

## **BOARD PROCEDURE**

**Descriptive Code: IDDF**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**Date: September 28, 2009**

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The goal of the Columbia County School System is to ensure that all students with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment that emphasizes the general curriculum as well as special education services and prepares them for employment and independent living. Special education and related services will be designed as needed and appropriate to meet the unique needs of a student with disabilities.

Prior to referral for special education services the following data must be obtained by the Response to Intervention Team/Student Support Team (RTI/SST) Chairperson and forwarded to district data review team:

- RTI/SST documentation including scientifically based intervention for a minimum of twelve weeks
- Progress monitoring data graphed to indicate the student's rate of progress during implementation of scientifically based intervention
- Two current assessments (within 12 months) such as the CRCT, norm-referenced achievement tests or benchmarks indicating performance that does not meet expectations for grade level standards
- Any educationally relevant medical information that would impact educational achievement
- Teacher information regarding routine classroom instruction including documentation of student's behavior in area of difficulty
- Passed Vision and Hearing Screenings
  - If the hearing or vision screening is passed, the evaluator notes results on the Hearing and Vision Screening Results Record form in the student's permanent record.
  - If the hearing or vision screening is failed, the evaluator notes the results on the Hearing and Vision Screening Results Record Form. The school nurse will re-screen the student after a period of two weeks. If the second screening is failed, the school nurse will contact the parents.
- Forms as listed on the RTI/SST Referral and Routing Slip

Once information is received by the District Data Review Team, all information is reviewed by the team. Once reviewed and accepted, Consent for Evaluation (SE41) is sent to the RTI/SST Chairperson by the SST/Assessment Coordinator. Once signed by the parent/guardian, the form is returned to the SST/Assessment Coordinator. The referral packet is copied and forwarded to the Special Services Department Records Clerk.

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### **EVALUATION PROCEDURES**

Students referred for special education services will be evaluated in all areas related to the suspected disability(s), including, where appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performances, adaptive behavior, motor and communicative abilities.

### **PARENTAL CONSENT FOR EVALUATION**

The Columbia County School System must have informed Consent for Evaluation from the parent/guardian on file before any student is scheduled for an individual evaluation. The RTI/SST Chairperson/Administrator will contact the parent and provide notification of the intent of the school system to evaluate the student and obtain informed Consent for Evaluation.

If the parent fails to respond within five school days, the RTI/SST Chairperson/ Administrator shall further initiate and document at least two additional attempts to obtain parental Consent for Evaluation. When three attempts to contact the parent have been unsuccessful, the school RTI/SST Chairperson/Administrator should contact the School Social Worker for assistance. Detailed records of reasonable attempts to contact the parents must be kept by the RTI/SST Chairperson/Administrator and/or School Social Worker.

If the parent still refuses to allow the proposed testing, the RTI/SST Chairperson/Administrator and/or the RTI/Assessment Coordinator will contact the Director of Special Services to discuss and decide further due process procedures.

### **COMPLETION OF EVALUATION**

The evaluation and eligibility determination should be completed within 60 calendar days from the date of the signed Parent Consent for Evaluation. The winter and spring holiday period, when students are not in attendance for at least five consecutive days, shall not be counted toward the 60 calendar day timeline. During the summer vacation period, a 90 calendar day timeline will be in effect beginning 30 calendar days prior to the last school day of the Columbia County School System.

If extenuating circumstances affect this timeline, such as illness, unusual evaluation needs, revocation of parent(s)/guardian(s)/surrogate's consent for evaluation, the Department of Special Services shall document the exceptions. This documentation must be filed as a part of the student's special education record. The Psychological Services Department must notify the Department of Special Services Facilitator assigned to that school.

The Special Education Facilitator will receive a copy of the completed psychological evaluation a minimum of 10 days prior to the 60/90 day timeline. The Facilitator will arrange an Eligibility/Staffing/Placement Meeting by sending the Notice of Placement Meeting form and

notify appropriate Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team members. Parents should be notified at least seven to ten days prior to the meeting.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Students, three through 21 years of age, may be determined eligible in 12 disability areas. Every student receiving special education services in the Columbia County School System must first be determined eligible for special education services, and an eligibility report must be completed. Students determined ineligible for a special education program should not be placed in a special education classes. The Special Education IEP Team determines eligibility based on the Georgia Department of Education Rules.

## **PARENTAL CONSENT FOR PLACEMENT**

Should the IEP Team recommend special education services, parental consent for placement must be signed before services can be initiated. If parent(s)/guardian(s) refuse(s) to grant permission for placement in the program, the student remains in regular education.

## **REEVALUATION PROCEDURES**

All students who are placed in special education programs in the Columbia County School System must go through a reevaluation review every three years to determine continued eligibility for services.

## **INDEPENDENT EVALUATION**

If the parent or another agency provides a psychological report, the RTI/SST Administrator/Chairperson should contact the school psychologist for review. Copies of out-of-system evaluations of a student in the Columbia County Special Education Program should be forwarded to Psychological Services and to Special Services.

Out-of-system independent evaluations can be used in the placement process in the Columbia County School System if the evaluation has been conducted and prepared by a “qualified examiner” as defined by the Georgia Department of Education Rules.

## **IEP PLACEMENT PROCEDURES**

If the student is found to meet eligibility, the IEP team will develop an IEP to address identified weaknesses within thirty days. If the student is not found to meet eligibility for special education services, regular education options should be discussed and the information should be referred back to the RTI/SST team for continued RTI/SST-Tier placement decisions.

All of the student’s teachers are invited and encouraged to participate in the IEP Team meeting. At least one general education teacher must participate in the IEP meeting. The Special

Education Facilitator, School Psychologist, and the Special Education Teacher should also be in attendance. The Local Education Agency Representative (LEA) will be the Special Services Facilitator when present; otherwise, the LEA representative is the School Administrator. The parent is sent the original notice regarding the meeting, location, date and time by the Special Education Facilitator.

If eligibility for special education is determined, the IEP Team develops an Individualized Education Program (IEP) within 30 days. A Transition Plan must be developed as part of the IEP process, if the student is in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, or 16 years of age, or if deemed appropriate by the IEP committee. The student must be a participant in the IEP decision making process if Transition services are to be considered. If the Transition Plan is to be developed at the IEP meeting, a representative from any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services must be invited. If the IEP team agrees that a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) is necessary, a Functional Behavioral Assessment must be conducted prior to the development of the BIP.

### **PARENTAL REQUEST FOR EVALUATION/SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

If a parent verbally makes a request for evaluation, the school administrator should inform the parent that the request must be in writing. When the parent provides a written request, a copy should be sent to the School Psychologist and the Director of Special Services within 24 hours. The written request must be stamped and dated at the school upon receipt from the parent.

1. The school's RTI/SST administrator must schedule a meeting within five school days with the school level RTI/SST Team to include the parent and school psychologist.
2. The parent should be provided with a brochure explaining the RTI process.
3. The School Psychologist & Special Services Facilitator will review the following:
  - a. Grades
  - b. Benchmark scores
  - c. RTI/progress monitoring data
  - d. Referrals to office
  - e. Attendance
  - f. Permanent record
  - g. Written observations
  - h. Diagnostic data
  - i. Other \_\_\_\_\_
4. The team will address the problem, develop an intervention plan if necessary and determine if evaluation is appropriate at this time.
5. School level RTI minutes will be taken and all members in attendance will sign.
6. If the school level team determines that an evaluation/special education referral is appropriate:

- a. Implement the Tier 3 Intervention Plan, if not currently in place, and continue to monitor progress.
- b. Request a Tier 3 Fidelity Observation
- c. Submit referral packet to the Department of **Psychological Services** to include forms listed on the RTI/SST Referral Routing Slip. This packet must be marked “Parent Request for Evaluation.” **Send TIER 3 meeting minutes to the Director of Special Services noting the team’s decision to evaluate.**

Once packet is received:

- a. An SE41 will be sent to the RTI/SST school administrator. The RTI/SST school administrator will forward the SE41 to the parents.
  - b. Once the signed SE41 is received by the school; a vision/hearing screening will be completed within 24 hours if not submitted with packet.
  - c. A signed SE41, **stamped date of receipt**, and vision/hearing screening should be sent to **Psychological Services**.
7. If the school level team determines that an evaluation/special education referral is not appropriate:
- a. The packet of information and minutes from the meeting will be provided to the Director of Special Services within 24 hours.
  - b. The Director of Special Services will provide prior written notice **to the parents** of the system’s decision not to evaluate at the present time.

## **PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION REFERRAL PROCEDURES**

Students, three through five years of age, may be eligible for the Columbia County Special Needs Preschool Program through the category of Significant Developmental Delay (SDD) if significant delays and/or difficulties are found in one or more of the following areas: cognition, adaptive development, communication, physical development and social/emotional development. The SDD category of eligibility may be determined for students three through seven years of age and continue through the school year in which the student turns nine years of age. If the student continues to exhibit developmental delays, categorical placement must be determined by the end of the school year in which the student turns nine in order for special education services to continue. As part of the Child Find Process, community based screenings are scheduled two times per month (August – May) at various locations within the community.

Referrals to the Special Services Special Needs Pre-K program are made through the Special Services Pre-K Case Manager and/or the Special Services Pre-K Facilitator. The student is scheduled for a screening at one of the community locations. Screenings are conducted by the following participants: Speech/Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Nurse, Special Education Pre-K teacher and School Psychologist. Screening of all areas of development is conducted: cognition, adaptive development, communication, physical development and social/emotional development.

Results of the screening are shared with the parent(s)/guardian(s). If results of the screening indicate the need for further evaluation, informed parental consent for evaluation is obtained and a comprehensive evaluation is completed. Eligibility is determined within the 60/90 day timeline. If appropriate, an IEP is developed and placement is determined by the IEP committee. Committee participants include: Parent(s)/Guardian(s), Special Services Facilitator (LEA representative), Special Needs Pre-K Teacher, General Education Pre-K teacher, Speech/Language Pathologist (if appropriate), Occupational Therapist (if appropriate), Physical Therapist (if appropriate), Private Services Providers (if appropriate).

All due process procedures apply in determining eligibility, placement and service delivery models for Special Needs Pre-K program.

### **GEORGIA SPECIAL NEEDS PERMISSION-School Choice Option** **Public School Choice**

Pursuant to Senate Bill 10 (Code 20-2-2113), parents of a student with a disability who meet the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Eligibility criteria may request to have their child attend another school within the system. The CCBOE will make a decision regarding a parental request to transfer based on two criteria:

- a. Class size and school capacity which is defined by the class-size capacity by grade and subject, based on state law (160-5-1-.08)
- b. The schools' ability to provide the services identified in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP)

### **Requirements**

- The student has been a Georgia resident for at least the preceding 12 calendar months
- The student has spent the prior school year in attendance at a Georgia public school. (Prior school year attendance requires that the student was enrolled and reported by the school district for funding during the preceding October and March Full-time Equivalency (FTE) surveys in Georgia.)
- The student must have a current IEP.

### **Application/Deadlines**

- The deadline for accepting requests for transferring within Columbia County Schools is **July 1**. Requests must be submitted to the Special Services Director at 4781 Hereford Farm Road, Evans, GA 30809.
- Parents may obtain forms at [www.ccboe.net/special](http://www.ccboe.net/special) or they may request that the forms be sent to them.

If approved, the parent/guardian is obligated to provide transportation for the student to attend school out of the school zone.

### **Discontinuation of the School Choice Option**

If parents wish to discontinue taking advantage of the Georgia Special Needs Permission School Choice opportunity, they will need to notify the Department of Special Services to make the necessary changes.

### **Request for Private School**

Parents/Guardians may request to transfer their child to a private school. The application must be obtained from the Georgia Department of Education website, [www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org).

### **PARENTAL REVOCATION OF CONSENT AFTER CONSENTING TO INITIAL PROVISION OF SERVICES**

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) have the right to revoke consent for placement in Special Education. The revocation of consent for services must be submitted to the school in writing. Once a school receives the revocation of consent, it should be submitted to the Director of Special Services within 24 hours.

The provision of Prior Written Notice (PWN) must be provided to the parent(s)/guardian(s) before discontinuation of services can occur. PWN must also be provided to the parent(s)/guardian(s) within ten school days.

#### **PWN must include the following:**

- Information for the parent regarding changes/services that will be eliminated (i.e. transportation, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Assistive Technology, testing accommodations, etc.)
- Explanation of why the action is occurring.
- Description of each piece or source of data, evaluations, records, assessment and/or reports supporting recommendations for the student to continue to receive or withdraw from services.
- Statement that the parent will be giving up the procedural safeguards available under IDEA and a list of sources for parents to contact regarding information about IDEA Part B.
- Description of other factors relevant to the situation.
- Date services will end.
- Understandable language and in the native language of the parent.
- Provision of procedural safeguards.

Students who reach the age of majority may revoke consent for placement. In this instance, PWN should be provided to the child and the parent.

## **Discipline**

Once consent for Special Education services are revoked, IDEA protection regarding out of school suspension and manifestation do not apply. Rules and timelines applying to general education students will apply.

## **Revocation of Partial Consent**

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may not revoke partial consent for services. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) disagree with an IEP committee decision regarding placement and/or special education services, due process procedures apply. Consent for services is consent for special education.

**ADOPTED: 10/6/03**

**REVISED: 10/6/03, 10/6/04, 7/6/04, 4/27/09, 6/9/09**

**Columbia County Board of Education**

Originally named IDDF (1); renamed on 9/23/03 to IDDF