly below the mean. If the evaluator is unable to administer a norm-referenced instrument and an alternative scientific, research-based instrument is administered, the instrument must reveal a significant language deficit in one or more areas listed in 1.–5. of the Definitions section above. Significance of the deficit(s) must be determined and

based on specifications in the manual of the instrument(s) utilized for evaluation purposes.

- d. Information gathered from the child's parent(s) or guardian(s), teacher(s), service providers, or caregivers must support the results of the standardized instruments and observations conducted.
- e. The language impairment must have an adverse effect on the child's ability to perform or function in the typical learning environment, thereby demonstrating the need for exceptional student education.
- f. The language impairment is not primarily the result of factors related to chronological age, gender, culture, ethnicity, or limited English proficiency.

2. For students in kindergarten through grade twelve (12)

A student meets the eligibility criteria as a student with a language impairment in need of specially designed instruction and related services if all of the following criteria are met:

- a. Due to deficits in the student's language skills, the student does not perform or function adequately for the student's chronological age or to meet grade-level standards as adopted in Rule 6A-1.09401, F.A.C., in one or more of the following areas, when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the student's chronological age or grade:
  - i. Oral expression
  - ii. Listening comprehension
  - iii. Social interaction
  - iv. Written expression
  - v. Phonological processing
  - vi. Reading comprehension
- b. Due to deficits in the student's language skills, the student does not make sufficient progress to meet chronological age or State-approved grade-level standards pursuant to Rule 6A-1.09401, F.A.C., in one or more of the areas identified in the previous paragraph when using a process based on the student's response to scientific, research-based intervention.
- c. Evidence of a language impairment is documented based on a comprehensive language evaluation, including all evaluation procedures as specified for students in kindergarten through grade twelve (12), included under the **Conducting Student Evaluations and Reevaluations** section of this document. There must be documentation of all of the following:
  - i. Documented and dated observations show evidence of significant language deficits that interfere with the student's performance or functioning in the educational environment.
  - ii. Results of standardized norm-referenced instrument(s) indicate a significant language deficit in one or more of the areas listed in the defined language impairments, as evidenced by standard score(s) significantly below the mean. If the evaluator is unable to administer a norm-referenced instrument and an alternative scientific, research-based instrument is administered, the instrument must reveal a significant language deficit in one or more areas listed in the defined language impairments. Significance of the deficit(s) must be determined and based on specifications in the manual of the instrument(s) utilized for evaluation purposes.
  - iii. Information gathered from the student's parent(s) or guardian(s), teacher(s), and, when appropriate, the student, must support the results of the standardized instruments and observations conducted.
  - iv. At least one additional observation conducted by the speech-language pathologist when the language impairment is due to a deficit in pragmatic language and cannot be verified by the use of standardized instrument(s). The language impairment may be established through the results of the evaluation procedures as specified in the evaluation procedures for students in kindergarten through grade twelve (12), included under the **Conducting Student Evaluations and Reevaluations** section of this document, and the additional observation(s) conducted subsequent to obtaining consent for evaluation as part of a

comprehensive language evaluation. The evaluation report must document the evaluation procedures used, including the group's rationale for overriding results from standardized instruments, the results obtained, and the basis for recommendations. The information gathered from the student's parent(s) or guardian(s), teacher(s), and, when appropriate, the student, must support the results of the observation(s) conducted.

- d. The group determines that its findings under section 2.a) above are not primarily the result of factors related to chronological age, gender, culture, ethnicity, or limited English proficiency.

### **Documentation of Determination of Eligibility**

For a student suspected of having a language impairment, the documentation of the determination of eligibility must include a written summary of the group's analysis of the data that incorporates all of the following information:

1. The basis for making the determination, including an assurance that the determination has been made in accordance with subsection 6A-6.0331(6), F.A.C.
2. Noted behavior during the observation of the student and the relationship of that behavior to the student's academic functioning.
3. The educationally relevant medical findings, if any.
4. Whether the student has a language impairment as evidenced by response to intervention data confirming the following:
  - a. Performance or functioning discrepancies. The student displays significant discrepancies, for the chronological age or grade level in which the student is enrolled, based on multiple sources of data when compared to multiple groups, including to the extent practicable the peer subgroup, classroom, school, district, and state level comparison groups.
  - b. Rate of progress. When provided with effective implementation of appropriate research-based instruction and interventions of reasonable intensity and duration with evidence of implementation fidelity, the student's rate of progress is insufficient or requires sustained and substantial effort to close the gap with typical peers or expectations for the chronological age or grade level in which the student is currently enrolled.
  - c. Educational need. The student continues to demonstrate the need for interventions that significantly differ in intensity and duration from what can be provided solely through educational resources and services currently in place, thereby demonstrating a need for exceptional student education due to the adverse effect of the language impairment on the student's ability to perform or function in the educational environment.
5. The determination of the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) and group of qualified professionals concerning the effects of chronological age, culture, gender, ethnicity, patterns of irregular attendance, or limited English proficiency on the student's performance or functioning.
6. Documentation based on data derived from a process that assesses the student's response to well-delivered scientific, research-based instruction and interventions, including:
  - a. Documentation of the specific instructional interventions used, the intervention support provided to the individuals implementing interventions, adherence to the critical elements of the intervention design and delivery methods, the duration of intervention implementation (e.g., number of weeks, minutes per week, sessions per week), and the student-centered data collected
  - b. Documentation that the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) were notified about the state's policies regarding the amount and nature of student performance or functioning data that would be collected and the educational resources and services that would be provided; interventions for increasing the student's rate of progress; and the parental or guardian right to request an evaluation.

### **Student Evaluation**

1. Children in prekindergarten

In addition to the procedures identified in subsection 6A-6.0331(5), F.A.C., the minimum evaluation for a prekindergarten child shall include all of the following:

- a. Information gathered from the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) and others, as appropriate, such as teacher(s),

service providers, and caregivers, regarding the concerns and description of language skills. This may be completed through a variety of methods, including interviews, checklists, or questionnaires.

- b. One or more documented and dated observation(s) of the child's language skills conducted by the speech-language pathologist in one or more setting(s), which must include the child's typical learning environment or an environment or situation appropriate for a child of that chronological age.
- c. One or more standardized norm-referenced instruments designed to measure language skills. The instrument must be administered and interpreted by a speech-language pathologist to determine the nature and severity of the language deficits. If the speech-language pathologist is unable to administer a norm-referenced instrument, a scientific, research-based alternative instrument may be used. The evaluation report must document the evaluation procedures used, including the rationale for use of an alternative instrument, the results obtained, and the basis for recommendations.

## 2. Students in kindergarten through grade twelve (12)

Prior to obtaining consent for initial evaluation, the requirements of subsection 6A-6.0331(1), F.A.C., related to general education intervention procedures for kindergarten through grade twelve students must be met.

- a. The school district must promptly request parental or guardian consent to conduct an evaluation to determine if the student needs exceptional student education in the following circumstances:
  - i. Prior to obtaining consent for evaluation, the student has not made adequate progress after an appropriate period of time when provided appropriate instruction and intense, individualized interventions.
  - ii. Prior to obtaining consent for evaluation, intensive interventions are demonstrated to be effective but require sustained and substantial effort that may include the provision of exceptional student education.
  - iii. Whenever a referral is made to conduct an evaluation to determine the student's need for exceptional student education and the existence of a disability.
- b. To ensure that the decreased performance or functioning of a student suspected of having a language impairment is not due to lack of appropriate instruction, the minimum evaluation procedures must include all of the following:
  - i. Review of data that demonstrate the student was provided well-delivered scientific, research-based instruction and interventions addressing the identified area(s) of concern and delivered by qualified personnel in general or exceptional education settings.
  - ii. Data-based documentation, which was provided to the student's parent(s) or guardian(s), of repeated measures of performance or functioning at reasonable intervals, communicated in an understandable format, reflecting the student's response to intervention during instruction.
  - iii. Information gathered from the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) and teacher(s), and, when appropriate, the student, regarding the concerns and a description of language skills. This may be completed through a variety of methods including interviews, checklists, or questionnaires.
  - iv. Documented and dated observation(s) of the student's language skills conducted by the speech-language pathologist in one or more setting(s).
  - v. One or more standardized norm-referenced instrument(s) designed to measure language skills. The instrument(s) must be administered and interpreted by a speech-language pathologist to determine the nature and severity of the language deficits. If the speech-language pathologist is unable to administer a norm-referenced instrument, a scientific, research-based alternative instrument may be used. The evaluation report must document the evaluation procedures used, including the rationale for use of an alternative instrument, the results obtained, and the basis for recommendations.
- c. With the exception of the documented and dated observation(s) of the student's language skills conducted by the speech-language pathologist in one or more setting(s), general education activities and interventions conducted prior to initial evaluation in accordance with subsection 6A-6.0331(1), F.A.C., may be used to satisfy the requirements of this subsection.

### **Unique Philosophical, Curricular, or Instructional Considerations**

#### **Language services**

1. A group of qualified professionals determining eligibility under requirements of this rule and subsection 6A-6.0331(6), F.A.C., will include a speech-language pathologist.
2. A speech-language pathologist will be involved in the development of the individual educational plan for **programs for students with a language impairment**, whether as special education or as a related service for an otherwise eligible student with a disability.
3. **Students determined eligible as a student with a language impairment have access to any supports and services needed as determined by the individual educational plan team. A student should be identified as a student with a disability using the most appropriate category, but this does not mean that the team must identify every possible category under which the student may be eligible. In addition, there is no requirement that a student be eligible under a given category in order to receive specific services. For example, students determined eligible as a student with a language impairment may have counseling as a related service, a functional behavioral assessment (FBA), or academic support for reading or writing even though the student has not been determined to be a student with an emotional or behavioral disability (EBD) or a specific learning disability.**
4. Language therapy services will be provided by a certified speech-language pathologist pursuant to Rule 6A-4.0176, F.A.C., or a licensed speech-language pathologist pursuant to Section 468.1185, F.S., or a speech-language associate pursuant to Rule 6A-4.01761, F.A.C.
5. Speech-language associate
  - a. Language therapy services provided by a speech-language associate as specified in Rule 6A-4.01761, F.A.C., will be under the direction of a certified or licensed speech-language pathologist with a master's degree or higher in speech-language pathology. Services under this subsection can be provided for a period of three (3) years as described in Section 1012.44, F.S., in districts that qualify for the scarcity supplement as described in Section 1011.62(7), F.S.
  - b. The district will submit a plan to the Department of Education for approval before implementation of Rule 6A-4.01761, F.A.C. The components of the plan must include a description of:
    - The model, specifying the type and amount of direction including, but not limited to, direct observation, support, training, and instruction
    - The rationale for using this model
    - The manner in which the associate will be required to demonstrate competency
    - The process for monitoring the quality of services
    - The process for measuring student progress
    - The manner in which the speech-language associate will meet the requirements of the annual district professional development plan for instructional personnel

**The school district has the option to include additional information regarding evaluations, qualified evaluators, or unique philosophical, curricular, or instructional considerations for students with language impairments.**

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The school district has provided additional information for this section in **Appendix B** of this document.
- There is no additional information for this section.

## **Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities**

### **Section B.15: Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students who are Visually Impaired**

#### **Statutory and Regulatory Citations**

34 CFR §§300.8, 300.34, 300.172, and 300.324  
Sections 1003.55, 1003.57, and 1003.575, F.S.  
Rule 6A-6.03014, F.A.C.

#### **Definition**

1. Students who are visually impaired include the following:
  - a. A student who is blind, has no vision, or has little potential for using vision.
  - b. A student who has low vision.
2. The term visual impairment does not include students who have learning problems that are primarily the result of visual perceptual or visual motor difficulties.

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

A student is eligible for special education and related services if the following medical and educational criteria are met:

1. A licensed ophthalmologist or optometrist has documented an eye condition that causes an impairment as manifested by at least one of the following:
  - a. A visual acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eye after best possible correction;
  - b. A peripheral field so constricted that it affects the student's ability to function in an educational setting;
  - c. A progressive loss of vision that may affect the student's ability to function in an educational setting, not including students who have learning problems that are primarily the result of visual perceptual or visual motor difficulties;  
or
  - d. For children birth to five (5) years of age or students who are otherwise unable to be assessed, bilateral lack of central, steady, or maintained fixation of vision with an estimated visual acuity of 20/70 or less after best possible correction; bilateral central scotoma involving the perimacula area (20/80–20/200); bilateral grade III, IV, or V retinopathy of prematurity (ROP); or documented eye impairment as stated in paragraph (3)(a) of Rule 6A-6.03014.
2. The student demonstrates a need for special education.

#### **Student Evaluation**

The minimum procedures necessary for determining eligibility shall include:

1. A medical eye examination describing: etiology; diagnosis; treatment regimen; prognosis; near and distance; corrected and uncorrected acuity measures for left eye, right eye; and both eyes; measure of field of vision; and recommendations for lighting levels, physical activity, aids, or use of glasses, as appropriate.
2. For children birth to five (5) years of age or students who are otherwise unable to be assessed, a medical assessment describing visual functioning shall be documented when standard visual acuities and measure of field of vision are unattainable.
3. If a medical criterion listed in paragraph (4)(a) of Rule 6A-6.03014, F.A.C., is met, then in addition to the provisions of Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C., a comprehensive assessment of skills known to be impacted by visual impairment shall include, but is not limited to: functional vision evaluation, learning media assessment, and, if appropriate, orientation and mobility assessment.

#### **Reevaluation**

1. Reevaluation shall occur at least every three (3) years and shall include a minimum of a medical eye examination within the last calendar year, functional vision assessment, learning media assessment, and, if appropriate, any other formal evaluations addressed in the initial evaluation in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C.
2. The medical aspect of a reevaluation for students with bilateral anophthalmia may be waived by a written recommendation of a physician.

### **Specialized Evaluations: Qualified Evaluators**

The following specialized evaluations are required to be administered by the individuals listed. All evaluators must hold a valid license or certificate in the state of Florida, in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C.

1. Medical eye exam: ophthalmologist or optometrist
2. Functional vision assessment: teacher of the visually impaired, orientation and mobility specialist, or low vision specialist
3. Learning Media Assessment: teacher of the visually impaired
4. Orientation and mobility (as appropriate): orientation and mobility specialist

### **Unique Philosophical, Curricular, or Instructional Considerations**

1. All students with visual impairments are registered for services from the Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Impaired. Students will be provided with instruction in braille unless otherwise determined by the IEP team. This determination is based upon the student's present reading and writing skills, functional vision assessment, and learning media assessment, as well as documentation indicating the need for instruction or use of braille in the future.
2. Orientation and mobility is a related service, provided to blind or visually impaired students by qualified personnel if the IEP team determines that it is necessary in order for the student to benefit from specially designed instruction, that enables the student to attain systematic orientation to and safe movement within their environments in school, home, and community. Orientation and mobility instruction encompasses skill and conceptual awareness that includes, but is not limited to: spatial awareness, use of sensory information to maintain orientation, the use of mobility devices (i.e., long cane, distance low vision aids, assistive technology), and other skills and techniques used to travel safely and efficiently across a variety of settings.
3. The school district will provide information describing the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind and all other programs and methods of instruction available to the parent of a student with sensory impairments. This information will be provided annually. Additionally, in accordance with Rule 6A-6.03014, F.A.C., cooperative planning with the DBS may occur for students eligible for DBS services, with parent participation and agreement.

**The school district has the option to include additional information regarding evaluations, qualified evaluators or unique philosophical, curricular, or instructional considerations for students with visual impairments.**

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The school district has provided additional information for this section in **Appendix B** of this document.
- There is no additional information for this section.

## Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities

### Section B.16: Provision of Occupational Therapy to Exceptional Students as a Related Service

#### Statutory and Regulatory Citations

34 CFR §300.34

Sections 468.201-225 and 1003.57, F.S.

Rules 6A-6.030191, 6A-6.03024, 6A-6.03028, 6A-6.03411, and Chapter 6AB-11, F.A.C.

#### Definitions

1. Occupational therapy means services provided by a qualified occupational therapist and includes improving, developing, or restoring functions impaired or lost through illness, injury, or deprivation; improving ability to perform tasks for independent functioning if functions are impaired or lost; and preventing, through early intervention, initial or further impairment or loss of function.
2. Related service provider means the licensed occupational therapist responsible for the assessment and provision of school-based occupational therapy as a related service.

#### Determination of Need for Occupational Therapy

To determine need for occupational therapy as a related service the individual educational plan (IEP), the educational plan (EP), or the individualized family support plan (IFSP) team shall do the following:

1. Review assessments conducted by the related service provider and all other relevant data.
2. Determine if occupational therapy services are needed to assist a student to benefit from specially designed instruction.
3. Include input from the occupational therapist to assist the IEP, EP, or IFSP team when the educational need for occupational therapy as a related service is being determined.

#### Student Assessment

Prior to the provision of occupational therapy, assessments shall be conducted by the related service provider as defined in the Occupational Therapy Practice Act, s. 468.203, F.S. Rule 6A-6.03024(1)(c), F.A.C., defines a related service provider as the licensed occupational therapist responsible for the assessment and provision of school-based occupational therapy as a related service as defined in s. 1003.01(3)(b), F.S., and 6A-6.03411(1)(dd), F.A.C.

#### Unique Philosophical, Curricular, or Instructional Considerations

1. When the IEP, EP, or IFSP is being reviewed for a student who is receiving occupational therapy as a related service, the licensed therapist or licensed assistant shall provide input to assist the IEP, EP, or IFSP team.
2. Occupational therapy may be provided by either a licensed occupational therapist or a licensed occupational therapy assistant in accordance with the provisions of s. 468.203, F.S. The occupational therapy assistant is supervised by the licensed occupational therapist. The licensed occupational therapist provides both initial direction in developing a plan of treatment and periodic inspection of the actual implementation of the plan. Such plan of treatment shall not be altered by the supervised individual without prior consultation with, and the approval of, the supervising occupational therapist. The supervising occupational therapist need not always be physically present or on the premises when the assistant is performing services. However, except in cases of emergency, supervision shall require the availability of the supervising occupational therapist for consultation with and direction of the supervised individual.

**The school district has the option to include additional information regarding evaluations, qualified evaluators, or unique philosophical, curricular, or instructional considerations for students who need occupational therapy.**

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The school district has provided additional information for this section in **Appendix B** of this document.
- There is no additional information for this section.



## Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities

### Section B.17: Provision of Physical Therapy to Exceptional Students as a Related Services

#### Statutory and Regulatory Citations

34 CFR §300.34

Sections 486 and 1003.57, F.S.

Rules 6A-6.030191, 6A-6.03024, 6A-6.03028, 6A-6.03411, and 64B17-6.001, F.A.C.

#### Definitions

1. Physical therapy means services provided by a qualified physical therapist.
2. Related service provider means the licensed physical therapist responsible for the assessment and provision of school-based physical therapy as a related service.

#### Determination of Need for Physical Therapy

To determine need for physical therapy as a related service the individual educational plan (IEP), the educational plan (EP), or the individualized family support plan (IFSP) team shall do the following:

1. Review assessments conducted by the related service provider and all other relevant data.
2. Determine if physical therapy services are needed to assist a student to benefit from specially designed instruction.
3. Include input from the physical therapist to assist the IEP, EP, or the IFSP team when the educational need for physical therapy as a related service is being determined.

#### Student Assessment

Prior to the provision of physical therapy, assessments shall be conducted by the related service provider as defined in the Physical Therapy Practice Act, Chapter 486, s. 486.021, F.S. **Rule 6A-6.03024(1)(c), F.A.C., defines a related service provider as the licensed physical therapist responsible for the assessment and provision of school-based physical therapy as a related service as defined in s. 1003.01(3)(b), F.S., and Rule 6A-6.03411(1)(dd)3.i., F.A.C.**

#### Unique Philosophical, Curricular, or Instructional Considerations

1. When the IEP, EP, or the IFSP is being reviewed for a student who is receiving physical therapy as a related service, the licensed therapist or licensed assistant shall provide input to assist the IEP, EP, or IFSP team.
2. Physical therapy may be provided by either a licensed physical therapist or a licensed physical therapist assistant in accordance with the provisions of s. 486.021, F.S. **The supervision of a physical therapist assistant shall not require on-site supervision by the physical therapist. The physical therapist shall be accessible at all times by two-way communication, which enables the physical therapist to respond to an inquiry when made and to be readily available for consultation during the delivery of care, and shall be within the same geographic location as the assistant. The supervising physical therapist should provide both initial direction in developing a plan of treatment and ensuring the plan is appropriately implemented on a consistent basis. The supervised individual cannot change the plan of treatment without prior consultation with, and the approval of, the supervising physical therapist.**

**The school district has the option to include additional information regarding evaluations, qualified evaluators, or unique philosophical, curricular, or instructional considerations for students who need physical therapy.**

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The school district has provided additional information for this section in **Appendix B** of this document.
- There is no additional information for this section.

## Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities

### Section C: Individual Educational Plan

#### Statutory and Regulatory Citations

34 CFR §§300.29, 300.110, 300.320 through 300.328, and 300.503

Sections 1001.02, 1003.01, 1003.4203, 1003.4282, 1003.57, 1003.5715, 1003.5716, 1008.212 and 1008.22, F.S.

Rules 6A-1.09961 and 6A-6.03028, F.A.C.

#### Definition

An IEP is a written statement for a student with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with Rule 6A-6.03028, F.A.C. Parents are partners with schools and district personnel in developing, reviewing, and revising the IEP. The procedures for the development of IEPs for students with disabilities are as follows:

**Note:** Since an EP is defined in Rule 6A-6.030191, F.A.C., as being developed for students identified solely as gifted, an IEP rather than an EP is developed for students who are gifted and have also been identified as having a disability.

#### Procedures

##### 1. Role of parents

The role of the parents in developing IEPs includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Providing critical information regarding the strengths of their student
- b. Expressing their concerns for enhancing the education of their student so that their student can receive FAPE
- c. Participating in discussions about the student's need for special education and related services
- d. Participating in deciding how the student will be involved and progress in the general curriculum, including participation in state and district assessments
- e. Participating in the determination of what services the district will provide to their student and in what setting
- f. For students entering grade nine in the 2014-2015 school year, participating in the determination of whether the student is pursuing a course of study leading to a standard diploma and a Scholar or Merit designation or a certificate of completion.

##### 2. Parent participation in IEP team meetings

The district shall establish procedures that provide for parents, guardians, surrogate parents, or persons acting in loco parentis to participate in decisions concerning the individual educational plan. Parents of each student with a disability must be members of any group that makes decisions on the educational placement of their child.

- a. In order to ensure that parents are present at each meeting, or are afforded the opportunity to participate at each meeting:
  - Parents are notified of the meeting early enough to ensure that they have an opportunity to attend
  - The meeting is scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time and place
- b. A written notice to the parent indicates the purpose; time; location of the meeting; who, by title or position, will be in attendance; and includes a statement informing the parents that they have the right to invite individuals with special knowledge or expertise about their child.
  - Parents may also request that a Part C service coordinator or other representative of the Part C system be invited to attend the initial IEP team meeting for a child previously receiving early intervention services under Part C of IDEA.
  - Decisions as to which particular teacher(s) or special education provider(s) are members of the IEP team are made by the district, based on the needs of the student.

- The written notice to the parent clearly indicates which persons invited to the IEP team meeting are required members of the team and, thus, would require excusal as described in subsection 4. below.

Any time an IEP team meeting is convened for the purpose of reviewing or changing a student's IEP as it relates to administration of the Florida Alternate Assessment and the provision of instruction in the state standards access points curriculum, or placement of the student in an exceptional student education center, the school must provide the notice to the parent at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting.

- c. No later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student turns fourteen (14) (or younger, if determined appropriate by the IEP team), the notice must also indicate that a purpose of the meeting will be to identify transition services needs of the student and that the district will invite the student.
- d. Not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student turns sixteen (16) (or younger, if determined appropriate by the IEP team), the notice must also indicate that a purpose of the meeting will be consideration of the postsecondary goals and transition services for the student, that the district will invite the student and will identify any other agency that will be invited to send a representative to the meeting.
- e. If neither parent can attend, the district uses other methods to ensure parent participation, including individual or conference telephone calls or video conferencing.
- f. A meeting may be conducted without a parent in attendance if the district is unable to obtain the attendance of the parent. In this case, the district maintains a record of its attempts to arrange a mutually agreed upon time and place. These records include such items as:
  - Detailed records of telephone calls made or attempted, and the results of those calls
  - Copies of correspondence sent to the parents and any responses received
  - Detailed records of visits made to the parents' home or place of employment, and the results of those visits
- g. The district takes whatever action is necessary to ensure that the parents and the student, beginning at age fourteen (14), understand the proceedings at a meeting, including arranging for an interpreter for parents and students who are deaf or whose native language is other than English.
- h. A meeting does not include informal or unscheduled conversations involving school district personnel and conversations on issues such as teaching methodology, lesson plans, or coordination of service provision. A meeting also does not include preparatory activities that school district personnel engage in to develop a proposal or response to a parent proposal that will be discussed at a later meeting.
- i. The district provides the parent with a copy of the IEP at no cost to the parent.

### 3. IEP team participants

The IEP team, with a reasonable number of participants, shall include:

- a. The parents of the student
- b. At least one regular education teacher of the student, if the student is or may be participating in the regular education environment; the regular education teacher of a student with a disability participates, to the extent appropriate, in the development, review, and revision of the student's IEP, including assisting in the determination of:
  - Appropriate positive behavioral interventions and supports and other strategies for the student
  - Supplementary aids and services, classroom accommodations, modifications, or supports for school personnel to be provided for the student
- c. At least one special education teacher of the student, or, where appropriate, one special education provider of the student
- d. A representative of the school district who is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities, is knowledgeable about the general curriculum, and is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the district; at the discretion of the district, the student's special education teacher may be designated to also serve as the representative of the district if the

teacher meets these requirements

- e. An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results; this role may be fulfilled by another member of the IEP team
- f. At the discretion of the parent or the school district, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the student, including related services personnel; the determination of the knowledge or special expertise shall be made by the party who invited the individual to participate in the IEP team meeting
- g. The student, if appropriate, and in all cases where a purpose of the meeting will be the identification of the student's transition services needs or consideration of postsecondary goals for the student and the transition services needed to assist the student in reaching those goals; if the student does not attend the IEP team meeting to identify transition services needs or consider postsecondary goals and transition services, the district takes other steps to ensure that the student's preferences and interests are considered
- h. Agency representatives— To the extent appropriate and with the consent of the parents or a student who has reached the age of majority, the school district will invite a representative of any participating agency that may be responsible for providing or paying for transition services; parental consent or the consent of the student who has reached the age of majority must also be obtained before personally identifiable information is released to officials of participating agencies providing or paying for transition services
- i. In the case of a student who was previously served and received early intervention services under Part C of the IDEA, the Part C service coordinator or other representatives of the Part C system must be invited to the initial IEP team meeting, at the request of the parent, to assist with the smooth transition of services
- j. The district will determine the specific personnel to fill the roles under b) through e) above

#### 4. IEP team member excusal

- a. A member of the IEP team is not required to attend an IEP team meeting, in whole or in part, if the parent of a student with a disability and the school district agree, in writing, that the attendance of the member is not necessary because the member's area of curriculum or related services is not being modified or discussed in the meeting.
- b. A member of the IEP team also may be excused from attending an IEP team meeting, in whole or in part, when the meeting involves a modification to or discussion of the member's area of the curriculum or related services, if the parent, in writing, and the school district consent to the excusal and the member submits, in writing to the parent and the IEP team, input into the development of the IEP prior to the meeting.
- c. The district has designated the following individual(s), by name or position, as having the authority to make the agreement with the parent, or provide consent on behalf of the district, to excuse an IEP team member from attending an IEP team meeting:

LEA Representative
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- d. If a required IEP team member is unable to attend the meeting as scheduled, the parent can agree to continue with the meeting and request an additional meeting if more information is needed, or request that the meeting be rescheduled.

#### 5. Transition of children with disabilities from the infants and toddlers early intervention program

- a. An IEP or an IFSP must be developed and implemented by the third birthday of a child who has been participating in the early intervention program for infants and toddlers with disabilities.
- b. Each school district shall participate in transition planning conferences arranged by the state lead agency for the infants and toddlers with disabilities early intervention program.
- c. If the child's third birthday occurs during the summer, the child's IEP team shall determine the date when services under the IEP or IFSP will begin.

#### 6. IEP timelines

Timelines for IEPs include the following:

- a. An IEP that has been reviewed, and, if appropriate, revised periodically, but not less than annually, must be in effect at the beginning of each school year for each eligible student with a disability within the district's jurisdiction.
- b. An IEP must be developed within thirty (30) calendar days following the determination of a student's eligibility for special education and related services and be in effect prior to the provision of these services.
- c. A meeting shall be held at least annually to review, and revise, as appropriate, each IEP.

#### 7. Considerations in IEP development, review, and revision

The IEP team considers the following factors in the development, review, and revision of the IEP:

- a. Strengths of the student and concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child
- b. Results of the initial or most recent evaluation or reevaluation
- c. As appropriate, results of the student's performance on state or districtwide assessments
- d. Academic, developmental, and functional needs of the student
- e. In the case of a student whose behavior impedes the student's learning or the learning of others, strategies, including the use of positive behavioral interventions, supports, and other strategies to address that behavior
- f. In the case of a student with limited English proficiency, the language needs of the student as related to the IEP
- g. In the case of a student who is blind or visually impaired, provision of instruction in Braille and the use of Braille unless the IEP team determines, after an evaluation of the student's reading and writing skills, needs, including future needs and appropriate reading and writing media (including an evaluation of the student's future need for instruction in Braille or the use of Braille), that instruction in Braille or the use of Braille is not appropriate for the student
- h. The communication needs of the student
  - i. In the case of a student who is deaf or hard-of-hearing, the student's language and communication needs, opportunities for direct communications with peers and professional personnel in the student's language and communication mode, academic level, and full range of needs, including opportunities for direct instruction in the student's language and communication mode. **Rule 6A-6.03028(3)(g), F.A.C., requires the use of the Model Communication Plan adopted by the State Board of Education during the development of the IEP for students who are deaf, hard of hearing or dual sensory impaired. Use of this plan will ensure that IEP teams are considering the instructional needs of these students in a more comprehensive manner.**
  - j. Whether the student requires assistive technology devices or services; on a case-by-case basis, the use of school-purchased assistive technology devices in a student's home or other settings is required if the IEP team determines that the student needs access to those devices in order to receive FAPE
  - k. At least annually, whether extended school year (ESY) services are necessary for the provision of FAPE to the student if the IEP team determines, on an individual basis, that the services are necessary; school districts may not limit ESY to particular categories of a disability or unilaterally limit the type, amount, or duration of those services
  - l. If, after considering all the factors mentioned above, the IEP team determines that a student needs a particular

device or service, including an intervention, accommodation, or other modification, in order to receive FAPE, the IEP includes a statement to that effect

## 8. Content of the IEP

Each IEP must include the following:

- a. A statement of the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, including how the student's disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum, or for prekindergarten children, as appropriate, how the disability affects the student's participation in appropriate activities.
- b. A statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals designed to meet the student's needs that result from the student's disability to enable the student to be involved in and make progress in the general curriculum or for preschool children, as appropriate, to participate in appropriate activities and meeting each of the student's other educational needs that result from the student's disability.
- c. A description of benchmarks or short-term objectives for students with disabilities who take alternate assessments aligned to alternate achievement standards, or any other student with a disability, at the discretion of the IEP team.
- d. A statement of the special education and related services, and supplementary aids and services, based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable, to be provided to the student, or on behalf of the student.
- e. A statement of the classroom accommodations, modifications, or supports for school personnel that will be provided for the student to advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals; be involved and progress in the general curriculum; to participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities; and to be educated and participate with other students with disabilities and nondisabled students in the activities described in this section. (A parent must provide signed consent for a student to receive instructional accommodations that would not be permitted on the statewide assessments and must acknowledge in writing that he or she understands the implications of such accommodations.)
- f. An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the student will not participate with nondisabled students in the regular class or in the activities described above.
- g. A statement addressing any individual appropriate accommodations necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the student on the statewide standardized assessments or district assessments. Accommodations that negate the validity of a statewide assessment are not allowable in accordance with s. 1008.22, F.S. If the IEP team determines that the student will take the Florida Alternate Assessment instead of other statewide standardized assessments or an alternate district assessment of student achievement, the IEP must include a statement of why the student cannot participate in other statewide standardized assessments or district assessment and why the particular alternate assessment selected is appropriate for the student. If a student does not participate in the statewide assessment program as a result of being granted an extraordinary exemption in accordance with s. 1008.212, F.S., the district must notify the student's parent and provide the parent with information regarding the implications of such nonparticipation in accordance with s. 1008.22(3), F.S.
- h. The projected date for the beginning of the special education, services, accommodations, and modifications described and the anticipated frequency, location, and duration of those services.
- i. A statement of how the student's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured and when periodic reports on the progress the student is making toward meeting the annual goals (such as through the use of quarterly or other periodic reports, concurrent with the issuance of report cards) will be provided.
- j. A statement to identify any Career and Professional Education (CAPE) Digital Tools certificates and CAPE industry certifications the student seeks to attain before high school graduation.

## 9. Transitional needs addressed within IEP

In accordance with s.1003.5716, F.S., Transition to postsecondary education and career opportunities.

- a. To ensure quality planning for a successful transition of a student with a disability to postsecondary education and career opportunities, an IEP team shall begin the process of, and develop an IEP for, identifying the need for

transition services before the student with a disability attains the age of 14 years in order for his or her postsecondary goals and career goals to be identified and in place when he or she attains the age of 16 years. This process must include, but is not limited to:

- Consideration of the student's need for instruction in the area of self-determination and self-advocacy to assist the student's active and effective participation in an IEP meeting; and
  - Preparation for the student to graduate from high school with a standard high school diploma pursuant to s. 1003.4282, F.S., with a Scholar designation unless the parent chooses a Merit designation.
- b. Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student attains the age of 16, or younger if determined appropriate by the parent and the IEP team, the IEP must include the following statements that must be updated annually:
- A statement of intent to pursue a standard high school diploma and a Scholar or Merit designation, pursuant to s. 1003.4285, as determined by the parent.
  - A statement of intent to receive a standard high school diploma before the student attains the age of 22 and a description of how the student will fully meet the requirements in s. 1003.4282, F.S., as applicable, including, but not limited to, a portfolio pursuant to s. 1003.4282(11)(b), F.S., which meets the criteria specified in State Board of Education rule. The IEP must also specify the outcomes and additional benefits expected by the parent and the IEP team at the time of the student's graduation.
  - A statement of appropriate measurable long-term postsecondary education and career goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, if appropriate, independent living skills and the transition services, including courses of study needed to assist the student in reaching those goals.
  - If a participating agency responsible for transition services, other than the school district, fails to provide the transition services described in the IEP, the school district shall reconvene the IEP team to identify alternative strategies to meet the transition objectives for the student set out in the IEP. However, this does not relieve any participating agency, including the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR), of the responsibility to provide or pay for any transition service that the agency would otherwise provide to students with disabilities who meet the eligibility criteria of that agency.
- c. Any change in the IEP for the goals specified in b) must be approved by the parent and is subject to verification for appropriateness by an independent reviewer selected by the parent as provided in s. 1003.572.
- d. If a participating agency responsible for transition services, other than the school district, fails to provide the transition services described in the IEP, the school district shall reconvene the IEP team to identify alternative strategies to meet the transition objectives for the student that are specified in the IEP. However, this does not relieve any participating agency of the responsibility to provide or pay for any transition service that the agency would otherwise provide to students with disabilities who meet the eligibility criteria of that agency.
- e. Beginning at least one year before the student's 18th birthday, a statement that the student has been informed of his or her rights that will transfer from the parent to the student on reaching the age of majority, which is eighteen (18) years of age.
- f. For students whose eligibility terminates due to graduation from secondary school with a regular diploma or due to exceeding the age eligibility for FAPE under State law, a public agency must provide the child with a summary of the child's academic achievement and functional performance, which should include recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting the postsecondary goals.

#### 10. Requirements for a Standard Diploma

In accordance with s.1003.4282 (11), F.S., beginning with students entering grade nine (9) in the 2014-2015 school year, the following requirements for a standard diploma apply for a student with a disability.

- a. A parent of the student with a disability shall, in collaboration with the individual education plan (IEP) team during the transition planning process pursuant to s. 1003.5716, F.S., declare intent for the student to graduate from high school with either a standard high school diploma or a certificate of completion. A student with a disability who does not satisfy the standard high school diploma requirements in this section shall be awarded a certificate of completion.

- b. The following options, in addition to the other options specified in this section, may be used to satisfy the standard high school diploma requirements, as specified in the student's individual education plan:
1. For a student with a disability for whom the IEP team has determined that the Florida Alternate Assessment is the most appropriate measure of the student's skills:
    - a. A combination of course substitutions, assessments, industry certifications, other acceleration options, or occupational completion points appropriate to the student's unique skills and abilities that meet the criteria established by State Board of Education rule.
    - b. A portfolio of quantifiable evidence that documents a student's mastery of academic standards through rigorous metrics established by State Board of Education rule. A portfolio may include, but is not limited to, documentation of work experience, internships, community service, and postsecondary credit.
  2. For a student with a disability for whom the IEP team has determined that mastery of academic and employment competencies is the most appropriate way for a student to demonstrate his or her skills:
    - a. Documented completion of the minimum high school graduation requirements, including the number of course credits prescribed by rules of the State Board of Education.
    - b. Documented achievement of all annual goals and short-term objectives for academic and employment competencies, industry certifications, and occupational completion points specified in the student's transition plan. The documentation must be verified by the IEP team.
    - c. Documented successful employment for the number of hours per week specified in the student's transition plan, for the equivalent of one (1) semester, and payment of a minimum wage in compliance with the requirements of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act.
    - d. Documented mastery of the academic and employment competencies, industry certifications, and occupational completion points specified in the student's transition plan. The documentation must be verified by the IEP team, the employer, and the teacher. The transition plan must be developed and signed by the student, parent, teacher, and employer before placement in employment and must identify the following:
      - I. The expected academic and employment competencies, industry certifications, and occupational completion points;
      - II. The criteria for determining and certifying mastery of the competencies;
      - III. The work schedule and the minimum number of hours to be worked per week; and
      - IV. A description of the supervision to be provided by the school district.
  3. Any change to the high school graduation option specified in the student's IEP must be approved by the parent and is subject to verification for appropriateness by an independent reviewer selected by the parent as provided in s.1003.572, F.S.
- c. A student with a disability who meets the standard high school diploma requirements in this section may defer the receipt of a standard high school diploma if the student:
1. Has an individual education plan that prescribes special education, transition planning, transition services, or related services through age twenty-one (21); and
  2. Is enrolled in accelerated college credit instruction pursuant to s. 1007.27, F.S., industry certification courses that lead to college credit, a collegiate high school program, courses necessary to satisfy the Scholar designation requirements, or a structured work-study, internship, or preapprenticeship program.
- d. A student with a disability who receives a certificate of completion and has an individual education plan that prescribes special education, transition planning, transition services, or related services through twenty-one (21) years of age may continue to receive the specified instruction and services.
- e. Any waiver of the statewide, standardized assessment requirements by the individual education plan team, pursuant to s. 1008.22(3)(c), F.S., must be approved by the parent and is subject to verification for appropriateness by an independent reviewer selected by the parent as provided for in s. 1003.572., F.S.

The repeal of s. 1003.438, F.S., effective July 1, 2015, does not apply to a student with a disability as defined in s. 1003.438, F.S., whose individual educational plan, as of June 20, 2014, contains a statement of intent to receive a special diploma. Such student shall be awarded a special diploma in a form prescribed by the Commissioner of Education if the student meets the requirements specified in s. 1003.438, F.S., and in effect as of June 20, 2014. Any such student who meets all special requirements of the district school board in effect as of June 20, 2014, but who is



unable to meet the appropriate special state minimum requirements in effect as of June 20, 2014, shall be awarded a special certificate of completion in a form prescribed by the Commissioner of Education.

#### 11. Separate parental consent for specific actions included in an IEP

In accordance with s. 1003.5715, F.S., effective July 1, 2013, separate parental consent for the following actions in a student's IEP is required:

- a. Administration of an alternate assessment pursuant to s. 1008.22, F.S., and instruction in the state standards access points curriculum.
- b. Placement of the student in an ESE center school.

The district must use the following forms adopted by FDOE for obtaining consent.

- o [Parental Consent Form: Instruction in the State Standards Access Points Curriculum and Florida Alternate Assessment Administration](#)
- o [Parental Consent Form: Student Placement in an Exceptional Education Center](#)

In accordance with 34 CFR §300.503, each consent form must be provided in the parent's native language as defined in 34 CFR §300.29. **Consent forms can be accessed at the following link:** <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/>. A district may not proceed with the actions described above unless the district documents reasonable efforts to obtain the parent's consent and the student's parent has failed to respond or the district obtains approval through a due process hearing.

Except for a disciplinary change in placement as described in s. 1003.57(1)(h), if a district determines that there is a need to change a student's IEP related to administration of the alternate assessment, instruction in the access points curriculum, or ESE center school placement, the school must hold an IEP team meeting that includes the parent to discuss the reason for the change. The school shall provide written notice to the parent at least 10 days before the meeting, indicating the purpose, time, and location of the meeting and who, by title or position, will attend the meeting. The IEP team meeting requirement may be waived by informed consent of the parent after the parent receives the written notice.

For a change in a student's IEP related to administration of the alternate assessment, instruction in access points curriculum, or ESE center school placement, the district may not implement the change without parental consent unless the district documents reasonable efforts to obtain the parent's consent and the student's parent has failed to respond or the district obtains approval through a due process hearing and resolution of appeals.

#### 12. Least restrictive environment (LRE) and placement determinations:

- a. To the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities, including those in public or private institutions or other facilities, are educated with students who are not disabled. A school district shall use the term "inclusion" to mean that a student is receiving education in a general education regular class setting, reflecting natural proportions and age-appropriate heterogeneous groups in core academic and elective or special areas within the school community; a student with a disability is a valued member of the classroom and school community; the teachers and administrators support universal education and have knowledge and support available to enable them to effectively teach all children; and a student is provided access to technical assistance in best practices, instructional methods, and supports tailored to the student's needs based on current research.

**Section 1003.57(1)(f), F.S., requires that, once every three years, each school district and school must complete a Best Practices in Inclusive Education (BPIE) assessment. The BPIE is an internal assessment process designed to facilitate the analysis, implementation and improvement of inclusive educational practices. The results of this process, including all planned short- and long-term improvement efforts, must be included in the school district's ESE policies and procedures.**

**Has the district completed the BPIE yet?**

- Yes
- No

**If so, what date was it completed? (Please upload the district's BPIE action plan that must include all short- and long-term improvement efforts, in Appendix F).**

The plan was completed on 7/24/2014 at the district level. The action plan (see Appendix) includes a timeline for implementation for the school level. Specifically, school personnel will be trained during the 2014-2015 school year and implementation will occur during the 2015-2016 school year.

If No, include the anticipated date for the BPIE assessment, if known.

- b. Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of students with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily; and
- c. A continuum of alternative placements must be available to meet the needs of students with disabilities for special education and related services, including instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions and a school district must make provision for supplementary services (such as resource room or itinerant instruction) to be provided in conjunction with regular class placement.

Describe the district's continuum of alternative placements (e.g., instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction and instruction in hospitals and institutions). If your district contracts with another to provide a placement option, please indicate this as well.

The District provides a continuum of services:

1. General Education (Only accommodations; consultative services to teachers and students-minimal services)
2. General Education with support facilitation or co-teaching (a collaborative teaching model); the ESE Teacher or other related service provider provides assistance to students who require help accessing the curriculum in the general education classroom.
3. VE services (pull out/resource services) - Students are pulled out of the general education classroom by an ESE Teacher or related service provider to receive academic instruction or therapies in a small group setting.
4. Special Day Class - Is an intensive educational program designed for students who have special needs such as ASD, EBD, or InD when they cannot be appropriately educated in a general education environment with supports. The types of classes available usually include mild, moderate or severe.
5. Separate Center Schools - Is an intensive educational program at a school specifically designed for students who have special needs such as ASD, EBD, InD, or Mental Health issues when they cannot be appropriately educated in a general education school environment.

6. Home and Hospital Instruction Program- Home and Hospital Instruction Programs serve students who have a disability, which makes attendance in the regular day classes or alternative education program impossible or inadvisable.

Describe the district's procedures regarding provision for supplementary services (such as resource room or itinerant instruction) to be provided in conjunction with regular class placement.

Supplementary aids and services are provided to students in the general education setting. IEP teams determine the services required and may include, intensive remediation for reading and/or math, sign language interpretation, assistance with assistive technology devices, braille textbooks, behavior specialist support, social skills training, and/or assistance provided to the student to access the general education setting.

d. In determining the educational placement of a student with a disability, including a preschool child with a disability, each school district must ensure that:

- The placement decision is made by a group of persons, including the parents, and other persons knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation data, and the placement options.
- The placement decision is made in accordance with the LRE provisions listed above.
- The student's placement is determined at least annually, is based on the student's IEP, and is as close as possible to the student's home.
- Unless the IEP of a student with a disability requires some other arrangement, the student is educated in the school that he or she would attend if nondisabled.
- In selecting the LRE, consideration is given to any potential harmful effect on the student or on the quality of services that he or she needs.
- A student with a disability is not removed from education in age-appropriate regular classrooms solely because of needed modifications in the general education curriculum.

e. In providing or arranging for the provision of nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities (including meals, recess periods, counseling services, athletics, transportation, health services, recreational activities, special interest groups or clubs sponsored by the school district, referrals to agencies that provide assistance to individuals with disabilities, and employment of students, including both employment by the school district and assistance in making outside employment available), each school district must ensure that each student with a disability participates with students who are not disabled to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of the student. The school district must ensure that each student with a disability has the supplementary aids and services determined by the student's IEP team to be appropriate and necessary for the student to participate in nonacademic settings.

### 13. Review and revision of the IEP

The district ensures that the IEP team:

- a. Reviews the IEP periodically, but not less than annually, to determine whether the annual goals for the student are being achieved
- b. Revises the IEP as appropriate to address:
  - Any lack of expected progress toward the annual goals and in the general curriculum, if appropriate
  - Results of any reevaluation conducted
  - Information about the student provided to or by the parents
  - The student's anticipated needs or other matters
  - Consideration of the factors described earlier in subsection 7.a)– l)
- c. Responds to a parent's right to ask for revision of the student's IEP
- d. Encourages the consolidation of reevaluation meetings for the student and other IEP team meetings for the student, to the extent possible

#### 14. Changes to the IEP

Generally, changes to the IEP must be made by the entire IEP team at an IEP team meeting and may be made by amending the IEP rather than by redrafting the entire IEP. However, in making changes to the IEP after the annual IEP team meeting for a school year, the parent and school district may agree not to convene an IEP team meeting for purposes of making those changes, and instead may develop a written document to amend or modify the student's current IEP. If changes are made to the student's IEP without a meeting, the district must ensure that the student's IEP team is informed of those changes. Upon request, a parent will be provided a revised copy of the IEP with the amendments incorporated.

#### 15. Students with disabilities in adult prisons

The requirements relating to participation in general assessments do not apply to students with disabilities who are convicted as adults under State law and incarcerated in adult prisons. In addition, the requirements relating to transition planning and services do not apply with respect to those students whose eligibility for services under Part B of IDEA will end because of their age before they will be eligible to be released from prison based on consideration of their sentence and eligibility for early release. The IEP team may modify the student's IEP or placement if the State has demonstrated a bona fide security or compelling penological interest that cannot otherwise be accommodated. The requirements relating to the IEP content and LRE do not apply with respect to such modifications made.

#### 16. IEP implementation and accountability

The school district is responsible for providing special education to students with disabilities in accordance with the students' IEPs. However, it is not required that the school district, teacher, or other person be held accountable if a student does not achieve the growth projected in the annual goals and benchmarks or objectives. An IEP must be in effect before special education and related services are provided to an eligible student and will be implemented as soon as possible following the IEP team meeting. In addition, the IEP will be accessible to each regular education teacher, special education teacher, related service provider, and other service provider who is responsible for its implementation. All teachers and providers will be informed of their specific responsibilities related to the implementation of the IEP and the specific accommodations, modifications, and supports that must be provided for the student in accordance with the IEP. The district must make a good faith effort to assist the student in achieving the goals and objectives or benchmarks listed on the IEP.

#### 17. IEPs and meetings for students with disabilities placed in private schools or community facilities by the school district

If a student with a disability is placed in a private school by the school district, in consultation with the student's parents, the school district will ensure that the student has the same rights as a student with a disability served by the school district. Before placing the student, the school district initiates and conducts a meeting to develop an IEP or IFSP for the student. The district will ensure the attendance of a representative of the private school at the meeting. If the representative cannot attend, the district will use other methods to ensure participation by the private school, including individual or conference telephone calls. After a student with a disability enters a private school or facility, any meetings to review and revise the student's IEP may be initiated and conducted by the private school or facility at the discretion of the school district. However, the school district must ensure that the parents and a school district representative are involved in decisions about the IEP and agree to proposed changes in the IEP before those changes are implemented by the private school. Even if a private school or facility implements a student's IEP, responsibility for compliance with

State Board Rules remains with the school district. These requirements apply only to students who are or have been placed in or referred to a private school or facility by a school district as a means of providing FAPE. If placement in a public or private residential program is necessary to provide special education to a student with a disability, the program, including non-medical care and room and board, must be at no cost to the parents of the student.

#### 18. Access to instructional materials

The school district will take all reasonable steps to provide instructional materials in accessible formats to students with disabilities who need those instructional materials at the same time as other students receive instructional materials.

#### 19. Physical education

Physical education services, specially designed if necessary, must be made available to every student with a disability receiving FAPE, unless the school district does not provide physical education to students without disabilities in the same grades. Each student with a disability will be afforded the opportunity to participate in the regular physical education program available to nondisabled students unless the student is enrolled full-time in a separate facility or the student needs specially designed physical education, as prescribed in the student's IEP. If specially designed physical education is prescribed in a student's IEP, the school district will provide the services directly or make arrangements for those services to be provided through other public or private programs. The school district responsible for the education of a student with a disability who is enrolled in a separate facility must ensure that the student receive appropriate physical education services in compliance with the section.

#### 20. Treatment of charter school students

Students with disabilities who attend public charter schools and their parents retain all rights under Rules 6A-6.03011 through 6A-6.0361, F.A.C. The school district will serve students with disabilities attending those charter schools in the same manner as the district serves students with disabilities in its other schools. This includes the following:

- a. Providing supplementary and related services on site at the charter school to the same extent to which the school district has a policy or practice of providing such services on the site to its other public schools
- b. Providing funds under Part B of the IDEA to those charter schools on the same basis as the school district provides funds to the school district's other public schools:
  - i. Including proportional distribution based on relative enrollment of students with disabilities
  - ii. At the same time as the school distributes other federal funds to its other public schools

#### 21. Program options

The school district must take steps to ensure that students with disabilities have available to them the variety of educational programs and services available to nondisabled students in the area served by the school district, including art, music, industrial arts, consumer and homemaking education, and vocational education.

**The school district has the option to include additional information regarding the development and implementation of IEPs.**

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The school district has provided additional information for this section in **Appendix B** of this document.
- There is no additional information for this section.

## Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities

### Section D: Discipline

- This section is not applicable for the district.

#### Statutory and Regulatory Citations

34 CFR §§300.530–300.537

Sections 893.02, 893.03, 1002.20, 1003.01, 1003.31, 1003.57, and 1006.09, F.S.

Rule 6A-6.03312, F.A.C.

#### Definitions

##### 1. Change of placement because of disciplinary removals

For the purpose of removing a student with a disability from the student's current educational placement as specified in the student's IEP under Rule 6A-6.03312, F.A.C., a change of placement occurs with **either** of the following:

- a. The removal is for more than ten (10) consecutive school days.
- b. The student has been subjected to a series of removals that constitutes a pattern that is a change of placement because the removals cumulate to more than ten (10) school days in a school year, because the student's behavior is substantially similar to the student's behavior in previous incidents that resulted in the series of removals, and because of additional factors, such as the length of each removal, the total amount of time the student has been removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another. A school district determines on a case-by-case basis whether a pattern of removals constitutes a change of placement, and this determination is subject to review through due process and judicial proceedings.

##### 2. Controlled substance

A controlled substance is any substance named or described in Schedules I–V of s. 893.03, F.S.

##### 3. Illegal drug

An illegal drug means a controlled substance but does not include a substance that is legally possessed or used under the supervision of a licensed health care professional or that is legally possessed or used under any other authority under the Controlled Substances Act, 21 U.S.C. 812(c), or under any other provision of federal law.

##### 4. Serious bodily injury

Serious bodily injury means bodily injury that involves a substantial risk of death; extreme physical pain; protracted and obvious disfigurement; or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty.

##### 5. Weapon

Weapon means a weapon, device, instrument, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury, except that such term does not include a pocket knife with a blade that is less than two and a half (2½) inches in length.

##### 6. Manifestation determination

A manifestation determination is a process by which the relationship between the student's disability and a specific behavior that may result in disciplinary action is examined.

##### 7. Interim alternative educational setting (IAES)

An interim alternative educational setting is a different location where educational services are provided for a specific time period due to disciplinary reasons and that meets the requirements of Rule 6A-6.03312, F.A.C.

#### Procedures

1. For students with disabilities whose behavior impedes their learning or the learning of others, strategies, including positive behavioral interventions and supports to address that behavior, will be considered in the development of their

IEPs. School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether a change in placement, consistent with the requirements and procedures in Rule 6A-6.03312, F.A.C., is appropriate for a student with a disability who violates the Code of Student Conduct.

Describe the district's procedures for providing information and training regarding positive behavioral interventions and supports.

District resource staff provide MTSS training which is a combination of best practices for positive behavior supports and classroom management techniques. Coaching and mentoring is provided to school based teams. These trainings are provided at the schools and also available through district-wide trainings.

Training is provided to teachers of students with Emotional Behavioral Disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder and MMI- special diploma (Mild, Moderate & Intensive) on the Essential Elements for those programs (best practices). There is also training on Essential Elements for Behavior Specialists who are school based.

CPI training is available district-wide but in addition, there is training available for teams to develop strategies with a particular focus on verbal de-escalation techniques.

Individual reviews of FBAs/PBIPs by district behaviors specialists to provide ideas/support to new school based behavior specialists and other school personnel (psychologists, social workers, etc)

Training is provided in preventative strategies with sensory/visual components to support positive behavior intervention plans.

Describe how the district addresses the behavior in the development of the IEP for students with disabilities whose behavior impedes their learning or the learning of others.

IEP team utilize data to develop interventions and goals specific to the student with disabilities, utilizing the supports listed above.

## 2. Authority of school personnel

Consistent with the school district's Code of Student Conduct and to the extent that removal would be applied to nondisabled students, school personnel:

- a. May remove a student with a disability who violates a code of student conduct from the student's current placement for **not** more than ten (10) consecutive school days
- b. **May remove** a student with a disability for **not** more than ten (10) consecutive school days in that same school year for separate incidents of misconduct, as long as those removals **do not constitute a change in placement** as defined in Rule 6A-6.03312, F.A.C.

Describe the district's procedures for monitoring out-of-school suspensions, to include the review of suspension and expulsion data.

On a monthly basis, case managers are to pull data on their assigned students. Discipline and suspension data is to be pulled and reviewed in conjunction with the other data as required.

Describe the district's procedures for determining whether a pattern of removals constitutes a **change of placement** (See **Definitions 1 a-b**).

Students with disabilities in the district cannot be suspended beyond 10 school days, however, case managers are required to schedule an IEP meeting when a student has reached a fifth day of suspension to determine if a pattern is emerging and to put additional behavioral supports in place which may include the development of a Positive Behavior Intervention Plan or an FBA when warranted.

### 3. Manifestation determination

A manifestation determination, consistent with the following requirements, will be made within **ten (10) school days** of any decision to change the placement of a student with a disability because of a violation of a Code of Student Conduct.

- a. In conducting the review, the school district, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP team (as determined by the parent and the school district):
  - Will review all relevant information in the student's file, including any information supplied by the parents of the student, any teacher observations of the student, and the student's current IEP
  - Will determine whether the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the student's disability or whether the conduct in question was the direct result of the school district's failure to implement the IEP
- b. If the school district, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP team determine that the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the student's disability or that the conduct in question was the direct result of the school district's failure to implement the IEP, the conduct will be determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability and the school district will take immediate steps to remedy those deficiencies.
- c. If the school district, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP team determine that the conduct was a manifestation of the student's disability, the IEP team will either:
  - Conduct a FBA, unless the school district had conducted an FBA before the behavior that resulted in the change of placement occurred, and implement a BIP for the student; or
  - If a BIP has already been developed, review and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior; and
  - Except as provided in 6. below, return the student to the placement from which the student was removed, unless the parent and the school district agree to a change in placement as part of the modification of the BIP.



- d. For disciplinary changes of placement, if the behavior that gave rise to the violation of a Code of Student Conduct is determined not to be a manifestation of the student's disability, the relevant disciplinary procedures applicable to nondisabled students may be applied to the student in the same manner and for the same duration in which they would be applied to nondisabled students, except that services necessary to provide FAPE will be provided to the student with a disability, as described in 5. below.
- e. If a parent disagrees with the manifestation determination decision made by the IEP team pursuant to this rule, the parent may appeal the decision by requesting an expedited due process hearing as described in 7. below.

Describe the district's procedures for scheduling manifestation determination reviews within required timelines and determining participants for these reviews.

When a determination has been made that a student will be reassigned to a discipline school for any infraction, to include zero tolerance offenses, the principal provides the parent/student with the information that the Area Superintendent may recommend a reassignment. The referring administrator contacts the Office of ESE Compliance to schedule the manifestation determination review within the required 10 school days. At that time, the school sends out a notice to the parent, and student (if 14 years of age or older). First notice is sent registered/return receipt requested or hand delivered.

Describe the district's procedures for initiating and conducting FBAs and BIPs in a timely manner.

The district ESE Handbook addresses discipline along with the development of FBAs and PBIPs. It is the expectation that when a student has reached 5 days of out of school suspension that the IEP team is convened to address the behavioral concerns of a student. However, the IEP team may proceed with the development of a Positive Behavior Intervention Plan or when necessary a FBA, or review the current plan to determine if additional interventions are needed. When a student has a cumulative total of 10 days of out of school suspension, an IEP team meeting must be convened. The FBA/PBIP process is initiated or reviewed and revised as needed. The need for further evaluations may also be considered. ESE and student services staff assist the school personnel in identifying the needed supports or evaluations. When a student is recommended for reassignment or expulsion due to a disciplinary infraction, a manifestation determination meeting is conducted.

Describe the district's procedures for providing training regarding conducting FBAs and developing and implementing BIPs.

Psychologists, Social Workers, Behavior Specialists and trained district staff are facilitators of the FBA/PBIP or PBIP. Full training is offered several times per year. In addition, ongoing training is provided throughout the year on data collection and strategies for improving behavior. District staff is available to provide individualized training and mentoring to staff as needed.

Describe the district's procedures for providing FAPE for students when the behavior is determined not to be a manifestation of the student's disability

Students with disabilities in the district cannot be suspended beyond 10 school days. If the behavior is found not to be an manifestation, the district discipline school (Pinellas Secondary School) is staffed to provide a full-continuum of services for students with disabilities in most cases if a student is reassigned due to a disciplinary action. In the event, a student needs

specialized services, the student may receive those services at a different school setting that has those services available. In the event a student is recommended for expulsion, the district will determine if FAPE can be provided through online or teleschool services and if not, will look at whether the student requires a more restrictive setting rather than expulsion.

Describe the district's procedures for requesting an expedited due process hearing when parents disagree with a manifestation determination.

The parent will be provided with their Procedural Safeguards and informed about the requirements for filing a due process hearing request. Upon receipt of the request for due process (once determined to meet the requirements), a resolution conference will be scheduled within 7 days of receiving the notice for an expedited due process hearing if the parent and district agree to participate. In addition, the district will work with the ALJ to schedule a date for the due process hearing to hold a spot within the required 20 school days should the district and parent be unable to reach an agreement through the resolution conference.

4. On the date a decision is made to make a removal that constitutes a change of placement of a student with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct, the school district will notify the parent of the removal decision and provide the parent with a copy of the notice of procedural safeguards.
5. FAPE for students with disabilities who are suspended or expelled or placed in an IAES
  - a. A school district is not required to provide services to a student with a disability during removals totaling ten (10) school days or fewer in that school year if services are not provided to nondisabled students who are similarly removed.
  - b. Students with disabilities who are suspended or expelled from school or placed in an IAES will continue to receive educational services in accordance with s. 1003.01, F.S., including homework assignments, to enable the student to continue to participate in the general curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals in the student's IEP and receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment, behavioral intervention services, and modifications designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not reoccur.
  - c. After a student with a disability has been removed from the current placement for 10 school days in the school year, if the current removal is not more than ten (10) consecutive school days and is not a change of placement under this rule, school personnel, in consultation with at least one of the student's special education teacher(s), will determine the extent to which services are needed to enable the student to continue to participate in the general curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals in the student's IEP.
  - d. If the removal is a change of placement under Rule 6A-6.03312, F.A.C., the student's IEP team determines appropriate services under b) above.

Describe the district's procedures for providing FAPE for students with disabilities who are suspended or expelled or placed in an IAES.

The district does not suspend students with disabilities beyond 10 days. The district discipline school is staffed to provide a full-continuum of services for students with disabilities in most cases. In the event, a student needs specialized services, the student may receive those services at a different school setting that has those services available. In the event a student is recommended for expulsion, the district will determine if FAPE can be provided through online or teleschool services and if not, will look at whether the student requires a more restrictive setting

rather than expulsion.

Describe the district's procedures for providing training and supports for staff members who provide services to students with disabilities who are suspended or expelled or placed in an IAES.

District resource staff provides MTSS training which is a combination of best practices for positive behavior supports and classroom management techniques. Coaching and mentoring is provided to school based teams by district staff such as behavior specialists, low-prevalence team, or other staff with expertise and knowledge in behavior support. These trainings are provided at the schools and also available through district-wide trainings. Training is provided to teachers of students with Emotional Behavioral Disabilities on the Essential Elements for those programs (best practices). There is also training on Essential Elements for Behavior Specialists who are school based. CPI training is available district-wide but in addition, there is training available for teams to develop strategies with a particular focus on verbal de-escalation techniques. In addition, when necessary, training for behavior is tailored to meet the needs of the school.

#### 6. Special circumstances and interim alternative educational settings

- a. School personnel may remove a student to an IAES for not more than forty-five (45) school days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability, if the student:
  - Carries a weapon to or possesses a weapon at school, on school premises, or to a school function under the jurisdiction of a SEA or a school district;
  - Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a state education agency or a school district; or
  - Has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a SEA or a school district.
- b. On the date that a decision is made to make a removal that constitutes a change of placement because of a violation of a code of student conduct, the school district will notify the parent of that decision and provide the parent with a copy of the notice of procedural safeguards.

Describe the district's procedures for notifying parents on the date that a decision is made to make a removal that constitutes a change of placement and providing parents with a copy of the notice of procedural safeguards on this date.

On the date of the infraction, the principal contacts the area superintendent to discuss the situation and to notify them of the request to reassign the student to another school or to the discipline school. If approved by the area superintendent as a consideration pending the outcome of the manifestation determination meeting (or regardless if a zero tolerance offense), the principal then notifies the student and parent via phone of the infraction and the intent to move forward with a reassignment based on the two scenarios possible. The principal also contacts the Office of ESE Compliance to schedule a manifestation determination meeting within the required 10 school days. The principal or designee send an invitation to the manifestation determination meeting with a copy of the Procedural Safeguards through registered/return receipt mail or hand delivers to the parent.

Describe the district's procedures for tracking students' removals to an IAES to ensure that the forty-five (45) school-day limit is maintained.

When a student is placed in an IAES, the Compliance Educational Diagnostician (LEA for the manifestation determination meeting) and Area Superintendents will establish the 45 school day time line allowable for the placement and contact the Supervisor of Compliance of the start date. An IEP meeting will be scheduled no later than the 35th day to discuss the appropriate placement for the student.

## 7. Appeal and expedited hearings

### a. An expedited hearing may be requested by:

- The student's parent, if the parent disagrees with a manifestation determination or with any decision not made by an administrative law judge (ALJ) regarding a change of placement under Rule 6A-6.03312, F.A.C.
- The school district, if it believes that maintaining the current placement of the student is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others

### b. The school district may repeat the procedures for expedited hearings if it believes that returning the student to the original placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others.

### c. Expedited due process hearings requested under this subsection will be conducted by an ALJ for the Division of Administrative Hearings, Department of Management Services, on behalf of the Department of Education, and will be held at the request of either the parent or the school district regarding disciplinary actions. These hearings will meet the requirements prescribed in Rules 6A-6.03011 through 6A-6.0361, F.A.C., except that the hearing will occur within twenty (20) school days of the date the request for due process is filed and an ALJ will make a determination within ten (10) school days after the hearing. In addition, unless the parents and the school district agree in writing to waive the resolution meeting described herein or agree to use the mediation process set forth in these rules:

- A resolution meeting will occur within seven (7) days of receiving notice of the request for expedited due process hearing
- The expedited due process hearing may proceed unless the matter has been resolved to the satisfaction of both parties within fifteen (15) days of the receipt of the request for expedited due process hearing

### d. The decision of the ALJ rendered in an expedited hearing may be appealed by bringing a civil action in a federal district or state circuit court, as provided in s. 1003.57(1)(b), F.S.

Describe the district's procedures for setting up resolution meetings within seven (7) days of receiving notice of a request for an expedited due process hearing.

Upon receipt of the request for due process (once determined to meet the requirements), the ESE Compliance Department will work with the Office of General Counsel to schedule a resolution conference within 7 days of receiving the notice for an expedited due process hearing if the parent and district agree to participate. The parent will be contacted upon receipt of the due process request by the Office of ESE Compliance to schedule the meeting.

#### 8. Authority of an ALJ

An ALJ hears and makes a determination regarding an appeal and request for expedited due process hearing under this subsection and, in making the determination:

- a. An ALJ may return the student with a disability to the placement from which the student was removed if the ALJ determines that the removal was a violation of Rule 6A-6.03312, F.A.C., or that the student's behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability; or
- b. Order a change of placement of the student with a disability to an appropriate IAES for not more than forty-five (45) school days if the ALJ determines that maintaining the current placement of the student is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others.
- c. The procedures under this subsection may be repeated if a school district believes that returning the student to the original placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others.

#### 9. Student's placement during appeals or expedited due process proceedings

When an appeal as described in 7. above has been made by either the parent or the school district, the student will remain in the IAES determined by the IEP team pending the decision of the ALJ or until the expiration of the time period specified by school personnel, including expulsion for a student where no manifestation was found, unless the parent and the Department of Education or school district agree otherwise.

#### 10. Protections for students not determined eligible for special education and related services

A regular education student who has engaged in behavior that violated a code of student conduct may assert any of the protections afforded to a student with a disability under this rule if the school district had knowledge of the student's disability before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred.

##### a. Basis of knowledge

A school district is deemed to have knowledge that a student is a student with a disability if:

- The parent has expressed concern in writing to supervisory or administrative personnel of the appropriate school district, or a teacher of the student, that the student needs special education and related services; or
- The parent has requested an evaluation to determine whether the student is in need of special education and related services; or
- The teacher of the student, or other school district personnel, expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student directly to the school district's special education director or to other supervisory school district personnel.

##### b. Exception

A school district would not be deemed to have knowledge of a disability (see above) if:

- The parent of the student has not allowed an evaluation to determine if the student is an eligible student

with a disability;

- The parent of the student has refused to provide consent for initial provision of special education and related service;
- The parent of the student revoked consent for the student to receive special education and related services; or
- The school district conducted an evaluation in accordance with Rules 6A-6.03011 through 6A-6.0361, F.A.C., and determined that the student was not a student with a disability.

c. Conditions that apply if no basis of knowledge

- If the school district has no knowledge that the student is a student with a disability prior to disciplinary action, the student may be disciplined in the same manner as a nondisabled student who engages in comparable behaviors.
- If an evaluation request is made for the student during the time period of the disciplinary action, the evaluation will be conducted in an expedited manner. Until the evaluation is completed, the student remains in the educational placement determined by school authorities, which can include suspension or expulsion without educational services. If the student is determined to be a student with a disability, taking into consideration information from the evaluation and information provided by the parents, the school district will provide special education and related services consistent with the requirements of Rule 6A-6.03312, F.A.C.

11. Nothing in Rule 6A-6.03312, F.A.C., prohibits a school district from reporting a crime committed by a student with a disability to appropriate authorities or prevents state law enforcement and judicial authorities from exercising their responsibilities with regard to the application of federal and state law to crimes committed by a student with a disability.
12. Student records in disciplinary procedures

**Regarding the person making the final determination for the disciplinary action**, school districts will ensure that the special education and disciplinary records of students with disabilities are transmitted, consistent with the provisions of 34 CFR §300.535(b), s. 1002.22, F.S., and Rule 6A-1.0955, F.A.C.:

Describe the district's procedures for ensuring that special education and disciplinary records of students with disabilities are transmitted to the person making the final determination regarding the disciplinary action.

In order to be sure that the district staff conducting the manifestation review has all of the information necessary to conduct a thorough review, the sending school prepares a draft IEP utilizing the input from teachers and parent. The sending school staff brings the folders to the manifestation meeting. In addition, the Office of ESE Compliance secretary provides a folder with all information related to grades, attendance, discipline, etc. to the Compliance Educational Diagnostician once the meeting has been scheduled. The Compliance Educational Diagnostician meets with the referring school's team and the psychologist to review the student's records 15 minutes prior to the manifestation determination meeting. Once the manifestation determination meeting is held, feedback is provided to the area superintendent and school regarding information reviewed, decision of the team, and suggestions for next steps.

13. Disciplinary records of students with disabilities

School districts will include in the records of students with disabilities a statement of any current or previous disciplinary action that has been taken against the student and transmit the statement to the same extent that the disciplinary information is included in, and transmitted with, the student records of nondisabled students.

- a. The statement may be a description of any behavior engaged in by the student that required disciplinary action, a description of the disciplinary action taken, and any other information that is relevant to the safety of the student and other individuals involved with the student.
- b. If the student transfers from one school to another, the transmission of any of the student's records will include both the student's current IEP and any statement of current or previous disciplinary action that has been taken against the student.



## Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities

### Section E: Participation in State and District Assessments

- This section is not applicable for the district.

#### Statutory and Regulatory Citations

34 CFR §300.320

Sections 1003.01, 1003.428, 1003.43, 1003.433, 1007.02, 1008.22, [1008.212](#), 1008.25, and 1011.62, F.S.

Rules 6A-1.09401, 6A-1.0943, 6A-1.09430, 6A-6.03028 and 6A-6.0331, F.A.C.

#### Statewide, Standardized Assessment Program

##### 1. Purpose

The primary purposes of the student assessment program are to provide information about student mastery of grade-level state standards and to inform parents of their child's educational progress.

##### 2. Student participation

- a. Each student with a disability has the opportunity to participate in the **statewide standardized** assessment program and any district-wide assessment of student achievement with allowable accommodations, if determined appropriate by the IEP team and recorded on the student's IEP.
- b. Accommodations identified for testing situations are those identified in the test manual and regularly used by the student in the classroom.
- c. A parent must provide signed consent for a student to receive instructional accommodations not permitted on statewide **standardized** assessments and acknowledge, in writing, the implications of such accommodations.
- d. Students who are identified solely as gifted are not eligible for **statewide standardized** assessment accommodations.

##### 3. Allowable accommodations

Allowable and appropriate accommodations for statewide **standardized** assessments are included in the test administration manual. Copies of current statewide **standardized** assessment test administration manuals published by the Florida Department of Education Bureau of Assessment and School Performance, and Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services are available by contacting the Department of Education at <http://www.fldoe.org/asp>.

##### 4. Waiver of assessment requirements

**A student with a disability, as defined in s. 1007.02(2), for whom the individual education plan (IEP) team determines that the statewide, standardized assessments cannot accurately measure the student's abilities, taking into consideration all allowable accommodations, shall have assessment results waived for the purpose of receiving a course grade and a standard high school diploma. Such waiver shall be designated on the student's transcript.**

#### Extraordinary Exemption for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with s. 1008.212, F.S., Students with disabilities; extraordinary exemption, a student with a disability may be eligible for an exemption from participation in statewide assessment.

##### 1. Definitions:

- a. "Circumstance" means a situation in which accommodations allowable for use on the state-wide standardized assessment, a statewide standardized end-of-course assessment, or an alternate assessment pursuant to s. 1008.22(3)(c) are not offered to a student during the current year's assessment administration due to technological limitations in the testing administration program which lead to results that reflect the student's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills rather than the student's achievement of the benchmarks assessed by the statewide standardized assessment, a statewide standardized end-of-course assessment, or an alternate assessment.



- b. "Condition" means an impairment, whether recently acquired or longstanding, which affects a student's ability to communicate in modes deemed acceptable for statewide assessments, even if appropriate accommodations are provided, and creates a situation in which the results of administration of the statewide standardized assessment, an end-of-course assessment, or an alternate assessment would reflect the student's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills rather than the student's achievement of the benchmarks assessed by the statewide standardized assessment, a statewide standardized end-of-course assessment, or an alternate assessment.
2. A student with a disability for whom the individual education plan (IEP) team determines is prevented by a circumstance or condition from physically demonstrating the mastery of skills that have been acquired and are measured by the statewide standardized assessment, a statewide standardized end-of-course assessment, or an alternate assessment pursuant to s. 1008.22(3)(c) shall be granted an extraordinary exemption from the administration of the assessment. A learning, emotional, behavioral, or significant cognitive disability, or the receipt of services through the homebound or hospitalized program in accordance with rule 6A-6.03020, Florida Administrative Code, is not, in and of itself, an adequate criterion for the granting of an extraordinary exemption.
3. The IEP team, which must include the parent, may submit to the district school superintendent a written request for an extraordinary exemption at any time during the school year, but not later than 60 days before the current year's assessment administration for which the request is made. A request must include all of the following:
  - a. A written description of the student's disabilities, including a specific description of the student's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills.
  - b. Written documentation of the most recent evaluation data.
  - c. Written documentation, if available, of the most recent administration of the statewide standardized assessment, an end-of-course assessment, or an alternate assessment.
  - d. A written description of the condition's effect on the student's participation in the statewide standardized assessment, an end-of-course assessment, or an alternate assessment.
  - e. Written evidence that the student has had the opportunity to learn the skills being tested.
  - f. Written evidence that the student has been provided appropriate instructional accommodations.
  - g. Written evidence as to whether the student has had the opportunity to be assessed using the instructional accommodations on the student's IEP which are allowable in the administration of the statewide standardized assessment, an end-of-course assessment, or an alternate assessment in prior assessments.
  - h. Written evidence of the circumstance or condition as defined in section (1).
4. Based upon the documentation provided by the IEP team, the school district superintendent shall recommend to the Commissioner of Education whether an extraordinary exemption for a given assessment administration window should be granted or denied. A copy of the school district's procedural safeguards as required in rule 6A-6.03311, Florida Administrative Code, shall be provided to the parent. If the parent disagrees with the IEP team's recommendation, the dispute resolution methods described in the procedural safeguards shall be made available to the parent. Upon receipt of the request, documentation, and recommendation, the commissioner shall verify the information documented, make a determination, and notify the parent and the district school superintendent in writing within 30 days after the receipt of the request whether the exemption has been granted or denied. If the commissioner grants the exemption, the student's progress must be assessed in accordance with the goals established in the student's individual education plan. If the commissioner denies the exemption, the notification must state the reasons for the denial.
5. The parent of a student with a disability who disagrees with the commissioner's denial of an extraordinary exemption may request an expedited hearing. If the parent requests the expedited hearing, the Department of Education shall inform the parent of any free or low-cost legal services and other relevant services available in the area. The Department of Education shall arrange a hearing with the Division of Administrative Hearings, which must be commenced within 20 school days after the parent's request for the expedited hearing. The administrative law judges at the division shall make a determination within 10 school days after the expedited hearing. The standard of review for the expedited hearing is de novo, and the department has the burden of proof.

#### **Exemption for a Child With Medical Complexity**

In accordance with s. 1008.22, F.S., *Student assessment program for public school; Child with medical complexity, a child with a medical complexity may be exempt from participating in statewide, standardized assessments, including the Florida Alternate*

Assessment (FAA), pursuant to the following provisions.

1. Child with a medical complexity

- a. Definition of child with medical complexity. A child with a medical complexity means a child who, based upon medical documentation from a physician licensed under chapter 458 or 459 is medically fragile and needs intensive care due to a condition such as congenital or acquired multisystem disease; has a severe neurological or cognitive disorder with marked functional impairment; or is technology dependent for activities of daily living; and lacks the capacity to take or perform on an assessment.
- b. Exemption options. If the parent consents in writing, and the IEP team determines that the child should not be assessed based upon medical documentation that the child meets the definition of a child with medical complexity, then the parent may choose one of the following three assessment exemption options.
  1. One-year exemption approved by the district school superintendent. If the superintendent is provided written documentation of parental consent and appropriate medical documentation to support the IEP team's determination that the child is a child with medical complexity, then the superintendent may approve a one-year exemption from all statewide, standardized assessments, including the FAA. The superintendent shall report annually to the district school board and the Commissioner of Education the number of students who are identified as a child with medical complexity who are not participating in the assessment program.
  2. One- to three-year exemption approved by the Commissioner of Education. If the commissioner is provided written documentation of parental consent; district school superintendent approval; the IEP team's determination that the child is a child with medical complexity based upon appropriate medical documentation; and all medical documentation, then the commissioner may exempt the child from all statewide, standardized assessments, including the FAA, for up to three years. The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to administer this subparagraph which must expedite the process by which exemptions are reviewed and approved and which demonstrate the utmost compassion and consideration for meeting the parent's and child's needs.
  3. Permanent exemption approved by the Commissioner of Education. If the commissioner is provided written documentation of parental consent; district school superintendent approval of a permanent exemption; the IEP team's determination that the child is a child with medical complexity based upon appropriate medical documentation and that a permanent exemption is appropriate; and all medical documentation, then the commissioner may approve a permanent exemption from all statewide, standardized assessments, including the FAA. The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to administer this subparagraph which must expedite the process by which exemptions are reviewed and approved and which demonstrate the utmost compassion and consideration for meeting the parent's and child's needs.

**Additional Information Required:**

An alternate assessment is required for any district-wide assessment of student achievement.

**Alternate Assessment Based on Alternate Achievement Standards (AA-AAS)**

1. Students with significant cognitive disabilities, for whom the **statewide standardized assessment**– even with allowable accommodations– is not appropriate, may be eligible to participate in the statewide assessment program through the AA-AAS.
2. Eligibility requirements

The decision that a student with a significant cognitive disability will participate in the statewide alternate assessment is made by the IEP team and recorded on the IEP. The following criteria must be met:

  - a. The student is unable to master the grade-level general state content standards pursuant to Rule 6A-1.09401, F.A.C., even with appropriate and allowable instructional accommodations, assistive technology, or accessible instructional materials.
  - b. The student is participating in a curriculum based on the state standards access points pursuant to Rule 6A-1.09401, F.A.C., for all academic areas.
  - c. The student requires direct instruction in academics based on access points pursuant to Rule 6A-1.09401, F.A.C.,

in order to acquire, generalize, and transfer skills across settings.

### 3. District and IEP team requirements

If it is determined by the IEP team using the Assessment Participation Checklist that the student will participate in the statewide assessment through the AA-AAS, the IEP will contain a statement of why the general assessment is not appropriate and why the AA-AAS is appropriate. It also will indicate that notification was made to the parent and that the implications of the student's nonparticipation in the **statewide, standardized assessment** program were provided. The Assessment Participation Checklist may be accessed at: <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-5831/dps-2010-92.pdf>.

### 4. Administration of the AA-AAS

The assessment will be administered individually by the student's special education teacher. If this is not possible, the test administrator will be a certified teacher or other licensed professional who has worked extensively with the student. All individuals who administer the AA-AAS must be trained in administration procedures and receive annual update training.

The district administers district-wide assessment(s) of student achievement. (If your district uses a portfolio as a corresponding district alternate assessment, the data collected should be based on grade level Florida Alternate Achievement Standards. For portfolios, indicate what information is being collected, how the information is being recorded, what type of scoring rubric is being used and how the district ensures that all teachers are collecting the same information and scoring the data the same way.)

- Yes
- No

If **yes**, include the name of each district-wide assessment with the corresponding alternate assessment.

K-2 ELA units; ABLLS (Alternate Assessment)  
 3-12 Florida Standards Assessment; FAA (Florida Alternate Assessment)  
 EOCs; EOCs for Access Courses, includes ULS Pre/Post test data (Alternate Assessment)

## **Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities**

### **Section F: Eligibility Criteria for Prekindergarten Children with Disabilities**

- This section is not applicable for the district.

#### **Statutory and Regulatory Citations**

34 CFR §§300.25 and 300.101

Sections 1003.01, 1003.21, and 1003.57, F.S.

Rule 6A-6.03026, F.A.C.

#### **Definition**

A prekindergarten child with a disability is a child who meets the following criteria.

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

In accordance with s. 1003.21, F.S., a child is eligible for prekindergarten programs for children with disabilities based upon meeting the eligibility criteria for one or more specific exceptionalities listed below and upon meeting the age requirements shown.

1. The child is below three (3) years of age and meets the criteria for eligibility for any of the following educational programs:
  - a. Deaf or hard of hearing
  - b. Visually impaired
  - c. Orthopedically impaired, other health impairment, or traumatic brain injury
  - d. Intellectual disabilities
  - e. Established conditions
  - f. Developmentally delayed
  - g. Dual-sensory impaired
  - h. Autism Spectrum Disorder
2. The child is age three (3) through five (5) and meets the criteria for eligibility as a child with one or more of the following disabilities:
  - a. Intellectual disabilities
  - b. Speech and language impaired
  - c. Deaf or hard of hearing
  - d. Visually impaired
  - e. Orthopedically impaired, other health impairment, or traumatic brain injury
  - f. Emotional or behavioral disabilities
  - g. Specific learning disabilities
  - h. Homebound or hospitalized
  - i. Dual-sensory impaired
  - j. Autism Spectrum Disorder

## k. Developmentally delayed

**Child Evaluation**

1. Evaluations are conducted in accordance with the requirements of rules for the eligibility areas listed in Sections 1 and 2 under *Eligibility Criteria*.
2. Existing screening and evaluation information available from agencies that previously served the child and family shall be used, as appropriate, to meet evaluation criteria for the rules for the eligibility areas listed in Section 1 and 2.

**Instructional Program**

In regards to a child who is eligible for admission to public kindergarten in accordance with Section 1003.21, F.S., an eligible prekindergarten child with a disability may receive instruction for one additional school year in a prekindergarten classroom in accordance with the child's individual educational plan (IEP) or individualized family support plan (IFSP).

The parent or guardian must be informed in writing of the implications of an additional year in the prekindergarten classroom (i.e., the additional year is not considered a "retention," thus impacting the future consideration of a "good cause exemption"). If a parent disagrees with the IEP team recommendation for an additional year of instruction in a prekindergarten classroom, the team's recommendation may not be used to deny a child admission to kindergarten.

**Transition from Early Steps Part C Services to Part B Services**

The district's processes and procedures regarding the transition of eligible children from Early Steps to the Part B Program for Prekindergarten Children with Disabilities, including district procedures that ensure the district's participation in the transition conference and development of the IEP by the third birthday, are described in the text box below.

**Referral to Early Steps**

- a. With parent permission, children with developmental concerns are referred by the community to Early Steps. It is a requirement under Part C of IDEA 2004 for referral sources to make referrals within two working days of identifying a child who may have a developmental delay or an established condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay. Families may also self refer.
- b. Early Steps makes an initial contact with the family within five (5) working days from the referral. A forty-five (45) calendar day timeline for completing the Individualized Family Support Plan begins with the referral date.
- c. A service coordinator is assigned to the family and must conduct the First Contact Process(face-to-face) during the first forty-four (44) days prior to the initial evaluation/assessment.
- d. During the First Contact Process, the service coordinator meets with the family, completes paperwork including release and consent forms, explains the Early Steps Program and assists the family in planning for the evaluation.

**Referral to Early Steps**

- a. With parent permission, children with developmental concerns are referred by the community to Early Steps. It is a requirement under Part C of IDEA 2004 for referral sources to make referrals within two working days of identifying a child who may have a developmental delay or an established condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay. Families may also self refer.
- b. Early Steps makes an initial contact with the family within five (5) working days from the referral. A forty-five (45) calendar day timeline for completing the Individualized Family Support Plan begins with the referral date.
- c. A service coordinator is assigned to the family and must conduct the face-to-face First Contacts process during the first forty-four (44) days prior to the initial evaluation/assessment.
- d. During the First Contact Process, the service coordinator meets with the family, completes paperwork including release and consent forms, explains the Early Steps Program and assists the family in planning for the evaluation.

**Notification**

Early Steps is required to notify the LEA of all children who "will shortly reach the age of eligibility" [PL 108-449, Section 637(a)(9)(A)(ii)(I)] for preschool services under Part B to assist the LEA in program planning.

- At Intake and at 24 months of age, Early Steps will inform the family about the policy of sharing personally identifying

information with the LEA.

- On the first of each month, Early Steps will provide notification to the LEA of all children determined eligible for Part C and who turn 27 months in that month or who were referred to Early Steps in the previous month and were older than 27 months.

Note: Children who enter Early Steps at 32 months or later will follow procedures outlined in Special Circumstances, Late Referral (Section I, F. 1.)

- The notification to the LEA will be organized by
  - a. the child's date of birth and will include
  - b. the code for the Early Steps Service Coordinator
  - c. date of referral to Early Steps
  - d. child's gender, and e. the zip code for the family.

#### Transition Planning

Transition planning begins from first contact with the family. When the child is no older than 24 months, Early Steps will give the family information about options (school district and community) for the child after the child turns three years of age and Part C services end.

- As part of transition planning, Early Steps will invite all families of children 24 to 33 months to attend the regularly scheduled Next Steps Seminar where information about community options is presented.
- A family may decline or consent to a referral to the LEA during transition planning.
- Throughout transition planning, Early Steps will document all family decisions and transition outcomes on the IFSP, Form I. Transition Conference

The transition conference may be held up to nine months prior to the child's third birthday, but must be held not less than three months (90 days) before the child's third birthday [PL 108-446, Section 637(a)(9)(ii)(II)].

- Early Steps will obtain a parental consent for the transition conference.
- Transition conferences will be scheduled between 27 and 30 months of age and will be scheduled as a separate meeting or as part of the collaborative evaluation outlined in Special Circumstances, Late Referral (Section I, F. 1.)
- A family may decline to consent to the LEA's participation in the transition conference.
- Transition conferences may be held as part of the Next Steps Seminar. To avoid late transition conferences, priority for these conferences will be given to families of children closest to 33 months of age at the time of the Next Steps Seminar.

#### Referral to the LEA

Referral is the formal process by which the child and family are referred by Early Steps, with parent consent, to the LEA to determine eligibility for the Part B Pre-K ESE Program. Early Steps may refer children to FDLRS Child Find either before, during or after the transition conference.

- As early as 24 months of age, with parental consent and after options for transition have been presented, the child may be referred to FDLRS Child Find. If the parent has previously declined, but now consents, referral will be made immediately to FDLRS Child Find.
  - i. FDLRS Child Find will enter the child's demographic information, including race/ethnicity into the CHRIS data system.
  - ii. Children who enter Early Steps at 32 months or later will follow procedures outlined in Special Circumstances, Late Referral (Refer to Section I, F. 1.)
  - iii. At the time of referral, Early Steps will provide FDLRS/Child Find with a Transition Referral Packet. The consent form for referral to the LEA must list the specific documents that will be released to the LEA, including the BDI-2.
  - iv. The Transition Referral Packet must be completed no later than 33 months and will include a copy of:
    1. Child's birth certificate, if available;

Note: Early Steps will make two attempts to obtain a copy of the birth certificate, at the initial evaluation and at the transition conference. For children transitioning from Part C and found eligible for Part B, a birth certificate is required for enrollment in the Pre-K ESE Program in Pinellas County.

2. Demographic information, including race/ethnicity as reported by the family;
3. Current IFSP, including Form I;
4. Documentation of dates and results of hearing and vision screening and any other relevant medical reports\* (e.g., audiological);\*
5. All therapy evaluations and other assessments completed within the previous 6 months; and
6. The "entry" and "exit" BDI-2 protocol and score sheet.

- v. With parent consent, all information in the Early Steps record related to screening, evaluation and assessment, eligibility determination, development and implementation of the IFSP or provision of services generated from outside sources through a contract with Early Steps may be included in the Transition Referral Packet for the FDLRS Child Find.
- vi. FDLRS Child Find will: Enter or update information in the CHRIS data base;
  1. Review the Transition Referral Packet for completeness and follow-up, if necessary;
  2. Participate in the Transition Conference with the family, Early Steps Service Coordinator, LEA representative, and other appropriate community providers when the child is between 27 and 30 months, unless child is a late referral (Refer to Section I, F.1.);
  3. If the family is unable to participate in a face-to-face transition conference, mails FDLRS/Child Find packet to the family, including releases and all other information required for the Pinellas County School District; and
  4. Sends the completed Transition Referral Packet to LEA, Pre-K Assessment Team (PreKAT) for evaluation and determination of eligibility for Part B/Pre-K ESE Program.
    - Evaluation/Determination of Eligibility/Development and Implementation of IEP Prior to the Child's Third Birthday
- i. At 35 months, the LEA will schedule an eligibility staffing meeting for children referred to LEA who are potentially eligible for Part B. The determination of eligibility will involve a review of the completed Transition Referral Packet, including "exit" BDI-2, and any additional evaluations conducted by the LEA.
- ii. Early Steps will inform the family that they can request participation of the Service Coordinator at initial IEP meeting.
- iii. LEA will develop and implement an IEP prior to child's third birthday for all children determined to be eligible for Part B.
- iv. Extended School Year (ESY) services will be provided, if the child's IEP team determines, on an individual basis, that the services are necessary for the provision of free appropriate public education (FAPE). It is acceptable to wait until the beginning of the school year to initiate the services on the IEP when a decision is made that ESY services are not needed.
- v. Based on the recommendation of the IEP team, the LEA may provide FAPE to a child prior to age three.
- vi. The Part C Transition Coordinator will notify Early Steps of the LEA eligibility staffing outcome.

#### Special Circumstances

##### 1. Late Referrals to Early Steps

- If the child is referred to Early Steps between 32 months and 34 months, 14 days (more than 45 calendar days) prior to the child's third birthday, with parent consent, the Early Steps Service Coordinator will contact the Pinellas County Schools Part C Transition Coordinator and schedule a joint evaluation/transition conference.
- 2. If a child is referred to Early Steps at 34 months, 15 days (less than 45 calendar days) prior to the child's third birthday, with the family's consent, Early Steps may provide service coordination to assist the family in contacting the FDLRS/Child Find Specialist or other community programs.

##### 3. Late Transition Conferences

- The Early Steps Service Coordinator will immediately contact the LEA and FDLRS/Child Find for all children who have not had a transition conference prior to 33 months to identify the strategies/activities, which must be implemented to ensure that the LEA develops and implements the IEP prior to the child's third birthday.

### **Unique Philosophical, Curricular, or Instructional Considerations**

#### 1. Philosophy

- a. The prekindergarten program for children with disabilities supports young children by recognizing and respecting their unique abilities, strengths, and needs.
- b. Services for young children with disabilities and their families include a range of educational, developmental, and therapeutic activities that are provided in least restrictive or natural learning environments where children experience learning opportunities that promote and enhance behavioral and developmental competencies.
- c. For a child with disabilities age three (3) through five (5) years, special education, which refers to specially designed instruction and related services, is provided to meet the unique needs of the child. Specially designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction.
- d. Programs and services for prekindergarten children with disabilities are based on practices that are developmentally appropriate for all young children. They acknowledge the importance of collaboration and partnerships with families and view the child in the context of the family and community. Understanding and knowledge of early childhood development serves as a foundation for these practices.

#### 2. Curriculum

- a. Curriculum content, materials, and activities are consistent with the district's program philosophy.

- For prekindergarten children with disabilities, during the year prior to kindergarten entry, the Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Standards are used to guide the selection of curriculum (curricula) in concert with a knowledge and understanding of the impact of the disability on the growth and development of the child.
- The VPK standards help to create a shared framework and common language between early childhood education and early childhood special education by emphasizing the sequence of development across multiple developmental domains and the importance of the classroom environment to include how curricula, materials, and equipment are selected.
- For children birth to the age of eligibility for the VPK program, Florida's Birth to Three Learning and Developmental Standards and the School Readiness Performance Standards may be used to guide the selection of curriculum, materials, and equipment.

b. Modifications, adaptations, and accommodations of curricula, materials, and activities selected may be needed to meet the unique needs of the child. Ongoing progress monitoring is conducted to ensure that the instruction or interventions provided are effective in attaining the desired outcomes.

### 3. Instructional support

- a. Young children receive instructional support through specially designed instruction and related services as determined by the IEP process or early intervention services as determined through the IFSP process. These services are based on peer-reviewed, research-based practices to the extent practicable.
- b. Teachers and related services personnel are trained in how to design and implement individualized programs to address the learning needs of children with disabilities.
- c. Teachers and related services personnel are provided with administrative support to assure reasonable class size and workload, adequate funds for materials, and professional development. Teachers provide instruction in the domains of development, including cognitive development, motor development, language and communication, social emotional development, and adaptive behavior. Instruction and related services may be offered in a continuum of placements and settings that may include regular, resource, or special class settings in public, community-based, or home-based settings.
- d. School districts may provide related services to children and professional development for teachers and related services personnel in coordination with community agencies, including other early childhood partners such as Early Learning Coalitions and Head Start. Additionally, support for professional development and related services may, as appropriate, be provided in collaboration with discretionary projects funded by the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, and other agencies of state and local government, including, but not limited to, the Division of Blind Services, the Department of Children and Families, and the Department of Health, Children's Medical Services.

**The school district has the option to include additional information regarding evaluations, qualified evaluators, or unique philosophical, curricular, or instructional considerations for prekindergarten children with disabilities.**

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The school district has provided additional information for this section in **Appendix B** of this document.
- There is no additional information for this section.
- This section is not applicable for the district.



## Part II. Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities

### Section G: Individualized Family Support Plan for Students with Disabilities Ages Birth through Five (5) Years

- This section is not applicable for the district.

#### Students with Disabilities Ages Birth through Two (2) Years

##### Statutory and Regulatory Citations

34 CFR §303.340

Sections 1003.03, 1003.21, and 1003.57, F.S.

Rules 6A-6.03029 and 6A-6.0331, F.A.C.

##### Definition

An IFSP is a written plan identifying the specific concerns and priorities of a family of children with disabilities, ages birth through five (5) years, related to enhancing a child's development and the resources to provide early intervention services. A planning process involving the family, professionals, and others is used to prepare the document. An IFSP must be used for children ages birth through two (2) years. At the option of the district and with written parental consent, an IFSP may be used in lieu of an IEP for children with disabilities ages three (3) through five (5) years. Parent(s) must be provided with a detailed explanation of the differences between an IFSP and an IEP.

##### Procedures

#### 1. Content of an IFSP

The IFSP is in writing and includes:

- a. A statement of the **child's** present levels of physical development (including vision, hearing, and health status), cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, and adaptive development based on **the information from the child's evaluation and skills assessment**.
- b. With concurrence of the family, a statement of the family's resources, priorities, and concerns related to enhancing the development of the family's child with a disability;
- c. A statement of the measurable results or **measurable** outcomes expected to be achieved by the child and the family, including pre-literacy and language skills, as developmentally appropriate for the child, and the **goals, criteria, procedures, and timelines** used to determine the degree to which progress toward achieving the **measurable** results or outcomes is being made and whether modifications or revisions of the **expected** results or outcomes or services are necessary;
- d. A statement of the specific early intervention services based on peer-reviewed research, to the extent practicable, or, for children ages three (3) through five (5) years, the specially designed instruction and related services necessary to meet the unique needs of the child and the family, including the frequency, intensity, and method of delivering services;
- e. A statement of the natural environments in which early intervention services, or, for children ages three (3) through five (5) years, specially designed instruction and related services are to be provided, and a justification of the extent, if any, to which the services will not be provided in a natural environment;
- f. The projected dates for initiation of services and the anticipated duration of such services; and
- g. **To the extent appropriate, the IFSP must:**
  - **Identify any medical and additional supports that the child or family needs or is receiving through other sources but that are neither required nor funded under IDEA, Part C and**
  - **Include a description of the steps the service coordinator or family may take to assist the child and family in securing additional supports not currently being provided**

h. The name of the service coordinator from the profession most immediately relevant to the child's or family's needs or the individual who is otherwise qualified to be responsible for the implementation of the **services identified on the plan** and **including transition services** coordination with other agencies and persons, including transition services. In meeting this requirement, the district may assign the same service coordinator who was appointed at the time that the child was initially referred for evaluation to be responsible for implementing a child's and family's IFSP or may appoint a new service coordinator.

## 2. Content of IFSPs for children ages birth through two (2) years

IFSPs developed for children with disabilities ages birth through two (2) years must also include:

- a. The frequency, intensity, and method of delivery of the early intervention services;
- b. The location **and length** of the early intervention services;
- c. The payment arrangements, if any;
- d. Other services to the extent appropriate; and
- e. The steps to be taken to support the transition of the child, upon reaching age three (3), to preschool services for children with disabilities ages three (3) through five (5) years, to the extent that those services are considered appropriate or other services that may be available, if appropriate; the steps required for transition include:
  - Discussions with **and training of**, parent(s) regarding future placements and other matters related to the child's transition;
  - Procedures to prepare the child for changes in service delivery, including steps to help the child adjust to and function in a new setting; and
  - **Confirmation that notification information for child find purposes has been transmitted to the local school district and the Florida Department of Education in accordance with the state's notification policies;**
  - With parental consent, the sharing of information about the child to the school district to ensure continuity of services, including evaluation and assessment information and copies of IFSPs that have been developed and implemented
  - **Identification of transition services and other activities that the IFSP team determines are necessary to support the transition of the child.**

## 3. Timelines and requirements for IFSPs

- a. Timelines for IFSPs developed for children ages birth through two (2) years include:
  - A **face-to-face** meeting to develop the initial IFSP for a child who has been evaluated for the first time and determined eligible must be conducted within forty-five (45) days from referral;
  - A review of the IFSP for a child and the child's family must be conducted every six (6) months or more frequently if conditions warrant, or if the family requests such a review; the review may be carried out at a meeting or by another means that is acceptable to the parent(s) and other participants.
- b. The purpose of the periodic review is to determine:
  - The degree to which progress toward achieving the outcomes is being made; and
  - Whether modifications or revision of the outcomes or services are necessary.
  - **Whether additional needs have been identified based on ongoing assessment or observation.**
- c. A **face-to-face** meeting is conducted on at least an annual basis **re-determine eligibility and review** the IFSP and, as appropriate, revise, **change or modify** its provisions. The results of any current evaluations, and other information available from the ongoing assessments of the child and family, are used **to determine continuing eligibility and** what services are needed and will be provided.
- d. IFSP meetings are held in accordance with the following:

- IFSP meetings are conducted in settings and at times that are convenient to families; and
  - In the native language of the family or other mode of communication used by the family, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.
- e. Meeting arrangements are made with and written notice provided to the family and other participants early enough before the meeting date to ensure that they will be able to attend.
- f. The contents of the IFSP are fully explained to the parent(s) and informed written consent from the parent(s) is obtained prior to the provisions of early intervention services described in the plan. If the parent(s) do not provide consent with respect to a particular early intervention service, that service may not be provided. The early intervention services to which parental consent is obtained must be provided. **Each early intervention service must be provided as soon as possible after the parent provides consent for that service.**
4. Participants in IFSP meetings (ages birth through two (2) years)
- Participants in the development of IFSPs (both initial and annual) for children with disabilities ages birth through two (2) years **must** include:
- a. The parent or parent(s) of the child;
  - b. Other family members as requested by the parent(s), if feasible to do so;
  - c. An advocate or person outside of the family, if the parent(s) request that the person participate;
  - d. The service coordinator who has been working with the family since the initial referral of the child for evaluation, or the person designated responsible for implementation of the IFSP;
  - e. For initial IFSP meetings, at least two (2) professionals from two (2) different disciplines directly involved in conducting the evaluations and assessments; for subsequent IFSP meetings, at least two (2) professionals from two different disciplines; and;
  - f. As appropriate, persons who will be providing services to the child or family.
5. If any of these participants are unable to attend a meeting, arrangements must be made for the person's involvement through other means, including:
- a. Participating in a telephone conference call;
  - b. Having a knowledgeable authorized representative attend the meeting; or
  - c. Making pertinent records available at the meeting.
6. Each periodic review provides for the participation of the persons listed above. If conditions warrant, provisions must be made for the participation of other representatives.
7. Participants in IFSP meetings (ages three (3) through five (5) years)
- Early intervention services for a child with disabilities ages birth through two (2) years and the child's family may commence before the completion of the evaluation and assessments if the following conditions are met:
- a. Parental consent is obtained;
  - b. An interim IFSP is developed that includes the name of the service coordinator who will be responsible for the implementation of the interim IFSP and coordination with other agencies and persons and the services that have been determined to be needed immediately by the child and the family; and
  - c. The evaluation and assessments are completed **and an initial IFSP developed** within forty-five (45) days from the referral **date**.
8. For children ages birth through two (2) years, the school district is only financially responsible for the early intervention services specified and agreed to through the IFSP process.

#### **Students with Disabilities Ages Three (3) through Five (5)**

## **Statutory and Regulatory Citations**

34 CFR §§**303.323** and 300.340

Sections 1003.21, 1003.03, and 1003.57, F.S.

Rules 6A-6.03029 and 6A-6.0331, F.A.C.

## **Definition**

An IFSP is a written plan identifying the specific concerns and priorities of a family of children with disabilities that must be used for children ages birth through two (2) years. A planning process involving the family, professionals, and others is used to prepare the document. At the option of the district and with written parental consent, an IFSP may be used in lieu of an IEP for children with disabilities ages three (3) through five (5) years. Parent(s) must be provided with a detailed explanation of the differences between an IFSP and an IEP.

## **Procedures**

### 1. Content of an IFSP

The IFSP is in writing and includes:

- a. A statement of the **child's** present levels of physical development (including vision, hearing, and health status), cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, and adaptive development based on objective criteria.
- b. With concurrence of the family, a statement of the family's resources, priorities, and concerns related to enhancing the development of the family's child with a disability;
- c. A statement of the measurable results or major outcomes expected to be achieved by the child and the family, including pre-literacy and language skills, as developmentally appropriate for the child, and the criteria, procedures, and timelines used to determine the degree to which progress toward achieving the results or outcomes is being made and whether modifications or revisions of the results or outcomes or services are necessary;
- d. A statement of the specific early intervention services based on peer-reviewed research, to the extent practicable, or, for children ages three (3) through five (5) years, the specially designed instruction and related services necessary to meet the unique needs of the child and the family, including the frequency, intensity, and method of delivering services;
- e. A statement of the natural environments in which early intervention services, or, for children ages three (3) through five (5) years, specially designed instruction and related services are to be provided, and a justification of the extent, if any, to which the services will not be provided in a natural environment;
- f. The projected dates for initiation of services and the anticipated duration of such services;
- g. The name of the service coordinator from the profession most immediately relevant to the child's or family's needs or the individual who is otherwise qualified to be responsible for the implementation of the plan and coordination with other agencies and persons. In meeting this requirement, the district may assign the same service coordinator who was appointed at the time that the child was initially referred for evaluation to be responsible for implementing a child's and family's IFSP or may appoint a new service coordinator.
- h. The frequency, intensity, and method of delivery of the early intervention services;
  - i. The location of the early intervention services;
  - j. The payment arrangements, if any;
- k. Other services to the extent appropriate; and
- l. The steps to be taken to support the transition of the child, upon reaching age three (3), to preschool services for children with disabilities ages three (3) through five (5) years, to the extent that those services are considered appropriate or other services that may be available, if appropriate; the steps required for transition include:
  - Discussions with parent(s) regarding future placements and other matters related to the child's transition;
  - Procedures to prepare the child for changes in service delivery, including steps to help the child adjust to

and function in a new setting;

- With parental consent, the sharing of information about the child to the school district to ensure continuity of services, including evaluation and assessment information and copies of IFSPs that have been developed and implemented

2. Requirements for IFSPs for children ages three (3) through five (5) are in accordance with the requirements in 6A-6.03028, F.A.C.
3. Participants in IFSP meetings for children with disabilities ages three (3) through five (5) years include:
  - a. The parent(s);
  - b. Not less than one regular education teacher, if the child is or may be participating in the regular education environment;
  - c. Not less than one special education teacher;
  - d. A representative of the local district who is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of specially designed instruction for children with disabilities and is knowledgeable about the general curriculum and the availability of resources of the local district;
  - e. An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of the evaluation results. This individual may be a member of the committee as described in b) through d) above;
  - f. At the discretion of the parent or the school district, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel; (Note: The determination of the knowledge or special expertise shall be made by the party who invited the individual to participate in the IFSP meeting); and
  - g. Whenever appropriate, the child.
4. For children ages three (3) through five (5) years, the school district is only financially responsible for the provision of specially designed instruction and the related services necessary for the child to benefit from the specially designed instruction.

**Part III.**  
**Policies and Procedures for Students**

## Part III. Policies and Procedures for Students

### Section A: Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students who are Gifted

- This section is not applicable for the district.

#### Statutory and Regulatory Citations

Sections 1003.01 and 1003.57, F.S.  
Rules 6A-6.03019 and 6A-6.030191, F.A.C.

#### Definition

A student who is gifted is one who has superior intellectual development and is capable of high performance.

#### Eligibility Criteria

A student is eligible for special instructional programs for the gifted from kindergarten through grade twelve (12) if the student meets the criteria under 1. or 2. below:

1. The student demonstrates:
  - a. The need for a special program
  - b. A majority of characteristics of gifted students according to a standard scale or checklist
  - c. Superior intellectual development as measured by an intelligence quotient of two (2) standard deviations or more above the mean on an individually administered standardized test of intelligence
2. The student is a member of an underrepresented group and meets the criteria specified in an approved school district plan for increasing the participation of underrepresented groups in programs for students who are gifted.  
Underrepresented groups are defined in Rule 6A-6.03019, F.A.C. as students with limited English proficiency or students from low socio-economic status families.

#### Additional Information Required

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The school district **has** a plan for increasing the participation of underrepresented groups in programs for gifted students. The plan is provided in **Appendix C** of this document.
- The school district **does not have** a plan for increasing the participation of underrepresented groups in programs for gifted students.

#### Student Evaluation

1. The minimum evaluations for determining eligibility address the following:
  - a. Need for a special instructional program
  - b. Characteristics of the gifted
  - c. Intellectual development
  - d. May include those evaluation procedures specified in an approved district plan to increase the participation of students from underrepresented groups in programs for the gifted
2. Evaluations and qualified evaluators for students who are gifted are listed in Part I of this document.

#### Temporary Break in Service

The team developing the EP may determine that a student's needs may currently be appropriately met through other academic options. The parent or student may indicate that they do not desire service for a period of time. Should the decision be made to waive the services offered on the current educational plan, the student may resume service at any time.

## Unique Philosophical, Curricular, or Instructional Considerations

### 1. Philosophy

- a. Each student identified as being eligible for gifted services is entitled to receive a free appropriate public education which will enable the student to progress in the general curriculum to the maximum extent appropriate.
- b. Specially designed instruction, appropriate related services, and programs for students who are gifted shall provide significant adaptations in one or more of the following: curriculum, methodology, materials, equipment, or environment designed to meet the individual and unique needs and goals of each student who is gifted.
- c. A range of service delivery options is available to meet the student's special needs. Teachers are trained to provide the unique services identified for each student and are provided with administrative support to assure reasonable class size, adequate funds for materials and inservice training.

### 2. Curriculum

- a. Curriculum options include an effective and differentiated curriculum designed for the abilities of the student who is gifted to ensure that each individual student progresses in the curriculum.
- b. The curriculum may include, but is not limited to, opportunities for problem solving, problem-based learning, application of knowledge and skills, and other effective instructional strategies.
- c. The teachers of the students who are gifted are trained to provide a curriculum based on the educational characteristics and needs of the learner who is gifted.
- d. Curriculum for each student will be determined by the EP and will focus on the performance levels for the student and needs for developing further skills and abilities, recognizing opportunities to extend the present program through appropriate scaffolding for students who are gifted.
- e. The curriculum for the student who is gifted will assume access to the general curriculum (State standards) with emphasis on what the EP team determines will offer opportunities for growth for the learner who is gifted based on the student's strengths and present level of performance.

### 3. Instructional support

- a. Students identified as eligible for gifted services receive instructional support through the specially designed instruction and related services as determined through the development of the EP.
- b. Teachers of the students who are gifted provide instruction and support to further develop the student's demonstrated ability.
- c. Teachers are provided with administrative support to develop an individualized program to meet the goals for each student as determined by the EP.
- d. Students who are gifted may indicate a need for special counseling and guidance in understanding their special characteristics.
- e. Support services are provided in coordination with local school district student services and community agencies, the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System Associate Centers, special projects funded by the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, and other agencies of state and local government.
- f. No student may be given special instruction for students who are gifted until after he or she has been properly evaluated and [found eligible for gifted services](#).

**The school district has the option to include additional information regarding evaluations, qualified evaluators, or unique philosophical, curricular, or instructional considerations for students who are gifted.**

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The school district has provided additional information for this section in **Appendix B** of this document.
- There is no additional information for this section.



## Part III. Policies and Procedures for Students

### Section B: Educational Plans for Students who are Gifted

#### Statutory and Regulatory Citation

Sections 1001.02, 1003.01, and 1003.57, F.S.  
Rule 6A-6.030191, F.A.C.

#### Procedures

1. The district is responsible for developing EPs for students who are identified solely as gifted.

**Note:** IEPs rather than EPs are developed for those students who are gifted and are also identified as having a disability.

- a. The EP includes:

- A statement of the student's present levels of educational performance that may include, but is not limited to, the student's strengths and interests, the student's needs beyond the general curriculum, results of the student's performance on State and district assessments, and evaluation results
- A statement of goals, including benchmarks or short-term objectives
- A statement of the specially designed instruction to be provided to the student
- A statement of how the student's progress toward the goals will be measured and reported to the parents
- The projected dates for the beginning of services and the anticipated frequency, location, and duration of these services

- b. The EP team considers the following during development, review, and revision of the EP:

- The strengths of the student and the needs resulting from the student's giftedness
- The results of recent evaluations, including class work and State or district assessments
- In the case of a student with limited English proficiency, the language needs of the student as they relate to the EP

- c. Timelines for development of the EP include the following:

- An EP is in effect at the beginning of each school year for each student identified as gifted who is continuing in a special program.
- An EP is developed within thirty (30) calendar days following the determination of eligibility for specially designed instruction in the gifted program and is in effect prior to the provision of these services.
- Meetings are held to develop and revise the EP at least once every three (3) years for students in grades K–8 and at least every four (4) years for students in grades 9–12.
- EPs may be reviewed more frequently, as needed, such as when a student transitions from elementary to middle school or from middle to high school.

- d. EP participants include:

- The parents, whose role includes providing strengths of the student, expressing concerns for enhancing the education of their child, participating in discussions about the child's need for specially designed instruction, participating in deciding how the child will be involved and participate in the general curriculum, and participating in the determination of what services the district will provide to the child and in what setting

- At least one teacher of the gifted program
- One regular education teacher of the student who, to the extent appropriate, is involved in the development of the student's EP; involvement may include the provision of written documentation of a student's strengths and needs for review and revision of the subsequent EPs
- A representative of the school district who is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of specially designed instruction for students who are gifted and is knowledgeable about the general curriculum and the availability of resources of the school district; at the discretion of the district, one of the student's teachers may be designated to serve as the representative of the district
- An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of the evaluation results; this individual may be a teacher of the gifted, a regular education teacher, or a representative of the school district as described above
- At the discretion of the parent or the school district, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the student, including related services personnel (**Note:** The determination of the knowledge or special expertise shall be made by the party who invited the individual to participate in the EP meeting)
- Whenever appropriate, the student

## 2. Parent participation in EP meetings

This district takes the following steps to ensure that one or both of the parents of a student identified as gifted is present or provided the opportunity to participate at EP meetings:

- a. Notifying parents of the meeting early enough to ensure that they will have an opportunity to attend
- b. Scheduling the meeting at a mutually agreed on time and place
  - i. A written notice to the parent indicates the purpose, time, location of the meeting, and who, by title or position, will be in attendance. It also includes a statement informing the parents that they have the right to invite an individual with special knowledge or expertise about their child. If neither parent can attend, the district uses other methods to ensure parent participation, including individual or conference telephone calls.
  - ii. A meeting may be conducted without a parent in attendance if the district is unable to obtain the attendance of the parents. In this case, the district maintains a record of its attempts to arrange a mutually agreed on time and place. These records include such items as:
    - Detailed records of telephone calls made or attempted and the results of those calls
    - Copies of correspondence sent to the parents and any responses received
    - Detailed records of visits made to the parent's home or place of employment and the results of those visits
  - iii. The district takes whatever action is necessary to ensure that the parent understands the proceedings at the meeting, including arranging for an interpreter for parents who are deaf or whose native language is other than English. A copy of the EP shall be provided to the parent at no cost.

## 3. Implementation of the EP

- a. An EP is in effect before specially designed instruction is provided to an eligible student and is implemented as soon as possible following the EP meeting.
- b. The EP is accessible to each of the student's teachers who are responsible for the implementation, and each teacher of the student is informed of specific responsibilities related to the implementation of the EP.

**Part IV.**  
**Policies and Procedures for Parentally-Placed Private School Students with Disabilities**

## Part IV. Policies and Procedures for Parentally-Placed Private School Students with Disabilities

### Section A: Provision of Equitable Services to Parentally-Placed Private School Students with Disabilities

#### Statutory and Regulatory Citations

34 CFR §§300.130–300.144

Rule 6A-6.030281, F.A.C.

#### Definition

Parentally-placed private school students with disabilities means students with disabilities enrolled by their parents in private, including religious, **non-profit** schools or facilities that meet the definition of elementary school or secondary school under Rules 6A-6.03011 through 6A-6.0361, F.A.C., and does not include students with disabilities who are or have been placed in or referred to a private school or facility by the school district as a means of providing special education and related services. This definition does not include students with disabilities enrolled by their parents in **for-profit** private schools.

#### Procedures

1. Policies and procedures for parentally-placed private school students with disabilities

The school district will maintain policies and procedures to ensure the provision of equitable services to students with disabilities who have been placed in private schools by their parents.

2. Child find for parentally-placed private school students with disabilities

The school district will locate, identify, and evaluate all students with disabilities who are enrolled by their parents in private, including religious, elementary and secondary schools located in the school district's jurisdiction. The child find process will be designed to ensure the equitable participation of parentally-placed private school students and an accurate count of those students.

a. Activities

In carrying out the requirements of this section, the school district will undertake activities similar to the activities undertaken for the school district's public school students.

b. Cost

The cost of carrying out the child find requirements, including individual evaluations, may not be considered in determining if the school district has met its obligation.

c. Completion period

The child find process will be completed in a time period comparable to that for other students attending public schools in the school district.

d. Out-of-state students

The school district in which private, including religious, elementary and secondary schools are located will, in carrying out the child find requirements, include parentally-placed private school students who reside in a state other than Florida.

3. Confidentiality of personally identifiable information

If a student is enrolled, or is going to enroll, in a private school that is not located in the school district of the parent's residence, parental consent will be obtained before any personally identifiable information about the child is released between officials in the school district where the private school is located and officials in the school district of the parent's residence.

4. Provision of services for parentally-placed private school students with disabilities – basic requirement

To the extent consistent with the number and location of students with disabilities who are enrolled by their parents in private, including religious, elementary and secondary schools located in the school district's jurisdiction, provision is made for the participation of those students in the program assisted or carried out under Part B of IDEA by providing

them with special education and related services, including direct services determined in accordance with 12. and 13. below, unless the U.S. Secretary of Education has arranged for services to those students under the by-pass provisions in 34 CFR §§ 300.190 through 300.198.

a. Services plan for parentally-placed private school students with disabilities

A services plan will be developed and implemented for each private school student with a disability who has been designated by the school district in which the private school is located to receive special education and related services.

b. Record keeping

The school district will maintain in its records, and provide to the Florida Department of Education (FDOE), the following information related to parentally-placed private school students covered:

- The number of students evaluated
- The number of students determined to be students with disabilities
- The number of students served

5. Expenditures

To meet the requirements, the school district will spend the following on providing special education and related services (including direct services) to parentally-placed private school students with disabilities:

- a. For children and students aged three (3) through twenty-one (21), an amount that is the same proportion of the school district's total subgrant under Section 611(f) of IDEA as the number of private school students with disabilities aged three through 21 who are enrolled by their parents in private, including religious, elementary, and secondary schools located in the school district's jurisdiction, is to the total number of students with disabilities in its jurisdiction aged three through twenty-one (21).
- b. For children aged three (3) through five (5), an amount that is the same proportion of the school district's total subgrant under Section 619(a) of IDEA as the number of parentally-placed private school students with disabilities aged three (3) through (5) five who are enrolled by their parents in private, including religious, elementary and secondary schools located in the school district's jurisdiction, is to the total number of students with disabilities in its jurisdiction aged three (3) through five (5).
- c. Children aged three (3) through five (5) are considered to be parentally-placed private school students with disabilities enrolled by their parents in private, including religious, elementary schools, if they are enrolled in a private school that meets the definition of elementary school under Florida law.
- d. If the school district has not expended for equitable services all of the funds described in paragraphs a) and b) above by the end of the fiscal year for which Congress appropriated the funds, the school district will obligate the remaining funds for special education and related services (including direct services) to parentally-placed private school students with disabilities during a carry-over period of one additional year.

6. Calculating proportionate amount

In calculating the proportionate amount of federal funds to be provided for parentally-placed private school students with disabilities, the school district, after timely and meaningful consultation with representatives of private schools, will conduct a thorough and complete child find process to determine the number of parentally-placed students with disabilities attending private schools located in the school district. (See Appendix B to IDEA regulations for an example of how proportionate share is calculated)

7. Annual count of the number of parentally-placed private school students with disabilities

The school district will, after timely and meaningful consultation with representatives of parentally-placed private school students with disabilities, determine the number of parentally-placed private school students with disabilities attending private schools located in the school district and ensure that the count is conducted on any date between October 1 and December 1, inclusive, of each year. The count will be used to determine the amount that the school district will spend on providing special education and related services to parentally-placed private school students with disabilities in the next fiscal year.

8. Supplement, not supplant

State and local funds may supplement and in no case supplant the proportionate amount of federal funds required to be expended for parentally-placed private school students with disabilities.

#### 9. Consultation with private school representatives

To ensure timely and meaningful consultation, the school district will consult with private school representatives and representatives of parents of parentally-placed private school students with disabilities during the design and development of special education and related services for the students regarding the following:

- a. The child find process, including how parentally-placed private school students suspected of having a disability can participate equitably and how parents, teachers, and private school officials will be informed of the process
- b. The determination of the proportionate share of federal funds available to serve parentally-placed private school students with disabilities, including the determination of how the proportionate share of those funds was calculated
- c. The consultation process among the school district, private school officials, and representatives of parents of parentally-placed private school students with disabilities, including how the process will operate throughout the school year to ensure that parentally-placed students with disabilities identified through the child find process can meaningfully participate in special education and related services
- d. Provision of special education and related services; how, where, and by whom special education and related services will be provided for parentally-placed private school students with disabilities, including a discussion of:
  - The types of services, including direct services and alternate service delivery mechanisms
  - How special education and related services will be apportioned if funds are insufficient to serve all parentally-placed private school students
  - How and when those decisions will be made
- e. How, if the school district disagrees with the views of private school officials on the provision of services or the types of services (whether provided directly or through a contract), the school district will provide to such private school officials a written explanation of the reasons why the school district chose not to provide services directly or through a contract

#### 10. Written affirmation

When timely and meaningful consultation has occurred, the school district will obtain a written affirmation signed by the representatives of participating private schools. If the representatives do not provide the affirmation within a reasonable period of time, the school district will forward the documentation of the consultation process to FDOE.

#### 11. Compliance

A private school official has the right to submit a complaint to the FDOE that the school district did not engage in consultation that was meaningful and timely or did not give due consideration to the views of the private school official. If the private school official wishes to submit a complaint, the official will provide to FDOE the basis of the noncompliance by the school district with the applicable private school provisions, and the school district will forward the appropriate documentation to FDOE. If the private school official is dissatisfied with the decision of FDOE, the official may submit a complaint to the U.S. Secretary of Education by providing the information on noncompliance, and FDOE will forward the appropriate documentation to the U.S. Secretary of Education.

#### 12. Equitable services determined

- a. No parentally-placed private school student with a disability has an individual right to receive some or all of the special education and related services that the student would receive if enrolled in a public school.
- b. Decisions about the services that will be provided to parentally-placed private school students with disabilities will be made in accordance with the information in this section.
- c. The school district will make the final decisions with respect to the services to be provided to eligible parentally-placed private school students with disabilities.

#### 13. Services plan for each student served

- a. If a student with a disability is enrolled in a religious or other private school by the student's parents and will

receive special education or related services from the school district, the school district will initiate and conduct meetings to develop, review, and revise a services plan for the student and ensure that a representative of the religious or other private school attends each meeting. If the representative cannot attend, the school district will use other methods to ensure participation by the religious or other private school, including individual or conference telephone calls.

- b. Each parentally-placed private school student with a disability who has been designated by the school district to receive services will have a services plan that describes the specific direct special education services that the school district will provide to the student in light of the services that the school district has determined it will make available to parentally-placed private school students with disabilities.
- c. The services plan will be developed, reviewed, and revised consistent with the requirements for IEP development, review, and revision.

#### 14. Equitable services provided

- a. The provision of equitable services will be by employees of the school district or through contract by the school district with an individual, association, agency, organization, or other entity.
- b. The services provided to parentally-placed private school students with disabilities will be provided by personnel meeting the same standards as personnel providing services in the public schools, except that private elementary and secondary school teachers who are providing equitable services to parentally-placed private school students with disabilities do not have to meet the highly qualified special education teacher requirements under Florida law.
- c. Parentally-placed private school students with disabilities may receive a different amount of services than students with disabilities in public schools.
- d. Special education and related services provided to parentally-placed private school students with disabilities, including materials and equipment, will be secular, neutral, and non-ideological.

#### 15. Location of services and transportation

- a. Equitable services to parentally-placed private school students with disabilities may be, but are not required to be, provided on the premises of private, including religious, schools.
- b. If necessary for the student to benefit from or participate in the services, a parentally-placed private school student with a disability will be provided transportation from the student's school or the student's home to a site other than the private school and from the service site to the private school, or to the student's home, depending on the timing of the services.
- c. The school district is not required to provide transportation from the student's home to the private school.
- d. The cost of any transportation provided under this section may be included in calculating whether the school district has expended its proportionate share.

#### 16. Due process hearings and procedural safeguards

- a. Except as provided herein, the procedures related to procedural safeguards, mediation, and due process hearings do not apply to complaints that the school district has failed to meet the requirements in this section, including the provision of services indicated on the student's services plan. However, such procedures do apply to complaints that the school district has failed to meet the requirements related to child find, including the requirements related to conducting appropriate evaluations of students with disabilities.
- b. Any request for a due process hearing regarding the child find requirements will be filed with the school district in which the private school is located and a copy will be forwarded to DOE.

#### 17. State complaints

- a. Any complaint that the school district has failed to meet the requirements related to the provision of equitable services, services plans, expenditures, consultation with private school representatives, personnel, or equipment and supplies will be filed in accordance with the state complaint procedures described in Rules 6A-6.03011 through 6A-6.0361, F.A.C.

- b. A complaint filed by a private school official under this section will be filed with DOE in accordance with its state complaint procedures as prescribed in Rule 6A-6.03311, F.A.C.

18. Requirement that funds not benefit a private school

- a. The school district will not use funds provided under IDEA to finance the existing level of instruction in a private school or to otherwise benefit the private school.
- b. The school district will use funds provided under Part B of IDEA to meet the special education and related services needs of parentally-placed private school students with disabilities, but not for the needs of a private school or the general needs of the students enrolled in the private school.

19. Use of personnel

- a. The school district may use funds available under IDEA to make public school personnel available in other than public facilities to the extent necessary to provide equitable services for parentally-placed private school students with disabilities if those services are not normally provided by the private school.
- b. The school district may use funds available under IDEA to pay for the services of an employee of a private school to provide equitable services if the employee performs the services outside of his or her regular hours of duty and the employee performs the services under public supervision and control.

20. Separate classes prohibited

The school district will not use funds available under IDEA for classes that are organized separately on the basis of school enrollment or religion of the students if the classes are at the same site and the classes include students enrolled in public schools and students enrolled in private schools.

21. Property, equipment, and supplies

- a. The school district will control and administer the funds used to provide special education and related services and hold title to and administer materials, equipment, and property purchased with those funds for the uses and purposes provided in this section.
- b. The school district may place equipment and supplies in a private school for the period of time needed for the provision of equitable services.
- c. The school district will ensure that the equipment and supplies placed in a private school are used only for IDEA purposes and can be removed from the private school without remodeling the private school facility.
- d. The school district will remove equipment and supplies from a private school if the equipment and supplies are no longer needed for IDEA purposes or removal is necessary to avoid unauthorized use of the equipment and supplies for other than IDEA purposes.
- e. No funds under IDEA will be used for repairs, minor remodeling, or construction of private school facilities.



## Part IV. Policies and Procedures for Parentally-Placed Private School Students with Disabilities

### Section B: John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program

#### Statutory and Regulatory Citations

Sections 1002.39, 1002.66, and 1003.21, F.S.

#### Definition

The John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program provides the option for students with an IEP or an accommodation plan issued under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (excluding a temporary accommodation plan which is valid six (6) months or less) to attend a public school other than the one to which the student is assigned or to receive a scholarship to a participating private school of choice.

#### Eligibility Criteria

1. The parent of a student with a disability may request and receive from the State a McKay Scholarship for the student to enroll in and attend a private school if:
  - a. The student has received specialized instructional services under the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program during the previous school year and the student has a current IEP developed by the local school board in accordance with rules of the State Board of Education for the John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program or a 504 accommodation plan has been issued
  - b. The student has spent the prior school year in attendance at a Florida public school or the FSDB. Prior school year in attendance means that the student was enrolled and reported by one of the following:
    - A school district for funding during the preceding October and February FEFP surveys in kindergarten through grade 12, which shall include time spent in a Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) commitment program if funded under the FEFP
    - The FSDB during the preceding October and February student membership surveys in kindergarten through grade 12
    - A school district for funding during the preceding October and February FEFP surveys, was at least four (4) years old when so enrolled and reported, and was eligible for services under s. 1003.21, F.S.
  - c. The parent has obtained acceptance for admission of the student to a private school that is eligible for the program and has requested a scholarship from the department at least sixty (60) days prior to the date of the first scholarship payment. The request must be through a communication directly to the FDOE in a manner that creates a written or electronic record of the request and the date of receipt of the request. FDOE must notify the district of the parent's intent upon receipt of the parent's request.
2. A student is not eligible for a John M. McKay Scholarship while he or she is:
  - a. Enrolled in a school operating for the purpose of providing educational services to youth in DJJ commitment programs;
  - b. Receiving an educational scholarship in accordance with Chapter 1002, F.S.;
  - c. Participating in a home education program as defined in s. 1002.01, F.S.;
  - d. Participating in a virtual school, correspondence school, or distance learning program that receives State funding pursuant to the student's participation, unless the participation is limited to no more than two (2) courses per school year;
  - e. Participating in a private tutoring program in accordance with s. 1002.43, F.S.;

- f. Enrolled in the FSDB; or
- g. Not having regular and direct contact with his or her private school teachers at the school's physical location.

### **Procedures**

1. The amount of the scholarship is calculated based on the student's matrix of services document or the amount of the private school's tuition and fees, whichever is less.
2. For purposes of continuity of educational choice, a John M. McKay Scholarship shall remain in force until the student returns to a public school, graduates from high school, or reaches the age of twenty-two (22), whichever occurs first.
3. A scholarship student who enrolls in a public school or public school program is considered to have returned to a public school for the purpose of determining the end of the scholarship's term. However, if a student enters a DJJ detention center for a period of no more than twenty-one (21) days, the student is not considered to have returned to a public school for that purpose.
4. Upon reasonable notice to the FDOE and the school district, the student's parent may remove the student from the private school and place the student in a public school.
5. Upon reasonable notice to the FDOE, the student's parent may move the student from one participating private school to another participating private school.

### **School District Obligations**

1. Offering parents an opportunity to enroll their student in another public school within their district if the parent requests information on the McKay public school option
2. Notifying parents of students with disabilities about the scholarship program by April 1st of each school year and within ten (10) days after an IEP team meeting or a 504 accommodation plan is issued
3. Informing parents of the availability of the Information Hotline and School Choice website
4. Keeping all district contact information up-to-date with the FDOE, which can be done through the <http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org> website when logged in as a district administrator
5. Submitting an annual Parental Notification Verification Form to the FDOE in the spring of each school year
6. Notifying parents, within ten (10) days of filing intent, if a matrix has not been completed, and informing parents that the required matrix completion date is thirty (30) days after a filed intent
7. For a student with a disability who does not have a matrix of services, completing a matrix of services within thirty (30) days of the parent's filed intent date that assigns the student to one of the three levels of service  
**Note:** Changes in a matrix of services document may be made only for a technical, typographical, or calculation error.
8. Providing locations and times, if requested, for any McKay Scholarship student attending a private school within the district to take statewide assessment exams
9. Providing reevaluation notifications to parents of scholarship students at least once every three (3) years
10. Confirming that scholarship students have not enrolled in public school by completing the District Enrollment Verification files quarterly prior to scholarship
11. Reporting students who receive McKay Scholarship funding as 3518, which designates them as McKay private school students on the full-time equivalent (FTE) survey
12. Notifying the FDOE if a student enrolls in public school, is registered as a home education student, or is committed to a DJJ commitment program for more than twenty-one (21) days
13. Providing transportation to the public school if the parent's choice is consistent with the district's school choice plan
14. Accepting a McKay student from an adjacent district if there is space available and there is a program in place that provides the services agreed to in the student's IEP

## Part IV. Policies and Procedures for Parentally-Placed Private School Students with Disabilities

### Section C: Florida Personal Learning Scholarship Accounts Program

#### Statutory and Regulatory Citation

Sections 1002.385, F.S.

#### Definition

The Florida Personal Learning Scholarship accounts program provides the option for a parent to better meet the individual educational needs of his or her eligible child.

- The following are defined as they relate to the Florida Personal Learning Scholarship:
  - "Approved provider" means a provider who has been approved by the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, a health care practitioner pursuant to s. 456.001(4), or a provider approved by the department pursuant to s. 1002.66, F.S.
  - "Curriculum" means a complete course of study for a particular content area or grade-level, which includes any required supplemental materials.
  - "Department" means the FDOE.
  - "Disability" means, for a student in kindergarten to grade 12, any of the following:
    - Autism, as defined in s. 393.069(3);
    - Cerebral Palsy, as defined in 393.063 (4);
    - Down Syndrome, as defined in s.393.063 (13);
    - Intellectual Disability, as defined in s.393.063 (21);
    - Prader-Willi syndrome, as defined in s. 393.063 (25);
    - Spina bifida, as defined in s. 393.063 (36);
    - For a student in kindergarten, being a high-risk child, as defined in 393.063 (20); and
    - Williams Syndrome.
  - "Eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organization" as defined in 1002.395.
  - "Eligible postsecondary institution" means any of the following:
    - Florida College System institution;
    - State university;
    - School district technical center;
    - School district adult general education center; or
    - An accredited nonpublic postsecondary educational institution, as defined in s. 1005.02, that is licensed to operate in the state pursuant to requirements specified in part III of chapter 1005.
  - "Eligible private school" means a private school, pursuant to s. 1002.01, that is located in Florida and offers an education to students in any grade from kindergarten to grade 12.
  - "IEP" means an individual education plan.
  - "Parent" means a resident of this state who is a parent, as defined in s. 1002.21, F.S.

- "Program" means the Florida Personal Learning Scholarship Accounts Program.

#### **School District's Obligations and Parental Options**

- Include the following:
  - Requirement for a district to complete an IEP and matrix of services upon parent request;
  - Provide for state assessments to students, upon parent request, and;
  - Notify parents concerning availability of reevaluation every three (3) years

**Part V.**  
**Appendices**

## Part V. Appendices

### Appendix A: General Policies and Procedures

#### 1. Procedural Safeguards for Students with Disabilities

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The Department of Education's *Notice of Procedural Safeguards for Parents of Students with Disabilities*, as posted on the Department's website.
- A different notice of procedural safeguards for parents of students with disabilities, included as an attachment.

Additional Attachment: N/A

#### 2. Procedural Safeguards for Students Who Are Gifted

One of the following **must** be selected:

- The Department of Education's *Procedural Safeguards for Exceptional Students Who Are Gifted*, as posted on the Department's website.
- A different notice of procedural safeguards for parents of students who are gifted, included as an attachment.
- This requirement is not applicable for the district.

Additional Attachment: N/A

**Part V. Appendices****Appendix B: Unique Philosophical, Curricular, or Instructional Considerations**

The school district has included as an attachment additional information related to evaluations; qualified evaluators; or philosophical, curricular, or instructional considerations for the exceptionalities identified below:

**II.B.1 Autism Spectrum Disorder**

- Evaluations
- Qualified Evaluators
- Unique Philosophical, Curricular or Instructional Considerations

Additional Attachment: N/A

**II.B.2 Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing**

- Evaluations
- Qualified Evaluators
- Unique Philosophical, Curricular or Instructional Considerations

Additional Attachment: N/A

**II.B.3 Developmentally Delayed**

- Evaluations
- Qualified Evaluators
- Unique Philosophical, Curricular or Instructional Considerations

Additional Attachment: N/A

**II.B.4 Dual-Sensory Impaired**

- Evaluations
- Qualified Evaluators
- Unique Philosophical, Curricular or Instructional Considerations

Additional Attachment: N/A

**II.B.5 Emotional or Behavioral Disabilities**

- Evaluations
- Qualified Evaluators
- Unique Philosophical, Curricular or Instructional Considerations

Additional Attachment: N/A

**II.B.6 Established Conditions**

- Evaluations
- Qualified Evaluators

- Unique Philosophical, Curricular or Instructional Considerations

Additional Attachment: N/A

#### **II.B.7 Homebound or Hospitalized**

- Evaluations
- Qualified Evaluators
- Unique Philosophical, Curricular or Instructional Considerations

Additional Attachment: N/A

#### **II.B.8 Intellectual Disabilities**

- Evaluations
- Qualified Evaluators
- Unique Philosophical, Curricular or Instructional Considerations

Additional Attachment: N/A

#### **II.B.9 Orthopedic Impairment**

- Evaluations
- Qualified Evaluators
- Unique Philosophical, Curricular or Instructional Considerations

Additional Attachment: N/A

#### **II.B.10 Other Health Impairment**

- Evaluations
- Qualified Evaluators
- Unique Philosophical, Curricular or Instructional Considerations

Additional Attachment: N/A

#### **II.B.11 Traumatic Brain Injury**

- Evaluations
- Qualified Evaluators
- Unique Philosophical, Curricular or Instructional Considerations

Additional Attachment: N/A

#### **II.B.12 Specific Learning Disabilities**

- Evaluations
- Qualified Evaluators
- Unique Philosophical, Curricular or Instructional Considerations

Additional Attachment: N/A



**II.B.13 Speech Impairments**

- Evaluations
- Qualified Evaluators
- Unique Philosophical, Curricular or Instructional Considerations

Additional Attachment: N/A

**II.B.14 Language Impairments**

- Evaluations
- Qualified Evaluators
- Unique Philosophical, Curricular or Instructional Considerations

Additional Attachment: N/A

**II.B.15 Visually Impaired**

- Evaluations
- Qualified Evaluators
- Unique Philosophical, Curricular or Instructional Considerations

Additional Attachment: N/A

**II.B.16 Related Services – Occupational Therapy**

- Evaluations
- Qualified Evaluators
- Unique Philosophical, Curricular or Instructional Considerations

Additional Attachment: N/A

**II.B.17 Related Services – Physical Therapy**

- Evaluations
- Qualified Evaluators
- Unique Philosophical, Curricular or Instructional Considerations

Additional Attachment: N/A

**II.C. Individual Educational Plans**

- Evaluations
- Qualified Evaluators
- Unique Philosophical, Curricular or Instructional Considerations

Additional Attachment: N/A

**II.F. Prekindergarten Children with Disabilities**

- Evaluations

- Qualified Evaluators
- Unique Philosophical, Curricular or Instructional Considerations

Additional Attachment: N/A

**III.A. Gifted**

- Evaluations
- Qualified Evaluators
- Unique Philosophical, Curricular or Instructional Considerations

Additional Attachment: N/A

## Part V. Appendices

### Appendix C: District Plan to Increase the Participation of Underrepresented Students in the Program for Students who are Gifted

This section is not applicable for the district.

#### 1. Current Status

Provide the following data:

##### Total Student Population

Number of All Students 101554

Number of Gifted Students 6126

Percent of Gifted Students 6%

**Limited English Proficient (Limited English proficient students are those who are coded as "LY," "LN," "LP," or "LF")**

Number of All Students 7755

Number of Gifted Students 33

Percent of Gifted Students .4%

Percentage of LEP Gifted Compared to Total Number of Gifted Students .5%

\*In order to calculate the "Percentage of LEP Gifted Compared to Total Number of Gifted Students", divide the number of LEP gifted students by the total number of gifted students in the district by and move the decimal point two numbers to the right.

##### Low Socio-Economic Status Family

Number of All Students 33371

Number of Gifted Students 1220

Percent of Gifted Students 3.7%

Percentage of low SES Gifted Compared to Total Number of Gifted Students 19%

\*In order to calculate the "Percentage of SES Gifted Compared to Total Number of Gifted Students", divide the number of SES gifted students by the total number of gifted students in the district and move the decimal point two numbers to the right.

\*\* Percentage of students who are gifted equals the number of students who are gifted within a category divided by the total number of students within that category

#### 2. District Goal

Provide the district's goal to increase the participation of students from under-represented groups in programs for students who are gifted, including which category(ies) are targeted:

The District has committed to increase the participation of students from under-represented populations by implementing a talent development model based on Renzulli's Schoolwide Enrichment Model.

**The district's plan addressing each of the following areas is included as an attachment:** See Attachment: 2-52-309

### **3. Screening and Referral Procedures**

- A description of the screening and referral procedures that will be used to increase the number of students referred for evaluation

### **4. Student Evaluation Procedures**

- A description of the evaluation procedures and measurement instruments that will be used

### **5. Eligibility Criteria**

- A description of the criteria, based on the student's demonstrated ability or potential in the specific areas of leadership, motivation, academic performance, and creativity, that will be applied to determine the student's eligibility; if a matrix is used when determining eligibility, a copy is included as an attachment

### **6. Instructional Program Modifications or Adaptations**

- A description of the instructional program modifications or adaptations that will be implemented to ensure successful and continued participation of students from under-represented groups in the existing instructional program for students who are gifted

### **7. District Evaluation Plan**

- A description of the district's plan used to evaluate its progress toward increasing participation by students from under-represented groups in the program for students who are gifted

**Part V. Appendices****Appendix D: District Policies Regarding the Allowable Use or Prohibition of Physical Restraint and Seclusion**

This section is not applicable for the district.

Select from the following:

The school district's policy regarding the allowable use or prohibition of physical restraint of students with disabilities is included as an attachment.

District documentation: See Attachment: 1-52-384

The school district's policy regarding the allowable use or prohibition of seclusion of students with disabilities is included as an attachment.

District documentation: N/A

**Part V. Appendices****Appendix E: Policies and Procedures Unique to Developmental Research (Laboratory) Schools**

- This section is not applicable for the district.

Section 1002.32, Florida Statutes (F.S.), establishes the category of public schools known as developmental research (laboratory) schools (lab schools). In accordance with s. 1002.32(3), F.S., "The mission of a lab school shall be the provision of a vehicle for the conduct of research, demonstration, and evaluation regarding management, teaching, and learning." Each lab school shall emphasize mathematics, science, computer science, and foreign languages. The primary goal of a lab school is to enhance instruction and research in such specialized subjects by using the resources available on a state university campus, while also providing an education in nonspecialized subjects. The exceptional education programs offered shall be determined by the research and evaluation goals and the availability of students for efficiently sized programs (s. 1002.32(3)(e), F.S.).

Describe the exceptional education services available within the lab school:

**Part V. Appendices****Appendix F: Best Practices in Inclusive Education (BPIE) Assessment**

Section 1003.57(1)(f), Florida Statutes, establishes the following requirement for school districts, "Once every 3 years, each school district and school shall complete a Best Practices in Inclusive Education (BPIE) assessment with a Florida Inclusion Network facilitator and include the results of the BPIE assessment and all planned short-term and long-term improvement efforts in the school district's exceptional student education policies and procedures. BPIE is an internal assessment process designed to facilitate the analysis, implementation, and improvement of inclusive educational practices at the district and school team levels."

The district's completed **BPIE Indicator Rating Tally Sheet** is attached.

**District's BPIE**

See Attachment: 2-52-980

The district's completed **BPIE Services Plan** is attached.

**District's BPIE**

See Attachment: 2-52-983