

## **REGULATION III: IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION**

### **A. CHILD FIND**

It is the policy of the state of Missouri that all students with disabilities, residing in the state, including students with disabilities who are homeless students or are wards of the state, and students with disabilities attending private schools, regardless of the severity of their disability, and who are in need of special education and related services are identified, located, and evaluated. This requirement applies to highly mobile students with disabilities (such as migrant and homeless students) and students who are suspected of being a student with a disability and in need of special education even though they are advancing from grade to grade. The state of Missouri also ensures that it has procedures in place to determine which students are receiving needed special education and related services.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is the agency responsible for coordinating the planning and implementation of the child find activities for children/students birth to twenty-one (21).

### **CHILD FIND FOR STATE AGENCIES**

The following state agencies participate in the planning and implementation of child find activities.

Department of Mental Health assists in identification and location of infants, toddlers, and students with suspected disabilities through its Regional Centers for the Developmentally Disabled, State Habilitation Centers, and State Hospitals. Referrals are made to local public agencies and the Part C system.

Department of Health and ~~Human~~ **Senior** Services assists in identification and location of infants, toddlers, and students with suspected disabilities through its Title V and Head Injury Programs. Referrals are made to local public agencies and to the Part C system.

Department of Social Services:

- (1) The Children's Division assists in the identification of infants, toddlers, and students with suspected disabilities. Referrals are made to local public agencies and to the Part C system.
- (2) Rehabilitation Services for the Blind identifies, locates, and refers infants, toddlers, and students who have visual problems. Referrals are made to local public agencies or to the Part C system.
- (3) The Division of Youth Services identifies students with disabilities who are placed within the care and custody of the Missouri Division of Youth Services. Special education services are provided for these students within the Division's facilities.

Department of Corrections provides for the identification of and special education services to inmates with disabilities under age twenty-one (21) years, who are placed within its jurisdiction.

### **CHILD FIND FOR PUBLIC AGENCIES**

DESE requires local education agencies (LEAs) to annually assist in Child Find by conducting the following activities prior to November 1 each year:

- (1) Publishing one (1) public notice in local newspapers or on the public agency website that describes the public agency's responsibility to provide special education and related services to students ages three (3) to twenty-one (21). The notice must also describe the LEA's responsibility to refer infants and toddlers suspected of having a disability to the state Part C early intervention system.
- (2) Airing one (1) public notice on local radio and/or television stations, during general viewing/listening hours, which describe the public agency's responsibility to provide special education and related services to students ages three (3) to twenty-one (21).
- (3) Placing posters/notices in all administrative offices of each building operated by the public agency that describes the public agency's responsibility to provide special education and related services to students ages three (3) to twenty-one (21).
- (4) Providing written information through general distribution to the parents/guardians of students enrolled in the public agency which describes the public agency's responsibility to provide special education and related services to students ages three (3) to twenty-one (21).

Local private agencies are also required to conduct Child Find in private schools as outlined in Regulation XIII.

### **CHILD FIND MONITORING**

DESE will monitor the implementation of the Child Find requirements. Such reviews will include:

- (1) Approval of each public agency's Compliance Plan documentation, and
- (2) A review of data from the annual child count reported by each public agency.

All data collected and used to meet Child Find requirements is subject to confidentiality requirements of 34 CFR 300.610 - 300.627.

Listed below is the statute of the state of Missouri which provides the legal basis and source for Missouri's policy for child find:

- (1) Section 162.700, RSMo

## **B. DEFINITIONS AND CRITERIA FOR DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines students with disabilities as those students, ages three (3) to twenty-one (21), who have been properly evaluated as having Intellectual Disability, Hearing Impairments and Deafness, Speech or Language Impairments, Visual Impairments/Blindness, Emotional Disturbance, Orthopedic Impairments, Autism, Traumatic Brain Injury, Other Health Impairments, a Specific Learning Disability, Deaf/Blindness, or Multiple Disabilities and, who because of that disability, require special education and related services. As allowed under 34 CFR 300.8 implementing IDEA, the state of Missouri also defines a student with a disability to include students ages three (3) through five (5) who have been properly identified as a young child with a developmental delay.

No student may be determined to be eligible if the determinant factor for that eligibility determination is lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including the essential components of comprehensive literacy instruction (as defined in section 2221(b)(1) of the ESEA), or lack of appropriate instruction in math or limited English proficiency 34 CFR 300.306(b)(1).

Several conditions may be diagnosed by other professionals such as physicians, psychologists, etc. that are not specified by IDEA. These may include such conditions as Tourette syndrome, diabetes, sickle cell anemia, leukemia, dyslexia, central auditory processing disorder, etc. Students who present significant learning problems by virtue of the condition may demonstrate eligibility for special education under one or more of the disabilities identified above.

### **DISABILITY CATEGORIES, DEFINITIONS, AND INITIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER**

Autism  
Deaf/Blindness  
Emotional Disturbance  
Hearing Impairment and Deafness  
Intellectual Disability  
Multiple Disabilities  
Orthopedic Impairment  
Other Health Impairment  
Specific Learning Disability  
Speech or Language Impairment  
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)  
Visual Impairment/Blindness  
Young Child with a Developmental Delay

Autism: Autism means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal or nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three (3) that adversely affects a student's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.

The term does not apply if a student's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the student has an emotional disability as defined in this document.

A student who manifests the characteristics of autism after age three (3) could be identified as having autism if the criteria are satisfied.

A student displays autism when:

- (1) Through evaluation that includes a review of medical records, observation of the child's behavior across multiple environments, and an in-depth social history, the following behaviors are documented:
  - a. Disturbances of speech, language-cognitive, and nonverbal communication: The student displays abnormalities that extend beyond speech to many aspects of the communication process. Communicative language may be absent or, if present, language may lack communicative intent. Characteristics may involve both deviance and delay. There is a deficit in the capacity to use language for social communication, both receptively and expressively.
  - b. Disturbance of the capacity to relate appropriately to people, events, or objects: The student displays abnormalities in relating to people, objects, and events. There is a deficit in the capacity to form relationships with people. The capacity to use objects in an age appropriate or functional manner may be absent, arrested, or delayed. The student may seek consistency in environmental events to the point of exhibiting rigidity in routines.
- (2) The condition adversely affects the student's educational performance.
- (3) The autism is not a result of an emotional disability as defined in this document.

Other Behaviors Which the Student May Exhibit Include:

- (1) Disturbance of developmental rates and sequences: The student may also exhibit delays, arrests, or regressions in physical, social, or learning skills. Areas of precocious skill development may also be present, while other skills may develop at normal or extremely depressed rates. The order of skill acquisition frequently does not follow normal developmental patterns.
- (2) Disturbances of responses to sensory stimuli: The student's behavior may also range from being hyperactive to being unresponsive to people and objects in their environment and can

alternate between these two (2) states over periods ranging from hours to months. Disturbances may be apparent in auditory, visual, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, and kinesthetic responses. The student may respond to stimulation inappropriately and in repetitive or nonmeaningful ways.

Deaf/Blindness: Deaf/Blindness means concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for students with deafness or students with blindness.

A student is deaf/blind when:

- (1) Both visual and hearing impairments are present as described in the criteria for Hearing Impairment/Deafness and Visual Impairment/Blindness, and
- (2) The impairments together cause severe communication, developmental, and educational needs.

Emotional Disturbance: Emotional Disturbance means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a student's educational performance:

- (1) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors;
- (2) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;
- (3) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;
- (4) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; and,
- (5) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or social problems.

The term includes schizophrenia, but does not apply to students who are socially maladjusted unless it is determined they have an emotional disturbance.

A student displays an emotional disturbance when:

- (1) Through evaluation procedures that must include observation of behavior in different environments and an in-depth social history, the student displays one of the following characteristics:
  - a. An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors;
  - b. An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;
  - c. Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;
  - d. A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; and,

- e. A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or social problems.
- (2) The characteristic(s) must have existed to a marked degree and over an extended period of time. In most cases, an extended period of time would be a range from two (2) through nine (9) months depending upon the age of the student and the type of behavior occurring. For example, a shorter duration of disturbance that interrupts the learning process in a younger student might constitute an extended period of time. Difficulties may have occurred prior to the referral for evaluation; and,
  - (3) The emotional disturbance adversely affects the student's educational performance.

NOTE: Manifestations of an emotional disturbance can be observed along a continuum ranging from normal behavior to severely disordered behavior. Students who experience and demonstrate problems of everyday living and/or those who develop transient symptoms due to a specific crisis or stressful experience are not considered to have an emotional disturbance.

Hearing Impairment and Deafness: Hearing Impairment means an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a student's educational performance, but is not included in the following definition for deafness. Deafness means a hearing impairment that is so severe that the student is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects a student's educational performance.

A student displays a Hearing Impairment/Deafness when:

- (1) A hearing impairment has been diagnosed by an audiologist, and
- (2) The hearing impairment adversely affects the student's educational performance.

Intellectual Disability: Intellectual Disability means significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior manifested during the developmental period that adversely affects a student's educational performance.

A student displays intellectual disability when:

- (1) The student performs 2.0 Standard Deviations below their peers of equivalent age, ethnic, and cultural background when measured by a standardized instrument of cognitive ability;
- (2) Adaptive behavior refers to the effectiveness with which a student meets the standards of personal independence and social responsibility expected of his/her age and cultural group. Adaptive behavior assessments should be completed by two or more adults who are familiar with the child's functional performance, including a parent or guardian when possible. The student displays significant deficits in adaptive behavior functioning when results from two raters using a standardized adaptive behavior instrument produce composite scores 2.0 Standard Deviations below the mean. When the criterion is met on one composite score, a second score allowing for the standard error of measurement may be accepted. There should

be a significant positive correlation between the student's intellectual ability and adaptive behavior; and,

- (3) The disability adversely affects the student's educational performance. The description of adverse educational impact is supported by information gained through a comprehensive evaluation including observation of the student's academic and functional performance completed in a variety of educational settings.

Multiple Disabilities: Multiple Disabilities means concomitant impairments (such as intellectual disability-blindness, intellectual disability-orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf/blindness.

A student displays multiple disabilities when:

- (1) Concomitant impairments occur, and
- (2) The impairments together cause severe educational needs.

Orthopedic Impairment: Orthopedic Impairment means a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a student's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by congenital anomaly (e.g., club foot, absence of some member, etc.), impairments caused by disease (poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations and fractures, or burns that cause contractures).

A student displays a physical impairment when:

- (1) An orthopedic impairment has been diagnosed by a licensed physician, and
- (2) The physical impairment adversely affects the student's educational performance.

Other Health Impairment: Other Health Impairment means having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment that is due to chronic or acute health problems, such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette Syndrome, and adversely affects a student's educational performance.

A student displays a Health Impairment when:

- (1) A health impairment has been diagnosed by a licensed physician, **licensed assistant physician, Missouri State Board of Nursing recognized advance practice registered nurse**, licensed psychologist, licensed professional counselor, licensed clinical social worker, or school psychologist, and

- (2) The health impairment adversely affects the student's educational performance. The description of adverse educational impact is supported by information gained through a comprehensive evaluation including observation of the student's academic and functional performance completed in a variety of educational settings.

Specific Learning Disability: Specific Learning Disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of a visual, hearing, or motor disability; intellectual disability; emotional disturbance; cultural factors; environmental or economic disadvantage; or, limited English proficiency.

A student has a specific learning disability when:

- (1) The student does not achieve adequately for the student's age or to meet state approved grade-level standards in one or more of the following areas, when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the student's age or state approved grade-level standards:
  - a. Oral Expression
  - b. Listening Comprehension
  - c. Written Expression
  - d. Basic Reading Skill
  - e. Reading Fluency Skills
  - f. Reading Comprehension
  - g. Mathematics Calculation; and,
  - h. Mathematics Problem Solving
- (2) The student does not make sufficient progress to meet age or state approved grade-level standards in one or more of the areas identified above when using a process based on the student's response to scientific, research-based intervention; or the student exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to age, state approved grade-level standards, or intellectual development, that is determined by the group to be relevant to the identification of a specific learning disability, using appropriate assessments, consistent with 34 CFR 300.307-300.311. A pattern of strengths and weaknesses is defined as a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability of at least 1.5 standard deviations; and,
- (3) The group determines that its findings under this section are not primarily the result of:
  - a. A visual, hearing, or motor disability;
  - b. Intellectual disability;
  - c. Emotional disturbance;
  - d. Cultural factors;



- e. Environmental or economic disadvantage;
  - f. Limited English Proficiency;
  - g. Lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including the essential components of comprehensive literacy instruction (as defined in section 2221(b)(1) of the ESEA);
  - h. Lack of appropriate instruction in math; and,
- (4) To ensure that underachievement in a student suspected of having a specific learning disability is not due to lack of appropriate instruction in reading or math, the group must consider, as part of the evaluation:
- a. Data that demonstrate that prior to or as part of the referral process, the student was provided appropriate instruction in regular education settings, delivered by qualified personnel, and
  - b. Data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals, reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction, which was provided to the student's parents.

### Professional Judgment

If a responsible public agency uses a severe discrepancy method: A student who does not display a discrepancy of at least 1.5 standard deviations as defined above, may nonetheless be deemed to have a specific learning disability if:

- (1) The student meets the other criteria of this rule; and
- (2) Based upon professional judgment and review of formal and informal assessments, the evaluation team concludes that a severe discrepancy exists.

In such cases, sufficient data must be presented in the evaluation report to document the existence of a specific learning disability.

It is the policy of the state of Missouri that any agency using a Response to Intervention model for the identification of Specific Learning Disability, must have written procedures for implementation that, at a minimum, incorporate guidelines developed by the SEA which are found on the Department website.

Speech or Language Impairment: Speech or Language Impairment means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairment, or voice impairment that adversely affects a student's educational performance.

A language impairment is present when a comprehensive communication assessment documents all of the following:

- (1) The language impairment adversely affects the student's educational performance as documented by lack of response to evidence based interventions designed to support progress in the general education curriculum.

- (2) The student's overall language functioning is significantly below age expectations as measured by two or more composite standard scores on standardized language assessments. The composite language score reflects both receptive and expressive language function in a single standard score. Significantly below is defined as 1.75 standard deviations or more below the mean for students who are kindergarten age eligible and older. A public agency may accept a second composite score allowing for the standard error of measurement when the criterion is met on the other composite score. The agency may adopt written procedures for utilization of reasonable variances that enable a student to meet the standard score criterion in highly unique situations such as English Learners.
- (3) Young child with a developmental disability criteria (communication area) shall be used for eligibility determinations for children who are three (3) to five (5) years of age but not yet kindergarten eligible.
- (4) The student consistently displays inappropriate or inadequate language that impairs communication in the student's educational environment as documented by structured qualitative procedures such as a formal language sample, classroom observations, curriculum based assessments, teacher/parent checklists/interviews, or other clinical tasks.
- (5) The language impairment is not a result of dialectal differences or second language influence.

A Sound System Disorder, which includes articulation and/or phonology, is present when:

- (1) The Sound System Disorder adversely affects the student's educational performance as documented by lack of response to evidence based interventions designed to support progress in the general education curriculum;
- (2) The student exhibits a significant delay of at least one year in correct sound production based on the state designated normative data in the table below after administering a single word test and/or a sentence/phrase repetition task and a connected speech sample with consideration given to the type of error recorded (substitutions, omissions, distortions, and/or additions). These errors may be described as single sound errors or errors in phonological patterns. However, if the student does not exhibit a significant delay of at least one year in correct sound production, but there are multiple errors in the sound system which are collectively so severe that the student's speech is unintelligible, the public agency may establish the student as having a sound system disorder; and,
- (3) The sound system disorder is not a result of dialectal differences or second language influence.

Phoneme	Chronological Age
/ m /	3:0
/ n /	3:6
/ ŋ / (ng)	7:0
/ h /	3:0
/ w /	3:0
/ j / (y)	5:0
/ p /	3:0
/ b /	3:0
/ t /	4:0
/ d /	3:6
/ k /	3:6
/ g /	4:0
/ f- /	3:6

Phoneme	Chronological Age
/ -f /	5:6
/ v /	5:6
/ θ / (th)	8:0
/ ð / (th)	7:0
/ s /	7:0
/ z /	7:0
/ ʃ / (sh) /	7:0
/ tʃ / (ch)	7:0
/ dʒ / (j)	7:0
/ ʒ / (zh)	8:0
/ l- /	6:0
/ -l /	7:0
/ r /	8:0

Word initial clusters	Chronological Age
/ tw kw /	5:6
/ sp st sk /	7:0
/ sm sn /	7:0
/ sw /	7:0
/ sl /	7:0
/ pl bl kl gl fl /	6:0
/pr br tr dr kr gr fr /	8:0
/ θr /	9:0
/ skw /	7:0
/ spl /	7:0
/ spr str skr /	7:0

A fluency impairment is present when a comprehensive communication assessment documents all of the following:

- (1) The fluency impairment adversely affects the student’s educational performance as documented by lack of response to evidence based interventions designed to support progress in the general education curriculum;
- (2) The student’s fluency is significantly below the norm as measured by speech sampling in a variety of contexts and impairs communication in the student’s educational environment as documented by structured qualitative procedures such as classroom observations, curriculum based assessments, teacher/parent checklists/interviews, or other clinical tasks; and,
- (3) The student consistently exhibits at least one of the following symptomatic behaviors of dysfluency:
  - a. sound, syllabic, or word repetition;
  - b. prolongations of sounds, syllables, or words;
  - c. avoidance;
  - d. blockages; or,
  - e. hesitations.

A voice impairment is present when a comprehensive communication assessment documents all of the following:

- (1) The voice impairment adversely affects the student’s educational performance as documented by lack of response to evidence based interventions designed to support progress in the general education curriculum;

- (2) The student consistently exhibits deviations in pitch, quality, or volume;
- (3) The student's voice is discrepant from the norm as related to his/her age, sex, and culture and is distracting to the listener; and,
- (4) The voice impairment is not the result of:
  - a. a medical condition that contraindicates voice therapy intervention;
  - b. a temporary condition such as: normal voice changes, allergies, colds, or other such conditions; or,
  - c. a dialectal difference or second language influence.

**Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI):** Traumatic Brain Injury means an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability, psychosocial impairment, or both that adversely affects a student's educational performance. The term includes open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as, cognition, language, memory, attention, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgment, problem solving, sensory, perceptual and motor abilities, psychological behavior, physical functions, information processing, and speech. The term does not include brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

A student has a Traumatic Brain Injury when:

- (1) A traumatic brain injury/head injury has been diagnosed by a licensed physician or through a neuropsychological assessment, and
- (2) The student's educational performance is adversely affected by deficits in acquisition, retention, and/or generalization of skills. Students with a brain injury may have rapidly changing profiles, therefore, educational assessment should include current documentation of the student's functional capabilities and indicate deficits in one or more of the following areas:
  - a. Building or maintaining social competence;
  - b. Performance of functional daily living skills across settings;
  - c. The ability to acquire and retain new skills; and,
  - d. The ability to retrieve prior information.

### Professional Judgment

A student may also be deemed eligible if the student displays characteristics of TBI even though a medical diagnosis of head injury has not been made by a physician. In such cases, substantial data to document the medical basis for a head injury must be present in the evaluation report.

Visual Impairment/Blindness: Visual Impairment, including blindness, means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a student’s educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.

Young Child with a Developmental Delay: Young Child with a Developmental Delay means a child ages three (3) through five (5) who is experiencing developmental delays, as measured by appropriate evaluation instruments and procedures, in one or more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development, and who need special education and related services.

Note: LEAs in Missouri are not required to adopt and use the term “Young Child with a Developmental Delay” for any children in their jurisdiction. However, if an LEA uses the term “Young Child with a Developmental Delay,” the LEA must conform to both the state’s definition of the term and the age range.

A child has a developmental delay when:

For children ages three (3) through five (5) (not kindergarten age eligible)

- (1) The student’s development is at or below 1.5 standard deviations, or equivalent levels, of the mean in any TWO areas of development OR at or below 2.0 standard deviations, or equivalent levels, in any ONE area of development as compared to typical development. Areas of development that can be used to determine eligibility include physical, cognitive, communication, social/emotional, or adaptive.
- (2) The child needs special education and related services.

Professional Judgment

A child may also be deemed eligible when:

- (1) The evaluation report documents through formal and informal assessment that a significant deficit exists and a child is eligible for services even though the standard scores, or equivalent levels, do not meet the stated criterion levels above, or
- (2) The team may determine that a child, who is functioning above the stated criterion level and because of intensive early intervention, is eligible for services based on expected regression if services were to be terminated.

For students ages five (5) (kindergarten eligible)

- (1) Students kindergarten age eligible may continue eligibility as a Young Child with a Developmental Delay if they were identified as such prior to attaining kindergarten age eligibility.

## **C. PROCEDURES FOR EVALUATION AND DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY**

DESE ensures that each public agency establishes and implements procedures for evaluation and determination of eligibility that meet the requirements of this section.

### **PARENTAL CONSENT FOR INITIAL EVALUATION**

Consent of the parent must be obtained by the responsible public agency from a parent prior to conducting the initial evaluation.

Consent for initial evaluation may not be construed as consent for initial provision of special education and related services. Public agencies must make reasonable efforts to obtain the informed consent from the parent for an initial evaluation to determine whether the student is a student with a disability.

### **WARD OF THE STATE**

For initial evaluations only, if the student is a ward of the state and is not residing with the student's parent, the public agency is not required to obtain informed consent from the parent for an initial evaluation to determine if the student is a student with a disability if:

- (1) The public agency cannot discover the whereabouts of the parent of the student despite reasonable efforts to do so;
- (2) The rights of the parent of the student have been terminated in accordance with state law; and,
- (3) The rights of the parent to make educational decisions have been subrogated by a judge in accordance with state law and consent for an initial evaluation has been given by an individual appointed by the judge to represent the student.

### **FAILURE TO CONSENT**

If the parent of a student enrolled in a public agency or seeking to be enrolled in a public agency does not provide consent for initial evaluation or the parent fails to respond to a request to provide consent, the public agency may, but is not required to, pursue the initial evaluation of the student by utilizing the procedural safeguards (including mediation procedures or due process procedures), if appropriate, except to the extent inconsistent with state law relating to such parental consent. A public agency does not violate its obligation under "child find" or "evaluations and reevaluations" of the Act if it declines to pursue the evaluation.

### **EVALUATION TIMELINES**

The following timelines are adopted by the state for purposes of evaluation. The public agency shall provide the parent with a Notice of Intent to Evaluate as soon as possible, but within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of referral for evaluation. Delays beyond this time may be permitted for

just cause (school breaks for summer or holidays, student illness, etc.) and documented in the student's record.

The evaluation shall be completed and a decision regarding eligibility rendered within sixty (60) calendar days following parent consent or notice, as the case may be. This timeline does not apply if the parent of the student repeatedly fails or refuses to produce the student for evaluation or the student enrolls in another public agency after the timeline has begun and prior to a determination by the student's previous public agency as to whether the student is a student with a disability or there is just cause (school breaks for summer or holidays, student illness, etc.) documented in the student's record.

### **PARENT REQUEST FOR EVALUATION**

Parents may request an evaluation for their student. If the public agency receives such a request, the public agency shall:

- (1) Accept the request and determine in a timely manner, but not more than 30 days from the request, if there is reason to suspect a disability and need for evaluation. Proceed with the evaluation process in accordance with the timelines and requirements set forth in this section, or
- (2) Refuse the request and provide the parent with Notice of Action Refused

### **INITIAL EVALUATION (34 CFR 300.301)**

Each public agency shall conduct a full and individual initial evaluation, in accordance with 34 CFR 300.305 and 34 CFR 300.306, before the initial provision of special education and related services to a student with a disability. This may or may not include additional testing as determined by the evaluation team members.

Either a parent of a student or a public agency may initiate a request for an initial evaluation to determine if the student is a student with a disability.

The initial evaluation must be conducted within the evaluation timelines set forth above and must consist of procedures to determine if the student is a student with a disability as defined in this State Plan and to determine the educational needs of the student.

If a parent of a student repeatedly fails or refuses to produce the student for evaluation or, if a student enrolls in another public agency after the evaluation timeline has begun and prior to the determination by the student's previous public agency as to whether the student is a student with a disability, the sixty (60) day timeframe does not apply. An exception to this applies only if the subsequent public agency is making sufficient progress to ensure a prompt completion of the evaluation, and the parent and the subsequent public agency agree to a specific time when the evaluation will be completed.

The screening of a student by a teacher or specialist to determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation shall not be considered to be an evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services.

### **REEVALUATIONS (34 CFR 300.303)**

A public agency must ensure that a reevaluation of each student with a disability is conducted if the public agency determines that the educational or related services needs, including improved academic achievement and functional performance of the student warrant a reevaluation or if the student's parent or teacher requests a reevaluation.

A reevaluation may occur not more than once a year, unless the parent and the public agency agree otherwise. A reevaluation must occur at least once every three years, unless the parent and the public agency agree that a reevaluation is unnecessary.

For parent or public agency requested reevaluations, initial evaluation timelines specified in this section must be followed.

### **EVALUATION PROCEDURES (34 CFR 300.304)**

The public agency must provide notice to the parents of a student with a disability that describes any evaluation procedures including, but not limited to, standardized and non-standardized tests, classroom observations, functional behavioral assessments (FBAs), interviews that the public agency proposes to conduct. Each public agency shall ensure, at a minimum, that the following requirements are met:

- (1) A variety of assessment tools and strategies are used to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information about the student, including information provided by the parent, and information related to enabling the student to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum (or for a preschool student, to participate in appropriate activities), that may assist in determining whether the student is a student with a disability and the content of the student's IEP.
- (2) No single measure or assessment is used as the sole criterion for determining whether a student is a student with a disability and for determining an appropriate educational program for a student.
- (3) The public agency uses technically sound instruments that may assess the relative contribution of cognitive and behavioral factors, in addition to physical or developmental factors.
- (4) Assessments and other evaluation materials used to assess a student under Part B of the Act are selected and administered so as not to be discriminatory on a racial or cultural basis, are provided and administered in the student's native language or other mode of communication, and in the form most likely to yield accurate information on what the



student knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is clearly not feasible to provide or administer.

- (5) Assessments and other evaluation materials used to assess a student are used for the purposes for which the assessments or measures are valid and reliable and are administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the tests. If an assessment is not conducted under standard conditions, a description of the extent to which it varied from standard conditions (e.g., the qualifications of the person administering the test or the method of test administration) must be included in the evaluation report.
- (6) Assessments and other evaluation materials include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely those that are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient.
- (7) Assessments are selected and administered so as best to ensure that if a test is administered to a student with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills, the test results accurately reflect the student's aptitude or achievement level or whatever other factors the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills (unless those skills are the factors that the test purports to measure).
- (8) The student is 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.
- (9) Assessments of students with disabilities who transfer from one public agency to another public agency in the same school year are coordinated with those students' prior and subsequent public agency as necessary and as expeditiously as possible to ensure prompt completion of full evaluations.
- (10) In evaluating each student with a disability, the evaluation is sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the student's special education and related services needs, whether or not commonly linked to the disability category in which the student has been classified.
- (11) The public agency uses assessment tools and strategies that provide relevant information that directly assists persons in determining the educational needs of the student.

#### **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR EVALUATIONS AND REEVALUATIONS (34 CFR 300.305)**

As part of an initial evaluation (if appropriate) and as part of any reevaluation under Part B of IDEA, the IEP Team and other qualified professionals, as appropriate, shall review existing evaluation data on the student, including evaluations and information provided by the parents of the student, current classroom-based, local or state assessments, classroom based observations, and observations by teachers and related services providers. On the basis of that review and input

from the student's parents, the IEP Team and other qualified professionals, as appropriate, shall identify what additional data, if any, are needed to determine:

- (1) Whether the student has a particular category of disability and the educational needs of the student, or in case of a reevaluation of a student, whether the student continues to have such a disability and the educational needs of the student;
- (2) The present levels of academic achievement and related developmental needs of the student;
- (3) Whether the student needs special education and related services, or in the case of a reevaluation of a student, whether the student continues to need special education and related services; and,
- (4) Whether any additions or modifications to the special education and related services are needed to enable the student to meet the measurable annual goals set out in the IEP of the student and to participate, as appropriate, in the general curriculum.

The group making these decisions may conduct its review without a meeting. The public agency must administer tests and other evaluation methods as may be needed to produce the data to make an eligibility determination and develop an IEP as listed in (1) through (4) above.

If the determination of the group is that no additional data are needed to determine whether the student continues to be a student with a disability, the public agency shall notify the student's parents of that determination and the reasons for it, and of the right of the parents to request an assessment to determine whether, for purposes of services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the student continues to be a student with a disability, and to determine the student's educational needs.

If the parent requests assessment, even though the determination has been made that no additional data are needed, the public agency must grant the request if the issue is continued eligibility under Part B of IDEA or to determine the student's educational needs.

A public agency must evaluate a student with a disability before determining that the student is no longer a student with a disability. An evaluation is not required before the termination of a student's eligibility due to graduation from the public agency with a regular diploma or due to reaching the age of twenty-one (21).

A public agency must provide a student whose eligibility terminates due to graduation from the public agency with a regular diploma or due to reaching the age of twenty-one (21) a summary of the student's academic achievement and functional performance, which shall include recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting the student's post secondary goals.

### **DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY (34 CFR 300.306)**

Upon completing the administration of tests and other evaluation materials, a group of qualified professionals and the parent of the student must determine whether the student is a student with a disability and the educational needs of the student. The public agency must provide a copy of the evaluation report which documents the determination of eligibility at no cost to the parent.

In interpreting evaluation data for the purpose of determining if a student is a student with a disability and the educational needs of the student, each public agency must – (i) Draw upon information from a variety of sources, including aptitude and achievement tests, parent input, and teacher recommendations, as well as information about the student’s physical condition, social or cultural background, and adaptive behavior; and, (ii) Ensure that information obtained from all of these sources is documented and carefully considered.

If a determination is made that a student has a disability and needs special education and related services, an IEP must be developed for the student in accordance with this state plan.

### **EVALUATION REPORT**

Each public agency shall develop a written Evaluation Report for all initial evaluations and any reevaluations which required additional testing or resulted in a change in eligibility.

The evaluation report must include a:

- (1) Statement of whether the student has a specific disability as defined in Regulation III of this document;
- (2) Synthesis of information from the evaluation that demonstrates consideration was given to all areas of functioning;
- (3) Basis for making the determination of eligibility for a disability including the disability’s adverse effect on the student’s education and the student’s need for specialized instruction;
- (4) Statement that the disability is not a result of lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including the essential components of comprehensive literacy instruction (as defined in section 2221(b)(1) of the ESEA) or lack of appropriate instruction in math or Limited English proficiency; and,
- (5) List of the individuals who were in attendance at the eligibility determination meeting and their role.

The Evaluation Report for students identified as Specific Learning Disabled must include items above and the following:

- (1) Relevant behavior, if any, noted during the observation of the student and the relationship of that behavior to academic functioning;
- (2) Educationally relevant medical findings, if any;

- (3) Whether the student:
- a. Does not achieve adequately for the student's age or to meet state approved grade-level standards, and
  - b. Does not make sufficient progress to meet age or state approved grade-level standards, or
  - c. Exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to age, state approved grade-level standards, or intellectual development;
- (4) The determination of the group concerning the effects of a visual, hearing, or motor disability; intellectual disability; emotional disturbance; cultural factors; environmental or economic disadvantage; or Limited English proficiency on the student's achievement level;
- (5) If the student has participated in a process that assesses the student's response to scientific, research-based intervention:
- a. The instructional strategies used,
  - b. The student-centered data collected,
  - c. Documentation that the student's parents were notified about:
    - The state's policies regarding the amount and nature of student performance data that would be collected,
    - The general education services that would be provided,
    - The strategies for increasing the student's rate of learning, and
    - the parents right to request an evaluation; and,
- (6) Each team member shall certify in writing whether the report reflects his/her conclusion; if it does not reflect his/her conclusion, the team member must submit a separate statement presenting his/her conclusions.

### **DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR YOUNG CHILDREN AGES 3 THROUGH 5**

Public agencies shall, through approved public agency policy, determine eligibility for children ages three (3) through five (5) (not kindergarten age eligible) using one of the following methods:

- (1) Identify all children using any of the disability categories except that of Young Child with a Developmental Delay (YCDD) and Language Impairment; or,
- (2) Identify all children as eligible using only the category of Young Child with a Developmental Delay (YCDD); or,
- (3) Identify all children as eligible using any of the disability categories, other than Language Impairment, including that of Young Child with a Developmental Delay (YCDD).

For a child with a disability who becomes Kindergarten age eligible (age five (5) before August 1), public agencies shall, through approved public agency policy, choose one of the following methods to determine continuing eligibility for special education:

- (1) If the public agency selected methods (2) or (3) for identifying children ages three (3) through five (5) (not kindergarten age eligible) described above, they may either:
  - a. Continue a child as eligible under the Young Child with a Developmental Delay (YCDD) or
  - b. Apply any disability category other than Young Child with a Developmental Delay (YCDD).
- (2) If the public agency selected method (1) above for identifying children ages three (3) through five (5) (not kindergarten age eligible) described, all children will continue to be identified as eligible using any disability category other than Young Child with a Developmental Delay (YCDD).
- (3) Students who are kindergarten age eligible (age five (5) before August 1) and have not been identified as eligible for special education in prior years, must meet criteria of any disability category other than Young Child with a Developmental Delay (YCDD).
- (4) Students who are first grade age eligible (age six (6) before August 1) must meet criteria of any disability category other than Young Child with a Developmental Delay (YCDD).

## **D. ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES**

### **DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES (34 CFR 300.307)**

The state has adopted criteria for determining whether a student has a specific learning disability. The criteria adopted by the state does not require the use of a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement for determining whether a student has a specific learning disability and permits the use of a process based on the student's response to scientific, research based intervention.

Public agencies in the state must use the state criteria in determining whether a student has a specific learning disability.

### **ADDITIONAL GROUP MEMBERS 34 CFR 300.308**

The determination of whether a student suspected of having a specific learning disability is a student with a disability must be made by the student's parents and a team of qualified professionals that must include:

- (1) The student's regular teacher or, if the student does not have a regular teacher, a regular classroom teacher qualified to teach a student of his or her age; for a student of less than

school age, an individual qualified by the Department to teach a student of his or her age, and

- (2) At least one person qualified to conduct individual diagnostic examinations of students, such as a school psychologist, speech-language pathologist, or remedial reading teacher.

### **EXTENSION OF EVALUATION TIMELINES WHEN DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY FOR SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES**

The public agency must promptly request parental consent to evaluate the student to determine if the student needs special education and related services and must adhere to the evaluation timelines, unless extended by mutual written agreement of the student's parents and the evaluation professionals;

- (1) If prior to a referral, a student has not made adequate progress after an appropriate period of time when provided instruction, **as described in the preceding section for Specific Learning Disability (4) a. and b.**, and
- (2) Whenever a student is referred for an evaluation.

### **OBSERVATION (34 CFR 300.310)**

The public agency must ensure that the student is observed in the student's learning environment (including the regular classroom setting) to document the student's academic performance and behavior in the areas of difficulty.

The group determining whether a student has a specific learning disability must decide to:

- (1) Use information from an observation in routine classroom instruction and monitoring of the student's performance that was done before the student was referred for an evaluation, or
- (2) Have at least one member of the group conduct an observation of the student's academic performance in the regular classroom after the student has been referred for an evaluation and parental consent is obtained.

In the case of a student of less than school age, a team member shall observe the student in an environment appropriate for a student of that age.

Listed below are the statutes of the state of Missouri which provide the legal basis and source for Missouri's policy.

- (1) Section 162.700 RSMo Evaluations
- (2) Section 162.700(2), RSMo Eligibility determination
- (3) Section 162.945, RSMo-Notice of evaluation results

**Proposed changes to the Missouri  
State Regulations Implementing Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

**Regulation III – Identification and Evaluation**

NOTE: This chart only shows substantive changes being proposed to the Part B State Regulations implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Other changes of a non-substantive nature, such as terminology or wording changes, spelling/punctuation/grammar corrections, etc. are not shown here. For a complete picture of all changes being proposed, the reader is directed to the regulatory document itself.

Regulation	Page	Current Regulation	Proposed Regulation	Rationale for Change
III	21	Department of Health and Human Services assists in identification and location of infants, toddlers, and students with suspected disabilities through its Title V and Head Injury Programs. Referrals are made to local public agencies and to the Part C system.	Department of Health and <del>Human</del> <b>Senior</b> Services assists in identification and location of infants, toddlers, and students with suspected disabilities through its Title V and Head Injury Programs. Referrals are made to local public agencies and to the Part C system.	Change to current name for the state agency: Department of Health and Senior Services.
III	27	<p><u>Other Health Impairment</u>: Other Health Impairment means having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment that is due to chronic or acute health problems, such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette Syndrome, and adversely affects a student’s educational performance.</p> <p>A student displays a Health Impairment when:</p> <p>(1) A health impairment has been diagnosed by a licensed physician, licensed psychologist, licensed professional counselor, licensed clinical social worker, or school psychologist, and</p>	<p><u>Other Health Impairment</u>: Other Health Impairment means having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment that is due to chronic or acute health problems, such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette Syndrome, and adversely affects a student’s educational performance.</p> <p>A student displays a Health Impairment when:</p> <p>(1) A health impairment has been diagnosed by a licensed physician, <b>licensed assistant physician, Missouri State Board of Nursing recognized advanced practice registered nurse</b>, licensed psychologist, licensed professional counselor, licensed clinical social worker, or school psychologist, and</p>	Add two additional titles to the list of qualified personnel who can evaluate and identify a health impairment. Both physician assistants and nurse practitioners are authorized to evaluate and treat patients, including prescribing medications, under the direct supervision of a licensed medical doctor. Accepting diagnostic reports from physician assistants and nurse practitioners will make it easier for parents and school staff to get access to medical personnel qualified to evaluate their children.

Regulation	Page	Current Regulation	Proposed Regulation	Rationale
III	42	<p><u>EXTENSION OF EVALUATION TIMELINES WHEN DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY FOR SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES</u></p> <p>The public agency must promptly request parental consent to evaluate the student to determine if the student needs special education and related services and must adhere to the evaluation timelines, unless extended by mutual written agreement of the student’s parents and the evaluation professionals, if prior to a referral, a student has not made adequate progress after an appropriate period of time when provided instruction and whenever a student is referred for an evaluation.</p>	<p><u>EXTENSION OF EVALUATION TIMELINES WHEN DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY FOR SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES</u></p> <p>The public agency must promptly request parental consent to evaluate the student to determine if the student needs special education and related services and must adhere to the evaluation timelines, unless extended by mutual written agreement of the student’s parents and the evaluation professionals;</p> <p>(1) <del>if</del> <b>if</b> prior to a referral, a student has not made adequate progress after an appropriate period of time when provided instruction, <b>as described in the preceding section for <u>Specific Learning Disability</u> (4) a. and b.,</b> and</p> <p>(2) <del>wh</del> <b>W</b>henever a student is referred for an evaluation.</p>	<p>Change to more closely reflect the formatting in 34 CFR 300.309(c)(1) and CFR 300.309(c)(2).</p>



## **REGULATION IV: FAPE/IEP/LRE**

### **A. FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION**

It is the policy of the state of Missouri that all children/students with disabilities ages three (3) to twenty-one (21) years, as prescribed by Missouri statutes and residing in the state, have a right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE), including students with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school.

The term "students with disabilities" as used in this document includes all students defined as "handicapped" and "severely handicapped" in accordance with 162.675(1) and (3) RSMo and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Definitions of each disabling condition are found in this document.

A free appropriate public education (FAPE) is defined to include regular and special education and related services which:

- (1) Are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge to the parent;
- (2) Meet the educational standards of the State Education Agency pertaining to the education of students with disabilities;
- (3) Includes preschool, elementary school, and secondary school education; and,
- (4) Are provided in conformity with the individualized education program (IEP).

### **FAPE FOR CHILDREN/STUDENTS BEGINS AT AGE THREE (3)**

The state of Missouri ensures that FAPE is available to each eligible child/student residing in the state no later than the child's third birthday. An IEP must be in effect by the child's third birth date. If the child's third birth date occurs during the summer, the child's IEP Team shall determine the date when the services under the IEP will begin. This State Plan and the Part C State Plan outline procedures that both the Part B and Part C systems must complete to assure a smooth transition for children eligible for the Part C program and eligible for Part B services to receive services at age three (3).

### **FAPE FOR STUDENTS SUSPENDED OR EXPELLED FROM SCHOOL**

A public agency is not required to provide services to a student with a disability who has been removed from his or her current placement for ten (10) school days or less in that school year if services are not provided to a student without disabilities who has been similarly removed.

In the case of a student with a disability who has been removed from the provision of special education and related services, including maintaining the student's special education placement,

for more than ten (10) school days in a school year the public agency, for the remainder of the removals must:

- (1) Provide services to the extent necessary to enable the student to continue to progress in the general curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward achieving the goals in the student's IEP if the removal is:
  - a. Under the school personnel's authority to remove for not more than ten (10) consecutive school days as long as that removal does not constitute a change of placement, or
  - b. For behavior that is not a manifestation of the student's disability and results in a disciplinary change of placement.

### **STUDENTS ADVANCING FROM GRADE TO GRADE**

The state of Missouri ensures that FAPE is available to any individual student with a disability who needs special education and related services, even though the student has not failed or been retained in a course or grade, and is advancing from grade to grade. The determination that such a student is eligible for services must be made on an individual basis by the group of individuals within the student's public agency that is responsible for making those determinations.

### **EXCEPTIONS TO FAPE**

Public agencies in Missouri are not required to provide FAPE to the following students and youth:

- (1) Youth with disabilities who reach the age of twenty-one (21).
- (2) Students who have graduated from high school with a regular high school diploma. The term, regular high school diploma does not include an alternative degree that is not fully aligned with the state's academic standards, such as a certificate of attendance or a High School Equivalency (HSE) certificate. Graduation from high school with a regular high school diploma constitutes a change in placement, requiring prior written notice in accordance with 34 CFR 300.503.
- (3) Students whose parent has refused to consent to the receipt of special education and related services or has failed to respond to a request to provide such consent.
- (4) Parentally placed private school students with disabilities.
- (5) Students with disabilities who receive early intervention services under Part C of the Act.

### **CONTINUING REQUIREMENT FOR FAPE**

Students who have participated in a graduation ceremony or who have obtained a High School Equivalency (HSE) certificate, but have not been awarded a regular high school diploma, continue to be eligible to receive FAPE if they are under twenty-one (21) years of age.

## **AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR FAPE**

The public agency or special school district in which a student with a disability resides is responsible for implementation of FAPE. Students with disabilities or severe disabilities who are admitted to programs and facilities of the Department of Mental Health or whose domicile is in one public agency, but actually reside in another public agency as a result of a placement arranged by or approved by the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Social Services, or a court of competent jurisdiction shall be provided special education and related services in the public agency where the student actually resides.

The Department of Mental Health, the Department of Social Services, or a court of competent jurisdiction may provide or procure special education and related services for such students.

The Department of Mental Health shall provide special education and related services for students with disabilities, ages three (3) to twenty-one (21), whose domicile is in one public agency, but actually reside in another public agency if said student has been determined by the Department of Mental Health to be dangerous to himself/herself or others or is determined to be medically fragile.

The Department of Corrections shall provide special education and related services to those youth who are determined eligible for special education services at the time of their admittance to the correctional system.

The following requirements do not apply to those students with disabilities who are convicted as adults under state law and incarcerated in adult prisons:

- (1) The requirement to participate in state and public agency assessments, and
- (2) The requirement relating to transition planning and transition services if their eligibility for Part B services will end because of their age before they will be eligible to be released from prison based on consideration of their sentence and eligibility for early release.

The IEP Team of a student with a disability, who is convicted as an adult under state law and incarcerated in an adult prison, may modify the student's IEP or placement if the Department of Corrections has demonstrated a bona fide security or compelling penological interest that cannot otherwise be accommodated. The requirements relating to LRE do not apply.

The Department of Social Services, Division of Youth Services (DYS) shall provide special education and related services or arrange for such services with other agencies and schools where DYS releases such students. Students and youth with disabilities who have been assigned to programs by a court and meet eligibility will continue to receive services by said program.

Listed below are the statutes of the state of Missouri which provide the legal basis and source Missouri's policy relating to FAPE.

- (1) Section 162.670, RSMo
- (2) Section 162.675, RSMo

- (3) Section 162.680, RSMo
- (4) Section 217.355(4), RSMo
- (5) Section 162.700(1), RSMo
- (6) Section 219.021, RSMo
- (7) Article IV, Section 37(a), Missouri Constitution

## **B. METHODS OF ENSURING SERVICES (34 CFR 300.154)**

### **ESTABLISHING RESPONSIBILITY FOR SERVICES**

The Assistant Commissioner of Special Education for DESE ensures that an interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination is in effect between each noneducational public agency and DESE, in order to ensure that all services that are needed to ensure FAPE are provided, including the provision of these services during the pendency of any interagency dispute. The agreement or mechanism must include the following:

- (1) Agency Financial Responsibility: An identification of or a method for defining the financial responsibility of each agency for providing services to ensure FAPE to students with disabilities. The financial responsibility of each noneducational public agency, including the state Medicaid agency and other public insurers of students with disabilities, must precede the financial responsibility of the public agency (or the state agency responsible for developing the student's IEP);
- (2) Conditions and Terms of Reimbursement: The conditions, terms, and procedures under which the responsible agency must be reimbursed by other agencies;
- (3) Interagency Disputes: Procedures for resolving interagency disputes (including procedures under which the responsible public agency may initiate proceedings) under the agreement or other mechanism to secure reimbursement from other agencies or otherwise implement the provisions of the agreement or mechanism; and,
- (4) Coordination of Services Procedures: Policies and procedures for agencies to determine and identify the interagency coordination responsibilities of each agency to promote the coordination and timely and appropriate delivery of services.

### **OBLIGATION OF NONEDUCATIONAL PUBLIC AGENCIES**

If any public agency other than an educational agency is otherwise obligated under federal or state law, or assigned responsibility under state policy to provide or pay for any services that are also considered special education or related services (such as, but not limited to, services described in 34 CFR 300.6 relating to assistive technology devices, 34 CFR 300.5 relating to assistive technology services, 34 CFR 300.34 relating to related services, 34 CFR 300.42 relating to supplementary aids and services, and 34 CFR 300.43 relating to transition services) that are necessary for ensuring FAPE to students with disabilities within the state, the public agency shall fulfill that obligation or responsibility, either directly or through contract or other arrangement.

A noneducational public agency may not disqualify an eligible service for Medicaid reimbursement because that service is provided in a school context. If a public agency other than an educational agency fails to provide or pay for the special education and related services, the public agency (or state agency responsible for developing the student's IEP) shall provide or pay for these services to the student in a timely manner. The public agency or state agency may then claim reimbursement for the services from the noneducational public agency that failed to provide or pay for these services and that agency shall reimburse in accordance with the terms of the interagency agreement or other mechanism and the conditions and terms of reimbursement.

## **C. INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM**

### **DEFINITION OF IEP (34 CFR 300.320)**

The term Individualized Education Program or IEP means a written statement for each student with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in a meeting and must include a:

- (1) Statement of the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, including how the student's disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum (i.e., the same curriculum as for nondisabled students), or for preschool children, as appropriate, how the disability affects the child's participation in appropriate activities, and for students with disabilities who take alternative assessments aligned to alternative achievement standards, a description of benchmarks or short-term objectives;
- (2) Statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals designed to meet the student's needs that result from the student's disability to enable the student to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum (i.e., the same curriculum as for nondisabled students), or for preschool children, as appropriate, to participate in appropriate activities, and meeting each of the child's other educational needs that result from the child's disability. Measurable goals are specific to a particular skill or behavior to be achieved, measurable/quantifiable, attainable, results oriented, time-bound, and can reasonably be accomplished within the duration of the IEP. For students with disabilities who take alternative assessments aligned to alternate achievement standards, a description of benchmarks or short-term objectives;
- (3) Statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services, based on peer reviewed research to the extent practicable to be provided to the student or on behalf of the student, and a statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided to enable the student to:
  - a. Advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals;
  - b. Be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum;
  - c. Participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities; and,

- d. Be educated and participate with other student with disabilities and nondisabled student in the activities described in this paragraph.

This statement must specify whether the student needs transportation as a related service. If the IEP Team determines transportation is not necessary as a related service, the IEP document must reflect this.

- (4) Statement of the student's participation in physical education;
- (5) Explanation of the extent, if any, to which the student will not participate with nondisabled student in the regular class and in activities described in letter C above;
- (6) Statement of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the student on state and district-wide assessments. If the IEP Team determines that the student shall take an alternative assessment on a particular state or district-wide assessment of student achievement, a statement of why the student cannot participate in the regular assessment, and why the particular alternate assessment is appropriate for the student;
- (7) Projected date for the beginning of the services and modifications described in letter C above, and the anticipated frequency, location, and duration of those services and modifications;
- (8) Description of how the student progress toward the annual goals described in letter B above will be measured, and when periodic reports on the progress the student is making toward meeting the annual goals (such as through the use of quarterly or other periodic reports, concurrent with the issuance of report cards) will be provided;
- (9) Listing of the individuals who attended the IEP meeting and their role (indicates attendance only not necessarily agreement with the IEP);
- (10) Statement indicating the student eligibility or ineligibility for extended school year services; and,
- (11) Statement of the placement considerations and decision.

As appropriate, the IEP must also include:

### **TRANSITION SERVICES**

- (1) Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student is sixteen (16), or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team, and updated annually thereafter appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills; the transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the student in reaching those goals, and

- (2) Beginning not later than one year before the student reaches age eighteen (18), a statement that the student has been informed of his or her rights under Part B of IDEA and that those rights will transfer to the student upon reaching the age of majority.

### **FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED**

- (1) The specific goals and objectives which specify the competencies in reading and writing Braille to be taught during the school year;
- (2) Means by which Braille will be implemented through integration with normal classroom activities;
- (3) The date on which Braille instruction will commence;
- (4) The level of competency in Braille reading and writing expected to be achieved by the end of the period covered in the IEP;
- (5) The duration of each session;
- (6) If the IEP Team determines that Braille instruction is not appropriate for a student with blindness or visual impairments, the basis for that determination shall be documented on the IEP; and,
- (7) That a referral to Rehabilitation Services for the Blind has been discussed and the decision of the parent regarding the referral.

### **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In developing each student's IEP, the IEP Team must consider:

- (1) The strengths of the student;
- (2) The concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their student;
- (3) The results of the initial or most recent evaluation of the student; and,
- (4) The academic, developmental, and functional needs of the student.

The IEP Team must also:

- (1) In the case of a student whose behavior impedes his or her learning or that of others, consider the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports and other strategies to address that behavior (for students for whom a Behavior Intervention Plan is developed, the Plan must be included in the IEP);

- (2) In the case of a student with limited English proficiency, consider the language needs of the student as those needs relate to the student's IEP;
- (3) Consider the communication needs of the student and, in the case of a student who is deaf or hard of hearing, consider the student's language and communication needs, opportunities for direct communications with peers and professional personnel in the student's language and communication mode, academic level, and full range of needs, including opportunities for direct instruction in the student's language and communication mode; and,
- (4) Consider whether the student requires assistive technology devices and services.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to require that additional information be included in a student's IEP beyond what is explicitly required in this section, and the IEP Team to include information under one component of a student's IEP that is already contained under another component of such IEP.

### **IEP TEAM (34 CFR 300.321)**

Public agencies shall ensure that the IEP Team for each student with a disability includes:

- (1) The parents of the student;
- (2) Not less than one regular education teacher of the student (if the student is or may be participating in the regular education environment);
- (3) Not less than one special education teacher of the student, or, where appropriate, not less than one special education provider of the student;
- (4) A representative of the public agency who is qualified to provide or supervise the provisions of specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities, is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum, and is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the public agency and able to commit the resources of the agency;
- (5) An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results, who may be a member of the team described in **§ 2** through **§ 4** of this paragraph;
- (6) At the discretion of the parent or the agency, and with parent written consent, if appropriate, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the student, including related services personnel as appropriate; and,
- (7) Whenever appropriate, the student with a disability.

### **TRANSITION SERVICES PARTICIPANTS**

The public agency shall invite a student with a disability of any age to attend his or her IEP meeting if a purpose of the meeting will be the consideration of the postsecondary goals for the



student and the transition services needed to assist the student in reaching those goals. If the student does not attend the IEP meeting, the public agency shall take other steps to ensure that the student's preferences and interests are considered.

To the extent appropriate, with the consent of the parents or a student who has reached the age of majority, in implementing transition services, the public agency also shall invite a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services.

### **DETERMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE**

The determination of knowledge or special expertise of any individual shall be made by the party (parents or public agency) who invited the individual to be a member of the IEP Team. The parents of a student who has reached the age of eighteen (18) may be invited to participate in the IEP Team meeting by either the student or the public agency.

### **DESIGNATING A PUBLIC AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE**

A public agency may designate another public agency member of the IEP Team to also serve as the agency representative (IEP Team participant D above) if they satisfy the criteria specified for that role.

### **IEP TEAM ATTENDANCE**

A member of the IEP Team shall not be required to attend an IEP meeting, in whole or in part, if the parent of a student with a disability and the public agency agree, in writing, that the attendance of such member is not necessary because the member's area of the curriculum or related services is not being modified or discussed in the meeting.

A member of the IEP Team may be excused from attending an IEP meeting, in whole or in part, when the meeting involves a modification to or discussion of the member's area of the curriculum or related services, if the parent, in writing, and the public agency consent to the excusal, and the member submits, in writing to the parent and the IEP Team, input into the development of the IEP prior to the meeting.

### **INITIAL IEP TEAM MEETING FOR A CHILD UNDER PART C**

In the case of a child who was previously served under Part C (First Steps), an invitation to the initial IEP Team meeting must, at the request of the parent, be sent to the Part C service coordinator or other representative of the Part C system to assist with the smooth transition of services.

### **PARENT PARTICIPATION (34 CFR 300. 322)**

Each public agency shall take steps to ensure that one or both of the parents of a student with a disability are present at each IEP meeting or are afforded the opportunity to participate, including

notifying the parents of the meeting early enough to ensure they will have an opportunity to attend and scheduling the meeting at a mutually agreed on time and place. The participants who will be invited to attend on behalf of the public agency are indicated by specific position(s) within the agency and, if possible, should include the name.

### **INFORMATION PROVIDED TO PARENTS**

The notice to parents must indicate the purpose, time, and location of the meeting; who will be in attendance; and inform the parent that the parent and the public agency can invite individuals to the meeting that they believe have knowledge or special expertise regarding their student. The determination as to whether an individual has knowledge or special expertise is made by the parent or public agency who invited the individual to be a member of the IEP Team. In the case of an initial IEP Team meeting for a student who has participated in Part C (First Steps), the notice must inform the parent, that at their request, an invitation to the initial IEP meeting shall be sent to the Part C service coordinator or other representatives of the Part C system.

For a student with a disability beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student is sixteen (16) or younger, if determined appropriate by the IEP Team, and annually thereafter, the notice must indicate:

- (1) That a purpose of the meeting is the consideration of the postsecondary goals and transition services for the student;
- (2) That the agency will invite the student; and,
- (3) Identify any other agency that will be invited to send a representative.

### **OTHER MEASURES TO ENSURE PARENT PARTICIPATION**

If neither parent can attend, the public agency shall use other methods to ensure parent participation, including ~~individual~~ or conference telephone calls, **or video conferences**, consistent with 34 CFR 300.328.

### **CONDUCTING AN IEP MEETING WITHOUT A PARENT IN ATTENDANCE**

A meeting may be conducted without a parent in attendance if the public agency is unable to convince the parents that they should attend. In this case, the public agency must have a record of at least two (2) separate attempts to arrange a mutually agreed on time and place, such as:

- (1) Detailed records of telephone calls made or attempted and the results of those calls;
- (2) Copies of correspondence sent to the parents and any responses received; or,
- (3) Detailed records of visits made to the parent's home or place of employment and the results of those visits.

The second attempt to schedule a meeting with the parent must be a direct contact. A direct contact includes regular or certified mail, phone call, or in person contact.

### **USE OF INTERPRETERS OR OTHER ACTION**

The public agency shall take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the parent understands the proceedings of the IEP meeting, including arranging for an interpreter for parents who are deaf or whose native language is other than English.

### **PARENT COPY OF THE IEP**

The public agency shall provide the parent a copy of the student's IEP at no cost to the parent.

### **WHEN IEPS MUST BE IN EFFECT (34 CFR 300.323)**

At the beginning of the school year, each public agency shall have an IEP in effect for each student with a disability within its jurisdiction who has been determined eligible to receive services under IDEA, Part B.

Each public agency shall ensure that a meeting to develop an IEP is conducted within thirty (30) days of a determination that the student needs special education and related services and that the special education and related services are made available to the student in accordance with the IEP as soon as possible following the IEP meeting.

Each public agency must ensure that:

- (1) The student's IEP is accessible to each regular education teacher, special education teacher, related service provider, and other service provider who is responsible for its implementation;
- (2) Each teacher and provider are informed of his or her specific responsibilities related to implementing the student's IEP; and,
- (3) The specific accommodations, modifications, and supports that must be provided for the student in accordance with the IEP.

### **IN-STATE TRANSFERS**

In the case of a student with a disability who transfers public agencies within the same school year, who enrolls in a new public agency, and who had an IEP that was in effect in Missouri, the public agency shall, without delay, provide such student with a free appropriate public education according to the procedures outlined below.

For students with known disabilities who enroll and have a copy of a current evaluation report and IEP the public agency shall place the student, without delay, in the appropriate special education placement and provide FAPE to the student including services comparable to those listed in the

IEP until the public agency either accepts the prior IEP or develops and implements a new appropriate IEP.

If the public agency does not agree with the current evaluation report, it must initiate a reevaluation as described in this State Plan. During the time that the reevaluation is being conducted, the agency shall implement the IEP, as written, from the sending agency or ~~develop an IEP~~ **provide comparable services** until the reevaluation is complete.

For students with suspected disabilities who enroll but do not have copies of the evaluation report and/or IEP, the public agency shall seek information to confirm special education services. Without delay, agency officials shall conduct interviews with officials of the public agency in which the student was enrolled, the student's parent/legal guardian, and, when appropriate, the student and provide such services as can be determined from interviews.

If no evaluation report is obtained, the public agency shall refer the student for comprehensive evaluation and review/revise the IEP, if determined necessary, at the completion of the evaluation.

### **OUT OF STATE TRANSFERS**

For students who transfer from another state, and had an IEP that was in effect in that state, to a Missouri public agency and enroll in a new school within the same school year, the Missouri public agency, in consultation with the parents, must provide the student with FAPE (including services comparable to those described in the student's IEP from the previous public agency) until the new public agency:

- (1) Conducts an initial evaluation, if determined necessary by the new public agency, and
- (2) Develops, adopts, and implements a new IEP (if appropriate).
- (3) When a student's records are not available to the new public agency, the new public agency shall:
  - a. Place the student in regular education, and
  - b. Initiate an initial evaluation, and
  - c. If the student is found eligible, develop and implement an IEP.

### **TRANSMITTAL OF RECORDS**

To facilitate the transition for a student entering a school from another public agency in Missouri or from an out-of-state school, the new school in which the student enrolls shall take reasonable steps to promptly obtain the student's records, including the IEP and supporting documents and any other records relating to the provision of special education or related services to the student, from the previous school in which the student was enrolled and the previous school in which the student was enrolled shall take reasonable steps to promptly respond to such request from the new school.

## **REQUIREMENT FOR REGULAR EDUCATION TEACHER**

The regular education teacher of a student with a disability, as a member of the IEP Team, must, to the extent appropriate, participate in the development, review, and revision of the student's IEP, including the determination of appropriate positive behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies for the student and supplementary aids and services, program modifications, or supports for school personnel that will be provided for the student, consistent with content of the IEP.

## **AMENDING OR MODIFYING AN IEP WITHOUT A MEETING**

In making changes to a student's IEP after the annual IEP Team meeting for a school year, the parent of a student with a disability and the public agency may agree not to convene an IEP Team meeting for the purposes of making such changes, and instead may develop a written document to amend or modify the student's current IEP. If changes are made to the student's IEP, the public agency must ensure that the student's IEP Team is informed of those changes.

## **CONSOLIDATION OF IEP TEAM MEETINGS**

To the extent possible, the public agency shall encourage the consolidation of reevaluation meetings for the student and other IEP Team meetings for the student.

## **IEP AMENDMENTS**

Changes to the IEP may be made either by the entire IEP Team at an IEP meeting or by mutual agreement of the parent and public agency (as described above) by amending the IEP rather than by redrafting the entire IEP. Upon request, a parent shall be provided with a revised copy of the IEP with the amendments incorporated.

## **REVIEW AND REVISION OF IEPS**

Each public agency shall ensure that the IEP Team reviews the student's IEP periodically, but not less than annually, to determine whether the annual goals for the student are being achieved. The IEP Team must also review and, as appropriate, revise the IEP to address:

- (1) Any lack of expected progress toward the annual goals and in the general education curriculum, if appropriate;
- (2) The results of any reevaluation;
- (3) Information about the student provided to or by the parents;
- (4) The student's anticipated needs; or,
- (5) Other matters.

### **FAILURE TO MEET TRANSITION OBJECTIVES (34 CFR 300.324)**

If a participating agency, other than the public agency, fails to provide the transition services described in the IEP, the public agency shall reconvene the IEP Team to identify alternative strategies to meet the transition objectives for the student set out in the IEP.

Nothing relieves any participating agency, including a state vocational rehabilitation agency, of the responsibility to provide or pay for any transition service that the agency would otherwise provide to students with disabilities who meet the eligibility criteria of that agency.

### **ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF MEETING PARTICIPATION (34 CFR 300.328)**

When conducting IEP Team meetings, the parent of a student with a disability and a public agency may agree to use alternative means of meeting participation such as video conferences and conference calls.

## **D. LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE)**

### **GENERAL LRE REQUIREMENTS (34 CFR 300.114)**

Each public agency shall ensure that to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities, including students in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with students who are nondisabled, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of students from the general educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in general education classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

### **CONTINUUM OF ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENTS (34 CFR 300.115)**

Each public agency shall ensure that a continuum of alternative placements is available to meet the needs of children/students ages three (3) to twenty-one (21) with disabilities for special education and related services. The continuum shall include instruction in the regular classes (general education environments), special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions. Each public agency must make provision for supplementary services (such as resource room or itinerant instruction) to be provided in conjunction with general class placement. A student does not have to fail in the less restrictive options on the continuum before the student is placed in a setting that is appropriate to his or her needs.

### **PLACEMENTS (34 CFR 300.116 AND 300.327)**

In determining the educational placement of a student with a disability, including a preschool student with a disability, each public agency shall ensure that the placement decision is made by the IEP Team that is knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation data, and the placement options, and is made in conformity with LRE provisions. The student's placement is

determined at least annually, is based on the student's IEP, and is as close as possible to the student's home.

Unless the IEP of a student with a disability requires some other arrangement, the student is educated in the school that he or she would attend if nondisabled. In selecting the LRE, consideration is given to any potential harmful effect on the student or on the quality of services that he or she needs. A student with a disability is not removed from education in age-appropriate regular classrooms solely because of needed modifications in the general curriculum.

Each year the public agency, through the IEP process, shall review/revise a student's IEP and subsequently make a placement decision for each student with a disability served by the public agency. The public agency must reach the placement decision from the assumption that a student with a disability should be educated with peers who do not have a disability unless the needs of the student with a disability require other arrangements. The public agency must be able to justify the placement decision in accordance with a two-part inquiry:

- (1) Whether education in the regular classroom, with the use of supplementary aids and services, can be achieved satisfactorily; if not, then,
- (2) Whether the student has been integrated to the maximum extent appropriate.

The following factors shall be considered as a part of the two-part inquiry:

- (1) The curriculum and goals of the regular education class (i.e., factors which document a need for specially designed materials, supplies, or equipment or significant modifications to the regular curriculum which would have an adverse affect on the educational program for other students in the class);
- (2) The sufficiency of the public agency's efforts to accommodate the student with a disability in the regular class (i.e., description of modifications which have been attempted/resources which have been committed and the student centered results which were observed or a description of the modifications considered but rejected and the basis for the rejection);
- (3) The degree to which the student with a disability will receive educational benefit from regular education (i.e., consideration of the potential positive effects with respect to cognitive, academic, physical, social, or other areas of development);
- (4) The effect the presence of a student with a disability may have on the regular classroom environment and on the education that the other students are receiving (i.e., description of potential harmful effects for the student with a disability or disruptive effects for students without disabilities); and,
- (5) The nature and severity of the student's disability (i.e., factors which support a need for alternative instruction which cannot be achieved in the regular class such as extreme

distractibility, diverse learning styles, and inability to engage appropriately with other students in academic or social interactions).

### **NONACADEMIC SETTINGS (34 CFR 300.117)**

Each public agency shall ensure that each student with a disability participates in nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities of the public agency with nondisabled students in the extracurricular services and activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of that student. The public agency must ensure that each student with a disability has the supplementary aids and services determined by the student's IEP Team to be appropriate and necessary for the student to participate in nonacademic settings. Such services and activities may include meals, recess periods, counseling services, athletics, transportation, health services, recreational activities, special interest groups or clubs sponsored by the public agency, referrals to agencies which provide assistance to individuals with disabilities, employment of students including both employment by the public agency, and assistance in making outside employment available.

### **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES (34 CFR 300.119)**

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will conduct the following activities to ensure that teachers and administrators in all public agencies are fully informed about their responsibilities for implementing the least restrictive environment policy and are provided with technical assistance and training necessary to assist them in this effort:

- (1) Distribution of state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to special education;
- (2) Monitoring of public agencies to determine compliance with the least restrictive environment provisions;
- (3) Training/workshops for public agency personnel provided prior to and following monitoring activities regarding least restrictive environment provisions;
- (4) Technical assistance as may be requested by public agencies relative to the implementation of LRE provisions; and,
- (5) Collaboration with the State Parent Information and Training Center, as requested.

### **MONITORING ACTIVITIES (34 CFR 300.120)**

DESE monitors each public agency, including the requirements for the least restrictive environment through the following procedures:

- (1) An annual review of each public agency's count of students with disabilities and placement data;
- (2) Investigation of any child complaint filed;



- (3) Periodic monitoring of public agencies to determine appropriate implementation of policies and procedures; and,
- (4) Review, approval, and subsequent verification of any corrective actions required of a public agency with respect to violations of least restrictive environment requirements.

The department will analyze data collected relative to implementation of the LRE requirement at each LEA/public agency. If there is evidence that the LEA/public agency makes placements that are inconsistent with 34 CFR 300.114, the department:

- (1) Shall review the LEA/public agency's justification for its actions, and
- (2) Shall assist in planning and implementing any necessary corrective action.

Listed below are the statutes of the state of Missouri which provide a legal basis and source for Missouri's policy for the least restrictive environment:

- (1) Section 162.680, RSMo
- (2) Section 167.126, RSMo

## **E. TRANSITION OF CHILDREN FROM PART C SERVICES TO PART B SERVICES 34 CFR 300.124**

The state of Missouri has developed policies and procedures to ensure a smooth and effective transition from Part C (First Steps) services to Part B (Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)) services at age three for children with disabilities.

### **NOTIFICATION TO LEA FROM PART C**

In Missouri, all children eligible for the Part C program are considered to be potentially eligible for Part B services. The Part C program notifies the LEA in which the child resides in accordance with the Part C State Plan.

Notification includes the following directory information: child's name and birth date and parent's name, address, and telephone number. When the LEA receives complete directory information, this constitutes a referral to Part B.

The Part C program has an opt out policy that allows parents to object to notification to the LEA. If a parent first opts out of notification to the LEA and subsequently requests notification to the LEA, there may be a gap in services if the decision was made less than 90 days from the child's third birthday.

## **TRANSITION CONFERENCE WITH LEA**

The Part C program requires that a transition conference with the LEA be held in accordance with the Part C State Plan. If invited, LEA personnel must participate in the meeting regardless of the time of year in which the meeting occurs. LEA personnel may participate in the meeting through a variety of methods, including in person, phone conference, web conference etc.

## **EVALUATION**

If the LEA suspects the child has a disability, an evaluation is conducted, in accordance with the procedures and timelines in the Part B State Plan, to determine if the child is eligible for Part B services.

## **TIMELINES FOR IEP DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION**

All children found eligible for Part C and who are also found eligible for Part B, including Part C Extension children described below must have an IEP developed by the child's third birthday.

The only exceptions to this requirement are (1) if the child was referred to Part C less than 90 days before the child's third birthday; (2) if the parent does not give parental consent to evaluate the child, which delays an evaluation by the public agency and subsequent development of an IEP; or (3) if the parent first opts out of notification to the LEA and subsequently requests notification to the LEA less than 90 days from the child's third birthday, which delays an evaluation by the public agency and subsequent development of an IEP.

An invitation to the initial IEP team meeting must, at the request of the parent, be sent to the Part C service coordinator or other representative of the Part C system to assist with the smooth transition for a child who previously received Part C services.

An IEP is developed in accordance with the Part B State Plan. The IEP team must consider the content of the child's Part C Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) when developing the IEP.

The obligation to make a free appropriate public education (FAPE) available to each Part C child who is eligible for ECSE begins on the child's third birthday, unless the parent of a child with a summer third birthday chooses Part C Extension instead of FAPE at age three.

## **PART C EXTENSION FOR CHILDREN WITH SUMMER THIRD BIRTHDAYS**

Parents of a child determined eligible for both Part C and Part B, and who has a summer third birthday in accordance with the Part C State Plan, may choose to: (1) continue Part C services until the initiation of the local public agency's school year following the child's third birthday, or (2) transition to Part B to receive FAPE on the child's third birthday.

Parents who choose to continue Part C services have the right, at any time, for their child with a summer third birthday to receive Part B services instead of Part C services. However, the LEA is

not required to provide FAPE under Part B for the period of time a child is receiving services through Part C Extension.

Parents who choose the option to transition to Part B have the right for their child with a summer third birthday to receive FAPE through an IEP upon the child's third birthday. Parents who choose Part B services cannot later choose to return to Part C services once consent for Part B services is obtained and the child has turned three.

## **F. FAILURE TO PROVIDE FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION (FAPE)**

The hearing procedure described in the General Provisions Section will be used when a public agency is determined to be unwilling or unable to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

### **FAILURE TO PROVIDE FAPE**

DESE may withhold, in part or whole, and may seek to recover, in part or whole, federal special education funds when a public agency is determined to be either unwilling or unable to provide FAPE. Such determination will be based on the agency's refusal or failure to comply with a corrective action or hearing decision as ordered by DESE in a:

- (1) Monitoring report stemming from a monitoring for compliance with IDEA, Part B; or,
- (2) Child complaint decision in which the agency has been found out of compliance; or,
- (3) Due process hearing decision of a state level hearing.

In each of the above, corrective actions are expected to be achieved within a given timeline, or in the case of a due process decision, implementation is expected to be achieved within a given timeline. Such timelines in the case of a monitoring report or a child complaint decision may be extended by DESE. However, if DESE determines it is unreasonable to further extend, or if DESE attempted to provide technical assistance to the agency to accomplish the corrective action to no avail, DESE may determine the agency is unable or unwilling to provide FAPE.

DESE will determine the amount of funding to be withheld or recovered on a case-by-case basis. DESE will determine the amount deemed necessary to enforce the decisions rendered in the actions described above. DESE will notify the public agency in writing of the specific action it has failed to correct, the source and amount of funds that will be withheld or recovered, and the date that the withholding or recovery of funds will begin.

The hearing procedure described in this State Plan, for LEA eligibility, is incorporated herein by reference.

**Proposed changes to the Missouri  
State Regulations Implementing Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

**Regulation IV – FAPE/LRE/IEP**

NOTE: This chart only shows substantive changes being proposed to the Part B State Regulations implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Other changes of a non-substantive nature, such as terminology or wording changes, spelling/punctuation/grammar corrections, etc. are not shown here. For a complete picture of all changes being proposed, the reader is directed to the regulatory document itself.

Regulation	Page	Current Regulation	Proposed Regulation	Rationale
IV	50	<p>IEP TEAM (34 CFR 300.321)Public agencies shall ensure that the IEP Team f or each student with a disability includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The parents of the student;</li> <li>(2) Not less than one regular education teacher of the student (if the student is or may be participating in the regular education environment);</li> <li>(3) Not less than one special education teacher of the student, or, where appropriate, not less than one special education provider of the student;</li> <li>(4) A representative of the public agency who is qualified to provide or supervise the provisions of specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities, is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum, and is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the public agency and able to commit the resources of the agency;</li> <li>(5) An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results, who may be a member of the team described in B through D of this paragraph;</li> </ol>	<p>IEP TEAM (34 CFR 300.321)Public agencies shall ensure that the IEP Team f or each student with a disability includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The parents of the student;</li> <li>(2) Not less than one regular education teacher of the student (if the student is or may be participating in the regular education environment);</li> <li>(3) Not less than one special education teacher of the student, or, where appropriate, not less than one special education provider of the student;</li> <li>(4) A representative of the public agency who is qualified to provide or supervise the provisions of specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities, is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum, and is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the public agency and able to commit the resources of the agency;</li> <li>(5) An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results, who may be a member of the team described in <del>B</del><sup>2</sup> through <del>D</del><sup>4</sup>of this paragraph;</li> </ol>	<p>There is no B through D of this paragraph. Two through four describe professional staff members from the LEA who would serve on IEP teams. One of those people can fill the role of an individual who can interpret instructional implications of evaluation results if they meet the requirements. Generally, someone who has a teaching certificate can fill this role because they understand the curriculum requirements for the child and can assess how the child’s disability can impact access to the curriculum and ability to make progress.</p>

IV	52	<p><b><u>OTHER MEASURES TO ENSURE PARENT PARTICIPATION</u></b></p> <p>If neither parent can attend, the public agency shall use other methods to ensure parent participation, including individual or conference telephone calls, consistent with 34 CFR 300.328.</p>	<p><b><u>OTHER MEASURES TO ENSURE PARENT PARTICIPATION</u></b></p> <p>If neither parent can attend, the public agency shall use other methods to ensure parent participation, including <del>individual or</del> conference telephone calls, <b>or video conferences</b>, consistent with 34 CFR 300.328.</p>	<p>Add video conferencing to make consistent with: 34 CFR § 300.328 <b>Alternative means of meeting participation.</b> When conducting IEP Team meetings and placement meetings pursuant to this subpart, and <u>subpart E</u> of this part, and carrying out administrative matters under section 615 of the <u>Act</u> (such as scheduling, exchange of witness lists, and status conferences), the <u>parent</u> of a <u>child with a disability</u> and a <u>public agency</u> may agree to use alternative means of meeting participation, such as video conferences and conference calls.</p>
IV	54	<p>IN-STATE TRANSFERS</p> <p>If the public agency does not agree with the current evaluation report, it must initiate a reevaluation as described in this State Plan. During the time that the reevaluation is being conducted, the agency shall implement the IEP, as written, from the sending agency or develop an IEP until the reevaluation is complete.</p>	<p>IN-STATE TRANSFERS</p> <p>If the public agency does not agree with the current evaluation report, it must initiate a reevaluation as described in this State Plan. During the time that the reevaluation is being conducted, the agency shall implement the IEP, as written, from the sending agency or <del>develop an IEP</del> <b>provide comparable services</b> until the reevaluation is complete.</p>	<p>Changes made to be consistent with 34 CFR § 300.1414(d)(2)(C)(i)(I) Transfer within the same state. There is no requirement to develop an interim IEP.</p>

## **REGULATION V: PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS/DISCIPLINE**

The following statements reflect the policy which the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has established to ensure procedural safeguards for all parties involved in the education of students with disabilities.

### **A. OPPORTUNITY TO EXAMINE EDUCATION RECORDS/PARENT PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS (34 CFR 300.501)**

Each responsible public agency shall provide the parent of a student with a disability the opportunity to inspect and review all education records with respect to the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of his/her child and the provision of a free appropriate public education to his/her child.

Each responsible public agency shall provide proper notice to ensure parents have the opportunity to participate in meetings with respect to the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of his/her child and the provision of a free appropriate public education to his/her child.

A meeting does not include informal or unscheduled conversations involving staff and conversations on issues such as teaching methodology, lesson plans, or coordination of service provision. A meeting also does not include preparatory activities that public agency personnel engage in to develop a proposal or response to a parent proposal that will be discussed at a later meeting.

The individualized education program (IEP) team determines the educational placement for each student with a disability.

### **B. INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION (IEE) (34 CFR 300.502)**

The parents of a student with a disability have a right to obtain an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) of their child. That right is subject to the requirement that the independent evaluation must meet the educational evaluation criteria used by the responsible public agency when it initiates an evaluation, to the extent those criteria are consistent with the parent's right to an independent evaluation.

Independent educational evaluation means an evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the public agency responsible for the education of the student in question.

The right to an independent educational evaluation assures that:

- (1) Upon requesting an IEE, information about where an independent evaluation may be obtained and the agency criteria applicable for independent educational evaluations will be given to parents.
- (2) Parents have the right to an independent evaluation at public expense for any agency evaluation with which the parents disagree. If a parent requests an IEE at public expense, however, the responsible public agency must, without unnecessary delay, either file a due process

hearing as described in Regulation V to show that the agency evaluation is appropriate or ensure that an IEE is provided at public expense, unless the agency demonstrates in a hearing that the evaluation obtained by the parent did not meet agency criteria. If the final due process hearing decision determines that the agency evaluation is appropriate, the parents still have the right to an independent educational evaluation, but not at public expense.

- a. Public expense means that the public agency either pays for the full cost of the evaluation or ensures that the evaluation is otherwise provided at no cost to the parent.
- (3) The responsible public agency may request, but not require, notification from parents before an IEE is conducted. If a parent requests an IEE, the public agency may ask for the parent's reason why he or she objects to the public evaluation. However, the public agency may not require the parent to provide an explanation and may not unreasonably delay either providing the IEE at public expense or filing a due process complaint to request a due process hearing to defend the public evaluation.
  - (4) If the responsible public agency has a policy regarding reimbursement for independent evaluations, that policy will specify the factors to be considered in the determination of public funding for the evaluation. That determination should be based on:
    - a. The qualifications and locations of the evaluators, and
    - b. The cost of the evaluation.

The public agency may only impose limitations on the cost of an IEE if the agency uses those same limitations when conducting an evaluation. If a public agency uses such cost limitations, it must ensure that its procedures require payment for an IEE at a higher rate if an appropriate IEE cannot, in light of the student's unique needs and other unique circumstances, be obtained within those cost limitations. If the cost of an IEE at public expense exceeds the agency's cost limitations, the public agency must either:

- a. Initiate a due process hearing or
  - b. Pay the full cost of the IEE.
- (5) If the responsible public agency has a policy regarding reimbursement for independent evaluations and that policy establishes allowable maximum charges for specific tests or types of evaluations, the maximum set will still enable parents to choose from among qualified professionals in the area and will result only in the elimination of excessive fees. The policy shall specify that the responsible public agency will pay the fee for the independent evaluation up to the maximum established. Additionally, the policy will anticipate that a student's "unique circumstances" may justify an evaluation that exceeds the allowable cost criteria.
  - (6) If the responsible public agency has no policy which sets maximum allowable charges for specific tests or types of evaluation, then the parents will be reimbursed for services rendered by a qualified evaluator.
  - (7) Except for the location of the evaluation and the qualifications of the examiner, a public agency may not impose conditions or timelines related to obtaining an independent educational

evaluation at public expense. These criteria for IEEs at public expense must apply equally to the public agency's own evaluations and exceptions for unique circumstances must be considered.

- (8) A parent is entitled to only one independent educational evaluation at public expense each time the public agency conducts an evaluation with which the parent disagrees.
- (9) That the results of an independent evaluation obtained by the parents at public expense (or private expense if shared with the agency by the parent):
  - a. Must be considered by the responsible public agency if it meets agency criteria in any decision made with respect to the provisions of a free appropriate public education to the student, and
  - b. May be presented as evidence at a due process hearing under this subpart regarding that student.
- (10) The cost of an independent evaluation will be at public expense if a hearing officer requests an independent educational evaluation as part of a due process hearing.

### **C. WRITTEN NOTICE (34 CFR 300.503)**

Written notice must be given to parents a reasonable time before the responsible public agency proposes to initiate or changes the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or the provision of a free appropriate public education of the student or refuses to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or the provision of a free appropriate public education of the student. The notice must be written in language understandable to the general public and provided in the native language of the parents or other mode of communication used by the parents, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.

If the native language or other mode of communication of the parents is not a written language, the responsible public agency shall ensure the following:

- (1) The notice is translated orally or by other means to the parents in their native language or other mode of communication;
- (2) The parents understand the content of the notice; and,
- (3) There is written evidence that those requirements have been met.

#### **CONTENT OF NOTICE**

The written notice sent to parents by the responsible public agency must contain the following:

- (1) A description of the action proposed or refused by the agency;
- (2) An explanation of why the agency proposes or refuses to take the action;



- (3) A description of each evaluation procedure, test, record, or report the agency used as a basis for the proposal or refusal;
- (4) A statement that the parents of a student with a disability have procedural safeguards protection and the means by which a copy of the description of the procedural safeguards can be obtained;
- (5) Sources for parents to contact to obtain assistance in understanding their procedural safeguards;
- (6) A description of other options that the IEP Team considered and the reasons why those options were rejected; and,
- (7) A description of other factors that are relevant to the agency's proposal or refusal.

#### **D. PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS NOTICE (34 CFR 300.504)**

A copy of the state approved procedural safeguards available to the parents of a student with a disability shall be given to parents only one (1) time a school year, except that a copy also shall be given to the parents:

- (1) Within five (5) school days of initial referral or parental request for evaluation;
- (2) Upon receipt of the first due process complaint and upon receipt of the first child complaint in a school year;
- (3) Upon a disciplinary change of placement; and,
- (4) Upon request by the parent.

The procedural safeguards notice must include a full explanation of all of the procedural safeguards relating to independent educational evaluation; prior written notice; parental consent; access to educational records; opportunity to present and resolve complaints through due process complaint and state complaint procedures including the time period in which to file; the opportunity for the agency to resolve the complaint and the difference between the complaint procedures; the student's placement during due process proceedings; procedures for students who are subject to placement in an interim alternative educational setting; requirements for unilateral placement by parents of students in private schools at public expense; mediation; due process hearings, including requirements for disclosure of evaluation results and recommendations; civil actions including the time period in which to file those actions; and, attorneys' fees.

#### **E. PARENTAL CONSENT (34 CFR 300.300)**

##### **PARENTAL CONSENT FOR SERVICES**

A public agency that is responsible for making FAPE available to a student with a disability must obtain informed consent from the parent of the student before the initial provision of special education

and related services to the student. The public agency must make reasonable efforts to obtain informed consent from the parent for the initial provision of special education and related services to the student. Procedures for reasonable efforts required are the same as parent participation in IEP meetings.

If the parent of a student fails to respond or refuses to consent to services, the public agency may not use the procedures under Procedural Safeguards (including mediation or due process) in order to obtain agreement or a ruling that the services may be provided to the student.

If the parent of a student refuses to consent to the initial provision of special education and related services or the parent fails to respond to a request to provide consent for the initial provision of special education and related services, the public agency will not be considered to be in violation of providing FAPE to the student for the failure to provide the student with the special education and related services for which the public agency requests consent. The public agency is not required to convene an IEP Team meeting or develop an IEP for the student for the special education and related services for which the public agency requests such consent.

### **PARENTAL CONSENT FOR REEVALUATIONS**

Each public agency must obtain informed parental consent, prior to conducting any reevaluation of a student with a disability. If the parent refuses to consent to the reevaluation, the public agency may, but is not required to, pursue the reevaluation by using the consent override procedures (mediation or due process). The public agency does not violate its obligation under child find or evaluations if it declines to pursue the evaluation or reevaluation.

**Informed parental consent need not be obtained if the public agency can demonstrate it made reasonable efforts to obtain such consent and the child's parent failed to respond.**

### **PARENTAL CONSENT TO ACCESS PUBLIC INSURANCE**

Before accessing a student's or parent's public benefits or insurance for the first time, and annually thereafter, a public agency must provide written notification, to the student's parents. The notification must be written in language understandable to the general public and in the native language of the parent or other mode of communication used by the parent, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.

A public agency must obtain parental consent before the public agency accesses a student's or parent's public benefits or insurance for the first time. This is a one-time consent, i.e., the public agency is no longer required to obtain parental consent each time access to public benefits or insurance is sought.

The annual notification must state:

- (1) The public agency may not require parents to sign up for or enroll in public benefits or insurance programs in order for their child to receive services in the IEP that it is required to provide at no cost to the parents.
- (2) The public agency may not require parents to incur an out-of-pocket expense such as the payment of a deductible or co-pay amount incurred in filing a claim for services.

- (3) The public agency may not use a student's benefits under a public benefits or insurance program if that use would:
- a. Decrease available lifetime coverage or any other insured benefit;
  - b. Result in the family paying for services that would otherwise be covered by the public benefits or insurance program and that are required for the student outside of the time the student is in school;
  - c. Increase premiums or lead to cancellation of benefits or insurance; or
  - d. Risk loss of eligibility for home and community-based waiver, based on aggregate health-related expenditures.
- (4) Withdrawal of consent or refusal to provide consent for billing public insurance does not relieve the public agency or other responsible public agency of its responsibility to ensure that all required services in the IEP are provided at no cost to the parents.
- (5) Parents have the right to consent or withdraw their consent for disclosure of their child's personally identifiable information (e.g. records or information about the services that may be provided under the IEP) to the agency responsible for the administration of the state's public benefits or insurance program at any time. Such disclosure will identify the purpose of the disclosure (e.g. billing for services), and the agency to which the disclosure may be made (e.g. MO HealthNet).

### **OTHER CONSENT REQUIREMENTS**

Parental consent is not required before reviewing existing data as part of an evaluation or a reevaluation or administering a test or other evaluation that is administered to all students unless, before administration of that test or evaluation, consent is required of parents of all students.

If a parent of a student who is home-schooled or placed in a private school by parents at their own expense does not provide consent for the initial evaluation or the reevaluation or the parent fails to respond to a request to provide consent, the public agency may not use the consent override procedures. The public agency is not required to consider the student as eligible for special education and related services.

### **DEFINITION OF EFFORTS**

Consent is not necessary for any subsequent placements and consent for reevaluations need not be obtained if the responsible public agency can demonstrate that it made reasonable efforts to obtain consent and the parent failed to respond. "Reasonable efforts" include a minimum of two (2) attempts documented, such as: detailed records of telephone calls made and the results of those calls; copies of correspondence sent to the parent and responses received; or, detailed records of visits to the parent's home or work place and the results of those visits. Neither may lack of consent after the initial evaluation or the initial placement be a cause for denial of any other service, activity, or benefit of the responsible public agency.

Parental consent means that the parent:

- (1) Has been fully informed of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought in his or her native language or other mode of communication;
- (2) Understands and agrees in writing to the carrying out of the activity for which his or her consent is sought, and the consent describes that activity and lists the records (if any) which will be released and to whom; and,
- (3) Understands that the granting of consent is voluntary on the part of the parent and may be revoked at any time; however, if the parent revokes consent, that revocation is not retroactive.

### **PARENTAL REVOCATION OF CONSENT (34 CFR 300.9 AND 300.300)**

A parent may unilaterally withdraw a student from further receipt of special education and related services by revoking their consent for the continued provision of special education and related services to his/her child. A public agency may not, through mediation or a due process hearing, challenge the parent's decision or seek a ruling that special education and related services must continue to be provided to the student. Parental revocation of consent must be in writing.

Upon receipt of the parent's written revocation of consent, a public agency:

- (1) Must provide the parent with prior written notice before ceasing the provision of special education and related services.
- (2) Will not be considered in violation of requirement to make FAPE available to the student because of the failure to provide the student with special education and related services.
- (3) Is not required to convene an IEP team meeting or develop an IEP for the student.
- (4) Is not required to amend the student's education records to remove any references to the student's receipt of special education and related services.

## **F. CHILD COMPLAINT PROCESS**

### **STATEMENT OF JURISDICTION**

DESE, as a grantee under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), must maintain procedures for receiving, investigating, and resolving complaints alleging that statutes and/or regulations implementing IDEA have been violated. This process is known as the child complaint process.

DESE disseminates information on this process to parents and other interested individuals, including parent training and information centers, protection and advocacy agencies, independent living centers, and other appropriate entities.

### **LIMITATIONS (34 CFR 300.153(C))**

A complaint must allege a violation by a public agency that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date that the complaint is received

### **FILING A COMPLAINT (34 CFR 300.153)**

An organization or individual may file a signed written complaint. The complaint must include:

- (1) A statement that a public agency has violated a requirement of Part B of the Act;
- (2) The facts on which the statement is based (state facts describing an alleged violation of state and/or federal regulations implementing IDEA);
- (3) The signature and contact information for the complainant; and
- (4) If alleging violations with respect to a specific child, the name and address of the residence of the child and the name of the school that the child is attending. If the child is a homeless child or youth, the available contact information for the child and the name of the school the child is attending must be provided;
- (5) A description of the nature of the problem of the child, including the facts relating to the problem; and,
- (6) A proposed solution of the problem to the extent known and available to the party at the time the complaint is filed.

The party filing the complaint must forward a copy of the complaint to the public agency serving the child at the same time the party files the complaint with DESE. Failure to provide a copy to the public agency will delay the starting of the timeline for the investigation of the complaint to the date DESE sends a copy of the complaint to the public agency.

If the party fails to provide a description of the nature of the problem of the child, including the facts relating to the problem at the time the complaint is filed, DESE may, in its discretion, dismiss the complaint and grant the party the opportunity to refile with the required information included.

### **PROCESSING OF COMPLAINT RECORD**

Upon receipt, the complaint shall be reviewed and necessary staff assigned to investigate it. The complaint shall also be entered into the complaint tracking process.

### **INVESTIGATION OF THE COMPLAINT**

The process of investigation shall include: staffing the complaint, providing written notice of the complaint to the public agency, written acknowledgment to the complainant, data collection, and on-site visits where appropriate.

- (1) Assigned staff will review the complaint to determine the parameters of the investigation. This would include determining whether an on-site visit will be necessary or whether the information may be obtained through the use of a data request and phone interviews.

- (2) Upon receipt of a complaint, notice shall be sent to the public agency against which the complaint is filed. The notice shall include a copy of the complaint, statement of the elements of the complaint, a description of the investigation process, and, if possible, the details of any on-site visits, data requests, or phone interviews that are planned. The public agency shall be invited to respond to the complaint, which could include a proposal to resolve the complaint and an opportunity for a parent who has filed a complaint and the public agency to voluntarily engage in mediation.
- (3) Upon receipt of a complaint, a written acknowledgment shall be sent to the complainant and shall include a statement of the elements of the complaint, a description of the investigation process, and an invitation to provide any additional information either orally or in writing, about the allegations in the complaint.
- (4) Documentation requests and phone interviews will be the primary methods of data collection in the complaint investigation. The data request should include documents relevant to the complaint and should be forwarded to a designated contact with the public agency. It is the purpose of the data requests and phone interviews to attempt, where possible, to resolve the complaint without an on-site visit.
- (5) If the investigation requires an on-site visit, separate notice to the public agency shall be given. This notice may be given by phone, but should preferably be in writing. If the notice is given by phone, then a confirmation in writing should follow-up the phone conversation. The notice shall include a statement of the records to be made available, staff to be interviewed, and any need for access to school or agency facilities.

### **INVESTIGATION TIMELINES**

DESE shall have, upon receipt of the completed complaint, sixty (60) calendar days to investigate and resolve the complaint. Extension of this time limit may be granted by the Commissioner of Education, or a designee, if exceptional circumstances exist with respect to the particular complaint, or the parent (or individual or organization) and the public agency involved agree in writing to extend the time limit to engage in mediation. If such an extension is given, notice shall be given to the complainant and the public agency under investigation, with documentation of that notice to be maintained within the child complaint file. This timeline may also be extended by up to thirty (30) days if both parties agree to participate in mediation.

### **RESOLUTION OF THE COMPLAINT**

Resolution of a child complaint shall be through the issuance of a Decision letter from the Commissioner of Education, or a designee, DESE. The Decision letter shall include findings of fact and conclusions, and provide reasons for the Decision. These findings would include a review of the investigation results, including any information in an on-site investigation or from a data request. The basis for resolution may be any of the following:

- (1) A decision that the public agency is not out of compliance;

- (2) A decision that the public agency is out of compliance, but that voluntary corrective action has been taken by the public agency to bring the public agency into compliance; or,
- (3) A decision that the public agency is out of compliance, and ordering a corrective action with a timeline for submission to DESE. Corrective actions ordered by the Commissioner of Education, or a designee, may include, but are not limited to, technical assistance activities, negotiations, or other actions to achieve compliance.

## **FINAL DECISION**

The findings of the Commissioner of Education, or a designee, related to the complaint shall constitute a final decision of DESE. No further appeal is available.

Permission from a child's parent or the adult student is required to share the final decision with a non-parent complainant. If permission is not given, the non-parent complainant will receive a copy of the final decision with all personally identifiable information redacted. In cases where it is impossible to remove personally identifiable information, the decision will not be provided to a non-parent complainant.

## **COMPLAINTS FILED UNDER THIS SECTION AND DUE PROCESS HEARINGS**

If a written complaint is received that is also the subject of a due process hearing, or contains multiple issues of which one or more are part of that hearing, DESE must set aside any part of the complaint that is being addressed in the due process hearing until the conclusion of the hearing. However, any issue in the complaint that is not a part of the due process action must be resolved using the time limit and procedures described above.

If an issue raised in a complaint filed under this section has previously been decided in a due process hearing involving the same parties, the due process hearing decision is binding on that issue and DESE must inform the complainant to that effect.

## **G. ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING RIGHTS**

### **MEDIATION (34 CFR 300.506)**

DESE makes mediation available to allow parents or adult students and responsible public agencies to resolve disagreements involving any matter under Part B of IDEA, including matters arising prior to the filing of a due process complaint. Mediation will be provided at no cost to either party. DESE funded mediation is not available to resolve disputes between parents or between public agencies and persons other than the parent (or adult student).

### **PROCESS**

The parties must mutually agree to mediate and mutually agree on a mediator from the trained mediator list maintained by DESE Office of Special Education.

- (1) The parties shall notify DESE of the mediator selected and DESE will send a letter empowering them to proceed. Mediators will not be paid if they have not been empowered by DESE.
- (2) Mediation must be scheduled within fifteen (15) days of the selection of a mediator.
- (3) Mediation must be conducted at a time and place that is convenient to both parties.
- (4) Mediation must be completed within thirty (30) days of the agreement to mediate.
- (5) Any agreement reached during mediation must be in writing and delivered to each party.
- (6) No more than three (3) persons can accompany each party unless the parties mutually agree on additional participants.
- (7) No attorney shall participate or attend on behalf of any party at the mediation session. However, parents may be accompanied by a lay advocate.
- (8) Mediation may not be used to deny or delay a parent's right to a due process hearing or to deny any other rights under Part B of IDEA.
- (9) If the parties resolve a dispute through the mediation process, the parties must execute a legally binding agreement that sets forth that resolution and that states that all discussions that occurred during the mediation will remain confidential and may not be used as evidence in any subsequent due process hearing or civil proceeding and is signed by both the parent and a representative of the agency who has the authority to bind such agency.
- (10) The written signed agreement is enforceable in any state court of competent jurisdiction or in a district court of the United States. Discussions that occur during the mediation process must be confidential and may not be used as evidence in any subsequent due process hearing or civil proceeding of any federal court or state court.
- (11) If the parties are not able to reach an agreement through the mediation process, the mediator will notify DESE.

### **MEDIATOR QUALIFICATIONS**

- (1) Mediators must be impartial and free of any conflict of interest.
- (2) Mediators shall not be employees of a public agency which is involved in the education or care of the student or of the State Board of Education. A person who otherwise qualifies as a mediator is not an employee of the State Board of Education or public agency solely because he or she is paid by the agency to serve as a mediator.
- (3) Mediators must have a minimum of sixteen (16) hours of training as a mediator.
- (4) Mediators, to be placed on DESE's mediator list, must meet all regulations, requirements, and must agree to be compensated at a rate set by DESE and provide DESE with a resume or biographical statement reflecting their qualifications.



- (5) Mediators must be knowledgeable in laws and regulations relating to the provision of special education and related services.

### **FILING A DUE PROCESS COMPLAINT (34 CFR 300.507)**

Parents or a public agency may file a due process complaint with DESE Office of Special Education concerning the proposed action of the agency to initiate or refuse to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the student or the provision of a free appropriate public education to the student.

The due process complaint must allege a violation that happened not more than two years before the date the parent or the public agency knew or should have known about the alleged action that forms the basis of the due process complaint. The above timeline does not apply if the complainant could not file a due process complaint within the timeline because:

- (1) The public agency specifically misrepresented that it had resolved the issues identified in the complaint, or
- (2) The public agency withheld information that it was required to provide under Part B of IDEA.

DESE shall inform parents of any free or low-cost legal and other relevant services available in the area upon their request or if a parent or the responsible public agency files a due process complaint.

### **DUE PROCESS COMPLAINT (34 CFR 300.508)**

In order to request a due process hearing, a parent or the public agency (or the attorney representing either party) must provide the other party with a copy of the due process complaint. That complaint must contain all of the content listed below and must be kept confidential. The party filing a due process complaint must forward a copy of the complaint to DESE.

The content of the complaint must include:

- (1) The name of the student;
- (2) The address of the student's residence;
- (3) The name of the student's school;
- (4) If the student is a homeless child or youth, the student's contact information and the name of the student's school;
- (5) A description of the nature of the problem of the student relating to the proposed or refused action, including facts relating to the problem; and,
- (6) A proposed resolution of the problem to the extent known and available at the time.

A complaint is filed on the date it is received by DESE if received during business hours of the Office of Special Education as posted on the DESE website. Complaints received after business hours will be deemed filed the following business day.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING COMMISSION TO PROCESS AND HEAR THE COMPLAINTS**

Within two (2) business days of the filing of the complaint, the Office of Special Education will forward the complaint to the Administrative Hearing Commission for a hearing. All further documentation must be filed with the Administrative Hearing Commission by fax or mail or as otherwise provided by the Administrative Hearing Commission Rules.

### **SUFFICIENCY OF COMPLAINT**

In order for a due process complaint to go forward, it must be considered sufficient. The due process complaint will be considered sufficient (to have met the content requirements above) unless the party receiving the due process complaint (parent or the responsible public agency) notifies the Administrative Hearing Commission and the other party, in writing, within fifteen (15) calendar days of receiving the complaint, that the receiving party believes that the due process complaint does not meet the requirements listed above.

Within five (5) calendar days of receiving the notification, that the receiving party (parent or the responsible public agency) considers a due process complaint insufficient, the Administrative Hearing Commission must decide if the due process complaint meets the requirements listed above and notify the parent and the responsible public agency, in writing, immediately.

### **COMPLAINT AMENDMENT**

The party who files the complaint may amend the complaint only if:

- (1) The other party approves of the changes, in writing, and is given the chance to resolve the due process complaint through a resolution meeting, described below, or
- (2) By no later than five (5) days before the due process hearing begins, the Administrative Hearing Commissioner grants permission for the changes.

If the complaining party makes changes to the due process complaint, the timelines for the resolution meeting (within fifteen (15) calendar days of receiving the complaint) and the time period for resolution (within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the complaint) start again on the date the amended complaint is filed.

### **WITHDRAWAL OF COMPLAINT**

Unless a motion for decision without hearing has been filed or the hearing has started, a complaining party can withdraw a complaint by sending a written notice of withdrawal or making a verbal request to the Administrative Hearing Commission. If a motion for decision has been filed

or the hearing has started, the complaining party shall make a request for withdrawal in writing to the Administrative Hearing Commission which will rule on the request.

### **RESPONSIBLE PUBLIC AGENCY RESPONSE TO A DUE PROCESS COMPLAINT**

If the public agency has not sent a prior written notice to a parent regarding the subject matter contained in their due process complaint, the public agency must, within ten (10) calendar days of receiving the due process complaint, send a response to the parent and the Administrative Hearing Commission that includes:

- (1) An explanation of why the public agency proposed or refused to take the action raised in the due process complaint;
- (2) A description of other options that the student's IEP Team considered and the reasons why those options were rejected;
- (3) A description of each evaluation procedure, assessment, record, or report the public agency used as the basis for the proposed or refused action; and,
- (4) A description of the other factors that are relevant to the public agency's proposed or refused action.

Providing the information in items A-D above does not prevent the public agency from asserting that the due process complaint was insufficient.

### **RESPONSE TO A DUE PROCESS COMPLAINT**

Except as stated under the sub-heading immediately above, the party receiving a due process complaint must, within ten (10) calendar days of receiving the complaint, send the other party and the Administrative Hearing Commission a response that specifically addresses the issues in the complaint.

### **MODEL FORMS (34 CFR 300.509)**

DESE has developed model forms to help parties file a due process complaint and a child complaint. However, parties are not required to use these model forms. Parties can use the model form or another appropriate form, as long as it contains the required information for filing a due process complaint.

## **H. RESOLUTION PROCESS (34 CFR 300.510)**

### **RESOLUTION MEETING**

Within fifteen (15) calendar days of receiving notice of a parent's due process complaint or amended complaint, and before the due process hearing begins, the responsible public agency must convene a meeting with the parent and the relevant member or members of the IEP Team who have specific knowledge of the facts identified in the due process complaint. The meeting:

- (1) Must include a representative of the responsible public agency who has decision-making authority on behalf of the public agency, and
- (2) May not include an attorney of the responsible public agency unless the parent is accompanied by an attorney.

Parents and the responsible public agency determine the relevant members of the IEP Team to attend the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting is for the parent to discuss their due process complaint and the facts that form the basis of the complaint so that the public agency has the opportunity to resolve the dispute. The resolution meeting is not necessary if the parent and the responsible public agency agree, in writing, to waive the meeting or if the parent and the responsible public agency agree to use the mediation process.

The responsible public agency shall notify DESE and the Administrative Hearing Commission of the date of the resolution meeting and the result or that a decision was made not to hold a resolution meeting.

### **RESOLUTION PERIOD**

If the public agency has not resolved the due process complaint to the satisfaction of the parent within thirty (30) calendar days of the receipt of the due process complaint (during the time period for the resolution process), the due process hearing may occur.

The forty-five (45) calendar day timeline for issuing a final decision begins at the expiration of the thirty (30) calendar day resolution period, with certain exceptions for adjustments made to the thirty (30) calendar day resolution period, as described below.

Except where the parties have both agreed to waive the resolution process or to use mediation, the failure of the parent to participate in the resolution meeting will delay the timelines for the resolution process and due process hearing until the parent agrees to participate in a meeting.

If after making reasonable efforts and documenting such efforts, the public agency is not able to obtain the parent's participation in the resolution meeting, the public agency may, at the end of the thirty (30) calendar day resolution period, request that the Administrative Hearing Commission dismiss the due process complaint.

If the public agency fails to hold the resolution meeting within fifteen (15) calendar days of receiving notice of the parent’s due process complaint or fails to participate in the resolution meeting, the parent may ask the Administrative Hearing Commission to order that the forty-five (45) calendar day due process hearing timeline begin.

### **ADJUSTMENTS TO THE THIRTY (30) CALENDAR DAY RESOLUTION PERIOD**

The forty-five (45) day timeline for the due process hearing starts the day after one of the following events:

- (1) Both parties agree, in writing, to waive the resolution meeting;
- (2) After either the mediation or the resolution meeting starts but before the end of the thirty (30) calendar day resolution period, the parties agree, in writing, that no agreement is possible; or,
- (3) Both parties agree, in writing, to continue the mediation process at the end of the thirty (30) calendar day resolution period but later, either party withdraws from the mediation process.

### **WRITTEN SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT**

If a resolution to the dispute is reached at the resolution meeting, the parties must enter into a legally binding agreement that is:

- (1) Signed by the parent and a representative of the public agency who has the authority to bind the agency, and
- (2) Enforceable in any state court of competent jurisdiction (a state court that has authority to hear this type of case) or in a district court of the United States.

The parties’ agreement does not need to be filed with, or adopted or approved by, the Administrative Hearing Commission to be legally binding.

### **AGREEMENT REVIEW PERIOD**

If the parties execute an agreement as a result of a resolution meeting, either party may void the agreement within three (3) business days of the agreement’s execution.

### **STATE-LEVEL DUE PROCESS HEARINGS**

- (1) Process: The Administrative Hearing Commission processes all due process complaints handling all issues after the filing of the complaint to the final decision. A complaint shall be assigned to a Commissioner who meets the training requirements of state law in regard to special education matters. The provisions of chapters 536 and 621, RSMo and the procedural rules adopted by the Administrative Hearing Commission shall be followed unless they conflict with the federal regulations or state statutes implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

(2) Hearing Rights: Any party to a hearing has the right to:

- a. Be accompanied and advised by counsel and by individuals with special knowledge or training with respect to the problems of students with disabilities;
- b. Represent themselves or be represented by a licensed Missouri attorney;
- c. Present evidence and confront, cross-examine, and compel the attendance of witnesses;
- d. Prohibit the introduction of any evidence that has not been disclosed to that party at least five (5) business days before the hearing;
- e. Obtain a written or, at the option of the parents, electronic verbatim record of the hearing at no cost; and,
- f. Obtain written or, at the option of the parents, electronic findings of fact and decisions at no cost.

Hearing officers have discretion to bar any party that failed to comply with 34 CFR 300.512(b) from introducing the relevant evaluation or recommendation at the hearing without the consent of the other party.

In addition, the parents, or the student if he/she is the educational decision maker, have the right to open the hearing to the public; otherwise, it is closed. The parents may also elect to have the student present at the hearing. Any student over age 18 has the right to attend the hearing, unless their legal guardian, if any, objects.

(3) Subject Matter: The party that requests the due process hearing may not raise issues at the due process hearing that were not addressed in the due process complaint, unless the other party agrees.

### **HEARING DECISIONS (34 CFR 300.513)**

A decision on whether a student received a free appropriate public education (FAPE) must be based on substantive grounds.

In matters alleging a procedural violation, the Administrative Hearing Commission may find that a student did not receive FAPE only if the procedural inadequacies:

- (1) Impeded the student's right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE);
- (2) Significantly impeded the parent's opportunity to participate in the decision-making process regarding the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to his/her child; or,
- (3) Caused a deprivation of an educational benefit.

None of the provisions described above shall be interpreted to prevent the Administrative Hearing Commission from ordering a public agency to comply with the requirements in the procedural safeguards section of the federal regulations under Part B of IDEA (34 CFR 300.500-300.536).

Nothing in the procedural safeguards section of the federal regulations under Part B of IDEA (34 CFR 300.500-300.536) shall be interpreted to prevent a parent from filing a separate due process complaint on an issue separate from a due process complaint already filed.

## **FINALITY OF DECISION**

Once the Administrative Hearing Commission has issued a final decision, no motion for reconsideration is permitted. However, if a final decision contains technical or typographical errors, a party may request correction of the errors if the correction does not change the outcome of the hearing or substance of the final hearing decision. Requests for a change of a technical or typographical error do not toll the time for an appeal. The Commission shall make the determination whether such a change is necessary.

## **FINDINGS AND DECISION TO ADVISORY PANEL AND GENERAL PUBLIC (34 CFR 300.514)**

The Administrative Hearing Commission shall mail a copy of the written findings and decision to each party and to DESE. DESE shall provide a copy of the findings and decision (with all personal identifiers removed) to the Missouri Special Education Advisory Panel and shall make the findings and decision available to the public (with all personally identifiable information removed).

## **TIMELINES AND CONVENIENCE (34 CFR 300.515)**

Except in the case of an expedited hearing provided for below, the hearing must be held and a written decision rendered and mailed within forty-five (45) days of the expiration of the thirty (30) day resolution period or the adjusted time period specified. The decision timeline may be extended upon request of a party and agreement by the Administrative Hearing Commissioner. The Administrative Hearing Commissioner cannot grant an extension without a request from one or both parties.

## **SITE OF THE HEARING**

Each hearing must be held at a time and place which is reasonably convenient to the parents and student involved.

## **CIVIL PROCEEDINGS (34 CFR 300.516)**

Any party aggrieved by the findings and decisions made in a hearing may appeal the decision within forty-five (45) days to the state courts as provided in Chapter 536, RSMo., or in federal court without regard to the amount in controversy. To the extent that Chapter 536, RSMo. provisions conflict with the IDEA judicial review requirements at 34 CFR 300.516 the IDEA judicial review provisions are controlling. The court shall receive the records of the administrative proceedings, shall hear additional evidence at the request of a party, and shall base its decision on the preponderance of the evidence, granting the relief the court deems appropriate.

## **COMMISSIONER QUALIFICATIONS TO HEAR DUE PROCESS COMPLAINTS**

Hearing Commissioners:

- (1) Shall not have a personal or professional interest in the matters that are before them which would conflict with their objectivity in the hearing;

- (2) Shall have an affirmative obligation to seek out any conflict of interest and withdraw from any matter in which a conflict is identified;
- (3) Shall not have been employed within the last five years by a public agency or organization engaged in special education parent or student advocacy;
- (4) Shall not have performed work for a public agency or for a parent or student as a special education advocate within the last five years as an independent contractor or consultant;
- (5) Shall not have been employed within the last five years by the State Board of Education or DESE;
- (6) Shall not have performed work for the State Board of Education or DESE within the last five years as an independent contractor or consultant;
- (7) Shall not have been a party to a special education proceeding as an attorney, parent, or student; and,
- (8) Must be knowledgeable and understand the provisions of IDEA, and federal and state regulations pertaining to IDEA, and legal interpretations of IDEA by federal and state courts and have had at least 10 hours of initial training in special education matters and shall annually complete a minimum of five hours of training.

Hearing Commissioners must have the knowledge and ability to conduct hearings, and to make and write decisions consistent with appropriate, standard legal practice.

Specific allegations of conflict of interest may be filed with the Administrative Hearing Commission.

A person who otherwise qualifies to conduct a hearing is not an employee of the agency because he or she is paid by the agency to serve as a hearing officer.

### **PRE-HEARING CONFERENCE**

The Administrative Hearing Commission has the option to conduct a prehearing conference.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING COMMISSION ORDERS**

The Commission has the authority to take any actions necessary to ensure the compliance with all requirements of the law. If the Commission orders a party to do an act or not to do an act, the party must comply with the order. Objections to orders must be made as part of the record as promptly as possible. The Commission has the authority to dismiss an action with, or without, prejudice if the party filing the request fails to comply with an order. The Commission has the authority to preclude the other party from presenting defenses and may impose sanctions as allowed by the regulations of the Administrative Hearing Commission.

### **SUBPOENAS**

Parties may request subpoenas for witnesses from the Administrative Hearing Commission in accordance with section 536.077, RSMo.



## **HEARING PROCEDURES**

The Commission shall hold the hearing and shall rule on procedural and evidentiary matters. The Commission must ensure that issues for the hearing are appropriately identified and that evidence is relevant and not cumulative. The Commission shall limit the hearing to the amount of time necessary for each party to present its case. The Commission has authority to question witnesses and request information.

## **LENGTH OF PRESENTATIONS**

The Commission may limit the length of any presentation in order to proceed with the hearing in an expeditious manner. In general, a hearing should last no longer than two (2) days. Any hearing exceeding two (2) days requires good cause to be shown and must be documented on the record.

## **EXCLUSIONS**

The parties shall exchange lists of exhibits and lists of their witnesses at least five (5) business days before the hearing including an expedited hearing. Any party has the right to prohibit the introduction of any evidence at the hearing that has not been disclosed to that party in accordance with this rule.

Evidence or testimony may also be excluded at the hearing if:

- (1) It is cumulative, irrelevant, or unnecessary;
- (2) It represents the legal conclusion of a witness; or,
- (3) It is speculation on the part of the witness.

This is not an exhaustive list of all bases for excluding evidence or testimony.

Admissibility of evidence shall be determined by the Administrative Hearing Commission in accordance with Missouri law, including but not limited to Section 536.070, RSMo, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and supporting regulations.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH HEARING COMMISSIONERS**

No party or attorney may communicate with the Commissioner on the merits of the case unless all parties have the opportunity to participate. Communication with the Commission should be directed to the Commission's primary telephone number, 573-751-2422.

All pleadings must be filed by fax or mail or as otherwise provided by the Administrative Hearing Commission.

## **WITNESSES**

At the request of a party or upon the Commissioner's own motion, the Commissioner may exclude witnesses from the hearing room so that they cannot hear the testimony of other witnesses. The Commissioner has authority to question witnesses and request information.

### **LIMITATIONS**

The Commission may, at its discretion, limit the number of witnesses, the length of direct and cross examination, and the number and type of documents used as evidence in the hearing.

### **CONSOLIDATION OF CASES**

#### (1) Standards for Consolidation

The Commission may consolidate two (2) or more separate cases for hearing if the cases involve the same student, present substantially the same issues of fact and law, if the consolidation would save time and costs, and if consolidation would not prejudice any party.

#### (2) Request for Consolidation

A party requesting consolidation must serve a written request for consolidation on all parties to the cases to be consolidated and the Commission. Any party objecting to the request must serve and file their objections within five (5) calendar days following service of the request for consolidation.

#### (3) Determination

The Administrative Hearing Commission will rule on the request for consolidation.

### **HEARING OFFICER LIST**

DESE shall keep a list of Commissioners who may hear due process complaints. The list must include a statement of the qualification of each of the Commissioners.

### **ATTORNEYS' FEES (34 CFR 300.517)**

Only a court of law can award attorneys fees.

In any action or proceeding brought under this section, the court, in its discretion, may award reasonable attorneys' fees as part of the costs:

- (1) To a prevailing party who is a parent of a student with a disability;
- (2) To a prevailing party who is DESE or a public agency against the attorney of a parent who files a complaint or subsequent cause of action that is frivolous, unreasonable, or without foundation, or against the attorney of a parent who continued to litigate after the litigation clearly became frivolous, unreasonable, or without foundation; or,

- (3) To a prevailing party who is DESE or a public agency against the attorney of a parent or against the parent, if the parent's complaint or subsequent cause of action was presented for any improper purpose, such as to harass, to cause unnecessary delay, or to needlessly increase the cost of litigation.

Funds under Part B of IDEA may not be used to pay attorney fees or costs of a party related to an action or proceeding under this section. A public agency may use Part B funds for conducting an action or proceeding under this section.

A court award for reasonable attorney fees is subject to the following:

- (1) The award must be based on prevailing rates in the community in which the action arose for the kind and quality of services furnished. No bonus or multiplier may be used in calculating the fee award;
- (2) Attorney fees and related costs may not be reimbursed for services performed subsequent to the time of a written offer of settlement to a parent if: the offer is made within the time prescribed by Rule 68 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, or in the case of an administrative proceeding, at any time more than ten (10) days before the proceeding begins; the offer is not accepted within ten (10) days; and the court or hearing officer finds that the relief finally obtained is not more favorable to the parents than the offer of settlement. However, if the parent prevails and was substantially justified in rejecting the settlement offer, an award of attorney fees and related costs may be made;
- (3) Attorney fees may not be awarded related to any meeting of the IEP team unless the meeting is convened as a result of an administrative proceeding or judicial action;
- (4) Attorney fees may not be awarded related to a resolution meeting; and,
- (5) The court may reduce the amount of attorney fees awarded if: the parent or the parent's attorney unreasonably protracted the final resolution of the controversy, the amount unreasonably exceeds the hourly rate prevailing in the community for similar services by attorneys of reasonably comparable skill, reputation, and experience; the time spent and legal services furnished were excessive considering the nature of the action/proceeding; or, the attorney representing the parent did not provide to the responsible public agency the appropriate information in the due process request notice required by regulation.

Attorney fees may not be reduced if the court finds the state or public agency unreasonably protracted the final resolution or there was a violation of the Procedural Safeguards.

### **MAINTENANCE OF PLACEMENT (34 CFR 300.518)**

During the pendency of any administrative or judicial proceeding regarding a due process complaint requesting a due process hearing, the student shall remain in his or her current placement, unless such change has been made with the agreement of the parent or guardian. Students who are endangering themselves or others can have their status changed, without the agreement of the parent or guardian. The Administrative Hearing Commission cannot order a change of placement during a dispute; but the parent or guardian and the public agency can agree to a change.

When a responsible public agency contacts a State Board of Education operated program for consideration of a student's eligibility for acceptance and enrollment, the responsible public agency shall assure that the student will be enrolled or will maintain enrollment in the responsible public agency pending final action by the state.

If the decision in a due process hearing agrees with the student's parents that a change of placement is appropriate, that placement must be treated as an agreement between the public agency and the parents for purposes of "stay-put" pending and during judicial appeal.

## **I. EDUCATIONAL SURROGATES (34 CFR 300.519)**

DESE has established the following for the appointment of educational surrogates:

### **IDENTIFYING THE NEED FOR APPOINTMENT**

Any person may advise a responsible public agency that a student with a disability within its jurisdiction may be in need of a person to act as an educational surrogate. Notice can be given to the public agency responsible for providing education to students with disabilities or directly to the Office of Special Education.

### **PROCESS OF APPOINTMENT**

When the public agency responsible for providing education to students with disabilities is informed of a student with disabilities living within its jurisdiction, it shall, within thirty (30) days, determine whether an educational surrogate should be appointed. A request for the appointment of a surrogate shall be made within ten (10) days to the Office of Special Education. The Office, on behalf of the State Board of Education, shall, within thirty (30) days, appoint a person to act as an educational surrogate. The Office shall maintain a registry of trained educational surrogates from which they will select individuals for appointment. If an educational surrogate dies, resigns, or is removed, within fifteen (15) days thereof, a replacement will be appointed.

### **CRITERIA FOR APPOINTMENT**

The State Board of Education shall appoint a person to act as a surrogate for the parent or guardian of a student with a disability as defined in Section 162.675, RSMo., when:

- (1) The student has no identified parent;
- (2) The student has parents who, after reasonable efforts, cannot be located by a public agency;
- (3) The student is a ward of the state and is living in a facility or group home (and not with a person acting as a parent); or,
- (4) The student is an unaccompanied homeless youth.

### **DEFINITIONS**

DESE will use the following definitions when determining a student's eligibility to receive a surrogate appointment:

**Parent:** The term "parent" means a biological, adoptive, or foster parent of a child or a guardian generally authorized to make educational decisions for the child (but not the state if the child is a ward of the state), a person acting in the place of a biological or adoptive parent (including a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative) with whom the child lives; an individual who is legally responsible for the child's welfare; or, an educational surrogate who has been appointed.

## **QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT**

Any person who is appointed to act as an educational surrogate shall:

- (1) Be at least eighteen (18) years of age;
- (2) Not be an employee of DESE, responsible public agency or any other agency that is involved in the education or care of the student with disabilities (a person otherwise qualified to be an educational surrogate is not an employee of an agency simply because he or she is reimbursed to serve as an educational surrogate);
- (3) Not be a contractor of a nonpublic agency that provides only non-educational care for the student;
- (4) Not be a contractor of responsible public agency;
- (5) Be free from any personal or professional interest that may conflict with the interests of the student represented; and,
- (6) Have knowledge and skills that ensure adequate representation of the student.

In the case of a student who is a ward of the state and has no parent as defined above, the educational surrogate alternatively may be appointed by the judge overseeing the student's case, provided that the surrogate meets the above requirements.

In the case of a student who is an unaccompanied homeless youth, appropriate staff of emergency shelters, transitional shelters, independent living programs, and street outreach programs may be appointed as temporary educational surrogates without regard to the above requirements, until an educational surrogate can be appointed that does meet those requirements.

## **EDUCATIONAL SURROGATE TRAINING**

All educational surrogates shall participate in a training session in which they will become familiar with the Missouri Educational Surrogate Program, acquire a basic understanding of the special education process in Missouri, and develop the knowledge and skill necessary to adequately represent a student. DESE shall provide the educational surrogate training and may require assistance from the public agency to present an effective training session.

## **RESPONSIBLE PUBLIC AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES**

Specifically, a responsible public agency shall:

- (1) Designate a staff member who will be responsible for overseeing the educational surrogate program in their public agency. Unless notified otherwise, DESE will assume that the educational surrogate contact person is the same as the public agency's special education director or contact person;

- (2) Complete and return to DESE a "Determination of Need for Surrogate Appointment" form for each student believed to be eligible for receiving a surrogate appointment;
- (3) Assist DESE in recruiting educational surrogate volunteers and submit their names and addresses to the Department;
- (4) Be available to aid DESE with local educational surrogate training; and,
- (5) Complete and return to DESE an "LEA Educational Surrogate Evaluation" form for each surrogate serving in the public agency.

### **DUTIES OF THE EDUCATIONAL SURROGATE**

An individual appointed to act as an educational surrogate shall:

- (1) Complete and return to DESE an Educational Surrogate Application and Verification of Eligibility form;
- (2) Attend an educational surrogate training session;
- (3) Represent their assigned student in all decisions relating to the student's education including matters related to the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the student, as well as the provision of a free appropriate public education to the student; and,
- (4) Notify the public agency or DESE if any conflicts develop or if they will no longer be able to fulfill their educational surrogate role.

### **IMMUNITY FROM LIABILITY**

The person appointed to act as an educational surrogate shall be immune from liability for any civil damage arising from any act or omission in representing the student in any decision related to the student's education.

This immunity shall not apply to intentional conduct, wanton and willful conduct, or gross negligence.

### **REIMBURSEMENT**

The person appointed to act as an educational surrogate shall be reimbursed by the State Board of Education for all reasonable and necessary expenses incurred as a result of his or her representation of a student with a disability. Determination of "reasonable and necessary" expenses shall be made at the discretion of DESE and pursuant to State Office of Administration guidelines. Such expenses do not include attorney fees or child care/babysitting expenses.

### **EVALUATION**

DESE will send to each public agency an evaluation form to complete for each educational surrogate in which they will recommend the continuation or termination of the surrogate appointment. Public agencies shall provide brief written discussions supporting a recommendation of termination and

attach any existing documentation. Upon receipt of a recommendation of termination, the Office will investigate and reach a decision on whether to terminate.

## **TERMINATION**

The educational surrogate appointment shall be terminated at the request of the educational surrogate or in the event of any of the following situations:

- (1) The conclusions of the initial educational evaluation indicate that the student does not qualify for receiving special education;
- (2) The student's parent or guardian reappears to represent him or her or wardship is terminated;
- (3) The student is no longer in need of special education services;
- (4) The student reaches the age of majority;
- (5) The educational surrogate fails to fulfill their responsibilities as defined by state and federal regulations; and,
- (6) The student graduates and/or reaches age twenty-one (21).

## **J. TRANSFER OF PARENTAL RIGHTS AT AGE OF MAJORITY (34 CFR 300.520)**

When a student with a disability reaches age eighteen (18) or otherwise is emancipated in accordance with state law, the public agency shall provide any required notice to both the student and the parents. All other rights accorded to parents under Part B of IDEA transfer to the student. All rights accorded to parents transfer to students, at age eighteen (18), who are incarcerated in an adult or juvenile, state or local correctional institution. The student and parent must be notified of the transfer of rights. The transfer does not apply if the student is declared incompetent by a court of competent jurisdiction.

## **K. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS/REMOVALS/EXPEDITED HEARINGS**

### **AUTHORITY OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case by case basis when determining whether a change of placement, consistent with other requirements of this section, is appropriate for a student with a disability who violates a code of student conduct.

### **TEN (10) SCHOOL DAYS OR LESS**

School personnel under this subsection may remove a student with a disability who violates a code of student conduct from their current placement to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting, another setting, or suspension, for not more than ten (10) consecutive school days (to the



extent such alternatives are applied to students without disabilities) without providing services. School personnel may also impose additional removals of not more than ten (10) school days consecutively in that same school year for separate incidents, as long as those removals do not constitute a change of placement. Once a student has been removed from his or her placement for a total of ten (10) school days in the same school year, the public agency must, during any subsequent days of removal in that school year, provide services to the extent required below under the subheading “Services.”

### **LONG TERM SUSPENSION**

If school personnel seek to order a change in placement that would exceed ten (10) school days consecutively and the behavior that gave rise to the violation of the school code is determined not to be a manifestation of the student’s disability, the relevant disciplinary procedures applicable to students without disabilities may be applied to the student in the same manner and for the same duration in which the procedures would be applied to students without disabilities, except services must be provided to ensure the student receives a free appropriate public education, although it may be provided in an interim alternative educational setting.

### **CHANGE OF PLACEMENT**

A removal of a student with a disability from the student’s current educational placement is a change of placement if:

- (1) The removal is for more than ten (10) school days in a row; or,
- (2) The student has been subjected to a series of removals that constitute a pattern because:
  - a. The series of removals total more than ten (10) school days in a school year;
  - b. The student’s behavior is substantially similar to the student’s behavior in previous incidents that resulted in the series of removals; and,
  - c. Of such additional factors as the length of each removal, the total amount of time the student has been removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another.

The public agency determines whether a pattern of removals constitutes a change of placement on a case-by-case basis. That determination is subject to review through due process and judicial proceedings.

### **SERVICES**

The services that must be provided to a student with a disability who has been removed from the student’s current placement may be provided in an interim alternative educational setting.

A public agency is only required to provide services to a student with a disability who has been removed from his or her current placement for ten (10) school days or less in that school year, if it provides services to a student without disabilities who has been similarly removed.

A student with a disability who is removed from the student's current placement for more than ten (10) school days must:

- (1) Continue to receive educational services, so as to enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the student's IEP, and
- (2) Receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment, and behavior intervention services, and modifications that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not happen again.

After a student with a disability has been removed from his or her current placement for ten (10) school days in that same school year and, if the current removal is for ten (10) school days in a row or less and if the removal is not a change of placement (see definition below), then school personnel, in consultation with at least one (1) of the student's teachers, shall determine the extent to which services are needed to enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the student's IEP.

If the removal is a change of placement, the student's IEP Team shall determine the appropriate services to enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the student's IEP.

### **MANIFESTATION**

Within ten (10) school days of any decision to change the placement of a student with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct, the public agency, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team (as determined by the parent and the public agency) shall review all relevant information in the student's file, including the student's IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine if the conduct in question was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability; or, if the conduct in question, was the direct result of the public agency's failure to implement the IEP.

If the public agency, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team (as determined by the parent and the public agency) determine that either the conduct in question was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability; or, if the conduct in question, was the direct result of the public agency's failure to implement the IEP applicable for the student, the conduct shall be determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability.

### **DETERMINATION THAT BEHAVIOR WAS A MANIFESTATION**

If the public agency, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team make the determination that the conduct was a manifestation of the student's disability, the IEP Team shall conduct a functional behavioral assessment, and implement a behavioral intervention plan for such student, provided that the public agency had not conducted such assessment prior to such determination before the behavior that resulted in a change in placement. If the student already has such a behavioral intervention plan, the IEP Team must review it and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior.

Unless the removal is due to weapons, drugs, or serious bodily injury, the student must be returned to the placement from which the student was removed, unless the parent and the public agency agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan.

### **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

Whether or not the behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability, school personnel may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting (determined by the student's IEP Team) for up to forty-five (45) school days, if the student:

- (1) Carries a weapon (see the definition below) to school or has a weapon at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of DESE or a public agency;
- (2) Knowingly has or uses illegal drugs (see the definition below) or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance (see the definition below) while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of DESE or a public agency; or,
- (3) Has inflicted serious bodily injury (see the definition below) upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of DESE or a public agency.

On the date on which the decision to take that action is made, the parent must be notified of the decision and provided the Procedural Safeguards statement.

### **DETERMINATION OF SETTING (CFR 300.531)**

The interim alternative educational setting must be determined by the IEP Team for removals that are changes of placement and forty-five (45) school day placements described under special circumstances.

### **EXPEDITED DUE PROCESS HEARING (34 CFR 300.532)**

The parent of a student with a disability who disagrees with any decision regarding placement, or the manifestation determination under this subsection, or a public agency that believes that maintaining the current placement of the student is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others, may request an expedited due process hearing.

### **AUTHORITY OF COMMISSION IN EXPEDITED HEARINGS**

The Administrative Hearing Commission will hold the due process hearing and make a decision. The Commission may:

- (1) Return the student with a disability to the placement from which the student was removed if the Commission determines that the removal was a violation of the requirements described under the heading Authority of School Personnel, or that the student's behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability, or

- (2) Order a change of placement of the student with a disability to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) school days if the hearing Commission determines that maintaining the current placement of the student is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others.

These expedited hearing procedures may be repeated, if the public agency believes that returning the student to the original placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others.

Whenever a parent or a public agency files a due process complaint to request such a hearing:

- (1) The Administrative Hearing Commission must arrange for an expedited due process hearing, which must occur within twenty (20) school days of the date the hearing is requested and must result in a determination within ten (10) school days after the hearing.
- (2) Unless the parents and the public agency agree, in writing, to waive the meeting or agree to use mediation, a resolution meeting must occur within seven (7) calendar days of receiving notice of the due process complaint. The hearing may proceed unless the matter has been resolved to the satisfaction of both parties within fifteen (15) calendar days of receipt of the due process complaint.

A party may appeal the decision in an expedited due process hearing in the same way as they may for decisions in other due process hearings.

The timeline for an expedited due process hearing may not be extended; however, the case may be withdrawn and re-filed.

### **PLACEMENT DURING APPEALS (34 CFR 300.533)**

When the parent or responsible public agency has filed a due process complaint related to disciplinary matters, the student must (unless the parent and DESE or public agency agree otherwise) remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the Administrative Hearing Commission, or until the expiration of the time period of removal as provided for and described under the heading Authority of School Personnel, whichever occurs first.

### **PROTECTION FOR STUDENTS NOT YET ELIGIBLE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES (34 CFR 300.534)**

Students who have not been identified as disabled may be subjected to the same disciplinary measures applied to students without disabilities if the public agency did not have prior knowledge of the disability. If the public agency is deemed to have knowledge that the student was a student with a disability before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action, the student may assert any of the protections for students with disabilities in the area of discipline. The public agency has knowledge of the disability when:

- (1) The parent has expressed concern in writing that the student needs special education services to supervisory or administrative personnel of the appropriate educational agency or a teacher of the student; or,

- (2) The parent has requested an evaluation; or,
- (3) The student's teacher or other school staff has expressed specific concern about a pattern of the student's behavior directly to the director of special education or to other supervisory personnel in accordance with the agency's established child find or special education referral system.

A public agency would not be deemed to have knowledge that the student is a student with a disability if the public agency conducted an evaluation and determined that the student was not a student with a disability; or determined that an evaluation was not necessary and provided proper Notice of Action Refused prior to the behavior incident; or, if the parent of the student has not allowed an evaluation of the student pursuant to IDEA or has refused services.

If a request for evaluation is made during the period the student is subject to disciplinary measures, the evaluation will be expedited. Until the evaluation is completed (assuming the public agency is not deemed to have knowledge that the student is a student with a disability prior to the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action), the student remains in the educational placement determined by the public agency, which can include suspension or expulsion without educational services. If the student is determined to be a student with a disability, the public agency shall provide special education and related services and follow all required procedures for disciplining students with disabilities.

### **REPORTING CRIMES COMMITTED BY STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Nothing in this part shall be construed to prohibit a public agency from reporting crimes, to appropriate law enforcement and judicial authorities, or to prevent state law enforcement and judicial authorities from exercising their responsibilities with regard to the application of federal and state law to crimes committed by students with disabilities. An agency reporting a crime shall ensure copies of the special education and disciplinary records of the student are transmitted for consideration by the appropriate authorities to whom it reports the crime. Transmittal of records must be in accordance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Controlled Substance:** Controlled substance means a drug or other substance identified under schedules I, II, III, IV, or V in Section 202(c) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 USC 812 (c)).

**Illegal Drugs:** Illegal drug means a controlled substance but does not include such a substance that is legally possessed or used under the supervision of a licensed healthcare professional or that is legally possessed or used under any other authority under that Act or under any other provision of federal law.

**Substantial Evidence:** Substantial evidence means beyond a preponderance of the evidence.

**Weapon:** Weapon means dangerous weapon as defined under paragraph (2) of the first subsection (g) of Section 930 of title 18, United States Code. The term "dangerous weapon" means a weapon, device, instrument, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for or is readily

capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury, except that such term does not include a pocket knife with a blade of less than 2½ inches in length.

Serious Bodily Injury: A serious bodily injury involves an injury with a substantial risk of death, extreme physical pain, protracted and obvious disfigurement, protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty (18 USC 1365 (h)(3)).

Listed below are the statutes of the state of Missouri which provide a legal basis for procedural safeguards in this state:

- (1) Section 162.962 RSMo
- (2) Section 162.963(1)(2), RSMo
- (3) Section 162.955, RSMo
- (4) Section 162.997(1)(2), RSMo
- (5) Section 162.958, RSMo
- (6) Section 162.998(1)(2), RSMo
- (7) Section 162.959, RSMo
- (8) Section 162.999(1)(2)(3)(4)(5)(6)(7)(8), RSMo
- (9) Section 162.961 (1)(2)(3)(4)(5), RSMo

**Proposed changes to the Missouri  
State Regulations Implementing Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

**Regulation V – Procedural Safeguards/Discipline**

NOTE: This chart only shows substantive changes being proposed to the Part B State Regulations implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Other changes of a non-substantive nature, such as terminology or wording changes, spelling/punctuation/grammar corrections, etc. are not shown here. For a complete picture of all changes being proposed, the reader is directed to the regulatory document itself.

Regulation	Page	Current Regulation	Proposed Regulation	Rationale
V	66	<p><b><u>PARENTAL CONSENT FOR REEVALUATIONS</u></b></p> <p>Each public agency must obtain informed parental consent, prior to conducting any reevaluation of a student with a disability. If the parent refuses to consent to the reevaluation, the public agency may, but is not required to, pursue the reevaluation by using the consent override procedures (mediation or due process). The public agency does not violate its obligation under child find or evaluations if it declines to pursue the evaluation or reevaluation.</p>	<p><b><u>PARENTAL CONSENT FOR REEVALUATIONS</u></b></p> <p>Each public agency must obtain informed parental consent, prior to conducting any reevaluation of a student with a disability. If the parent refuses to consent to the reevaluation, the public agency may, but is not required to, pursue the reevaluation by using the consent override procedures (mediation or due process). The public agency does not violate its obligation under child find or evaluations if it declines to pursue the evaluation or reevaluation.</p> <p><b>Informed parental consent need not be obtained if the public agency can demonstrate it made reasonable efforts to obtain such consent and the child’s parent failed to respond.</b></p>	<p>Add sentence describing an exception to the consent requirement included in 34 CFR § 300.300(c) to make this section consistent with IDEA regulations.</p>

**Proposed changes to the Missouri  
State Regulations Implementing Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

**Regulation VIII – Personnel Standards**

NOTE: This chart only shows substantive changes being proposed to the Part B State Regulations implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Other changes of a non-substantive nature, such as terminology or wording changes, spelling/punctuation/grammar corrections, etc. are not shown here. For a complete picture of all changes being proposed, the reader is directed to the regulatory document itself.

Regulation	Page	Current Regulation			Proposed Regulation	Rationale for Change
		Title	Responsibilities	Educational Qualifications	Certificates or License	
VIII	105	Speech-Implementer	<del>Assists with the implementation of IEPs under the direction of a speech/language pathologist.</del>	<del>Bachelor’s Degree in Communications Disorders, Elementary Education, or Secondary Education</del>	<del>Certification as a teacher issued by the State Board of Education and annual approval by the Office of Special Education</del>	Removing because LEAs will no longer be allowed to use the speech implementer model beginning with the 2022-23 school year.
VIII	106	Teacher • <del>Specialized</del> <b>Specially designed</b> instruction	Direct instruction, consultation with teachers, develop IEPs, writing evaluation reports, travel training, co-teaching, individualized assessments, sign language instruction.	Bachelor’s Degree	Certification in special education issued by the State Board of Education	Change term to more closely match wording used in IDEA 34 CFR § 300.39(a)(1).



## **REGULATION VIII: PERSONNEL STANDARDS**

### **A. PERSONNEL QUALIFICATIONS (34 CFR 300.156)**

#### **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

DESE has established and maintains qualifications to ensure that personnel necessary to carry out the purposes of this part are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, including that those personnel have the content knowledge and skills to serve children with disabilities.

The qualifications for personnel, includes related services personnel that are consistent with any state approved or state recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the professional discipline in which those personnel are providing special education or related services.

The qualifications for related services personnel ensures that related services personnel who deliver services in their discipline or profession, meet the requirements and have not had certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis and allow assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised, in accordance with state law, regulation, or written policy, to be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services to children with disabilities.

Public agencies must ensure that all personnel necessary to carry out Part B of the Act are appropriately and adequately prepared and meet the requirements outlined in Regulation VIII.

#### **SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS**

Qualifications for teachers ensure that each person employed as a public agency special education teacher in the state who teaches in an elementary school, middle school, or secondary school is fully certificated as a special education teacher as required by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

Public agencies must take measurable steps to recruit, hire, and retain qualified personnel to provide special education and related services to students with disabilities.

#### **RULE OF CONSTRUCTION**

Nothing in this part shall be construed to create a right of action on behalf of an individual student or a class of students for the failure of a particular public agency or DESE employee to be qualified or to prevent a parent from filing a complaint about staff qualifications with DESE.

## **USE OF PARAPROFESSIONALS**

Missouri allows paraprofessionals who are appropriately trained and supervised to be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services to students with disabilities.

Supervision is provided by a properly certificated teacher appropriate for the setting. Public agencies must provide each paraprofessional, including those who hold a teaching certificate, with the orientation and initial training necessary for the individual to perform the duties associated with the work assignment prior to working with the student. At a minimum, such training shall include information and experiences related to:

- (1) The type of disabilities displayed by the students with whom they will work;
- (2) Basic principles of behavior modification;
- (3) Basic instructional techniques expected to be used (demonstration, modeling, cueing, reinforcement, correction, etc.); and,
- (4) Other areas as necessary (positioning, lifting and transferring techniques, feeding procedures, etc.).

Paraprofessionals, including those who hold a teaching certificate, shall receive a minimum of fifteen (15) hours of training within six (6) months of hire and a minimum of ten (10) hours of training yearly in subsequent school years.

## **TELEPRACTICE**

Telepractice is a service delivery model using technology to deliver professional services at a distance by linking professional to student or professional to professional for assessment, intervention, and/or consultation. Utilization of telepractice is governed by the Missouri professional licensing boards and by the policy, procedures, and practices for each profession (i.e. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, The American Occupational Therapy Association, The American Psychological Association, etc.).

## **PERSONNEL STANDARDS**

The Personnel Standards outlined in the following pages list the Titles, Responsibilities, Educational Qualifications, and appropriate Missouri Licensure or Certification requirements for the personnel providing special education and related services for students with disabilities. The Titles listed are not intended to be a finite listing of occupational categories.

The descriptions listed under Responsibilities are not an all inclusive list. Public agencies should review applicable Practice Acts, code of ethics, and content of an individual's preparation program to determine if a designated individual can deliver specific services. Services must be provided consistent with the appropriate guidelines and requirements specified by the individual licensure requirements. In addition, the administration of some standardized assessments have specific requirements for administration. Personnel, with the appropriate education and training, may be qualified to administer these assessments and may hold a variety of job titles.

The Educational Qualifications indicate the entry-level academic degree needed for state approved licensure or certification. Public agencies may employ individuals with qualifications that exceed these requirements. Licensure and Certification requirements are those currently in place and are subject to change by the appropriate governing agency. Specific requirements are available from the appropriate licensing or certifying agency that is listed.

## PERSONNEL STANDARDS

TITLE	RESPONSIBILITIES	EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS	CERTIFICATES OR LICENSE
Adaptive Physical Education Teacher	Direct instruction, consult with teachers, assist in developing IEPs, individualized assessments.	Bachelor's Degree	Certification in physical education or special education issued by the State Board of Education
Assistant Behavior Analyst	Provides applied behavior analysis services under the supervision of a behavior analyst. Supervises the implementation of ABA services by ABA implementers such as Paraprofessionals or Registered Behavior Technicians. Conducts assessments and develops plans. Provides support, consultation, and intervention regarding behavior management and ABA instruction. Conducts professional development in behavior intervention and instructional techniques including but not limited to discrete trial, pivotal response training, and verbal behavior training.	Bachelor's Degree	License issued by the Division of Professional Registration
Audiologist	Plans and implements screening, evaluation/diagnosis, and special education services for hearing impaired students.	Master's Degree	License issued by the State Board of Registration for the Healing Arts
Audiology Aide	Works under direct supervision of a licensed audiologist.	High school diploma or a high school equivalency (HSE) certificate	Registration certificate issued by the State Board of Registration for the Healing Arts
Behavior Analyst	Provides applied behavior analysis services. Develops and oversees behavior intervention plans. Supervises the implementation of ABA services by ABA implementers such as Paraprofessionals or Registered Behavior Technicians. Conducts assessments and develops plans. Provides support, consultation, and intervention regarding behavior management and ABA instruction. Conducts professional development in behavior intervention and instructional techniques including but not limited to discrete trial, pivotal response training, and verbal behavior training.	Master's Degree	License issued by the Division of Professional Registration
Case Manager	An administrative function that includes oversight of the IEP process on an individual student basis.	Bachelor's Degree	Certification in any area of special education issued by the State Board of Education
Counselor, School	Provides direct guidance and counseling to eligible students with disabilities not routinely provided to the entire school population.	Master's Degree	Certification as a School Counselor issued by the State Board of Education

Counselor, Licensed Professional	Provides individual and group counseling techniques, methods or procedures for the purposes of assessing, understanding or influencing behavior. Conducts assessments for aptitudes, intelligence, attitudes, abilities, achievement, interests or personal characteristics. Provides Therapeutic vocational/personal rehabilitation.	Master's Degree	License issued by the Division of Professional Registration
Educational Diagnostician	Administers educational evaluations and assists in determining eligibility for special education.	Master's Degree	Certification as a School Counselor, School Psychological Examiner, School Psychologist, or in special education issued by the State Board of Education; or a Licensed Professional Counselor license issued by Division of Professional Registration
Interpreter of the Deaf	Facilitates communication between students with hearing impairments and hearing persons.	High school diploma or a high school equivalency (HSE) certificate	Certification issued by the Commission for the Deaf and a license issued by the Division of Professional Registration.
Music Therapist	Participates in the development and implementation of IEPs.	Bachelor's Degree	Certification recognized by the American Music Therapy Association
Occupational Therapist	Provides occupational therapy and evaluation services to eligible students with disabilities.	Bachelor's Degree	License issued by the Missouri Board of Occupational Therapy
Occupational Therapy, Certified Assistant (COTA)	Provides occupational therapy services under the direction of a licensed occupational therapist.	AA degree	License issued by the Missouri Board of Occupational Therapy
Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Specialist	Provides orientation and mobility services to eligible students with visual impairments.	Bachelor's Degree with specialization in orientation and mobility, teaching the blind and visually impaired, rehabilitation teaching, special education, occupational therapy, physical therapy or closely related area	Certified by the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) as an Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS) or current O&M services contract with Rehabilitation Services for the Blind
Orientation and Mobility Paraprofessional	Provides orientation and mobility services under the direction of an Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Specialist.	High school diploma or a high school equivalency (HSE) certificate, and demonstrated proficiency in O&M as determined by the supervisory O&M Specialist	None

Paraprofessional	Assists with the implementation of IEPs under the direction of a licensed/certificated professional. Additional responsibilities may include: practicing and supporting skills and behaviors described in a child's IEP goals related to instruction provided by a licensed/certificated professional, meeting the physical needs of the student, preparation of materials and providing other supports that may be necessary based on the student's needs and disability.	High school diploma or a high school equivalency (HSE) certificate OR If assigned to a school-wide Title I building, meets the paraprofessional requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act	None
Paraprofessional for Braille Instruction	Assists with the implementation of IEPs under the direction of a teacher for the visually impaired.	High school diploma or a high school equivalency (HSE) certificate OR If assigned to a school-wide Title I building, meets the paraprofessional requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and demonstrated proficiency in Braille as determined by the supervisory teacher for the visually impaired	None
Physical Therapist	Provides physical therapy and evaluation services to eligible students with disabilities.	Bachelor's Degree OR Master's Degree if graduated after December 31, 2002	License issued by the State Board of Registration for the Healing Arts
Physical Therapist Assistant	Provides Physical Therapy services under the direction of a physical therapist.	60 hours prescribed course of study, Associate's Degree	License issued by State Board of Registration for the Healing Arts
Physician	Provides medical, evaluative, and diagnostic services, and assists in planning and implementing special education services for students with disabilities.	Medical Degree	License issued by the State Board of Registration for the Healing Arts

Psychologist, School	Administers psychological tests, participates on evaluation teams, provides psychological services to eligible students with disabilities as specified on the IEP, and assists in planning and implementing special education services.	Master's Degree	Certification as a School Psychologist issued by the State Board of Education
Psychologists	Administers psychological tests, participates on evaluation teams, provides psychological services to eligible students with disabilities as specified on the IEP, and assists in planning and implementing special education services.	Master's Degree	License issued by the Division of Professional Registration
Recreational Therapist	Participates in the development and implementation of IEPs.	Bachelor's Degree	Certification recognized by the Recreational Therapy Association
Registered Behavior Technician	Implements behavior intervention strategies and applied behavior analysis supports under supervision of the Behavior Analyst and/or Assistant Behavior Analyst. Assists in the implementation of intervention strategies and the preparation and collection of data for Behavior Intervention Plans.	Complete 40 hours of training through an approved curriculum and pass competency examination needed to apply for registration issued by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board	Registered Behavior Technician registration issued by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board
School Nurse, LPN	Provides health services under the direction of an RN or Physician. <a href="http://www.allnursingschools.com/nursing-careers/article/registered-nurse-vs-licensed-practical-nurse/">http://www.allnursingschools.com/nursing-careers/article/registered-nurse-vs-licensed-practical-nurse/</a>	Degree, diploma or certificate from an accredited Licensed Practical Nursing Program	License issued by the State Board of Nursing
School Nurse, RN	Provides screening, evaluative, and diagnostic health information. Provides health services to eligible students with disabilities as specified on the student's IEP. The health services would include only those not routinely provided to the entire school population.	Degree, diploma or certificate from an accredited Professional Nursing Program	License issued by the State Board of Nursing
School Psychological Examiner	Coordinates and/or participates on the multidisciplinary evaluation team. Conducts individual evaluations and assists in determining whether a student is a student with a disability	Master's Degree	Certification as a School Psychological Examiner issued by the State Board of Education

School Social Worker	Provide services to parents of students with special education needs, assists in the development and implementation of IEPs. Assist in identification and assessment of individual's educational needs including social, emotional, behavioral, adaptive needs; develops and implements behavior intervention plans; provides individual, group, parent, and family counseling and consultation; serves as a liaison with home, school, and community.	Master's Degree in Social Work	None
Social Worker, Licensed Clinical	Provides methods, principles, and techniques of casework, group work, client centered advocacy community organization, administration, planning, evaluation, consultation, research, psychotherapy and counseling methods and techniques to persons, families, and groups in assessment, diagnosis, treatment, prevention, and amelioration of mental emotional conditions. Delivers services that are billable to Medicaid.	Master's Degree	License issued by Missouri State Committee for Social Workers
Special Education Administrator	Directs, coordinates, and supervises the public agency's special education services.	Master's Degree	Certification as a Special Education Administrator issued by the State Board of Education.
Special Education Process Coordinator	Supervises the special education process from referral through placement and provision of services, appropriate identification and placement of students with disabilities; and, public agency compliance with state and federal requirements for special education.	Bachelor's Degree	Certification in any area of special education issued by the State Board of Education or certification or licensure in a related service area
Special Education Supervisor/PK-12	Directs and assists special education teachers and paraprofessionals, grades PK-12, or any combination thereof, in providing special education services to students with disabilities.	Bachelor's Degree	Certification in special education issued by the State Board of Education
Speech Implementer	Assists with the implementation of IEPs under the direction of a speech/language pathologist.	Bachelor's Degree in Communications Disorders, Elementary Education, or Secondary Education	Certification as a teacher issued by the State Board of Education and annual approval by the Office of Special Education



Speech/Language Pathologist	Provides direct instruction, consultation with teachers, develops IEPs, writes evaluation reports, and may provide evaluation services and any other duties permitted by state law.	Master's Degree	Certification as a Speech and Language Pathologist issued by the State Board of Education or license issued by the State Board of Registration for the Healing Arts
Speech/Language Pathologist, Diagnostic	Provides evaluation services for students with suspected speech/language disabilities. This person does not have a caseload of students for provision of direct services.		
Speech/Language Pathology Aide	Works under the direct supervision of a licensed speech/language pathologist. Additional responsibilities may include preparation of materials and providing other supports that may be necessary based on the student's needs and disability.	High school diploma or a high school equivalency (HSE) certificate	Registration certificate issued by the State Board of Registration for the Healing Arts
Speech/Language Pathology Assistant	Assists with the implementation of IEPs under the direction of a licensed speech/language pathologist.	Bachelor's Degree	Registration certificate issued by the State Board of Registration for the Healing Arts
Teacher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early childhood special education</li> </ul>	Direct instruction, consultation with teachers, develop IEPs, writing evaluation reports, travel training, individualized assessments.	Bachelor's Degree	Certification in early childhood special education issued by the State Board of Education
Teacher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early childhood blended</li> </ul>	Direct instruction, consultation with teachers, develop IEPs, writing evaluation reports, travel training, individualized assessments.	Bachelor's Degree	Certification in early childhood or early childhood special education issued by the State Board of Education
Teacher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hearing Impaired</li> </ul>	Specialized instruction in sign language or other related instruction.	Bachelor's Degree	Certification in deaf and hearing impaired issued by the State Board of Education
Teacher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <del>Specialized</del> <b>Specialized</b> <b>Specially designed</b> instruction</li> </ul>	Direct instruction, consultation with teachers, develop IEPs, writing evaluation reports, travel training, co-teaching, individualized assessments, sign language instruction.	Bachelor's Degree	Certification in special education issued by the State Board of Education
Teacher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visually Impaired</li> </ul>	Specialized instruction in Braille or other related instruction.	Bachelor's Degree	Certification in blind and partially sighted issued by the State Board of Education
Vocational/Career Education Resource Educator (VRE)	Assists with the development and implementation of IEPs and the placement of students with disabilities in vocational programs.	Bachelor's Degree	Special Education Certificate or Counselor or Vocational Certificate and additional coursework as determined by the Vocational Division

**Proposed changes to the Missouri  
State Regulations Implementing Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

**Regulation XVI – State Operated Programs**

NOTE: This chart only shows substantive changes being proposed to the Part B State Regulations implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Other changes of a non-substantive nature, such as terminology or wording changes, spelling/punctuation/grammar corrections, etc. are not shown here. For a complete picture of all changes being proposed, the reader is directed to the regulatory document itself.

Regulation	Page	Current Regulation	Proposed Regulation	Rationale
XVI	150-151	<p>(5) Following a professional review of this information provided by the public agency, the public agency shall be notified whether or not the student is eligible for services through MSSD. The eligibility decision is not appealable.</p> <p>Students who would otherwise be eligible for MSSD based on the severity of the disability will not be accepted if they require homebound placement as such a placement would preclude attendance at a separate day program such as MSSD. Students who otherwise qualify and require only intermittent services in the home will be eligible for referral.</p> <p>(6) Should the public agency be notified that the student is eligible for MSSD, the public agency may refer the student. The public agency shall notify parents of the eligibility decision and submit the referral only after the parents have been offered all rights available to them as explained in the Procedural Safeguards notice. The IEP, at time of referral, must reflect the actual number of minutes of service per week needed to provide FAPE, or the public agency must reconvene the IEP Team before submitting the referral so as to ensure an IEP Team decision on actual minutes needed to provide free appropriate public education (FAPE).</p> <p>(7) Upon receipt of the completed referral form, IEP for separate placement, and Notice of Action for change of placement, enrollment documents will be mailed to the parent. MSSD will notify the LEA of the date of the student’s enrollment. A student with a severe disability may enroll in MSSD upon attaining the age of five (5) years. Extended School Year services shall be provided to students who attain age five (5) years during the summer, if eligible for such services.</p>	<p><b><u>MSSD ELIGIBILITY REVIEW</u></b></p> <p><del>(5)</del>(1) Following a professional review of this information provided by the public agency, the public agency shall be notified whether or not the student is eligible for services through MSSD. The eligibility decision is not appealable.</p> <p>Students who would otherwise be eligible for MSSD based on the severity of the disability will not be accepted if they require homebound placement as such a placement would preclude attendance at a separate day program such as MSSD. Students who otherwise qualify and require only intermittent services in the home will be eligible for referral.</p> <p><del>(6)</del>(2) Should the public agency be notified that the student is eligible for MSSD, the public agency may refer the student. The public agency shall notify parents of the eligibility decision and submit the referral only after the parents have been offered all rights available to them as explained in the Procedural Safeguards notice. The IEP, at time of referral, must reflect the actual number of minutes of service per week needed to provide FAPE, or the public agency must reconvene the IEP Team before submitting the referral so as to ensure an IEP Team decision on actual minutes needed to provide free appropriate public education (FAPE).</p> <p><b><u>MSSD REFERRAL PROCEDURE</u></b></p> <p><del>(7)</del>(1) Upon receipt of the completed referral form, IEP for separate placement, and Notice of Action for change of placement, enrollment documents will be mailed to the parent. MSSD will notify the LEA of the date of the student’s enrollment. A student with a severe disability may enroll in MSSD upon attaining the age of five (5) years. Extended School Year services shall be provided</p>	<p>Section headers added to more clearly identify the components of the eligibility and referral process. Sections re-numbered to adjust for addition of the headers.</p> <p>Revise this section to make it clear that local public agencies are responsible for determining placement in the least restrictive</p>

		<p>(8) The public agency will convene an IEP meeting in collaboration with MSSD at least annually to review and/or revise IEPs for students enrolled in MSSD.</p> <p>(9) At any time the IEP Team may determine, based on general functioning level and progress shown, that the student is no longer eligible for MSSD, either because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The student’s cognitive and adaptive levels of functioning and performance at school no longer demonstrate a need for pervasive levels of supports across all life areas and a separate school placement no longer appears to be the student’s least restrictive environment, or</li> <li>b. A separate school placement is no longer the student’s least restrictive environment because he or she demonstrates a need for homebound instruction that exceeds the scope of what would reasonably be considered intermittent in nature.</li> </ul> <p>In such instances, the IEP Team, including a representative of MSSD, convenes to review/revise the IEP to consider placement in the least restrictive environment. The Team should consider IEP goal progress data, other existing data in the education record, information in the most recent reevaluation, and any relevant medical information. MSSD will develop an IEP based on the IEP Team’s decisions, including services and IEP goals to be implemented by the public agency in accordance with the IDEA transfer processes, when the student re-enrolls at the public agency. The public agency will provide the parent with prior written notice of the change in placement and change in services.</p>	<p>to students who attain age five (5) years during the summer, if eligible for such services.</p> <p><del>(8)</del>(2) The public agency will convene an IEP meeting in collaboration with MSSD at least annually to review and/or revise IEPs for students enrolled in MSSD.</p> <p><del>(9)</del>(3) At any time the IEP Team may determine, based on general functioning level and <b>IEP goal</b> progress shown, that the student is no longer eligible for MSSD, either because <b>MSSD can no longer provide FAPE in the least restrictive environment.:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <del>The student’s cognitive and adaptive levels of functioning and performance at school no longer demonstrate a need for pervasive levels of supports across all life areas and a separate school placement no longer appears to be the student’s least restrictive environment, or</del></li> <li>b. <del>A separate school placement is no longer the student’s least restrictive environment because he or she demonstrates a need for homebound instruction that exceeds the scope of what would reasonably be considered intermittent in nature.</del></li> </ul> <p>In such instances, the <b>public agency representative convenes the</b> IEP Team, including a representative of MSSD, <del>convenes</del> to review/revise the IEP to <del>consider</del><b>determine</b> placement in the least restrictive environment. The Team should consider IEP goal progress data, other existing data in the education record, information <del>in</del><b>from</b> the most recent reevaluation, and any relevant medical information. <del>MSSD will develop an IEP based on the IEP Team’s decisions, including services and IEP goals to be implemented by the public agency in accordance with the IDEA transfer processes, when the student re-enrolls at the public agency.</del> The public agency will provide the parent with prior written notice of the change in placement and change in services.</p>	<p>environment and, when MSSD is no longer the appropriate placement, the public agency convenes the IEP team to change the placement in the least restrictive environment. Removing reference to transfer student process because the local public agency was responsible for determining placement when the student attended MSSD and continues to be responsible when placement in the LRE changes.</p>
XVI	152	<p>(5) During the sixty (60) day interim placement, the public agency shall follow the referral procedures to seek eligibility determination in accordance with 1-4 above.</p>	<p>(5) During the sixty (60) day interim placement, the public agency shall follow the referral procedures to seek eligibility determination in accordance with 1-4 above <b><u>MSSD Eligibility Review.</u></b></p>	<p>Revise to reflect proposed formatting changes in preceding sections.</p>

# **REGULATION XVI: STATE OPERATED PROGRAMS**

## **A. SEA PROVISION OF DIRECT SERVICES**

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) provides free appropriate public education (FAPE) services for students with disabilities through three State Board of Education Operated Programs: School for the Deaf (MSD), School for the Blind (MSB), and the Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled (MSSD).

It is the policy of DESE that the requirements of Part B of IDEA are implemented by the State Board of Education Operated Programs responsible for the education of students with disabilities. Each State Board Operated Program is required to submit a Compliance Plan that specifies the policies and procedures necessary to meet the requirements of IDEA.

DESE ensures each educational program for students with disabilities administered by the State Board of Education is under the general supervision of the Office of Special Education, DESE, and that their programs meet the standards of the State Education Agency (SEA).

DESE ensures funds provided under Part B to support SEA direct services are used in accordance with requirements of this state plan with the exception of those policies related to excess cost.

## **B. MISSOURI SCHOOLS FOR THE SEVERELY DISABLED**

### **REGULATIONS FOR SERVICES**

MSSD, a system of day school services in a separate school settings, was established by state law to serve students with severe disabilities referred to the State Board of Education by public agencies which do not operate such programs themselves and which are not a part of special school districts. If the evaluation information and the Individualized Education Program (IEP) compiled by the public agency supports separate school placement as the student's least restrictive educational environment, the LEA may request a determination of student eligibility for services. The following procedural information is provided to assist public agencies in accessing services from MSSD.

### **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR MSSD**

- (1) The public agency must establish the existence of a severe or profound intellectual disability. Students with severe disabilities generally have significant cognitive deficits as evidenced by method a or b described below:
  - a. The student obtains scores falling four (4) or more standard deviations below the mean using a standardized measure of cognitive functioning. The evaluation report also includes scores from a normative referenced standardized measure of adaptive

behavior that yields a composite score that falls four (4) or more standard deviations below the mean, or

- b. The student is not able to respond to any standardized measure of cognitive ability due to a combination of sensory and/or motor impairments, but evaluation information indicates significant deficits in cognitive ability and adaptive behavior skills as evidenced by a description of the student's need for pervasive levels of supports across all life areas, as defined by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) classification system. The evaluation report also includes scores from a normative referenced standardized measure of adaptive behavior that yields a composite score that falls four (4) or more standard deviations below the mean.

Only assessment results from comprehensive evaluations less than three (3) years old and consistent with the procedures in Regulation III will be considered during the MSSD eligibility process.

- (2) The public agency shall provide justification of why the public agency is not the least restrictive environment for the student.

Students who educationally benefit from special education and related services that can be provided by the public agency are not considered eligible for services through MSSD. In general, students with disabilities such as cognitive deficits falling two (2) to three (3) standard deviations below the mean, Speech or Language Impairments, Hearing Impairment/Deaf, Visual Impairment/Blind, Learning Disabilities, Emotional Disturbance, Other Health Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, or Orthopedic Impairment can receive an appropriate education when served by public agencies.

## **ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURES**

In order to assure compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations governing identification, evaluation, IEP development, and educational placement procedures for students who may be enrolled in MSSD, the following procedures have been adopted by the State Board of Education.

- (1) All students identified as potentially in need of special education services shall be enrolled in and served by the public agency pending the determination of such need. This includes students whose performance indicates possible functioning within the range of severe to profound intellectual disability.
- (2) The public agency in which the student resides shall complete a comprehensive evaluation which is current within three (3) years. Additional evaluations may be required as determined necessary for individual students. The evaluation information must be obtained in accordance with state regulations on evaluation. Additional educational records or other pertinent information may be required by MSSD to clarify the student's educational needs.

- (3) Following compilation of evaluation information, the public agency where the student resides is responsible for development of an IEP for the current school term in accordance with the requirements of state regulations. The public agency must consider all service options, including service through a separate school placement, to determine which is appropriate to meet the student's educational needs.
- (4) If the IEP Team is considering separate school as a placement option for the student, the public agency must forward the evaluation report, current IEP, and justification for separate school placement to MSSD for eligibility consideration. The preceding IEPs, if applicable, and related educational records and other pertinent information for all services provided by the public agency shall also be forwarded. MSSD may request additional information on an individual student basis if necessary. Following a professional review of this information, the public agency shall be notified whether the student is eligible for services through MSSD. The eligibility determination is not appealable and is a unilateral determination made by MSSD. If the student is determined eligible, MSSD will send the public agency recommendations for needed instruction and services as appropriate.

### **MSSD ELIGIBILITY REVIEW**

- ~~(5)~~(1) Following a professional review of this information provided by the public agency, the public agency shall be notified whether or not the student is eligible for services through MSSD. The eligibility decision is not appealable.

Students who would otherwise be eligible for MSSD based on the severity of the disability will not be accepted if they require homebound placement as such a placement would preclude attendance at a separate day program such as MSSD. Students who otherwise qualify and require only intermittent services in the home will be eligible for referral.

- ~~(6)~~(2) Should the public agency be notified that the student is eligible for MSSD, the public agency may refer the student. The public agency shall notify parents of the eligibility decision and submit the referral only after the parents have been offered all rights available to them as explained in the Procedural Safeguards notice. The IEP, at time of referral, must reflect the actual number of minutes of service per week needed to provide FAPE, or the public agency must reconvene the IEP Team before submitting the referral so as to ensure an IEP Team decision on actual minutes needed to provide free appropriate public education (FAPE).

### **MSSD REFERRAL PROCEDURE**

- ~~(7)~~(1) Upon receipt of the completed referral form, IEP for separate placement, and Notice of Action for change of placement, enrollment documents will be mailed to the parent. MSSD will notify the LEA of the date of the student's enrollment. A student with a severe disability may enroll in MSSD upon attaining the age of five (5) years. Extended School Year services shall be provided to students who attain age five (5) years during the summer, if eligible for such services.

~~(8)~~**(2)** The public agency will convene an IEP meeting in collaboration with MSSD at least annually to review and/or revise IEPs for students enrolled in MSSD.

~~(9)~~**(3)** At any time the IEP Team may determine, based on general functioning level and **IEP goal** progress shown, that the student is no longer eligible for MSSD, either because **MSSD can no longer provide FAPE in the least restrictive environment**:

- a. ~~The student's cognitive and adaptive levels of functioning and performance at school no longer demonstrate a need for pervasive levels of supports across all life areas and a separate school placement no longer appears to be the student's least restrictive environment, or~~
- b. ~~A separate school placement is no longer the student's least restrictive environment because he or she demonstrates a need for homebound instruction that exceeds the scope of what would reasonably be considered intermittent in nature.~~

In such instances, the **public agency representative convenes the** IEP Team, including a representative of MSSD, ~~convenes~~ to review/revise the IEP to ~~consider~~ **determine** placement in the least restrictive environment. The Team should consider IEP goal progress data, other existing data in the education record, information ~~in~~ **from** the most recent reevaluation, and any relevant medical information. ~~MSSD will develop an IEP based on the IEP Team's decisions, including services and IEP goals to be implemented by the public agency in accordance with the IDEA transfer processes, when the student re-enrolls at the public agency.~~ The public agency will provide the parent with prior written notice of the change in placement and change in services.

## **REEVALUATION**

The public agency shall conduct a reevaluation as required by state regulations. Results of the reevaluation shall be submitted to MSSD for review. Additional data may be requested by MSSD to clarify the student's educational needs.

## **TRANSFER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN MSSD**

A student who is enrolled in an MSSD school and moves from one public agency to another (including those moves to another public agency within the catchment area of the MSSD school the student currently attends), may transfer enrollment immediately on the basis of the justification for separate school placement, current IEP, and evaluation report. This is considered an interim placement, not to exceed thirty (30) days, during which the new public agency follows the transfer procedures provided within Regulation III to confirm concurrence with placement in MSSD as the least restrictive educational environment for the student. If this review results in determination that MSSD is the least restrictive environment, the new public agency will complete the Justification for Continued Separate School Placement form. If, during the thirty (30) day interim period, the new public agency fails to provide the Justification for Continued Separate School Placement form, the student will not be served by MSSD and shall be served by the public agency through a placement other than MSSD.

**TRANSFER OF STUDENTS WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES FROM A SEPARATE SCHOOL (DAY) FACILITY (IN MISSOURI PUBLIC AGENCY, A SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT, OR AN OUT-OF-STATE PROGRAM)**

A sixty (60) day interim placement at MSSD may be available for students with severe disabilities who are changing public agencies due to a change in residence. These students must have been receiving services in their public agency, through cooperative arrangement with another public agency, in a special school district, or in an out-of-state program for students with severe disabilities.

To qualify for this interim placement, the following criteria must be met:

- (1) The current IEP and comprehensive evaluation report are adopted by the new public agency pursuant to transfer procedures provided within Regulation IV.
- (2) The new public agency submits a copy of the student's current IEP and comprehensive evaluation report to MSSD with a letter acknowledging adoption of the documents. In the same letter, the new public agency will verify the previous placement provided educational services in a self-contained classroom with students with severe disabilities in a separate school building. In addition, the public agency requests that the student be served in a sixty (60) day interim placement to confirm concurrence with placement in MSSD as the least restrictive educational environment for the student.
- (3) MSSD will issue a letter of interim placement assignment if the information submitted is viewed as substantiating the request.
- (4) Enrollment documents must be completed at the onset of the sixty (60) day interim placement period. MSSD will notify the public agency of the date of the student's enrollment.
- (5) During the sixty (60) day interim placement, the public agency shall follow the referral procedures to seek eligibility determination in accordance with ~~4-4 above~~ **MSSD Eligibility Review**. If found eligible, the public agency will issue a notice of action to the parents, guardian or educational surrogate and MSSD confirming continued placement. If, during the sixty (60) day interim period, the public agency fails to submit the justification for separate school placement, the student will not be served by MSSD and shall be served by the public agency through a placement other than MSSD.

If MSSD is not confirmed as the student's least restrictive educational environment, the public agency is notified of this decision and becomes responsible for providing the required special education and related services in accordance with Regulation V and Regulation IV.



## **TRANSFER OF STUDENTS WHO PREVIOUSLY ATTENDED MSSD, MOVED OUT OF STATE, AND HAVE RETURNED TO MISSOURI**

To qualify for this interim placement, the following criteria must be met:

- (1) The student attended MSSD in the 12 months prior to seeking readmission,
- (2) The student moved out of state and had an IEP placement other than a separate day school,
- (3) The student moved back to Missouri, and
- (4) The parent agrees to the interim placement at MSSD.

Procedure to implement the interim placement:

- (1) The current IEP and comprehensive evaluation report are reviewed by the new public agency pursuant to transfer procedures provided within Regulation IV and a decision made accepting or rejecting the IEP and evaluation report is documented.
- (2) The new public agency submits a copy of the student's current IEP and evaluation report to MSSD with documentation of the acceptance or rejection of the documents. In a letter, the new public agency will verify the previous placement at MSSD within the prior twelve (12) months. In addition, the public agency requests that the student be served in a sixty (60) day interim placement to confirm concurrence with placement in MSSD as the least restrictive educational environment for the student.
- (3) MSSD will issue a letter of interim placement assignment if the information submitted is viewed as substantiating the request.
- (4) Enrollment documents must be completed at the onset of the sixty (60) day interim placement period. MSSD will notify the public agency of the date of the student's enrollment.
- (5) During the sixty (60) day interim placement, the public agency shall follow the procedures to seek eligibility determination in accordance with 1-4 above. If found eligible, the public agency will issue a notice of action to the parents, guardian, or educational surrogate and MSSD confirming continued placement. If, during the sixty (60) day interim period, the public agency fails to submit all the documentation needed to determine eligibility for placement at MSSD, the student will not be served by MSSD and shall be served by the public agency through a placement other than MSSD.

If MSSD is not confirmed as the student's least restrictive educational environment, the public agency is notified of this decision and becomes responsible for providing the required special education and related services in accordance with Regulation V and Regulation IV.

## **C. MISSOURI SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND MISSOURI SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF**

The Missouri School for the Blind (MSB) and Missouri School for the Deaf (MSD) are established by state law to serve those students referred to the State Board of Education by local public agencies who may require such services to receive a free appropriate public education. If the evaluation information and the Individualized Education Program (IEP) compiled by the local public agency supports separate school placement as the student's least restrictive educational environment, the local public agency may seek determination of student eligibility for services. The following procedural information is supplied to assist public agencies in accessing services from MSD and MSB.

### **ELIGIBILITY FOR MSB AND MSD**

**MSB:** Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired, for purposes of MSB eligibility, are those students who meet the state eligibility criteria for Visual Impairment. Students who meet the state eligibility category criteria for Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled (MSSD) are not eligible for MSB.

**MSD:** Students who are Deaf or Hearing Impaired, for purposes of MSD eligibility, are those students who meet the state eligibility criteria for Deaf/Hearing Impaired. Students who meet the state eligibility criteria for MSSD are not eligible for MSD.

A student may enroll in MSB and MSD upon attaining the age of five (5) years. Extended School Year services shall be provided to students who attain age five (5) years during the summer, if eligible for such services.

In order to assure compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations governing identification, evaluation, IEP development, and educational placement procedures for students who seek enrollment in either the MSD or MSB program, the following procedures have been adopted by the State Board of Education. The public agency is encouraged to request a professional employee of MSB or MSD to participate in the enrollment and referral process. Such requests for participation shall be honored when made during the school term and when schedules permit.

- (1) All students identified as potentially in need of services from the State Board Operated Programs shall be enrolled in public agency programming pending the determination of such need.
- (2) The public agency in which the student resides shall provide comprehensive and appropriate evaluation information, current within three (3) years. The public agency may be required to submit to MSB or MSD additional evaluations, educational records, or other pertinent information as determined necessary to clarify the student's educational needs. The requested additional evaluations must be obtained in accordance with Regulation III.

- (3) Following compilation of evaluation information, the public agency where the student resides is responsible for development of an IEP for the current school term in accordance with the requirements of state regulation provisions for IEPs within Regulation IV. The public agency must consider all service options, including service through a separate school placement, to determine which is appropriate to meet the student's educational needs.
- (4) If the IEP Team is considering separate school as a placement option for the student, they must submit documentation of the justification for such placement in writing, including an explanation that MSB or MSD would be the least restrictive educational environment for the student. The justification documentation must include information that the public agency has:
  - a. Considered educating the student in the public agency;
  - b. Identified supplementary aids and services that would be needed to educate the student in the public agency; and,
  - c. Articulated why the public agency cannot serve the student in the public agency in a placement that would benefit the student.

The public agency must submit to MSB or MSD any supporting evidence of each of the preceding statements that justify the IEP Team's decision.

- (5) When the IEP indicates the student is in need of services which the public agency is unable to provide and which may be provided by the MSB or MSD, the public agency may forward the evaluation report, current IEP, and justification for separate school placement to MSB or MSD for eligibility review. The preceding IEPs, if applicable, and related educational records and other pertinent information for all services provided by the public agency shall also be forwarded. MSB or MSD may request additional information if necessary. Following a professional review of this information, the public agency shall be notified whether the student is eligible for services through MSB or MSD. The eligibility determination is not appealable and is a unilateral determination made by MSB or MSD, respectively. If the student is determined eligible, MSB or MSD will send the public agency recommendations for instructional programming and services if appropriate.

## REFERRAL

- (1) Should the public agency be notified that the student is eligible for MSB or MSD, the public agency may refer the student after holding an IEP meeting to consider the recommendations from MSB and MSD and modify the IEP accordingly if needed. The IEP, at time of referral, must reflect the actual number of minutes of service per week needed to provide FAPE, or the public agency must reconvene the IEP Team before submitting the referral so as to ensure an IEP Team decision on actual minutes needed to provide FAPE.

After the parents have received an explanation of the Procedural Safeguards notice, the public agency shall submit the referral to MSB or MSD. Notice of such decision to refer

shall be given to the parent in accordance with the law, including an explanation of their right to appeal the action through use of their due process hearing rights.

- (2) When referring the student, the public agency will send the newly revised IEP to MSB or MSD. Upon acceptance of the referral, MSB or MSD will send enrollment documents to the parents.
- (3) The public agency will convene an IEP meeting in collaboration with MSB or MSD at least annually to review and/or revise IEPs for students enrolled in MSB or MSD.
- (4) If at any time MSB or MSD believes a modification to the student's IEP is required, including instances wherein MSB or MSD does not believe MSB or MSD is the Least Restrictive Environment, MSB or MSD will notify the public agency that an IEP Team meeting is necessary. The public agency must hold an IEP Team meeting within a reasonable time of MSB's or MSD's notification to the public agency of the need for an IEP Team meeting. The student's teacher and other appropriate professional personnel from MSD or MSB shall be invited to participate in this meeting. If the IEP Team determines the student is ineligible for services at MSB or MSD, they shall inform the parents of their right to appeal in accordance with the Procedural Safeguards.

### **REEVALUATION**

The public agency shall conduct a reevaluation as required by state regulations.

Results of the reevaluation shall be submitted to MSB and MSD for review. Additional data, including additional evaluation information, may be requested by MSB or MSD and must be provided by the public agency to clarify the student's educational needs.