



# Special Education Parent & Guardian Handbook



Spokane Public Schools  
*excellence for everyone*

**SPED** | SPECIAL  
EDUCATION



## Special Education Services

Special education is instruction that is adapted to fit the needs of your student. In order to access special education services, your student needs to have a documented disability and an evaluation that determined that the disability affects them at school. This instruction may also include related services (physical therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, etc.) that are unique to your student so that they are able to access their Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE). These services are provided at no cost to the family and are decided upon based on evaluation results along with input from the IEP team. Special education is designed to help the student be successful in the school environment.

## Discipline for Students Receiving Special Education Services

If your student has a 504 or IEP, the law affords them additional rights under section 504 and/or IDEA.

### **Manifestation Determination Meeting**

If your student is suspended 10 or more school days in the course of year, the school is required to hold a manifestation meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to determine if your student's behavior was related to their disability and/or the district's failure to follow to your student's IEP. For more information, please see the [procedural safeguards](#) document.

### **Exclusions**

- As with all students, any time your student is removed from class or school for more than a brief period due to behavior (for example, a brief check in with a teacher in the hall) it counts as a suspension. These exclusions count towards the ten-day total suspension count.
- When your student is removed from school for more than ten days, they must also get educational services. This may look like access to online learning or packets at home.

### **FBA/BIP**

- If your student's behavior adversely affects their learning or the learning of other students, the school is required to conduct a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA). The district may also conduct an FBA following a manifestation meeting. The purpose of the FBA is to determine the "why" of a behavior and better understand the environmental conditions leading to that behavior. Understanding the why helps us address the situation and best support the student. Following the FBA, a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) may be developed or changed. The BIP uses positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) to promote a successful environment for student learning. You must give consent for the FBA as it is a new evaluation of your child.
- The BIP becomes part of your child's IEP and must be implemented as any other supports would be at school.

## Prior Written Notice (PWN)

After your student's IEP meeting the school must provide you with written notification before any suggested changes to your child's education, including addition or denial of changes to services including your child's educational placement. This notification is called a Prior Written Notice (PWN). This notice must be provided to you in a way that you can easily understand including having it presented in your native language. This document must include:

- A description of the action being considered (for example, adding or removing services)
- The reason the action (change or update in services) is being considered (this is the action that will be taken after the date listed below)
- A description of other options that were considered and why they were rejected as an idea
- A list of the evaluation procedures being used
- Any other relevant information

The PWN will be provided to you after every decision and before a change or update in services takes place. If you don't receive one or the information is unclear you can reach out for clarification. The district has a list of support team members available at the end of this document with contact information.

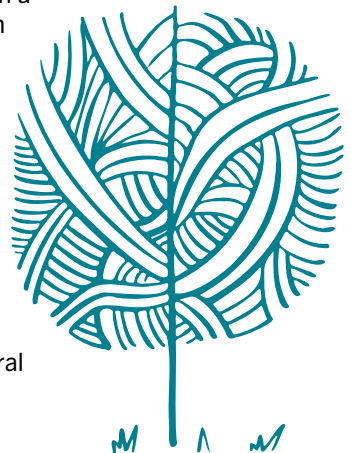
If you do not agree with the decision in the PWN then you can follow the steps listed in Dispute Resolution Prior to Citizen's Complaint or Due Process.

For more information, see the [procedural safeguards](#) document.

## Consent

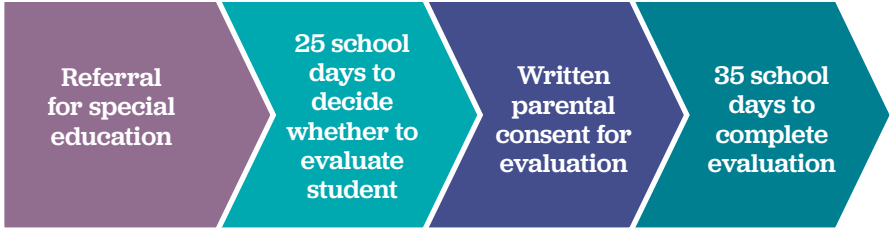
Before special education services can begin, parents and guardians will be asked to consent for an evaluation of their child to take place. You will discuss with the school psychologist a list of assessment options that will be given to your child upon consent. These assessments will provide you with a snapshot of where your child is currently performing in all areas impacted in the school setting. You will also be asked for consent before any new or additional evaluations are given to your child.

You may revoke your consent for special education services at any time. Revoking consent does not undo any previous evaluation or IEPs as they will remain a part of the student's cumulative record. Revoking consent does not keep your student from receiving special education later on and you may restart the child find process at any time. For more information, please see page ten of the procedural safeguards.



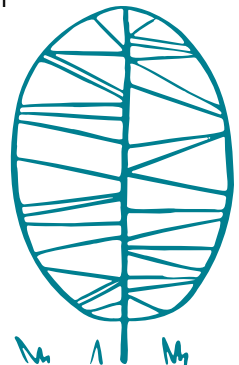
## Initial Evaluation and Re-evaluation

If you suspect your student may be in need of special education services, you should file a request for an initial evaluation in writing with your school district—also known as the child find process. You can contact the special education department at 509-354-7947.



Once a child find referral is made, the district will decide if your student should be evaluated for special education. The district has 25 school days to make this decision. If you do not hear back regarding a decision to evaluate meeting within 20 school days, please contact the special education department. You will be invited to a decision to evaluate meeting with your child's school.

- The district may decide not to evaluate if there is evidence your student is academically at or above grade level or other circumstances that may warrant the need for additional observation. You will be provided documentation of this decision in the form of a prior written notice.
- If you do not agree with the fact that the district does not want to evaluate your child, you have a couple options. You should first request a team meeting with your school to discuss your concerns. If after that meeting you still feel your child needs to be evaluated, contact someone at the district office before going to the state for support.
- Your student may qualify for a 504-accommodation plan or other interventions services that are outside of special education.
- If the district agrees to evaluate, then they will seek your permission for consent to evaluate. Parent consent is required before any assessments may take place. Once you have provided this permission, a team will spend some time evaluating your child in all suspected areas of disability. This process takes time and may take up to 35 school days. Once the evaluation is completed, you will meet with the team to discuss the results and the team will determine if your child qualifies for an IEP.
- The law requires that students be re-evaluated every three years to determine eligibility for special education services. Parents may request an early re-evaluation if there are concerns.



## Independent Education Evaluation

Evaluations are completed by a provider from outside of the school district and can be either provided by the parent to the assessment team or requested by the parent and paid for by the school district.

- Parents are welcomed to present an evaluation from an outside provider as part of the evaluation process and the district will take the information into consideration and it may be used in the evaluation report.
- If you disagree with the results of a school evaluation, you may ask the district for an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE). The district has 10 school days to respond to your request and a list of providers will be given upon the initial request. The IEE is completed at no cost to you. The district may refuse to move forward with the IEE, however is required to file due process as a result.
- The district encourages parents and guardians to reach out to the special education department if there are any concerns about the evaluation process.

## What is in an IEP

An Individual Education Program (IEP) is a document/ roadmap that outlines how your child will access their special education services. At a minimum, the IEP needs to contain:

- Your student's identifying information and eligibility category
- Your student's present levels of academic progress and performance
- Measurable goals for the upcoming year and how the school will measure progress on those goals
- Any related services including Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Speech Therapy
- Accommodations and modifications to help your student access their education
- How much time the student spends in general education ("gen ed")
- Where the student will receive their special education services along the continuum of services

Your child's IEP must be updated at least annually. You will meet with the IEP team to discuss what the plan is for the upcoming year. Your IEP team should include you and your family, your child's special education teacher (s), general education teacher (s), someone who can represent the district, related service providers (speech, OT, etc.), and anyone else involved in your student's education. You may bring whomever you would like to an IEP meeting including but not limited to an advocate, support person, outside providers, counselors.

## Dispute Resolution Prior to Citizen's Complaint or Due Process

Before you file a formal complaint with the state (OSPI Dispute Resolution and Due Process procedures here), it is a good idea to make sure you have connected with school and district support. We recommend that families connect with their school team first (teacher, principal, any support staff in school) but are always welcome to contact a special education coordinator who oversees their child's program or the special education family liaison. Never hesitate to reach out to the special education department if you feel as though your child's needs are not being met or rights are not being considered.

If you feel like your concerns about your child's IEP are not being heard, you can request a facilitated IEP through the state. In a facilitated IEP, the state provides a trained facilitator who oversees an IEP meeting and makes sure that everyone has equal opportunity to have their voice heard. In this situation, it is the IEP team that reaches a decision, and is not part of a judicial process.

## Confidentiality

Your student has a right to have their education records, including their IEP, kept private. Unless we have documentation that states differently, you and the child's other parent are the only people outside of the district who have access to your child's records. You may sign a release of information that allows the school to share information with outside providers and the providers to share information with the school.

## Access Rights

You have a right to review your student's educational records at anytime. As a parent you also have the right to:

- An explanation and/or interpretations of the records
- A have a copy of the records
- Have someone else, like your lawyer, review the records

In order to request a copy of the records, file a request through your district through the website. If you experiencing a delay please contact Student Services at 509-354-7393

The district also has to keep a record of anyone who receives a copy of the records, other than employees within the district.

If you believe information in your child's record is incorrect, you may ask the district to change the records.

For more information, please see the [procedural safeguards](#) document.

## Special Education Leadership Team

Last Name	Position	Contact
Kristina Baker	Director, Special Education	<a href="mailto:KristinaB@spokaneschools.org">KristinaB@spokaneschools.org</a> 509.354.7296
Katie Cormier	Coordinator, Special Education - South & Southwest Feeder Pattern (LC & FHS)	<a href="mailto:KatieCor@spokaneschools.org">KatieCor@spokaneschools.org</a> 509.354.7303
Andrew Huffaker	Coordinator- Related service providers	<a href="mailto:AndrewHu@spokaneschools.org">AndrewHu@spokaneschools.org</a> 509.354.7386
Barb Knauss	Coordinator- Northeast Feeder Pattern (RHS)	<a href="mailto:BarbK@spokaneschools.org">BarbK@spokaneschools.org</a> 509.354.5986
Stacy Maddigan	Coordinator- Northwest Feeder Pattern (Shadle)	<a href="mailto:StacyM@spokaneschools.org">StacyM@spokaneschools.org</a> 509.354.7945
Michelle O'Neill	Coordinator- Principal of Secondary Transition (IMAGES, STEP, Project SEARCH), DHH/Home health/Vision/Audiology programs	<a href="mailto:MichelleO@spokaneschools.org">MichelleO@spokaneschools.org</a> 509.354.7385
Renee Pryor	Coordinator- Northcentral Feeder Pattern (NC)	<a href="mailto:ReneeP@spokaneschools.org">ReneeP@spokaneschools.org</a> 509.354.7221
Savannah Warrington	Coordinator- Intervention	<a href="mailto:SavannahW@spokaneschools.org">SavannahW@spokaneschools.org</a> 509.354.5904
Mollie Weber	Special Education Parent/ Guardian Liaison	<a href="mailto:MollieW@spokaneschools.org">MollieW@spokaneschools.org</a> 509.354.4644

## Early Learning Leadership Team

Angela Haberman	Early Learning Prgr Support Coordinator	<a href="mailto:AngelaH@spokaneschools.org">AngelaH@spokaneschools.org</a> 509.354.5983
Teanne Stangel	Child Find	<a href="mailto:TeanneS@spokaneschools.org">TeanneS@spokaneschools.org</a> 509.354.5919
Karin Thompson	Director, Early Learning	<a href="mailto:KarinT@spokaneschools.org">KarinT@spokaneschools.org</a> 509.354.4648



## Resource Contact List

Agency	Focus	Contact
OSPI	Agency that oversees public K-12 Education in Washington State.	360-725-6000 <a href="http://www.k12.wa.us">www.k12.wa.us</a> Olympia, WA
Arc of Spokane	Provides support for individuals with disabilities and their families.	509-328-6326 <a href="http://arc-spokane.org">arc-spokane.org</a> Spokane, WA/ National
Isaac Foundation	Provides support and resources to families touched by autism.	509-325-1515 <a href="http://theisaacfoundation.org">theisaacfoundation.org</a> Spokane, WA
Northwest Autism Center	Resource center for families affected by autism.	509-328-1582 <a href="http://www.nwautism.org">www.nwautism.org</a> Spokane, WA
Disability Determination Services (DDS)	Determine eligibility for social security disability insurance (SSDI), supplemental security income (SSI), and non-grant medical assistance (NGMA).	1-800-772-1213 <a href="http://www.ssa.gov/disability">www.ssa.gov/disability</a> Olympia, Federal Way, and Spokane, WA.
Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)	Providing support for individuals and families affected by disability.	509-329-2900 <a href="http://www.dshs.wa.gov/dda">www.dshs.wa.gov/dda</a> Spokane, WA/National
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)	Helps people with disabilities prepare for, obtain, and retain employment.	509-363-4700 <a href="http://www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr">www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr</a> Spokane, WA/National
PAVE	Provides support, training, information, and resources to empower and give voice to individuals, youth, and families impacted by disabilities.	1-800-5-Parent <a href="http://wapave.org">wapave.org</a> State Wide
Joya Child and Family Development	Birth to Three family support and therapy provider.	509-326-1651j <a href="http://joya.org">joya.org</a> Spokane, WA
Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs	Support and community resources through SRHD including family support, care coordination, and health information.	509-324-1665 <a href="http://srhd.org">srhd.org</a> Spokane, WA
Passages Family Support	Mental health support and services.	509-892-9241 <a href="http://passages-spokane.org">passages-spokane.org</a> Spokane, WA
Frontier Behavioral Health	Behavioral healthcare and related services to individuals of all ages.	509-838-4651 <a href="http://fbhwa.org">fbhwa.org</a> Spokane, WA







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***Visit us for more information***

Special Education  
200 N. Bernard  
Spokane, Washington 99201  
Phone: 509.354.7310

Spokane Public Schools complies with all federal and state rules and regulations and does not discriminate in the admission, treatment, employment, or access to its programs or activities on the basis of age, sex, marital status, race, color, creed, national origin, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, to the use of a trained guide or service animal by a person with a disability, sexual orientation including gender expression or gender identity, or honorably discharged veteran or military status. This holds true for all students who are interested in participating in educational programs and/or extracurricular school activities, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Inquiries regarding compliance and/or grievance procedures may be directed to the school district's Title IX/Staff Civil Rights Officer, ADA Officer, Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying (HIB)/Student Civil Rights Officer and/or 504 Compliance Officer. The following employees have been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination: Civil Rights Coordinator and Title IX Coordinator, Jodi Harmon, (509) 354-7344, [JodiH@spokaneschools.org](mailto:JodiH@spokaneschools.org); and Section 504 Coordinator, Melanie Smith, (509) 354-7284, [MelanieSm@spokaneschools.org](mailto:MelanieSm@spokaneschools.org). Address: 200 N Bernard Street, Spokane 99201-0282.