

District Policies, Practices, and Procedures in Special Education

I. Introduction The purpose of this plan is to revise and improve policies, practices, and procedures related to special education within the district. This plan ensures compliance with federal and state regulations, promotes best practices, and enhances the provision of services for students with disabilities.

II. MTSS Framework

1. At Tier 1, universal supports such as visual aids, modeling correct speech, built-in think time, and checks for understanding will be embedded. At Tier 2, focused support will be provided, which may include small group vocabulary practice, targeted math fact fluency practice, or structured oral language activities. At Tier 3, individualized strategies will be implemented, such as explicit phonics instruction, individualized math concept applications, or repeated practice of sounds/words.
 2. Classroom teachers will collaborate with their grade level teams for strategies that may be integrated into daily instruction, utilizing district-wide assessment data. If concerns exist for a student after exhausting all strategies, they will refer the student to the MTSS team for further assistance. The teacher will be responsible for collecting data to track student progress, and will bring to regularly scheduled MTSS meetings to review with the team. At this time, data-based decisions will be made in adjusting supports before considering referral for special education evaluation.
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III. Initial Evaluations / Procedures for Conducting Initial Evaluations

1. Upon receiving a referral for special education evaluation, the district will review available data to determine if a disability is suspected.
 2. If a disability is suspected, the district will obtain written parental consent within the required timeline. If a disability is not suspected, the district will provide a description, explanation, and the data used to make such determination.
 3. The evaluation process will be completed within 60 days of receiving consent, in accordance with federal and state requirements.
 4. The evaluation team will use multiple sources of information, including observations, parent input, and assessments.
 5. Cultural and linguistic factors will be considered to ensure non-discriminatory evaluations.
 6. A multidisciplinary team will review all data and determine eligibility based on established criteria.
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IV. Reevaluations / Procedures for Conducting Reevaluations

1. Reevaluations will occur at least once every three years unless determined unnecessary by the IEP team and parent agreement. Reevaluations may also occur before the three year deadline if determined necessary by the IEP team and parent agreement.
 2. Parental consent will be obtained prior to conducting reevaluations.
 3. The reevaluation process will include a review of existing data, additional assessments if needed, and input from educators and parents.
 4. The team will determine continued eligibility and necessary changes to the student's IEP.
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V. Evaluation Procedures / Appropriate Assessments

1. Assessments will be selected based on student needs and administered by qualified professionals.
 2. Assessments will be valid and reliable for the intended purpose.
 3. A variety of assessment tools, including functional, observational, and educationally relevant assessments, will be used.
 4. Assessments will be conducted in the student's native language or preferred mode of communication.
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VI. Procedural Safeguards

1. Parents will be provided with a copy of procedural safeguards annually and upon request.
 2. The district will ensure that parents understand their rights regarding evaluations, eligibility, and service decisions.
 3. Prior written notice will be given to parents regarding proposed changes in identification, evaluation, or placement of the child or provision of FAPE.
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VII. Determination of Eligibility

1. Eligibility decisions will be based on comprehensive data from multiple sources.
 2. A team of qualified professionals will determine if a student's disability adversely affects educational performance for which they will require specially designed instruction.
 3. Eligibility criteria for specific disabilities will align with federal and state guidelines.
 4. Parents will be actively involved in the eligibility determination process.
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VIII. Qualified Team Members

1. The team will include a general education teacher, special education teacher, at least one person qualified to conduct individual diagnostic assessments of children, and other relevant professionals.
 2. Parents will be considered essential members of the team.
 3. Additional specialists (e.g., school psychologists, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, adaptive PE teachers, audiologists, teachers for the visually impaired, teachers for the hearing impaired) will be included as needed.
 4. The team will be responsible for ensuring accurate and comprehensive evaluations.
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IX. Additional Procedures for Identifying SLD or Multiple Disabilities

1. For the identification of both a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) and Multiple Disabilities (MD), the district will use a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) to identify struggling students before referral, so that appropriate interventions may be provided. Multiple sources of evidence, including but not limited to, cognitive and achievement testing, classroom performance, and observation, will be used. The eligibility team will document how the disability or disabilities impact learning and determine needs for specially designed instruction.

2. As part of the SLD determination process, intervention data will be reviewed alongside patterns of strengths and weaknesses assessment data. The evaluation team will consider exclusionary factors, lack of appropriate instruction, observations, and medical findings when making eligibility decisions.
 3. For students with multiple disabilities, assessments will consider the interaction of impairments and how they affect educational needs as well as determine if there is a severe or profound deficit in communication or adaptive behavior.
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X. Conclusion This district plan provides a structured approach to policies, practices, and procedures to enhance special education services. By following these guidelines, the district will ensure compliance, promote equitable access, and support the academic success of all students.