IDEA Reevaluation: A Brief Overview

The IDEA reforms under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) were signed into law on December 3, 2004, with changes taking effect on July 1, 2005. The revisions reflected changes in requirements for reevaluations, which had previously been required a minimum of every 3 years. Perhaps the most significant change included a provision that allowed teams to waive the triennial evaluation if it was determined that an evaluation was not needed to determine a student’s eligibility or educational or related service needs.

REQUIREMENTS FOR REEVALUATIONS

Reevaluations may be conducted if the local educational agency determines that the “educational or related services needs … of the child warrant a reevaluation” or upon the request of the child’s parents or teacher. Reevaluation shall occur no more than once a year unless the agency and parents agree additional evaluation is needed. A reevaluation must be conducted at least once every 3 years but may be waived if the district and parents agree that it is unnecessary.

If an IEP team determines that no additional data are needed to determine a student’s eligibility and educational needs, there is no duty to conduct such an assessment. In other words, if the full team, including the parents, believes that the present program is working and simply needs to continue in the same manner, then no assessments are needed. In this case, the IEP team must notify the parent of its decision and the reasons for its decision.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS’ ROLE IN REEVALUATIONS

School psychologists possess unique training and expertise in school-based evaluation. Within reevaluations, school psychologists are charged with (a) planning assessment practices to address the question or needs warranting the reevaluation, (b) administering assessments according to established guidelines, (c) interpreting assessment results with consideration to implications for student programming and services, and (d) facilitating data-based decision making as members of IEP teams (National Association of School Psychologists [NASP], 2016). Across these responsibilities, school psychologists consistently apply principles of measurement, instrument protocols, and the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education, 2014). Moreover, throughout reevaluation processes, school psychologists adhere to legal and ethical standards of practice and actively attend to issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (NASP, 2016).

COMPONENTS OF A REEVALUATION

Reevaluation begins with a review of existing evaluation data on the child, including: Evaluations and information provided by the parents of the child; current classroom based, local, or state assessments, and classroom-based observations; and observations by teachers and related services providers. On the basis of that review, and with input from the child’s parents and teachers, the team should identify what additional data, if any, are needed to determine whether the child continues to have a disability. The team should also identify the educational needs of the child, including whether the child continues to need special education and related services and whether any modifications to the special education and related services are needed to enable the child to meet the measurable annual goals in the IEP and to participate, as appropriate, in the general education curriculum.
RESOURCES


https://www.nasponline.org/x36851.xml

U.S. DOE: IDEA Sec. 300.303
U.S. DOE: IDEA Sec. 300.305

This document is designed to summarize guidance based on federal legislation. State and territorial laws and regulations and local education agency policies may be more restrictive than federal guidance (e.g., they may not permit 3-year reevaluations to be fully waived, as federal legislation suggested they may be). Readers are encouraged to also access their state or territorial department of education and school district websites for this state and local guidance. Please also note that the function of this document is informational, and it is not intended to provide official legal advice.

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