

Basic Rights in Special Education

Cohasset Public Schools
Fall 2025



Cohasset Public Schools- Office of Student Services

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Student Services Administrative Team	
Michael Stapleton	Director of Student Services
Theresa Miller	Administrative Assistant for the Office of Student Services
Meghan Greaney	Elementary Team Chairperson (PK-5)
Melissa Loney	Secondary Team Chairperson (6-12)

Director of Student Services

Questions about overall special education policies and procedures

Concerns about district compliance with IDEA, Section 504, or state regulations

Issues with access to or quality of student services across the district

Disputes or concerns unresolved at the school level

Requests for mediation or formal dispute resolution processes

General feedback or concerns about student services programs

Administrative Assistant for the Office of Student Services

Requests for copies of student service documents (IEP, evaluations, reports)

General information about student services office hours and contacts

Guidance on paperwork or forms needed for special education processes

Confidential Administrative Assistant for the Director of Student Services

Team Chairs

Questions about your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Concerns about your child's progress or access to accommodations/services

Requests for evaluations or re-evaluations for your child

Clarification about goals, accommodations, and service delivery

Coordination of school-based supports and interventions

Scheduling or rescheduling Initial/ Re-Evaluation Team meetings

Understanding Special Education Basic Rights

Our goal today is to:

- Review basic special education rights and principles
- Discuss how families can effectively advocate for their children
- Promote collaboration between the school district and SEPAC to support students' success
- Answer questions and provide resources to empower families

Special Education Information

Special Education Law

- Federal: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (reauthorized in 2004)
<https://www.congress.gov/108/plaws/publ446/PLAW-108publ446.pdf>
- Massachusetts: Chapter 71B (Chapter 766) 603 CMR 28.00
<https://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr28.html?section=all>

Special Education is:

- Specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of an individual in order to access and make effective progress in the general curriculum, and/or related services necessary to access and make effective progress in the general curriculum

Eligibility for Special Education Services

Eligibility for Special Education:

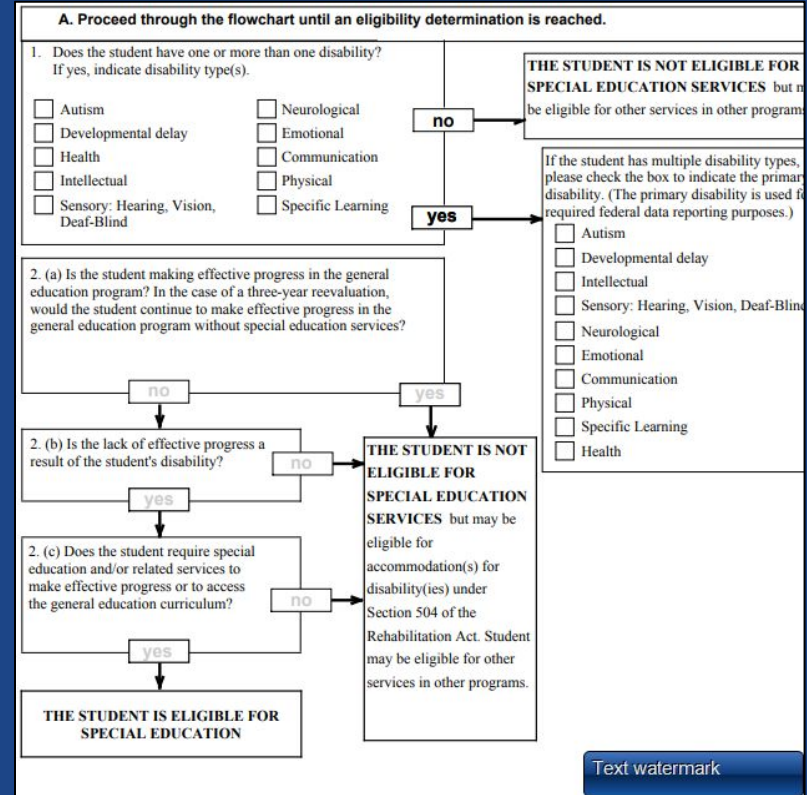
(All 3 Must Be Met)

1. The student has a diagnosed disability

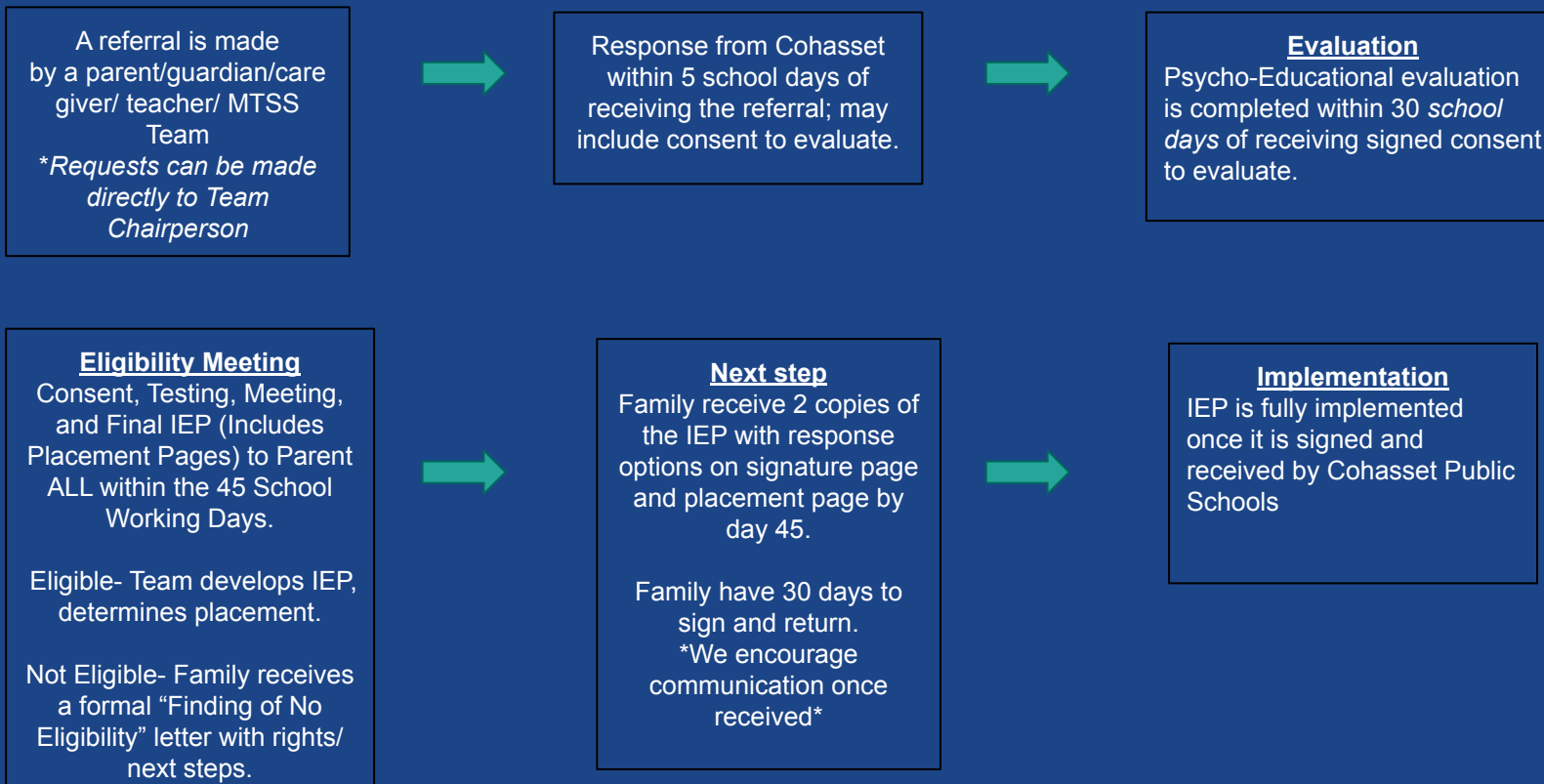
Disability Definitions and Related Links

2. The student is not making effective progress as a result of their disability

3. The student requires special education services and/ or related services to access the curriculum or make effective progress. to do so.



The Evaluation Process:



Family Participation

- Parents are equal partners. The Team consists of parents, general education teacher, special education providers, *student if 14 or older*, and others based on need/discretion of family or school
- Student participation and voice is essential.
- Student driven IEP Plans/ Transition Plans- This takes collaborative planning and open communication.

Basic Principles of Special Education

Participation

- Parent and student participation is paramount, as students are the focus of special education.
- It is the obligation of the district to ensure participation.

FAPE

- Is Free and Appropriate Public Education: Services are provided by the public school district at no cost to families with services to enable progress including all levels PK-22, and extra curricular.

Evaluation

- Initial Evaluation
- Reevaluation (3 Years)
Variety of assessment tools and strategies
- Independent Educational Evaluation

Basic Principles of Special Education

IEP

Individualized Education Program

Student and Parent concerns

Current level of performance
(Academics/ Behavioral/ Social
Emotional, Communication,
Other areas)

Accommodations

Measurable annual goals

Transition Planning

Service Delivery

LRE

Least Restrictive
Environment

Focus on inclusion in the
general education
environment

Procedural Safeguards

Parent's Notice of Procedural Safeguards

- Written notice
- Consent
- Stay put rights
- Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA)
- Problem Resolution Solution (PRS)
- Adherence to timelines
- Confidential records

Parent's Notice of Procedural Safeguards

- Website linked in previous slide
- Sent to all special education families on 9/2/2025
- Updated in May 2025- “The PNPS have been updated to include information to meet the requirement of annual notice regarding the school district's use of MassHealth.” “The school district will also give you written notice and request your consent – or written permission – before the school district asks to use public health insurance (MassHealth or Medicaid), to pay for a student's special education services for the first time.”

This document, the Parent's Notice of Procedural Safeguards, answers the following questions:

1. What is "prior written notice" and when do you receive it?	Page 2
2. What is "parental consent" and when must the school district ask for your consent?	Page 3
3. Is the school district required to evaluate upon request by a parent?	Page 5
4. What is an "independent educational evaluation"?	Page 5
5. When can you see your student's student records?	Page 7
6. How can parents and schools resolve disputes?	Page 7
7. What are your responsibilities if you place your student in a private school?	Page 11
8. What must be done to plan for your student's transition from school?	Page 12
9. How may a school discipline a student with a disability?	Page 12
10. Where can the laws and regulations and other useful information be found?	Page 14

Modifications

What is Instructional Modification?

A modification means a change in what is being taught to or expected from the student. Modifications are designed by special educators, but can be provided by general educators, paraprofessionals or special educators.

The 3 types of modifications:

- Content - the level or intensity of the information may be altered
- Methodology/Delivery of Instruction -a specialized approach to provide the skills needed to progress
- Output– how will the skill be demonstrated (?)

****If content is heavily modified, child may have difficulty with MCAS or experience greater challenges accessing curriculum in higher grades.**

Resources

Team

- * Special Education Teachers
- * Team Chairperson
- * Related Service Providers
- * General Education Teacher
- * Building Administration
- * Director of Student Services

SEPAC

- * Advises the district
- * Meets regularly to participate in planning, develop, and evaluation of programming

Parents Procedural Rights

Safeguards Emailed to families on 9/3/2024 and linked below:

[Parent's Notice of Procedural Safeguards](#)

Questions?

Thank you for attending!

Please reach out to Michael Stapleton with any questions, comments, concerns, or topics for future meetings!