

## INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL EVALUATIONS

It is the policy of the Slate Valley Unified Union School District to grant independent evaluations under conditions set forth in these policies, applicable Federal regulations and Vermont State regulations.

For purposes of this, "evaluations" are defined as observations, test and other diagnostic measures. Evaluations shall be conducted by persons who are trained in the administration of evaluation procedures and in the scoring and interpretation of the results in conformity with the instructions provided by their producer; be provided and administered in the child's native language or other mode of communication unless it is clearly not feasible to do so; be selected and administered so as not to be racially or culturally discriminatory; include those instruments designed to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely those which are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient.

No single evaluation procedure shall be used as the sole criterion for determining special education eligibility. In evaluating each child's eligibility for special education, the evaluation shall be sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the child's special education and related service needs, whether or not commonly linked to the disability category in which the child may be or has been classified. The child shall be assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities. A variety of assessment tools and strategies shall be used to gather relevant functional and developmental information about the child, including information provided by the parent, and information related to enabling the child to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum (or for a preschool child, to participate in appropriate activities), that may assist in determining whether the child is eligible for special education services and the content of the child's IEP.

**Independent Evaluations Paid for by the School District:** Whenever there is a request for payment for an independent evaluation by this school district, the following criteria will apply:

1. Parents, guardians, etc. may request an independent evaluation at school expense only after the Evaluation and Planning Team has had an opportunity to complete its evaluation and issue a report. The request must be written to the special education administrator and be approved before the independent evaluation is scheduled to take place. The parent will be asked:
  - a. why they disagree with the District's evaluation of their child,
  - b. what specific independent evaluations are being sought,
  - c. what they purport to show
  - d. who they propose as independent evaluator and
  - e. estimated costs.
2. The special education administrator will respond to a completed parental request for an independent evaluation by responding to the request in writing within 10 working days of receiving the completed request or by initiating a due process hearing to show that the school district's evaluation is appropriate.
3. The special education administrator will provide parents a list of evaluation agents/sites that meet the school district's evaluation criteria, and the parents will inform him/her of their choice before the evaluation takes place. Parents may opt to select a qualified evaluator not on the list as long as the individual meets the qualifications specified. The criteria for the independent evaluation shall be consistent with the criteria used by the district for its evaluation.

Reimbursement for independent evaluations will be limited to the amount a comparable evaluation conducted by the school district would cost, unless a comparable evaluation is not available at the same cost or less. This cost shall not exceed \$3,000.

4. Upon the request of the special education administrator, the independent evaluator must provide evidence of being appropriately trained, licensed or certified to administer and interpret all tests or examinations to be administered.
5. All independent evaluations shall be conducted within a 100 miles radius of Fair Haven, Vermont, unless prior permission has been granted by the school district to go outside this area.  
A request for an evaluation outside the school designated area must be in writing to the Superintendent. The request must include the rationale for extending the distance to include a specific evaluator. The Superintendent will respond to this request within 10 working days of receiving the completed request or by initiating a due process hearing to show that evaluators within the 100 mile radius would be appropriate. Where a parent or guardian has obtained an independent educational evaluation without first consulting the special education administrator, reimbursement may be limited as set forth above.
6. The special education administrator may request the independent evaluator to carry out additional specific assessments which the Evaluation and Planning Team deems necessary to ensure appropriateness or a child's education.
7. The independent evaluators shall send the report of the results of the independent evaluation and, if requested by the district, all supporting data including test protocols to the special education administrator. No invoices will be processed for payment until all materials noted above are received by the special education administrator.
8. The results of all independent evaluations obtained at public expense will be considered by the evaluation and planning or IEP meeting participants in any decision made with respect to the provision of a free appropriate public education for the student.

**Independent evaluations paid for by the parents:** If the parent obtains an independent evaluation at private expense, the results of the evaluation will be considered by the district in any decision made with respect to the provisions of a free appropriate public education of the child.

**Independent evaluations ordered by a hearing officer:** If a hearing officer requests an independent educational evaluation as part of a hearing, the cost of such evaluation shall be at public expense.

*Date Warned: May 3, 2018*  
*Date Adopted: May 14, 2018*

Slate Valley Unified Union School District

