

IU 26 GUIDE TO IDEA EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION FOR NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS

Frequently Asked Questions for Parents / Guardians and Caregivers

In the table below, you will find answers to questions frequently asked to IU 26 staff and contractors.

A detailed listing of FAQs related to the IDEA Equitable Participation provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education can be found by visiting the [Questions and Answers Regarding Equitable Participation](#) (hyperlink) on the PDE website.

1. I think my child may have a disability impacting their educational progress. What is my first step?

The first step is to discuss your concerns with your child's teachers and school leadership. They may be able to address your concerns and take steps to address academic concerns, such as interventions and additional supports. If you remain concerned, you may request an evaluation. Evaluations may be requested by completing the [EP Evaluation Request Form - Private School Students](#) (hyperlink) or by requesting an evaluation with school staff at your child's neighborhood SDP school. Once complete, a representative of IU 26 will contact you to confirm eligibility and to discuss the evaluation process.

2. I know I don't want to change my child's school. Should I still request an evaluation?

Yes! Child Find, or the identification of children who have educational disabilities enrolled in private schools in Philadelphia County, is the basis for calculating the share of the IU 26 IDEA-B award allocated to private schools. The resulting dollar value of the award is used to provide equitable participation (EP) services to private school staff and students. Formally identifying your child as having an educational disability brings additional funding to private schools to support students with disabilities.

3. I filled out the google request form. Now what happens?

Staff from the Office of Specialized Services (OSS) may reach out to you or your child's school with questions about your request. After OSS confirms eligibility for an evaluation, a certified school psychologist will be assigned to work on the evaluation. The psychologist will be in touch to discuss the evaluation process and to request your signature on consent and release of records forms. The consent and release of records forms must be signed and returned before the evaluation can begin.

4. Should students who are suspected of being gifted also get evaluated?



Yes! Requests for gifted EP evaluations should be forwarded to ossequitable-participation@philasd.org

5. What will happen if my child is identified as having an educational disability through the evaluation process?

If your child is identified as having an educational disability, it will be discussed at the evaluation meeting. You may decide to simply use the information discovered through the evaluation to discuss supports available at your child's current private school. Your child will be included in the annual child find count that determines the equitable participation dollar amount of the IU 26 IDEA-B award to be allocated to private schools in the form of services provided. If after the evaluation, you are considering transferring your child to a School District of Philadelphia school, you can request an "Offer of FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education)". The IEP team will draft a contingent IEP describing potential services your child would receive if you decided to enroll them in a School District of Philadelphia public school.

6. What happens if I disagree with the results of my child's evaluation?

Parents have the right to disagree with evaluation results. They must document their dissent in writing. The procedural safeguards document provided during the consent process outlines the steps that a parent can take when they disagree with the results of an evaluation. Concerns raised will also be documented in the notes from the Evaluation Meeting.

7. How frequently will my child be evaluated?

If a child is determined to have an educational disability as defined by IDEA, a re-evaluation will be scheduled for three years from the initial evaluation. In the instance of a child with an intellectual disability, it will be scheduled for two years from the initial evaluation.

Reevaluation can be requested sooner if there is reason for concern. Evaluations can also be waived by signing a waiver form, if the school and parent agree there is no need for an additional evaluation.

8. How often do parents receive a progress report of how the student is doing?

An evaluation is not a public school IEP nor a private school plan for services. The evaluation seeks to identify any learning disabilities. Progress reports are not part of the evaluation process.

9. Can a parent discontinue an evaluation? What's the process?

Yes, a parent may withdraw their consent to the evaluation at any time. Notify the psychologist assigned to your child that you withdraw consent and request a consent form to document that. You may also reach out to OSS directly, if that is your preference.

10. Can we request to change a provider?

If there are any concerns with the psychologist providing the evaluation, please reach out to the Office of Specialized Services at OSSEquitableParticipation-request@philasd.org

11. What types of services can be provided for eligible students?

The evaluation process for equitable participation does not entitle individual students to



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services. The services provided are established through a separate collaboration process with the nonpublic schools. At this time services rendered to nonpublic schools will consist of professional development for instructional staff. For additional information, you may visit the Equitable Participation Q&A Site at [h https://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/Special%20Education/IDEA/Pages/EquitablePartQA.aspx](https://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/Special%20Education/IDEA/Pages/EquitablePartQA.aspx)

12. Are the psychologists qualified?

Yes, all psychologists performing assessments are licensed School Psychologists. The Psychologist may be an IU 26 / School District of Philadelphia (SDP) employee, or a contractor working for the SDP / IU 26. Contractors selected through a competitive process, having met strict criteria including required state licensure as a school psychologist in the same manner as SDP / IU 26 psychologist staff.