Special Education Evaluation Procedures at Tolleson Elementary School District

At Tolleson Elementary School District, we are dedicated to helping every student succeed, no exceptions! If your child is struggling in school, a **special education evaluation** can help determine if they need additional support and services. Below is an overview of how the process works in **Arizona**, so you know what to expect and how to be involved.

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1. What is a Special Education Evaluation?

A special education evaluation is a **free, formal process** to find out whether your child has a disability that affects their learning and whether they qualify for **special education and related services** under **IDEA** (the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act).

It provides a full picture of your child's abilities, challenges, and learning needs.

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2. Who Can Request an Evaluation in Arizona?

An evaluation can be requested by:

- You (the **parent or guardian**)
- A **teacher or school staff member**
- A **health care provider** or other professionals (with your consent)

If you are concerned about your child's development or academic progress, you can make a **written request** to your child's teacher, school principal, or special education coordinator.

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3. What Happens After the Request?

Step 1: Review and Written Consent

Once an evaluation is requested, the school will hold a **review of existing data** and decide whether a formal evaluation is needed. If so, we will ask for your **written consent** to begin the process.

Step 2: Timeline in Arizona

According to Arizona law, once you provide written consent, the school has **60 calendar days** to complete the evaluation (excluding school breaks of more than five school days).

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4. What Does the Evaluation Include?

The evaluation is individualized and may involve:

- Academic achievement testing
- Cognitive or psychological assessments
- Speech/language evaluations
- Motor skills or physical development assessments
- Social, emotional, and behavioral evaluations
- Classroom observations

Evaluations are conducted by certified professionals who are trained to assess children in these areas.

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5. After the Evaluation – Eligibility Meeting

After testing is complete:

- You'll be invited to an **Eligibility Determination Team meeting**.
- The team (including you) will review the results to determine if your child qualifies for special education under one of **13 disability categories** defined by IDEA (such as Specific Learning Disability, Autism, Speech or Language Impairment, etc.).

If your child is eligible, the team will create an **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**.

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6. What If My Child is Not Eligible?

If your child does not qualify for special education services, the team will still discuss other support options, such as:

- **Section 504 Plans**
- **Intervention strategies**
- **General education supports**

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7. Your Rights as a Parent in Arizona

You have the right to:

- Be fully involved in every step of the evaluation process
- Receive all information in your preferred language
- Disagree with decisions and request an **Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)**
- File a **due process complaint** or **state complaint** if you feel your rights were violated

For more information on your rights, please visit the **Arizona Department of Education – Exceptional Student Services** website:
👉 https://www.azed.gov/specialeducation

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8. Ready to Start or Have Questions?

Please contact: Megan Duplain, Administrator of Special Programs at Tolleson Elementary School District
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Together, we're here to support your child's success.