

Special Education Procedures (update 4.11.23)

The following procedures describe the steps that the Hitchcock County School district will generally follow in implementing certain portions of the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act and Rules 51 and 52 of the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE). If any procedure described herein conflicts with or is inconsistent with state or federal laws or regulations, the law or regulation will control. Nothing in the following procedures creates any enforceable right, educational entitlement or procedural protection that is separate from or in addition to the rights provided by state and federal law and regulation.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) (Rule 51 § 004.01; 34 § CFR 300.101)

Except as otherwise provided by law, the school district will ensure that all children with verified disabilities, from birth through the school year in which the child reaches age twenty-one, including children who have been suspended or expelled from school, have available to them a FAPE, which includes special education and related services to meet their unique needs and the availability of FAPE for resident children in detention facilities, correctional facilities, jails, and prisons.

The school district will ensure that FAPE is available to any individual child with a disability who needs special education and related services, even though the child has not failed or been retained in a course or grade and is advancing from grade to grade.

Full Education Opportunity Goal and Program Options (Rule 51 § 004.11A; 34 CFR § 300.109)

The school district provides full educational opportunities to all children with disabilities aged birth to 21. The school district does this, in part, by:

- Offering and providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE), including special education and related services, and complying with all state and federal special education laws and regulations;
- Making available to children with disabilities a variety of educational programs and services that are available to nondisabled children including, but not necessarily limited to, art, music, industrial arts, consumer and homemaking education, and vocational education
- Working collaboratively with parents, teachers, guidance counselors, other school staff members, community agencies, educational service units, and other school districts to review

and/or offer appropriate course offerings and other educational opportunities;

- Providing supplementary aids, services, and other effective supports determined appropriate and necessary by the child's IEP Team, to ensure that students have an equal opportunity to participate in academic, nonacademic, and extracurricular services and activities;
- Collecting and examining data; and
- Staff development activities

The timetable for accomplishing this goal is immediate and ongoing. The school district accomplishes this goal by taking the above steps on a regular, scheduled, and ongoing basis as well as on an unplanned basis when the need arises for each individual student.

Child Find Process (Rule 51 § 006.01A and Rule 52 § 006.01; 34 CFR § 300.111)

To identify, locate and evaluate children residing within the geographic boundaries of the school district who may qualify for special education (including homeless children and wards of the State), the school district will take the following practical steps:

- a) announce in mailings sent to families with school-aged children at least annually that the school district will identify and verify children at no charge for possible disabilities;
- b) include information about the identification and verification of children for possible disabilities at no charge in mailings sent to patrons, homeless shelters, and Health and Human Service offices located in the school district at least annually; and
- c) accept referrals for evaluation directly from parents, school personnel, and other state and regional agencies.

Student Assistance Teams (Rule 51 § 006.01B). The school district will use student assistance teams to develop individualized programs of support for students who may be experiencing difficulties in school. The school district will generally work to assist a student through the SAT process prior to evaluating the student for possible verification under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or Rule 51 of the Nebraska Department of Education.

The SAT will be an ad hoc group created around a student, and will generally include building staff with expertise in the specific content area(s) identified as problematic for the student. The SAT may also involve other

interested or relevant staff and may, but is not required to, include the student's parent.

The team will review the strengths and interests that are unique to the student and determine the academic or social challenges the student is facing at school. The team will then develop ideas and strategies that may help the student be more successful in school.

If the SAT determines that appropriate general education interventions have been attempted without success, it will consider evaluating the student for eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or referring the student to the multidisciplinary team for evaluation pursuant to Rule 51.

Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (Rule 51, § 006.03 and Rule 52 § 006.09). The school district will appoint a Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MDT) which will be responsible for making all verification decisions pursuant to the qualification criteria in Rule 51 of the Nebraska Department of Education. The MDT will analyze, assess, and document the needs of each student, and the MDT's compiled information will be used on the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) if the MDT determines that the student qualifies for special education.

The MDT will not base a student's verification upon 1) lack of appropriate instruction in reading as contemplated in Section 614(a)(5)(A) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, 2) lack of instruction in math, or 3) limited English proficiency.

If a nonpublic school student qualifies for the school district's special education program, an administrator or other designated representative of the student's nonpublic school shall be appointed as a member of the student's MDT.

Referral Procedures for Infants and Toddlers (Rule 52 § 006.01-006.03). The school district will make a referral for a child under the age of three to the agency responsible for providing services coordination in the Planning Region as soon as possible but in no case later than seven (7) days after becoming aware of the infant's or toddler's potential eligibility for early intervention services. A child under the age of three who is the subject of a substantiated case of child abuse or neglect; or is identified as directly affected by illegal substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure must be referred to the Early

Intervention Program (the agency responsible for providing services coordination in the Planning Region).

Except as otherwise allowed by law or regulation (see Rule 52 § 006.02B), the school district must complete the screening; complete the initial evaluation and assessments; and participate in the initial individualized family service plan (IFSP) within 45 calendar days from the date of referral.

IEP Meetings (Rule 51 § 007.09A–C, G-H)

Each student's IEP team will meet initially to develop the student's IEP within 30 calendar days of the determination that the student qualifies for special education. Thereafter, each IEP team will meet at least once annually to determine whether the annual goals of the student's IEP are being achieved. The student's IEP team will also ensure that the student's IEP is in effect at the beginning of each school year. The school district will encourage the consolidation of reevaluation meetings with other IEP Team meetings to the extent possible. The school district and parents may agree to meeting participation by video conference, conference call, or other electronic or alternative means.

Pre-Meeting Procedures. Staff members may engage in activities such as researching placements and service options, preparing draft IEP documents, writing reports, creating charts, and comparing student makeup of various program settings prior to and in preparation for IEP team meetings. Actual IEP and placement decisions, however, will not be made until concerns and input of parents and other members of the IEP team are received and considered at an IEP meeting. Although staff members may consider possible service and placement options and form opinions about them outside of an IEP meeting, no final decision will be made before full consideration of all data and input from all team members at an IEP team meeting. The school district has no policy of refusing to consider or use any particular service, program, or placement option.

Individualized Education Program (Rule 51 § 007; 34 CFR § 324)

At the beginning of each school year, the school district will have in effect, for each child with a disability within its jurisdiction, an IEP, as defined in 34 CFR § 300.320 that meets the requirements of 34 CFR § 300.323. The IEP shall be developed, reviewed, and revised for each child with a disability as follows.

Development of the IEP

General. In developing each child's IEP, the IEP Team will consider:

- (i) The strengths of the child;
- (ii) The concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child;
- (iii) The results of the initial or most recent evaluation of the child; and
- (iv) The academic, developmental, and functional needs of the child.

Consideration of special factors. The IEP Team will:

- (i) In the case of a child whose behavior impedes the child's learning or that of others, consider the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies, to address that behavior;
- (ii) In the case of a child with limited English proficiency, consider the language needs of the child as those needs relate to the child's IEP;
- (iii) In the case of a child who is blind or visually impaired, provide for instruction in Braille and the use of Braille unless the IEP Team determines, after an evaluation of the child's reading and writing skills, needs, and appropriate reading and writing media (including an evaluation of the child's future needs for instruction in Braille or the use of Braille), that instruction in Braille or the use of Braille is not appropriate for the child;
- (iv) Consider the communication needs of the child, and in the case of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing, consider the child's language and communication needs, opportunities for direct communications with peers and professional personnel in the child's language and communication mode, academic level, and full range of needs, including opportunities for direct instruction in the child's language and communication mode; and
- (v) Consider whether the child needs assistive technology devices and services.

Requirement with respect to regular education teacher. A regular education teacher of a child with a disability, as a member of the IEP Team, must, to the extent appropriate, participate in the development of the IEP of the child, including the determination of:

- (i) Appropriate positive behavioral interventions and supports and other strategies for the child; and

(ii)Supplementary aids and services, program modifications, and support for school personnel consistent with law.

Agreement.

(i) In making changes to a child's IEP after the annual IEP Team meeting for a school year, the parent of a child with a disability and the school may agree not to convene an IEP Team meeting for the purposes of making those changes, and instead may develop a written document to amend or modify the child's current IEP.

(ii) If such changes are made to the child's IEP, the school must ensure that the child's IEP Team is informed of those changes.

Consolidation of IEP Team meetings. To the extent possible, the school must encourage the consolidation of reevaluation meetings for the child and other IEP Team meetings for the child.

Amendments. Changes to the IEP may be made either by the entire IEP Team at an IEP Team meeting, or by *Agreement* as provided above, by amending the IEP rather than by redrafting the entire IEP. Review and revision of IEPs

General. The school will ensure that the IEP Team:

(i)Reviews the child's IEP periodically, but not less than annually, to determine whether the annual goals for the child are being achieved; and

(ii) Revises the IEP, as appropriate, to address -

(A) Any lack of expected progress toward the annual goals described in 34 CFR § 300.320(a)(2), and in the general education curriculum, if appropriate;

(B) The results of any reevaluation conducted under 34 CFR § 300.303;

(C) Information about the child provided to, or by, the parents, as described under 34 CFR § 300.305(a)(2);

(D) The child's anticipated needs; or

(E) Other matters.

Consideration of special factors. In conducting a review of the child's IEP, the IEP Team must consider the special factors described above.

Requirement with respect to regular education teacher. A regular education teacher of the child, as a member of the IEP Team, must, consistent with the requirement above, participate in the review and revision of the IEP of the child.

Failure to meet transition objectives

Participating agency failure. If a participating agency, other than the school, fails to provide the transition services described in the IEP in accordance with 34 § 300.320(b), the school will reconvene the IEP Team to identify alternative strategies to meet the transition objectives for the child set out in the IEP.

Children with disabilities in adult prisons

Requirements that do not apply. The following requirements do not apply to children with disabilities who are convicted as adults under State law and incarcerated in adult prisons:

(i) The requirements contained in section 612(a)(16) of the Act and 34 CFR § 300.320(a)(6) (relating to participation of children with disabilities in general assessments).

(ii) The requirements in 34 CFR § 300.320(b) (relating to transition planning and transition services) do not apply with respect to the children whose eligibility under Part B of the Act will end, because of their age, before they will be eligible to be released from prison based on consideration of their sentence and eligibility for early release.

Modifications of IEP or placement.

(i) Subject to law, the IEP Team of a child with a disability who is convicted as an adult under State law and incarcerated in an adult prison may modify the child's IEP or placement if the State has demonstrated a bona fide security or compelling penological interest that cannot otherwise be accommodated.

(ii) The requirements of 34 CFR §§ 300.320 (relating to IEPs), and 300.114 (relating to LRE), do not apply with respect to the modifications described in paragraph (d)(2)(i) of this section.

Contracted Programs (Rule 51 § 013.02).

The school district shall be responsible for the development and maintenance of the IEP and the participation in all IEP meetings and shall assure that IEP meetings are arranged with the contracted program and the parents. Such arrangements may include meetings with the contracted program, the school district, and the parent. Meetings may occur within the district, at the contracted program site, or another site if more appropriate.

IEP Distribution to Parents (Rule 51 § 007.09D, F).

A copy of the IEP will be provided to the parent at no cost. If the IEP is amended, the parent will be provided with a revised copy of the IEP with the amendments incorporated upon request.

Distribution of IEP information to staff (Rule 51 § 007.02C, § 007.02D, and § 007.09E1).

The case manager for each student with an IEP will provide the staff assigned to work with that student with information about the student's disabling conditions, the modifications and accommodations called for in the student's IEP. The case manager will also inform relevant staff of any subsequent changes made to the student's IEP. This information may be provided by: giving staff members a copy of the student's IEP; giving staff members a copy of the accommodations page of the student's IEP; or using any other method reasonably calculated to communicate relevant information to the responsible staff member(s).

Least Restrictive Environment (Rule 51 § 008.01A; 34 CFR 314)

The school district will assure that, whenever possible, all students with disabilities are educated in the same manner and in the same environment as students without disabilities by using supplementary aids and services. A student with a disability or disabilities will be removed from the regular educational environment and given special services and classes *only* when the nature of the disability does not allow for the satisfactory education of the student in regular classes.

Procedural Safeguard Notice (Rule 51 § 009.06A-D; 34 CFR 504)

A copy of the procedural safeguards will be given by the school district one time per school year. A copy shall also be given to the parent upon: a) initial referral or parental request for evaluation, b) upon request by a parent, c) upon receipt by the school district of the first occurrence of the filing of a complaint under section 009.11 of Rule 51, d) the first occurrence of filing a special education due process case under Rule 55, and e) in accordance with the discipline procedures in section 016 of Rule 51. The notice shall include a full explanation of all procedural safeguards in compliance with section 009.06B of Rule 51. The notice shall be written in English and provided in the native language of the parent as required by sections 009.05C-D of Rule 51.

Evaluation Procedures (Rule 51 § 006.02; 34 CFR.304)

Notice. The school will provide notice to the parents of a child with a disability that describes any evaluation procedures the school proposes to conduct.

Conduct of evaluation. In conducting the evaluation, the school will:

(1) Use a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information about the child, including information provided by the parent, that may assist in determining:

(i) Whether the child is a child with a disability; and

(ii) The content of the child's IEP, including information related to enabling the child to be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum (or for a preschool child, to participate in appropriate activities);

(2) Not use any single measure or assessment as the sole criterion for determining whether a child is a child with a disability and for determining an appropriate educational program for the child; and

(3) Use technically sound instruments that may assess the relative contribution of cognitive and behavioral factors, in addition to physical or developmental factors.

Other evaluation procedures. The school will ensure that:

(1) Assessments and other evaluation materials used to assess a child:

(i) Are selected and administered so as not to be discriminatory on a racial or cultural basis;

(ii) Are provided and administered in the child's native language or other mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is clearly not feasible to so provide or administer;

(iii) Are used for the purposes for which the assessments or measures are valid and reliable;

(iv) Are administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel; and

(v) Are administered in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the assessments.

(2) Assessments and other evaluation materials include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely those that are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient.

(3) Assessments are selected and administered so as best to ensure that if an assessment is administered to a child with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills, the assessment results accurately reflect the child's aptitude or achievement level or whatever other factors the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the child's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills (unless those skills are the factors that the test purports to measure).

(4) The child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities;

(5) Assessments of children with disabilities who transfer from one public school to another public school in the same school year are coordinated with those children's prior and subsequent schools, as necessary and as expeditiously as possible, consistent with law, to ensure prompt completion of full evaluations.

(6) In evaluating each child with a disability under 34 CFR §§ 300.304 through 300.306, the evaluation is sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the child's special education and related services needs, whether or not commonly linked to the disability category in which the child has been classified.

(7) Assessment tools and strategies that provide relevant information that directly assists persons in determining the educational needs of the child are provided.

(8) Evaluations shall also comply with any additional requirements found in Rule 51, including but not limited to those found in section 006.02.

Review of Existing Evaluation Data (Rule 51, § 006.06). For initial evaluations and reevaluations, the IEP team and other qualified professionals will review all existing educational assessments as well as parental, classroom and other relevant observations in determining whether:

- a) the student is a student with a disability or continues to be a student with a disability qualifying for special education;
- b) a student with a disability needs or continues to need special education services; and
- c) a student with a disability needs additional or modified special education to meet the goals of the student's IEP or the general goals of the school district's curriculum.

Independent Education Evaluation (Rule 51 § 006.07). When a student's parent requests an independent education evaluation, the student's case manager or the district's special education director will respond in writing without unnecessary delay that (1) the school district will initiate a hearing under 92 NAC 55 to show that its evaluation is appropriate OR (2) an independent educational evaluation will be provided at public expense. The written response will (1) include a copy of the board's policy on IEEs and (2) if appropriate, identify at least one qualified individual who meets the policy's criteria within the geographic area.

Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information (Rule 51 § 009.03; 34 CFR § 300.123, 34 CFR § 300.610-.626)

Notice to parents. The school must give notice that is adequate to fully inform [parents](#) about the requirements of protecting the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information collected, used, or maintained under Part B of the Act, including:

- (1) A description of the extent that the notice is given in the native languages of the various population groups in the [district](#);
- (2) A description of the children on whom [personally identifiable](#) information is maintained, the types of information sought, the methods the [district](#) intends to use in gathering the information (including the sources from whom information is gathered), and the uses to be made of the information;
- (3) A summary of the policies and procedures that the school will follow regarding storage, disclosure to third parties, retention, and [destruction](#) of [personally identifiable](#) information; and
- (4) A description of all of the rights of [parents](#) and children regarding this information, including the rights under FERPA and implementing regulations in [34 CFR part 99](#).

Before any major identification, location, or [evaluation](#) activity, the notice must be published or announced in newspapers or other media, or both, with circulation adequate to notify [parents](#) throughout the [district](#) of the activity.

Access rights. The school will permit parents to inspect and review any education records relating to their children that are collected, maintained, or used by the school. The school will comply with a request without unnecessary delay and before any meeting regarding an IEP, or any hearing pursuant to law, or resolution session pursuant

to law, and in no case more than 45 days after the request has been made.

The right to inspect and review education records under this section includes:

- (1) The right to a response from the school to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of the records;
- (2) The right to request that the school provide copies of the records containing the information if failure to provide those copies would effectively prevent the parent from exercising the right to inspect and review the records; and
- (3) The right to have a representative of the parent inspect and review the records.

The school may presume that the parent has authority to inspect and review records relating to his or her child unless the school has been advised that the parent does not have the authority under applicable State law governing such matters as guardianship, separation, and divorce.

Record of access. The school must keep a record of parties obtaining access to education records collected, maintained, or used under Part B of the Act (except access by parents and authorized employees of the school), including the name of the party, the date access was given, and the purpose for which the party is authorized to use the records.

Records on more than one child. If any education record includes information on more than one child, the parents of those children have the right to inspect and review only the information relating to their child or to be informed of that specific information.

List of types and locations of information. Each participating school must provide parents on request a list of the types and locations of education records collected, maintained, or used by the school.

Fees. The school may charge a fee for copies of records that are made for parents under this part if the fee does not effectively prevent the parents from exercising their right to inspect and review those records. The school may not charge a fee to search for or to retrieve records.

Amendment of records at parent's request. A parent who believes that information in the education records collected, maintained, or used under

this part is inaccurate or misleading or violates the privacy or other rights of the child may request the school to amend the information.

The school must decide whether to amend the information in accordance with the request within a reasonable period of time of receipt of the request.

If the school decides to refuse to amend the information in accordance with the request, it must inform the parent of the refusal and advise the parent of the right to a hearing as provided below.

Opportunity for a hearing. The school must, on request, provide an opportunity for a hearing to challenge information in education records to ensure that it is not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the child.

Result of hearing. If, as a result of the hearing, the school decides that the information is inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the child, it must amend the information accordingly and so inform the parent in writing.

If, as a result of the hearing, the school decides that the information is not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the child, it must inform the parent of the parent's right to place in the records the school maintains on the child a statement commenting on the information or setting forth any reasons for disagreeing with the decision of the school.

Any explanation placed in the records of the child under this section must:

- (1) Be maintained by the school as part of the records of the child as long as the record or contested portion is maintained by the school; and
- (2) If the records of the child or the contested portion is disclosed by the school to any party, the explanation must also be disclosed to the party.

Hearing procedures. A hearing held under this section must be conducted according to the procedures in 34 CFR § 99.22.

Consent. Parental consent must be obtained before personally identifiable information is disclosed to parties, other than officials of

participating agencies described below, unless the information is contained in education records, and the disclosure is authorized without parental consent under 34 CFR part 99.

(1) Except as provided in paragraphs (2) and (3) of this section, parental consent is not required before personally identifiable information is released to officials of participating agencies for purposes of meeting a requirement of this part.

(2) Parental consent, or the consent of an eligible child who has reached the age of majority under State law, must be obtained before personally identifiable information is released to officials of participating agencies providing or paying for transition services in accordance with § 300.321(b)(3).

(3) If a child is enrolled, or is going to enroll in a private school that is not located in the school district of the parent's residence, parental consent must be obtained before any personally identifiable information about the child is released between officials in the school district where the private school is located and officials in the school district of the parent's residence.

Safeguards. The school will protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information at collection, storage, disclosure, and destruction stages. One official at the school district must assume responsibility for ensuring the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information. All persons collecting or using personally identifiable information must receive training or instruction regarding the school's policies and procedures under 34 § 300.123 and 34 CFR part 99. Each school must maintain, for public inspection, a current listing of the names and positions of those employees within the school who may have access to personally identifiable information.

Destruction of information. The school must inform parents when personally identifiable information collected, maintained, or used under this policy is no longer needed to provide educational services to the child. The information must be destroyed at the request of the parents. However, a permanent record of a student's name, address, and phone number, his or her grades, attendance record, classes attended, grade

level completed, and year completed may be maintained without time limitation.

Children's rights. The school has policies and procedures regarding the extent to which children are afforded rights of privacy similar to those afforded to parents, taking into consideration the age of the child and type or severity of disability. Under the regulations for FERPA in 34 CFR 99.5(a), the rights of parents regarding education records are transferred to the student at age 18. If the rights accorded to parents under Part B of the Act are transferred to a student who reaches the age of majority, consistent with § 300.520, the rights regarding educational records in §§ 300.613 through 300.624 must also be transferred to the student. However, the public school must provide any notice required under section 615 of the Act to the student and the parents.

Enforcement. The school district will follow any policies and procedures the State has in effect, including sanctions that the State uses, to ensure that its policies and procedures consistent with §§ 300.611 through 300.625 are followed and that the requirements of the Act and the stated procedures are met.

Early Intervention Transition (Rule 51 § 005.03, Rule 52 § 008; 34 CFR § 300.124)

The school district shall ensure that students participating in early intervention services experience a smooth and effective transition to preschool programs and/or services provided under Part B of IDEA by following the procedures described in 92 NAC 52-008.

Children Placed In or Referred To a Nonpublic School or Facility by the School District or Approved Cooperative As a Means of Providing Special Education and Related Services (Rule 51 § 015.01; 34 CFR § 300.129)

A special education student may be placed in a nonpublic school or facility, if the student's IEP team develops an IEP for the child in accordance with Section 007 that places the student in the nonpublic school or facility. If a student's IEP team determines that the student will be placed in a nonpublic school or facility, the school district will ensure that the student is provided special education and related services in conformance with the provisions of Rule 51 at no cost to the student or parents. The school

district will be responsible for initiating and conducting IEP meetings after the student has been placed in the nonpublic school or facility and will insure that both the parents and representatives from the nonpublic school or facility are involved in any decision about the child's IEP and agree to any proposed changes in the IEP before those changes are implemented.

Children Placed In a Nonpublic School by Parents As a Means of Obtaining Special Education and Related Services; FAPE is At Issue (Rule 51 § 015.02; 34 CFR § 300.129)

The school district will not pay for the cost of education, including special education and related services, of a child with a disability at a nonpublic school or facility if the school made FAPE available to the child and the parents elected to place the child in a nonpublic school or facility as a means of obtaining special education and related services. However, the school district will include that child in the population whose needs are addressed consistent with Rule 51. Disagreements between a parent and the school district regarding the availability of a program appropriate for the child, and the question of financial reimbursement, are subject to the due process procedures of Rule 55 of the Nebraska Department of Education.

Working with Nonpublic Schools within the Boundaries of the District (Rule 51 § 015.03B and § 015.03D1a; 34 CFR § 300.129)

The school district will provide written information to each non-public school within its geographic boundaries that the public school will identify and verify children for possible disabilities at no charge. This communication will also inform the non-public school officials, staff and parents about the availability of equitable services for students with disabilities who attend non-public schools that are not within the geographic boundaries of the district.

A student who attends a nonpublic school may participate in the school district's special education program to receive FAPE provided that (1) the student has been verified pursuant to Rule 51 and (2) the student is a resident of the school district as defined by NEB REV. STAT. § 79-215. The student's IEP team will determine the physical location where the student will receive services and will consider whether it is necessary for the student to be transported to the service location. A non-resident student who attends a nonpublic school within the geographic boundaries of the district may receive equitable services if the student has been verified pursuant to Rule 51.

Disagreement between parents and the school district over whether or not the school district has a program available to serve the needs of a special education student, including claims for tuition reimbursement by parents, are subject to the appeal procedures established in Rule 55.

Personnel Standards (Rule 51 § 010; 34 CFR § 300.156)

The school district shall ensure that all personnel are appropriately and adequately trained and prepared to provide special education and related services to children with disabilities as required by law including but not limited to Section 2122 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Rule 51, and IDEA. The school district shall ensure that its recruits, hires, trains, and retains such personnel by doing the following:

- 1) Advertising for only qualified candidates.
- 2) Verifying that all personnel hold the required certificate, license, registration, or other credentials and training during the interview process or prior to employment.
- 3) Verifying that all personnel maintain the required certificate, license, registration, or other credentials and training during employment.
- 4) Providing continuing education opportunities and training programs.
- 5) Evaluating personnel performance for compliance with federal and state law and regulations and school district standards and policies.

District-Wide Assessments (Rule 51 § 004.05B, § 004.05C, and § 004.05D; 34 CFR § 300.160)

Each student who has been verified under Rule 51 will participate in district-wide assessments in a manner that is appropriate for the student. Each student's IEP team will determine how the student will participate in district-wide assessments. The method of assessment will be recorded on the student's IEP. Alternate assessments will be administered at the same time that state and district-wide assessments are administered to the student's grade level peers. The school district shall report assessment results to parents, the public, and the Department with the same frequency and in the same detail as they report on the assessment of nondisabled children and/or as required by Rule 51.

Suspension and Expulsion Reporting (Rule 51 § 004.06E; 34 CFR § 300.170)

The school district shall report the incidences, duration, and count of removals, suspensions, and expulsions, and other disciplinary information of children receiving special education services required by 92 NAC 004.06E to the State electronically through the NDE website by June 30th of each year. The report will be disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, LEP status, and disability category. If disciplinary discrepancies are occurring in the rate of long-term suspensions and expulsions of children with disabilities, the school district shall review its policies, procedures, and practices related to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards to ensure that they comply with IDEA.

Access to Instructional Materials (Rule 51 § 004.15; 34 CFR § 300.172)

The school district may contract with the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC) when purchasing print instructional materials and/or assures the Nebraska Department of Education that it will provide such materials to children with blindness or other children with print disabilities at the same time as other children.

Overidentification and Disproportionality (34 CFR § 300.173)

The school district shall take affirmative steps to prevent the inappropriate overidentification or disproportionate representation by race and ethnicity of children as children with disabilities, including children with disabilities with a particular impairment described in 34 C.F.R. §300.8. These steps shall include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- Providing staff with technical assistance, professional development, and other educational opportunities;
- Collecting, examining, and reporting data;
- Monitoring, assessing, and providing continuous improvement activities;
- Reviewing school district policies, procedures, and practices.

The school district shall collect and examine data to determine if significant disproportionality based on race and ethnicity is occurring with respect to:

- The identification of children with disabilities, including the identification of children as children with disabilities in accordance with a particular impairment described in 34 C.F.R. §300.8;
- The placement in particular educational settings of these children; and

- The incidence, duration, and type of disciplinary actions, including suspensions and expulsions.

The school district will review and analyze the data and any other applicable indicators or information that is needed to adequately measure overidentification and disproportionate representation. In the event that the available information demonstrates inappropriate overidentification or disproportionate representation by race and ethnicity of children as children with disabilities, the school district shall correct the matter as soon as practicable, but in no case later than any time period required by law.

Prohibition on Mandatory Medication (34 CFR § 300.174)

State and school district personnel shall not require parents to obtain a prescription for substances identified under schedules I, II, III, IV, or V in section 202(c) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 812(c)) for a child as a condition of attending school, receiving an evaluation under sections 300.300 through 300.311, or receiving services authorized under IDEA.

Transportation (Rule 51 § 014; 34 CFR § 300.34(c)(16))

The school district shall provide transportation or transportation services to special education students who qualify for it under law as provided in NEB. REV. STAT. 79-1129, Rule 51, and IDEA. This may include paying mileage reimbursement to parents, transporting children with school district vehicles, contracting with a transportation company, or using any other method that is proper and necessary to transport students. Transportation eligibility will be determined by the student's IEP Team. The plan for transportation for the student shall be part of the IEP if required by law.

Written Notice of Change (Rule 51 § 009.05A-D)

The school district will provide the parents of a student with a disability with prior written notice within a reasonable time before the school district either proposes or refuses to make a change to the student's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, or the provision of a free appropriate public education. The written notice will comply with sections 009.05B-D of Rule 51 of the Nebraska Department of Education.

Informed Parental Consent (Rule 51 § 009.08)

The school district will obtain informed parental consent before: a) conducting an initial evaluation to determine if a child qualifies as a child with a disability, b) conducting a reevaluation, c) initial placement of a child with disabilities in a program providing special education and related services or early intervention services, d) accessing a child's or parent's public benefits or insurance for the first time (and after providing notification to the child's parents consistent with 92 NAC 51-009.90A2); and e) accessing a child's or parent's private insurance proceeds (each time).

Parent Refusal to Consent Under Rule 52 (Rule 52 § 009.02K3)

If a parent refuses to provide consent under Rule 52, the school district may:

- Hold a meeting with the parent(s) to explain how the parent's failure to consent affects the ability of their child to receive early intervention services;
- Provide the parents with written information regarding early intervention services;
- Provide referrals to other agencies, if appropriate; and
- Take other actions or make such other efforts as the school district deems appropriate.

Nothing in these procedures shall override a parent's right to refuse to consent under section 009.03A of Rule 52.

Appointment of Surrogate For Student (Rule 51 § 009.10B)

The school district shall ensure that the rights of students with disabilities are protected by informing the members of the student's IEP team whenever (1) a parent cannot be identified, (2) a parent(s), legal guardian or individual acting *in loco parentis* for the student cannot be located, (3) the child is an unaccompanied homeless youth, or (4) the child is a ward of the State or court. The team will then hold a meeting to discuss and consider whether the school district must appoint a surrogate to participate on the IEP team and fulfill the role of the student's parent. Surrogate parents shall only be appointed when required or allowed by Rule 51 or IDEA. If the district identifies students who may be in need of a surrogate parent, the district will:

1. Attempt to identify and locate the parent;
2. Investigate the legal status of those student(s); and
3. If after a reasonable effort, the parents cannot be located, the school district shall ensure that the rights of students with disabilities are protected by appointing a surrogate.

4. Surrogates will be provided sufficient training to assure they are knowledgeable as to the legal rights and educational needs of the student they are to represent. Training will be conducted as needed.
5. Surrogates will be appointed by the director of special education following documentation that no conflict of interest exists and completion of appropriate training or assurance that the surrogate is knowledgeable in order to represent the student.
6. Surrogates will be monitored on a regular basis to ensure effective performance. Should a surrogate be unable or unwilling to discharge his or her duties, a new surrogate will be appointed by the director.
7. The surrogate parent shall continue to represent the student until one of the following occurs:
 - a. The student is determined to no longer be eligible for, or in need of, special education or related services except when termination from such programs is being contested;
 - b. The parent, who was previously unknown, or whose whereabouts were previously unknown or a guardian or person acting as the student's parents becomes known; and/or,
 - c. It is determined that the appointed surrogate parent no longer adequately represents the student.
 - d. The surrogate parent's term has expired.