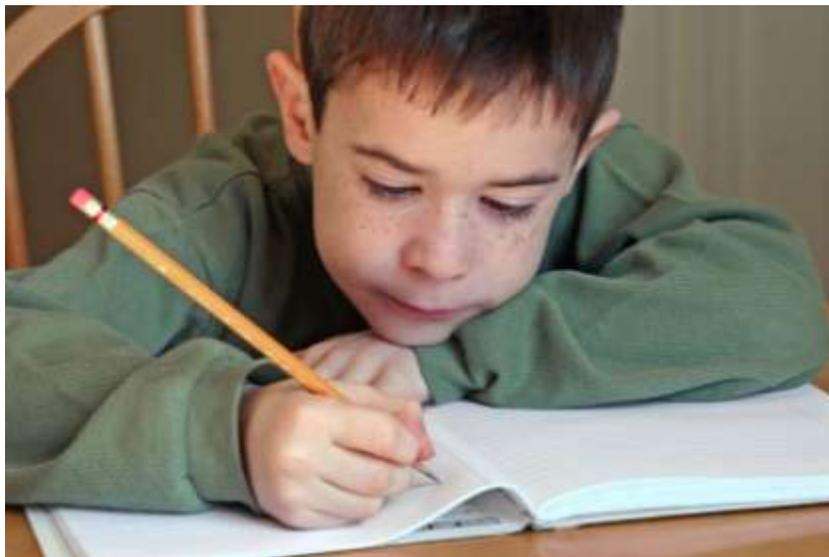


Special Education Policy and Procedural Manual



Special Education Procedural Manual

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Introduction

Special Education Department Philosophy

Seven Hills offers a multitude of services for students with special needs. We are committed to providing all children a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. We are proud to serve our children in a highly engaging, inclusive environment. Classrooms are staffed with highly qualified teachers and assistants who are dedicated to supporting all learners. In addition, we have a talented Team of special educators and clinicians who provide specialized instruction and work collaboratively with classroom teachers to better serve all students. Our occupational therapist, school psychologist and speech and language specialists provide excellent services to students and serve as resources to our staff and families.

This manual has been developed as a resource for the Seven Hills Charter Public School staff, administration and community. It references state and federal regulations and the processes of Seven Hills Charter Public School. □ The following policies and procedures are aligned with the:

- Massachusetts Department of Education, Massachusetts General Laws ch. 71B, et seq., Special Education Regulations 603 CMR28.00 et. seq. and IDEA 2004.
- The Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 aligns IDEA closely to the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), helping to ensure equity, accountability and excellence in education for children with disabilities.
- Section 504 The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended).

Office Information

Special Education programs and services at SHCPS are overseen by the Student Support Director. The Director's office is located in the main office of the school at 51 Gage Street Worcester, MA. The office is open from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday, and can be reached by telephone at 508-799-7500 ext 1361.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

A. DOES A CHILD NEED SERVICES? - THE FIRST STEPS

If a child does not seem to be progressing as well as other children or if a parent/teacher is concerned about a child's development it is important to find out why. Prior to referral to Special Education the following steps may be taken:

- **Parent/Teacher Conference**

At any time during the school year, a parent or a teacher can request a conference to discuss issues related to a child's progress.

- **District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (Response to intervention or Rtl)**

Teachers have a resource to assist them in accommodating different learning styles in the classroom called a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan. It is designed to ensure that all efforts have been made to meet students' needs in general education and avoid unnecessary referrals to Special Education.

The District Curriculum Accommodation Plan assists the general education teacher in accommodating the diverse learning styles of children in the classroom through access to general education support services provided by extra support staff in the school. The plan also calls for direct and systematic instruction in reading for all students and the provision of services to address the needs of children whose behavior may interfere with learning. We constantly assess student learning and refine our programs to enhance opportunities for success.

Our three-tiered curriculum model allows all students to access the skills and concepts outlined in the Common Core Curriculum Frameworks. Our core curriculum (Tier 1) consists of solid programming in all of the content areas. In addition, all students access supplemental programs (Tier 2) that are designed to target individual areas of strength and weaknesses. Students needing more intensive interventions may access a full range of services through special education and other individualized programming (Tier 3).

- **Family and Student Support Team**

Seven Hills Charter Public School (SHCPS) supports a collaborative model of educating children. Our goal is to work as a Team to ensure that each student receives the appropriate level of challenge and support. The Family and Student Support Team (FASST) has been developed to help staff and families navigate through the support process at Seven Hills.

A child who experiences difficulty in school should be referred to a Family and Student Support Team (FASST). A FASST meeting will include Head of School

or appropriate administrator, school personnel of various disciplines, parents, and student (if appropriate). The purpose of the FASST is to work with classroom teachers and parents to identify strategies and/or support services that will improve student performance and put those suggestions into a plan. Within 4-6 weeks, follow up meetings are held to assess the impact of the FASST plan. If the student is more successful, the FASST may continue to monitor the student's progress. If the plan is not effective, the FASST should consider other options including referral for a Special Education evaluation.

Staff members, parents or students can request support through the FASST process by submitting a FASST ticket through the Seven Hills Help Desk or by calling the Head of School for their Academy.

B. INITIAL EVALUATIONS/ASSESSMENTS

Evaluations of the student must be made in all areas of suspected disability in order to determine eligibility for special education. Eligibility must not be based on lack of reading or math instruction or on Limited English Proficient (LEP). Evaluation activities should be tailored to the specific referral questions for the individual student and need to address whether or not there is a disability, and if the disability affects the student's learning. The school will work with the parent(s) and educational staff, to decide which assessments are needed to evaluate the student.

Evaluations must provide information to determine present levels of academic achievement and related developmental needs. No single test should be used as the sole criterion for determining eligibility. Rather, a variety of techniques (both formal and informal assessments), including information provided by parents, observation of the student in the classroom, work samples/portfolios, interviews, and review of the student's record should be used. The school will send a notice to the parent(s) and ask for consent to conduct an evaluation within 5 days of receiving the referral. The Evaluation Consent Form outlines assessments the school recommends.

An observation of the student must be made by at least one Team member other than the student's teacher to determine a specific learning disability. Consent for an initial evaluation for wards of the state is not required if the LEA cannot, after reasonable efforts, locate the parent or the parent's rights have been terminated under state law or a judge has subrogated the parent's rights to make educational decisions. The District is obligated to seek a surrogate parent, through the DESE, for wards of the state. A ward of the state includes foster children (except if the information is to determine what the child knows and can do academically and developmentally, and the child has a foster parent) and a child in the custody of a public child welfare agency.

Evaluation must be provided and administered in the language and form most likely to yield accurate functionally, unless it is not feasible to so provide and administer.

Required Assessments for An Initial Evaluation:

- *Student Observation*
- *Teacher Assessment*
- *Educational and/or Related Service Assessment(s)* should include assessments in all areas of the child's suspected disability. Functional behavioral

assessments (FBA) must be conducted if the student's behavior interferes with learning.

Optional Assessments:

The following assessments can be recommended by the Team or requested by parents:

- *Psychological*
- *Home Assessment:* The Team should request this only if there are significant concerns related to the home or family environment as they affect student's school performance.
- *Health Assessment*
- *Behavioral Assessment*
- *Specialist Assessment* (occupational therapy, speech therapy, physical therapy)

C. REEVALUATION/ASSESSMENTS

A reevaluation will be conducted for each student with a current IEP every three years or more frequently if requested or recommended. Reevaluations do occur not more than once a year unless both parents and LEA agree that evaluation is needed. When a student is referred for a reevaluation, existing evaluation data should be reviewed first. If no additional information is needed to determine whether the student continues to be eligible, the District may request that a parent waive particular types of assessment(s). The parent may either consent to waive the assessment(s) or may choose to have the assessment completed regardless of the recommendation for waiver.

Evaluations are required prior to a finding that a student is no longer eligible, except for graduation with a regular diploma or aging out.

Required Assessments for A Reevaluation Evaluation:

- *Student Observation*
- *Teacher Assessment*
- *Educational and/or Related Service Assessment(s)* should include assessments in all areas of the child's suspected disability. Functional behavioral assessments (FBA) must be conducted if the student's behavior interferes with learning.

Optional Assessments:

The following assessments can be recommended by the Team or requested by parents:

- *Psychological*
- *Home Assessment:* The Team should request this only if there are significant concerns related to the home or family environment as they affect student's school performance.
- *Health Assessment*
- *Behavioral Assessment*
- *Specialist Assessment* (occupational therapy, speech therapy, physical therapy)

Reevaluation activities should be tailored to the specific questions for the individual student in order to help the Team determine whether the student would continue to make progress in the general education curriculum without the continued provision of special education services. Evaluations must provide information to determine present levels of academic achievement and related developmental needs. No single test should

be used as the sole criterion for determining eligibility. Rather, a variety of techniques (both formal and informal assessments), information provided by parents, observation of the student in the classroom, work samples/portfolios, interviews, and review of the record should be used. Please note that an observation of the student must be made by at least one Team member other than the student's teacher to determine a specific learning disability. Evaluation must be provided and administered in the language and form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is not feasible to so provide and administer.

D. EVALUATION (INITIAL AND REEVALUATION) PROCEDURES

1. The Student Support Director will send out a **Parent Consent Packet** consisting of:
 - Proposal to Conduct A Reevaluation (N1)*
 - Evaluation Consent Form (N1A)*
2. If the **parent does not return the *Evaluation Consent Form (N1A)* within 30 days**, the Student Support Director or designee will call the parent to discuss any concerns. If after an additional 10 days, the parent still does not respond, the Student Support Administrative Assistant will send the parent a second *Evaluation Consent Form/Second Notice*. Additional efforts to obtain parental consent will be made and documented. If the parent revokes consent or refuses to consent to any reevaluation and the District determines that such action will deny the student an appropriate education, the District shall seek resolution through the Bureau of Special Education Appeals.
3. Upon **receipt of the signed *Evaluation Consent Form (N1A)***, the Student Support Administrative Assistant will notify the evaluation Team members that they may begin to assess the student. Simultaneously, the Student Support Administrative Assistant will schedule the Team Meeting and send to parent(s) the following:
 - A Notice of Team Meeting (N3)*
 - Attendance Sheet (N3A)*
 - Parent Vision Questionnaire*
4. **Student Support Director will ensure that the assessments are completed within 30 school working days** of the parent's signed consent. If consent is received within thirty (30) to forty-five (45) school working days before the end of the school year, the District ensures that a Team meeting is scheduled so as to allow for the provision of the proposed IEP or written notice of the finding that the student is not eligible no later than fourteen (14) days after the end of the school year. Team members should coordinate their assessments with the student's teacher(s) and other evaluators so that the child is not over-tested on any given day. The persons conducting the assessments should ensure that the child is notified in advance of any pullout from class.
5. Assessors must give the Student Support Director two copies of their final, "word processed" evaluation report by the due date. This allows the

Student Support Director or Chairperson to be well prepared for the Team meeting and also allows the Chairperson to collate a set of reports to send home for the parents prior to the Team meeting.

6. **Evaluation Reports** All evaluation reports should include:

- Procedures employed
- Results
- Diagnostic impression(s) to help the Team determine eligibility including the student's present levels of educational performance and areas of need arising from the student's disability
- Signature and date of report; Include student D.O.B. and grade level
- If multiple dates were used to test child, specific dates of evaluation segments must be listed on the report.
- Written in clear, jargon-free language.
- Educationally relevant accommodations and modifications should be identified to ensure the student's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum.

"Outside" evaluation reports submitted by parents If a parent submits an evaluation conducted by an independent evaluator, the Special Education teacher should contact the Student Support Director to review the report prior to scheduling a meeting with the parent. A meeting with the parents should be scheduled within ten days of receipt of the report. The results of the outside evaluation will be considered in determining the need to revise the existing IEP and/or conduct a District reevaluation.

All efforts will be made to avoid duplication of assessments. If a decision is made to waive any assessment, the Chairperson will send a request for *Waiver of Assessment* to the parent for signature with the *Evaluation Consent Form*. It is important to note that **any time SHCPS waives its right to assess, it places the District in the position of accepting any recommendation(s) made by the evaluator.**

E. ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

The Special Education Eligibility Flowchart has been designed to assist Teams in making eligibility determinations. The flowchart is a worksheet and not a notice/form. This worksheet should become part of the student record but does not need to be mailed to parents and, if the student is determined eligible for services, it should not be attached to the IEP.

To be eligible for Special Education services, the Team will consider the following three questions:

1. Does the student have one or more of the following types of disability?

If the student does not meet the criteria for any of these categories, the student is NOT ELIGIBLE for Special Education but may be eligible for other accommodations within general education.

If the answer is **Yes**, the Team will continue to Question 2.

Disability Categories:

Autism - A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction. The term shall have the meaning given it in federal law at **34 CFR 300.7**: (i) Autism means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3 that adversely affect a child'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 child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance, as defined in paragraph (b)(4) of this section.

(ii) A child who manifests the characteristics of "autism" after age 3 could be diagnosed as having "autism" if the criteria in paragraph (c)(1)(i) of this section are satisfied.

Developmental Delay - The learning capacity of a young child (3-9 year old) is significantly limited, impaired or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: receptive and/or expressive language; cognitive abilities; physical functioning; social, emotional, or adaptive functioning; and/or self-help skills.

Intellectual Impairment - The permanent capacity for performing cognitive tasks, functions, or problem solving is significantly limited or impaired and is exhibited by more than one of the following: a slower rate of learning; disorganized patterns of learning; difficulty with adaptive behavior; and/or difficulty understanding abstract concepts. Such term shall include students with mental retardation.

Sensory Impairment - The term shall include the following:

1. ***Hearing*** - The capacity to hear, with amplification, is limited, impaired, or absent and results in one or more of the following: reduced performance in hearing acuity tasks; difficulty with oral communication; and/or difficulty in understanding auditorally-presented information in the education environment. The term includes students who are deaf and students who are hard-of-hearing.

2. ***Vision*** - The capacity to see, after correction, is limited, impaired, or absent and results in one or more of the following: reduced performance in visual acuity tasks; difficulty with written communication; and/or difficulty with understanding information presented visually in the education environment. The term includes students who are blind and students with limited vision.

3. ***Deaf-Blind*** - Concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes severe communication and other developmental and educational needs.

Neurological Impairment - The capacity of the nervous system is limited or impaired with difficulties exhibited in one or more of the following areas: the use of memory, the control, and use of cognitive functioning, sensory and motor skills, speech, language, organizational skills information processing, affect, social skills, or basic life functions. The term includes students who have received a traumatic brain injury.

Emotional Impairment - As defined under federal law at 34 CFR §300.7, the student exhibits one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a

marked degree that adversely affects educational performance: an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. The determination of disability shall not be made solely because the student's behavior violates the school's discipline code, because the student is involved with a state court or social service agency, or because the student is socially maladjusted, unless the Team determines that the student has a serious emotional disturbance.

Emotional disturbance is defined as follows:

- (i) The term 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 child's educational performance:
 - 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.
 - e) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.
- (ii) The term includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance.

Communication Impairment - The capacity to use expressive and/or receptive language is significantly limited, impaired, or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: speech, such as articulation and/or voice; conveying understanding, or using spoken, written, or symbolic language. The term may include a student with impaired articulation, stuttering, language impairment, or voice impairment if such impairment adversely affects the student's educational performance.

Physical Impairment - The physical capacity to move, coordinate actions, or perform physical activities is significantly limited, impaired, or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: physical and motor tasks; independent movement; performing basic life functions. The term shall include severe orthopedic impairments or impairments caused by congenital anomaly, cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures if such impairment adversely affects a student's educational performance.

Health Impairment - A chronic or acute health problem such that the physiological capacity to function is significantly limited or impaired and results in one or more of the following: limited strength, vitality or alertness including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli resulting in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment. The term shall include health impairments due to asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit with hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, and sickle

cell anemia, if such health impairment adversely affects a student's educational performance.

Specific Learning Disability - The term shall have the meaning given in federal law at **34 CFR §300.7 and §300.541**. Specific learning disability is defined as follows:

- (i) General. The term means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and developmental aphasia.
- (ii) The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

Sec.300.541 Criteria for determining the existence of a specific learning disability: A Team may determine that a child has a specific learning disability if the child does not achieve commensurate with his or her age and ability levels in one or more key areas if provided with learning experiences appropriate for the child's age and ability levels. If the Team finds that a child has a severe discrepancy between his/her intellectual ability and achievement in one or more of the following areas, the Team may determine that the child has a specific learning disability.

- Oral expression.
- Listening comprehension.
- Written expression.
- Basic reading skill.
- Reading comprehension.
- Mathematics calculation.
- Mathematics reasoning.

The District has authority to use a process that determines if the child responds to scientific, research-based intervention as part of the evaluation procedures (See NCLB for definition of “scientific, research-based intervention”). The Response to Intervention Model (RTI) is endorsed and utilized by SHCPS in conjunction. **Extra steps are required when a specific learning disability is suspected. The Team must fill out all of the SLD paperwork required by DESE to determine if SLD is an appropriate category.**

Team members must certify in writing whether the written report reflects their conclusion of a finding of a specific learning disability. Any individual who disagrees with the written report must submit a separate statement to express their differing conclusions. The Team may not identify a child as having a specific learning disability if the severe discrepancy between ability and achievement is primarily the result of a visual, hearing, or motor impairment; mental retardation; emotional disturbance; or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

1. Is the student making effective progress in school? If the answer is No, the Team will ask if the lack of progress is a result of the student's disability.

The Team must make a judgment as to whether the student is making effective progress in the general education program. To do so, the Team must determine whether the student has:

1. Made documented growth, with or without accommodations, in knowledge and skills acquisition including social/emotional development, the learning standards set forth in the Massachusetts Curriculum, and the curriculum of the District.
2. Made growth according to the chronological age, the developmental expectations, and the individual educational potential of the child.

When considering if the student has made effective progress, the Team must specifically look at whether the disability is causal to an inability to make progress. **Teams judge whether the lack of progress is a result of the disability.** Teams must look at the evaluation results to see whether the lack of progress is a result of the disability or a result of other factors. Only if the Team determines the lack of progress is connected to a disability may the Team continue to discuss a possible finding of special education eligibility. According to state and federal regulation, **a student may not be found eligible solely because the student is unable to follow the school discipline code, has limited English proficiency, social maladjustment, or has lacked reading or math instruction.** *These reasons may become part of the Team's deliberations, but the essential finding of the Team must be that the lack of progress is, at least in part, a result of the disability(ies).*

If the answer is **No** (meaning that the lack of progress is not a result of the student's disability) the student is NOT ELIGIBLE for Special Education but may be eligible for accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or other school based services.

If the answer is **Yes**, the Team will continue to Question 3.

3. Does the student require specially designed instruction in order to make effective progress in school or does the student require related services in order to access the general curriculum?

If the answer is **No**, the student is NOT ELIGIBLE for Special Education. If the student only requires accommodations, then that student is not eligible for special education. Accommodations are typically provided by general educators within the general education environment. Preferential seating, pencil grip use, or cooperative learning strategies are some examples of these kinds of typical accommodations. Accommodations do not involve modifying the material content, but do allow students to receive information in a more effective manner.

If the answer is **Yes**, the student is eligible for Special Education. Special Education is specially designed instruction that meets the unique needs of the student, or related services that are necessary to access the general curriculum. It is provided by a certified Special Education teacher or related service provider and may consist of adapted curriculum, methodology, instructional strategy and/or performance

criteria. Related services are developmental, corrective or supportive in nature, i.e., occupational therapy.

Eligibility can be determined at any age or grade level as some disabilities become more apparent as children progress through the grades.

A 504 Accommodation Plan may be appropriate. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. This law protects a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Major life activities include learning. The Team can make a referral to the 504 Coordinator if they feel that the student requires such a plan to be developed.

F. EXTENDED EVALUATIONS

An extended evaluation should be used when evaluation information is inconclusive and should not be used to deny programs or services determined necessary by the Team. If the Team has determined eligibility and some necessary objectives and services, then the Team should write a partial IEP and, with parent acceptance, immediately implement the partial IEP while the extended evaluation is occurring. The evaluation may extend from one to eight school weeks but no longer than eight school weeks. The Team may meet at intervals during this period and should reconvene promptly when the evaluation is complete to make any final decisions about IEP services. The extended evaluation should not be used to allow extra time to complete required assessments and is not considered a placement.

G. FINDING OF NO ELIGIBILITY

After all assessments have been presented, if the Team makes a Finding of No Eligibility, the student is deemed ineligible for Special Education and the school must provide written notice to the parent within **10 school days** of the meeting. Contained within the notice must be:

- What action is proposed or refused and why the decision was made
- Identify any other options considered and rejected by the Team
- Describe all evaluation tools and other relevant information used in reaching the decision
- Include procedural safeguards and source available to explain those safeguards.

The parent(s) must be notified of their right to appeal the Team decision.

H. INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL EVALUATIONS

After reviewing the evaluation findings, the parent(s) are asked if they are satisfied with the evaluations completed by Seven Hills Charter Public School. If parent(s) disagree with the district's evaluation, parent(s) may have a right to an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE). Under federal and state law, if the parent requests an IEE at public expense, the district must either pay for the IEE or, within five school days, request a determination from the BSEA that the district's evaluation was comprehensive and

appropriate. Thus, the Chairperson (Special Education Liaison) should **immediately** notify the Student Support Director of any request for an IEE so that the Student Support Office can generate a response within five school days.

All independent education evaluations must be conducted by qualified persons who are registered, certified, licensed or otherwise approved and who abide by the rates set by the state agency responsible for setting such rates. Unique circumstances of the student may justify an individual assessment rate that is higher than that normally allowed.

Whenever possible, the independent education evaluation shall be completed and a written report sent no later than 30 days after the date the parent requests the independent education evaluation. If publicly funded, the report shall be sent to the parents and to the school district. The independent evaluator shall be requested to provide a report that summarizes, in writing, procedures, assessments, results, and diagnostic impressions as well as educationally relevant recommendations for meeting identified needs of the student. The independent evaluator may recommend appropriate types of placements but shall not recommend specific classrooms or schools.

Within ten school days from the time the school district receives the report of the independent education evaluation, the Team shall reconvene and consider the independent education evaluation and whether a new or amended IEP is appropriate.

Publicly Funded Evaluations: When the parent requests public funding for an independent education evaluation, the district shall abide by the following provisions for a sliding fee scale:

1. If the student is eligible for free or reduced cost lunch or is in the custody of a state agency with an Educational Surrogate Parent appointed in accordance with federal law, then the school district shall provide, at full public expense, an independent education evaluation that is equivalent to the types of assessments done by the school district. No additional documentation of family financial status is required from the parent.
2. If the family financial status is not known, the district shall offer the parent information about the sliding fee scale and the opportunity to provide family income information to determine if the family may be eligible for public funding of all or part of the costs of an independent education evaluation. Provision of financial information by the family is completely voluntary on the part of the family. The lack of financial information provided by the family will disqualify the family from such additional public funding of all or part of the costs of an independent education evaluation under 603 CMR 28.04(5)(c) but shall not limit the rights of parents to request public funding under 603 CMR 28.04(5)(d).
3. If the family agrees to provide financial information, such information shall include anticipated annual income of the family, including all sources of income and verifying documents. Financial information shall be reviewed by the district, shall be kept confidential during review by the district, shall not be copied or maintained in any form at the district except to note that information was provided and reviewed and met or did not meet sliding fee scale standards. Financial documents shall be promptly returned to the parent upon the district's determination of financial income status.

4. The district shall consider family size and family income information in relation to Federal Poverty Guidelines and shall contribute public funds to the costs of the independent education evaluation according to the following standards:

(i) If the family income is equal to or less than 400% of the federal poverty guidelines, the district shall pay 100% of the costs of an independent education evaluation.

(ii) If the family income is between 400% and 500% of the federal poverty guidelines, the district shall pay 75% of the costs of an independent education evaluation.

(iii) If the family income is between 500% and 600% of the federal poverty guidelines, the district shall pay 50% of the costs of an independent education evaluation.

(iv) If the family income is over 600% of the federal poverty guidelines, the district shall have no obligation to cost-share with the parent.

5. When the parent seeks and receives public funding for an independent education evaluation under these provisions, the parent may request independent assessments in one, more than one, or all of the areas assessed by the school district. If a parent requests an IEE in an area not assessed by the district, the best practice would be for the district to review its evaluation and determine whether the requested assessment would provide needed additional or new information about the student's disability and if so, conduct the requested assessment with parent consent.

6. The right to this publicly funded independent education evaluation under 603 CMR 28.04(5)(c) continues for 16 months from the date of the evaluation with which the parent disagrees. If the parent requests an IEE long after the district evaluation or if there is a significant change of circumstances since the district's evaluation, the best practice would be for the district to determine whether its own assessment information may be out of date and, if so, to seek the parents' consent for the district to conduct its own updated assessments of the student first, within the regulated timelines.

7. Parents may obtain an IEE at their own expense at any time. Whether an IEE is funded by the District or the parent, within 10 school days from the time the district receives the report of the IEE, the Team must reconvene and consider the IEE and whether a new or amended IEP is appropriate.

District Hearing Request. Even if the district seeks parental consent for the district to conduct an updated evaluation or an assessment in a particular area or the district is awaiting income verification from the parent for the sliding scale entitlement under MA law, the district must nevertheless request a hearing at the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) within five days of receiving a request for public funding of an IEE if it wishes to preserve any rights it may have to contest its obligation to provide such funding. The District can of course later withdraw its request if appropriate.

I. MANDATED TIMELINES

(Days are calendar days unless specified as school days)

Request for an Evaluation

Written response from school district within **5 school days** of request

Evaluation (Initial and Re-evaluation)

Evaluations must be done within **30 school days** from date of receipt of parent consent

Team Meeting and Provision of Proposed IEP (Initial and Re-evaluation)

45 school days from the date of parent consent for evaluation; two copies of proposed IEP are provided to the parents within **10 calendar days** after a Team meeting

Assessment Reports

Made available to parents **2 days** prior to the Team meeting upon request

Invitation to Team Meeting (all meetings)

Written notice must be provided **10 days** prior to the scheduled Team meeting unless parent requests to meet sooner and waives invitation notice

Placement Meeting (when separate meeting is needed)

The Team must convene within **10 school days** following the meeting at which the Team developed the IEP

Parent Response to Proposed IEP and Placement

30 days from receipt of proposed IEP and Placement – otherwise IEP is considered rejected

School District Response to Rejected IEP and/or Placement

Within **5 days** of receipt, the school district must send written notice to the BSEA of rejection

Annual Review Meeting

Held within **12 months** of when current IEP was developed

Three-Year Re-Evaluation Determination

Every **3 years**, or sooner, if necessary

Independent Education Evaluation

Within **10 school days** from school district receipt of IEE report, the Team must reconvene to consider the report and determine if a new or amended IEP is appropriate

Extended Evaluation

With parents' consent, an extended evaluation may extend longer than one week but no longer than **8 school weeks** (a partial IEP will be generated in the meantime).

THE INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

A. MEETING NOTIFICATION

For evaluations, no later than **45 school days** after the parents consent to an evaluation, they will be invited to a Team meeting to discuss results of the assessments and the determination of eligibility for Special Education. **Ten days prior** to an IEP meeting or if otherwise agreed upon date with the parent, for evaluation or annual review the parent will be sent a meeting notice which includes:

- The purpose of the meeting
- The meeting date, time and location
- The district contact person and their contact information

The notice has a list of the people who will attend the Team meeting on the attendance sheet form. Parents have the right to include others in the meeting who they believe have special knowledge of the child, special expertise or to take notes. Parents should inform the school district in advance if there will be additional person(s) attending the meeting. Students, upon reaching the age of fourteen (14) years of age, are required by law to be invited to a Team meeting.

Typically the professionals who have worked with the student will present information regarding the student's current academic performance and the professionals who have tested the student will present a summary of formal testing results.

B. TEAM MEETING

Team meeting should be used as a communication vehicle. During an IEP Meeting, Team members share information and discuss the needs of the student in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the student. The discussion should connect one IEP element to the next and ensure internal consistency within the produced document..

For initial and reevaluation meetings, sending evaluation reports to parents in advance of a meeting should ensure that the Team discussion is more focused and can immediately start with a common base of information **rather than a lengthy recitation of evaluation results**. This strategy allows for more time to brainstorm and write the IEP itself enabling parents to leave the meeting with a more solid understanding of their child and how the school system plans to help their child improve.

The Meeting has a three step process:

Step 1: Eligibility Determination (See process in Eligibility section)

Team members discuss the assessment information and answer required questions to determine whether or not a student is eligible for Special Education services.

Step 2: IEP Development

If a student has been found eligible for Special Education services, the Team members will develop an Individual Education Program (IEP) in response to the student's individual needs.

Step 3: Placement Decision

After the Team has determined the services the student will receive, the Team members make a decision as to the student's placement. The student's placement must allow him/her to receive the required services in the least restrictive environment.

C. IEP AGENDA

**Seven Hills Charter Public School
IEP TEAM Meeting Agenda
Annual Review**

- Introductions
- Introduce agenda/purpose of meeting

IEP Development

- Parent input
- Student progress
- Accommodations/modifications
- Testing Accommodations—MCAS
- Goals/services
- Schedule

- Placement

- Print notes/IEP draft
 - Wrap up
-

Meeting Notes:

**Seven Hills Charter Public School
IEP TEAM Meeting Agenda
Initial Evaluation/Re-evaluation**

- Introductions
- Introduce agenda/purpose of meeting
- Parent input

Eligibility

- Review testing information/student performance
- Special education eligibility (flow chart)
 - Specific learning disability form, if needed

IEP Development

- Accommodations/modifications
- Testing Accommodations—MCAS
- Goals/services
- Schedule

Placement

- Placement Decision

- Print notes/IEP draft
- Wrap up

Meeting Notes:

D. IEP TEAM MEMBERS

Federal law defines the “IEP Team” as a group of people, who are responsible for developing, reviewing, and revising the IEP for a student with a disability, including:

The Team consists of the following members:

- the student's parent(s);
- at least one regular education teacher familiar with the student;
- at least one special education teacher familiar with the student;
- a representative of the district who has the authority to commit resources;
- an individual who can interpret evaluation results;
- other individual(s) who have knowledge or expertise regarding the student;
- if appropriate, the child.

One person may fulfill the requirement for two or more Team members resulting in fewer amount of people in the Team meeting. At SHCPS, special education teachers are given the authority to commit resources. Therefore at annual meetings, they are representing the special education teacher and the district representative (Team Chair).

A required member of the Team may be excused from participation in the meeting when parents consent to the member’s excusal in writing. The IEP meeting involves a modification or discussion of a required Team member's area of curriculum or related services (by role, most likely the General Educator or the Special Educator), that member may be excused, in whole or in part, only if the individual who is filling that role submits written input into the development of the IEP to the parent(s) and IEP Team prior to the meeting. If that member conducted an assessment, the assessment report must be given to the parent and Team for consideration as they develop an IEP.

E. ROLES OF IEP MEMBERS

Parents

- Share their biggest concerns and hopes for their child
- Identify their child’s strengths, interests, personal attributes and personal accomplishments to enable Team members to keep a whole child perspective
- Participates in determining eligibility for Special Education and, if deemed eligible, assists in developing the student’s IEP
- Fill out Vision Statement form that includes both their immediate and long-term hopes for their son or daughter and bring to the meeting
- Request and review all evaluation reports prior to the meeting and write down any questions or concerns.
- Bring your current IEP to the meeting for comparison (if applicable)

Parents may find it challenging to take in all the information discussed while also providing input and attempting to remember important details. It is helpful if both parents attend or if a friend accompanies a parent to take notes.

General Education Teacher

- Provides information about the student's progress in the curriculum, his/her strengths and weaknesses, social functioning and learning style
- Participates in the discussion of the student's eligibility for special education and, if deemed eligible, assists in developing the student's IEP

Special Educator/Liaison/Team Chairperson

- Presents assessment information to the Team
- Conducts annual review Team meetings
- Participates in determining eligibility for special education and, if deemed eligible, in writing the resulting IEP
- Likely to provide direct special education services and serves as contact person/liaison.
- Completes the written IEP reflecting the Team's agreement
- Has the authority to commit system resources
- Makes final decision in situation when Team members are unable to agree on the IEP

Related Services Providers

- Presents assessment information, relating results to what is considered to be typical performance in their area of specialization, i.e. A speech therapist reports on the student's communication skills
- Participates in determining eligibility for special education and, if deemed eligible, in writing the resulting IEP

Student Support Director

- Manages the Special Education evaluation process from receipt of referral for Special Education evaluation to the completion of IEPs or findings of No Eligibility.
- Conducts initial and reevaluations Team meetings
- Participates in determining eligibility for special education
- Reviews the final IEP for accuracy before sending to Parent(s) for signature
- Has the authority to commit system resources

Student (students are invited to the meeting at age 14 with parental approval)

- Identify strengths and vision for the future
- Provide input to the Team regarding the services received
- Bring any concerns to the attention of the Team

F. IEP DEVELOPMENT

When a student has been found eligible for Special Education services, an Individual Education Program (IEP) is developed. Jointly, parents and school personnel develop a program that will address the "individual" and unique needs of the student. The IEP

describes the student's learning style, the disability, recommended special education or related services and the goals/objectives the Team expects the student to achieve.

The chairperson will complete a summary sheet which includes the goals established at the meeting and the service delivery recommended by the Team. If the Team members cannot come to a mutually agreed upon decision regarding IEP elements after hearing all members of the team, the Chairperson will determine the district's proposal to meet student's need. The completed IEP will be sent to the parent for approval within 10 calendar days of the Team meeting.

IEP development is a student driven, individualized process. When developing the IEP the Team should keep in mind:

- Student's future dreams and goals
- Understand how the student's disability affects the student's learning
- Student's current performance
- Address only the areas that are affected by the disability
- Provide a focus for the student's learning
- Reflect high expectations for the student
- Stay as close as appropriate to what the student's peers are learning and doing
- Identify supports and services the student needs for success
- Ensure that the recommended services contain, at a minimum, some specially designed instruction.

A sample IEP with directions for each IEP section is available on our IEP software system, SEMStracker online under Test Student. Staff should refer to these notes when developing the IEP to meet district expectations.

G. NOTES REGARDING CERTAIN IEP ELEMENTS:

Vision Statement - IEP 1: A vision statement is required for all students. The character of the statement will change based on the age of the student. The intent of the vision statement is to look forward to future goals, usually 1-5 years in the future. For younger students, periods of transition from one grade to the next or from elementary to middle school may provide a time focus for these statements.

The Team steps back from the here and now to take a broader, long-range perspective as it looks to where this student is headed in the future. Knowing where the student is headed makes it easier for the Team to eventually determine what progress needs to be made this year. As the student becomes older and more involved in transition planning, the vision statement becomes the hopes and dreams of the student and not the parent and Team. Also, the statement for older student must conform to federal regulation and be based on the student's preference and interests and include desired outcomes in adult living and post-secondary and work environments.

Present levels of Educational Performance

PLEP A. General Education Curriculum - IEP 2: Teams must consider for each student how the student's disability(ies) affects performance in general education curriculum area(s). Clear descriptions of how the disability(ies) impact progress will better assist Teams in determining the most appropriate and individualized

accommodations and specially designed instruction. The Team will also use the assessment information and their discussion of the student's levels of educational performance (PLEP) to focus the direction of the IEP goals and services. The PLEPs must be based on current, relevant information about the student obtained from a variety of sources.

PLEP B. Other Educational Needs - IEP 3: Teams must ensure that they review the considerations listed on IEP 3. These lists are not exhaustive in nature. Therefore, Teams should describe other identified area(s) of educational needs that affect progress, but may not be listed.

Measurable Annual Goals - IEP 4: Most IEPs should contain no more than an average of three to four goals. Goals should relate directly to those areas where the student's disability affects performance and should reflect a focus on those areas that make the biggest difference in the student's performance. Goals should not identify multiple curricular standards in a single curriculum area nor qualify as a detailed weekly or monthly lesson plan. Current performance levels and goals should relate directly to the previously written Present Levels of Educational Performance. **Teams must connect current performance to measurable annual goals.** The IEP should be written with a direct connection between the current performance levels and the measurable annual goals. The current performance levels state what the student can currently do and identify key stumbling blocks. The goals state what the student will accomplish by the end of the IEP period. The current performance levels become the starting points for determining the goals and the goals become the end points for student accomplishment for the IEP period.

Service Delivery - IEP 5 Indirect services represent services that are provided to someone other than the student. Consultation or training for school staff and/or parents should be listed in Section A. Direct services to student should be listed in Section B if the service(s) will occur in the general education environment and in Section C if the service(s) will occur in any other type of setting. Although Teams are identifying service needs that they believe should take place outside of the general education classroom, Teams are not, at this point, determining the student's final placement. The final type of placement is determined after the entire IEP is developed. There is an exception to this general rule: if the Team has, in the course of its discussions, determined that this student will need a longer school day or school year, then the service delivery information may reflect services beyond the standard school day and, in some circumstances may reflect a need for residential services. In all cases, if extended educational services are required, the goals and objectives developed for the student should reflect the comprehensive nature of the student's program.

Start dates should be included for all services; however, end dates should be entered only as appropriate. For instance, if speech therapy is recommended for four months and not for the entire IEP period, then a start and end date should be entered.

Massachusetts Curriculum Achievement Tests (MCAS)

The Team will review any **state or district-wide assessments** planned during the IEP period and will identify any accommodations necessary for the student to participate in the testing. Team members should ensure that their accommodation recommendations

in this IEP section *mirror* their earlier recommendations included in the IEP section on accommodations.

All students, including students with disabilities, are required to participate in all MCAS tests scheduled for their grades. Students with significant disabilities who are unable to take the standard MCAS tests, even with accommodations, must take the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt).

IEP chairperson should use the **MCAS Accommodations Consideration for IEP Meetings** form in the Appendix of the manual to determine appropriate accommodations for students.

Non-participation, Length of School Day/Year, Transportation - IEP 6 Teams must justify non-participation in general education program. To reinforce IDEA's strong preference for involvement in the general education environment, the law requires a clear statement justifying why removal is considered critical to the student's program and the basis for the Team's conclusion that education of the student in a less restrictive environment, with the use of supplementary aids and services, could not be achieved satisfactorily. Given reasons should focus on the benefit the student will receive from being outside of the general education environment. An eligible child should not be removed from the general education classroom solely because of needed modification of the curriculum. The justification should refer to any special education and related services recommended to occur in other settings during the service delivery discussion and not to potential placements.

H. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS WHEN DEVELOPING AN IEP

Eligible Students with Behavior Problems:

If an eligible student's behavior affects performance in the general curriculum, then the interfering behavior should be reflected on IEP 2. If an eligible student's behavior affects other areas of educational need, then the interfering behavior should be reflected on IEP 3. If an eligible student's behavior affects performance in the general curriculum and in other areas of educational need, then the interfering behavior should be reflected in both locations on the IEP. Teams are reminded that IDEA-2004 requires pro-active steps in behavior management and in the provision of positive behavioral supports for eligible students whose behavior impedes their learning or the learning of others.

Requirements for Students with disabilities on the autism spectrum:

Whenever an evaluation indicates that a child has a disability on the autism spectrum, which includes autistic disorder [autism], Asperger's disorder, pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified, childhood disintegrative disorder, and Rhett's Syndrome as defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fourth edition (DSM-IV, 2000), the IEP Team shall consider and shall specifically address the following:

- 1) the verbal and nonverbal communication needs of the child; the need to develop social interaction skills and proficiencies;

- 2) the needs resulting from the child's unusual responses to sensory experiences;
- 3) the needs resulting from resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines;
- 4) the needs resulting from engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements;
- 5) the need for any positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports to address any behavioral difficulties resulting from autism spectrum disorder; and
- 6) other needs resulting from the child's disability that impact progress in the general curriculum, including social and emotional development.

Bullying prevention and intervention law and identifying eligible students' needs:

IEP Teams must determine whether the sections 7 and 8 provisions of the Massachusetts bullying prevention and intervention law apply to eligible students. The provisions apply if the student's disability (a) is on the autism spectrum, or (b) affects social skills development, or (c) makes the student vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

For students on the autism spectrum, protection under the law will be automatic. Due to the nature of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), progress in positive social skill development is already a likely focus within the IEP of every student with ASD. Social skills instruction should be at the student's skill level and appropriate for his/her age. The focus of the IEP in relation to the bullying intervention and prevention law will be to aid the student in accessing social and emotional learning to handle more effectively challenges in his/her academic, social, and communication realms.

For students in the other categories, the Team must make a determination as to whether the student's disability affects social skills development or renders the student vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing. Teams should be aware that students with emotional impairments, developmental delays, health impairments, communication disorders, and neurological impairments are likely to have a disability that affects their social skills development. However, Teams should carefully evaluate whether students with any type of impairment have delays in social skills development or are otherwise vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of their disability.

The IEP Team's discussion focuses comprehensively on the student's educational needs and on the student's overall involvement in the school, including participation in the general curriculum and in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities. In this process, the IEP Team considers the student's disability and the impact of the disability on the student's interaction and communication with others.

After the IEP Team has identified a student's needs, the Team should have a discussion of what goals, objectives services, supports, instruction, and accommodations should be included in the student's IEP. The IEP Team must consider the student's skills in the following areas: self-awareness, self management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Transition:

Beginning with the IEP in effect upon the student's turning 14 years of age, the Team shall consider, and include in the IEP, appropriate goals and services related to training, education, employment and independent living skills necessary to assist the student in reaching the student's post-secondary goals.

- Post-secondary education
- Vocational training
- Integrated employment (including supported employment)
- Continuing and adult education
- Adult services, and
- Independent living community participation.

The Team should address services needed to promote this transition. The transition services are based on the student's needs, taking into account the student's preference and interests, and includes specially designed instruction, community experiences, the development of employment or other post-secondary school adult living experiences, the development of employment or other post-school adult living objectives, and if appropriate, the acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

Transition elements are incorporated throughout the IEP for a more integrated approach to transition planning. The vision statement, aids Team Members in determining the student's transition needs that may be reflected in the IEP. The Team should develop a transition goal(s), if needed, or benchmarks should be incorporated throughout the student's other IEP goals. If the child requires services or courses necessary to reach the goals, IEPs must have measurable post-secondary goals related to training, education, employment, and as necessary, independent living.

At a meeting prior to the student turning 14, a Transition Planning form must be developed and written at the meeting as well as incorporating the IEP transition elements.

PLACEMENT

Once the IEP Team has decided **what** services a student needs, a decision must be made **where** services will be provided. In deciding a student's placement, the Team must make sure that the child has the maximum opportunity to learn with children who do not have disabilities – in academic, nonacademic and extracurricular activities. This is the Least Restrictive Environment standard (LRE) required by law. Placement should be chosen individually for each student from a full continuum of placement options based on the most appropriate placement to provide the services on the student's IEP.

The first placement option considered for all eligible students will be the general education classroom with the use of supplemental aids and services. Students may not be denied education in age-appropriate general education classrooms solely because the students' education requires modification to the general curriculum.

Teams must first consider if the eligible student may be served in the school and classroom the student would attend if not disabled. Other options should be considered only when the nature and severity of the disability would prevent satisfactory achievement within the general education environment.

An in-district placement should always be considered and recommended before an out-of-district placement is considered. If the Team determines that an out-of-district placement is necessary, the Team must be mindful of the requirement to give preference to approved programs located in Massachusetts.

In most cases, the Team that wrote the IEP will decide the placement immediately after the IEP is developed. If the student's needs and corresponding services are complex and the Team is considering an initial out-of-district program, a subsequent meeting might be scheduled to finalize the placement decision. In all cases, the parent continues to be an equal participant in the Team process. The Team shall, without identifying a specific placement type, notify the school district where the student resides within two school days and invite them to a meeting to participate as a member of the placement Team.

At the placement meeting, the Team shall first consider if the school district where the student resides has an in-district program that could provide the services recommended by the Team. SHCPS shall arrange with the school district where the student resides to deliver such services or develop an appropriate in-district program at the program school for the student.

If the placement Team, determines that the student requires an out-of-district program to provide the services identified on the student's IEP, then the placement proposed to the parent shall be an out-of district day or residential school, depending on the needs of the student. Upon parental acceptance of the proposed IEP and proposed placement, programmatic and financial responsibility shall return to the school district where the student resides. The school district where the student resides shall implement the placement determination of the Team.

Final IEP

At the IEP meeting, the Chairperson will take notes on the district's carbon copied Summary Notes form (a copy is attached to in the Appendix). All essential items are listed on the form including parent concerns, accommodations, modifications, goals, service delivery grid, etc. At the conclusion of the meeting the notes are reviewed with the parent. The Chairperson and the parent sign the form indicating they are in agreement on the notes. Parents are informed that they are not consenting to the IEP yet that they are agreeing to the accuracy of the notes. The original version of the notes is filed in Student's Special education file, one copy is provided to the special education liaison, and one copy to the parent.

For an annual IEP, copies of the existing IEP may be brought forward as the foundation for creating the new IEP. The word "DRAFT" must be written or stamped at the top of each page. All "DRAFT" copies are collected and destroyed once the IEP is developed.

The district's use of a summary report prior to providing the complete IEP must be acceptable to the parent. Parents may ask the district for the completed IEP in order to begin implementation of IEP services as soon as possible. The district must respond to such requests with a complete IEP within 3-5 days of the Team Meeting at which it was developed. Otherwise, the final IEP will be

provided to the parents no more than 2 calendar weeks (10 school days) after the conclusion of the Team meeting.

A. SIGNING THE IEP

Parents have **30 days** to sign their child's IEP. They have several options, they can:

1. accept the IEP as developed
2. reject the IEP as developed
3. reject portions of the IEP; any portions not rejected will be considered accepted and implemented immediately.

Parents have an additional option to request a meeting to discuss the rejected IEP or rejected portions. Changes can be made to the IEP within this thirty (30) day period.

Once the school receives a signed IEP, the Student Support Assistant will send all of the student's teachers and service providers an email to inform them of parent decision. Any accepted parts of the IEP will be implemented without delay upon the receipt of signed IEP or by date indicated on the IEP service grid.

Implementation of the IEP cannot be delayed due to lack of classroom space or personnel. The school must provide as many of the services on the accepted IEP as possible. For any services that cannot be provided due to lack of space or personnel, the Student Support Director will immediately inform parents in writing of any delayed services, reasons for delay, actions that the school district is taking to address the lack of space or personnel and offers alternative methods to meet the goals on the accepted IEP. Upon agreement of the parents, the school district will implement the mutually agreed upon alternative methods immediately until the lack of space or personnel issues are resolved.

IEPs which are not signed and returned to the district after 22 days, the parent or guardian is sent a pink reminder letter reminding them of their options. IEPs not signed by thirty (30) days from receipt are considered rejected and notice of rejection must be sent to the Massachusetts Department of Education.

B. STAY-PUT PROVISION

In accordance with state and federal law, during the duration of any dispute regarding placement or services, the eligible student shall remain in his or her current education program and placement unless the parents and the school district agree otherwise.

If the parents are seeking initial placement in the public school, and the child is at least five years old, however, the child shall be placed in the public school program.

C. IEP AMENDMENTS

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) Amendment is designed to be used in conjunction with other IEP pages. The form should be used for minor IEP adjustments that do not change the type of placement.

The explanation of a proposed change should include the IEP section(s) that the change will affect. Team members must attach the IEP page(s) to the amendment to help clarify the recommended adjustment. For instance, if an IEP goal is being altered, IEP 4 with

the reworded goal should be attached or if service delivery is being altered, IEP 5 with the adjusted services should be attached.

The Team may be convened during the school year to consider evaluation reports and/or to modify or amend a student's current IEP. The IEP may also be amended or modified without the need to reconvene the Team by agreement of the parents and District.

D. PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports are one tool that the school district uses to communicate with parents regarding educational progress every Trimester. The progress report should be written in clear language and identify the progress a student has made toward accomplishing an annual goal and its related benchmarks. The progress report should provide a clear picture of the students current skill levels as well whether the student is on track for meeting identified goals. If there are questions about student progress, the parent should communicate those questions or concerns to the contact person/liaison immediately. Together they may identify refinements to address areas of concern.

Progress Reports may prompt the Team to amend the IEP

If a lack of expected progress continues past the first progress report and subsequent refinements, the Team should make IEP adjustments and may want to reconsider rewriting a goal to set a different and more attainable standard.

If a student is making more progress than projected, progress reports may make recommendations on next steps. Sometimes it may be appropriate to amend the IEP to add additional goals.

Use of Progress Report at an Annual Review Meeting

Documentation from an Annual Review Meeting should reflect the student's progress towards the existing IEP goals. Therefore, Team will want to refer to the most current progress report during such review meetings.

Progress reports are issued according to the same schedule as report cards for the student's grade. Progress reports must be completed by the Special Education teachers or specialists who work with your child.

Progress reports run the life of the IEP, not the school year.

E. MONITORING IEP COMPLIANCE

The Student Support Director (SSD) is responsible for monitoring compliance of State and Federal regulations. The SSD will work with the Student Support Assistant to schedule all annual and re-evaluation meetings prior to IEP end date and/or re-evaluation date. The SSD will also work with the Student Support Assistant to ensure that all students have an active IEP at the beginning of the school year.

F. TRANSFER OF STUDENT RECORDS POLICY

- ❖ SHCPS takes reasonable steps to obtain the records of student transferring to the district, including the IEP
- ❖ The school from which the student transfers takes reasonable steps to insure the request for school records is responded to promptly.

Procedures:

- 1) Parents or Guardian are asked to fill out a Service Form which questions if student is or has received Special education Services or a 504 for any reason. If the parent indicates yes on any questions the Student Support Director has an informal meeting with them to discuss student's history.
- 2) SHCPS has all parents sign a records release for the school their child was attending previously.
- 3) The records release is faxed over to the previous school by our district student data administrator and telephone confirmation of receipt of the release and requested information is verified.
- 4) The school's Administrative Assistant tracks all requests for student records in a separate training file and follows up regularly on the outstanding requests.
- 5) The school's Administrative Assistant notifies the Student Support Director when a record request is outstanding for more than several days.
- 6) A follow up request is made by the Student Support Director to the sending district and if no immediate response a request is faxed in writing from the Special Education department.
- 7) The parent is notified by the Student Support Administrative Assistant and assistance is requested in the event there is delayed response on the part of the sending school.

Special Education Program/Personnel

A. CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

SHCPS provides or arranges for provision of each of the elements of the IEPs of students in need of special education ensuring that the continuum of services and placements are available to meet the needs of all students with disabilities. SHCPS special education teachers and assistants provide a range of services including but not limited to: consultation, check-ins with students or teachers, inclusion support, tutorials, small group or 1:1 interventions, alternative curriculum, technology integrated instruction, or other services as deemed necessary.

B. SYSTEM WIDE RELATED SERVICES

Speech/Language Therapy

Certified speech pathologist and speech assistant address issues of articulation or voice; expressive language, receptive language and/or social pragmatics. Service may be provided within the classroom setting or outside of the class in individual or small group sessions. Speech therapists also provide consultation to regular/Special Education teachers.

Occupational Therapy (OT)

Certified occupational therapist address issues of fine motor skills, sensory integration, and modification of the physical environment to accommodate disability issues and have expertise in low and high tech assistive technology. Services may be provided via consultation, the provision of assistive technology or via direct instruction provided individually or in small group.

Physical Therapy (PT)

Registered physical therapists focus primarily on gross motor skills. Most students who receive physical therapy services have some type of physical impairment or a demonstrated weakness in gross motor skills.

Counseling Services

Counseling services may be provided through a guidance counselor, guidance assistant, or a school psychologist. Counseling services may include crisis intervention, lunch buddies, small group counseling to address a specific issue (recent trauma, children with chronic illness) or individual counseling sessions.

Health Services

Health services include all of the services provided by the school nurse including: the administration of required medications, assessing students with possible health impairments or those who report to the nurse's office complaining of various ailments, and consulting with parents and staff about the impact of conditions that may affect learning.

C. IEP SERVICE INTERRUPTION

Sometimes, due to a variety of circumstances, which may include an employee taking an extended sick/maternity/personal leave or leaving the school district, your child's Special Education services may be interrupted or delayed. Seven Hills Charter Public School will advise the student's parents or guardians of the service interruption in writing in a notice which will include the following information:

- The type of service delayed or interrupted
- The IEP goal affected
- Reason for the interruption
- Proposed school action/alternative plan

Implementation of any alternative service is contingent upon the parents' or guardians' approval.

D. Home and Hospital Services

Students with chronic illnesses who have home/hospital stays of more than 14 consecutive days or students with recurring home/hospital stays which will add up to more than 14 school days in a school year, are eligible for home and hospital services if the medical need is documented by a physician. Home and hospital instruction is a free service of Seven Hills. Notify the Head of School immediately if service is indicated. The program begins as soon as the physician requests Home or Hospital Instruction on the state mandated "Physician's Request" form. The Head of School will work in conjunction with the Student Support Director to assign an instructor to the student and

contact the home to schedule lessons. The home and hospital instructor will contact the child's teachers to get assignments and books for the student.

Home/hospital instruction is typically one-to-one and is provided on an individualized schedule, for less than a full school day or a full school week. The school district should determine the number of instructional hours per day or per week based on the educational and medical needs of the individual student. Following receipt of a physician's order stating that an eligible student is likely to remain at home, in a hospital, or in a pediatric nursing home for medical reasons and for more than 60 school days in any school year, the Team shall convene without undue delay to consider the student's evaluation needs and, if appropriate, to amend the existing IEP or develop a new IEP suited to the student's unique circumstances.

E. Discipline and Students with Disabilities

Students with special needs, as defined by federal and state laws and regulations, shall be subject to the provisions of the school discipline code, except as otherwise provided by this section.

The Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan for students needing modification of the discipline code will specify the modifications needed in the student's IEP or 504 plan. If a student's behavior is impacted by his or her special needs, such behaviors will be dealt with through the TEAM or 504 process.

If an administrative decision under the discipline code will impact the student's placement and/or will result in a cumulative suspension of over 10 days in a school year, a TEAM or 504 meeting is required before any administrative decision with respect to discipline is made.

Prior to making an administrative decision under the discipline code, an administrator will determine whether or not the student has been designated as a student with special needs or has been referred for a special education evaluation but not yet determined to have special needs.

A student who has not been determined to be eligible for special education or related services or 504 accommodations and who has engaged in behavior that violated any rule or code of conduct may assert any of the protections provided by state and federal special education laws if the school had knowledge that the student is a student with a disability before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action:

- The parent has expressed concern in writing to school personnel that the student is in need of special education services or 504 accommodations;
- The parent has requested an evaluation of the student or
- The student's teacher or other school personnel have expressed specific concerns about the behavior or performance of the student to the Student Support Manager, 504 Coordinator or special education staff.

If the parent has not consented to evaluation of the student or has refused special education services, or if an evaluation of the student has resulted in a determination of ineligibility, SHCPS not be considered to have had prior knowledge.

If the school department is not deemed to have knowledge that the student is a student with a disability, the student may be disciplined under the discipline code except that the following limitations apply:

- If the parents/guardians of the student request an evaluation during the time period that the student is subjected to discipline, then the evaluation must be conducted in an expedited manner; and
- Until the evaluation is completed, the student remains in the educational placement determined by school authorities.

If an administrative decision under the discipline code will impact a student's placement and/or will result in a cumulative suspension of more than 10 days during the school year, and/or will result in an expulsion, the following provisions shall apply:

- A **manifestation review** will be conducted by the child's TEAM to determine whether the student's misconduct was a manifestation of his/her disability. In making this determination, the TEAM will consider whether the IEP was followed, whether behavioral interventions, strategies and supports were provided, and whether the disability had a direct relationship to the behavioral infraction(s). A functional behavioral assessment (FBA) must be conducted, if such an assessment does not already exist, and the student's behavioral intervention plan, if such a plan was not implemented prior to the behavior resulting in the discipline, must be implemented. If a plan was already being implemented, it may be reviewed and modified depending on the results of the manifestation determination, the proposed disciplinary action may or may not be implemented. If the TEAM finds that behavior was a direct result of the school's failure to implement the IEP, the school shall take immediate steps to remedy those deficiencies.
- If the TEAM concludes that the student's conduct had a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability, the student shall not be disciplined, a functional behavioral assessment will be conducted and behavioral intervention plan constructed, or if one is already in place, the TEAM will review and modify it as necessary. The child will be returned to his/her original placement unless the TEAM agrees otherwise.
- If the TEAM concludes that the student's conduct is not a manifestation of the student's disability, then the school's standard disciplinary procedures will be applied; and the student will continue to receive educational services with access to the general education curriculum and progress towards IEP goals. If the student has a repeated pattern of change in placement beyond ten days, due to disciplinary action, then the TEAM must meet and re-write the IEP or 504 plan. The TEAM will present the alternative plan to the student's parents/guardians along with the written notice as required by state and federal laws and regulations. Refusal or failure of the parents/guardians to consent to the provision of services under the alternative plan shall not prevent the suspension from being implemented.
- If the student's parents/guardians request a hearing before the Massachusetts Department of Education Bureau of Special Education Appeals, the student shall continue in the last agreed upon placement pending the hearing, unless another placement is agreed to by the parties or a court order permits the school to change the student's placement for up to forty five school days, based on a showing that the student's continued presence in school presents a substantial likelihood of injury to students or others. After an expedited hearing before the

Massachusetts Department of Education Bureau of Special Education Appeals, the hearing officer may order a change in the placement of the student to an appropriate interim educational setting determined by the TEAM for not more than 45 days.

- In all instances when a change in placement or a suspension of 10 or more days will be imposed, the student must be provided with a free appropriate public education.

The Team may determine a change in placement, with or without the parents/guardians' permission to an interim educational setting for a period not to exceed 45 days, as long as a free appropriate public education is provided, and a functional behavior assessment and manifestation determination is conducted in any of the following instances:

- a student carries a weapon to school or to a school function
- a student possesses or sells illegal drugs and/or controlled substances while at school or at a school function
- a student inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function
- on the authority of a hearing officer if the officer orders the alternative placement after the district provides evidence that the student is "substantially likely" to injure him/herself or others.

No school shall suspend or exclude a student for more than 10 school days during any school year during the pendency of a Massachusetts Department of Education Bureau of Special Education Appeals process or judicial proceeding brought to challenge a suspension, proposed suspension, or any proposed disciplinary action, unless a court order has been obtained authorizing a temporary change in the student's educational placement based on a showing that the student's continued presence in school presents a substantial likelihood of injury to the student or others.

Parents of students with a disability will be given written notice of procedural safeguards. Note: For purposes of this document the word TEAM will be used interchangeably with special education Teams and 504 Teams.

F. Dispute Resolution - Continuum of Options

As a parent of a child with special needs you are a member of the Team which makes decisions about the education of your child. You also have the right to dispute a proposed educational plan for your child.

1. Local School District Procedures

Individuals with questions or concerns should first contact the school. If you are unable to solve your problem within the school, individuals can contact the Mass. Department of Education.

2. Mediation

Mediation is a voluntary and confidential dispute resolution process available at no cost through the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA). When school personnel and parents disagree about the educational needs of a student, either party may request mediation. Within **30 days** of receipt of a request for mediation, the mediator shall schedule a mediation session at a time and place convenient to the parties. The mediation shall include the parents, any

representative of the parents' choosing, and a representative(s) of the school district, with one representative who is authorized to resolve the dispute on behalf of the school district. This process encourages mutual respect, promotes communication and often provides the basis for positive working relationships between schools and parents. An impartial mediator helps schools and parents clarify issues, discuss options and collaborate to reach mutually satisfying agreements that address the needs of the student. If the parties resolve some or all of the issues, they work together with the mediator to put their agreement(s) in writing. All discussions that occur during mediation are confidential and may not be used as evidence in a hearing. Parents and school districts may request a hearing without participating in mediation. To request a mediation, contact:

BSEA Coordinator of Mediation
(781)338-6443

3. Department of Education (DOE) - Problem Resolution System

The Problem Resolution System is the DOE's process for receiving, reviewing and resolving concerns from the public regarding students who allegedly are not receiving educational services or procedural protections that by law must be provided. In most cases, the DOE will make a decision regarding problems brought to its attention within 60 calendar days from the date the signed Intake Information Form is received. Findings and orders issued by the Department on complaints and the Department's processing of a complaint are not reviewable by the Bureau of Special Education Appeals. Copies of the Problem Resolution System Guidelines and Procedures are available from the Department upon request. For information on how to file a complaint, contact:

Problem Resolution Intake Specialist
(781) 338-3700
Email: compliance@doe.mass.edu
Website: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa>

4. Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA)/ Due Process Hearing

A parent or a school district may request a hearing at any time on most matters concerning the eligibility, evaluation, placement, or IEP provision of Special Education in accordance with state and federal law or procedural protections of state and federal law for students with disabilities. The BSEA is independent from the Massachusetts Department of Education. **Five days** after receipt of a written request for hearing, the Bureau of Special Education Appeals shall notify the parties in writing of the name of the assigned hearing officer and, as appropriate, shall provide either a date for the hearing or a statement of federally required procedures to be followed before a hearing date can be assigned. The decision of the hearing officer shall be implemented immediately and shall not be subject to reconsideration of the Bureau of Special Education Appeals or the DOE, but may be appealed to a court of competent jurisdiction.

A due process hearing may only be requested by filing a written request with the opposing party and simultaneously with the BSEA, at 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5023, or by fax to the BSEA at 781-338-3398. A BSEA Hearing Form may (but is not required to) be used for this purpose. Contact:

5. **Resolution Session**

Upon receipt of a written request for a hearing, the Bureau of Special Education Appeals shall notify the parties that in accordance with federal law, prior to holding a hearing, the school district is required to convene a resolution session with parents and relevant Team members within **15 calendar days** of receipt of a parent's request for a due process hearing. During this session the parents can discuss the issues that form the basis of the complaint, and the school district is provided with the opportunity to resolve the complaint. This session is mandatory unless the parents and the school district agree in writing to waive such meeting, or agree to use the mediation process unless mediation is agreed upon in lieu of the required resolution session, the parties' discussions and any information presented at the resolution meeting may be admissible at the due process hearing.

If the school district does not resolve the issues through this resolution session within **30 days** of the receipt for a request for a due process hearing, the hearing may occur and all of the applicable timelines shall commence.

6. **Advisory Opinion Process**

The advisory opinion process is an optional dispute resolution process available to parties who have requested a due process hearing. Each party has one hour to give a brief presentation of its case after which the hearing officer issues a written, nonbinding opinion within an hour of the close of the presentations. The parties may agree prior to the commencement of the process, apart from the hearing officer, to make the resulting opinion binding on the parties.

In order to commence the Advisory Opinion Process, a Request for an Advisory Opinion may be submitted either simultaneously with or after a Request for Hearing. A Request for an Advisory Opinion shall automatically constitute a request for a **30 day** postponement of any previously scheduled hearing date.

One or both parties may submit a Request for an Advisory Opinion to Special Education Appeals. However, the Advisory Opinion Process is voluntary, and therefore, consent of both parties is necessary in order to access the process.

G. PARENT'S PRIVATE INSURANCE AND MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT

SHCPS requests the parent's permission to use their private health insurance (MassHealth) to be reimbursed for health related services as listed in the IEP provided by SHCPS staff. Parents are informed that: 1) it is at no cost to them 2) that it is voluntary and 3) their child will continue to receive services as needed based on their educational plan either way. Parents are asked to fill out a form each year at an IEP meeting to document their decision.

Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SPED PAC)

Massachusetts state law requires each school district to create a district-wide Parent Advisory Council (PAC) which offers memberships to all parents of students with disabilities and other interested parties.

The PAC's duties include advising the district on matters that pertain to the education and safety of children with disabilities. The PAC shall also meet regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development and evaluation of the school district's Special Education programs.

The PAC encourages an atmosphere of open communication, understanding and mutual respect among all students, parents, teachers and administrative staff.

SPED PAC Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide a network in which parents of children with special needs have access to relevant information, training and emotional support; and to encourage an atmosphere of effective communication, understanding and mutual respect among all students, parents, educators and the community-at-large.

Member Benefits

- Network with other parents at PAC meetings and get answers to your questions
- Attend PAC workshops such as Basic Rights
- Stay current on issues of interest for Special Education students
- Periodic email to all members on pertinent issues
- Resource referral
- An avenue to voice your concerns and suggestions to the school.
- Make a difference in the experiences of special needs students and their families at Seven Hills
- Act as advisory council to the Board of Trustees to address concerns of parents/guardians of students with special needs

Website

Visit the SEPAC website at <http://sevenhillssepac.webs.com/> for more information.

GENERAL INFORMATION

A. KEY TERMS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Accommodations

Accommodations are adaptations to the presentation of material or setting that typically occurs in the general education classroom. Accommodations support the student's ability to access the curriculum but do not alter the content or nature of the lesson.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)

A plan to address problem behavior that includes, as appropriate, positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports; program modifications; and supplementary aids and services that may be required to address the problem behavior.

Curriculum Frameworks

The curriculum frameworks contain the academic content, concepts and skills in specific academic subject as defined by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts/Board of Education. The instructional content delivered to children must be aligned with the curriculum frameworks established for each content area.

District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP)

The curriculum accommodation plan is intended to assist principals in ensuring that all efforts have been made to meet student's needs in regular education. It identifies the process and resources for teachers to address learning and behavioral issues. There is a heavy focus on teacher collaboration and mentoring. Response to Intervention, a new federal requirement, is a key component of the DCAP.

Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Under Special Education regulations, a school district must provide a free and appropriate public education to children with disabilities. The program is at no cost to parents and is provided directly or indirectly by the public schools (as in a specialized day program).

Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)

FBA is a problem-solving process for addressing student problem behavior. FBA relies on a variety of techniques and strategies to identify the reasons for a specific behavior and to help IEP Teams select interventions that directly address the problem behavior.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

An individualized education program is a written statement, developed and approved in accordance with Special Education law/regulations that identifies a student's Special Education needs and describes the services a school district will provide to meet those needs.

Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES)

IAES is a setting other than the student's current placement that enables the student to continue to receive educational services according to his or her IEP. The IAES must enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and progress toward meeting the goals in the

IEP. Students in an IAES should also receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment, behavioral intervention services and modifications that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not happen again. The particular IAES is determined by the student's IEP Team.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

The Least Restrictive Environment is the classroom setting that can provide a student with disabilities those services or aides that are needed to access the curriculum and most closely approximates the general education classroom.

Modifications

Modifications change the curriculum content in some way to enable the student to be successful in the general education environment. When a lesson is modified, the goals of the lesson may stay the same, but the content may change. A student may participate in the general education lesson but with modified materials and/or expectations.

SECTION 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 is a civil rights statute. A person is considered to have a disability under Section 504 if he or she has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (i.e. learning). A student eligible for section 504 has a plan that provides necessary accommodations and/or modifications that enable the student to access the curriculum within the classroom.

Specialized Instruction

Specialized instruction is provided by a certified Special Education teacher and is designed to meet the unique needs of the eligible student or related services necessary to access the general curriculum and shall include the programs and services set forth in Special Education regulations.

B. COMMON ACRONYMS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

ABA: Applied Behavioral Analysis

ABC: Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

ADHD: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

APD: Auditory Processing Disorder

AS: Asperger's Syndrome

ASD: Autistic Spectrum Disorder

ASL: American Sign Language

AYP: Adequate Yearly Progress

BD: Behavioral Disorder

BD/ED: Behavior Disorder/Emotionally Disturbed

BIP: Behavior Intervention Plan

CBA: Curriculum-Based Assessment

CEC: Council for Exceptional Children

DD: Developmental Disability

DESE: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

DSM-IV: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders

ED: Emotionally Disturbed

EI: Early Intervention
ELL: English Language Learner
ESL: English as a Second Language
ESY: Extended School Year Services
FAPE: Free Appropriate Public Education
FERPA: Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act
IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education
IEE: Independent Educational Evaluation
IEP: Individualized Education Plan
ITP: Individualized Transition Plan
LD: Learning Disability
LEA: Local Education Agency (the school district)
LEP: Limited English Proficiency
LLD: Language-based Learning Disability
LRE: Least Restrictive Environment
NCLB: No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
NOS: Not Otherwise Specified (usually seen as PDD-NOS)
OCR: Office of Civil Rights
OHI: Other Health Impaired
OSEP: (U.S. Dept. of Education's) Office of Special Education Programs
OT: Occupational Therapist or Occupational Therapy
PDD: Pervasive Developmental Disorder (a form of autism)
PLEP: Present Levels of Educational Performance
PT: Physical Therapist or Physical Therapy
RtI: Response-to-Intervention
SES: Socio-Economic Status or Supplemental Educational Services
SID: Self-Injurious Behavior
SLP: Speech-Language Pathologist
SS: Scale(d) Score
TAP: Tests of Achievement

APPENDIX

MCAS Accommodations Consideration for IEP Meetings

Standard Accommodations:

Changes in Timing or Scheduling of the Test

- 1. **Frequent Breaks:** The test is administered in short periods with frequent breaks.
- 2. **Time of Day:** The test is administered at a time of day that takes into account the student's medical or learning needs (IEP or 504 plan must specify time of day).

Changes in Test Setting

- 3. **Small Group:** The test is administered in a small group setting (no more than 10 students). **Note:** If students will also receive the accommodation of having the test read aloud or signed, no more than 5 students may be in the small group.
- 4. **Separate Setting:** The test is administered in a room other than the one used by the rest of the class.
- 5. **Individual:** The test is administered to the student individually.
- 6. **Specified Area:** The test is administered with the student seated at the front or other specified area of the room, in a study carrel, or in another other enclosed area (IEP or 504 plan must specify location).

Changes in Test Presentation

- 7. **Familiar Test Administrator:** The test is administered by a test administrator familiar to the student.
- 8. **Noise Buffers:** The student wears noise buffers, after test administration instructions have been read (music may **not** be played on headphones worn during MCAS testing).
- 9. **Magnification or Overlays:** The student uses magnifying equipment, enlargement devices, colored visual overlays, or specially tinted lenses (IEP or 504 plan must specify which).
- 10. **Test Directions:** The test administrator clarifies general administration instructions. No portion of the test items or reading selections (including the introduction to reading selections) may be read or signed.
- 11. **Large Print:** The student uses a large-print (18-point font) edition of the test. All answers must be transcribed verbatim from the large-print answer booklet to the student's standard answer booklet.
- 12. **Braille:** The student uses a Braille edition of the test. All answers must be either scribed or transcribed verbatim into the student's answer booklet, unless the student also has accommodation 23 (typed response) in his or her IEP.
- 13. **Place Marker:** The student uses a place marker.
- 14. **Track Test Items:** The test administrator assists the student in tracking test items (e.g., moving from one test question to the next) or by redirecting the student's attention to the test.
- 15. **Amplification:** The student uses sound amplification equipment.
- 16. **Test Administrator Reads Test Aloud (except ELA Reading Comprehension test, which is nonstandard accommodation 26):** The test administrator reads the ELA Composition, Mathematics, and/or Science and Technology/Engineering test(s) aloud to the student. Must also have accommodation 3,4 and/or 5. The test can be read aloud in one of the following ways, which must be specified in the IEP or 504 plan:
 - o Test administrator reads entire test session word-for-word exactly as written.
 - OR

- o Test administrator reads selected words, phrases, and/or sentences as directed by the student. The student points to the word, phrase, or sentence that he or she needs read aloud.
- ❑ 17. **Test Administrator Signs Test** (except ELA Reading Comprehension test, which is nonstandard accommodation 27): The test administrator signs the ELA Composition, Mathematics, and/or Science and Technology/Engineering test(s) to the student who is deaf or hard of hearing.
- ❑ 18. **Electronic Text Reader (except ELA Reading Comprehension test, which is nonstandard accommodation 28)**: The student uses an electronic text reader for the ELA Composition, Mathematics, and/or Science and Technology/Engineering test(s).

Changes in How the Student Responds to Test Questions

- ❑ 19. **Scribe Test or Use Speech-to-Text Conversion Device (except ELA Composition, which is nonstandard accommodation 29)**: The student dictates or signs responses to a scribe or uses a speech-to-text conversion device to record responses. Must also have accommodation 4 and 5.
- ❑ 20. **Organizer, Checklist, Reference Sheet, or Abacus**: The student uses a graphic organizer or checklist to answer open-response items or to respond to a writing prompt; an individualized mathematics reference sheet; or an abacus on the Mathematics tests.
 - o Organizer
 - o Checklist
 - o Reference Sheet
 - o Abacus
- ❑ 21. **Student Signs or Reads Test Aloud**: Must have accommodation 4 and 5. The student may
 - o read the test aloud to him- or herself;
 - o read the test and record answers on an audio recording device and then write responses to test items while playing back the recorded segment(s) (including the ELA Composition);
 - o type responses and then use text-to-speech software to play back and review the typed responses (student must also have accommodation 23 on his or her IEP or 504 plan);
 - o sign test items/responses onto video and then write answers while playing back the video (for a student who is deaf or hard of hearing).
- ❑ 22. **Monitor Placement of Responses**: The test administrator monitors placement of student responses in the student's answer booklet.
- ❑ 23. **Typed Responses**: The student uses a word processing program or an Alpha-Smart (or similar electronic keyboard) to type the ELA Composition, answers to open-response questions, or answers to short-answer questions on any MCAS test.
- ❑ 24. **Answers Recorded in Test Booklet**: The student records answers directly in the test booklet or uses special paper for drafts or computation (e.g., lined or graph paper).
- ❑ 25. **Other Standard Accommodation**: The student uses another accommodation during routine instruction:

*Non-Standard Accommodations: IEP and 504 Teams may allow the use of one or more of the following nonstandard MCAS test accommodations **only when all of the criteria are met**, as described next to each nonstandard accommodation.*

- ❑ **26. Test Administrator Reads Aloud the ELA Reading Comprehension Test:** Must also have accommodations 3,4 and/or 5
 - 1. The student has a specific disability that severely limits or **prevents him or her from decoding text**, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so. The student must be a **virtual non-reader** (i.e., at the beginning stages of learning to decode), not simply reading below grade level.

AND
 - 2. The student has access to printed materials **only** through a reader and/or is provided with spoken text on audiotape, CD, video, or other electronic format **during routine instruction**, except while the student is actually being taught to decode.

- ❑ **27. Test Administrator Signs ELA Reading Comprehension Test for a Student Who Is Deaf or Hard of Hearing** Must also have accommodations 3,4 and/or 5
 - 1. The student has a specific documented disability that severely limits or **prevents him or her from decoding text**, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so. The student must be a **virtual non-reader** (i.e., at the beginning stages of learning to decode), not simply reading below grade level.

AND
 - 2. The student has access to printed materials only through a sign language interpreter or is provided with signed text on video or other electronic format during routine instruction, except while the student is actually being taught to decode.

- ❑ **28. Electronic Text Reader for the ELA Reading Comprehension Test:** The student uses an electronic text reader (i.e., Kurzweil 3000) for the ELA Reading Comprehension test; Must also have accommodations 4 and 5
 - 1. The student has a specific documented disability that severely limits or **prevents him or her from decoding text**, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so. The student must be a **virtual non-reader** (i.e., at the beginning stages of learning to decode), not simply reading below grade level.

AND
 - 2. The student has access to printed materials only through an electronic text reader and is provided this accommodation **during routine instruction**, except while the student is actually being taught to decode.

- ❑ **29. Scribe the ELA Composition:** The student dictates the ELA Composition to a scribe or uses a speech-to-text conversion device to record the ELA Composition Must also have accommodations 4 and 5
 - 1. The student has a significant disability which requires the dictation of **all written compositions** to a scribe or use of an electronic speech-to-text conversion device for all compositions.

OR

- 2. The student is unable to use his or her writing hand or arm at the time of testing due to a broken bone or fracture. (see Section B in this chapter for additional information on using a scribe for a student who is not yet on an IEP or 504 plan.)
- 30. **Calculation Devices:** The student uses a calculator, arithmetic table (including addition/subtraction and multiplication/division charts), or manipulatives (IEP or 504 plan must specify which) on the non-calculator session of the Mathematics and/or the grades 5 and 8 Science and Technology/Engineering tests. Calculators are allowed for all students on the high school STE tests.
- 1. The student has a specific disability that **severely limits or prevents him or her from calculating mathematically**. The student must be **virtually unable to perform calculation** (i.e., at the beginning stages of learning how to calculate) without the use of a calculator or arithmetic table, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so.
- AND**
- 2. The student has access to mathematical calculation only through the use of a calculator, arithmetic table, or manipulatives, which the student uses **during routine instruction**, except while the student is actually being taught to calculate.
- 31. **Spell- or Grammar-Checking Function on Word Processor, Spell-Checking Device, or Word Prediction Software for the ELA Composition:** The student uses a spell- or grammar-checking function, spell-checking device (including hand-held electronic spellers), or word prediction software (IEP or 504 plan must specify which function or device) for the ELA Composition.
- 1. The student has a specific documented disability that severely limits or prevents him or her from spelling correctly, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so. The student must be virtually unable to spell simple words (i.e., at the beginning stages of learning how to spell).
- AND**
- 2. The student can produce understandable written work only when provided this accommodation, which the student uses during routine instruction.
- 32. **Other Nonstandard Accommodation:** The student uses another nonstandard accommodation during routine instruction that the IEP or 504 Team identifies as being necessary for the student to participate in MCAS tests. Accommodations may not :
- alter, explain, simplify, paraphrase, or eliminate any test question, reading passage, writing prompt, or multiple-choice answer option;
 - provide verbal or other clues or suggestions that hint at or give away the correct response to the student;
 - contradict test administration requirements or result in the violation of test security, e.g.: - Test items may not be modified, reordered, or reformatted in any way for any student.
 - Tests may not be photocopied, enlarged, altered, or duplicated.
 - English language dictionaries are not allowed for any student on any test except the ELA Composition test.

Student Transition Survey

Name: _____

Grade _____

School: _____

Age: _____

1. What are your future plans:
 - a. college/junior college
 - b. military service
 - c. technical school
 - d. immediate full time job as a _____
 - e. part-time job and school
 - f. don't know
 - g. other, please specify: _____

2. Education Interest
What subject(s) do you like best in school?

3. What skills/services could help you in getting a job?

- a. good technical background
- b. previous work experience
- c. good job hunting skills
- d. knowing the right people
- e. help by a Work Experience Program
- f. other, please specify: _____

4. Work History/Interests

- a. What kind of work do you think you would like to do and be good at doing? _____

- b. Have you ever worked for money?
Where: _____
What did you do? _____

- c. How did you feel about working? _____

- d. What was the best part about having a job? _____

e. What was the worst part about having a job?

5. What skills do you think you need to learn to be able to live and work in the community after you graduate?

6. Do you have a job? _____

How did you get it? _____

When did you get your job? _____

What do you like about the job? _____

6. Living Skills-Please check how you think you do in each area:

Skills	I can do this on my own	I need help	I can't do it
Shop for my clothes			
Shop for food			
Eat at a restaurant			
Drive a car			
Use busses			
Cook a snack			
Cook a meal			
Laundry			

7A. Can you manage money alone? Please check below.

Task	Yes, I can	No, I need help
Can you make change?		
Can you keep a checking account?		
Can you budget a weekly allowance or paycheck?		

7B. Are you responsible for any special chores at home?

7C. Recreation/Leisure Time Activities

- a. What do you do in your free time? _____
- b. Do you spend most of your time alone or with friends?

- c. What are your hobbies and interests?

- d. What games/sports do you enjoy?

7D. What new activities, hobbies or sports would you like to try?

8. Have you talked with anyone at school about your career options?

Yes _____ No _____

9. Who did you discuss the options with? (please check all that apply)

- _____ Parents
- _____ Special education teacher
- _____ Regular education teacher
- _____ Transition coordinator
- _____ Guidance counselor
- _____ Principal
- _____ Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- _____ Other (Please specify) _____
- _____ Friends

10. What services does the school need in order to assist you and other students in Transition?

11. Do you know what an IEP is?

_____ Yes _____ No

12. Have you attended your IEP meetings?

_____ Yes _____ No

13. Do you feel you were involved in planning or writing the IEP?

_____Yes

_____No

14. Have you been asked about what you want to do for the IEP?

_____Yes

_____No

Do you have any other comments, questions or concerns that you would like to discuss or bring up at this time?

**Seven Hills Charter Public School
Special Education Placement/Level of Need Calculations**

School day = (Mon.-Thurs. 7:45 am - 4:15 pm; Fri. 7:45 am – 12:35 pm)
School week = 38.83 hours/week

Placement Considerations (For use in calculating PL1/PL2 Forms)

Placement:	Pull-Out Services Are Provided:	At SHCPS, this means:
Full Inclusion	Less than 21% of the school week.	0 - 8.14 hours of pull-out services per week.
Partial Inclusion	Between 21-60% of the school week.	8.15 - 23.30 hours of pull-out services per week.
Substantially Separate Classroom	More than 60% of the school week.	23.31 - 38.83 hours of pull-out services per week.

Level of Need (For use in calculating PL3 Form)

Percent of Program Time Receiving Sp.Ed. Services (Inclusion and Pull-Out)	At SHCPS, this means:
Under 25% of Program Time	0 - 9.71 hours of direct service per week.
Between 25-75% of Program Time	9.72 – 29.12 hours of direct service per week.
Over 75% of Program Time	29.13 – 38.83 hours of direct service per week.

Service Delivery, Number of Hours Per Week (For use in calculating IEP service delivery grid)

Services:	Number of Hours/Week:
1 X 10 min.	0.17
1 X 15 min.	0.25
1 X 30 min.	0.50
1 X 45 min.	0.75
1 X 60 min.	1.00
1 X 90 min.	1.50
2 X 15 min.	0.50
2 X 30 min.	1.00
2 X 45 min.	1.50
2 X 60 min.	2.00
2 X 90 min.	3.00
3 X 15 min.	0.75
3 X 30 min.	1.50
3 X 45 min.	2.25
3 X 60 min.	3.00
3 X 90 min.	4.50
4 X 15 min.	1.00
4 X 30 min.	2.00
4 X 45 min.	3.00
4 X 60 min.	4.00
4 X 90 min.	6.00
5 X 15 min.	1.25
5 X 30 min.	2.50
5 X 45 min.	3.75
5 X 60 min.	5.00
5 X 90 min.	7.50
5 X 120 min.	10.00
5 X 180 min.	15.00

Seven Hills Charter Public School—Worcester, MA
Special Education Department
Sped Teacher Checklist for IEP Meetings

As the special education teacher your role is to understand the student's disability and ways to accommodate and modify expectations and design interventions and service to ensure student makes effective progress.

- Attendance Sheet, Medicaid form, Eligibility Flow Chart (Initial Meeting)
- IEP Summary Sheets
- Student File
 - Testing reports (for initials and re-evaluations)
 - Recent Progress Report
- Samples of progress
- Parent contact form

Seven Hills Local Monitoring Practices that ensure attendance at Team meetings

The following practices are used routinely to insure attendance at Team meetings:

- ❖ District Admin Support person is primary person for scheduling meetings and maintaining meeting calendar
- ❖ Early notification of upcoming meetings by mail and phone
- ❖ Periodic updates to school staff regarding meeting attendance requirements
- ❖ Student Support Administrative Assistant is educated in required Team members for IEP meeting
- ❖ Special Education Liaison and Student Support Director give input to Student Support Administrative Assistant regarding Team member invite list for each meeting
- ❖ Parent input form and phone call to parent prior to meeting
- ❖ Frequent updating parent contact information
- ❖ Different meeting times at parent convenience, teleconference, or working with alternate family members or designee by parent
- ❖ Notification of staff with attendance invite sheets in personal mail boxes and also posted on Special Education calendar.
- ❖ Special Education Liaisons communicate with Team members prior to meeting
- ❖ In the event parent cancels or fails to appear, phone contact is made with parent by sped admin support or coordinator to assess details and a meeting is re-scheduled with new notices sent by mail.
- ❖ Offer parent transportation as appropriate, cab fare
- ❖ If parent has younger children, offer place for them while parent meets, etc.

Evaluation Process Procedures

Individual Assessor's responsibilities:

1. Team members should coordinate their assessments with the student's teacher(s) and other evaluators so that the child is not over-tested on any given day. The persons conducting the assessments should ensure that the child is notified in advance of any pullout from class.
2. Each person conducting an assessment shall summarize educationally relevant and common terms the following:
 - Procedures employed
 - Results
 - Diagnostic impression
 - The student's needs, offering explicit means of meeting them
 - Signature and date report; include student D.O.B. and grade level
 - If multiple dates were used to test child, specific dates of evaluation segments must be listed on the report.
- 2) Summaries are completed by Notification of Assessment Form deadlines as set by the Student Support Office. Completed evaluations must be in the Student Support Office by noon of the date the assessment is due.
- 3) The assessment due date is at a minimum 4-5 days prior to the Team meeting so that assessments can be shared with parent at least 2 days prior to meeting. SHCPS mails home all evaluations completed to the parent prior to the meeting as general policy.
- 4) Evaluators are encouraged to access the student record for important information that may have already been collected such as teacher input, parent input, FASST forms/referral data , previous testing, IEP's and other pertinent data to incorporate in the Educational Evaluation .

Web Resources

Massachusetts Department of Education
www.doe.mass.edu

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/index.html>

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)
www.nichcy.org

Federation for Children with Special Needs
www.fcsn.org

Council for Exceptional Children
www.ideapractices.org

National Center for Learning Disabilities
www.nclld.org
IDEA Parent Guide - <http://www.nclld.org/content/view/900/456084>

For more information about specific disabilities and additional resources please visit the following websites:

Westborough Special Education Parent Advisory Council
<http://westborough.ma.schoolwebpages.com>

Concord Special Education Parent Advisory Council
<http://concordspedpac.org>

Massachusetts Yellow Pages for Kids
<http://www.yellowpagesforkids.com>

Massachusetts Parent Advisory Council (Masspac)
www.masspac.org

LD Online www.ldonline.org

ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Children www.ericec.org

Parent Professional Advocacy League (PAL) www.ppal.net

ARC Massachusetts www.arcmass.org