Mercer Island School District
Special Services Department

Private School FAQ

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Evaluations and Referrals

What should I do if I suspect my child has a disability?

Parents, school personnel, school district staff, or other persons with knowledge about a student may make a referral requesting that the student be evaluated to determine eligibility for special education.

The Private School Referral packet can be found on our website (INSERT LINK). Please complete the referral packet and email it to SpecialServices@mercerislandschools.org or fax it to 206-236-3333 (Attn: Sophia Murray).

What happens after the school district receives a referral?

Your referral puts into motion a series of timelines the school district must meet in response to your request. The district must acknowledge and/or notify you of the referral and make a decision within 25 school days as to whether or not it will evaluate your student.

The referral process includes a review of existing data about your student. Existing data includes, but is not limited to, any information you have provided, any medical information available, and any information about your student's performance at school or in other settings (such as preschool, private school, at home, as well as other settings).

Who will evaluate my child?

The school district where the private school is located is responsible for conducting the evaluation and for determining if the student is eligible for special education services. For example, if you live on Mercer Island and attend a private school in Bellevue, then Bellevue school district is responsible for completing the evaluation. Mercer Island School District is responsible for completing evaluations for all students attending ANY private or public school located on Mercer Island regardless of the student's home address.

What happens if my child is found eligible for Special Education services?

Upon determination of special education eligibility, parent/guardians can choose from 3 options:

(1) Parent/guardian may choose to receive special education services through an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in which case the student would enroll in their neighborhood public school.

(2) Parent/guardian may choose to receive services through a Service Plan (ISP) and continue to be enrolled in an eligible private school.

(3) Parent/guardian may decline to receive services.

Special Education Services for Parentally-Placed Students

Parentally-placed private school students may be eligible to receive special education services through an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Service Plan (ISP). The following information describes the two types of services available to parentally-placed private school students, and identifies which students may be eligible for each service. Students may not simultaneously have an active IEP and an Individual Service Plan (ISP).

Student's Residence	Service Location
Student resides within Mercer Island School District and attends private school on Mercer Island.	IEP services through MISD (must enroll in the district) ISP through MISD (must be enrolled in an eligible private school)
Student resides outside Mercer Island School District but attends private school on Mercer Island.	IEP through the home school district (Bellevue, Seattle, etc.) ISP through MISD (limited services)

Individual Education Plan (IEP)

Can my child have an IEP if they are enrolled at a private school?

Any private school student residing within the Mercer Island School District may access special education services outlined in an IEP by partially enrolling in the school district. Students enrolled in this manner are entitled to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), which is offered through an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

How are IEP services provided to students who are partially enrolled?

IEP services are provided at the student's neighborhood school. Services are offered during the public school day. Services will not begin prior to the student's enrollment in the District.

If a student attends a school within the Mercer Island School District but resides out of the district, part-time enrollment for special education services is not an option. Students must request IEP services from their District of residence.

Individual Service Plan (ISP)

What is a Service Plan ?

A Service Plan (ISP) is an alternative to an IEP and is available to parentally-placed private school students:

(a) enrolled in approved, non-profit private schools*,
(b) eligible for special education and
(c) not enrolled in the district for school-based or IEP service

Identified students may receive equitable services at their private school site. These students are not entitled to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and do not have an individual right to receive some or all of the special education services they would receive if they were enrolled in the district as a full- or part-time student. Furthermore, equitable services may vary from year-to-year and services may not be provided in all areas of eligibility or to all

students. These services are funded through a calculated proportional share of federal funds received by the District to serve all district students with disabilities.

What can my child access through a Service Plan?

Equitable services to parentally-placed private school students may be provided by a district special education teacher or paraeducator, an outside contracted agency or private school teacher serving under a Personal Services Contract with the District. Services funded through Proportionate Share are not guaranteed throughout the school year. If the allocation is depleted, services may be discontinued for the remainder of the school year. The specific services and location(s) of services available to students on Service Plans are determined annually.

How do I access these services?

If you are interested in equitable services for your child, you can call the Special Services office at (206) 236-3329 or email sped@mercerislandschools.org. Since private school students have no individual right to services through a Service Plan, it is possible that a Service Plan will not be made available to your child. If equitable services are not available, parents may elect to dual-enroll their child to receive IEP services. If your child is eligible to receive services, you will need to enroll in your home district, if you have not done so before.

https://www2.nwrdc.wa-k12.net/scripts/cgiip.exe/WService=wmercers71/skyenroll.w

*Which private schools are approved?

To be eligible for a Service Plan, a student must be enrolled and attending an approved, non-profit private school located within the Mercer Island School District (regardless of District of residence). Students who are homeschooled, attend non-approved or for-profit private schools are not eligible to access Proportionate Share services. Approved schools include:

St. Monica Catholic School
French American School of Puget Sound
Northwest Yeshiva High School
Yellow Wood Academy