

HULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Eligibility Information

The Hull Public Schools is required under state (Chapter 766) and federal (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) special education laws to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities. School districts are required to follow certain procedures including a pre-referral process, the identification of disabled children, a comprehensive evaluation, the development of an individualized education program (IEP) for students identified as having a disability, and an annual review of each IEP.

These laws also guarantee students and parents/guardians certain due process rights in the event of a disagreement about the content of the IEP or the child's educational placement.

The Hull Public Schools identifies and evaluates children from age 3 through 21 who may be eligible for special education services. Referral sources include parents, teachers, pediatricians, student support teams and private community providers. Throughout the school year, Hull Public Schools Integrated Pre-School conducts screenings of children between the ages of three and five years. Kindergarten screening takes place in the spring prior to the school year the child will begin kindergarten. If a concern is raised about a school-aged child related to school performance the child may be referred to the building-based student support team (pre-referral). The team may further refer a student for a special education evaluation once all regular education instructional support efforts have been considered. Parents may refer their child for an evaluation at anytime if they suspect their child has a disability. In this case pre-referral takes place simultaneously. A special education evaluation may only take place with parental consent.

Specialized instruction may be recommended for students who have disabilities that affect learning. The presence of a disability alone does not, however, mean that a student is eligible for special education services.

To determine eligibility, the evaluation team must review and answer the following questions:

1. Does the student have one or more than **one disability**?
2. Is the student making **effective educational progress**?
3. Is the lack of progress due to the **disability**?
4. Does the student require special education in order to make **effective educational progress**?

The results of a comprehensive battery of assessments including teacher reports, specialist evaluations, and information from parents are used to answer these questions.

Eligibility Information (continued)

An educational assessment may include:

- a history of the student's educational progress in the general curriculum
- a summary of pre-referral activities including documentation of support provided through regular education
- information regarding the student's attention skills, participation in class and extra curricular activities, and social relations with groups, peers and adults
- classroom observations -a review of the student's attendance record
- a narrative description of the student's educational and/or developmental potential

An evaluation team may include a chairperson, special educator(s), regular educator(s), speech/language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, literacy specialist, vision or hearing specialist, behavior specialist, adjustment or guidance counselor, school nurse, building principal, and school psychologist.

Assessment information must be comprehensive and sufficient to allow the educational team to:

1. Determine the presence or absence of a disability and eligibility for special education services under legal standards;
2. Evaluate factors related to the student's performance in school;
3. Plan appropriate services to respond to the student's needs.

Some students are entitled to a "Section 504 Accommodation Plan" under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. A Section 504 Plan may be developed for an individual who has a disability which substantially limits a major life activity such as learning, walking, seeing, hearing, breathing, working or performing manual tasks, but does not require special education to make effective educational progress.