



# Special Education Operating Procedures

South San Antonio Independent School District

## REFERRAL PROCESS AND INITIAL EVALUATIONS

The district must conduct a Full and Individual Initial Evaluation before the initial provision of special education and related services to a child with a disability. The initial evaluation must be conducted within 45 school days of receiving written Parental Consent for the evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine if the child is a child with a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and to determine the educational needs of the child.

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts may consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (RtI). The implementation of Response to Intervention (RtI) has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts to meet the needs of all struggling students.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the campus to learn about the school's overall General Education Referral or Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including RtI, making a referral for a Special Education Evaluation or for a Section 504 Evaluation to determine if the student needs specific aids, accommodations, or services. A parent may request an evaluation for special education or Section 504 services at any time.

### **Special Education Referrals:**

If a parent makes a written request for an initial evaluation for special education services to the Director of Special Education or an administrative employee of the school district, the district must respond no later than 15 school days after receiving the request. At that time, the district must give the parent a Prior Written Notice of whether it agrees to or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards. If the school district agrees to evaluate the student, the district will contact the parent and provide notice and consent documents.

Please note that a request for a Special Education Evaluation may be made verbally and does not need to be in writing. Districts must still comply with all Federal Prior Written Notice and Procedural Safeguard Requirements and the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of Special Education. However, a verbal request does not require the district or charter school to respond within the 15-school-day timeline.

If the district decides to evaluate the student, it must complete the student's initial evaluation and Evaluation Report no later than 45 school days [40 school days – SSAISD] from the day it receives a parent's written consent to evaluate the student. However, if the student is absent



# Special Education Operating Procedures

South San Antonio Independent School District

---

from school during the evaluation period for three or more school days, the evaluation period will be extended by the number of school days equal to the number of school days that the student is absent.

There is an exception to the 45-school-day timeline. If a district receives a parent's consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30th due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.

Upon completing the evaluation, the district must give the parent a copy of the Evaluation Report at no cost.

Additional information regarding Special Education is available from the district in a companion document titled Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process.

The designated contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding the referral for evaluation for special education services is the campus administrator, assessment personnel or ARD Facilitator for Special Education Referrals.

## **Section 504 Referrals**

The district must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in the district's Section 504 Program. Districts must also implement a system of Procedural Safeguards that includes notice, an opportunity for a parent or guardian to examine relevant records, an impartial hearing with an opportunity for participation by the parent or guardian and representation by counsel, and a Review Procedure.

The designated contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for Section 504 services is the campus or district Section 504 Coordinator for Section 504 referrals.