
Manchester Local Schools

Special Education Parent Handbook



Table of Contents

[Alternative Assessment](#)

[Confidentiality](#)

[Disability Categories](#)

[Discipline](#)

[ETR- General Guidelines](#)

[ETR- Referral/Child Find](#)

[ETR- Planning](#)

[ETR- Consent](#)

[ETR- Eligibility](#)

[Extended School Year](#)

[Functional Behavior Assessments \(FBA\)](#)

[Graduation](#)

[IEP- general guidelines](#)

[IEP- Transition](#)

[IEP-SDI, Accommodations, Modifications, Assistive Technology](#)

[IEP- Accommodations vs. Modifications](#)

[IEP- Progress Reporting](#)

[Informed Consent](#)

[Internal Monitoring](#)

[Least Restrictive Environment \(LRE\)](#)

[Medicaid](#)

[Parental Right Packet](#)

[Positive Behavior Intervention & Supports/ Restraint & Seclusion Policy](#)

[State Testing](#)

[Appendix](#)

Alternative Assessment

Ohio's Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities (AASCD) is aligned to [Ohio's Learning Standards–Extended \(OLS-E\)](#) and is designed to provide students with significant cognitive disabilities the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills through a rigorous, yet accessible, assessment. The AASCD is administered by grade level and covers English language arts and mathematics for all students. In addition, students in grades 5 and 8 will be assessed in science, while high school students will be tested in all four content areas.

Participation Guidelines: Students participating in the AASCD will be determined by the IEP team using [Ohio's Alternative Assessment Participation Decision-Making Tool](#).

Staff responsible for administering the assessments will receive proper training, adequate preparation time (especially when using supplemental resources), and access to the necessary technology to deliver the assessment effectively.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), making it illegal to disclose a student's private information without proper authorization. Only individuals with a direct educational need to know—specifically related to a student's support or instruction—are permitted access to that student's confidential records. Additionally, HIPAA regulations require all student-identifying documents to be stored securely in a locked drawer.

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: personal and family background, evaluation results, test data, psychological and medical reports, disability classifications, academic performance, and other sensitive data.

Disability Categories

Students who qualify for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) must meet eligibility criteria within one or more of the defined disability categories. These categories are designed to ensure that students with diverse learning, physical, emotional, or developmental needs receive appropriate support and services tailored to their individual challenges. There are fourteen disability categories. Each category outlines specific characteristics that impact a student's ability to access and benefit from the general education curriculum, making individualized planning essential to their educational success.

- A. Autism
- B. Intellectual Disability
- C. Developmental Delay (Pre-School)

- D. Deafness
- E. Hearing Impairment
- F. Deaf-Blindness
- G. Visual Impairment
- H. Emotional Disturbance
- I. Multiple Disabilities
- J. Orthopedic Impairment
- K. Other Health Impairment
- L. Specific Learning Disability
- M. Speech or Language Impairment
- N. Traumatic Brain Injury

Discipline

The discipline process is tailored to each student, taking into account their individual needs and understanding of school rules. Teachers are encouraged to document student behavior and work collaboratively with colleagues when developing intervention strategies. For serious disciplinary actions—such as suspensions exceeding nine consecutive or cumulative days—refer to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) [Discipline Flow Chart](#).

Evaluation Team Report- ETR

ETR- General guidelines

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), schools are required to conduct a comprehensive, multidisciplinary evaluation—commonly referred to as an Evaluation Team Report (ETR)—when a parent formally requests an evaluation to determine if their child qualifies for special education services.

ETR Timelines

Consent for Evaluation	Must be obtained within 30 calendar days of the evaluation request by a parent or public agency or a written explanation if the request is denied.
Conduct the Evaluation (Initial)	Must be completed within 60 calendar days of receiving parent consent. When conducting a reevaluation, the report is due to be discussed by the due date on the current document.
Complete the Evaluation	Complete the evaluation five school days prior to the meeting so that information can be used to draft an IEP if applicable.

The ETR must assess the student in all areas of suspected disability and involve a team of qualified professionals, including the parent, to ensure that the evaluation is thorough, objective, and based on a variety of tools and measures. The goal is to determine whether the student

meets the criteria for one or more of the IDEA disability categories and whether there is a need for specially designed instruction.

ETR- Referral/ Child Find

In accordance with the law, Manchester Local Schools is responsible for locating, evaluating, and identifying children with disabilities who may require special education and related services—a process known as *Child Find*. If a child is suspected of needing these services, the Special Education Coordinator or School Psychologist should be contacted to initiate the evaluation process. Parents are encouraged to submit a written request if they wish to have their child evaluated for special education.

When an evaluation request is made outside of the school's established Response to Intervention (RTI) process, the Special Education Coordinator, in collaboration with the school psychologist, building staff, and the child's parent or guardian, will determine the appropriate next steps.

ETR- Planning

The qualified team shall utilize the District's eligibility checklists when determining all of the areas of assessment based on the suspected disability(ies).

The school team, which may include the Special Education Coordinator, school psychologist, teachers, and other relevant staff, will meet with the parent to review the concerns and gather background information. With parental consent, the team will then develop an evaluation plan tailored to the child's individual needs, outlining the specific assessments and areas to be evaluated. The goal is to collect comprehensive data to determine whether the child qualifies for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Vision and hearing screenings that have occurred within a year from the meeting date may be considered in the evaluation. The team may request a new screening, within the existing data timeline, if there are suspected concerns.

Once the evaluation is complete, the team will meet again with the parent to review the results and discuss eligibility and potential next steps.

ETR- Consent

For an **initial** evaluation, written informed consent must be obtained from parent/guardian. Preferably in an in-person meeting.

If consent for a **reevaluation** is not provided after multiple attempts are made, the team will move forward with the evaluation.

ETR- Eligibility

Initial Eligibility:

Decisions regarding initial eligibility must be made by a qualified team, which includes the parent, a district representative, an individual qualified to interpret evaluation results, a general education teacher, and at least one person qualified to conduct individual diagnostic assessments of children. When appropriate, the child with a disability should also be involved in the reevaluation process.

Reevaluations:

For reevaluations, eligibility determinations must be made by the required members of the IEP team.

Extended School Year

The decision to provide **Extended School Year (ESY)** services is made by the student's IEP team each year during the IEP review process. ESY is not automatically provided to all students with disabilities; instead, eligibility is based on the individual needs of the student.

To qualify for ESY, the team must review **data that has been collected and documented over time**. This data helps determine whether a student shows significant **regression** (loss of skills during breaks in instruction) and has difficulty with **recoupment** (relearning those skills once instruction resumes).

The goal of ESY is not to teach new content, but rather to help students **maintain essential skills and prevent significant loss of learning** so they can continue progressing toward their IEP goals.

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)

A functional behavior assessment (FBA) is a structured process of gathering data to identify a specific target behavior, determine the purpose of that behavior, and what factors maintain the behavior that are interfering with the student's education.

The FBA process guides the creation of intervention plans aimed at teaching appropriate alternative behaviors and social skills. These plans often involve modifying the classroom environment, adapting curriculum and instructional methods, and adjusting teacher-student interactions that may reinforce the problematic behavior.

An FBA is recommended for students whose behavioral or emotional challenges hinder their own learning or that of their peers.

Graduation

We are committed to helping every student successfully reach graduation by following Ohio's approved pathways for graduation. Our policies, practices, and procedures are designed to provide clear guidance and support as students work toward meeting all state requirements. The link below offers information on our practices to ensure students, families, and staff have the tools they need to stay informed. The following link will take you to the MLSD page where you can find additional information.

[Policies, Practices, and Procedures for Reaching Graduation](#)

Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

IEP- general guidelines

An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is a written document developed for students who have been identified as needing specialized instruction. It is created through a team process that includes parents, teachers, school specialists, district representatives, and when appropriate the student. The IEP outlines the student's unique learning needs, specific educational goals, and the services and supports the school will provide to help the student succeed. Essentially, an IEP is a personalized roadmap designed to ensure that your child receives the appropriate instruction and support to make meaningful progress in school.

IEP in Effect Timelines:

Within calendar 30 days of determination of a disability (ETR)
Within 90 calendar days of parent consent for evaluation
Within 120 calendar days of parent request for evaluation

Individualized Education Plan-Procedures

1. An IEP review must be held for each student with a disability within 364 days of the previous IEP.
2. The meeting should be arranged in coordination with the IEP team, aiming for a time that accommodates the parent's schedule and works for most team members whenever possible.
3. Required team members include:
 - a. Parent/ Guardian
 - b. Intervention Specialist or SLP, this is the case manager of the IEP.
 - c. General Education Teacher

- d. District Representative (Principal/ Assistant Principal/ Special Education Coordinator/ School Counselor)
- e. Students who are 14, or turning 14 during the IEP, should be included in the meeting.
- f. Any related service providers who have provided information for the IEP should be in attendance.

IEP- Transition

This section of the IEP must be completed for any student who will be 14 or older during the period covered by the new IEP.

Current assessments addressing the student's preferences, interests, needs, and strengths (PINS) in the areas of education, employment, and independent living should be included. These assessments may include: Interest Survey, Career Inventory, Interview.

IEP- SDI, Accommodations, Modifications, Assistive Technology

Specially Designed Instruction	Accommodations	Modifications	Assistive Technology
The strategies & methodologies that are used to teach skills.	The environmental supports students need to achieve their goals.	A fundamental change to the scope & complexity of curriculum.	Physical item or software to provide or improve access to instruction.
The "HOW" something is taught "TO" the student	Changes made "FOR" the student	Changes in curriculum "FOR" the student	Tangible "SOMETHING" given "TO" the student

IEP- Accommodations vs. Modifications

Both accommodations and modifications are only used when a student cannot access the general education curriculum without them. There should be few cases where modifications to the curriculum are used.

Accommodations give students with disabilities different ways to access information and demonstrate their knowledge. They provide equal access to the curriculum without lowering standards or expectations. Students are still responsible for learning the same material and answering the same questions as their peers.

Modifications mean making changes in what is being taught to or expected from the student. The modification or change means the child will not be doing the same level of work as their peers and will not be expected to master the same academic content as others in the classroom. Below is a link to Ohio's extended standards.

[Ohio's Extended Content Standards](#)

IEP- Progress Reporting

Progress reports are to be completed each nine weeks at the close of each grading period. Reports are to be sent home within five school days of the end of the grading period.

Final progress on IEP goals and objectives is collected at the end of each IEP term and reviewed as part of the new IEP. If the annual review of the IEP is held within 2 weeks of grades closing, progress will be reported on the previous IEP.

Transition progress will also be reported for students who have transition activities.

Informed Consent

IDEA defines parental consent as:

- The parent has been fully informed of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought, in the parent's native language, or other mode of communication.
- The parent understands and agrees in writing to the carrying out of the activity for which the parent's consent is sought, and the consent describes that activity and lists the records (if any) that will be released and to whom; and
 - The parent understands that the granting of consent is voluntary on the part of the parent and may be revoked at any time.
 - If a parent revokes consent, that revocation is not retroactive (i.e., it does not negate an action that has occurred after the consent was given and before the consent was revoked).

Internal Monitoring

As part of our ongoing commitment to meeting the requirements of IDEA, the District utilizes an Internal Monitoring Team to strengthen compliance monitoring.

This proactive approach will help ensure that any concerns are addressed early and that services and support for students remain in full alignment with federal and state guidelines.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Policy- The Ohio Department of Education & Workforce: To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled; and (ii) Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature of severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Manchester Local Schools Board Policy- Following is a link to Manchester Local School Board Policy regarding student placements (po2452):

<https://go.boarddocs.com/oh/manches/Board.nsf/Public?open&id=policies>

Manchester Local School District is dedicated to educating students within district facilities to the fullest extent possible. Out-of-district placements are considered only when it is determined that a student's educational needs cannot be appropriately met within district programs and services.

Procedures:

1. **Reasons for Out-of-District Placement** – Questions about a student's placement may come up for a variety of reasons. These may include academic concerns, such as the need for more intensive support and small-group instruction to access the curriculum, or behavioral concerns that impact the student's success within the school setting.
 - a. **Academic:** Out-of-District placements may be considered for students with more intensive academic needs. Without the resources of multiple disability or cross-categorical classrooms within our district, students who need a more functional curriculum may be placed in a program that is designed to meet their more intensive needs with a focus on job training and skills.
 - b. **Behavioral:** For students with significant behavioral concerns, an out-of-district placement may be considered. These programs provide a more structured and restrictive environment designed to address behavioral needs, while still ensuring students have access to curriculum standards.
2. **Monitoring & Support for Students Before an Out-of-District Placement-** The team first creates an intervention plan to develop and monitor progress before making a determination on placement.
 - a. **Academic:** For students who are experiencing academic challenges but have not yet been identified as having a disability, the team will begin with **Response to**

Intervention (RTI) support. These may include classroom-based interventions led by the teacher, small-group pull-out support, Title I reading services, or targeted instruction from a math intervention coach. Progress is closely monitored to determine whether the student is responding to these supports or if further evaluation may be needed.

For students who have already been identified as having a disability, their needs are addressed through the **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)**. When concerns arise, the IEP team may meet to review and amend the IEP, adjusting goals, services, or specially designed instruction to better support the student's academic growth. These changes ensure that instruction remains aligned with the student's needs and provides meaningful access to the general education curriculum.

- b. Behavioral: When a student demonstrates behaviors that pose an immediate risk to themselves, their peers, or staff, the school district may take prompt action to ensure safety.

For students who exhibit ongoing behavioral challenges that do not present a safety concern, the school works collaboratively with staff and, when appropriate, a behavior specialist to provide support. This may include developing an **informal behavior plan** to track concerns, reinforce positive behaviors, and guide interventions within the classroom.

If behaviors continue despite these interventions, the team may recommend conducting a **Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)**. An FBA helps identify the underlying reasons for the student's behavior and guides the development of a **formal Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)**. The BIP includes proactive strategies, environmental supports, and positive behavior interventions to promote the student's success in the school setting.

MLSD offers MTSS support to help address students' social and emotional needs. More details about these supports can be found [HERE](#) under resources.

3. Team Considerations for Out-of-District Placements.

- a. Academic: When a student is first considered for an out-of-district placement for academics, the team must take into consideration many factors.
 - i. ETR Data- Does the ETR show deficits that would require more intensive support in areas like academics, intelligence, or adaptive skills.

- ii. Classroom Data- Are the students' needs being met within the general education classroom/ inclusion classroom/ or the small group setting?
Does the student need more intensive small group instruction using extended standards?
 - iii. Classroom/ School Environment Observations
 - iv. State and District Testing
 - v. Concerns of the parent
 - vi. Concerns of the team
 - b. Behavioral: Out-of-District placements for behavioral needs are considered when a student requires a more structured environment to develop behavioral strategies that will help them be more successful in their school setting alongside peers. The school based team considers several factors when making this recommendation including consistency and severity of the behavior. Below is the link for the student handbook for each building:
 - i. [Nolley Elementary School](#)
 - ii. [Manchester Middle School](#)
 - iii. [Manchester High School](#)
4. **Team Out-of-District Placement Decisions-** All available data information is considered when the team finalizes the placement decision.

Best Practices:

Placement in special classes, separate schools, or other settings outside the general education environment should occur only when the disability's nature or severity makes it impossible for the student to succeed in regular classes, even with supplementary aids and services.

Intervention Specialists (IS) and Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP) should review each student's Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) during every IEP meeting and be prepared to discuss these considerations with parents.

Continuum of Alternative Placements: Manchester Local Schools partners with both public and private providers to offer a full range of services designed to meet the more intensive academic and behavioral needs of our students.

Medicaid

The Medicaid Form serves as a release allowing the district to submit a student's special education documents if requested by the Ohio Department of Medicaid.

The [Annual Medicaid Review form](#) provides information on the process.

Parental Rights Packet

The [Parent Rights Packet](#) is a required document that must be offered at every meeting. It provides families with important information about their child's rights as a student with a disability.

Positive Behavior Intervention & Supports/ Restraint & Seclusion Policy

The Board is committed to the district-wide implementation of **Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS)** for all students. Staff are expected to focus on prevention and the use of non-aversive strategies to address behavior, thereby minimizing—if not eliminating—the need for restraint or seclusion.

The official board approved policy on Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports and Limited use of Restraint and Seclusion can be found [HERE](#).

Professional and support staff designated by the Superintendent may use physical restraint and/or seclusion only when there is an immediate risk of physical harm to the student or others.

All restraint and seclusion practices must align with this Policy and the standards adopted by the State Board of Education.

Training on PBIS, as well as on permissible restraint and seclusion techniques, will be provided to professional staff and other staff members identified by the Superintendent. Only trained personnel are authorized to implement these measures.

Every instance of restraint or seclusion must be documented and reported according to this Policy.

State Testing

Ohio requires state testing for all public school students. Students with significant needs may qualify to participate in Ohio's **Alternative Assessment**, with eligibility guidelines available [HERE](#).

Students with disabilities who are not eligible for the alternative assessment will take Ohio's standard assessments. The [Ohio-Accessibility Manual for Ohio State Tests](#) provides more information on student accommodations for these tests.

Appendix

[Annual Medicaid Review form](#)

[Discipline Flow Chart](#)

[ESY Flowchart](#)

[Ohio's Alternative Assessment](#)

[Ohio's Alternative Assessment Participation Decision-Making Tool](#)

[Ohio's Extended Content Standards](#)

[Ohio's Learning Standards–Extended \(OLS-E\)](#)

[Ohio-Accessibility Manual for Ohio State Tests](#)

[Parent Rights Packet](#)

[Policies, Practices, and Procedures for Reaching Graduation](#)

[Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports and Limited use of Restraint and Seclusion Policy](#)

[Social and Emotional Support Resources](#)

88Student Handbook: [Nolley](#) / [MMS](#) / [MHS](#)