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Onslow County Schools
Exceptional Children Services
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Onslow County Schools Parent Information: Independent Educational Evaluation (I.E.E.)

The following information is provided to parents when parents request an independent educational evaluation because the parents disagree with an evaluation performed by the school district. ***Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities (NC 1504 - 1.3)*** provide specific information on policies for an IEE. In addition, ***Procedural Safeguards: Handbook on Parents' Rights*** provides information regarding independent educational evaluations.

An independent educational evaluation (IEE) is an evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the school system. A parent is eligible to request an IEE at public expense if the parent disagrees with a formal evaluation conducted or obtained by the school district. "Formal Evaluation" means the procedures used to determine whether a child has a disability and the nature and extent of the special education and related services the child needs. "Public expense" means the school district either pays for the full cost of the evaluation or ensures the evaluation is otherwise provided at no cost to the parent.

Guidelines under which an independent educational evaluation may be obtained, the location of the evaluation, and qualifications of examiners are as follows:

1. Parents/guardians must submit a written request for an independent educational evaluation to either the student's EC Case Manager or special education teacher, an administrator at the child's school, or the Director for Exceptional Children's Services. As an IEE is only available to parents when they disagree with a formal evaluation conducted or obtained by the district, parents are required to identify the evaluation with which they disagree before a request for an IEE at public expense will be processed.
2. To assist the District in making its decision whether to grant the IEE request, parents may be asked to provide the reasons why they disagree with the District's evaluation. While a response would be helpful, parents are not required to answer this question, and whether they answer or not will have no impact on whether the request for an IEE is granted. It also will not impact the speed with which the district considers a request.
3. Upon receiving a request for an IEE, the EC Director will determine whether to (a) grant the IEE or (b) initiate a due process hearing to show that the school system's evaluation is appropriate and an IEE should not be granted.
4. If the IEE is granted, and the parent has not already identified the evaluator they would like to have complete the IEE, they will be provided with a list of independent evaluators. Parents may select a name from the District's list or propose an evaluator not on the list. The parent's selection should be provided in writing to the EC Director.
5. If you propose an evaluator not on the list, the District will investigate to confirm that the proposed evaluator meets the qualifications and geographic and cost criteria.
6. Allowable charges shall be within the usual and customary cost range in the Southeast region of North Carolina for the specific test or evaluation performed.

7. Except in extraordinary circumstances, evaluators conducting independent evaluations shall be located within the State of North Carolina. Reimbursement is generally not available for travel costs. Reimbursement for travel costs associated with independent educational evaluations located more than 100 miles from the student's school will only be considered in those extraordinary circumstances where, because of the child's unique needs, a qualified independent professional is not available to conduct the evaluation within that area.
8. All persons and/or facilities or agencies conducting the independent evaluations shall be licensed and/or certified by the appropriate regulatory organization in the State of North Carolina to perform evaluations within the discipline being evaluated and shall possess any additional qualifications specified by the NC Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities for the specific type of evaluation requested.
9. Once an evaluator is confirmed, parents will be provided a written consent for the evaluator to conduct the evaluation, consistent with these guidelines. Consent for an independent educational evaluation includes permission for the evaluator and the district to exchange student records (such as grades, attendance, work samples, progress monitoring data, assessments, etc.) and information, and for the evaluator to conduct observations of the student on district property, if requested by the evaluator and/or required by the nature of the evaluation. *Parents may also provide records directly to the evaluator, or request that specific records in the student's school record be provided.*
10. The district will contract directly with the independent evaluator to perform the evaluation once an evaluator is approved and parental consent is obtained. Parents will be notified by the EC Director once the contract is in place. At that time, parents, are expected to contact the evaluator to schedule the evaluation in a timely manner and to schedule any necessary appointments.
11. If an observation or observations were a component of the District evaluation being disputed by the parents, upon request by the independent evaluator, they will be offered the same level of access to the student's classroom. If the evaluator wishes to conduct observations in the school setting, those must be coordinated with the EC Director. Parents are not permitted to attempt to coordinate observations on behalf of the evaluator with school staff. Requests made by the independent evaluator to conduct an observation of the student in the school setting will be considered on a case-by-base basis. The school system will work with the evaluator directly to schedule any classroom observations.
12. Consistent with the NC state regulations and guidelines, the evaluator must provide a copy of the final report to both the parent and the district.
13. *The Director must authorize the evaluation before the school system accepts financial responsibility for the evaluation. Private evaluations obtained at parent or private expense without following these guidelines will be considered in any decision relating to a free appropriate public education for the child, but will not be eligible for reimbursement by the school system.*