

# OPERATING PROCEDURES

## EVALUATION PROCEDURES

UT Tyler University Academy

212804

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Legal Framework: EVALUATION PROCEDURES

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Broad Category: EVALUATION

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### PROCEDURES:

- Once a student has been referred and consent has been obtained, a multi-disciplinary team of evaluation staff (School Psychologist, Diagnostician, Speech Therapist, Dyslexia Specialist, as appropriate to the evaluation needs) review referral documents (MTSS data, health information, teacher information, parent information, school information) and develop a plan for the assessment. The team determines the type of assessments that are needed and assigns roles to evaluation personnel. As the evaluation ensues and it is determined that additional assessments are needed, parents are notified, additional consent is obtained, and additional assessments may be added to the evaluation.
- Upon referral for a Full and Individual Initial Evaluation, the student's parents will be provided with TEA's IDEA Overview, which the parent will sign, the Guide to Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process, and the Procedural Safeguards.
- For a student referred for a Full and Individual Initial Evaluation and Dyslexia is suspected (along with any other additional areas of eligibility), the District's Certified Academic Language Therapist will be a member of the evaluation team. A dyslexia-certified teacher will also be present at the subsequent ARD committee meeting to review the evaluation and make recommendations.
- When parents provide a copy of an evaluation completed outside of the school setting, the multi-disciplinary evaluation team (as appropriate to the evaluation) reviews the evaluation. If an educational disability is suspected based on the report's outcome, the school will refer the student for a Full and Individual Initial Evaluation. If the multi-disciplinary team reviews the evaluation and determines that the evaluation sufficiently meets the evaluation criteria outlined in federal and state statutes and school board policy, an ARD committee will be convened to review the evaluation and determine the need for specialized instruction. If additional evaluation is needed, parents are notified, consent is obtained, and further evaluation is completed in accordance with evaluation timelines.

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- Cultural and language differences are considered in various ways when a student's home language is not English or when language differences are suspected. After consent has been obtained, an oral language assessment is completed to determine the student's level of language proficiency in English (and Spanish when the student speaks Spanish). If a student does not exhibit English Language Proficiency, the evaluation is completed by the Bilingual evaluator using both English and Spanish assessments in the case of a Spanish-speaking student. For students proficient in a language other than English or Spanish, dependent upon language proficiency in English, the evaluation will be conducted in English, and then cognitive data will be analyzed for cultural and language impact, or a nonverbal cognitive assessment will be completed.
- When a student has been referred for a Full and Individual Initial Evaluation, a meeting is held between the parent/guardian and an evaluation staff member. Meetings can be conducted in person, over the telephone, or through video conferencing. At that time, the evaluator reviews procedural safeguards (summary) and the Notice of Evaluation. The Notice of Evaluation (provided in the parent's native language when possible) describes in writing the elements of the evaluation and examples of assessments that may be used, particularly psychological examinations and the involvement of a School Psychologist. Parents are given the opportunity to ask questions, and consent is obtained either in person or electronically. Parents are notified at that time that consent can be revoked in writing at any time but that revocation is not retroactive to assessments that are already completed. Parents are then provided an electronic copy of the Procedural Safeguards and Guide to the ARD Process in their native language when possible. Parents are also provided a copy of the Special Education Overview. Paper copies are available upon request or when electronic consent has not been obtained.
- To obtain informed consent for reevaluation, members of the ARD committee give input (either in an ARD committee meeting or outside of an ARD committee meeting) as part of the Review of Existing Evaluation Data (REED). Once the REED has been completed and committee members determine the specific scope of the evaluation, a Notice of Evaluation is completed. The Notice of Evaluation (provided in the parent's native language when possible) describes in writing the elements of the evaluation and examples of assessments that may be used, particularly psychological examinations and the involvement of a school psychologist. Parents are given the opportunity to ask questions, and consent is obtained either in person or electronically. Parents are notified at that time that consent can be revoked in writing at any

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time but that revocation is not retroactive to assessments that are already completed. Parents are also provided an electronic copy of the Procedural Safeguards and ARD Guide in their native language when possible. Paper copies are available upon request or when electronic consent has not been obtained.

- When a parent makes a verbal request for assessment, this information is shared with the campus diagnostician so that the campus diagnostician can follow up in accordance with the parent request framework. When a parent makes a written request for assessment to the campus director, teacher, or director of special education, the campus diagnostician is notified. Within 15 school days, parents are provided the opportunity to give informed consent (see previous) or a Prior Written Notice outlining why the district will not evaluate the student.
- UT Tyler University Academy (UTTUA) offers a variety of assessment tools to evaluate the diverse group of learners represented at UTTUA. These various tools are used to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information, including information from the parent. Evaluators consider things such as language needs, age, testing norms, and task demands when choosing testing instruments.
- Evaluators at UTTUA ensure the validity and reliability of assessments by reviewing test manuals. Test manuals contain norming data that allow the examiner to ensure that selected and administered assessments are not discriminatory on a racial or cultural basis and that tests are used for the purposes for which the assessments or measures are valid and reliable. Test manuals also provide information to the examiner regarding specific standardized administration rules.
- Initial Referrals and FIEs are tracked on a district spreadsheet to which all evaluators contribute. School evaluators meet weekly to review the spreadsheet and progress toward the completion of evaluations. When needed, assistance is provided to staff by contract evaluators to ensure evaluations are completed within the federal and state-mandated timeline.
- For a Full and Individual Initial Evaluation, all elements of the evaluation are addressed either formally or informally. Prior to consent being obtained, members of the evaluation team meet with the general education teacher to review data and ensure that all suspected areas are being addressed in the evaluation. Depending upon the suspected area of disability, the evaluator selects formal and informal tools to sufficiently and comprehensively evaluate the student's current performance.

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- Once an evaluation is complete, evaluators provide a copy of the FIIE to the parent no later than five school days before the initial ARD meeting. Upon parent request, evaluators will meet with the parents in person, over the phone, or via Zoom to review the evaluation. Evaluators also enter the completion date into the data management system (including absences) to ensure that the initial ARD meeting is held in a timely manner.
- When considering a Review of Existing Evaluation Data for Reevaluation, members of the ARD committee are given the opportunity to provide input either within an ARD committee meeting or without an ARD committee meeting. Previous evaluation data is reviewed. Information is requested from parents, current classroom-based, local, or state assessment information, and classroom observation information is obtained. Observations noted by teachers and related service providers are reported. Based on information from the REED and input from parents, committee members must identify what additional data, if any, are needed to determine if the child is a child with a disability, continues to be a child with a disability, and the educational needs of the child. Members must also determine if the child needs special education and related services. Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance must be established. Finally, committee members must determine whether changes need to be made to the student's services to enable the child to meet the measurable annual goals set out in the Individualized Education Program. If additional data is needed, informed consent is obtained, and the evaluation is completed. If the committee determines that no further data are required to determine eligibility and educational needs, parents are notified of the determination and reasons for the determination. Parents are also notified of their right to request an assessment.
- Reevaluations may occur not more frequently than once a year unless the parent and school agree otherwise. Reevaluations must occur at least once every three years unless the parent and school agree that a reevaluation is unnecessary.
- For students who are graduating, a Summary of Performance is completed. The summary of Performance includes post-secondary goals, current information regarding the student's present levels of academic achievement, and functional performance. This includes information about the student's physical strengths and needs, behavioral strengths and needs, functional strengths and needs, and academic strengths and needs. Information about the student's accommodation needs. An evaluation may be included for any student the ARD committee deems necessary but must be included for

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students who completed credit requirements with one or more modified classes when the ARD committee determines satisfactory performance on state assessments is not necessary for graduation or the student graduates based on completion of the IEP.

- The educational diagnostician or speech pathologist compiles the Summary of Performance.
- When contracting with evaluation providers, UTTUA staff provide the evaluators with referral data. Once the contracted provider has completed an evaluation, UTTUA evaluation staff review the assessment for compliance with district expectations and request additional testing if deemed necessary by school evaluation staff.
- In the event of a prolonged school closure, measures have been put in place to ensure the completion of assessments within a timely manner. UTTUA evaluation staff have access to online video conferencing to hold meetings and platforms that are qualified for the provision of services. Teacher Information and Parent Information can be obtained electronically. UTTUA evaluation staff have access to online rating scales. Assessment publishers continue to develop tools that can be administered remotely with parental assistance, such as the Brief Observation of Symptoms of Autism (BOSA). MTSS data and performance on universal screeners and STAAR assessments are available online to evaluators. Evaluators can obtain sufficient data to complete a comprehensive evaluation when in the absence of in-person instruction.

#### STAFF RESPONSIBLE:

**District Level:** School Psychologist, Speech Pathologist, Contracted Assessment Personnel, Certified Academic Language Therapist, Director of Special Education

**Campus Level:** Campus Diagnostician, Campus Director, General Education Teachers

#### TIMELINES FOR EVALUATION ACTIVITIES:

- All evaluation staff attend annual legal updates through Region 7 and other training opportunities throughout the year. Relevant information gained at training is shared with evaluation staff at weekly meetings.
- Evaluation timelines are monitored by the special education coordinator and members of the district evaluation staff weekly.
- Evaluations are reviewed by members of the evaluation staff before being sent to parents. Evaluation concerns are discussed during the evaluation, and the team

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makes suggestions for improvement during weekly meetings or more frequently when needed.

- A written report of an initial evaluation must be completed as follows:
- Not less than the 45th school day following the date on which UT Tyler University Academy (UTTUA) receives written consent for the evaluation from the child's parent if the child is absent from school three or more school days between the time UTTUA received written consent and the evaluation due date, then the evaluation timeline will be extended by the number of days absent or
- If UTTUA receives written consent at least 35 school days but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, the evaluations must be provided to the parent not later than June 30 of that year or
- If the child was absent from school three or more days between the time that UTTUA received written consent and the last instructional day of the school year, the evaluation report must be completed not later than the 45th school day following the date on which the LEA received written consent plus the number of days the child was absent.
- If the child was in the process of being evaluated for special education eligibility by another Local Education Agency (LEA) and enrolls at UTTUA before the previous LEA completed the initial evaluation, UTTUA will coordinate with the previous LEA as necessary and as expeditiously as possible to ensure a prompt completion of the evaluation.
- A child is considered absent if not in attendance at the school's official attendance taking time or alternative attendance taking time.

#### EVIDENCE OF PRACTICE:

- Forms and checklists used in the evaluation process
- Training artifacts (presentation hand-outs, sign-in sheets, etc.)
- Submission of SPP 11 and 12 data in TEAL
- List of qualified personnel with required licenses and certifications to administer evaluations
- Reports for compliance
- Data tracker from software programs