

Child Find

Scholar Academies' Schools will ensure that all students who are in need of special education and related services are identified, located and evaluated. This procedure is called Child Find (34 CFR 300.125) (PA 711.21)

Procedures:

Scholar Academies' Schools child identification process is coordinated by Support Services, which utilizes a variety of resources and conducts many systematic activities in its effort to identify children requiring special services.

In accordance with the Child Find process Scholar Academies' Schools will provide information to the public regarding special education and related services. More specifically, Scholar Academies' Schools will publish at the beginning of each school year in the parent and student handbook information about Child Find and the special education and related services available. Scholar Academies' Schools is responsible for maintaining documentation of public annual notices made to inform parents of the special education services available (34 CFR 300.125).

Records of newly enrolled student will be screened to determine which are currently receiving needed special education and related services. This includes highly mobile children with disabilities and those who are suspected of having a disability under 34 CFR 300.7 and are in need of special education, even though they are advancing from grade to grade (34 CFR 300.125).

Scholar Academies will implement early intervention procedures (Student Support Team, see *Child Find Referral Process*) with the purpose of identifying at-risk students and those students needing special education services.

During the first 3 months of each new school year, Scholar Academies will engage in activities and procedures to seek students suspected of having a disability. The Director of Student Support and nurse will coordinate screening all new students in the following areas (varies with grade):

- (a) Vision
- (b) Hearing
- (c) Academics
- (d) Emotional Behaviors
- (e) Communication

Scholar Academies will look for potential signs of developmental delays and other risk factors that could indicate disabilities. The activities include review of group data, conducting hearing and vision screening, assessment of student's academic functioning, observation of the student displaying difficulty in behavior and determining the student's response to attempted remediation. Input from parents is also an information source for identification. After a child is identified as a suspected child with a disability, he or she is evaluated, but is not evaluated before parents give permission for their child to be evaluated

Signs of developmental delays or risk factors that might indicate a disability could include, but are not limited to, poor prenatal care, birth trauma, febrile or other seizure activity, severe reaction to early medication or inoculation requiring extended medical care, or severe trauma to the head, followed by failure to attain developmental milestones for communication, motor development, socialization, emotional development, self-help skills, or cognition; unexplained failure to attain developmental milestones in these areas; failure to use toys and other objects in a developmentally appropriate manner; persistent inability to sustain attention at levels sufficient to complete age-appropriate tasks; easy frustration with developmentally-appropriate tasks or

activities; difficulty with coloring, letter formation, or drawing lines and shapes within age-appropriate parameters; difficulty building or sustaining age-appropriate relationships or conversations; persistent difficulty tolerating the presence of or interactions with peers or adults; persistent and severe disciplinary actions in preschool or school settings; failure to develop age or grade-level appropriate reading, writing, mathematical, listening, or speaking skills after exposure to sound instruction in these areas by qualified teachers; and failure to pass routine vision or hearing screenings.

Scholar Academies will maintain documentation and annually report the number of children with disabilities within each disability category that have been identified, located and evaluated (34 CFR 300.125). The collection and use of data to meet these requirements are subject to the confidentiality requirements.

Pre-Referral Process

With the purpose of providing a forum to discuss students who demonstrate academic, behavioral, or social difficulties within the educational setting and how these difficulties are adversely affecting the student's performance in the classroom, Scholar Academies has a three-step pre-referral process based on a Response To Intervention and Instruction (RTII) model.

Student Support Teams (SST)

The SST is comprised of a group of teachers and support staff working together to ensure that each student receives the services and support necessary to meet individual needs and to increase academic success.

The purpose of the meeting is to generate ideas/ interventions which support the student in the regular education classroom. If concerns continue to persist a Student Support Team is held.

Tier I Universal Screen

All Scholar Academies students are screened for development benchmarks. Staff reviews data from these screens to plan interventions where appropriate.

Tier II

Staff reviews data from universal screenings and determine need for Tier 2 services. Parents are notified of need for Tier 2, programming, duration, frequency, service provider, and goals for Tier 2 services. Tier 2 services are reevaluated after each benchmark period to determine next steps for student. Students may move back to Tier 1 Universal Services, remain in Tier 2 services or increase to Tier 3 services.

Tier III

When a teacher, staff member, or parent identifies a student who has not benefited fully from classroom instruction, Tier 2 supports or Tier 3 supports, a referral can be made to hold a Student Support Team meeting.

The SST is a team comprised of general/special education teacher(s), support staff and administrator(s) to provide a place to discuss student concerns in a supportive open environment. The members of the team share a common mission to strengthen and support students who are having difficulty in the school environment. All possible sources of information are reviewed to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the student's strengths, weaknesses and specific needs.

If concerns still exist after one round of Tier 3 intervention services, a follow-up meeting may be held to discuss components of a formal evaluation to determine special education eligibility.

Evaluation and Eligibility Determination

A full individual initial evaluation will be conducted before the initial provision of special education and related services to a child with a disability (34 CFR 300.531). The evaluation will determine if the child is a child with a disability as well as determine the educational needs of the child. A re-evaluation of each child will be conducted every three years.

Procedures:

When the implementation of Student Support Team interventions are deemed unsuccessful, are not enabling the student to progress quickly enough, or require resources that cannot realistically be provided through general education, a referral is made.

Evaluations will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of IDEA. In conjunction with the support staff, Scholar Academies will contact qualified professional (school psychologist, speech/language pathologist, occupational therapist, etc.) to review existing evaluation data, collect additional data and use the results of the evaluation to determine the category of eligibility and the need for special education and related services (34 CFR 300.7, 300.534, 300.535). The results of the evaluation will be used to develop the initial IEP or to review and revise an existing IEP (34 CFR 300.340, 300.350).

Procedures for initial evaluation (34 CFR 300.531 and 300.532)

Tests and other evaluation materials used to assess a child will be selected and administered so as not to be discriminatory on a racial or cultural basis and will be provided and administered in the student's native language or other mode of communication, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so. Materials and procedures used to assess a student with limited English proficiency will be selected and administered to measure the extent to which the child has a disability and needs special education, rather than measuring the child's English language skills.

A variety of assessment tools and strategies will be used to gather relevant functional and developmental information about the child, including information provided by the parent.

Information related to enabling the child to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum will be included. The information gathered will assist in determining whether the child is a child with a disability and in the development of the child's IEP.

Any standardized tests that are given will be validated for the specific purpose for which they are used and administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the tests. If an assessment is not conducted under standard conditions, a description of the extent to which it varied from standard conditions will be included in the evaluation report.

Tests and other evaluation materials will be selected to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely those that are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient. Tests will be selected and administered to a child with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills to accurately reflect the test results of the child's aptitude or achievement level or whatever other factors the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the child's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills (unless those skills are the factors that the test purports to measure).

No single procedure will be used as the sole criterion for determining whether a child is a child with a disability and for determining an appropriate educational program for the child. The child will be assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, motor abilities, and the need for assistive technology.

The evaluation will be sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the child's special education and related service needs, whether or not commonly linked to the disability category in which the child has been classified. Technically sound instruments will be used that may assess cognitive and behavioral factors, in addition to physical or developmental factors. Assessment tools and strategies will be used to provide relevant information that directly assists persons in determining the educational needs of the child.

Parental Requests for evaluation

Parents are never barred from requesting a special education evaluation before, during, or after the pre-referral intervention activities. In the event that a parent makes an oral request for a student evaluation, Scholar Academies must give a consent form within ten (10) calendar days of the oral request for evaluation. If the school refuses to conduct the evaluation, a written notice of refusal must be given within a reasonable amount of time.

Parental Right to Revoke Consent

A parent has a right to unilaterally withdraw their child from special education services. In this event, the charter school may not challenge that parent's decision using Part B dispute resolution procedures. If at any time following initial provisions of special education services a parent revokes consent to services in writing, the school must provide a written notice before ceasing the provision of special education services. (34 C.F.R. § 300.300). No member of the administration may appeal this decision using mediation or a due process hearing in order to secure education services for the child. (34 C.F.R. § 300.300).

Re-evaluation (34 CFR 300.334, 300.536, and 300.543)

A re-evaluation will be conducted every three years or if conditions warrant a re-evaluation, if the student's parent or teacher requests a re-evaluation, or before determining that the child is no longer a child with a disability. Students with Intellectual Disabilities will be reevaluated every two years.

Determination of needed evaluation data for initial evaluation and reevaluation (34 CFR 300.533 and ARS 15-766)

Scholar Academies Student Support Team and other qualified professionals, as deemed appropriate, will review existing data on the student, including evaluations and information provided by the parents of the child, current classroom-based assessments and observations, and observations by teachers and related services providers.

On the basis of that review, and input from the child's parents, the team and other qualified professionals will identify what additional data, if any, are needed to determine eligibility.

If the determination is that no additional data are needed, Scholar Academies will notify the student's parents of that determination and the reasons for it and of the right of the parents to request an assessment to determine whether the child continues to be a child with a disability. No assessment will be required unless requested by the child's parents to determine eligibility. The team will provide a copy of the evaluation report and documentation of eligibility to the parents.

If additional data are needed, the Student Support Team will provide procedural safeguards notice, prior written notice, and obtain informed parent consent. Scholar Academies will arrange for the administration of tests and other evaluation materials as may be needed to determine if the child is a child with a disability.

Determination of eligibility (34 CFR 300.533--300.536, 300.540)

The Student Support Team, other qualified professionals, and the parents of the child will determine whether the child has a disability, or continues to be a child with a disability, as defined in 34 CFR 300.7.

Based on the review of data and on input from the child's parents and the Student Support team, the team determines if:

- Student has a category of disability, or in the case of reevaluation, continues to have a disability
- Student needs special education and related services, or in the case of a reevaluation, continues to need special education and related services
- Present levels of performance and other educational needs of the child
- Any additions or modifications to the special education and related services will be needed to enable the student to meet the measurable annual goals established in the IEP and to participate in the general curriculum, as appropriate. In interpreting evaluation data for the purpose of determining if a student is a student with a disability, the team will draw upon information from a variety of sources, including aptitude and achievement tests, parent input, teacher recommendations, physical condition, social or cultural background, and adaptive behavior. The team will consider and document all information obtained from all of these sources.

A student may not be determined to be eligible if the determinant factor for the eligibility determination is lack of instruction in reading or math or limited English proficiency and the student does not otherwise meet the eligibility criteria under 34 CFR 300.7300.543.

If a student is suspected of having a specific learning disability, the documentation of the team's determination of eligibility will include:

- Whether the child has a specific learning disability
- Basis for making the determination
- Relevant behavior noted during the observation of the child
- Relationship of that behavior to the child's academic functioning
- Educationally relevant medical findings, if any
- Whether there is severe discrepancy between achievement and ability that is not correctable without special education and related services
- Determination of the team concerning the effects of environment, cultural or economic disadvantage

Evaluation Report

The Student Support team and other qualified professionals including the parent(s) of the student will determine whether they are a student with a category of disability or, in the case of a reevaluation, if they continue to be a student with a disability, as defined in 34 CFR 300.7.

The evaluation report will include:

- Review of current evaluations, including types of tests and results of those tests
- Educational history including the reason for referral, current classroom-based assessments, and observations by teachers and related service providers
- Information provided by the parents, including medical and developmental history
- Determination of whether the student's educational problems are related to or resulting from educational disadvantage

It will also include general information pertaining to:

- o Whether the student has a category of disability or, in the case of reevaluation if they continue to be a student with a category of disability
- o Present levels of performance and educational needs
- o Whether the student needs special education and related services or continues to need special education and related services
- o Whether any additions and modifications to special education and related services are needed to meet the measurable annual goals established in the IEP and to participate, as appropriate, in the general curriculum.

The Student Support Team will provide a copy of the evaluation report and the documentation of determination of eligibility to the parent. The evaluation report must be completed within sixty (60) days of receiving parental consent.

Independent Evaluation (34 CFR 300.501)

Parents have the right to obtain an independent educational evaluation of their child conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by Scholar Academies' Schools. An evaluation is the procedure used in accordance with 34 CFR 300.530-300.536 to determine whether a child has a disability and the nature and extent of the special education and related services the child needs.

If a parent requests an independent educational evaluation, Scholar Academies' Schools will, without unnecessary delay, either initiate a due process hearing to show that our evaluation is appropriate, or it will ensure that an independent educational evaluation is provided at our expense, unless Scholar Academies' Schools demonstrates in a due process hearing that the evaluation obtained by the parent did not meet criteria.

Upon request for an independent educational evaluation, Scholar Academies' Schools will provide to parents information about where an independent educational evaluation may be obtained and criteria for an evaluation [34 CFR 300.51(a)(2)].

If the parent obtains an independent educational evaluation at private expense, the results of the evaluation will be considered by Scholar Academies' Schools in any decision made with respect to the provision of FAPE to the child and may be presented as evidence at a hearing regarding the child [34 CFR 300.502(c)(1and2)].

Cost of the independent educational evaluation will be at public expense if requested by a hearing officer [34 CFR 300.502 (d)].