



Jackson-Madison County School System

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

DEPARTMENT: SPECIAL SERVICES

TOPIC: CHILD FIND/REFERRAL PROCEDURES

I. Purpose

To outline provisions regarding the referral of children for an initial special education evaluation pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)'s child find obligation to locate, identify, and evaluate students suspected of a disability under the IDEA.

II. Scope

This procedure applies to children who do not currently have an IEP and have been referred for an initial evaluation, special education services, or a suspected disability by a parent, teacher, or other Jackson-Madison County School System (JMCSS) employee, including students currently identified with a disability under Section 504. This procedure also applies to students who currently have an IEP but are suspected of a different IDEA disability than the disability for which the student is currently identified.

III. General Child Find/Referral Provisions

JMCSS is committed to locating, identifying, and evaluating children age 3 to 21 who reside within JMCSS's geographical boundaries and are suspected of having a disability in need of special education and related services pursuant to the IDEA.

A. Referral Procedures for General Education Students and Students Identified under Section 504

1. Special Education Referral by JMCSS teacher or staff

When a teacher or other JMCSS personnel have concerns about a student's academic, behavioral, medical, or social-emotional functioning, the student may be referred to the Student Support Team (SST) to allow a team of educators to consider the child's educational functioning based on a comprehensive view of the child. The SST will

problem-solve any areas of concern and determine if a disability is suspected under the IDEA. If the SST determines that a disability is suspected under the IDEA, an initial referral meeting will be scheduled with the child's parent to request parental consent for an initial special education evaluation. The referral meeting shall be scheduled with the parents within ten (10) school days of the request.

The initial referral meeting will typically include the following participants: parent, general education teacher, LEA representative, special education teacher, school psychologist, and other participants as needed (*e.g.*, speech language pathologist, RTI lead, RTI interventionist, school nurse). The special education teacher shall provide the parent with a copy of their procedural safeguards. During the meeting, the team will discuss the need for testing. After the decision, a Prior Written Notice outlining the IEP team's decision will be issued within 10 days of the decision. A Prior Written Notice will be issued within 10 days. If the parent refuses evaluation (or refuses to participate in the meeting), the special education teacher shall provide the parent with a copy of their procedural safeguards and, within 10 school days of the IEP team decision, a prior written notice documenting the parent's refusal to allow the district to evaluate the student for a disability under the IDEA.

The district has 60 calendar days to complete the initial special education evaluation from the date the LEA receives consent. Within 60 calendar days, the special education teacher will schedule an eligibility meeting with the parents to review the completed evaluation, and based on the results of the evaluation, the eligibility team will determine if the child meets the State criteria for a disability under the IDEA. The special education teacher shall provide the parent with a 10-day notice with an invitation to the meeting, including a copy of their procedural safeguards and a copy of the evaluation, 48 hours in advance of the Eligibility meeting. Within 10 days of the decision, a prior written notice documenting the team's eligibility determination will be sent to the parent. If the student is eligible, the special education teacher will schedule an IEP meeting with the parent within 30 calendar days to develop an initial IEP for the student.

2. Special Education Parent Referrals

When a parent requests, either through a written request or verbally, an initial evaluation or special education services for their child, the school shall schedule a referral meeting with the child's parent to discuss the parent's referral for an evaluation/request for special education services. The referral meeting shall be scheduled with the parents within ten (10) school days of the request.

The referral meeting will typically include the following participants: parents, general education teacher, LEA representative, special education teacher, school psychologist, and other participants as needed (*e.g.*, speech language pathologist, school nurse). The parents will be provided with a copy of their Procedural Safeguards, which are reviewed at the meeting. If the district suspects a disability under the IDEA, it shall request parental consent for an initial special education evaluation.

Within 10 days, a prior written notice outlining the district's decision to evaluate the child will be provided to the parent. If the district does not suspect a disability, the special education teacher will provide the parent, within 10 days, a prior written notice documenting the district's refusal to evaluate the student for a disability under the IDEA.

The district has 60 calendar days to complete the initial special education evaluation from the date of consent. Within 60 calendar days, the special education teacher will schedule an eligibility meeting with the parents to review the completed evaluation, and based on the results of the evaluation, the eligibility team will determine if the child meets the State criteria for a disability under the IDEA. The special education teacher shall provide the parent with a copy of their procedural safeguards and, within 10 days, a prior written notice documenting the team's eligibility determination. If the student is eligible, the special education teacher will schedule an IEP meeting with the parent within 30 calendar days to develop an initial IEP for the student.

B. Referral Procedures for Students with an IEP

If a parent, teacher, or JMCSS personnel suspect that a student with an IEP has a different IDEA disability than the disability for which he or she is currently identified, the district shall schedule a reevaluation meeting with the child's IEP team to consider an early reevaluation. The IEP team shall follow all required state and federal procedures for scheduling IEP meetings and determining the need for a reevaluation.

C. Special Education Referral, Evaluation, IEP, and Head Start Procedures

This document establishes procedures for Child Find, referral, evaluation, eligibility determination, IEP development, and service delivery for children not currently enrolled in JMCSS, including children participating in Head Start programs. These procedures are aligned with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Tennessee State Board of Education Rule 0520-01-09.

1. Referral Procedures for Children Not Currently Enrolled in JMCSS

When a parent of a child not currently enrolled in JMCSS requests an initial evaluation for special education services, the request shall be treated as a referral under TN SBE Rule 052001-09-.06 and directed to a JMCSS school psychologist. A referral meeting shall be scheduled within ten (10) school days of the request, regardless of whether the request is submitted verbally or in writing.

At the referral meeting, the team shall review existing information and determine whether there is suspicion of a disability under IDEA. If a disability is suspected, parental consent for evaluation shall be requested. Procedural safeguards and prior written notice (PWN) shall be provided within 10 school days. If no disability is suspected, PWN documenting refusal shall be issued within 10 school days.

2. Head Start Child Find Procedures

JMCSS shall fulfill its Child Find obligations for children participating in Head Start programs operated within the district. Child Find activities shall include ongoing developmental screenings, observations, and collaboration with Head Start staff. Any child identified with suspected developmental concerns shall be referred for a referral meeting. Parental consent shall be obtained prior to evaluation.

3. Initial IEP Development and Implementation Timeline

If a child is determined to be eligible, an initial IEP meeting shall be convened within 30 calendar days of the eligibility determination. Services shall be implemented as soon as possible following the IEP meeting. Prior written notice documenting service provision shall be issued within 10 school days.

4. Referral to Services Timeline

When a parent requests an initial evaluation for special education services, either verbally or in writing, the request shall be treated as a referral under Tennessee State Board of Education Rule 0520-01-09-.06. Upon receipt of the referral, JMCSS shall assign a school psychologist and schedule a referral meeting within ten (10) school days upon the request.

Following the referral meeting, if the district suspects that the child may have a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), parental consent for an initial evaluation shall be requested in accordance with Rule 0520-01-09-.07. The parent shall be provided with procedural safeguards, and prior written notice documenting the district's decision to evaluate shall be issued within **10 school days**. If the district determines that there is not a suspicion of a disability, prior written notice documenting the refusal to evaluate shall also be provided within **10 school days**.

Once signed parental consent is received, the district shall complete a comprehensive initial evaluation in all areas of suspected disability within **60 calendar days**, as required by Rule 0520-01-09-.07(4). Within this evaluation timeline, an eligibility meeting shall be convened to review the evaluation results and determine whether the child meets Tennessee eligibility criteria for a disability under IDEA. Following the eligibility determination, the parent shall be provided with procedural safeguards and prior written notice documenting the eligibility decision within **10 school days**, in accordance with Rule 0520-01-09-.15.

If the child is determined eligible for special education and related services, the district shall convene an initial Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting within **30 calendar days** of the eligibility determination, consistent with Rule 0520-01-09-.10. The IEP team shall develop an IEP that addresses the child's unique needs and determines appropriate services, placement, frequency, duration, and location of services.

Special education and related services shall be implemented **as soon as possible** following the IEP meeting and shall not be delayed due to administrative or scheduling considerations. Service delivery shall occur in accordance with the finalized IEP to ensure the provision of a **Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE)**.

5. Head Start-Specific Timeline Inset

All referrals, evaluations, eligibility, and IEP timelines apply equally to children enrolled in Head Start. Services may be delivered within the Head Start setting as determined by the IEP team to ensure FAPE in the LRE.

6. Head Start and JMCSS Roles and Responsibilities

Head Start staff are responsible for ongoing screening, documentation of concerns, and collaboration with families. JMCSS retains sole responsibility for IDEA compliance, including evaluation, eligibility, IEP development, placement decisions, and service delivery. All decisions are made by the IEP team in accordance with TN SBE Rule 0520-01-09.

D. Referral Procedures for Children Transitioning from TEIS Services

1. Initial Referral

- Once the monthly notification is received via email, the LEA shall send the parents a letter notifying them that documentation has been received that their child is receiving early intervention services. The LEA shall also send a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards.

2. TEIS Students Turning Three Years Old:

- For a child receiving Tennessee Early Intervention Services (TEIS) services, a Service Coordinator from TEIS will schedule and notify JMCSS of a transition planning conference (TPC) to be scheduled at least 90 days prior to the child's third birthday. A JMCSS representative will attend the TPC, review procedural safeguards with the parent, explain the evaluation process for school-aged services, and explain the continuum of services available for preschool children within the district. The JMCSS representative will then coordinate next steps with the family to determine the need to obtain consent for an initial evaluation to determine the child's eligibility for special education services. The initial evaluation and eligibility determination must be completed and, if applicable, the IEP developed prior to the child's third birthday. The parents and TEIS representative must be invited to the eligibility meeting. The JMCSS representative shall provide the parents with a copy of their procedural safeguards and, within 10 days, a prior written notice documenting the district's eligibility determination. TEIS shall also be provided with a copy of the eligibility determination. If the student is eligible and parents elect the

Part C Extended Services Option, the IEP team will develop and propose an initial IEP within 30 calendar days, but no later than the child's third birthday.

3. TEIS Extended Option:

- If the TEIS representative is present at the eligibility meeting, the child's parent/guardian has up to 10 calendar days from the date of the eligibility meeting to decide whether to (1) continue early intervention services through the TEIS Extended Option beginning on the child's third birthday, (2) transition to school aged services with an IEP beginning on the child's third birthday, or (3) decline both options. TEIS will provide JMCSS with the parents' decision within 3 business days.
- If the TEIS representative is not present at the eligibility meeting, TEIS will schedule a decision meeting with the parent within 7 calendar days of the eligibility meeting. The parent/guardian has up to 10 calendar days from the date of the decision meeting to decide whether to (1) continue early intervention services through the TEIS Extended Option beginning on the child's third birthday, (2) transition to school-aged services with an IEP beginning on the child's third birthday, or (3) decline both options. TEIS will provide JMCSS with the parents' decision within 3 business days.
- Children whose parents choose TEIS Extended Option will maintain Part B eligibility and be inactivated with a reason of "Parent Elected Part C Extended Services".

4. Adjusted Timelines for Late TEIS Referrals:

- Children referred to TEIS 45-90 days before the child's third birthday: TEIS will inform JMCSS that they have received a late referral. The LEA shall begin planning for a transition as close as possible to the child's third birthday upon receipt of that notification. TEIS will inform JMCSS if the student is eligible for TEIS services, and if so, TEIS will schedule a TPC with a JMCSS representative. For these "late referrals," JMCSS shall complete the evaluation process, eligibility, and IEP (if applicable) as close as possible to the child's third birthday.
- Children referred to TEIS less than 45 days before the child's third birthday: TEIS will not evaluate the child or schedule a TPC. JMCSS will follow its Referral Procedures for Students Not Currently Enrolled in JMCSS. A meeting to determine the need for initial consent for assessment shall be scheduled within 10 days of receipt of referral.

5. TEIS Students Exiting from TEIS's Extended Option

- On March 15 of each calendar year, TEIS will provide JMCSS with a list of children who were found eligible for school-aged services and have been receiving TEIS

extended option services but will no longer be age-eligible for TEIS extended option services upon the start of the following school year. JMCSS shall review all current information and data from TEIS and proceed as follows:

- If the district determines that (1) it no longer suspects a disability, (2) it suspects a change in eligibility categories, or (3) it requires additional data to support the development of an IEP, JMCSS will initiate a reevaluation. The IEP team shall follow all required IDEA procedures for scheduling IEP meetings and obtaining consent for a reevaluation. The reevaluation and eligibility determination must be completed by the beginning of the upcoming school year. The special education teacher shall provide the parent with a copy of their procedural safeguards and, within 10 school days, a prior written notice documenting the district's eligibility determination. If the student is eligible, the IEP team will develop and propose an initial IEP by the beginning of the upcoming school year.

- If the district determines that the child continues to require special education services in the identified eligibility category (ies), JMCSS will schedule an IEP meeting to develop and propose an initial IEP by the beginning of the upcoming school year.

6. Early Exits from TEIS Extended Option

- TEIS will notify JMCSS, as applicable, when a parent chooses to exit TEIS Extended Option early and the date for which TEIS services will discontinue. JMCSS will follow the procedures for TEIS Students Exiting from TEIS's Extended Option identified above; however, the timeline for completing any reevaluation, eligibility determination, and IEP (as applicable), shall occur as with 60 days of the signature on the TEIS Extended Option Exit Form or by the time TEIS services will end (if TEIS services will end on a specific date that is greater than 60 days).

IV. LEA Oversight and Monitoring of IEP Procedures

A. Purpose of LEA Oversight

The Local Education Agency (LEA) shall maintain a system of ongoing oversight to ensure that IEP procedures, including the selection and implementation of accommodations and modifications, are carried out in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), state regulations, and district procedures. Oversight is designed to ensure timely implementation of IEPs, fidelity of services, and provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for all eligible students with disabilities.

B. LEA Responsibilities for Oversight

The LEA shall be responsible for the following oversight activities related to IEP procedures:

1. Policy and Procedure Maintenance

- Maintain and annually review written IEP procedures, including procedures for accommodations, modifications, implementation, and progress monitoring.
- Update procedures as needed based on changes in federal law, state regulations, monitoring feedback, or district practice.

2. Training and Capacity Building

- Provide annual district-level training for administrators, special education staff, and general education teachers on IEP procedures, accommodations, modifications, and implementation expectations.
- Provide targeted or corrective training when data indicates noncompliance or implementation concerns.

3. Monitoring and Fidelity Checks

- Conduct periodic reviews of IEPs to ensure accommodation and modifications:
 - Are clearly documented,
 - Are aligned to Present Levels of Educational Performance (PLAAFPs),
 - Are individualized by content area or setting, and
 - Do not alter the construct of assessments unless a modification is intentionally selected by the IEP team.

Monitor classroom implementation through walkthroughs, observations, or documentation reviews to ensure accommodations and modifications are provided as written.

4. Data Review and Compliance Tracking

- Review district and school-level data related to:
 - Timely IEP implementation,
 - Consistency between instructional and assessment accommodations,
 - Use of accommodations on state and district assessments, and outcomes related to student progress and access to core instruction.
- Utilize compliance dashboards, checklists, or self-monitoring tools to identify trends and areas for improvement.

5. Corrective Action and Technical Assistance

- When noncompliance or implementation concerns are identified, the LEA shall:
 - Require corrective action plans, ○ Provide technical assistance or coaching, and ○ Monitor completion and effectiveness of corrective actions.
- Ensure corrective actions are implemented within the required timelines.

C. School-Level Accountability

1. School administrators are responsible for ensuring that:
 - All staff serving students with IEPs receive access to the IEP or IEP-at-a-Glance,
 - Accommodation and modifications are implemented consistently across instructional settings, and
 - Concerns related to implementation are promptly addressed.
2. Administrators shall collaborate with IEP case managers and the Special Services Department to support compliance and instructional fidelity.

D. Documentation and Continuous Improvement

- Oversight activities, findings, and corrective actions shall be documented and retained in accordance with district and state record-keeping requirements.
- The LEA shall use oversight data to inform continuous improvement of special education practices, professional learning priorities, and procedural updates.