**Special Education Process**

**Grades K-12 use a tiered instruction and team approach.**

This tiered instructional approach begins with each school monitoring student progress through a school data team. In that team meeting, a concern by the school staff may be addressed through the creation of a Tier 2 Intervention Plan. This Tier 2 level instruction/intervention is for all concerns including addressing high achieving students.

If a parent has concerns and bring that concern to the school, there are steps to be followed:
- First have a parent-teacher conference to see what the concerns are and how they can be addressed at the classroom level.
- The teacher can then take those concerns to the school data team. If the data indicate a need, a Tier 2 Intervention Plan is developed and parents are informed.
- If more information is needed and/or student is not making adequate process, then an RTI² team meeting is scheduled and the RTI² referral packet is completed.
- The RTI² team can develop a Tier 3 Intervention Plan or make a referral for a screening or evaluation for special education.
- A parent must provide written consent for the district to complete an evaluation of the student. If the student is being considered for a learning disability in reading, math or written expression, the RTI² process will need to be followed. Beginning July 2014, RTI² is the only process to eligibility for an eligibility of LD in reading, math and written expression.
- If a parent provides an out of district assessment, that assessment should be provided to the school psychologist who will review and may result in an formal meeting, either RTI² or IEP, to consider the next steps which may include obtaining parental consent.

**Evaluation for Special Education**

After review of your child’s response to interventions over a period of time, and/or screening(s), the team may deem it necessary to refer your child for a comprehensive evaluation to determine the eligibility for special education services.

Appropriate school personnel will proceed with your signed written consent to evaluate the current functioning level(s) of your child. The appropriate school personnel may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- School psychologist will perform evaluations concerning intellectual, emotional, academic, or social functioning.
- Speech pathologist evaluates areas related to speech or language impairments.
- Occupational therapists may evaluate fine motor skills
- Physical therapists may evaluate gross motor skills
- English Language Learner (ELL) teachers evaluate current levels of English language acquisition.
- General Education and Special Education teachers may assess or conduct observations and give input based on data.
- The parent will give input through parent information records, developmental background checklists, and/or complete forms for tests which may include parent information. The parent may also provide for review current reports or evaluations from private providers of the child if appropriate for the team to consider. The parent may also have pertinent medical documentation to share with the team for consideration.
Once the initial evaluation is completed on or before 40 school days, the team will meet to review all evaluations, past information from RTI documentation, observations, and assessments to complete the eligibility process for special education if appropriate.

**Eligibility and Individualized Education Planning Meeting (IEP)**

- The eligibility meeting team members consist of parents, special education personnel, interpreter of evaluation results, classroom teacher and LEA (an administrator who ensures the school can and will implement the plan). If the student is 14 years of age or older and special education is being considered, then that student should be involved in the meeting.
- The IEP team determines whether or not special education services are a necessary intervention and considers eligibility based on Tennessee State criteria for special education.
- To be eligible the student must meet a two-prong process.
- First, is there an educational impact due to the student’s disability? The student’s needs through testing and evaluations must meet the state’s requirements for one or more of the following disabilities:
  - Autism
  - Deaf-Blindness
  - Deafness
  - Developmental Delay
  - Emotional Disturbance
  - Functionally Delayed (a TN state eligibility)
  - Hearing Impairment
  - Intellectual Disability
  - Intellectually Gifted (a TN state eligibility)
  - Multiple Disabilities
  - Orthopedic Impairment
  - Other Health Impairment
  - Specific Learning Disability
  - Speech or Language Impairment
  - Traumatic Brain Injury
  - Visual Impairment

**Individualized Education Plan**

- This is a plan designed by the team to help your child succeed in the school setting. The plan will include current levels of strengths and needs, goals and objectives, and supports and services for your child.
- As a parent it is your procedural safeguard and responsibility to be part of developing this plan.
- A plan is written and approved annually by the team.
- This group determines the least restrictive environment that will meet the student’s needs with age appropriate peers. The Williamson County Schools provides a continuum of supports and services in the child’s zoned school.
Special education services can be offered in a variety of ways. The IEP team makes the determinations of services for an individual student based on that student's needs. We provide a continuum of services which range from the least restrictive environment (in which the student is receiving their education in the general education classroom) to the most restrictive placement (in which the student receives all their education in a special education setting). If the student is included in the general education setting, the team considers what supplemental supports (i.e. training, assistive technology or other supports) or accommodations the student may need in order to be successful.

Services will be provided by an appropriate team member depending on the service needed. The services may be provided by special education staff such as a special education teacher, a special education paraprofessional, a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) or an SLP Assistant, an Occupational Therapist or OT Assistant, a Physical Therapist or PT Assistant, a vision or hearing consulting teachers, a gifted education consulting teacher, a sign language interpreter or Brailler, an early childhood teacher. Other system wide personnel may consult with the IEP team. These members include WCS social workers, behavior intervention specialists, and WCS autism consultants and school psychologists.

**Monitoring Your Child's Progress**

You will receive IEP progress reports on a regular basis (quarterly) of your child's progress toward the goals. This is at the same time the general education students have progress reports.

**IEP meeting and Re-evaluation**

- Every year you will be expected to be part of a team that determines your child's needs for the next year.
- Once your child has received special education services, he/she will be evaluated every three years to determine special education placement and then an IEP will be developed if appropriate.