



Phoenix Charter Academy Academic Support Manual



Introduction

The Academic Support Policy and Procedure Manual was written to support teachers and administrators throughout the process of evaluating and supporting individual student learning difficulties and applying appropriate and carried teaching strategies to reach each learner. General education classes at Phoenix Charter Academy are designed to meet students where they are and to provide a curriculum to build new skills while spiraling to fill any educational gaps. PCA will work to make all students successful no matter what their learning style or abilities requires additional support services built into the general education classes and educational system. This Manual describes the processes and the procedures that classroom and special education teachers and administrators can use to ensure that every student in a diverse student population will be successful.

The Academic Support Policy and Procedure Manual is a resource and evolving reference. New Chapters, appendices and other additions and changes will be incorporated as our work develops and improves.

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I. Special Education Services:

Outreach by School District (Student Find)

Upon enrollment to Phoenix Charter Academy all students will receive appropriate outreach and monitoring for eligibility in special education. Teaching staff are regularly in communication around individual student need. Students are provided interventions through the general education Team when appropriate in coordination with the Academic Support Department. Students needing additional support may enter the Instructional Kid Talk (IKT) process where a Team of teachers will meet at least monthly to collaborate with the Academic Support Department and other staff to structure interventions and gather data on the student. Students may be referred for special education testing through Phoenix Charter Academy staff, parent, self, or other adult supporter. If a parent or adult supporter is concerned about a student's progress in the general curriculum and would like to make a referral for a special education evaluation or for additional interventions within the general education classroom they may do so by contacting the Head of School or Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

Upon intake of a student, or disclosure of a student who received special education services in their previous educational setting, the student and/or parent will be encouraged to bring the appropriate documents to PCA to copy. If this is unable to happen, the Academic Support Department will coordinate with the registrar to request and obtain documents in a timely manner.

A. Evaluation Referral

Any person concerned about a student's progress in school may make a referral for an evaluation to determine eligibility for special education services. Once a referral is made the evaluation process begins.

Instructional Kid Talk and the General Education Accommodation Plan are designed to be implemented before students are referred for a special education evaluation. Ideally the school would have first convened an IKT Team to develop, implement, and document the effectiveness of accommodations. Ideally, only if these accommodations are not successful, would a student be referred for special education. The evaluation process cannot be delayed because a school district has not fully explored accommodations in a regular education.

Initiating a Referral for Special Education Eligibility

School Referral –

If the interventions of the IKT Team were documented as unsuccessful, a student is referred by the IKT Team for an evaluation to determine eligibility for special education.

The IKT Team captain completes the Referral for Evaluation, attaching relevant findings from the IKT process. Upon receipt and review of the referral by the Coordinator of Academic Support Services, the Academic Support Department will compile and mail the Parent Consent Package within 5 school days of the receipt of the referral. Additionally, the Academic Support Department will contact the parent or guardian via phone to discuss the reasons for referral and the evaluation process.

Non-School Referral –

When a parent or person making a referral has concerns about the student development or a suspicion that the student may have a disability, the Academic Support Department promptly sends the Parent Consent Package within 5 school days of written receipt of a referral.

Parental Consent Package	N1-Notice of Proposed School District Action Notice of Procedural Safeguards N1A-Evaluation Consent
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Acting on the Referral for an Evaluation to Determine Special Education Eligibility

The parent or guardian must complete and return the consent to evaluate (N1A) before the evaluation can begin. After the parental consent package has been sent the Academic Support Department will send the Educational Assessment-Part B to all the student's teachers and the Educational Assessment-Part A completed by an Academic Support Teacher to be returned within 5 school days of receipt.

If the parent or guardian does not return the Evaluation Consent Form within 30 days, the Special Education Teacher will call the parent or guardian to discuss any concerns. If after 10 additional days, the parent does not respond, the Academic Support Department will send the parent a second N1A-Notice for Evaluation Consent. If the parental consent is not received within 30 days of the second attempt, additional efforts to obtain parental consent are made and documented. If the parent revokes consent or refuses to agree to an evaluation the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) will determine if such action denies the student of Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and seeks resolution through the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA).

Upon Receipt of the signed N1A-Evaluation Consent Form the timeline for the evaluation process begins. The evaluation must be completed within 30 school days. The Team Meeting must be scheduled and held within 45 school days of the schools receipt of the N1A. The Network Director of Special Education and English Language Development immediately notifies the Evaluation Team members that they may begin to assess the student and will provide the necessary parties with referral information and student

background. Simultaneously, The Academic Support Department will schedule the Team Meeting and sends the written notification to parents and all other participants.

Pre-Meeting Paperwork	N ₃ -Team Meeting Invitation
	N ₃ A-Attendance Sheet

In the event that the parent calls to change the meeting time/date, the Academic Support Department will promptly send out the N₃-Team Meeting Invitation Date/Change.

All completed evaluation reports will be made available to the Network Director of Special Education and English Language Development at least 5 days prior to the Team Meeting who will make reports available to the parents or guardian at least 2 days prior to the Team Meeting. Other Team members will have access to evaluation reports via the Academic Support Office.

B. Evaluation Guidelines

Students are evaluated in all areas of suspected disability in order to determine eligibility for special education. Eligibility cannot be based on lack of reading or math instruction or limited English proficiency. Evaluation activities are tailored to the specific referral questions or the individual student and address whether or not there is a disability, and if the disability affects the student's learning. Evaluations must provide necessary information to determine present level of academic achievement and related developmental needs. No single test is used as the sole criterion for determining eligibility.

Evaluations are provided and administered in the language and form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally. Evaluations are administered and interpreted by trained individuals.

Required Assessments for an Evaluation

- ☐ Educational Assessment: Part A to be completed by the Head of School or Director of Curriculum & Instruction
- ☐ Educational Assessment: Part B to be completed by each teacher
- ☐ Specific Learning Disabilities Forms, SLD 1, 2, 3, 4, and 28M / 10 –when student suspected of having a learning disability
- ☐ Specialist Assessment(s) to be completed by specialists in the areas of the child's suspected disability
- ☐ Educational Assessment including-history of student's progress in the general curriculum, assessment of the student's attention skills, participation behaviors, communication, memory, and social relations

Optional Assessments for an Evaluation:

- ☐ Psychological
- ☐ Cognitive
- ☐ Health Assessment-done by a physician
- ☐ Home assessment

Evaluation Process:

Members of the Evaluation Team coordinate their assessments with the student's teacher(s) and other evaluators so that a student is not "over-tested" in one day. The person conducting the assessments is responsible for notifying the teacher in advance of any pull-outs.

In the case that PCA needs to contract out testing for a student, it will be the responsibility of the Network Director of Special Education and English Language Development to locate trained individuals who will be responsible for conducting these evaluations in a timely manner.

Waiver of Assessment:

If a decision is made to waive any required assessment, the Academic Support Department will send a Request for Waiver of Assessment (esped) to the parent or guardian for signature with the NtA-Evaluation Consent Form. It is important to note any time Phoenix Charter Academy waives the rights of assessment; it places the District in the position of accepting any recommendation(s) made by an independent evaluator(s).

Evaluation Reports:

All Assessment reports should be written in clear, jargon-free language. Assessors are to interpret and analyze the results of the student testing as related to their performance in school to assist the Team in the evaluation process. Reports should include the following:

- The student's present level of educational performance
- Areas of need arising from the student's disability
- Educationally relevant accommodations and modifications to provide access to the general education curriculum

Students with Limited English Proficiency:

Students with Limited English Proficiency who are in the evaluation process will be provided with assessments in their native language in addition to assessments in English depending on the level of proficiency of the student. Evaluation results will be made available to students and their families in their native language in accordance with aforementioned timelines.

Independent Educational Evaluation:

If a parent disagrees with the evaluation done by Phoenix Charter Academy, they may request an independent educational evaluation for up to 16 months from the date of the original assessment. The Network Director of Special Education and English Language Development will ensure that all independent evaluations are conducted by qualified persons who are registered, certified, licensed or otherwise approved and who abide by the rates set by the state agency responsible for setting such rates. The parent may obtain an independent education evaluation at private expense at any time. If a parent requests public funding for an IEE, PCA will abide by the provisions for a sliding scale fee for free and reduced IEEs. If the IEE is publically funded, a copy of the report is sent to PCA in addition to the parents. The Team will convene within 10 school days from when the report is received by the school. Whenever possible, the IEE is completed, written and sent 30 days from the date of request by the parent or guardian. A completed IEE report will include a written summary of procedures, assessments, results, and diagnostic as well as educationally relevant recommendations for meeting the unique needs of the scholar.

PCA currently completes academic testing and testing of student's suspected area of disability through the Academic Support Department full staff. PCA contracts out for all other testing, most commonly for cognitive and psychological evaluations. In the case that a parent is requesting an evaluation in an area that is not typically assessed through the school, the Network Director of Special Education and English Language Development will seek and provide, when possible, testing in the area as requested by the parent where the school is in agreement of the appropriateness for further testing. In the case that PCA is unable to provide the parent with the requested testing, or if the family chooses not to share financial documentation regarding eligibility for free or reduced independent testing, the school may A) agree to pay for the independent educational evaluation or B) will complete an appeal within 5 school working days to the Bureau Special Education Appeals. Through the appeal process, PCA will seek to demonstrate that the evaluation conducted through the school is appropriate and comprehensive. Students with unique circumstances of the student may justify an individual assessment rate that is higher than that normally allowed and will always be considered by Phoenix Charter Academy at the request of an Independent Educational Evaluation.

Extended Evaluations:

If the Team finds a student eligible for special education, but the evaluation's information is insufficient to develop the IEP, the Team will ask for the parent's signed consent to extend the evaluation period. The extended period can not be used to deny services. The Team documents their findings and determines when evaluation period is necessary and the types of information needed to develop an IEP. The extended evaluation period is to be no longer than 8 weeks. The Team will meet within 10 days of receiving the IIE.

C. The Reevaluation Process:

A reevaluation is conducted for each student with a current IEP, every three years or more frequently if requested or recommended. Evaluations are required prior to finding that a student is no longer eligible for special education services, except for graduation with a regular diploma or aging out. For these students, PCA provides a summary of academic and functional performance, including recommendations on how to assist the child to meet post-secondary goals.

Initiating the Reevaluation Process:

The Academic Support Department develops a schedule of reevaluation at the beginning of each year to facilitate reevaluations being completed within the required time lines. 10 weeks prior to the date of documented. If the parent revokes consent or refuses to consent to the reevaluation, PCA will seek resolution through the Bureau of Special Education Appeals.

Upon receipt of the sig re-evaluation the reevaluation process will officially begin. The Network Director of Special Education and English Language Development sends the referral form to all of the student's teachers to provide information on student strengths, areas of difficulty, interventions used and significant events in the student's life since the last evaluation. This information is used to develop questions to be answered in the evaluation process. If no additional information is needed to determine whether or not the student continues to be eligible, PCA may request that a parent waive particular types of assessment(s). The parent has the right to consent or deny the waiver.

Implementing the Reevaluation Process:

The Network Director of Special Education and English Language Development reviews the referral and determines which types of assessment should be completed. The Academic Support Office will send an N1A-Evaluation Consent Form to the parent which must be completed before the reevaluation process begins.

If the parent does not return the Evaluation Consent Form within 30 days, a second notice of the N1A is sent to the family. If there is no response to the second letter, the Special Education Teacher will call the parents to discuss and concern and will document the call. If parental consent is not received within 30 days, additional efforts to obtain parental consent are made. Once the Evaluation Consent Form-N1A is obtained and signed contracted assessments may begin. Simultaneously, the Academic Support Staff schedules the Team meeting and sends parents and Team members a Meeting Invitation-N3, and Attendance Sheet-N3A. The rest of the reevaluation process continues as the initial evaluation process.

The Network Director of Special Education and English Language Development is responsible to contracting all evaluations requiring special areas of licensure.

D. Special Education Team Meetings

The Special Education Team meeting process is designed to bring together parents, teachers, and specialists to review all of the data and assessments collected in the evaluation process and determine if a student is eligible for special education services or not. If a student is found eligible for special education services then the Team develops an Individual Educational Program (IEP) and then determines the educational placement for the student.

Team Members:

The Team consists of the following members:

- ✓ Student parent/guardian and the student invited to attend when age 14 and older
- ✓ At least one general education teacher who has taught the student
- ✓ Special Education LEA responsible for appropriating school funds
- ✓ Student (encouraged to attend; mandatory if within one year of age of majority)

Other members of a Team may include:

- ✓ Related service providers
- ✓ Individuals responsible for conducting and interpreting evaluation results
- ✓ Student advisor
- ✓ Sports coach
- ✓ Head of School, Director of School Culture, or Network Director of Special Education and English Language Development
- ✓ Representative of Student Support Team (when behavior is involved)
- ✓ College counselors
- ✓ Translator
- ✓ Network Director of Special Education and English Language Development (present for all initial, reevaluations, and manifestation determinations)
- ✓ Any persons requested by parent and agreed upon by the Network Director of Special Education and English Language Development

Annual Review Meetings

The IEP Team will meet annually to review the existing IEP and develop a new IEP that reflects student growth and current educational needs as related to the general curriculum. After reviewing student progress, the Team will determine appropriate goals, objectives, accommodations and specially designed instruction for the upcoming 12 month period. The IEP Annual Review must be held within twelve months of the previous review. It is encouraged to hold annual review meetings for new students within 30 days of the start of the quarter in which they enroll.

Materials to Prepare for Team Meetings

The following material are prepared ahead of time and distributed at the meeting to facilitate communication and comply with special education regulations:

Annual Team Meetings	Attendance Sheet-N3A Meeting Notes Medicaid Form Part B Forms (all teachers) Parental Safeguards Transfer of Rights – age 17* Age of Majority - age 18* 688 Referral – 2 years before graduation*
Initial or Reevaluation only	Eligibility Flowchart-ED1 Part A Form All Evaluations Specific Learning Disability Forms* 28M/10* SLD 1, 2, 3, 4*

*denotes situational

IDEA 2004 permits members being excused if parent and LEA agree (written agreement from parent). If excused member has input it is provided in writing.

Responsibilities of the Special Education Team:

The IEP Team is responsible for three important activities:

- ✓ Eligibility Determination/Initial and Reevaluation
- ✓ Development of the IEP
- ✓ Placement Decisions

1. Eligibility Determination

The Team will use the Special Education Eligibility Flowchart to assist in making eligibility determinations. The flowchart will assess three prongs of the eligibility criteria.

Identification of a Disability:

Team members should examine the evaluative data, including information provided by the parent to determine if the student has a disability as defined in Massachusetts by the following categories

- Autism
- Intellectual
- Emotional

- Physical
- Health
- Developmental Delay
- Neurological
- Multiple
- Communication
- Specific Learning
- Sensory: Hearing, Vision, Deaf-Blind

Is the Student Making Effective Progress in the General Curriculum?

The Team makes a judgment as to whether the student is making effective progress in the general curriculum. The Team will determine whether the student has made documented growth (with or without accommodations) in knowledge and skills acquisition, including social/emotional development and whether the student has made growth according to the chronological age, the developmental expectations and the individual potential of the child. When considering if the student has made progress the Team is to judge whether the lack of progress is a result of the student's disability or a result of other factors. In addition to the evaluations the team also reviews a student's grades, attendance and discipline records. According to state and federal regulation, a student is not found eligible solely because the student is unable to follow the school discipline code, has limited English proficiency, social maladjustment, or lacked reading or math instruction. These reasons may become part of the Team's deliberations, but the essential finding of the Team must be that the lack of progress is, at least in part, a result of the disability (-ies).

Does the Student Require Specially Designed Instruction to Make Progress

Specially designed instruction is a modification not regularly provided for students in the general education program. Specially designed instruction includes modifications that affect the content, delivery of instruction, methodology, and/or performance criteria that are necessary to assist the student in participating and learning. Related services necessary to access the general curriculum are considered special education and may be provided alone, or in combination with specially designed instruction. If the student only requires accommodations then the student is not eligible for special education, but may be eligible for a 504 plan.

Specific Learning Disabilities

Extra steps are required when a specific learning disability is suspected. Federal regulation requires additional steps in the evaluation process if the Team suspects a student of having a specific learning disability. The District must complete the following steps and paperwork prior to the Team meeting to determine eligibility:

- Historical Review (SLD 1) to ensure that underachievement in the area of concern is not due to a lack of appropriate instruction in reading and math. The historical

review will include an assessment of the student's participation skills, performance history, as well as any relevant medical information

- Area of Concern/Evaluation Method (SLD 2) to determine that there is an existence of a Specific Learning Disability by means of a student's response to a scientific, researched-based intervention or through the IQ discrepancy model.
- Exclusionary Factors (SLD 3) to determine that the difficulty in the identifies area is not a result of cultural factors; an environmental or economic disadvantage; limited English proficiency; a visual, hearing or motor disability; mental retardation; or an emotional disturbance.
- Observation (SLD 4) to document a student's academic performance and behavior in the area of disability in the natural learning environment.
- Team members certify in writing whether the written report reflects their conclusion of a finding of a specific learning disability using the Specific Learning Disability Determination Form. Any individual who disagrees with the written report submits a separate statement to express their differing conclusions. These conclusions will be documented on form 28M/10.

Students on the Autism Spectrum:

If a student is identified as being on the Autism Spectrum, the Team will take special considerations when designing and implementing the student's Individualized Educational Program. In the annual review, the Team will review the following criteria. The Team facilitator will take notes on each criterion and will additionally document this in the Nt letter. The Team's consideration will be included in the IEP as appropriate.

Considerations for a student on the autism spectrum include, but are not limited to:

- A. **Communication**
- B. **Social skills** and peer interactions
- C. **Sensory** integration and sensitivity
- D. Changes in **routine** and **environment**
- E. Engagement in activities that are **repetitive, stereotyped**, and/or based on **stimulation** and the needs associated with such activities
- F. Behaviors that are associated with or manifestations of the autism spectrum including, but not limited structured **positive behavior plans** and regular opportunities to practice and receive feedback on desired behaviors
- G. Other needs that may be related to the autism spectrum including the student's **social emotional** needs and development.

Finding of Eligibility for Special Education Services:

If a student is found eligible for Special Education then an IEP is developed. In most cases the IEP will be developed based on the initial or reevaluation meeting. Any action proposed by the school district should be documented in a Notice of Proposed School District

Action-N₁ letter. The following materials are then sent to parents within 10 school working days from the date of the meeting.

Finding of Eligibility	N ₁ -School Districts Proposal to Act IEP Pages 1-7 PLI-Placement Page TPF-Transition Planning Form (if student is over 14) Parent Survey Outline of Follow Up
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Finding of No Eligibility:

If the student does not have a disability, does not show a lack of progress, or if a lack of progress is not due to a disability, or if the student doesn't require specialized instruction, then the Team makes a finding of no eligibility. The school will send a Notice of School District Refusal to Act (N₂) and Special Education Eligibility Determination Chart. Parents have the right to appeal any eligibility determination.

Parents' Consent to Evaluation Findings:

Team members should check a parent's understanding of the evaluation data and their agreement with it. If parents disagree with the assessment they have the right to request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE).

Extended Evaluation:

If evaluation information is inconclusive and the Team has found the student eligible, the Team may want to consider an Extended Evaluation to gather further information needed to write the IEP. At this point the Team will develop a partial IEP or Full IEP in conjunction with an Extended Evaluation form. This is so the student may not be denied services during the extended evaluation period. An Extended evaluation may run one to three weeks. The Team may decide to meet during this time, however the Team must convene as soon as the information is available to review assessment data and complete the writing of the IEP.

2. Development of the IEP

This is the second step in the process. After a student has been found eligible for special education the Team develops the IEP. The Team must discuss all sections of the IEP. The IEP becomes a formal agreement between a student's parents and Phoenix Charter Academy. The IEP helps teachers and parents to understand how the student learns, how the student best demonstrates understanding and how the school staff and student will work together. The IEP should provide a clear picture of the student's abilities and needs,

and identifies key goals and objectives that provide a direction and focus for the students learning over the next IEP period.

The IEP consists of the following pages:

- Vision Statement – IEP 1
- General Curriculum – IEP 2
- Other Educational Needs – IEP 3
- Current Performance Levels/Measurable Annual Goals – IEP4
- Service Delivery – IEP 5
- Non-Participation, Length of School Day/Year, Transportation – IEP 6
- Justification of Non-Participation in the General Education Program
- State or District-Wide Assessment – IEP 7
- Placement Pages
- Transition Planning Form

MCAS Accommodations:

The IEP Team is responsible for deciding how a student will participate in State MCAS Testing. MCAS accommodations must be consistent with the accommodations that a student is receiving in their educational program. Students may receive standard accommodations and will only receive non-standard accommodation with the approval of the Instructional Leadership Team.

Transition Plan:

Transition planning begins when a student is 14 and is required by federal law. Transition elements are incorporated throughout the IEP so that the approach becomes integrated into the student's program. The Team should consider transition goals and services necessary as the child approaches graduation and is required to discuss the need for a Chapter 688 referral and the involvement of adult service agencies beginning with the student's initial Transition Plan.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention:

If the Team decides that the student's disability affects social skill development or may make a student vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing the IEP must address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond in such a circumstance. When a student has been identified as being vulnerable to bullying the Social Work, Student Support, and Academic Support Teams will collaborate to create a plan for the student. Additional supports and plans will be documented in IEP 8 when a student's disability (a) is on the autism spectrum; (b) affects social skills development; or (c) makes the student vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

Phoenix Charter Academy strives to create a community of students who are accepting of others and who use each other for support. PCA strives to raise awareness of students around issues of bullying. PCA traditionally holds an anti-violence symposium where

students participate in an alternative school day focused in small groups around issues of bullying.

Age of Majority:

As the student reaches the age of seventeen the Team must discuss the transfer of rights that occurs at the age of majority. This is documented with the Transfer of Rights form. As the student reaches the age of eighteen he or she is required to decide to keep, share, or defer decision making rights. This is documented with the Age of Majority form with witness of a member of the Team and placed in the student file. If a student has chosen to share decision making with his or her parent and student fails to come to an agreement with the parent, the student's choice will ultimately prevail regarding the decision. In the case that a parent has been granted guardianship or other legal authority of a student the parent will continue to exercise all decision-making rights.

Upon turning 18, if a student has elected to act on their own behalf, Phoenix Charter Academy will continue to send parents written notices as well as provide the parent access to the student file upon request.

Amending the IEP:

Under the IDEA, a student's IEP can always be modified or amended at any time if the conditions warrant. Different types of amendments implicate different procedures and considerations.

An IEP may always be amended through the IEP meeting process. The procedural requirements related to notice, IEP meeting participants, and IEP content would apply as with any other IEP meeting.

Amendments to an IEP may be made at any time without holding an IEP meeting, if the LEA and parents agree. When making an amendment, the changes are completed through an abbreviated document rather than rewriting the entire IEP. Amendments to IEPs without a meeting must be agreed upon in writing by the parents and the LEA.

If the amendment to the IEP meeting is held after the annual IEP meeting for a school year and does not constitute a complete IEP review (e.g., a change in the time of a service), the anniversary date for the annual IEP review will remain the same, i.e., this process would not "reset the clock".

The IEP may be amended to address issues such as:

- Lack of progress toward annual goals
- New information about the student is provided to or by the parents

- Reconsideration of decisions previously made regarding grading, promotion, and assessment
- Revision or consideration of transportation services
- The need to eliminate or add curriculum modifications or accommodations such as classroom or individual aids
- Revision of the need for a behavior intervention plan
- The need to identify alternative strategies to meet the transition objectives if those set forth in the IEP are not being provided

When a student with an existing IEP enrolls at a Phoenix school, within 60 days from when the student started at the school, a placement meeting will be convened with the appropriate members of the IEP Team. The District will review the service delivery grid and the placement and in collaboration with the parent or guardian and student, discuss the supports required to afford the student a Free and Appropriate Education at Phoenix Charter Academy.

Once the required supports and services are discussed and agreed upon by the Team, a shortened document will be drafted to review

Timelines for Developing IEPs:

If a student is found eligible, a Team meeting is held 45 days from the date the parents consented to an evaluation. The requirement is to provide the parents with an IEP within 14 days of the Team meeting. If however at the conclusion of the meeting the Team Chair or Liaison provides the parents with a summary which includes a completed IEP service delivery grid describing the types and amounts of special education and /or related services and a statement of major goal areas associated with these services there is more time available for providing the IEP to the parents. Providing parents with a summary at the completion of the meeting allows the district up to two calendar weeks to provide the IEP to parents. The district will provide two copies of the proposed IEP to the family at this time.

Parent Response to IEP:

Parents and adult supporters have 30 days to respond to the IEP. If there is no response by the 25th day the student's Liaison will contact the parent. Until the IEP is returned and signed the old IEP is in effect.

IEP Implementation and Availability:

Students will begin receiving services as outlined in the IEP when the school is in receipt of the signature of the parents on the developed IEP. If a student's needs are outside of the scope of the established routine, then the Academic Support Department will work with

the Head of School and Director of Curriculum & Instruction to identify staff and space where the student's needs can be met as outlined by the IEP. Parents will be notified in writing if there will be any delay of service and will be informed of the steps that PCA will be taking to ensure that the service is provided within reasonable time. PCA will also provide parents with alternatives that will be taken while coordinating an IEP service.

Rejected IEPs

If an IEP is returned rejected the student's liaison will contact the parent and attempt to come to an agreement. If needed further mediation will be attempted with PCA administration.

Related Services

Phoenix Charter Academy will provide students with related services on an as needed basis. In the case that PCA does not have the capacity to provide the service in house the school will collaborate with community partners or contract services to ensure provision of service.

3. Placement Decisions

The final step in the IEP process is determining the appropriate placement. Placement is discussed immediately after an IEP is developed. The IEP is to be used to inform decisions regarding placement. If a placement may possibly occur outside of the public school setting or in a separate day school then it is encouraged to invite a representative from a student's local school district with the consent from the parent, as soon as meeting time is set. If it is decided by the Team that the student requires services outside of the scope of PCA, then the staff will coordinate with the sending school district to ensure that the student is supported in the transition.

In discussing placement the Team must consider the least restrictive environment where the student will be able to access the general curriculum and make progress towards the goals in the IEP. When a student receives services outside of the general curriculum the reasons are noted on IEP Page 6. Teachers are supported within the general education classroom to provide appropriate accommodation and modification as outlined in the IEP.

4. Out-Of-District Placement Decisions

The parent, guardian, and/or student will be provided with Prior Written Notice of the upcoming Team Meeting. This meeting may be solely for placement or an annual IEP meeting that will also discuss placement.

At the Team meeting, after the IEP has been developed, the Team shall consider the identified needs of the student, the types of services required, and whether such services may be provided in a general education classroom with supplementary aids and/or services or in a separate classroom or

school. The Team shall consider all aspects of the student's proposed special education program as specified in the student's IEP and determine the appropriate placement to provide the services. The Team shall determine if the student shall be served in an in-district placement or an out-of-district placement and shall determine the specific placement according to the following. If the Team determines an out-of-district placement is required to provide the student with a free and appropriate education, a "stay-put" IEP will be developed to ensure student is receiving services. While the stay-put IEP is in place the District will communicate with the district office of the student to organize a meeting with the Team and representatives from the district office to review the services required and discuss options for the out-of-district placement that reflect the needs of the student.

E. Implementation of the IEP

FAPE

All students at Phoenix Charter have the opportunity to participate in all programs, services and activities that are provided through the general education program. PCA strives to provide all students with an individualized educational experience that is tailored to their needs and goals. Because this is a fundamental aspect to our school, general education services include a large degree of individualization and student support students with individualized educational programs (IEPs) are able to easily access and benefit from the programs, services and activities in the general education setting under the supervision and guidance of the Academic Support Department. All staff who are responsible for providing programs, services and activities are provided with access to student records as appropriate and participate in professional development on differentiating services for students.

PCA seeks to identify exciting opportunities to enhance their educational experience. Such opportunities include, but are not limited to, sports, clubs, field trips, academic enrichment, counseling, electives, tutoring, daycare, vocational and work study opportunities and social work services. Students receive information about opportunities through multiple avenues including: student advisory groups which meet daily, community meeting, flyers/posters and relationships with staff and staff communication. PCA consistently gathers information on the interests of students in order to encourage students to participate in activities and opportunities that match with student interest and to make sure all students are engaged and connected to the school.

Receipt of Services

Students will begin receiving services as outlined in the IEP when the school is in receipt of the signature of the parents on the developed IEP. If a student's needs are outside of the

scope of the established routine, then the Academic Support Department will work with the Head of School and Director of Curriculum & Instruction to identify staff and space where the student's needs can be met as outlined by the IEP. Parents will be notified in writing if there will be any delay of service and will be informed of the steps that PCA will be taking to ensure that the service is provided within reasonable time. PCA will also provide parents with alternatives will be taken while coordinating an IEP service.

Phoenix Charter Academy oversees the implementation of IEPs through the Academic Support Department. The programming and services included in the student's IEP is available without expense to the parent or adult supporter.

In the case that Phoenix Charter Academy is working with an outside agency to provide a service to a student the district will obtain consent from the parents or guardian to access the parent's private insurance. In the case that a parent denies access to insurance, Phoenix Charter Academy will use alternate means to support the cost of the service.

Continuum of Services

Students will have access to a continuum of services and placements at PCA as deemed appropriate by the IEP Team. PCA may provide students with Full and Partial Inclusion as well as a Substantially Separate classroom if needed. PCA seeks to provide appropriate services within the general education classroom. PCA strives to meet the independent needs of through an innovative problem solving model including arranging for opportunities for vocational and career training through the partnership with local organizations as well as through the development of curriculum within the school to meet the unique needs of the student.

Instructional Grouping

Students receiving services outside the general education classroom including a substantially separate classroom will not exceed the following groupings:

- 8 students with one Academic Support teacher
- 12 students with one Academic Support teacher and one fellow push-in
- 16 students with one Academic Support teacher and two fellows assisting

Assistive Technology

Students are provided with specialized materials and equipment as outlined in a student's IEP. In addition to technology provided in IEPs, students have regular access technology within the classroom as it is incorporated into teachers' instructional plans. If a new student is enrolled with an IEP that calls for specific assistive technology, the Network Director of Special Education and English Language Development will work with school administration to ensure prompt procurement and implementation of the technology. The

parent will be notified immediately if extra time is needed to put assistive technology in place and to agree upon terms for the interim.

F. Progress Reports

Families will receive quarterly updates on student progress towards their goals through quarterly progress reports. Teachers are will have access to student's IEP goals through the student summaries document. Teachers are required to track the data needed to report on each goal, and will share this information within one week of the initial grade and comment due date for all grades. Teachers are expected to share information in the form of a narrative as instructed below. The Academic Support Department is responsible for promptly inputting information into esped and sending progress report information to parents. Additionally, parents will receive any updates and general correspondence from the Academic Support Department.

G. Discipline

Procedures for Recording Suspensions

Student's suspensions from any part of the student's program will be input daily into PowerSchool. The Academic Support Team will run weekly suspension reports to identify IEP or 504 students who have 5 or more suspensions. This list is shared with the Administrative Leadership Team in a monthly meeting to provide guidance around the student's behavior and suspension. At this point the Team begins to gather information about the suspensions and may begin to conduct an FBA through the Social Work department. The Team also may choose to conduct a manifestation meeting before a student reaches 10 suspensions.

Manifestation Determination

A student with an IEP or 504 may be disciplined as you would their typical peers except regarding suspension or expulsion. If a student with an IEP or 504 is suspended for more than 10 days in a school year, it is considered a change in placement and the Team has a manifestation determination meeting to decide if the behavior that is causing the student to be disciplined is a manifestation of the student's disability. When the Director of School Culture contacts the family regarding the suspension, they will provide the parent with documentation of the suspension and will schedule the Manifestation Determination Meeting. This meeting will occur before the final day of a cumulative or long-term suspension. At the Manifestation Meeting, parents are provided with Parent's Notification of Procedural Safeguards, and the school will be represented by members of the Academic Support Department as well as members of the PCA Leadership Team. When appropriate, a school social worker will be in attendance.

The Team will discuss the most recent disciplinary actions and look over the student log to identify patterns of behavior. Additionally, the Team will look at the student's current level of functioning as well as the IEP or 504 that is in place to ensure it is appropriate to meet

student need. PCA seeks to be proactive regarding suspension of students with IEPs or 504 Plans, and will likely have conducted a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) or will have begun collecting information regarding the FBA prior to the Team meeting. If it has not already occurred, and if the student's behavior is a manifestation of the disability, the Team must then conduct an FBA directly following the Team meeting. If the Team has not already created one, the Team must write or revise a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) in accordance with the information that is shared at this meeting.

In a manifestation meeting, the Team will use the Manifestation Determination form to guide the conversation and provide all parties with information necessary to guide the process. If the Team decides that a student's misconduct is a manifestation of their disability or the school has not properly implemented the student's IEP or 504 the Team must consider the placement. The school may not deny students of services on IEP or 504, access to general curriculum, and make progress on IEP goals and the student may not be further suspended for behavior relating to their disability.

If the misconduct continues and is not deemed a manifestation of their disability then the Team will revise the behavior intervention plan and check the IEP or 504 for effectiveness. In-school suspension may be used, while remaining cognizant of time outside of the student's regular program. All discussions during a Manifestation Meeting will be documented on the Manifestation Meeting form through the Academic Support Department and a copy will be provided to the family upon conclusion of the meeting. A copy will also be placed in the student file.

Subsequent to the Manifestation Determination Meeting, the student and parent will meet with the School Administration and will participate in a due process meeting.

Disciplinary Procedures for a Student Not Yet Eligible

Students who are in the process of being evaluated or are eligible based on the criteria below will be provided with safeguards regarding student discipline according to suspected areas of disability.

In evaluation is characterized by:

- Having received written concern or request from a parent or adult supporter for an evaluation
- through direct communication to the Academic Support Department or from staff concerning a pattern of student behavior
- If the student is in the Instructional Kid Talk (IKT) general education team process.

A student will not be eligible to receive safeguards if A) the student has previously been evaluated with the Team decision of "no finding of eligibility"; B) if the parent has refused to sign special education evaluation consent; or C) has refused special education services.

In the case that a parent or adult supporter requests an evaluation subsequent to the disciplinary action, the student will remain in the current educational placement with

disciplinary action and the district will arrange for expedited testing and determine of eligibility. Students remaining in their current placement may continue to be subjected to disciplinary action. If a student is then found eligible for special education services the Team will meet for a Manifestation Determination meeting and the student will receive all safeguards of a student with special education services.

Special Circumstances

If the conduct that the student is being disciplined for involves the “special circumstances” of weapons, illegal drugs, controlled substances, or serious bodily injury, school personnel may move the student to an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for up to 45 school days, regardless of the manifestation determination. The IEP or 504 Team must determine the IAES.

A child with a disability who causes injury to self or others cannot be placed in a different program without parental consent. If the parent does not consent, a hearing officer can be requested to determine if a change is required, when there is a preponderance of evidence presented “that maintaining the current placement of such child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others.”

The hearing officer is required to examine the evidence to determine the above as well as the “appropriateness” of current placement, including the reasonableness of the school’s services, interventions, aides and other efforts to minimize the risk of harm related to behavior within the current placement. The hearing office must also determine that the interim alternative 45-day placement provides effective IEP or 504 services to ensure FAPE, including participation in the general curriculum.

Provision of Educational Services While Suspended

When a student with special needs is suspended beyond 10 days in a school year due to a single action or a pattern of behavior, Phoenix Charter Academy will provide the students with services during any subsequent removal from school. Students will be provided with educational and related services while serving the terms of the suspension where they will be provided with access to the general education as well as the opportunity to make progress towards their IEP goals. In the case of a suspension beyond 10 days, PCA will assign a member of staff to serve as a suspension liaison who will be responsible for collecting assignments from the students’ teachers and coordinating with Academic Support Department. Additionally, in most cases, teachers will be encouraged to reach out the student and family to ensure the student’s connection to school during this time.

H. Parent and Community Involvement:

Resolutions of Disputes

Phoenix Charter Academy will always work with the family and adult supporters of a student to come to agreement on the terms by which the district will provide services to the student. In the case that the family and the school are not able to come to terms of

agreement independently, and the parent has made an official request for a hearing through the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA), the school will schedule a resolution session with the parents and relevant members of the students IEP Team within 15 days of receiving notice from the BSEA. The Head of School, Director of Curriculum & Instruction and/or Director of School Culture will also be required to attend the meeting. At this meeting the members of the Team are encouraged to reach agreement to resolve the dispute. If agreement is reached, the parties may choose to waive the resolution session and must document this or a decision to use mediation in writing. This will be a legally binding document. All parties have three days to void the agreement.

If the school and family are unable to resolve the issue the school will encourage the family to seek mediation with the BSEA. All decisions are to be clearly documented in writing and copies provided to the family.

Family Participation in Meetings

Families are valued members of the IEP Team and PCA seeks to have regular communication with a student's family regarding the academic performance of the student. Parents are notified by the student's special education liaison by phone no less than 2 weeks prior to the date that the IEP may expire. PCA will work with the family to schedule a meeting at their convenience to ensure meeting participation. Meetings are generally held at PCA, however the Team may make other arrangements to obtain parental permission, including visiting the home, meeting at an agreed upon location, or obtaining attendance by phone. The Academic Support Department will log all attempts to reach parents in the student's powerschool log and in the case that a parent does not attend the meeting these attempts will be documented on IEP page 8. PCA will always attempt to reach parent by phone or email before scheduling meeting and will provide 10 days written notice through the mail.

Special Education Parent Advisory Council

The mission of the Academic Support Parent Advisory Council is to work for understanding of, respect for, and support of all children with IEPs and 504s in the community. To that end, they will work to promote a network of parents of children on IEP and 504 plans & provide the forum to share information, advise the Network Director of Special Education and English Language Development on operations and development of special education programs, parent & teacher training needs, and help to develop policy.

The Academic Support Parent Advisory Council will meet at least annually to discuss the rights of parents and guardians of students with disabilities and to discuss the big goals of department. Parents are encouraged to provide input and insight to assist the department in working towards these goals. Additionally, parents will have the opportunity to guide conversation at the meeting to address other issues of concern.

Evaluation of Special Education Programs

Special Education Programs are directed under the supervision of the Network Director of Special Education and English Language Development . The Network Director of Special Education and English Language Development is responsible for ensuring the coordination of Academic Support programming with the Leadership Team. In addition to regular program reviews from the state and charter school office, Academic Support programs are evaluated internally through student performance data including aspects of student academics, engagement, and behaviors as compared to other subgroups and the overall population.

Teachers who provide services to students are observed regularly by direct supervisors as well as twice formally within an academic year. Teachers are provided with regular feedback.

Home-Hospital Policy

In accordance with 603CMR28.03(3)(c), upon receipt of a physician's written order verifying that a student at PCA must remain at home or in a hospital on a day or overnight basis, or any combination of both, for medical reasons and for a period of 14 days or more in a school year, PCA will arrange for the provision of educational services in the home or hospital. These services will be provided with sufficient frequency to allow the student to continue his or her educational program, and have the opportunity to make educational progress as long as it does not interfere with the medical needs of the student.

The Head of School will coordinate these services with the Director of Special Education, though the services are not to be considered special education unless the student has been deemed eligible for these services and they are included on the student's IEP.

To initiate the process, when the student's personal physician determines that a student's medical condition will require either hospitalization or home care of 14 days or more in a school year, the physician must notify the school using form 28R/3 or an equivalent signed statement. At minimum, the physician's signed notice must include the following:

- the date the student was admitted to a hospital or was confined to home
- the medical reason(s) for the confinement
- the expected duration of the confinement; and
- what medical needs of the student should be considered in planning the home or hospital education services.

Without delay a team consisting of representatives from the Social Work department, the Network Director of Special Education and English Language Development, and a member of Leadership Team will meet to determine the provisions of the academic services. The provision of academic services must include the same academic content as that is provided

in the student's regular school based program. This team is to carefully consider the unique needs of the student and will proceed accordingly to develop the educational program.

Taking into consideration the placement of the student, projected time of stay at home or hospital, the course of study the student is enrolled in, specific academic or learning needs, the team will create a plan providing educational provisions under one of four options.

- Providing the services directly to the student using district employees;
- Contracting with the hospital to provide services;
- Contracting with another school district to provide services; or
- Contracting with another agency to provide services.

The school will additionally determine the number of instructional hours per day or week that the student will receive based on the medical and individual needs of a student. When the decision of a provisionary program is put in place, it is the responsibility of the social work department to communicate the plan to the appropriate staff members and to oversee the logistics as long as the plan remains in place.

If, in the judgment of the student's physician, a student with an IEP or 504 is likely to be confined to home or hospital for more than 60 days in a school year, the Network Director of Special Education and English Language Development, will convene a Team meeting to consider the evaluation needs and, if appropriate, to amend the existing IEP or develop a new IEP based on the student's individual needs and circumstance. This meeting will occur within 10 days of notice of a student's prolonged absence from school.

Language Supports for Families

Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

- Upon holding an annual IEP meeting. The team will draft a proposed IEP for the parent. Once the proposed IEP is drafted, the document will be uploaded to IEP monitoring system for translation. The English version of the IEP will be drafted within a week and mailed out to the parent. In addition, within that week, the Spanish version will be uploaded to IEP online monitoring system for translation. Once the translated version is received back from the IEP online monitoring service, the translated version will be mailed home.

Progress Reports

- In accordance with the IDEA Phoenix presents Special Education Progress each time a report card is mailed home. As a result, Phoenix provides five progress reports within one academic school year. Once teachers and related service providers, provide updates on goals to the case managers, case managers transfer the updates to

the progress report. The case manager creates both a English version of the progress report and the requested language of the parent, guardian, or student. The documents are then mailed home within the report card.

Notices

- Notices such as, but not limited, meeting invitations, procedural safeguards, etc. are provided to parents, guardians, or students in both English and the requesting language by mail as prior written notice. In addition, when meetings such as annual IEP meetings are held, parent, guardians, and students are provided these documents in person as apart of the notes taken during the meeting.

Evaluation

- Once the test administrator for an evaluation drafts the English version o a report, the English version is immediately mailed home to the parent. However, if it is documented the parent prefers documents in another given language, the document is sent for translation and immediately mailed home to the parent once it has been received back to the school. If the parent requires or request immediate support in understanding the document the school will organize a meeting with the parent and an interpreter to review the document.

Student and Parent Rights

A copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards is given to parents, guardians, or the student themselves (if the individual is 18 or older and has shared or sole decision-making authority over their Special Education Services) at least once a school year in accordance with the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA). This often occurs when the Team is brought together to hold the student's annual IEP meeting. However, a copy is also given to the one of the individuals above for the following circumstances:

- Upon initial referral or parent request for evaluation
- Upon request by a parent 34 C.F.R. 300.504.
- On the date the decision is made to change the placement of a student with a disability due to a violation of a code of student conduct
- Upon receipt of the first due process complaint in a school year.
- Upon receipt of the first state complaint with the Massachusetts Department of Education in a school year.

To ensure that students have access to educational, non-academic, extracurricular and ancillary programs, the school will limit the number of removals from these core areas of a

student's schedule. Through creative course schedule structuring, Phoenix has incorporated flexible periods that can be used to provide the student with needed supports and services with limited disruption from their core content classes and additional school wide programming.

I. Confidentiality

The requesting district/school submits an authorization to release school records form that must be signed by the student (if the student is 18 or older) or the parent/guardian of the student. The Recruitment Manager then obtains the requested school records and sends it to the requesting district/school.

If the requested documentation includes Special Education documentation, the Recruitment Manager sends the authorization to release school records form to the the Lead Special Education Teacher/Director of Special Education. The Lead Special Education Teacher then prepares the requested documents and has the Recruitment Manager provide a signature that the IEP was released to him to be mailed off to the requesting district/school.