

Taylor County School System

Special Education Supervision and Monitoring Manual

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This manual is to be used as a guide for implementation and in conjunction with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA) and its regulations, The Georgia State Department of Education's Rules, implemented April 18, 2011, and the Georgia Implementation Manuals 1 and 2. This Special Education Supervision and Monitoring Manual details the procedures that Taylor County School System, Director of Special Education, and School Administrators will follow to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations pertaining to educating students with special needs. If any information in this manual conflicts with current rules, the rules supersede.

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Area of General Supervision I: Identification Processes

Indicators:

9: Disproportionality in Special Education

10: Disproportionality by Category

11: Child Find

12: Early Transition

Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information

See State Rule: 160-4-7-.08

DEFINITION

Education records are records that directly relate to a student and are maintained by an educational agency or institution.

COMPONENTS

- *Confidential Information*
- *Access rights and required procedures*
- *Amendment of Records at parent request*
- *Results of hearing*
- *Parent Consent*
- *Safeguards*
- *Destruction of Confidential Information*

Description
All information which identifies a student as being a student with a disability is kept confidential. This includes but not limited to all IEP paperwork. Information from IEPs will only be shared with staff members who have a need to know. All IEPs and supporting documents are to remain in a secure location, under lock and key, at the school and district levels.
Method to Monitor for Compliance
Records will be handled and maintained in such a manner as to insure confidentiality.
Monitoring Staff
District Level – Director of Special Education, Special Education Accountant School Level – Principal, Office Secretary, Special Education Lead Teacher, Special Education Teacher

Student Support Team
See State Rule: 160-4-2-.32

DEFINITION

Student Support Team (SST) is an interdisciplinary group that uses a systematic process to address learning and / or behavior problems of students, K – 12, in a school.

COMPONENTS

- *Requirement for local school SST*
- *Student evaluation*
- *SST Members*
- *Parents / Guardian participation*
- *Steps of SST Process*
- *Documentation of SST Activities*
- *Exceptions to the use of the SST Process*

Description
When the SST requests a psychological evaluation, the SST Coordinator from the referring school must submit all SST documentation to the Special Education Office.
Method to Monitor for Compliance
District leaders in collaboration with Principals will ensure that SST is using the data – driven problem-solving process by providing ongoing professional development on the: MTSS/RTI process, organization of paperwork, clear definitions of roles and responsibilities, processes, procedures and legal aspects of SST. SST Coordinator at each school will monitor the students being referred to SST by collaborating with the referring teacher / team upon consideration of SST referral based on RTI / progress monitoring findings. SST Coordinator at each school will monitor progress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Following guidelines outlined in Procedures & Forms RTI / SST / 504 Plans Manual along with TIER 3 SST forms. ● Conducting monthly fidelity checks to ensure quality of interventions. ● Sharing progress with administrators during monthly Design Team meetings before referral for psychological evaluation. ● Director of Special Education will monitor the placement rate of initial referrals to special education (high / low percentage of referrals found eligible).
Monitoring Staff
District Level –Director of Teaching & Learning and Director of Special Education School Level – Principal, Assistant Principal, Building level SST Coordinators, Academic Coach(es), SLP’s, and Special Education Teacher(s)

What is the Student Support Team?

SST teams had their origin in a federal lawsuit known as Marshall vs. Georgia (1984). It dealt primarily with disproportionate placement of minority students in Special Education. Within this case, it became obvious that in Georgia there was no standard process for students to obtain individualized help in the regular classroom for learning or behavior difficulties but many times were placed in Special Education often being removed from the general education classroom.

As part of Georgia's commitment to the federal court to remedy technical violations found in the trial, the State of Georgia mandated that a Student Support Team (SST) would be established in every Georgia public school, K – 12. The court accepted this commitment, thereby making SST mandate a permanent injunction.

The SST is a joint effort between regular education and special education to identify and plan alternative instructional strategies for children prior to or in lieu of a special education referral. Each building level team is comprised of such persons as administrators, classroom teachers, requesting teachers, special education teachers, academic coaches, counselors, school psychologist, central office personnel, and parents.

This interdisciplinary group which plans for interventions in a student's education program shall engage in a six-step process to include: (1) identification of needs, (2) assessment, if necessary, (3) academic (educational) and / or behavior plan, (4) implementation, (5) follow-up and support, and (6) continuous monitoring and evaluation.

Students who are experiencing difficulties, in a number of areas, benefit from the activities of the SST. This includes students who are experiencing a lack of progress as well as those students who need a more challenging academic program. At any time during this process, if the team has sufficient evidence that the student has a disability, the team should determine whether an evaluation or 504 Plan is necessary. **For students with obvious severe disabilities and / or in crisis for whom delay of referral would be detrimental to the student, the SST may bypass implementation of alternative strategies prior to referral. The reason for bypassing this process must be clearly documented.**

The overall function of the Student Support Team committee discusses, develops and implements research-based interventions for teachers / staff to use with students. The SST is an intervention process for teachers and parents that provide an avenue for student success.

The SST Team

The SST shall include at a minimum the referring teacher and at least two of the following participants, as appropriate to the needs of the student:

1. Parent / guardian shall be invited to participate in all meetings of their child's SST and in the development of interventions for their child.
2. SST Coordinator / Chairperson
3. Principal
4. Regular / General Education Teacher(s)
5. Lead teacher / Grade-Level Chairperson
6. Subject Area Specialist / Academic Coaches
7. Special Education Teacher
8. Counselor
9. School Psychologist
10. ESOL teacher
11. School / outside agency / social worker
12. Central Office personnel
13. Section 504 Coordinator / Special Education Director
14. Other appropriate personnel / district leaders:

Team Member Roles

Team Members	Role
Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Parental involvement and support are critical in assuring the successful development, implementation, and continuing support of effective intervention approaches ❖ Attend SST / RTI meetings, as requested
District Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Support the SST ❖ Appoint or help principals appoint (or serve as) the SST chairperson ❖ Provide leadership for the staff to ensure a basic understanding of the SST process ❖ Provide information about local school operations and serve as a liaison between SST and the District ❖ Train SST members on their roles and responsibilities ❖ Coordinate Tier 3 / SST professional development for staff ❖ Provide school administrators and Central Office staff with annual feedback on the efficiency, effectiveness, and potential needs impacting SST support ❖ Ensures SST-related records or documentation are adequately completed, maintained, and available for school and system-wide analysis, e.g., SST Annual Review ❖ Surveys staff as to the effectiveness of SST actions ❖ Collaborate with school staff to conduct regular fidelity checks to determine if the intervention is implemented the way it was intended
<p>School SST Coordinator / Chairperson</p> <p><i>Facilitates meeting, accountable for time, checks for meaning and understanding, keeps group focused, remains positive and compliments group, diffuses emotionally charged statements, prioritizes concerns and actions, expects accountability from group, encourages input from all</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Coordinates & attends SST meetings ❖ Conducts monthly SST meetings ❖ Invites mandatory & appropriate members ❖ Determines SST agenda for each SST meeting ❖ Maintains SST files & paperwork ❖ Updates SST log ❖ Attend district SST chairperson meetings ❖ Ensures the SST referral and intervention process are not routinely used to address poorly defined academic or behavioral issues, e.g., those not first addressed through pre-referral Tier 1 and / or Tier 2 intervention ❖ Communicates with the principal, Central Office Student Services staff, and other school staff members regarding specific intervention cases or difficulties ❖ Ensures that SST documentation, whether action is pending, started, or completed, follows a student to the receiving school if a child transfers to another school ❖ Participates in school-based SST Annual Reviews

<i>members and asks for specifics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Collaborate with school staff to conduct regular fidelity checks to determine if the intervention is implemented the way it was intended ❖ The functions of the SST Chairperson(s) are to ensure that the intervention and referral procedures outlined in this and related documents are fully met and to also manage the day-to-day operations of the SST
Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ School principals are responsible for deciding on the most suitable SST organizational model for their school ❖ Retains all responsible for deciding on the most suitable SST organizational model for their school ❖ Retains all responsibility for proper and effective implementation of the SST / RTI procedures ❖ The principal may delegate the management, administrative, and oversight duties related to SST requirements to a SST Chairperson ❖ Principals will select the School RTI /SST Chairperson within the first 10 calendar days of the school year. The individuals selected, as well as other key individuals identified by the school principal (e.g. newly assigned SST or critical student support staff, team model contact person, etc.) must attend all initial and recurring training provided ❖ Arranges for coverage of staff needing to be present at SST meetings ❖ Collaborate with school staff to conduct regular fidelity checks to determine if the intervention is implemented the way it was intended
Recorder / Note taker	Documents SST minutes containing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Student name ❖ Name of team members ❖ Meeting dates ❖ Identification of student learning and / or behavior problems ❖ Records of assessments ❖ Intervention (education) plan and implementation results (progress monitoring) ❖ Takes notes during the meeting and provides a record of the discussion in a format that is useful to the school and participants on the ‘Summary of Meeting Form’ (page 9 of Procedures and Forms RTI / SST / Section 504 Plan manual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Distributes intervention plans to appropriate members
Referring teacher or RTI Team <i>(The referring teacher is making the case to support the learner’s needs.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gathers information / identification of learning and / or behavior weaknesses, reviews data ● Develops intervention plan ● Implements intervention plan ● Evaluates and documents progress ● Continues to monitor and evaluate student’s progress

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pinpoint targeted learning / behavior weaknesses
Regular Education Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in shared responsibilities such as assessment, observation, planning, etc. ● Observe and help collect data on referred students ● Participate in SST staff / professional development ● Be familiar with intervention resources / programs readily available within the school / district ● Identify and intervene with at-risk students having difficulties and / or performing below grade level ● Initiate support, and participate in Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 interventions when needed ● Encourage early parent participation, commitment, and support of needed interventions ● Complete necessary documents and actions as detailed by the SST Chairperson ● Develop, maintain, and monitor the intervention plan, and / or behavior contract ● Implement interventions with fidelity ● Respects and listens to other individuals, questions statements to get clearer information, helps recorder, helps group stay on task, comes prepared, and is accountable for agreed upon actions
School Psychologist Speech Language Pathologist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides consult on Tier 1, 2, and 3 interventions ● Supports SST team ● Shares knowledge in their field
Director of Special Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monitor active referral cases ● Share SST information of students that transfer into system ● Manage school-based Section 504 Accommodations program ● Manage referral processes for special education assessment
Other appropriate personnel <i>Miscellaneous team members offer additional insight and expertise in developing appropriate intervention plans for students and are valuable team members</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Utilize own area of expertise in the development of student-centered interventions ● Perform or participate in any needed pre-referral or intervention actions or screenings that are within the member's area of expertise (e.g., work with teacher on Tier 2 interventions, observations, social and health histories, etc.) and provide the results of such data gathering actions as appropriate ● Assist the team in making intervention plans that not only targets the changes needed for effective student achievement but also enhances the student's strengths ● Assist the team in making intervention plans that not only targets the changes needed for effective student achievement but also enhances the student's strengths

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assist in helping teachers, parents, students, and others feel welcome and an integral part of the intervention process ● Assist the SST Chair in identifying team issues, concerns, and strategies to enhance team effectiveness and cohesion ● Be familiar with and committed to problem-solving processes and related procedures such as curricular-based measures ● Ask critical questions that help the team gather pertinent information about the whole child and his or her unique situation
Counselor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monitor educational needs of at-risk, pregnant, homeless, home-bound, and / or unaccompanied youth who perform either academically or behaviourally below expectations

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Student Support Teams

taken from Georgia Department of Education

Who makes up the Student Support Team?

Membership varies from school to school. Typically, there are three to five members. They may be an administrator, a counselor, a regular education teacher, a special education teacher, a school social worker, a parent, a media specialist, a school psychologist or other central office persons, as appropriate.

How does one get on this team and how long would one serve as a member?

Members may be appointed or may volunteer, and some are invited to serve on a particular case that needs their expertise. Service time for standing members may vary from a semester to several years.

Who may request assistance from the SST?

The problem-solving expertise of the SST is for the benefit of the entire school. Any unresolved problem that is impeding the learning process may be referred to the SST, by a teacher, administrator, parent or even a student.

What happens when SST addresses a problem?

A brainstorming process is used to generate recommendations for solving the problem. These are usually given to a teacher to implement with a student.

How long is the SST strategy implemented?

This depends on the specific problem. Usually, six weeks is sufficient to determine whether the recommendations will succeed. If not, the process may be used again to fine-tune the strategy. Some cases are of short duration, yet a few students may be followed by SST for their entire school career.

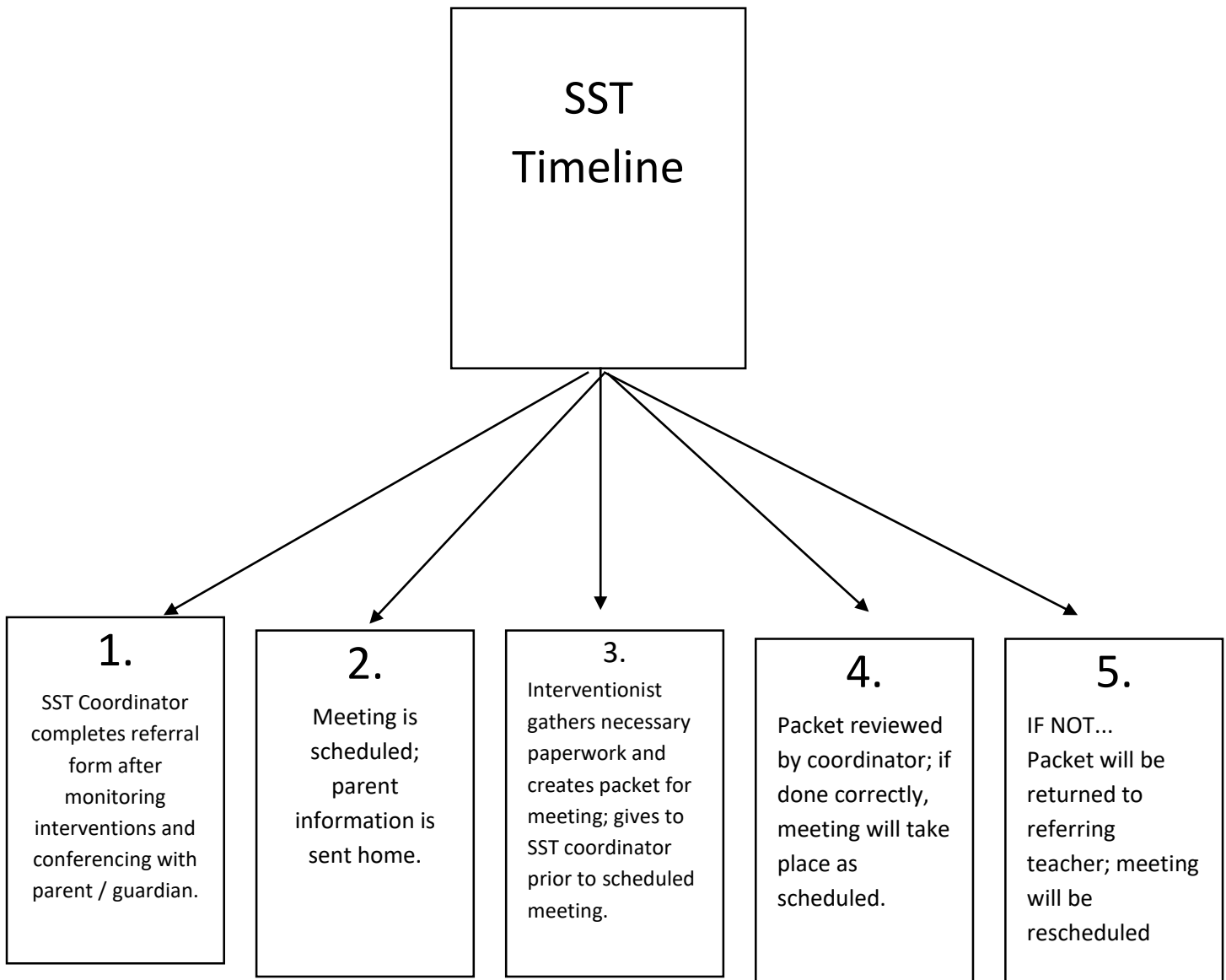
Can the SST refer students for evaluation for special education consideration?

Yes, but only after several important decision criteria are met: one, that reasonable classroom interventions of sufficient duration have been carefully attempted, without success; and two, that the cause of the problem is suspected to be a disability that cannot be resolved without special education services. Exceptions would be pre-schoolers; and seriously disabled students for whom SST would delay obviously needed special education services. They may bypass SST, with the reason documented.

What data could be cited to indicate the effectiveness of an SST?

Many indicators could be gathered in a school that would show success of the SST process, from teacher satisfaction to pre/post student performance. In systems that are regarded as having excellent SSTs, one measure is that, of students referred on by SST for special education evaluation, 80 to 90 percent of them end up qualifying for such services.

Organizational Model



Special Education Eligibility Procedures

Referral for Special Education may be considered when the following guidelines are followed;

- Student's performance has been identified and analysed.
- Student has participated at Tier 2 and Tier 3 in at least 2 research-based intervention cycles (6 weeks each, group and / or individual). The student's progress resulting from these interventions was evaluated by SST committee.
- Special Education Teacher must have joined the SST committee at Tier 3.
- Data documenting the rate of improvement (or lack thereof) over time for a targeted problem was collected.
- After Tier 3 interventions have been completed, data must confirm at least two of the following in order to find an individual eligible for referral for an evaluation for possible special education placement:

- Student's slope of growth continues to be below grade-level
- Student's performance on progress monitoring probes has not resulted in 4 consecutive data points above the universal screener cut off, either at present or during previous evaluations of performance.
- Student's level of performance continues to be significantly discrepant from grade-level peers.

Vision and hearing screening may be done at Tier 2 (as determined necessary) to rule out possible sensory issues which could have an impact on the student's response to intervention(s). Parent permission may be required.

If these guidelines have been considered, a comprehensive evaluation for special education may be deemed appropriate. If an evaluation for special education is determined to be appropriate by the SST the following procedures should occur:

- The school's SST Coordinator shall complete:
 - Parental Consent for Evaluation (giving parent list of possible test to be administered)
 - Initial Referral for Psychological Evaluation
 - Initial Referral Checklist (attaching all required documents listed)
- The principal must review completed packet and sign the **Initial Referral for Psychological Evaluation** prior to submitting the packet to the Special Education Director.
- Upon receipt of the packet, the Special Education Director will check contents for completeness and also sign the **Initial Referral for Psychological Evaluation**.
- In the case of incomplete information or discrepancies, the Special Education Director will collaborate with Principal and SST Coordinator of referring school to resolve issues.
- Initial Referral for Psychological Evaluation 'packet' will be forwarded to Chattahoochee-Flint Resa by the Special Education Department. Resa will set up an appointment for testing / evaluation with one of their psychologist who may request further information from parent or other professionals as the comprehensive evaluation is a team effort. The appointment date will be communicated to the Special Education Department by letter. The Special Education Department will forward letter / information to parents and referring school.
- Upon completion of the evaluation, Resa will mail the psychological evaluation findings to the Special Education Department. The Special Education Department will send a copy of the psychological to the respective grade level Special Education Teacher who now becomes the Special Education Case Manager.
- The special education teacher / case manager will set up an Initial Eligibility meeting to include: Prior Written Notice and Your Rights as Parents.

- The Special Education Teacher / Case Manager will invite the psychologist, a regular education teacher, a special education teacher, an LEA, and any other members important to the team. The special education teacher will write a DRAFT eligibility prior to the initial meeting. A completed eligibility is required if the student qualifies for special education services or if the student does not qualify.
- If the student is found eligible for special education services, this same committee will write an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- The entire process beginning with Consent to Evaluate and ending with possible special education eligibility should not exceed 60 days.

Parent Request

Parents maintain their due process right to request an evaluation. Whenever the parent requests an evaluation, the parent must be given a copy of “Your Rights as Parents – Special Education”. However, **eligibility for special education should not be considered without documentation of prior instructional interventions**. SST bypass procedure does exist for rare cases or extreme circumstances (as mentioned above on page 4). If the SST process has been bypassed, the data necessary for eligibility may need to be gathered during the evaluation process by the SST Coordinator and / or regular education teachers. If the Special Education Department refuses the parent’s request, the department must give the parent written notice explaining the reason(s) why the decline to initiate an evaluation along with data this decision was based upon and other factors considered. The parent then has the right to request a due process hearing to seek favorable ruling that the evaluation must be conducted.

Child Find

See State Rule: 160-4-7-.03

DEFINITION

Child Find is a component of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that requires states to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities, aged birth to 21, who need early intervention or special education services.

COMPONENTS

- *Child find notice is published in the newspaper, announced on district website, and flyers placed in several locations within community*
- *Provides for screening and evaluation of all children with suspected disability ages 3-21 including:*
- *Children birth through age three through Babies Can’t Wait*
- *Preschool children, ages 3 – 5 through PEECH (Partners in the Early Education of Children with Handicaps)*
- *Children enrolled in the LEA schools including public charter schools*
- *Children who are suspected of being children with disabilities*
- *Highly mobile children, including migrant children*
- *Children who are detained or incarcerated in jails or correctional facilities*
- *Children enrolled in home school / study programs*

- Parentally-placed private school children, including religious, elementary and secondary schools
- Screening to determine appropriate educational strategies is not to be considered an evaluation
- ~~Student referrals must be accompanied by documentation of scientific, research or evidence based academic and / or behavioral interventions that demonstrate insufficient rate of progress~~
- ~~Exception allowed only when evaluation and / or placement is required due to a significant disability~~

Description
Screening and possible evaluation of all children with suspected disability ages 3 – 21 will be conducted within 60 days of parental consent
Method to Monitor for Compliance
<p>Director of Special Education maintains notification by the following sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Taylor County District Website – taylor.schooldesk.net – ongoing yearly ✓ Taylor County News recurring advertisement twice per year ✓ Child – Find informational flyers posted in community clinic, school clinic, and post offices <p>The District shall ensure compliance of this Georgia Rule at all district levels. When a disability is suspected, babies through age three are usually referred to Babies Can't Wait (BCW) by parents, physicians, day-care providers, and / or family / friends. BCW will transition to the local school system with parent permission prior to the child turning three. Children ages three through five receive services through PEECH. In addition to BCW, these referrals may be from Headstart, Taylor County Pre-K, or home school if a disability is suspected. Taylor County Pre-K Children are referred to PEECH by building level administration based on a referral by a Pre-K teacher. PEECH sends a monthly data log report to Taylor County Special Education Director. All Special Education Teachers from Taylor County School District send a monthly data log report to Taylor County Special Education Director for students 3 – 21.</p>
Monitoring Staff
<p>District Level – Director of Special Education</p> <p>School Level – Principal, Assistant Principal, Special Education Teachers</p>

GENERAL CHILD FIND PROCEDURES

1. The Taylor County Special Education Department will notify the Taylor County News to advertise “Child Find” semi-annually as part of an awareness campaign to seek children with suspected disabilities. This is a general notification stating that all children are entitled to a free education including children with disabilities ages birth to 21. The district advertises contact information locally as well as West Georgia GLRS contact information. The Taylor County Special Education Department will also post the “Child Find” information on the Taylor County Website ongoing. As another means of searching for children with suspected disabilities, the district puts up flyers in a local clinic in Butler, Georgia, the school clinic at Taylor County Upper Elementary School, and post offices in Butler and Reynolds, Georgia.
2. Babies Can’t Wait (BCW) coordinates and facilitates the referral process to the local school district through a transition conference 90 days prior to the child receiving services turning three. A parent or guardian must consent to allow BCW to contact the local school district.
3. When a child is between the ages of three and five and not eligible for state-funded kindergarten, the Taylor County Special Education Department personnel will contact the Head Start Program Director for referrals. Headstart screens all children within the first 45 days. If child fails, Headstart rescreens. If parent / teacher also has concerns, the child is referred to PEECH.
- ~~4. If a child is an enrolled student in the Taylor County School District and suspected of having a disability, the school will initiate the Response to Intervention (RTI) / Student Support Team (SST) processes.~~
5. For highly mobile children, including migrant children, the Taylor County Special Education Department will contact the Migrant Education Program (MEP) representative at the Georgia Department of Education Region 2 MEP office at 221 N. Robinson Street, Lenox, Georgia 31637, (229) 546-3248, fax (229) 546-3251 to speak with the resource specialist assigned to Taylor County.
6. If a child is detained or incarcerated in the city / county jail or correctional facility, the Taylor County Special Education Department personnel will contact the School Resource Officer.
7. Children parentally-placed in private, religious, or home, or public charter schools and in need of special education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated. Taylor County will provide services based on a proportionate share of federal funds. Annually, the Taylor County Special Education Services Division personnel will contact principals/headmasters of these schools and discuss available special education services. The two entities will sign a written agreement prior to the beginning of each school year. Subsequently, when the district receives notification of home school children, information concerning special education and related services will be forwarded to the parent.
8. In addition to the procedures listed above, GLRS and Child Serve personnel will provide further public awareness campaigns on an annual basis.
9. Prior to the beginning of school, the Taylor County Special Education Services Division will review student Individualized Education Plans and input the information into the Student Information System

10. Taylor County Special Education Teachers & PEECH will submit monthly data log to the Taylor County Special Education Department.

11. Annually, the Taylor County Special Education Department personnel will submit, via the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) portal, accurate data concerning the eligibility of students between the ages of three and twenty-one for special education and related services. The Taylor County Special Education Department personnel will utilize the timeline, provided by the GaDOE Special Education Services and Supports, to present the requested data in a timely manner.

Preschool Special Education - Partners in the Early Education of Children with Handicaps (PEECH)

The Preschool Special Education program began as a result of public law 99-457, which states that all children identified with a disability or developmental delay are entitled to a free and appropriate public education beginning on their third birthday.

Taylor County utilizes Pre – K services for ages 3 – 5 through PEECH. PEECH is a Pre – K program that partners with several counties and offers services. Together, we seek to help parents in meeting their child’s needs.

Interventions Prior to Referral

Once Taylor County receives a referral, it is forwarded to PEECH. Once PEECH has received all necessary documents, their staff will schedule a screening. The PEECH team (Speech Therapist, Special Education Teacher and / or PEECH Director) screens the child. ~~and, if necessary, provides interventions for teacher / parent to document progress for two to four weeks. During the 2 to 4 weeks period of interventions, PEECH staff will contact teacher / parent to conduct follow up conferences. If the child is not making sufficient progress with interventions (progress monitoring documentation gathered at this time), the PEECH team will determine if evaluation is necessary.~~ With written parental consent, the Special Education Teacher, therapists, and / or other PEECH staff members conduct a developmental evaluation of the child within 60 calendar days.

- If a child is transitioning from BCW, an evaluation must be completed within 90 days prior to the child’s 3rd birthday.
- **Note: exceptions to the use of interventions may occur for some students who require immediate consideration of special education services.**

Post-Screening Meeting

After compiling evaluation results, the Special Education Teacher will schedule an Eligibility / IEP meeting. The meeting committee consists:

- Parent
- Special Education Teacher
- Regular Education Teacher
- Therapist

- LEA Representative.

If the child meets eligibility, consent for placement is signed and an IEP is developed. If the team determines further psychological evaluation is needed, Taylor County School System refers to Resa.

Evaluation and Re-evaluation

See State Rule: 160-4-7-.04

DEFINITION

An evaluation is defined as a comprehensive set of diagnostic assessment tools, administered by a licensed psychologist or licensed speech pathologist, to assist in determining a student’s eligibility for receiving special education services. A re-evaluation is a comprehensive set of diagnostic assessment tools, which may be administered once every three years and not more than once a year, unless the parent and district personnel decide otherwise. A re-evaluation must be administered by a licensed psychologist to determine changes in a student’s academic achievement and functional performance. A speech re-evaluation must be administered by a licensed speech pathologist.

COMPONENTS

- *Initial evaluation referral process*
- *Timeframes for evaluations*
 - *60 calendar days*
- *Parental Consent*
- *Re-evaluation consideration*
- *Comprehensive Evaluation*
 - *Variety of appropriate evaluation tools*
 - *Administered by trained and knowledgeable staff*
 - *Existing data reviewed*
 - *Identify additional data needed*
- *Determination of eligibility*
 - *Eligibility team*
 - *Documentation of evaluation results*
 - *Exclusionary factors*
 - *Determination of the disability and the need for special education or dismissal*

Description
District leaders / Principals in collaboration with Resa will ensure initial evaluations are completed within the 60-day timeline (using the data-driven problem solving process) by providing ongoing professional development on the: organization of paperwork, clear definitions of roles and responsibilities, processes, procedures and legal aspects of evaluations and re-evaluation.
Method to Monitor for Compliance
Referring school’s SST Coordinator provides the Director of Special Education with a completed packet of information required for initial evaluation. District Special Education

Staff ensures parent consent for evaluation is date stamped when received in Special Education Office to ensure 60-day timeline is established and initiated. Special Education Director reviews student information prior to forwarding to Resa. District Special Education Department keeps an intake log of each student referred. Each school's SST Coordinator keeps a checklist log of each student in the RTI / SST process.

Monitoring Staff

District Level – Director of Special Education, Special Education Accountant, Director of Teaching & Learning
Level – Principal, Assistant Principal, School SST Chairperson

Initial Evaluation Procedures

1. After a student has received interventions, and progress monitoring indicates a lack of adequate progress, a Special Education Referral may be initiated.
2. Documentation should be provided in the student's RTI / SST records of substantial evidence of the need for a referral. Research-based interventions in the areas of identified weaknesses should be documented (academic and / or behavioral). At a minimum, students who exhibit emotional / behavioral difficulties should have a Behavior Support Plan and / or referral to the school counselor for additional interventions. Students at Tier 3 must have a Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plan in place PRIOR to referral for evaluation.
3. If a student is being referred for a suspected disability associated with a medical condition (ADHD, diabetes, etc.), an Authorization to Release Medical Information form should be obtained PRIOR to eligibility being established as a medical release will be needed prior to an eligibility determination for Other Health Impaired (OHI).
4. Completed referrals will be sent to the Special Education Office. Teachers / parents will be contacted if additional rating scales / forms are need for evaluation purposes.
5. Completed referrals will be date / time stamped. The Special Education Director will monitor compliance of all initial referrals.
6. Upon completion of the evaluation and once Taylor County School District receives psychological from Resa, the Special Education Director will date stamp it and forward it to the respective special education teacher. The special education teacher will set up an initial meeting inviting the psychologist and all others related to the child.
7. Upon determination of eligibility, Consent for Placement must be signed by the parent / guardian. Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team members may complete the IEP after eligibility is established but must do so within 30 days of eligibility.
8. Parents may request for an Independent Evaluation in writing.

Timelines

- All initial evaluations must be completed **within 60 calendar** days of receipt of Parent Consent for Evaluation.
- Holiday periods and other circumstances when children are not in attendance for five consecutive school days shall not be counted toward the 60-day timeline, including the weekend days before and after such holiday periods. Consent received 30 days or more prior to the end of the school year must be completed within the 60-calendar day evaluation timeframe.
- If a student is determined eligible for special education services, the system has 30 days to develop the IEP

Hearing / Vision

- Results of hearing and vision screening cannot be older than one calendar year when applied to an evaluation for special education services. An evaluation may not proceed until it is documented that the student has an acceptable level of vision and hearing. Hearing / vision should have been completed during Tier 2 of the RTI / SST process **with Parent Consent for Diagnostic Evaluation for SST** being signed by parent.
- If the event that a student does not pass the school system's hearing and / or vision screening, the student must be assessed through an appropriate physician.
- SST Coordinators (for initial evaluation) and / or special education teachers (for re-evaluations) should notify the Special Education Director of difficulties obtaining medical clearance.

Informed Parent Consent

Written parent consent must be obtained prior to an initial evaluation or re-evaluation. Parent consent is obtained through the RTI / SST process within each school for initials. In the rare event the RTI / SST process is bypassed, parent consent may be obtained through the special education central office or each school's SST Coordinator for initial evaluations. **For students with obvious severe disabilities and / or in crisis for whom delay of referral would be detrimental to the student, the RTI / SST may bypass implementation of alternative strategies prior to referral. The reason for bypassing this process must be clearly documented.**

Detailed documentation of attempts to obtain parent consent must be kept (e.g. records of telephone calls / texts messages and results of those calls / messages, copies of correspondence and any responses received, detailed records of visits made). If the parents refuse to give consent, or fail to respond to a request to provide consent for an evaluation, the school system may, **but is not required to**, pursue the initial evaluation by using mediation and impartial due process hearing procedures. However, the school system may not use the consent override procedures for a student who is home-schooled or placed in a private school by the parents at their own expense.

Re-evaluations

A re-evaluation of each child with a disability is conducted at least once every 3 years, unless the IEP committee agree that a re-evaluation is unnecessary.

Redetermination of Eligibility Meeting

A redetermination meeting will be held in order for the IEP team to examine all student data (formative and summative) and determine if further evaluation is warranted. The meeting should be conducted prior to 120 days of expiration to ensure compliance.

- It is preferable for the case manager to begin gathering and reviewing the material listed below 12 months before eligibility expires and then conduct the re-evaluation / redetermination meeting.
 - Hearing / Vision
 - Classroom observation
 - Data from progress monitoring of IEP goals
 - Work samples
 - Updated medication / medical diagnosis
 - State assessment data (EOGT, EOCT, etc.
 - District assessment data (Benchmark scores)
 - Behavior rating scales, adaptive behaviour scales, etc.... as needed
 - Office referrals
 - Grades
 - Updates from outside counselling services
- The Redetermination meeting should include a discussion of current progress and data, and the IEP team determines if further evaluation is needed.
- Redetermination can be held at the annual IEP meeting, unless the date of eligibility expires prior to the annual review.
- The case manager is responsible for reviewing student eligibility to ensure that a student's eligibility does not expire. Case managers have access to Infinite Campus to review / update data. The student information should be checked upon receipt of caseload at the beginning of the school year.
- The Redetermination meeting should include a discussion of current progress and data, and the IEP team determines if further evaluation is needed.
- **If no additional data is needed** to determine continued eligibility, the committee proceeds with eligibility.
- This decision should be documented on the Redetermination form. Once decision is made and parents agree, **the Redetermination form with date must be attached to the most recent eligibility**. This becomes the new eligibility date. **Example: If the re-evaluation determination committee met on 5/1/15 and determined no further information was needed to continue eligibility and services, 5/1/15 is the new eligibility date and the next eligibility is due before 5/1/18.**

If additional assessment is needed:

- ❖ The IEP team determines re-evaluation is needed and completes the redetermination form.

- ❖ The parent or teacher has the right to request a re-evaluation for the determination of eligibility even if the committee had concluded that no additional data was needed.
- ❖ The parent must sign written consent for evaluation.
- ❖ The Case Manager completes the re-evaluation packet and sends all required documents to the Special Education Director at a minimum of 6 months prior to the eligibility due date / expiration date. Upon completion of the re-evaluation, an eligibility meeting will be scheduled.

Re-evaluation Procedures / Process

- The Special Education Teacher or Case Manager (most times this is the same person) shall complete:
 - Parental Consent for Evaluation (giving parent list of possible tests to be administered)
 - Re-evaluation Referral for Psychological Evaluation
 - Re-evaluation Referral Checklist (attaching all required documents listed)
- The principal must review completed packet and sign the **Referral for Psychological Re-evaluation** prior to submitting the packet to the Special Education Director.
- Upon receipt of the packet, the Special Education Director will check contents for completeness and also sign the **Referral for Psychological Re-evaluation**.
- In the case of incomplete information or discrepancies, the Special Education Director will collaborate with Principal and Special Education Teacher / Case manager of referring school to resolve issues.
- Referral for Psychological Re-evaluation 'packet' will be forwarded to Chattahoochee-Flint Resa by the Special Education Department. Resa will set up an appointment for testing / evaluation with one of their psychologists who may request further information from parent or other professionals as the comprehensive evaluation is a team effort. The appointment date will be communicated to the Special Education Department by letter. The Special Education Department will forward letter / information to parents and referring school.
- Upon completion of the re-evaluation, Resa will mail the psychological evaluation findings to the Special Education Department. The Special Education Department will send a copy of the psychological to the respective grade level Special Education Teacher / Case Manager.
- The special education teacher / case manager will set up an eligibility meeting to include: Prior Written Notice and Your Rights as Parents.
- The Special Education Teacher / Case Manager will invite the psychologist, a regular education teacher, a special education teacher, an LEA, and any other members important to the team. The special education teacher will write a DRAFT eligibility prior to the initial meeting.

- If the IEP team agrees that the student is eligible, a completed eligibility is required. An IEP should already be in place but amendments may take place after this new eligibility is established.
- If the student **does not qualify, an eligibility form is required with proper documentation as to the reason.** Services will be discontinued. The committee may (but is not required to) refer the student to the SST committee for continual monitoring and to assist in development of interventions that will promote success in the general education

Note: If a student has been found ineligible to receive special education services due to discontinuation in that area of exceptionality, he / she cannot be found eligible for special education services through a new area of exceptionality without the proper documentation of implemented interventions (behavior and / or academic) for that area. The Special Education Director, School Psychologist, and / or SST committee must review the documentation to determine if it is sufficient for eligibility.

Independent Evaluations – Request for an Independent Evaluation

- A parent may request an independent educational evaluation (IEE) only when:
 - The parent has allowed the school system to conduct their own evaluation and when the parent disagrees with the results of a completed evaluation conducted by the school system. Parent must provide written consent to the Special Education Director.
- Taylor County School System must either pay for the independent evaluation or begin due process procedures to show that the system’s evaluation is judged to be sufficient. The Special Education Director will set up a meeting with parent and other school system administrators to determine if the school system will consent to the IEE. Taylor County and the parent must agree on the independent evaluator.
- The qualifications of the independent evaluator must be the same as those required by Taylor County School System.
- The school system has the right to set a reasonable limit on the cost of the independent evaluation.
- The evaluation report becomes the legal and current evaluation for the student.
- Eligibility must be determined based on that report through an eligibility / re-evaluation meeting with required IEP team participants.
- A parent is entitled to only one IEE at public expense each time the school system conducts an evaluation with which the parent disagrees.
-

When a parent obtains an IEE at personal expense:

- The parent always has the right to obtain an outside IEE at their own expense, before or after the system’s evaluation.
- Taylor County School System must consider the results of the parentally obtained evaluation.
- Eligibility may be determined on the basis of the IEE if the district and parent both agree to the results.

- The accepted IEE becomes part of the student’s special education records and the special education teacher (with assistance from the school psychologist) completes an eligibility based on the results of the IEE. This then becomes the new eligibility for the student.

Eligibility Determination and Categories of Eligibility

See State Rule: 160-4-7.05

DEFINITION

A child or youth from 3 through 21 years of age is considered to have a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) if the child or youth meets the eligibility criteria in any of the following areas and needs special education and related services.

COMPONENTS

Definitions for areas of disability for children aged 3 to 21:

- a) *Autism Spectrum disorder*
- b) *Deafblind*
- c) *Deaf/hard of hearing*
- d) *Emotional and behavioral disorder*

Description
District leaders in collaboration with parents, School Administrators, Classroom Teachers, and School Psychologist will ensure evaluations are complete within the 60-day timeline through determination of eligibility criteria in any of the following areas and needs special education and related services.
Method to Monitor for Compliance
RTI / SST Coordinators at each school will monitor the students being referred to SST by collaborating with the referring teacher and / or RTI team upon consideration of referral using the RTI process. Special Education Director will monitor success of the SST process by monitoring placement rate for initial referrals to special education, (high percentage of referrals and high percentage of these referrals being found eligible). Special Education Director and Resa will monitor evaluation reports.
Monitoring Staff
District Level – Director of Special Education, Special Education Accountant, Director of Teaching & Learning School Level – Principal, AP, School SST Chairperson, Special Education Teachers

- e) *Intellectual disability (mild, moderate, severe, profound)*
- f) *Orthopaedic impairment*
- g) *Other health impairment*
- h) *Significant developmental delay*
- i) *Specific learning disability*
- j) *Speech-language impairment*
- k) *Traumatic brain injury*
- l) *Visual impairment*

Determination of eligibility by Eligibility Team (which consists of qualified professionals and parents)
Exclusionary factors for eligibility

Documentation of eligibility / ineligibility: variety of appropriate sources and well documented Evaluation Report and Determination provided to parents

Determination of Eligibility

An initial eligibility / IEP placement meeting only occurs in 2 situations:

1. The student has never before been found to be eligible for special education services and has not had an IEP in the past or,
2. The student is a transfer student to Georgia and who may have had a prior eligibility and IEP (see transfer section)

Scheduling of meeting:

1. The Special Education Teacher / case manager will schedule and coordinate IEP meetings for Initial Eligibility / IEP Placements. All required members (parent, Local Education Agency Representative (LEA), General Education Teacher, Psychologist) and additional personnel will be invited who can provide input for eligibility determination.
2. The Special Education Director or other LEA must attend all Eligibility / Placement / IEP meetings.
3. Parental Excusal Form must be completed if a required participant (LEA, Special Education Teacher, or General Education Teacher) is not in attendance or are unable to stay for the length of the meeting.
4. No individual may participate in the meeting unless they are listed on the Notice of Meeting Invitation or the parent has given their consent.

Eligibility portion of meeting:

1. The parent will be provided with a signed copy of the evaluation report.
2. The parent and team members will be provided with a copy of the eligibility report to review during the meeting.
3. The School Psychologist reviews the results of the psychological evaluation.
4. Eligibility is determined by Eligibility Team Members, through review of all formal and informal sources of information.
5. Presence of a disability and need for services must be established; presence of a disability alone is insufficient for placement.
6. **Disability must adversely impact educational performance** (even with correction for sensory impairments).
7. Progress monitoring data is required for all areas except sensory impairments such as deaf or blind and, in some cases, Traumatic Brain Injury and Autism placements.
8. Consideration must be given to Exclusionary Factors such as lack of appropriate instruction, limited English Proficiency, atypical educational history, environmental or economic disadvantage, or cultural factors, attendance.
9. The Eligibility form must be signed by all participants / team members.
10. The Consent for Placement must be signed prior to services beginning.

Related services:

1. Physical and Occupational therapies are related services.
2. Services require a prescription from a physician.
3. Taylor County contracts these services with The Speech Path, 225 Wes Park Drive, Perry, Georgia 31069, phone – 478-987-1610.
4. Related services assessment information is needed for IEP development. This information must be entered into the appropriate areas on the eligibility form. However, this assessment information is not necessary for eligibility determination in one of the disability areas. Related service providers are responsible for providing this assessment information to the special education teacher prior to the IEP meeting. The special education teacher should invite / contact the service providers prior to IEP meetings.

IEP portion of meeting:

Upon determination of eligibility, the IEP Committee may convene to develop the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). If the IEP Committee is not convened at this time, an IEP MUST be developed no later than 30 days from eligibility determination date.

- The LEA will state the purpose of the remainder of the meeting is to develop an IEP now that the student is eligible.
- The LEA will provide the parent with a brief description of the components and purpose of the IEP meeting. The Special Education Teacher will facilitate the development of the IEP to include:
 - Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)
 - Consideration of Special Factors,
 - Goals and Short-term objectives (if GAA)
 - Student Supports including Supplementary Aids and Services
 - Instructional and Testing Accommodations
 - Special Education Services
 - All other applicable components of the IEP
- A copy of the draft IEP (if not finalized) may be provided to parent.
- A finalized IEP must be provided to the parent no later than 10 days of the meeting date.

Sample Eligibility Meeting Agenda

1. Introduce Eligibility Team Members in attendance.
2. Provide and explain parental rights.
3. State the Purpose of the Meeting (i.e., determine eligibility for special education services).
4. Review rationale for referral:
 - a. Case history
 - b. Summary of interventions

- c. RTI data
 - d. Benchmark assessments, and other district and state-wide test scores
 - 5. Review other information required to determine eligibility
 - 6. Review exclusionary factors:
 - a. Attendance
 - b. Vision / hearing
 - c. Atypical educational history
 - d. Cultural differences or economic disadvantage
 - 7. Summarize findings:
 - a. Determine eligibility for services
 - b. Consider areas for possible placement
 - c. Provide explanation in summary for the reason the student is eligible for services via the areas determined by the eligibility report.
 - 8. All members sign the form:
 - a. For SLD, members must indicate agreement or non-agreement
 - b. For SLD, any member who disagrees with the decision of the team must provide an explanation in writing.
 - 9. Adjourn and dismiss, or team members may opt to move into IEP Meeting if student is eligible. (IEP meeting must be held within 30 days.)

CATEGORIES AND SUMMARIES OF EVALUATION INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR ELIGIBILITY

<p><u>Autism</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Psychological Evaluation 2. Educational Evaluation 3. Communication Evaluation 4. Behavior Evaluation 5. Developmental History <p><u>Blind</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Audiological Evaluation 2. Optometric or Ophthalmological Eval. 3. Functional Vision Evaluation 4. Learning Media Assessment 5. Clinical Low Vision Evaluation (per rule) 6. Expanded Core Curriculum Evaluation <p><u>Hard of Hearing</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Audiological Evaluation 2. Otological Evaluation 3. Educational Evaluation 4. Psychological Evaluation (optional) <p><u>Emotional/Behavioral Disorder</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Documentation of interventions 2. Psychological Evaluation 3. Educational Evaluation 4. Behavioral Observations 5. Social History 6. Documentation of duration, frequency and intensity 7. Exclusionary factors documented <p><u>Intellectual Disability</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Psychological Evaluation 2. Educational Evaluation 3. Structured observation 4. Adaptive Behavior Evaluation 5. Relevant medical information 6. Exclusionary factors documented <p><u>Orthopaedic Impairment</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Medical Evaluation 2. Developmental/Educational Evaluation 3. Psychological (if significant cognitive / academic deficits are present) 	<p><u>Health Impairment</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Medical Evaluation 2. Developmental / Educational Evaluation 3. Psychological (if significant cognitive / academic / attention deficits are present) 4. Exclusionary factors documented <p><u>Significant Developmental Delay</u> (ages 3-7 initial and 3-9 re-evaluations)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developmental Evaluation (5 skill areas) 2. Relevant medical information 3. Exclusionary factors for K or older <p><u>Specific Learning Disability</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Psychological Evaluation 2. Comprehensive Educational Evaluation 3. Documentation of supplementary instruction that lasts for 12 weeks with 4 data points. 4. Classroom observation (in deficit area) 5. Analyzed Samples of work (in deficit area) 6. Relevant medical information 7. Exclusionary factors documented <p><u>Speech / Language Disorder</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Documentation of prior evidenced-based interventions 2. Oral Peripheral Examination 3. Articulation Evaluation 4. Language Evaluation 5. Voice Evaluation 6. Fluency Evaluation <p><u>Traumatic Brain Injury</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Summary of Pre-Injury functioning 2. Medical Evaluation / verification of TBI 3. Psychological Evaluation / Neuropsychological / Psychoeducational <p><u>Visual Impairment</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Optometric or Ophthalmological Evaluation 2. Educational Evaluation 3. Functional Vision Evaluation 4. Learning Media Assessment 5. Clinical Low Vision Evaluation (per rule) 6. Expanded Core Curriculum Evaluation
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Private Schools

See State Rule: 160-4-7.13

DEFINITION

A private school is a school or educational facility operated and supported by private individuals or a corporation rather than by a government or public agency. The following section on private schools includes students who are home-schooled.

COMPONENTS

- *LEA privately placed or referred students*
- *Parental placement in private school and LEA offer of FAPE*
- *Provision of written notice by parent to place in private school*
- *Reimbursement and limitation on reimbursement for private school placement*
- *Home schooled students*
- *Child Find process and children in private schools*
- *Part B and Related Services for private school students*
- *Provision of IEPs and Service Plans to privately placed students*
- *Consultation with private schools for child count*
- *Private school representatives at IEPs*
- *Equitable services determination and limitations of service*
- *Materials provision; secular, neutral, non-ideological*
- *Location of services and transportation*
- *Provision of property, equipment and supplies to private school*

Description
Parentally-placed SWDs in private schools will have a service plan which indicates the special education services provided by Taylor County School System.
Method to Monitor for Compliance
Special Education Director will monitor services for privately placed students.
Monitoring Staff
District Level – Superintendent, Special Education Director, and Director of Federal Programs

Area of General Supervision II: Services and Supports

Indicators:

4a & 4b: Suspension and Expulsion

5: LRE

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

See State Rule: 160-4-7-.07

DEFINITION

The Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is a term used to ensure that all students have a right to an education under IDEA and are educated, to the maximum extent appropriate, with nondisabled peers. Removal of students with disabilities from the general education environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in a general education class with the use of supplementary aids and / or services cannot be satisfactorily attained.

COMPONENTS

- *LRE Requirements: Written policies and procedures exist*
- *Annual IEP placement determination*
- *Full continuum of alternative placements*
- *Location of services*
- *Preschool placements and services*
- *School age placements and services*
- *Non-academic and extracurricular settings*

Description
The Taylor County School System will ensure that students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in non-academic, extracurricular services / activities (i.e. meals, recess periods, counselling services, athletics, transportation, health services, recreational activities, special interest groups, school or district sponsored clubs) with nondisabled peers.
Method to Monitor for Compliance
Curriculum Director will monitor the performance of students with and without disabilities on state wide achievement tests. IEP teams will consider all placement options for students ages 2 – 22 that are eligible before finalizing students' IEPs. <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ General Education Setting with no support✓ General Education Setting with support✓ Collaborative Model✓ Co-teaching Model✓ Resource✓ Self-Contained

Special Education Teachers shall provide General Education Teachers and Special Education Director a copy of schedule after approval from building level principal.
Monitoring Staff
District Level – Special Education Director Building Level – Principal, AP, Special Education Lead Teacher

In order to guide an IEP committee through this LRE process the six-step sequence is presented.

The IEP committee members:

1. Document the student’s currently level of performance.
2. Write goals from the information gathered, addressing the student’s learning needs.
3. Determine which goals / objectives can be taught in general education settings considering:
 - a. Age-appropriate and content appropriate settings available.
 - b. Modifications to activities, materials, instructions and / or environments necessary.
 - c. Personnel support for the student, teacher, and / or class.
4. For those goals / objectives which cannot be met in a general education setting, determine which special education the goal / objective(s) will be taught.
5. Determine settings or activities to provide additional opportunities for interaction with nondisabled peers.
6. Determine a method to evaluate the appropriateness of the LRE decision through ongoing assessment of student learning.

Source: Hughes, Alberto, Waugh, & Wilson: the Center for Collaborative Education at Georgia State University

Personnel Supports

PERSONNEL SUPPORT	DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE
GENERAL EDUCATION	Students with disabilities are served in the general education class with no personnel support.
CONSULTATION	Students with disabilities receive at least one segment per month of direct service from the special education teacher.
SUPPORTIVE INSTRUCTION	Students with disabilities receive service from personnel other than a certified teacher in the general education classroom (i.e., a paraprofessional, interpreter, or job coach).
COLLABORATION	A special education teacher works with identified students with disabilities and the general education teacher within the general education classroom (less than full segment daily).
CO-TEACHING	The special education teacher provides service in the general education classroom by sharing teaching responsibility with the general education teacher (full segment every day).
ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENT	The special education teacher provides instruction to students with disabilities in a separate classroom, special schools, home environment, hospitals, or institutions.

Source: Georgia Department of Education pg. 4&5 of Special Education Rules Implementation Manual Service Delivery & LRE

Discipline

See State Rule: 160-4-7-10

DEFINITION

Discipline is the practice of training people to obey rules or codes of behaviour.

COMPONENTS

- *Relationship of general code of conduct to IEP*
- *Interim alternative settings and 10-day rule*
- *Manifestation determination*
- *Functional behavior assessment*
- *Behavior intervention plan*
- *Special Circumstances: weapons, illegal drugs, injury*
- *Provision of notification of change of placement*
- *Appeal Process*
- *Placement during appeal*
- *Protections for children not yet eligible*
- *Referral to law enforcement and judicial authorities*
- *Change of placement due to disciplinary removal*

Description
The Taylor County School System code of conduct (in student handbooks) shall apply to all children unless a child’s Individual Education Plan (IEP) specifically provides otherwise.
Method to Monitor for compliance
Administrators will review discipline reports to determine the effectiveness of rules and regulations for students with disabilities (SWD). Curriculum Director and Special Education Director will track and log data on discipline spreadsheet
Monitoring Staff
District Level – Special Education Director, Curriculum Director / RTI Coordinator School Level – Principals, AP, School SST Chairperson, Special Education Lead Teacher

Authority of School Personnel

The Taylor County School System personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether a change in placement, consistent with the other requirements of the discipline rule, is appropriate for a child with a disability who violates a code of student conduct.

Taylor County School personnel may remove a child with a disability who violates a code of student conduct from his or her current placement to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting, another setting or suspension, for not more than 10 consecutive school days (to the extent those alternatives are applied to children without disabilities), and for additional removals of not more than 10 school days (to include those of above) in that same school year for separate incidents of misconduct as long as the removals do not constitute a change of placement under the discipline rule.

If a child with a disability is removed from his or her current placement for 10 school days in the same school year, during any subsequent days of removal the Taylor County School System will provide services

to the extent required under the discipline rule. Parents must be notified of discipline infraction that will result in a removal from the current placement for more than 10 school days.

Taylor County School System will notify parents of any discipline infractions which results in a removal such as In School Suspension (ISS) and Out of School Suspension (OSS). School administrators or their designee will monitor the number of removals for SWDs. This person will notify the Special Education Director when students reach the fifth day of removal or the third office discipline referral. The Special Education Director will access discipline records through Infinite Campus on an as needed.

An IEP meeting should be held after the third office referral or fifth day of removal whichever comes first to discuss the behavior with the parent as well as update or complete a Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plan for the student. In the event that disciplinary changes in placement would exceed 10 school days, if the behaviour that gave rise to the violation of the school code is determined not to be a manifestation of the child's disability.

*Note taken from Special Education Manual: If a child has an IEP in place or has been referred for testing to determine if the student qualifies for special education services, the student has added protections from suspension or expulsion from school.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

See State Rule: 160-4-7-.06

DEFINITION

Annual review means an evaluation, conducted at least annually by the committee on special education, of the status of each student with a disability and each student thought to have a disability who resides within the school district for the purpose of recommending the continuation, modification or termination of the provision of special education programs and services for the student to the board of education.

COMPONENTS

- Present level of performance
- Assessments and identified needs (academic, functional, developmental)
- Effect of disability
- Parental Concerns
- Consideration of Special Factors
- Measurable Annual Goals
- Benchmarks / short-term objectives for students on alternative assessment
- Criteria for measurement of goals / objectives
- Progress reporting and schedule
- Plan for services (special education, related services, modifications / accommodations, positive behavioral supports) with frequency, location, and duration of services
- Consideration of assistive technology
- Explanation for exclusion of participation with non-disabled peers
- Testing accommodations or modifications (**see Appendix A for GAA flowchart**)
- Consideration of ESY

Transition Plans to include:

- Appropriate post-secondary goals including education and employment

- IEP /transition goals (minimum one) in Education / Training to meet post-secondary goals including activities / services (minimum one)
- IEP /transition goals (minimum one) in Development of Employment to meet post-secondary goals including activities / services (minimum one)
- Description of transition assessment and results
- Course of study
- Student involvement
- Agency representative (recommended but not necessary; prior parental consent)

Transfer of Rights – beginning not later than one year before the student reaches 18, the IEP must include a statement that the student has been informed of his / her rights under part B of the IDEA, if any, which will transfer to the him / her on reaching age 18.

IEP Team

- Parent of child
- Minimum of one regular education teacher of the child (if the child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment)
- Minimum of one special education teacher / special education provider of the child
- LEA qualified to: 1) provide or supervise the provision of specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities, 2) knowledgeable about available resources, and 3) knowledgeable about general education curriculum.
- Child, when appropriate
- **Excusal of IEP Team Member** – a member of the IEP team may be excused if parent of a child with a disability and the LEA agree, in writing, that the attendance is not necessary.

Transition for children birth through 2 – part C – this is handled through PEECH

Parent participation in IEP: notification and invitation

- Notify parents of meeting early enough to ensure that they will have opportunity to attend and scheduling at a mutually agreed upon time.
- Notice should indicate time, purpose, location, participants, and informs of parents right to invite other individuals.
- Invite student for transition

IEP... conducted within 30 days of determination, current within year, and accessed by all service providers

Inter and Intra – state transfer of students with IEPs

- If a child with a disability transfers into Taylor County within a school year, Taylor (in consultation with the parents) will provide FAPE to the child (including services comparable to those described in the child’s IEP from previous LEA) until Taylor either adopts the child’s IEP from previous LEA or develops, adopts, and implements a new IEP.
- If a child with a disability (who had an IEP that was in effect in a LEA in another state) transfers to Georgia within the same school year, Taylor County (in consultation with the parent) will provide FAPE (including services comparable to those described in the child’s IEP from previous LEA), until Taylor County conducts an evaluation if determined necessary or develops, adopts, and implements a new IEP.

FERPA and transmittal of records

- ❖ Taylor County will take reasonable steps to promptly obtain the child’s records.

Review and Revision of the IEP

Review and revision of incoming transfer student with existing IEP:

- ✓ Interim placement to serve student for 30 days prior to IEP transfer meeting.
- ✓ IEP team will meet within 30 days to amend / accept incoming IEP / Eligibility

Description
The Taylor County Schools will implement procedures and practices to ensure that ALL students with disabilities receive an effective special education program that results in progress toward IEP annual goals and in the general education.
Method to Monitor for Compliance
Special Education Director will ensure IEPs are written to include components of progress monitoring. Special Education Director will review all components of IEPs for compliance. Case managers will schedule annual reviews at least one day prior to the last meeting date. Case managers will develop, write, and ensure that IEPs have no gap in services.
Monitoring Staff
District Level – Special Education Director School Level – Principal, AP, Special Education Lead Teacher, Special Education Teacher

Personnel, Facilities, and Caseloads

See State Rule: 160-4-7-.14

DEFINITION

Personnel are staff members employed by the Taylor County Board of Education. Facilities are designated locations for providing job-related services. Caseloads are the number of students assigned to a special education staff member who is responsible for the development, implementation, review, and revision of IEPs.

COMPONENTS

- Maintenance of credentials for professional employees
- Classroom size and appropriateness
- Maximum class size and caseload by eligibility category

Description
The Taylor County Board of Education shall provide a classroom of suitable size in a distraction-free area, as required by the type of program or services to be established, with appropriate furniture, materials, supplies, and equipment to meet the needs of the class or individual children to be served and maintenance of credentials for professional employees.
Method to Monitor for Compliance
The Taylor County School System will ensure recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining an adequate supply of highly qualified (certified or licensed) personnel, including special

education, related services (which are contracted out), and leadership personnel, to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

The District will ensure facility plans are reviewed and approved by the Facilities Department of Georgia Department of Education.

Caseloads will reflect maximum class sizes and caseloads for personnel providing services for children 5 – 21. (Services for ages 3 – 5 are contracted with PEECH)

Monitoring Staff

District Level – Director of Special Education, Special Education Accountant, Director of Teaching & Learning

Building Level – Principal, AP, & Special Education Lead Teacher

Technical Assistance & Monitoring Process

The Special Education Department conducts monitoring visits to each school consistently throughout the year. On-site monitoring is provided monthly or as often as needed based on individual school needs. Each campus is assigned a Special Education Lead Teacher. The Special Education Director and Special Education Lead Teacher are responsible for providing direct support with the overall policies and procedures for compliance.

Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS)

See state rule: 160-4-7-.15

Definition / Purpose

- The Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) is a service available within the continuum of supports for districts to consider when determining the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities, ages 5-21. GNETS services is an option in the continuum of supports that prevents children from requiring residential or more restrictive placement. Specifically, GNETS provides comprehensive educational and therapeutic support services to students who exhibit intense social, emotional and/or behavioral challenges with a severity, frequency or duration such that the provision of education and related services in the general education environment has not enabled him or her to benefit educationally based on the IEP.
- GNETS services aim to support students with social, emotional and/or behavioral challenges. These students' behaviors may include but are not limited to, significant, aggressive, self-destructive, atypical, and withdrawal behaviors. Children receiving GNETS services are taught coping skills, behavior regulation, and adaptive behaviors, with a keen focus on developing positive interpersonal relationships with others.
- GNETS services are implemented with greater intensity and frequency than what is typically delivered in a general education school environment. The supplemental aids and services available at GNETS must be appropriate and necessary in order for the child's IEP team to consider GNETS services.

Consideration for GNETS Services.

- ✓ An IEP team to include members of Taylor County School System as well as GNETS director or designee may consider in-class services by a GNETS program for a child with an emotional and behavioral disorder based upon documentation of the severity of the duration, frequency and intensity of one or more of the

characteristics of the disability category of emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). **This documentation must include prior extension of less restrictive services as well as Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA), Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), discipline, and / or restraint data which indicate such services have not enabled the child to benefit educationally.** A comprehensive re-evaluation should have been completed within the last 3 years. Taylor County School System is responsible for transportation to and from GNETS facility.

Continuum of GNETS Service Delivery and Environments.

- The IEP team must determine that GNETS services are necessary for students to receive FAPE. Removal from the general education setting will occur only when the nature or severity of students’ social, emotional and/or behavioral challenges are such that education in a general education setting with the use of supplementary services and intensive individualized interventions cannot be achieved.
- The IEP team will consider the various setting in which GNETS services may be delivered and determine whether the individual student is likely to receive FAPE in each environment, beginning with the least restrictive setting.

Method to Monitor for Compliance
Ensure that FAPE is delivered to students recommended for GNETS services in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Convene IEP team meetings, conduct FBAs / BIPs. Collaborate with GNETS staff. Provide transportation.
Monitoring Staff
District Level – Director of Special Education Building Level – Principal, GNETS Director, & Special Education GNETS Teacher

Area of General Supervision III: Student Progress

Indicators:

3: Assessment

7: Preschool Outcomes

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

See state rule: 160-4-7-.02

Components

- **FAPE inclusive for students aged 3 to 21: Full Educational Opportunity**

FAPE must be available to all children residing in the State between the ages of 3 and 21, inclusive, including children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school.

- **FAPE for students aged 22**

If a student is receiving services upon reaching age 22, Taylor County will continue services to which the adult student has been previously entitled until the end of the semester. If an adult student remains after their 22nd birthday (until the end of that semester), Taylor County shall notify the adult student and the parent(s) that although services will continue, no individual entitlement to FAPE or other rights under IDEA are afforded the adult student.

- **FAPE provision by 3rd birthday**

Taylor County works with PEECH (Partners in the Early Education of Children with handicaps) to ensure that:

1. The obligation to make FAPE available to each eligible child residing in Taylor County begins no later than the child's third birthday; and
2. An IEP or an IFSP is in effect for the child by that date.
3. If a child's third birthday occurs during the summer, the child's IEP Team shall determine the date when services under the IEP or IFSP will begin.

- **FAPE for incarcerated students**

The obligation to make FAPE available to all children with disabilities does not apply with respect to the following:

1. Adult students aged 18 through 21, who, in the last educational placement, prior to their incarceration in an adult correctional facility:

- Were not actually identified as being a child with a disability;
- Did not have an IEP in effect; and
- Graduates from high school with a regular high school diploma.

2. The exception does not apply to adult students with disabilities, aged 18 through 21, who:

- Had been identified as a child with a disability and had received services in accordance with an IEP but who left school prior to their incarceration in an adult correctional facility or local jail;
- Did not have an IEP in their last educational setting, but who had actually been identified as a child with a disability; or
- Have graduated from high school but have not been awarded a regular high school diploma.

- **Definition of regular high school diploma**

The term regular high school diploma does not include an alternative degree that is not aligned with the State's academic standards such as a special education diploma, certificate of attendance or a general educational development credential (GED).

- **Delay of services not allowed**

Taylor County must ensure that there is no delay in implementing a child's IEP.

- **Medicaid payment allowances and limitations**

Taylor County may use Medicaid to provide or pay for services required under IDEA:

With regard to services required to provide FAPE, Taylor County may not require the parents to sign up for or enroll in Medicaid in order for their child to receive FAPE.

- **Notice to parents regarding use of benefits / Medicaid**

Taylor County will obtain parental consent prior to accessing Medicaid for the first time and after providing notification to the child's parents.

- **Residential placement**

If placement in a public or private residential program is necessary to provide special education and related services to a child with a disability, the program must be at no cost to the parents of the child.

- **Provision of accessible instructional materials**

Taylor County will provide instructional materials in specialized, accessible formats (i.e. Braille, audio, digital, large-print, etc.) to children whose disability require this. Taylor County will take reasonable steps to ensure material is available in a timely manner.

- **Provision of assistive technology (AT)**

Children with disabilities who require AT in order to receive FAPE are eligible for AT devices and / or services. Each IEP team will consider AT devices / services once per year at the annual review. If the team determines that AT devices / services are required, a statement to that effect must be included in the child's IEP.

- **Assistive technology (AT) evaluations**

Each IEP Team will consider whether or not a child requires assistive technology devices and services in order to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Minimal compliance will be indicating the appropriate response in the Consideration of Special Factors section of the IEP. Assistive technology can also be addressed when considering other factors such as communication needs and instruction in the use of Braille. An AT evaluation may be required if appropriate AT solutions are not known to the child's IEP team through the consideration process. The AT evaluation can be conducted by a multidisciplinary team of professionals knowledgeable about AT devices in the technology areas being assessed. The child and family should also be included in this evaluation process.

- **Home use of assistive technology**

If the IEP Team determines that the child with a disability requires school-purchased assistive technology at home or in other settings to receive a FAPE, the assistive technology must be provided to the child at no cost to the parent. The need for assistive technology in the non-school settings should be documented in the child's IEP.

- **FAPE and Extended School Year (ESY)**

Taylor County School System ensures that ESY services are available as necessary to provide a FAPE. Extended School Year means services must be provided only if a child's IEP team determines, on an individual basis, that the services are necessary for the provision of FAPE to the child. In implementing ESY, Taylor County may not limit to particular categories of disability.

- **Extracurricular activities accessibility**

Taylor County School System will take steps, including the provision of supplementary aids and services determined appropriate and necessary by the child's IEP Team, to provide non-academic and extracurricular services and activities in the manner necessary to afford children with disabilities equal opportunity for participation in those services and activities. Non-academic and extracurricular services and activities may include counseling services, athletics, transportation, health services, recreational activities, special interest groups or clubs sponsored by the school.

- **Access to physical education and specially designed physical education**

Specially designed physical education services will be made available as necessary to every child with a disability receiving FAPE, as long as physical education services are made available to children without disabilities.

- **Services to public charter schools that are not LEAs**

Children with disabilities who attend public charter schools and their parents retain all rights to a FAPE. Taylor will serve children with disabilities attending those charter schools.

- **Charter schools that are LEAs**

There are no charter schools in Taylor County.

- **Programming options and equal access**

Taylor County takes steps to ensure that children with disabilities have available to them the variety of educational programs and services available to nondisabled children in the area, including art, music, and Career, Technical and Agricultural Education.

- **Routine Checking of Hearing Aids / Other Components**

Taylor County will ensure that hearing aids worn in school by children with hearing impairments, including deafness, are functioning properly.

Taylor County will ensure that the external components of surgically implanted medical devices are functioning properly. Taylor County School System is not responsible for the post-surgical maintenance, programming or replacement of the medical device that has been surgically implanted (or of an external component of the surgically implanted medical device).

- **Prohibition of mandatory medication**

Taylor County School System prohibits personnel from requiring parents to obtain a prescription. However, the system does not prohibit teachers and / or other school personnel from consulting or sharing classroom-based observations with parents or guardians regarding a child’s academic and functional performance, or behavior in the classroom.

Area of General Supervision IV: Parent Engagement

Indicators:

8: Parent Involvement

16: Complaint Timelines

17: Hearing Timelines

18: Resolution Session

19: Mediation

Procedural Safeguards and Parent Rights

See state rule: 160-4-7-.09

Definition: The term procedural safeguards refers to the document “Parent Rights”.

Taylor County will provide “Parent Rights” at least one time per school year, except a copy shall be given in the following circumstances:

- Independent educational evaluations
- Prior written notice
- Parental Consent
- Access to education records
- Complaint process

- Mediation
- Student placement during / pending due process
- Interim placements
- Private school placement by parent
- Due process hearings
- Attorneys' fees
- Provided in language understandable to parents

Taylor County provides opportunity for the parents of a child with a disability to:

- have opportunity to review records relating to the identification, evaluation, educational placement and provision of FAPE by notifying administration.
- to participate in meetings with respect to the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the child and the provision of FAPE.
- obtain independent educational evaluations

Taylor County ensures that parents:

- receive notice before the school initiates or changes (or refuses to initiate or change) the identification, evaluation, and / or educational placement of the child or the provision of FAPE to the child to include parental consent for initial evaluation, re-evaluation, and initial placement.
- may refuse to consent or choose revocation once eligibility is established.
- Consent is not required if Taylor County is unable to obtain parental participation which includes records of reasonable effort attempts to ensure involvement.
- upon request receive notice of places to contact for assistance in understanding rights

Surrogate Parent

State Rule: 160-4-7-.11

Definition: Surrogate means substitute

In order to provide every child eligible for a public education with the protection of procedural due process, a surrogate parent shall be appointed by Taylor County when:

- No parent can be identified
- After reasonable efforts, cannot locate parents
- The child is a ward of the state
- Homeless youth

Taylor County will:

- appoint a surrogate as needs are determined
- maintain a list of surrogates

Criteria for Surrogate parent selection:

- Not an employee of the GaDOE or Taylor County School System
- If child is unaccompanied homeless youth, appropriate staff of emergency shelters, transitional shelters, independent living programs, and street outreach programs may be appointed as temporary surrogate parent until one can be appointed.
- Has no personal or professional interest that conflicts with the interest of the child represented

Surrogate parent responsibilities:

- Has knowledge and skills that ensure adequate representation of the child.
- May represent child in matters relating to:
 - Identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the child
 - Provision of FAPE

Dispute Resolution State Rule: 160-4-7-.12

Complaint Process (chain of command)

- Teacher first
- School administration
- Central office personnel
- Superintendent
- Parents have the right to address the board of education through public participation at a board meeting provided they have followed the appropriate procedures.

A resolution in a dispute with a district over the rights and services afforded to students with disabilities and their families can be accomplished several different ways. When a resolution cannot be worked out locally, other processes are guaranteed to students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These include (1) formal complaints, (2) mediation, and/or (3) a due process hearing.

Mediation Process - The Taylor County School System ensures that procedures recommended by GaDOE will be utilized to allow parties involved in any matter relating to the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to resolve such disputes on an individual basis through a mediation process. The GaDOE shall maintain a list of individuals who are qualified mediators and knowledgeable in laws and regulations relating to the provision of special education and related services. Mediators shall be selected on a random, rotational or other impartial basis. The State shall bear the cost of the mediation process. Each session in the mediation process shall be scheduled in a timely manner and shall be held in a location that is convenient to the parties to the dispute.

Mediators:

- may not be an employee of the GaDOE or Taylor County employee involved in the education or care of the

child.

- must not have a personal or professional interest that conflicts with the person's objectivity.

If the parties resolve a dispute through the mediation process, they shall execute a legally binding agreement that sets forth the resolution and states that:

- Discussions that occurred during the mediation process shall be confidential and may not be used as evidence in any subsequent due process hearings or civil proceedings.
- Is signed by both the parent and a representative of Taylor County.

Impartial Due Process Hearings- The impartial due process hearing is designed to provide a parent or school system an avenue for resolving differences with regard to the identification, evaluation, placement or provision of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to a child with a disability. The due process hearing request must allege a violation that occurred not more than two years before the date the parent or Taylor County School System knew or should have known about the alleged action that forms the basis of the due process hearing request. Due process hearings are provided at no cost to either party. However, each party is responsible for his / her costs associated with hiring legal counsel.

Resolution Process

The purpose of the meeting is for the parent of the child to discuss the due process hearing request, and the facts that form the basis of the request, so that Taylor County has the opportunity to resolve the dispute that is the basis of the request for a due process hearing. If Taylor County has not resolved the due process hearing request to the satisfaction of the parent within 30 days of the receipt of the due process complaint, the due process hearing may occur unless both parties agree in writing to waive the resolution meeting. If a resolution to the dispute is reached at the resolution meeting, the parties must execute a legally binding agreement that is signed by both the parent and a representative of Taylor County.

Area of General Supervision V: Readiness for College and Career

Indicators:

1: Graduation Rules

2: Dropout Rates

13: Secondary Transition

14: Post School Outcomes

Bridge Law

State House Bill 400

Definition: BRIDGE (Building Resourceful Individuals to Develop Georgia's Economy)

The Bridge Act was signed into law to create an atmosphere motivating middle and high school students to learn because they see the relevance of education to their dreams and future plans. Components

Sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students receive:

- Counseling

- Regularly scheduled advisement
- Career awareness
- Career interest inventories
- Information to assist students in evaluating their academic skills and career interests

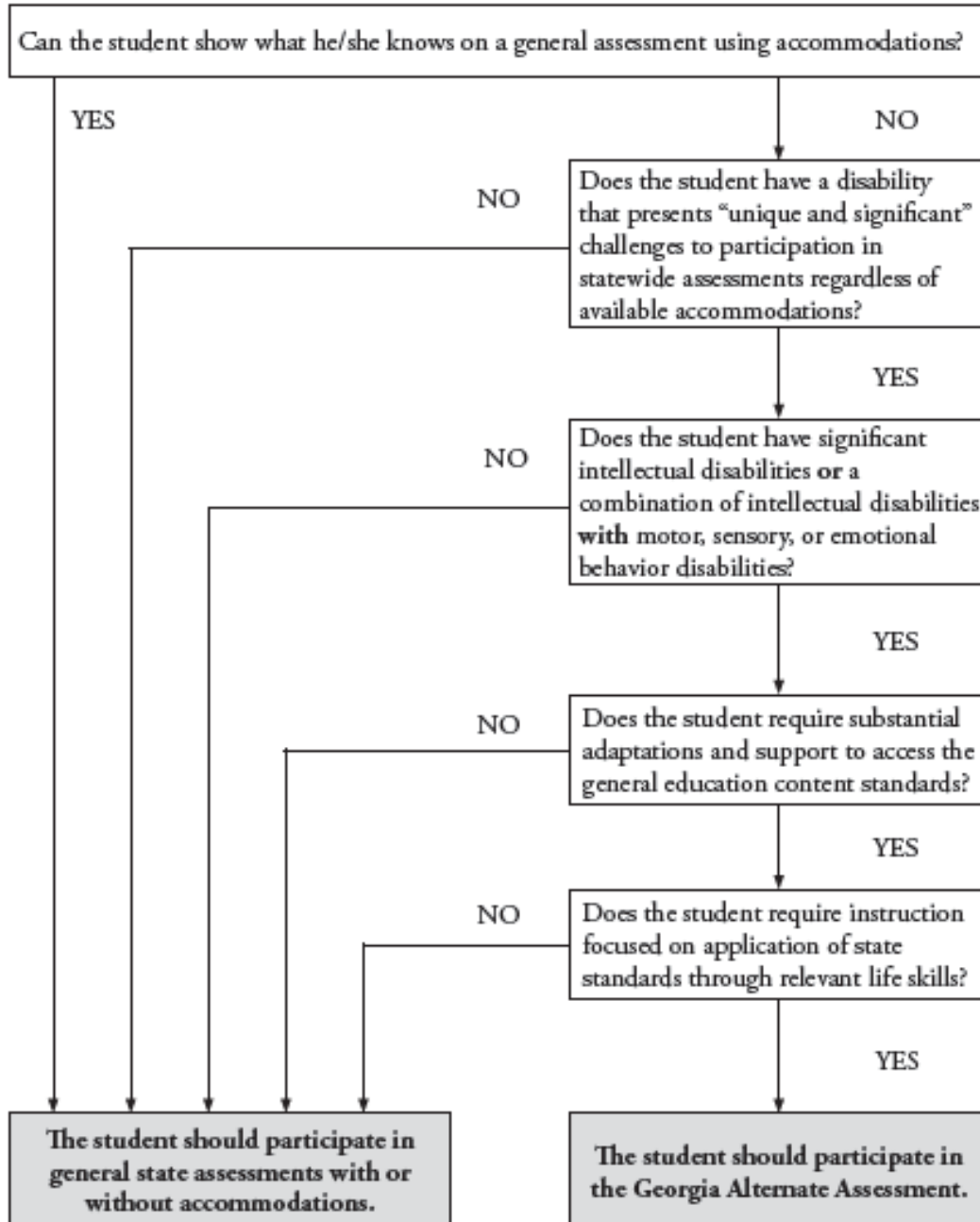
Individual Graduation Plan for 8th grade students

High School students receive:

- Career counselling
- Career guidance
- Career advisement
- Information to enable students to successfully complete their individual graduation plans

GENERAL INFORMATION

Participation Guidelines for the GAA



Appendix B CFRESA Evaluation Flowchart

Procedural Flowchart for Psychological Evaluations at CFRESA

