

Special Education Policies

Holdrege Public Schools adopts this special education policy with the intent that the policy maintain the District's compliance with all applicable laws affecting special education services and programs. The Superintendent or designees shall develop regulations or procedures to implement these policies. Employees and contractors of the District are expected to comply with these policies and all regulations, guidelines and procedures related to this policy in all respects.

The District will abide by all state and federal laws relating to special education. The District's special education policy and regulations, guidelines and procedures related to this policy are to be interpreted so as to be in compliance with such laws. In the event of changes in law, the school administration shall be authorized to implement modifications of practice to comply with such changes (whether the changes impose more or less stringent procedural or substantive requirements) until such time as amended policies are adopted by the Board of Education. References herein to 92 NAC 51 citations are made to Rule 51 as in effect on the date of the adoption of these policies. In the event of renumbering or other revisions to Rule 51, the policy shall be interpreted and implemented consistent with such renumbering or revisions.

1. Free Appropriate Public Education

A free appropriate public education shall be made available to all children with disabilities residing in the District from date of diagnosis through the school year in which the student reaches 21 years of age, including children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 51-004.01 through 004.03A and 007.07C2 through 007.07C6

2. Full Educational Opportunity Goal

The District shall take steps to ensure that its children with verified disabilities have available to them the variety of educational programs and services available to children without disabilities in the areas served by the District, including art, music, industrial arts, family consumer science education, and vocational education.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 51-004.11A

3. Child Find

All children from birth to age twenty-one (21) with disabilities residing in the District, including children with disabilities who are homeless or are wards of the state or attending nonpublic schools, regardless of the severity of their disabilities, who are in need of special education and related services, will be identified, located and evaluated and a practical method shall be developed and implemented by the administration to determine which children with disabilities are currently receiving needed special education and related services. The District will publish annual notice of any significant activity that is designed to identify, locate, or evaluate children to publicly notify parents. The District will screen and evaluate all children with suspected disabilities birth through age 21, and will implement practical methods to track which children are currently receiving special education and related services. The District will provide student referrals that are accompanied by documentation of scientific, research, or evidence-based academic and/or behavioral interventions that have been implemented as designed for the appropriate period of time to show effect or lack of effect that demonstrates the child is not

making a sufficient rate of progress to meet age or state-approved, grade-level standards within a reasonable time frame. The District will provide sustained supervision to monitor the implementation of compliant practices for the Child Find Rule. The District will use supervision and monitoring data to identify schools and/or personnel that require technical assistance to support compliant practices in the area of Child Find, paying particular attention to the communities experiencing disproportionality in the schools. All District Child Find activities will be equitably available to all children regardless of race, ethnicity, language, location, transience, income level, and access to medical care.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 51-006.01 through 006.01A2

4. Pre-Referral Interventions

For a school age student, a general education student assistance team (SAT) or a comparable problem solving team shall be used prior to referral for multidisciplinary team evaluation. The SAT or comparable problem solving team shall utilize and document problem solving and intervention strategies to assist the teacher in the provision of general education. If the student assistance team or comparable problem solving team feels that all viable alternatives have been explored, a referral for multidisciplinary evaluation shall be completed. A referral shall include information from the SAT or comparable problem solving team, meeting the requirements of 92 NAC 51-006.01B and a listing of the members of the SAT or comparable problem solving team.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 51-006.01B

5. Individualized Education Program (IEP)

An individualized education program, or an individualized family service plan, is to be developed, reviewed, and revised for each child with a disability in accordance with 92 NAC 51-007.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 51-007

6. Least Restrictive Environment

To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are to be educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment will occur only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

The District will: (1) develop and implement written procedures for implementation of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Rule; (2) provide high quality, sustained professional learning activities on the written procedures for appropriate district and school personnel to assist with the implementation of the LRE Rule; (3) provide sustained supervision to monitor the implementation of compliant practices for the LRE Rule; (4) use the supervision and monitoring data to identify schools and/or personnel that require technical assistance to support compliant practices in the area of least restrictive environment, paying particular attention to the disproportionate group; (5) ensure that every Individualized Education Programs (IEP) team meaningfully considers various support systems and activities that could be used to assist students with disabilities (SWD) to be educated successfully in general education classes prior to the consideration of pullout special education services; (6) ensure that special education teachers provide support to general education teachers in a variety of ways including, but not limited to, consultation, implementation of accommodations or modifications, and co-teaching; (7) ensure

that a continuum of alternative placements is available to meet the needs of children with disabilities, particularly those in the disproportionate group, for special education and related services; (8) ensure that, in determining the educational placement of a child with a disability, including a preschool child with a disability, each district ensures that the placement decision is made by a group of persons including the parents, and other persons knowledgeable about the child, the meaning of the evaluation data, and the placement options. Particular attention is paid to the disproportionate group; (9) ensure that placement discussions are based upon a completed IEP developed by the IEP team, focused on individualized student needs; and (10) ensure that the IEP teams review the students' progress at least annually to determine appropriate placement and progress towards annual goals.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 51-008.01

7. Procedural Safeguards

Children with disabilities and their parents shall be afforded the required procedural safeguards.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 51-009.01 through 009.07; 009.10 through 009.12; 009.14, 006.07

8. Disciplinary Removal of Children with Disabilities

The District will (1) develop and implement written procedures for disciplining students with disabilities (the "Discipline Rules"); (2) provide high quality, sustained professional learning activities on the written procedures for appropriate district and school personnel to assist with the implementation of the Discipline Rules; (3) provide sustained supervision to monitor the implementation of compliant practices for the Discipline Rules; (4) use supervision and monitoring data, disaggregated by race/ethnicity, to identify schools and/or personnel that require technical assistance to support compliant practices in the area of discipline (including but not limited to: de-escalation techniques, functional behavior assessment, behavior intervention planning, and manifestation determination procedures); (5) ensure that school personnel appropriately consider unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining suspension of a child with a disability, and ensure that data shows that these considerations are equitably made by race/ethnicity; (6) notify parents on the day that the decision is made to make a removal that constitutes a change in placement of a child with a disability because of violation of a code of child conduct, and send parents copies of the procedural safeguards; (7) provide educational services for students removed fewer than 10 days to enable the student to continue to participate in the general educational curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the Individualized Education Programs, with data showing that these services are equitably provided by race/ethnicity; (8) ensure that within 10 school days of any decision to change placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct, the IEP Team will review all relevant information in the file to determine whether the conduct in question was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the child's disability or the conduct was the direct result of the district's failure to implement the IEP, and that such determinations are made equitable by race/ethnicity; and (9) ensure that, if the IEP Team makes a determination that the conduct was a manifestation of the child's disability, then the IEP Team conducts a functional behavioral assessment, unless the District conducted a FBA before the behavior that resulted in the change of placement occurred, and implements a behavioral intervention plan.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 51-016

9. Evaluation, Identification, and Reevaluation Procedures

Children with disabilities shall be evaluated, identified, and reevaluated in accordance with 92 NAC 51-006. The District will: (1) provide high quality, sustained professional learning activities on the written procedures for appropriate district and school personnel to assist with the implementation of the Evaluation and Reevaluation Rule; (2) provide sustained supervision to monitor the implementation of compliant practices for the Evaluation and Reevaluation Rule; (3) use the supervision and monitoring data, disaggregated by race and ethnicity, to identify schools and/or personnel that require technical assistance to support compliant practices in the area of evaluation and reevaluation, as well as the appropriate technical assistance/professional development to any schools and/or personnel identified in such data; (4) conduct a reevaluation of each child with a disability at least once every 3 years, unless the parent and the District agree that a reevaluation is unnecessary; (5) use a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant academic, functional, and developmental information about the child, including information provided by the parents, and information related to enabling the child to be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum that may assist in determining: (i) Whether the child is a child with a disability, and (ii) The content of the child's individualized education program; (6) use more than one procedure to determine whether a child has a disability and the appropriate educational program for the child; (7) use technically sound instruments to assess the relative contribution of cognitive and behavioral factors, in addition to physical or developmental factors; (8) select assessments and other evaluation materials in a manner that (i) does not discriminate on a racial or cultural basis, (ii) is provided and administered in the child's native language or other mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is clearly not feasible to so provide or administer, (iii) has been validated for the specific purpose for which they are used, and (iv) are administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the assessments; and (9) provide high quality, sustained professional learning activities on the written procedures for appropriate District and school personnel to assist with the implementation of the Evaluation and Reevaluation Rule.

The District will respond to a request for an Independent Educational Evaluation without unnecessary delay. Locations of any evaluator shall be within a reasonable distance of the District. A reasonable distance means within 100 miles of the school building the child attends and within Nebraska. In the event this geographic area restriction would prevent a parent from obtaining an Independent Educational Evaluation, the location of the evaluator may be outside the specified geographic area but must be within Nebraska. The District will provide the parent(s) with a list of qualified agencies/evaluators within the geographic area. The evaluators are to have their rates approved by the Nebraska Department of Education to be authorized to conduct the evaluation.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 51-006

10. Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information

The confidentiality of student records and information shall be maintained in accordance with law.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 51-003.16, 003.20, 009.03 through 009.03M3

11. Transition of Children from Part C to Preschool Programs

Children participating in early intervention programs under Part C of the IDEA (early intervention services) and who will participate in preschool programs assisted under Part B of the IDEA (services for school-aged children) shall experience a smooth and effective transition to those preschool programs in a manner consistent with 92 NAC 52-008. The District will participate in transition planning conferences arranged by the designated lead agency.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 52-008

12. Children in Nonpublic Schools

To the extent consistent with the number and location of children with disabilities in the District who are enrolled by their parents in nonpublic elementary and secondary schools in the District, provision will be made for the participation of those children in the programs assisted or carried out under Part B of the IDEA (services for school-aged children) by providing them with special education and related services.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 51-012.08 and 015

13. Personnel Standards and Personnel Development

Personnel providing special education or related services to children with disabilities shall be appropriately and adequately prepared and trained in accordance with IDEA requirements and the District will take measurable steps to recruit, hire, train and retain personnel meeting the requirements of IDEA to provide such services.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 51-010

14. Participation in and Reporting of State and District Wide Assessments

All children with disabilities shall be included in all general state and district wide assessment programs, including assessments described under section 612(a)(16)(A) of the IDEA with appropriate accommodations and alternate assessments where necessary and as indicated in their respective individualized education programs. The District will make available to the Nebraska Department of Education the information necessary to carry out its duties relating to the reporting of children with disabilities participation in assessments.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 51-004.05

15. Suspension and Expulsion Rates

The District will examine data, including data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, LEP status, and disability category to determine if significant discrepancies are occurring in the rate of long-term suspensions and expulsions of children with disabilities.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 51-004.06E

16. Access to Instructional Materials

As part of any print instructional materials adoption process, procurement contract, or other practice or instrument used for purchase of print instructional materials, the District will enter into a written contract with the publisher of the print instructional materials to:

1. Require the publisher to prepare and, on or before delivery of the print instructional materials, provide to the National Instructional Material Access Center, electronic files containing the contents of the print instructional materials using the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard, or
2. Purchase instructional materials from the publisher that are produced in, or may be rendered in specialized formats.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 51-004.15

17. Over-Identification and Disproportionality

Procedures shall be in place to ensure that testing and evaluation materials and procedures utilized for the evaluation and placement of children with disabilities will be selected and administered so as not to be racially or culturally discriminatory. Such materials or procedures shall be provided and administered in the child's native language or mode of communication, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so, and no single procedure shall be the sole criterion for determining an appropriate educational program for a child. All District special education provisions will be equitably available to all children regardless of race, ethnicity, language, location, transience, income level, and access to medical care.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 51; 006.02C

18. Prohibition on Mandatory Medication

Children shall not be required to obtain a prescription for a controlled substance as a condition of attending school, receiving an evaluation to determine whether a child has a disability or the nature and extent of special education and related services the child needs, or receiving special education services.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 51-004.11D; 21 U.S.C. §812(c)

19. Transportation

Transportation will be provided for children with disabilities who are eligible for transportation and residents of the school district as required by law.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 51-014.01 through 014.02

20. Surrogates

A surrogate will be appointed and other action taken to ensure the rights of children with a disability as required by law.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 51-009.10

21. Early Intervention Services – Consent

When a parent refuses to provide consent under 92 NAC 52, a meeting will be held or offered to explain to the parents how their failure to consent affects the ability of their child to receive services under 92 NAC 52.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 52

22. Eligibility Determinations

The District will (1) develop written procedures for implementation of the Eligibility Determination Rule; (2) provide high quality, sustained professional learning activities on the written procedures for appropriate district and school personnel to assist with the implementation of the Eligibility Determination Rule; (3) provide sustained supervision to monitor the implementation of compliant practices for the Eligibility Determination Rule; (4) use the supervision and monitoring data, disaggregated by race and ethnicity, to identify schools and/or personnel that require technical assistance to support compliant practices in the area of eligibility; (5) ensure Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are developed for children with a determination made of having a disability that has: (a) an adverse effect on educational performance (academic, functional, and/or developmental) and (b) requires special education and

related services; (6) ensure that an eligibility report, which documents the area of disability, is completed and placed in each child's special education folder, with the eligibility report providing statements for each component of the eligibility and be comprehensive enough to serve as the evaluation report when necessary; (7) ensure the completion of the administration of assessments and other measures that the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (a group of qualified professionals and the parents of the child) determine whether the child is a child with a disability and the educational needs of the child; (8) ensure appropriate consideration of the exclusionary factor for reading (a child is not to be determined to be a child with a disability if the primary factor for that determination is a lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including the essential components of reading instruction as defined in section 1208(3) of ESEA); (9) ensure appropriate consideration of the exclusionary factor for math (a child must not be determined to be a child with a disability if the primary factor for that determination is a lack of appropriate instruction in math); (10) ensure appropriate consideration of the exclusionary factor for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) (a child will not be determined to be a child with a disability if the primary factor for that determination is limited English proficiency); and (11) ensure (1) evaluation data draw upon information from a variety of sources, including aptitude and achievement tests, parent input, and teacher recommendations as well as the information about the child's physical condition, social or cultural background, and adaptive behavior and (2) that information obtained from all these sources is documented and carefully considered.

Legal Reference: 92 NAC 51-006.04.

Legal Reference: 34 CFR Parts 300, 303, and 304
Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-1110 to 79-1167
92 NAC 51, 52, and 55

Date of Adoption/Revision: 6/8/2009
Revised: 8/8/2011; 7/13/2015; 7/19/2021