

I. Evaluations

Evaluations are used to:

- Determine if a student has a disability;
- Determine the nature and extent of special education and related services the student needs;
- Determine if an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan is meeting the educational needs of the student;
- Document a student's current performance levels; and
- Develop appropriate and meaningful goals and objectives.

Initial Evaluation

A referral for an initial evaluation for special education services is made.

- Parents must provide written consent prior to an initial evaluation, and parents can choose to give consent or refuse permission.
- All suspected areas of disability must be assessed in the initial evaluation, including:
 - Academic
 - Communication
 - Intellectual ability
 - Motor skills
 - Social skills
 - Adaptive skills
 - Assistive technology
 - Hearing
 - Vision, etc.

The purpose of the initial evaluation is to determine:

- Whether the student has a disability or is gifted;
- The educational needs of the student;
- Impact on educational and functional performance;
- Whether the student needs specially designed instruction

- The nature and extent of the special education and related services needed

Reevaluation

For a student who is already receiving special education services, the IEP team must conduct a reevaluation in order to determine the student's continued eligibility for special education services.

- Parents will be required to provide consent prior to the reevaluation.
- A reevaluation is often called a triennial review.
- A parent or teacher may request a reevaluation if necessary.
- A reevaluation is used to monitor a student's progress and to assess the effectiveness of the special education services.
- If a student is evaluated during the last year of high school, ensure that adult norms are used so the evaluation will be sufficient for the post-secondary documentation of the disability.
- West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services may provide an evaluation at no cost for eligible students.

Additional Evaluations

There may be circumstances when the IEP team needs additional information about a student.

- Examples:
 - When a student is not progressing
 - When the IEP team is in disagreement over the removal or addition of a special education or related service
- An additional evaluation can be requested to assist with the determination of educational needs.

If a parent disagrees with an evaluation completed by the school district, a parent has a right to request an independent educational evaluation.

- A parent has a right to request an independent evaluation (by an individual who does not work for the school district).

- School districts are required to pay for the expense of the independent evaluation.
- The school district must provide the parent with a list of evaluators and make arrangements in advance of the evaluation.
- The parent will select the evaluator. A parent can choose an evaluator not on the list provided by the school district as long as the evaluator meets the credentials set by the school district.
- If a school district refuses a parent's request for an independent evaluation, the school district is required to file for due process to prove that the school district's evaluation is appropriate and that the parent's request is without merit.

A school district is required to consider any evaluations the parent obtains privately.

- A school district may not use one evaluation as the sole criterion when making decisions about special education services.

Information and material developed from West Virginia Department of Education Policy 2419 and “A Parent’s Advocacy Guide to Special Education.”