



WELCOME NEW PARENTS

Special Education Parent Advisory Group Meeting: January 6, 2023

What is SEPAG?

- Special Education Parent Advisory Group - A SEPAG gives parents the opportunity to provide direct input to their school district about policies, programs, practices, and services that have an impact on students with disabilities and their families.
- In our district, we also provide members of SEPAG with opportunities to learn more about how to support students with disabilities through workshops facilitated by the district.
- A SEPAG is part of the local school district, not a private or independent group.
- A SEPAG is not a parent support group, but it can be parent-led.
- The purpose of a SEPAG is to examine systemic strengths and weaknesses that impact a group of students, not to address individual concerns.

Continuum of Services

Pre-K through 8

- Integrated Preschool Program
- Self-Contained Programs
 - LLD
 - LEAD
- Pull-out Replacement Resource
- In-class Resource
- General Education with supports
- 504 Plans

Eligibility

- Initial referral – from EI, I&RS, parent (usually at the recommendation of a medical professional)
- Initial evaluation – assess in areas of suspected disability
 - Norm-referenced assessments
- Three prongs
 - Disability
 - Educational impact
 - Requires special education
- 14 categories (see N.J.A.C. linked on the last slide for a list and description)
 - Most common in our district include preschool child with a disability, specific learning disability, communication impairment, other health impaired

The IEP

Individualized Education Program: [What Is an IEP? | Individualized Education Program Explained](#)

- Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance – including strengths and needs
- Goals and objectives
- Modifications and accommodations
- Program/class type
- Related services
- Parental Concerns

Annual Review

- Yearly review of progress in addition to quarterly progress reports
- Teacher(s) update the present levels section
- Goals & objectives are updated to reflect current needs
- Service recommendations and modifications/accommodations are reviewed and updated as needed
- Program recommendation for the one-year time period following the date of the meeting

Additional notes on IEP meetings:

- A parent can request an IEP meeting outside of the annual review date
- Parents are part of the team. Most often, a draft IEP is prepared in advance but changes are made during the meeting and the parent receives a final draft
- Parents have 15 days to consider the proposed IEP before it goes into effect. More information about this can be found linked in PRISE on the last slide, including when not in agreement with an aspect of the IEP.

Triennial Evaluation Process

- A child with an IEP is typically re-evaluated every 3 years
- The evaluation process is very similar to the initial evaluation process, in which standardized assessments are used to determine whether the child continues to be eligible for special education (related services) and what programs/special services they need.

Important Contacts

- If you have a question about something specific in the classroom or curriculum, the first person is your child's special education teacher in that content area.
- If you have a question about your child's IEP, the evaluation process or your child's program, you out to your case manager.
- Here are some key personnel in the Student Services Department:
 - Case Managers: Marydenise Appio, Kendall Kreider, Bernadette Szenasy, Meghan Deutsch
 - Student Services Secretary: Karen Kirchofer
 - Principals: Crista Fenton (IEF) and Alicia Subervi (GBMS)
 - Director of Student Services: Lisa Ferreira
 - Superintendent: Dr. James Bigsby

Helpful resources

- [Parental Rights in Special Education \(PRISE\)](#) – NJDOE document that explains all procedural safeguards
- [SPAN Parent Advocacy Network](#) – includes resources and helpful workshops for parents
- [Understood.org](#) – includes information about a variety of disabilities
- [NJ Administrative Code: Special Education](#)
- [The Office of Special Education](#)
- [NJ State Division of Developmental Disabilities](#) - assistance for adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities with the application process ideally beginning before students reach adult age

Please join us....

For our next meeting in the Spring 2023, date
TBD.

Information will be shared via parentsquare
and our next meeting will include a guest
speaker.

