

# Greater Gulf Coast Cooperative

Damon ISD · Danbury ISD

Hitchcock ISD · Needville ISD

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## Special Education Policies, Procedures and Regulations 2019-2020

## ASSURANCE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

Hitchcock ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1972, as amended.

Greater Gulf Coast Cooperative  
Damon ISD · Danbury ISD · Hitchcock ISD · Needville ISD  
Special Education Policies, Procedures and Regulations  
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## **Accommodations, Modifications, Supplementary Aids and Services**

Accommodation is a change in the teaching or testing procedures in order to provide students access to information and to create an equal opportunity to demonstrate content knowledge and skills.

An instructional accommodation does not change what the student is expected to master; therefore, curriculum content remains intact.

Modification is a change in what the student is expected to learn and/or demonstrate.

An instructional modification indicates what is being taught the - curriculum content - is altered.

A curriculum modification reduces content and skills the student is required to learn.

*Accommodations and modifications should be individualized and routinely used during classroom instruction and testing. Data regarding the use of accommodations and modifications, such as observational reports and/or assignment/test scores with/without the use of accommodations should be collected and analyzed on a regular basis to determine*

- a) if the accommodations are being implemented as specified by the student's ARD Committee and
- b) if the student is benefitting from the use of the accommodations and modifications.

Supplementary Aids and Services are provided in general education classes, other education-related settings, and in extracurricular and nonacademic settings, to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate.

The student's IEP must include information about the services that will be provided. The ARD Committee is responsible for documenting in the student's IEP the projected services. Requirements for documenting the provision of related services include:

- a) Frequency ~ how often the child will receive the service(s).
- b) Duration ~ how many minutes each session(s) will last and date when the services will begin and end.
- c) Location ~ where the services will be provided (in the general education classroom or another setting).

### Consideration of Special Factors:

The IEP should document consideration of special factors including:

- a) The communication needs of the student,
- b) In the case of a student with limited English proficiency, the language needs of the student as those needs relate to the student's IEP, and
- c) In the case of a student whose behavior impedes his/her learning or that of others, consideration of positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports to address that behavior.

## **Adaptive Equipment**

Students with disabilities, occasionally require adaptive equipment to enable them to achieve their highest level of independence with an activity or in the context of a setting. This adaptive equipment may be required across school and therefore be described as a personal use item, or may be required specifically for a student to access, participate in, and thus benefit from the instructional program provided at school. There are three channels in which a student's need for adaptive equipment

### Medical Prescription

When a child's need for adaptive equipment is identified by a medical practitioner, a physician typically prescribes the equipment to meet the personal use needs of the student. This equipment is typically custom fitted to the student's specific needs related to the level of impairment the student experiences as a result of disability and the functional outcomes to be achieved by the equipment.

### Campus Identified Safety Concern

If the concern is one that is specific to the ability of the student to access the resources currently available on the campus, the solution is typically developed by a campus team and may involve modifications to the campus procedures or materials.

*If there is a concern regarding the wheelchair that may impact the student's safety while transporting the student on the bus, the campus should contact the Transportation Department.*

### Related Service Evaluation

When durable adaptive equipment is identified through an occupational therapy, physical therapy, or assistive technology evaluation, the adaptive equipment is provided through the Hitchcock ISD Special Education Department. This equipment is typically identified as assistive technology in the student's individualized educational program (IEP) and is recommended specifically to assist the student to access, participate in, and benefit from the instructional program. This equipment is durable and is designated for use only by the student for which it is assigned by the evaluator.

### **ARD/IEP Committee**

Hitchcock ISD has an admission, review and dismissal (ARD) committee at each campus for each eligible child with a disability and for each child for whom an initial Full and Individual Evaluation is conducted.

The ARD/IEP committee must meet periodically, but not less frequently than annually or by parent request to discuss educational concerns.

### Duties of the ARD/IEP Committee

In Texas, an ARD/IEP Committee makes decisions about eligibility. Within 30 calendar days of completing the Full Individual Evaluation (FIE), the ARD/IEP Committee must meet to review the written report and determine whether the student is eligible for special education services. A copy of the evaluation report must be given to the parent at no cost.

- a) Reviews data from the student's assessment
- b) Establishes eligibility for special education services
- c) Develops and reviews the Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- d) Reviews progress on individual goals
- e) If needed, develops and reviews Functional Behavior Assessment/Behavior Intervention Plan (FBA/BIP)
- f) Develops a health care plan if needed by the student
- g) Reviews data for the personal graduation plan addressing transition services as needed
- h) Assures an educational placement in the least restrictive environment appropriate to meet the needs of the student
- i) Makes decisions regarding promotion or retention of students with disabilities receiving special education services
- j) Makes decisions about student participation in local and state assessments.
- k) If the parent does not speak and understand English an interpreter in the parent's native language will be provided.
- l) Provides a copy of the student's ARD/IEP committee meeting.

### Duties of the Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) or Educational Diagnostician

- a) Inform parent(s) of initial or re-evaluation results
- b) Ensure the Notice of Procedural Safeguards Booklet is provided to parent/adult student or guardian
- c) Conduct the ARD/IEP committee meeting
- d) Facilitate resolution of problematic ARD/IEP committee meetings.

- e) Monitor the input of information in an data management system (eSTAR).
- f) Ensure all issues are followed up.

#### Duties of the ARD Specialist

- a) Coordinates scheduling of ARD/IEP committee meetings at a time mutually acceptable to the parent/adult student and other members.
- b) Provides the parent/adult student with written notice of ARD/IEP committee meetings at least 5 school days prior to the meeting.
- c) Record the Notice of the ARD/IEP committee meeting and Notice of Procedural Safeguards booklet in the software management system (eSped)
- d) Take the minutes of the meeting

#### Guidelines for ARD/IEP Meetings

- a) ARD/IEP meetings should be conducted efficiently.
- b) ARD/IEP meetings will have a clear agenda. A sample agenda is attached.
- c) A copy of the IEP will be sent to parents, particularly the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) and goals.
- d) The campus staff, along with the LSSP and Educational Diagnostician will need to determine if there is a need for a staffing prior to the ARD.
- e) All participants are expected to exhibit professional conduct during the meeting. Rudeness and abusive language cannot be tolerated and such behavior can be cause for discontinuing the meeting.

#### The ARD/IEP committee is composed of

- a) A representative from the school district who is qualified to supervise the provision of specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities, who is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum, and who is knowledgeable about the availability of resources in the school district
- b) The student's current special education teacher or special education provider T
- c) The appropriate general education teacher(s) who is responsible for implementing a portion of the student's IEP for those students who are receiving, or who are expected to receive, instruction in general education
- d) District nurse when students with health care plan are being considered
- e) Speech therapist when students with speech impairments are being considered
- f) An Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) or Educational Diagnostician who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results
- g) A professional certified in the education of students with auditory impairments when services are being considered
- h) A professional certified in the education of the visually impaired when services are being considered
- i) A Career and Technical Education (CTE) teacher who will instruct the student when the committee is considering placement in a CTE program.
- j) The Life Skills teacher if work based learning is being proposed or discussed
- k) The appropriate related services personnel when necessary
- l) A professional representing the Language Proficiency Advisory Committee (LPAC) when a student with disabilities and limited English proficiency are being considered
- m) The student, the student's parent(s), and/or a designated representative participates as follows:
  - i. A student 18 years of age or older who has not been judged by a court of law to be incompetent to manage personal affairs or who has not relinquished rights to parents in writing will participate in his/her ARD/IEP meeting.
  - ii. A parent participates if the student is younger than 18 years of age, if the student is 18 years of age or older and has been judged by an appropriate court of law to be incompetent to manage personal affairs, or if an adult student has relinquished rights to his/her parent(s) in writing.

## **Assistive Technology**

Hitchcock ISD provides assistive technology (AT) services when required. The ARD committee should conduct a Review of Existing Evaluation Data (REED) and formerly request an assistive technology evaluation and submit along with the signed parent consent.

### Evaluation

To determine the student's need for an AT device may be initiated by one of the following means:

- a) recommendation as a result of an AT technical assist by an AT team member
- b) student moves into the district with documentation identifying the student as having been supported with an AT device as a part of their previous IEP and no current evaluation report is provided by the previous school district within 30 calendar days, or
- c) AT evaluation for a student currently supported with a device at school is approaching three years old.

Upon completion of the initial technical assist evaluation, the recommendations for supports may include:

- a) no additional support is indicated
- b) instructional modifications or accommodations
- a) instructional strategies will be provided through the office of Special Education Services.
- c) assistive technology devices will be provided through the office of Special Education Services.

### Assistive Technology in the IEP

When assistive technology is considered in the ARD/IEP process and determined to be necessary for the student to receive FAPE, the ARD/IEP Committee can provide the assistive technology as:

- a) Part of special education services a child receives. It is included as a condition to at least one of the child's instructional objectives demonstrating the need for this device.
- b) A related service to be provided by an AT personnel.
- c) A supplementary aids and services identified as an accommodation the student uses to access the curriculum demonstrating the need for the device/service. It is implemented by the classroom personnel.

## **Auditory Impairment**

It is a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Hitchcock ISD is a member of the Galveston-Brazoria Cooperative for the Hearing Impaired (GBCDHH). The cooperative provides a system of direct and supportive special education services to eligible hearing impaired students.

### Site-Based Services

This is a site-based program where students who need intensive instruction and smaller class sizes that provide access to total communication attend a campus within Clear Creek ISD on a daily basis. GBCDHH site based programs are currently offered in Clear Creek ISD at Gilmore Elementary, Creekside Intermediate, and Clear Springs High School.

### Itinerant Services

Certified deaf education teachers provide direct services to students at the child's home campus. Teachers concentrate on the development of language, communication skills, and self-concept so that each child makes progress in their educational setting.

### Indirect Services

Certified deaf-education teachers and/or audiological staff provide indirect services on behalf of hearing-impaired students that includes but is not limited to: consultation with teachers/staff, instructional support and accommodations, assistive technology support, parent support, monitoring of IEP progress.

#### Parent/Infant Services

Services are provided to infants from birth to three years of age by certified deaf education teachers in cooperation with GBCDHH and ECI. Teachers focus on early and intensive auditory stimulation to facilitate growth of auditory, language, and speech skills along normal developmental lines.

#### Audiological Services

These include audiological testing, routine hearing aid maintenance, ear-mold impressions and fitting, provision of assistive listening devices, and failed hearing screening follow-ups.

#### **Autism**

Students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder exhibits a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three. Autism adversely affects a child's educational performance. Children with pervasive developmental disorders are included under the disability category of autism. The child may not be considered to be a child with autism if the child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance. The characteristics are generally evident before age three, but, could appear after age three.

#### Characteristics

- a) engagement in repetitive activities and stereotypical movements
- a) resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines
- b) unusual responses to sensory experiences

#### Services may include

- a) specially designed instruction
- b) technology supports including communication systems
- c) social skills instruction
- d) positive behavior support strategies
- e) counseling and psychological services

#### Placement

- a) general education classroom with direct instructional services from a special education teacher
- b) self-contained special education classroom with direct instructional services
- c) structured learning class

#### **Counseling and Psychological Services**

When an ARD/IEP Committee determines the need for counseling or psychological services to support the student's special education program, a specially designed program is included as part of the student's IEP.

#### Programs may focus on

- a) school-related issues
- b) behavior
- c) learning based

#### **Child Find**



It is a continuous process of public awareness activities, screening and evaluation designed to locate, identify, and evaluate children with disabilities. In coordination with the ECI program, Hitchcock ISD provide services for children ages 0-2 who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or visually impaired.

#### Infants and Toddlers

- a) A meeting will be held with the school district and ECI program six months prior to the child's third birthday to transition from ECI to school services, Head Start, or other educational settings.
- b) Through weekly home visits, the teacher models, supports, and advises the parents in the instructional areas of hearing aid management, parent-child communication, listening skills, and language development for students with auditory impairments. Instructional materials are brought to the home to make the program effective for the family.
- c) Not all children served by the ECI program will qualify for special education services.

#### Referral Process for Children Served Through ECI

A meeting will be scheduled by the Assessment Team to help the family make the transition from ECI services to special education services 90 days before a toddler receiving ECI turns three years old, if appropriate.

#### Referral Process for Children Not Served Through ECI

- a) If the parents suspect a disability, they should contact the district campus to initiate a special education referral for an evaluation of the child's needs.
- b) The special team leader meets with the parents or guardian to complete the referral packet.
- c) The campus ARD Specialist will send the Request for Services to the Assessment Team who will complete the evaluation and the report.

#### Child Find Procedures for Private Schools

- a) Students who attend private schools located within Hitchcock ISD are eligible for referral, evaluation and determination of eligibility for special education regardless of the child's district of residence.
- b) For students presently attending a private school, the referral source should request an evaluation by contacting the special education department.

### **Deaf-Blindness**

Students with concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.

### **Disability Categories**

Students ages 3-21 must meet one or more of the eligibility requirements listed below in order to receive special education services. They include:

- |                                |                          |                                  |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| *auditory impairment           | *autism                  | *deaf-blindness                  |
| *emotional disturbance         | *intellectual disability | *non-categorical early-childhood |
| *orthopedic impairment         | *other health impairment | *specific learning disability    |
| *speech or language impairment | *traumatic brain injury  | *visual impairment               |

*Note: If a student is a child with a disability, who is determined by an ARD/IEP Committee to meet eligibility criteria for one or more disabilities but has no need for special education and related services, he/she is not considered disabled under IDEA 2004. Eligibility for services under Section 504 may be considered in these cases.*

### **Discontinuing Special Education Services**

Special education services shall be discontinued when one of the following occurs:

No Longer Eligible for Services

- a) If the ARD/IEP Committee determines a student does not have a disability condition under IDEA based upon an evaluation, or if the committee finds that the student does not need specially designed instruction provided through special education as a result of the disability, the committee will determine that the student is not eligible for special education services.
- b) Before discontinuing services, however, the school must give the parent(s) and/or adult student prior written notice (English, Spanish).

Services Through Age 21

- a) A student receiving special education services who is 21 years of age on September 1 of a school year shall be eligible for services through the end of that school year or until graduation with a regular high school diploma, whichever comes first.
- b) Graduation with a regular high school diploma terminates a student's eligibility to receive special education services.

Revocation of Consent for All Special Education Services

- a) If, at any time after the school begins providing special education and related services to the student, the parent(s) and/or adult student choose to revoke consent for services, the school must discontinue providing special education and related services to the student.
- b) Before discontinuing services, however, the school must give the parent(s) and/or adult student prior written notice (English, Spanish).
- c) The campus Educational Diagnostician, LSSP or SLP will meet with the parent to obtain a signed Prior Written Notice: Revocation of Consent for Hitchcock Independent School District Special Education Services from the parent(s) and/or adult student. The form will be filed in the student's special education folder and the folder will be sent to the ESC.

**Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)**

This program provides special education and related services for eligible children with disabilities ages 3-5. ECSE refers to the services provided by the district, not to the place where they are provided. Eligible children may receive ECSE services in a variety of settings such as pre-kindergarten and self-contained classrooms or in community settings such as Head Start and pre-school.

**Eligibility Determination and Documentation**

There is a two-part test for determining whether a student is eligible for special education services:

- a) a student must have a disability, and
- b) as a result of the disability, the student must need special education services to benefit from education.

A child must not be determined by the ARD/IEP Committee to be a child with a disability if the determinant factor for such determination is:

- a) Lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including in the essential components of reading instruction as defined in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (IDEA) which means explicit and systematic instruction in
  - i. Phonemic awareness
  - ii. Phonics
  - iii. Vocabulary development
  - iv. Reading fluency, including oral reading skills, and
  - v. Reading comprehension strategies
- b) Lack of appropriate instruction in math
- c) Limited English proficiency

*Not all struggling learners have a disability. In these situations, the campus-based support team may meet and use the Response to Intervention (RTI) process to recommend additional intervention, other services or programs in general education to help the student.*

### **Emotional Disturbance**

It is a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance:

- a) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
- b) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
- c) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
- d) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
- e) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

### **Full and Individual Initial Evaluation (FIE)**

Hitchcock ISD will assess students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom and are recommended to have an FIE. The district will

- a) Conduct an initial full and individual evaluation before the initial provision of special education and related services for a student with a disability.
- b) A written report of a full individual and initial evaluation of a student for purposes of special education services shall be completed not later than the 45th calendar day following the date on which the school district receives written consent for the evaluation, signed by the student's parent or legal guardian.
- c) The assessment specialist determines the degree of evaluation needed in each area depending on the eligibility criteria for the suspected disability.
- d) The area of language dominance is evaluated first to determine the language to be used in further evaluation.
- e) Tests and other evaluation materials include those tailored to evaluate specific areas of educational need and not merely those designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient.
- f) Tests are selected and administered to ensure that the test results of a student who has impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills, will accurately reflect the student's aptitude, achievement level, or whatever other factors the test purports to measure.
- g) No single procedure should be used as the sole criterion for determining whether the student is a student with a disability or for determining an appropriate educational program for the student.
- h) The evaluation must be sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the student's special education and related service(s) needs.
- i) All evaluation personnel are responsible for adhering to all auditable dates for initial evaluations, re-evaluations, and transfers where the student has been in special education in another district.

### **Health and Medical Services**

The nurse assists in coordinating communication between the school, home and medical provider. The nurse attends and / or provides input regarding a student's medical needs for staffing and ARD meetings.

#### Evaluation Criteria / Process

- a) The evaluation of a student's health needs involves a multidisciplinary process.
- b) The nurse obtains written permission from the parent in order to contact the medical provider to discuss the student's health care needs and initiate an individualized health care plan if appropriate.
- c) The nurse obtains a physician order for any medication, medical treatments or procedures to be performed at school.

- d) The extent of information gathered by the nurse will be determined by the student's health care needs.
- e) Based upon this information, the nurse identifies those health issues that are relevant to the student's educational progress and coordinates the delivery of school health services.
- f) The nurse plans and coordinates training and education of staff including campus personnel, transportation staff and district staff to ensure that the student's health needs are being met throughout the school day.

#### Nursing Services Delivery Models

- a) Campus nurse
- b) Trained paraprofessional staff including clinic aides and special education aides in Life Skills units who are trained to perform daily medical procedures and are monitored and supervised by the campus nurse.

#### **Homebound Services**

Students served on a homebound are expected to be confined for a minimum of four consecutive weeks as documented by a physician. Homebound instruction will be provided by the school district according to local district policy.

#### Procedures for Special Education Homebound Instruction

- a) All students referred for homebound instruction must be residents of the Hitchcock Independent School District (HISD) and enrolled in the school of attendance. Students will remain enrolled on the campus of attendance and continue to receive instructional assignments and grades from the home campus.
- b) The lead special education teacher at the student campus is the initial contact person in the referral process and will be responsible to conduct a brief interview with the parent.
- c) A Homebound Needs Evaluation Referral will be given to the parent to be filled by the physician.

#### Homebound Needs Evaluation Referral

- a) The Admission Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee must consider the physician's information as one of the factors in the committee's decision making process when determining home-bound instructional services; however, the licensed physician's information is not the sole consideration in the committee's decision-making process.
- b) The ARD committee will meet to determine the need for homebound instruction.
- c) If eligible, a placement IEP meeting will be held to establish beginning/end dates for homebound services and a plan for reintegration of the student to the school. Homebound instruction is a temporary service and is discontinued in consultation with the physician, or upon the expiration of the documented need for homebound services.
- d) An ARD will be held to plan for the student's return to school.

#### Instruction

- a) In most cases, for students receiving general education homebound instruction, all of the classes that the student is enrolled in will be covered in homebound. For students receiving special education services, the ARD committee for students with disabilities will determine the scope of instructional services.
- b) Please keep in mind that curriculum for Advanced Placement or other advanced classes and some CTE electives, are difficult to implement through the homebound setting. In some cases, the student's homebound committee may recommend a change in schedule to better fit the needs of the student during homebound instruction.

#### Attendance

- a) Homebound services are to be scheduled during regular school hours and school calendar days.

- b) Students served at home earn eligible days present based on the number of hours the student is served at home by the homebound program each week. Students receive a minimum of four hours of homebound instruction per week.
- c) If a student/parent does not schedule homebound services or cancels a scheduled session, the student will be reported absent according to TEA attendance guidelines.
- d) Students are expected to return to their campus at the date determined by the ARD/IEP Committee for students with disabilities unless new medical information is obtained and an additional ARD/IEP meeting is held.

### **Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)**

An IEE can be requested if a parent disagrees with the evaluation results of testing conducted by HISD.

- a) The district will respond within a reasonable time, either by agreeing to provide the IEE or by initiating a due process hearing to show that the school district's FIE is appropriate.
- b) If the request for an IEE is granted, the criteria under which the evaluation is obtained, including the location of the evaluation and the qualifications of the examiner, must be the same as the criteria that the school uses when it initiates an evaluation.
- c) The evaluation is conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the school district responsible for the student's education.
- d) IEE data is given to the assessment diagnostician for consideration by the ARD Committee.
- e) The ARD committee will review, report and take any action deemed appropriate by the district in any decision made with respect to providing a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE).

### **Individual Services Plan (ISP)**

Developed by the HISD, the parent and the private school. All services provided must be linked to measurable goals and benchmarks established for the student as a part of the plan. The service provider will monitor progress toward the annual goal/s and share the student's progress with the parent as outlined in the ISP. The ISP is required to contain all the elements of a traditional IEP that are appropriate to the student and services provided. The ISP Committee is comprised of all members required for any ARD/IEP committee meeting conducted in the district, but must also include input from a representative of the private school. Notice of the ISP meeting must be provided to the parent/ adult student at least five school days in advance of the meeting.

### **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

It is developed by the ARD Committee. The IEP must include certain information about the child and the educational program designed to meet his or her unique needs. It includes

#### Present levels of academic achievement

- a) How the child's disability affects that child's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum
- b) For preschool children, as appropriate, how the disability affects the child's participation in age-appropriate activities

#### Standards-Based measurable annual goals

- a) Continue emphasis on knowledge of enrolled grade level curriculum to ensure drafting of goals which are aligned with enrolled grade level TEKS
- b) Draft annual goals and short term objectives/benchmarks (when appropriate) in standards-based format aligned to enrolled grade level TEKS
- c) Utilize TEA Curriculum Framework and Vertical Alignment documents as a resource for enrolled grade level curriculum standards

- d) Meeting the student's needs that result from the student's disability to enable the student to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum AND
- e) Meeting each of the student's other educational needs that result from the student's disability.

Each measurable annual goal must contain each of the following components:

- a) Timeframe: Identifies the amount of time in the goal period and is usually specified in the number of weeks or a certain date for completion
- b) Conditions: Describe the specific resources that must be present for a child to reach the goal. The condition of the goal should relate to the behavior being measured
- c) Behavior: Represents an action that can be directly observed, measured and monitored
- d) Criterion: Identifies how much, how often, or to what standard the behavior must occur in order to demonstrate that the goal has been met

### **Intellectual Disability**

Students with significantly sub average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

### **LIFE Skills**

Hitchcock ISD LIFE Skills programs span the instructional ages from Kindergarten to age 21. These classrooms are designed to meet the educational needs of students with significant cognitive disabilities who require direct, intensive, individualized instruction to acquire, maintain and generalize skills. Instruction is focused on functional skills that are considered critical to the quality of life. Areas addressed include:

- a) functional academics
- b) self-help, domestic
- c) vocational
- d) communication
- e) social
- f) behavior

*The LIFE Skills classrooms are organized around the principles of structured teaching to maximize student independence and to allow teachers to deliver direct instruction of student IEPs on an individual and small group basis. Attention is given to appropriate and purposeful inclusion of students in the general education setting as well.*

### **Mainstream / In-Class Support Services**

Special education services are frequently provided through in-class support services in the general education classroom. This allows Hitchcock ISD to provide specially designed instruction to students with disabilities and monitor student progress that

- a) addresses the unique needs of the student that result from his/her disability and
- b) complies with the student's IEP specifying the special education and related services that enable the student to access the general curriculum and to make progress toward his/her individual goals and objectives; and
- c) provides qualified special education personnel involved in the implementation of the student's IEP through the provision of direct, indirect and/or support services.

### **Multiple Disabilities**

They are concomitant impairments (such as intellectual disability-blindness, intellectual disability-orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be

accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. Multiple disabilities do not include deaf-blindness.

### **Non Categorical Early Childhood**

Refers to a student between the ages of three through five who is evaluated as having an intellectual disability, emotional disturbance, or autism impairments.

### **Occupational Therapy**

Services provided by a qualified occupational therapist that includes

- a) improving, developing, or restoring functions impaired or lost through illness, injury, or deprivation;
- b) improving ability to perform tasks for independent functioning if functions are impaired or lost; and
- c) preventing, through early intervention, initial or further impairment or loss of function

#### Referral Process

When a campus or parent concern arises for a student in special education that involves occupational performance or participation in motor, process or social interactions as they relate to the student's educational needs, the campus will consider whether a referral to occupational therapy is warranted. There are several circumstances under which a referral to occupational therapy may be generated.

- a) Students may be currently receiving special education services and demonstrate a lack of progress on a goal in an area that may require the addition of occupational therapy in order to allow the student to make satisfactory progress on that goal.
- b) Students may move in to the district with occupational therapy as part of their individual education plan.
- c) Students may be undergoing an initial full and individual evaluation to determine eligibility for special education and the assessment team identifies the need for information from occupational therapy to assist in making the eligibility determination.
- d) It is determined at the Review of Existing Evaluation Data meeting that updated assessment from occupational therapy is needed.

#### Service Delivery Models

- a) Student specific OT services are available for all students receiving special education services if an educational need is identified by the ARD Committee.
- b) Integrated OT service time may be used to work with the student in classroom or other school environments to determine appropriate strategies, interventions and adapted equipment, and to train instructional staff on how and when to use strategies, interventions and adapted equipment.
- c) The OT provider will participate with the collaborative team on the campus to assess the effectiveness of interventions and to revise/adapt interventions as needed.
- d) Technical assistance is provided in the form of general recommendations for instructional strategies that may benefit groups of students with needs similar to the student for whom technical assistance is being requested.

### **Orientation and Mobility**

Teach students with blindness or vision impairments critical skills to remain oriented in their environment as well as specific mobility skills in order to travel safely, efficiently and as independently as possible within the school. The ARD/IEP committee determines the appropriate service delivery model and the frequency and duration of services based on the evaluation and recommendation from the O&M specialist.

#### Referral Process

- a) An evaluation of orientation and mobility skills must be completed, along with the evaluation by a teacher of students with visual impairment when establishing initial eligibility as a student with a visual impairment.
- b) The Eye Medical Report should indicate whether the student has no vision or a serious visual loss after correction, or a progressive medical condition that will result in no vision or serious vision loss after correction. A Functional Vision Evaluation (FVE) analyzes how a student actually performs visually in a variety of environments, including familiar and unfamiliar environments, in different lighting conditions, and requiring the use of both near and distance vision.
- c) The FVE must include recommendations concerning the need for an Orientation and Mobility Evaluation, to determine whether there is a need for specific instruction to ensure safe and efficient movement and travel.

### **Orthopedic Impairment**

An impairment that affects a child's educational performance. The impairments include those caused by congenital anomaly, by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures).

### **Other Health Impairment**

Students having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, and sickle cell anemia, and Tourette syndrome and adversely affects a child's educational performance.

### **Out of District Programs**

The program is recommended

- a) when a student who is already served in a self-contained classroom or program shows increasingly severe challenging behaviors that pose a threat to the safety of the student and/or other people despite the consistent implementation of the Behavior Intervention Plan and other intervention supports.

### **Steps for Placement**

- a) a staffing meeting is scheduled to review students programming, consider other possible interventions, review current data, and discuss the continuum of supports.
- b) the staffing would include the following members: campus administrator, teacher, LSSP/educational diagnostician, and Special Education Director.
- c) if warranted, the administrator schedules parent conference to discuss outcome of staffing and to receive input from parents. Administrator shares info from parents with special education director.
- d) Non Public School Administrator is contacted and an Admission, Review and Dismissal meeting is scheduled to review IEPs, discuss program, placement and options of continuum of supports.
- e) Once the ARD committee has agreed on an out of district placement, it will determine a reintegration plan and implementation timeline. Hitchcock ISD administrator will initiate the transfer process and facilitate a site visit for the parents to the Non Public School campus.
- f) Based on individual student needs while attending Non Public School campus, the HISD campus lead teacher will coordinate staffing meetings and/or ARD meetings with the Non Public School campus to discuss the student's IEP progress, programming and reintegration plan.

### **Parent Concerns**

From time to time disputes may arise between the parent(s) and the school district relating to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement or the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), for a



student with a disability. Hitchcock ISD tries local resolution as the first option giving parents and the district the chance to resolve any concerns. The steps to follow are

- a) parent(s) should contact their child's school and speak to the principal regarding a concern.
- b) If contacting the campus principal is not providing a solution to the problem, the parent(s) should contact the district superintendent's office and discuss the concern that is occurring on campus and the individual will direct them to the appropriate staff member to discuss their concern.
- c) If the superintendent is not able to assist with a solution, the parent(s) should contact the special education department.
- d) If all efforts to reach a solution with the district are unsuccessful, the parent(s) or other interested party can file a complaint with the Texas Education Agency.

### **Physical Therapy**

Hitchcock ISD has contracted services with the Harris County Department of Education (HCDE) to provide physical therapy to special education students currently enrolled at Hitchcock ISD.

Due to the Texas PT licensure rules that govern physical therapy practice, the therapist must have the following in order to provide physical therapy services:

- a) a current evaluation in hand (accurate/within last 3 years)
- b) goals that indicate PT support
- c) PT time, frequency and duration specified on the services page
- d) a physician referral

### **Positive Approach to Student Success (PASS)**

This program is specifically for students with disabilities who have difficulty managing their behaviors. The focus of the program is to teach social skills that replace inappropriate behaviors and motivate students to implement positive social skills while learning in the general education classroom. Collaboration between the general education teachers, PASS staff and administration is an integral part of a successful PASS program.

#### Considerations for the PASS program

- a) The student should have a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) with goals and objectives.
- b) The student's behavior should interfere with his/her or other's learning.
- c) Behavior that is not a result of a disability should be addressed through the school's general education discipline and/or RTI.
- d) Data was collected and placement in a least restrictive program is indicated.
- e) The student should have the cognitive ability to learn replacement behaviors.

#### Transfer Students

They may receive services through the PASS program if the student previously received services for behavioral difficulties and the most comparable placement at the campus is in the PASS program. Prior to the 30 day ARD, data should be collected to determine if this is the best programming for the student.

### **Private, Religious, and Home Schools**

Hitchcock ISD must locate, identify and evaluate all students with disabilities enrolled in private schools located within Hitchcock ISD boundaries.

#### Information

- a) Parents are contacted by letter at the beginning of each school year to ask if they would like to receive identified services for students who meet eligibility.
- b) Parents complete a document indicating that they are interested in receiving services.
- c) Parents are contacted to schedule an Individual Service Plan (ISP) meeting for students who are eligible for identified services.
- d) Parents are notified to schedule a 3 year re-evaluation by the home campus assessment specialist and/or Speech Pathologist to schedule a date for the re-evaluation.
- e) Students who attend private schools located within Hitchcock ISD are eligible for referral, evaluation and determination of eligibility for special education regardless of the child's district of residence.
- f) For students presently attending a private school, parents can request an evaluation by contacting the special education department at 409-316-6546.

## **Programs and Services**

Hitchcock ISD provides a continuum of special education services and placement options for students with disabilities in order to meet their individual needs. This continuum includes services such as advance support, accommodations and modifications. Special education services are provided at all Hitchcock ISD campuses. The following descriptions explain the instructional arrangements which may be considered for students with disabilities:

- a) Mainstream is an instructional arrangement for providing special education services in the general education setting which may include in-class support, accommodations and modifications.
- b) Self-contained, mild/moderate/severe, regular campus is an instructional arrangement for providing special education instruction and related services for 50 percent or more of the school day on a regular school campus.
- c) Homebound is an instructional arrangement for providing special education instruction to eligible students with disabilities who are medically unable to attend school at the campus site.
- d) Non-public day school is an instructional arrangement for providing special education instruction to students through a contractual arrangement with an approved non-public school for special education services.

## **Referral Process**

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (RtI). The implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts to meet the needs of all struggling students.

### Special Education Referrals:

- a) Parent makes a written request for an initial evaluation for special education services to the special education lead teacher. *Please note that a request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally and does not need to be in writing.*
- b) The district must respond no later than 15 school days after receiving the request. *However, a verbal request does not require the district or charter school to respond within the 15-school-day timeline.*
- c) The district must give the parent a prior written notice of whether it agrees to or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards.
- d) If the school district agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.
- e) If the district decides to evaluate the student, it must complete the student's initial evaluation and evaluation report no later than 45 school days from the day it receives a parent's written consent to evaluate the student. However, if the student is absent from school during the evaluation period for three

or more school days, the evaluation period will be extended by the number of school days equal to the number of school days that the student is absent.

- f) There is an exception to the 45-school-day timeline. If a district receives a parent's consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30th due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.
- g) Upon completing the evaluation, the district must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost.

### **Specific Learning Disability**

It is a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological process involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.

### **Speech Therapy**

Speech-language therapy is considered an instructional service. The delivery of speech services must include frequency, location, and duration of services. A child may be determined to be a child with speech or language impairment if

- a) the child has a communication disorder; and
- b) the speech or language impairment adversely affects the child's educational performance

#### Evaluation

- a) It is completed by a speech-language pathologist
- b) A comprehensive battery it is administer to determine the services needed by the student.

#### Direct Service Delivery Model

- a) Classroom-Based
- b) Pull-Out

#### Speech therapy can target one or more of the following areas:

- a) Articulation - Abnormal production of speech sounds.
- b) Stuttering - Abnormal flow of verbal expression characterized by impaired rate/rhythm.
- c) Language - Impairment or delayed development of comprehension and/or use of a spoken/written or other symbol system.
- d) Voice - Absence or abnormal production of vocal quality, pitch, loudness, and/or resonance.

### **Speech Therapy Services for Medically Fragile Students**

Some medically fragile students may require home-bound services and/or may experience a temporary period of time when they are not medically stable enough to benefit from Speech Therapy services. The ARD committee will determine if speech therapy services during this time should be direct or consultative and will determine the frequency and duration of speech therapy services while home-bound.

### **Structured Learning Class – SLC**

It is an intensive educational program for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other developmental disorders that require highly structured and individualized intervention for the development of functional communication skills and socially appropriate behaviors.

### **Student Records**

The parent has the right to review his or her child's entire education record unless advised that he or she does not have the authority under applicable state law governing such matters as guardianship, separation, and divorce. The Special Education Department must keep a log including name, date and purpose of everyone who reviews the student's special education records.

### Amending Records

If the parent believes that his or her child's education records are inaccurate, misleading, or violate his or her child's rights, the parent may ask the school to amend the information.

### Texas Public Information Act

Gives the parent the right to inspect and obtain copies of the student's education records.

### **Transition Plan**

Transition services means working as a team with the student, parent, school staff and outside agencies or community service to develop a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that is based on the individual student's needs to be successful after high school. The plan can start at the age of 14 and is based on the student's IEP considering

- a) student's strengths,
- b) preferences,
- c) interests,
- d) instruction,
- e) related services,
- f) community experience,
- g) development of employment, and
- h) acquisition of daily living skills

### **Traumatic Brain Injury**

An acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Traumatic brain injury applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech.

*Note: Traumatic Brain Injury does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma.*

### **Transportation**

Transportation as a related service provides eligible students with disabilities access to their academic programs and certain other related services. Some students with disabilities may require a variety of supports and services that are separate from transportation available to all students, such as:

- a) specialized or adaptive equipment for persons who require specialized positioning or seating;
- b) a skilled nurse to conduct invasive procedures;
- c) bus attendant to help curtail behavioral challenges;
- d) air conditioned vehicles for persons who are sensitive to heat or prone to seizures; or
- e) wheelchair or other mobility device accessibility.

**Visual Impairment (including blindness)**

The impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.

Services

- a) general education classroom with consultative support from a teacher of the visually impaired
- b) general education classroom with direct instructional services from a teacher of the visually impaired
- c) a combination of general education and self-contained special education classes with consultative and/or direct instructional services from a teacher of the visually impaired
- d) self-contained special education classroom with the consultative and/or direct instructional services from a teacher of the visually impaired
- e) residential placement - Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired