

Walton County School District
Criteria for Independent Educational Evaluations Conducted at Public Expense

1. Parents of children eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are entitled to an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) of their child if the parent disagrees with the evaluation obtained or conducted by the School District.
2. An IEE is defined as an evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the school district responsible for the education of the child in question.
3. Parents may obtain an IEE at the expense of the School District (public expense) or at their own expense. As stated above, the right to request an IEE at public expense is dependent upon a parent's disagreement with an existing evaluation performed by the School District. **If** the School District has not performed its own evaluation in a particular area of disability, the parent does not have a right to an IEE with respect to that area until after the School District performs an assessment in that disability area. Only one IEE may be funded for each evaluation obtained by the School District. In addition, parents may be asked to explain the reasons they object to the School District's evaluation.
4. A reasonable time after the request for an IEE is received, the School District will provide the parents with a list of professionals who are qualified to perform the IEE and who otherwise meet School District criteria. **If** parents choose to have an IEE performed by a professional who is not on the School District-approved list, the criteria specified below in paragraph 5 will apply. In such cases, parents may want to inquire with the Special Education Department to ensure that the evaluator chosen by the parent meets District criteria. The School District will undertake arrangements for the IEE, such as contracting with the evaluator, verifying compliance with criteria, and remitting payment.
5. When an IEE is funded by the District, the criteria under which the evaluation is obtained must be the same as the criteria that the School District uses when it initiates an evaluation itself. The following criteria shall be applied to parent-requested IEEs performed at School District expense:
 - a. The School District limits the travel distance to obtain an IEE to the general geographic area (i.e., not more than 50 miles from the student's school) where the School District obtains its evaluations.
 - b. The School District will only pay the prevailing rate for IEEs which shall not exceed the reasonable and customary rates for similar services in the community. The School District does not reimburse independent contractors for travel.
 - c. The qualifications of the evaluators chosen to perform IEEs must comport with the qualifications required of evaluators chose by the School District for School District-initiated evaluations. For initial eligibility evaluations, the evaluator must

be a psychologist licensed by the Georgia Board of Examiners of Psychologists and have training and experience in school psychology or child clinical psychology.

- d. Since the School District reviews existing evaluation data as part of its evaluation process, independent evaluators will also be required to review existing evaluation data as part of the IEE. The School District will, therefore, request parental consent to provide such evaluation data to the independent evaluator as part of the IEE process.
6. If a parent obtains an IEE that does not comply with the above criteria, the School District may refuse to reimburse the parent for the costs of the IEE. This result may be avoided if the parent contacts the School District prior to obtaining an IEE and allows the School District to make the necessary arrangements to perform the IEE in accordance with these criteria.
7. The School District will pay for an IEE that does not comply with the criteria set forth above only if the parent demonstrates that extraordinary or unique circumstances are present to warrant a departure from the School District's criteria. The School District shall make a decision in such situations on a case-by-case basis, in light of the child's existing evaluation data and other relevant information.
8. If approved, payment for the evaluation will be made directly to the independent evaluator, who must complete a W-9 and agree to provide an original typed report to the School District, with a copy provided to the parents. The School District is not required to request parental consent for the independent evaluator to provide the evaluation report directly to the School District. The School District's receipt of such report is an express condition of payment for the IEE. Assessment protocols must be made available for School District review, if requested, and the report must contain original signatures, as the name and title of all assessment personnel involved in the evaluation. The report must also comply with applicable requirements of state and federal regulations with respect to evaluations.
9. If School District agrees to waive any of the above requirements or criteria in any particular case, such waiver should not be interpreted to mean that the School District would not impose that requirement or criterion for other evaluations.
10. If the parents have any questions regarding the above criteria, or otherwise need assistance in obtaining an IEE, they may contact Mr. Martin Gore, Special Education Director, at 770-266-4501 or martin.gore@walton.k12.ga.us.