
Piedmont Unified School District

Special Education Parent Handbook

Developed with the Assistance of the
District Special Education Advisory
Committee
2007

Dear Parents:

PRAISE (Piedmonters for Resources, Advocacy and Information in Special Education) is a group of Piedmont parents who support and provide information for fellow parents of special needs children. We also work collaboratively with the Piedmont Unified School District. As part of that collaboration, we are happy to have helped PUSD update this Special Education Parents' Handbook.

The mission of PRAISE is to promote advancement of Special Education through understanding and appreciation of learning differences among students, parents, staff and the community; information; advocacy of student needs; professional development for educators in special education as well as general education; and financial support for relevant programs.

Our special education students range from preschool through high school and beyond, and receive a wide range of services appropriate to individual needs including speech and pragmatics; reading, math and writing support; special day classes; occupational therapy; adaptive physical education; social skills; adaptive technologies; and more.

PRAISE welcomes your participation in our monthly informational programs and our community and board activities. Please visit our website at www.piedmontpraise.org and contact us at piedmont_praise@yahoo.com. Please join us!

Sincerely,

PRAISE Board of Directors

SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

A cornerstone of serving students with disabilities is parent knowledge of and participation in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process. The professionals in Piedmont Unified School District recognize that, you, as a parent, have unique insight and expertise about your child and their educational experience. By working closely with parents, we feel that our efforts to reach the goal of providing effective educational programs for our students can be achieved. We hope that this guide will provide parents with an understanding of the IEP process that will assist us all in meeting the individual needs of your student.

Although our staff makes every effort to acquaint parents with the many aspects of our programs and services, we realize that you would sometimes like a more comprehensive overview of the IEP process and District resources than can be provided during scheduled meetings. Therefore, the District, with the feedback and assistance of parents experienced in the IEP process, has developed this handbook to provide you with information that will support your participation in the IEP process. If further questions arise after reviewing the information contained in this manual, please contact any member of the Special Education staff with your questions.

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Part 1

Piedmont Unified Special Education Program Overview

At the present time, there are approximately 350 students in the Piedmont schools receiving special education services, with many receiving more than one service. The most frequently occurring disabling condition is specific learning disability, followed closely by students with speech and language disorders. Although the incidence is much smaller, the District also serves students with autism, hearing impairments, severe emotional disturbance, orthopedic handicaps, health impairments, and students with multiple handicaps. Staff includes approximately 25 full and part-time credentialed teachers and specialists, as well as approximately 35 para-educators providing instructional and clerical support. As nearly all special education students are placed in general education for the majority of their school day, classroom teachers are an integral component in the provision of special education services in the District. Through close and continuing collaboration, a partnership between special and general education is seen as a vital prerequisite to the successful delivery of special education services in the Piedmont schools.

General Philosophy

Special Education is individually designed instruction and services for individuals with disabilities whose educational needs cannot be met with accommodations in the general education program. Special Education is an integral part of the total public education system, and provides education in a manner that promotes maximum interaction between students with disabilities and students who are not disabled, consistent with the needs of both groups of students. The basic tenets of the Piedmont Special Education program include the following:

Advocacy for the needs of special education students in all educational settings. When appropriate, assisting students in advocating for their own educational needs.

Encouraging development of each student's independence in academic, social, and other significant areas of their development.

Empowering students with strategies and compensatory techniques to enable them to be successful in school and in life.

Close and continuing collaboration with general education staff members.

Use of a wide variety of instructional approaches and programs designed to address the needs of each individual student in order to improve skills and increase self confidence and independence.

Full participation of parents as members of their student's IEP team. When appropriate, full participation of students as members of their IEP team.

Helping students, parents, and teachers to understand the true nature of each student's specific learning challenges, and to help to dispel any misconceptions that may exist.

Full utilization of technology in support of student achievement.

Preparation of students for life beyond high school through post-secondary transition planning.

Within the District's general philosophy is an adherence to the principle that all students with disabilities need to have maximum interaction, as appropriate, with non-disabled students. This means that special education students are placed on regular school campuses, and attend general education classes as much as is consistent with their needs. Points to consider regarding this kind of program integration:

Students with disabilities are motivated to participate in learning activities with non-disabled peers.

Students with disabilities should be full participants in the social experience of their school.

Students without disabilities develop an appreciation for, and an increased acceptance of, students with disabilities.

Special education students experience more of the "real world", and at the same time are exposed to what is needed to be successful in meeting academic and social expectancies.

Types of Services/Programs

The services/programs listed below are those most frequently delivered in the district. This is not an exhaustive list and some students will require instruction/support in a fashion not described below. It is the responsibility of the IEP team to identify what is appropriate for each individual student.

Learning Center: The district's learning center program provides specialized instruction and support to students at multiple levels. The amount of time spent in learning center is defined by the IEP and based upon level of student need.

Level I: Students receiving learning center support at Level I attend a special education classroom that focuses on supporting the student's progress in the general education curriculum. Often, this includes an emphasis on teaching organization and planning as well as learning strategies for a broad range of curriculum.

Level II: Students receiving learning center support at Level II have been determined by the IEP team to require intensive remedial support in a core content class such as reading, language arts, and/or math. This remedial support parallels and supports the curriculum in the general education classroom. This means a student may be receiving language arts instruction (or another area of curriculum) in both the general education and learning center environments simultaneously. For other students at Level II, the IEP team may determine that the general education core content is not appropriate and the student will be solely enrolled in a class such as Learning Center Language Arts in place of the general education language arts class. However, in each event the expectation is that students are working in range of district curriculum standards.

Level III: Students receiving learning center support at Level III have been determined by the IEP team to require instruction through modified curriculum. This level of support is only appropriate for students who need a high level of remediation and sometimes this is across multiple areas of curriculum. In most cases, students in Level III learning center are working to curriculum standards defined by the IEP team rather than the curriculum standards of the district. Students at Level III are sometimes served 50% or more of their day in special education.

Related Services: These services are provided by specialists and are specific services, to students, that support the underlying skills required for learning. Those services defined as Related Services may include, but are not limited to: speech and language therapy, hearing and audiological support, mobility instruction, special instruction for visually handicapped, home or hospital instruction, designated psychological services, physical

and occupational therapy, career/occupation training. Instruction may be given in any appropriate setting, including the regular classroom. Services include assistance to individuals and/or consultation with an individual's teacher or parent, as specified in the IEP.

Transition: Beginning at age 16, the IEP team will develop Individualized Transition Plans. These shall be related to the post-secondary goals of students. Such goals might include meeting with the high school counselor to discuss the college application process and plan for taking entrance exams. For students with severe disabilities, the IEP team may discuss life skills activities as well as adult transition program opportunities after high school.

Nonpublic, Nonsectarian School Services: Nonpublic, nonsectarian school services are available to individuals with exceptional needs, only when the IEP team determines that the most appropriate educational program is not available through the public school system in Piedmont Unified School District or the North Region Special Education Local Plan Area or adjacent service regions.

AB3632: Requires that local education agencies (LEA) arrange with other agencies to provide related services (needed for students to benefit from special education). These agencies include California Children's Services, County Mental Health, and the State Department of Rehabilitation.

Types of Program Supports

In addition to specialized instruction, a student with an IEP is entitled to program supports identified as necessary by the IEP team.

Accommodations: Accommodations are a common component of Individualized Education Programs throughout the district. A general principle of accommodations is that they do not change the curriculum standard from that required of general education students. This means a student may receive supports, which alter the structure or format of the learning/performance situation but the expectation of learning mastery relative to all students does not change. Below is a list of prototypical accommodations.

Extended time on tests/assignments.
Preferential Seating.
Books on Tape.
Note taking Support.
Use of graph paper.

Modifications: Modifications are a less common component of Individualized Education Programs throughout the district. A general principle of modifications is that they are a change to the curriculum standard from that required of general education students. As a result, modifications are noted on report cards. While a modification noted on a report card during elementary and middle school has no implication for postsecondary admissions, this changes when students enter high school. Most colleges and universities view modified curriculum/grades as unacceptable for entrance requirements.

Below is a list of prototypical modifications.

Alterations to test standard (e.g. use of open book or open notes).
Dictation on an assignment or test that is measuring written expression skills.
Exemption from class assignments determined essential by the classroom teacher.

Assistive Technology: For some students, technology will be of central importance to accessing their

curriculum. For example, many students with hearing impairments receive the support of listening devices as part of the IEP. Other examples include the use of a word processor at a student's desk or the use of a classroom computer to assist with the writing process.

Behavioral Interventions: In the event that a student's behavior impedes the learning of self or others, the IEP team is required to develop a behavioral intervention plan. Such a plan will include identification of target behaviors and the strategies the team intends to implement in order to diminish the problem behavior (s).

Transportation: Special arrangements will be made if the IEP team determines that age, disability, or distance prevents your child from either walking to school or riding the city bus. Whenever possible, students are encouraged to use regular bus transportatio

Part 2

Tips for Parent Participation in the IEP process

In this section, we provide strategies and information that will assist your full participation in the IEP process.

Preparing to Participate in the Initial IEP meeting

The following are tips for parents to use in the initial IEP meeting.

1. If, at any point, you do not understand something, ask that it be restated. Do not hesitate to ask for clarification of any detail.
2. If you do not understand the meaning of an educational term, ask for an example or demonstration of what is meant.
3. Share relevant information about your child by contributing what you know about your child's skills, interests, weaknesses and strengths.
4. Prior to the meeting, make a list of questions and note any issues you feel are important to discuss. Ask for further discussion whenever necessary.
5. Take note of what regular school activities are included in the program for your child. Don't forget non-academic areas such as lunch and recess and other areas such as art, music, and physical education.
6. Be sure all services that are necessary to implement your child's educational program will be written into the IEP.
7. Ask yourself if what is planned corresponds to your knowledge of your child's ability.
8. Save all documents from the IEP process in a binder. This will help you to keep track of your students program and the history of services.

IEP meetings after eligibility is determined

Once a child is found eligible for special education and the IEP has been approved by the parent, there are predicted as well as sometimes unpredicted times when an IEP team needs to meet. You, as the parent, have the right to call an IEP meeting to review the program and progress of your child at any time.

The IEP team should meet when any of the following things happen:

1. Student demonstrates lack of expected progress in his/her program.
2. When any new assessments have been completed by the classroom teacher, nurse, psychologist, speech therapist, occupational therapist, adaptive physical education teacher, etc.
3. When a parent wants to revise, review, or develop new goals and objectives for the IEP.
4. When any change of program placement is requested.
5. At least one time per year to review the IEP (annual review).

When a parent feels an IEP meeting is needed, these steps should be followed:

1. Write a short letter requesting that an IEP meeting be scheduled. You should include the reason(s) for your request in that letter.
2. Send your letter to the principal of the school your child attends.
3. The office will set up the IEP meeting by calling or writing to your for convenient times, days, dates, and people you feel should attend the IEP meeting.
4. You will be notified in writing of the day, time, and location of the IEP meeting. The written notification should be signed and returned.

Frequently Asked Questions Related to the IEP Process

What is an IEP?

An IEP is an Individualized Educational Program specially designed to meet your child's Special Education needs. It will include present levels of education performance, annual goals, objectives, and indicate what services and/or special programs are needed to achieve the goals.

What is a 504 Plan?

Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act provides that no program, including education programs, which receives federal money, may exclude a person with disabilities from participation in it solely by reason of his or her disability. While IDEA protects children in the area of education, Section 504 protects the disabled for life and encompasses the right to vote, education, accessibility, employment, etc. Some students who do not meet eligibility criteria for special education services may have a right to a 504 plan.

Eligibility Questions

How do I know if my child is eligible for Special Education services?

A child's eligibility is determined by the IEP team after you provide consent to an assessment by the district.

At what age, can students become eligible for special education services?

As early as infancy, if your child has been diagnosed with a low incidence disability such as deafness or blindness. Otherwise, students may be found eligible as early as 3 years of age.

Who determines my child's special educational eligibility/needs?

You, working in cooperation with the IEP team, will determine your child's eligibility/needs.

Assessment Questions

What should an assessment cover?

The student is to be assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability including, where appropriate, -health and development, vision (including low vision), hearing, motor abilities, language function, general ability, academic performance, self-help, orientation and mobility skills, career and vocational abilities and interest, and social and emotional status.

Are there documents, which I may have that would help in the assessment process?

Yes. Various professional reports, which you may have received on your child from other sources such as Regional Center reports, documentation of hearing and vision screenings, or any doctor's reports would help the assessment process. For example, speech and language, occupational and physical therapy, neurological or ophthalmological reports, and special medical reports are often useful. School districts ask you to share the other professional reports with them to assist in determining your child's needs.

How often must assessments be completed?

Complete re-evaluation must be considered at least every three years for individuals with exceptional needs. In addition, reevaluation may be conducted whenever the students' parents or teacher request, and when reevaluation appears to be needed for program planning.

Is parental consent needed for reevaluation of my child?

Yes. Parental consent is needed for any reevaluation of your child, not just the initial evaluation.

Before my child enters kindergarten

If I think my 3-5 year old needs services, who should I contact?

You should contact the Educational Services office at 594-2893.

If my three-to -five-year old child is eligible for special education services, where will he/she receive them?

Your child, if eligible, may receive services at a public or private non-sectarian preschool, a child development center, family day care home, your own home, or a special preschool where both children with disabilities and children without disabilities attend. In California, the state can contract with Head Start programs to provide special education services to children between three and five years old.

If my infant has been diagnosed with a disability such as deafness or blindness?

You should contact the Educational Services office at 594-2893.

Parent/Student Rights

How are Parent's and Children's Rights Protected?

Piedmont Unified School District wants to provide the best education possible for all students. In doing this, certain procedures must be kept in mind. The law requires that the districts shall establish procedures to protect the rights of disabled students and their parents or guardians; these procedures are called Procedural Safeguards and Parent Rights. These are described throughout this booklet as they pertain to the different topics discussed. In addition, you can find a copy of parent rights in Appendix A of this handbook. Below, are highlights for your consideration.

Parents/Students have the right to:

1. Written prior notice for evaluation or change of educational placement of an exceptional student;
2. Written permission of the student's parent(s) or guardian (or of the student, if age 18 years) to begin a diagnostic evaluation of a student, or a change in the educational placement of an exceptional student;
3. The right of the parent(s) or guardian (or student, if age 18 years) to examine all reports and educational records of the student with regard to evaluation and the provision of a free, appropriate public education;
4. The right of parent(s) to an independent evaluation of the student;
5. The right to have a copy of the IEP provided at no cost, and when requested, in the primary language of the parent;
6. Confidentiality of records and other information regarding the student;
7. The right to an impartial Due Process hearing regarding the identification, evaluation, placement, and provision of a free, appropriate public education for the exceptional student;
8. The right to electronically record the proceedings of the IEP meetings with at least 24 hours prior notification given to the district.

What standard of service does my child have a right to?

The U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision in the Rowley case, which declares that under federal law an "appropriate" educational program and placement is one which provides services to the disabled student sufficient for him/her to obtain "educational benefit." It does not entitle the student to the "best" possible educational program or a "potential maximizing" education. The plan of instruction and placement should be likely to result in educational progress not regression- or trivial educational advancement.

If dissatisfaction/disagreement arises

If I believe my child is not receiving the services agreed upon in the IEP?

Contact your child's special education teacher or a site administrator. If need be, you should request an IEP meeting.

If I am not happy with my child's progress, whom do I contact first? If I still do not get the situation satisfactorily resolved, to whom can I speak?

First, contact your child's teacher. If you are not able to resolve the problem, then speak to the principal. If need be, you should request an IEP meeting.

If I am not happy with my child's special education placement, what can I do?

Call your school principal to request an IEP meeting to consider other alternatives.

What happens if I don't agree with all or part of the IEP? What are my options?

Under California law, a student with disabilities is not allowed to participate in any part of a special education program without written parental consent to the IEP. If you do not agree with an IEP, you can refuse to sign it altogether, or you can consent only to the parts with which you agree and specifically state your disagreement with other parts. In the latter case, only those components of the IEP to which you have consented will be implemented.

I agreed with the IEP when it was written, but I no longer think it is appropriate. What can I do?

If you are convinced your child's IEP is no longer appropriate, you can request a new IEP meeting.

Can I change my mind after I sign the IEP document?

Yes. When a parent has changed his/her mind, he/she may revoke his/her consent at any time and should immediately send a written revocation of consent to the special education administrator who represented the school district at the IEP meeting and ask that a new IEP meeting be scheduled as soon as possible. [A parent is entitled to an IEP review meeting within 30 days of a written request, not counting days over the two-week winter break and summer recess.]

I have tried to resolve my concerns through the IEP process and do not believe they have been adequately resolved?

You may contact the North Region SELPA at 525-9800 and request Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). This is a problem solving process mediated by a two-person mediation team. If your issue is not adequately resolved through the ADR process, you may wish to review your due process rights which are explained in your copy of Parent's Rights and District Responsibilities.

Communications

If I want to visit the school program or my child's classes, what procedures do I follow?

Call the school where your child attends; they will help arrange a convenient time for both you and the teacher.

If I want extra conferences about my child's progress, what can I do?

Contact your child's teacher, special education case manager, and/or the site principal.

Part 3

Procedural Essentials

In 2004, after much input from educators, parents, and policymakers, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) was approved. This revision of IDEA '97 continues to be the central body of legislation that governs the responsibilities of school districts to provide equal opportunity for educational benefit to students with disabilities. These responsibilities are further guided by state law, which together with federal regulations establishes the full responsibilities school districts have to serve students with disabilities.

What is Special Education?

The California Education Code (section 56031) defines special education as:

"... specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of individuals with exceptional needs whose educational needs cannot be met with modification of the regular instruction program, and related services, at no cost to the parent, that may be needed to assist these individuals to benefit from specially designed instruction. "

Special education is an integral part of the total public education system. Other features of special education include:

1 . It is provided in a way that promotes maximum interaction between students with and without disabilities in a manner which is appropriate to the needs of both.

2. Special education provides a full continuum of program options, including instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and instruction in physical education, to meet the educational and service needs of individuals with exceptional needs in the least restrictive environment.

3. Individuals with exceptional needs shall be grouped for instructional purposes according to their instructional needs.

Referral and Assessment

Referral - The IEP process begins with a referral for assessment. A referral for assessment means any written request for assessment to identify an individual with exceptional needs made by any of the following:

- (a) A parent or guardian of the individual.
- (b) A teacher or other service provider of the individual.
- (c) A foster parent of the individual, consistent with the limitations contained in federal law. (30 EC 56029)

Assessment Plan - Once a child has been referred for assessment, the Local Education Agency (aka. Piedmont Unified School District) must provide a parent with an assessment plan within 15 days of the written referral. The assessment plan "...shall include all areas related to the suspected disability by those qualified to make a determination of the child's need for the service before any action is taken with respect to the provision of related services or designated instruction and services to a child, including, but not limited to, services in the areas of, occupational therapy, physical therapy, psychotherapy, and other mental health assessments . . . (1 GC 7572)."

*****The assessment process cannot begin until parents have provided written consent, by signing and returning the district's assessment plan.**

Once the signed assessment plan is received by the district, the assessment team has 60 days to convene an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting and determine eligibility, programs, and services.

Members of the IEP Team

Once the assessment is complete, an IEP meeting is held.

The IEP team shall include all of the following (30 EC 56341):

- (1) One or both of the pupil's parents, a representative selected by a parent, or both...
- (2) Not less than one regular education teacher of the pupil, if the pupil is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment. If more than one regular education teacher is providing instructional services to the individual with exceptional needs, one regular education teacher may be designated by the Local Educational Agency to represent the others.

The regular education teacher of an individual with exceptional needs shall, to the extent appropriate, participate in the development, review, and revision of the pupil's IEP, including assisting in the determination of appropriate positive behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies for the pupil, and the determination of supplementary aids and services, program modifications, and supports for

school personnel that will be provided for the pupil...

- (3) Not less than one special education teacher of the pupil, or if appropriate, not less than one special education provider of the pupil.
- (4) A representative of the Local Educational Agency who meets all of the following:
 - (A) Is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of individuals with exceptional needs.
 - (B) Is knowledgeable about the general curriculum.
 - (C) Is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the Local Educational Agency.
- (5) An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of the assessment results. The individual may be a member of the team described in paragraphs (2) to (6), inclusive.
- (6) At the discretion of the parent, guardian, or the Local Educational Agency, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the pupil, including related services personnel, as appropriate. The determination of whether the individual has knowledge or special expertise regarding the pupil shall be made by the party who invites the individual to be a member of the IEP team.
- (7) Whenever appropriate, the individual with exceptional needs.

At the initial IEP meeting, the assessment team provides its results and discusses eligibility for special education.

Eligibility and Criteria:

A pupil shall qualify as an individual with exceptional needs if the results of the assessment demonstrate that the degree of the pupil's impairment requires special education. The decision as to whether or not the assessment results demonstrate that the degree of the pupil's impairment requires special education shall be made by the IEP team, including assessment personnel. The IEP team shall take into account all the relevant material which is available on the pupil. No single score or product of scores shall be used as the sole criterion for the decision of the IEP team as to the pupil's eligibility for special education.

- (1) A pupil has a hearing impairment, whether permanent or fluctuating, which impairs the processing of linguistic information through hearing, even with amplification, and which adversely affects educational performance. Processing linguistic information includes speech and language reception and speech and language discrimination.
- (2) A pupil has concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes severe communication, developmental, and educational problems.
- (3) A pupil has a language or speech disorder.
- (4) A pupil has a visual impairment which, even with correction, adversely affects a pupil's educational performance.
- (5) A pupil has a severe orthopedic impairment which adversely affects the pupil's educational performance. Such orthopedic impairments include impairments

caused by congenital anomaly, impairments caused by disease, and impairments from other causes.

- (6) A pupil has limited strength, vitality or alertness, due to chronic or acute health problems, including but not limited to a heart condition, cancer, leukemia, rheumatic fever, chronic kidney disease, cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, epilepsy, lead poisoning, diabetes, tuberculosis and other communicable infectious diseases, and hematological disorders such as sickle cell anemia and hemophilia which adversely affects a pupil's educational performance.
- (7) A pupil exhibits autistic-like behaviors.
- (8) A pupil has significantly below average general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, which adversely affect a pupil's educational performance.
- (9) A pupil exhibits a serious emotional disturbance.
- (10) A pupil has a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an impaired ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations, and has a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement in one or more of the academic areas.
- (11) A pupil has a traumatic brain injury.
- (12) A pupil has multiple disabilities.

If a student is found eligible for services and supports, then the team must develop an IEP.

IEP Components

The IEP must contain the following components (30 EC 56345):

- (1) A statement of the individual's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, including the following:
 - A. The manner in which the disability of the individual affects his or her involvement and progress in the general education curriculum.
 - B. For preschool children, as appropriate, the manner in which the disability affects his or her participation in appropriate activities.
 - C. For individuals with exceptional needs who take alternate assessments aligned to alternate achievement standards, a description of benchmarks or short-term objectives.
- (2) A statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals, designed to do the following:
 - (A) Meet the individual's needs that result from the individual's

disability to enable the pupil to be involved in and make progress in the general curriculum.

(B) Meet each of the pupil's other educational needs that result from the individual's disability.

(3) A description of the manner in which the progress of the pupil toward meeting the annual goals described in paragraph (2) will be measured and when periodic reports on the progress the pupil 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.

(4) A statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services, on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable, to be provided to the pupil, or on behalf of pupil, and a statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided to the pupil to do the following:

(A) To advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals.

(B) To be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum in accordance with paragraph (1) and to participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities.

(C) To be educated and participate with other individuals with exceptional needs and non-disabled pupils in the activities described in this subdivision.

(5) An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the pupil will not participate with non-disabled pupils in the regular class.

(6) A statement of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the pupil on state and district-wide assessments.

(7) The projected date for the beginning of the services and modifications and the anticipated frequency, location, and duration of those services and modifications.

In order for the initial IEP to be implemented, a parent must sign their agreement on the IEP document. A parent may indicate partial agreement if they so desire.

After Your Student's initial IEP

Upon completion of the initial IEP, service providers will be responsible to provide you with progress towards goals at least as often as progress reports are provided to all students.

The IEP team will reconvene at least annually and your student will be reassessed to determine eligibility every three year unless the team agrees that further assessment is unnecessary to re-establish eligibility and update the IEP.

Parents may request, in writing, an IEP meeting at any time and the district will schedule such meeting within 30 days. This request should be provided to your student's special education teacher or a site

administrator.

Part 4 – Useful Information

GLOSSARY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TERMS

Special Education has a language of its own with seemingly endless acronyms and terminology. We have attempted here to give you the key to this specialized language. We know that this glossary is not all inclusive, but we hope it will provide you with the basic special education vocabulary. This will aid you in being a knowledgeable member of the IEP team.

Accommodations:

Accommodations are supports, which alter the structure or format of the learning/performance situation but the expectation of learning mastery relative to all students does not change.

Adapted Physical Education (APE):

A program for students who, because of their disabilities, cannot participate effectively in regular PE and require specialized physical education.

Audiological Services:

Includes identifying children with hearing loss and providing services that will help children with hearing losses maximize their strengths and abilities.

Due Process:

The legal procedures set up to resolve disagreements between parents and school districts over some part of a child's special education program (See Fair Hearing).

Extended School Year (ESY):

Services provided during the summer recess to qualifying students with special needs.

Fair Hearing:

A formal hearing that is called by parents or school district personnel and presided over by an administrative law judge from the California State Office of Administrative Hearings. Issues, which may be considered under the fair hearing procedure are limited to identification, assessment, the IEP, and placement of individuals with exceptional needs.

Free and Appropriate Public Education:

A guiding principle of federal special education law which mandates that students with disabilities are to be provided an appropriate public education at no cost to the parents.

Individualized Education Program (IEP):

A written document developed by a team including the parent, mandated by law, that defines a child's current levels of educational performance; specifies annual goals and short-term objectives; type of educational instruction and related services; amount of participation in general educational programs; date(s) special education service begins and is projected to end; and the annual evaluation procedures and review date for updating the IEP. When appropriate, the IEP contains additional items.

Inclusion:

The inclusion of students with disabilities with their regular education peers to the maximum extent possible, while meeting the needs of both groups.

Learning Disability:

A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using spoken and/or written language as well as a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement. This may manifest itself by an impaired ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):

The educational setting in which any child can succeed which is most closely aligned with the regular classroom and curricula.

Local Education Agency (LEA):

Your local school district.

Low Incidence Disability:

A severe disabling condition with an expected incidence rate of less than one percent of the total statewide enrollment in kindergarten through grade 12 (e.g. hearing impairments, vision impairments, and severe orthopedic impairments).

Mainstreaming:

A term referring to the time during which a special education student participates in general education activities, either academic or non-academic (e.g., math, reading, art, PE).

Modifications:

Modifications are a change to the curriculum standard from that required of general education students. As a result, modifications are noted on report cards. Most colleges and universities view modified high school curriculum/grades as unacceptable for entrance requirements.

Occupational Therapy (O.T.):

A service which addresses fine motor difficulties that may impact the ability to carry out the act of writing as well as addressing the sensory motor challenges experienced by some students.

Placement:

The specific system of delivery (DIS, RSP, SDC) that meets the child's individual needs as identified in the IEP.

Referral:

The formal request to assess and determine a child's special education needs; a referral may be made by a parent, teacher, medical personnel, or anyone with specific knowledge of the child.

Related Services:

Also known as related services; specialized instruction and/or support services identified through an assessment and written on an IEP as necessary for a child to benefit from his/her educational program (e.g., speech/language remediation, Braille transcription, etc.).

Resource Specialist Program (RSP):

Students receiving special education instruction for less than 50% of the school day are enrolled in the RSP; these students are usually "pulled out" of the general education classroom for special assistance during specific periods of the day or week and are taught by credentialed resource specialists.

Special Education:

Instruction or education that is required to meet the needs of children with special needs which cannot be supplied through some modification in the general education program.

Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA):

The service areas covered by the Local Plan developed under subdivision (a), (b), or (c) of Ed Code Section 56170.

Standardized Testing and Report Program (STAR):

School districts are required by the State to assess students annually through the STAR program. IEP teams must identify which STAR test is appropriate and should identify any necessary accommodations for the student. IEP teams may not exempt students from STAR testing.

DIRECTORY OF RESOURCES

Special Education Resources/Links

Advocacy

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law www.bazelon.org

Center for Law and Education www.cleweb.org

Community Alliance For Special Education (415) 431-2289 www.caseadvocacy.org

Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund www.dredf.org

Family Voices of California www.familyvoicesofca.org
National Center for Youth Law www.youthlaw.org
Protection and Advocacy (PAI) www.pai-ca.org
Wrightslaw www.wrightslaw.com

Attention Deficit Disorder

Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (CH.A.D.D.) (510)291-2950 www.chadd.org
The National Attention Deficit Disorder Association (ADDA) www.add.org

Autism

Autism Research Institute www.autism.com/ari/
Autism Society of America (800) 328-8476 www.autism-society.org
Autism Speaks www.autismspeaks.org
CADDRE (510) 620-3700 www.ehib.org/CADDRE
Cure Autism Now (888) 828-8476 www.cureautismnow.org
Online Asperger Syndrome Information and Support (OASIS) www.udel.edu/bkirby/asperger/

Bay Area Resources

Alameda County Department of Public Health (510) 267-8000 www.acphd.org
Alameda County Special Olympics (510) 553-9833 www.specialolympics.org
Bay Area Outreach and Recreation Program www.borp.org
Center for Independent Living (510) 841-4776 www.cilberkeley.org
East Bay Learning Disabilities www.eastbaylda.org
Family Resource Network (510) 547-7322 www.frnoakland.org
FamilyPaths (formerly Parental Stress Services) (510) 893-5444 www.familypaths.org
Through the Looking Glass(510) 848-1112 www.lookingglass.org
Piedmonters for Resources Advocacy and Information in Special Education www.piedmontpraise.org

Disabilities Information

Blind Babies (415) 586-6140 www.blindbabies.org
Council for Exceptional Children (888) 232-7733 www.cec.sped.org
Down Syndrome Connection (925) 362-8660 www.downsyndromeconnection.org
Epilepsy Foundation of Northern California (800) 632-3532 www.epilepsyfoundation.org/norcal
Federation for Children with Special Needs www.fcsn.org
National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities www.nichcy.org
Project: Circle of Inclusion Web site www.circleofinclusion.org
United Cerebral Palsy of the Golden Gate (510) 832-7430 www.ucp.org/ucp_local.cfm/35

Federal, State, and Local Government Education Departments

Alameda County Office of Education (510) 887-0152 www.acoe.k12.ca.us
California Department of Education <http://www.cde.ca.gov>
North Region SELPA (510) 337-2352
Piedmont Unified School District (510) 594-2600 www.piedmont.k12.ca.us
U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep

Service Provider Agencies

Regional Center of the East Bay (510)383-1200 www.rceb.org
California Children's Services (510) 208-5970 www.dhs.ca.gov/pcfh/cms/ccs

Gifted Education

ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education <http://www.cec.sped.org>

National Association for Gifted Children <http://www.nagc.org>

Learning Disabilities

All Kinds of Minds www.allkindsofminds.org

International Dyslexia Association <http://interdys.org>

LdOnline <http://www.ldonline.org>

Learning Disabilities Association of America <http://www.ldanatl.org>

National Center for Learning Disabilities <http://www.nclld.org>

Schwab Foundation for Learning <http://www.schwablearning.org>

Technology

Alliance for Technology Access (707) 778-3011 <http://www.ataccess.org>

Definitions of Terms Used in Reports

In general, academic achievement tests measure how much a student has learned in a given content area. Both informal tests and formal tests are used for evaluation. Informal tests, such as the Qualitative Reading Inventory, measure a child's knowledge against a criterion, or set, established performance standard. These informal or criterion tests tell how much of the subject matter the person knows, and suggest what should be taught next. Although these tests are deemed informal, much care has been given to their development.

The other, formal type of test is called a normed or standardized test. A norm is a designated standard of the average performance of people of a given age, background, etc. Scores are based on a procedure for comparing the test-taker's performance to the performance of some well-defined group; part of the normative sample. For instance, the Woodcock-Johnson data were gathered from a sample of 6,359 people, from 24 months to 95 years old. They were balanced according to national distributions of sex, race, occupation, geographic location and type of community. They came from all over the U.S.

Scores for these formal or standardized tests are expressed in a variety of ways. Percentile ranks and standard scores are peer comparison statements that describe the test-taker's standing in a group.

A percentile score shows, for instance, that if a student age 6 years has a percentile rank of 70 on a subtest, 70% of the 6 year old students in the standardization sample scored as well as, or lower than, our student, and 30% of the students in the standardization sample scored higher. Percentile scores do not form an equal increment scale, the way standard scores do, but percentile scores are usually easier to understand. With percentile scores the center of the curve may be 50%. 100% is a "Perfect" score. But nobody gets a perfect score. just as the ends of the bell curve extend in theory to infinity, never touching the baseline, so the percentile ranks and the extended percentile ranks may reach 99% or 99.9%, but never 100%.

Standard scores form a bell shaped curve. The center of the curve is the score 100, and "perfect" varies with the test. It may be, for instance, 140 or 160. A standard score of 100 is at the 50th percentile.

Standard scores have a standard deviation of 15. About 68% of the norm sample population scores between 85 and 115 (one standard deviation on each side of 100; the center of the bell-shaped curve). 95% of the norm sample population scores between 70 and 130 (2 standard deviations on each side of the center of the curve or the mean).

Scaled scores are used to show results for subtests containing too few items to provide the broad distributon

needed for standard scores with a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15. Scaled scores have a mean of 10 and a standard deviation of 3. They approximate a normal distribution, like the standard scores, and so 68% of the relevant group will score within one standard deviation of the mean (7-13), 95% will score within 2 standard deviations, and 99% will score within 3 standard deviations.

Grade and age equivalents are often felt to be more understandable by lay people; however, they can be misleading for interpreting performance, for several reasons. They can't be compared across subtests, they don't form equally spaced units throughout the scale, and they are easily misinterpreted. For instance, if a 5th grader scored a grade-equivalence of 9.2 on a given sub-test, this means they scored about the same as the average student in the second month of ninth grade would score on this subtest. It does not mean that this 5th grader is performing at a level consistent with curricular expectations at his or her school.

In another example, if a 10 year old scores a 6.8 age equivalent on a certain subtest, this means that the average student age 6 years, 8 months, would get the same score. Obviously, this 10 year old knows many things beyond the general knowledge of the average child age 6.8. These discrepancies are compounded at higher grade levels, where the variety of, for instance, mathematics classes, further separates student skills. Because of the danger of misinterpretation, these grade equivalencies and age equivalencies are de-emphasized in most reports.