

6A-6.03019 Special Instructional Programs for Students who are Gifted.

(1) Gifted. One who has superior intellectual development and is capable of high performance.

(2) Criteria for eligibility. A student is eligible for special instructional programs for the gifted if the student meets the criteria under paragraph (2)(a) or (b) of this rule.

(a) The student demonstrates:

1. Need for a special program.

2. A majority of characteristics of gifted students according to a standard scale or checklist, and

3. Superior intellectual development as measured by an intelligence quotient of two (2) standard deviations or more above the mean on an individually administered standardized test of intelligence.

(b) The student is a member of an under-represented group and meets the criteria specified in an approved school district plan for increasing the participation of under-represented groups in programs for gifted students.

1. For the purpose of this rule, under-represented groups are defined as groups:

a. Who are limited English proficient, or

b. Who are from a low socio-economic status family.

2. The Department of Education is authorized to approve school district plans for increasing the participation of students from under-represented groups in special instructional programs for the gifted, provided these plans include the following:

a. A district goal to increase the percent of students from under-represented groups in programs for the gifted and the current status of the district in regard to that goal;

b. Screening and referral procedures which will be used to increase the number of these students referred for evaluation;

c. Criteria for determining eligibility based on the student's demonstrated ability or potential in specific areas of leadership, motivation, academic performance, and creativity;

d. Student evaluation procedures, including the identification of the measurement instruments to be used;

e. Instructional program modifications or adaptations to ensure successful and continued participation of students from under-represented groups in the existing instructional program for gifted students;

f. An evaluation design which addresses evaluation of progress toward the district's goal for increasing participation by students from under-represented groups.

(3) Procedures for student evaluation. The minimum evaluations for determining eligibility are the following:

(a) Need for a special instructional program,

(b) Characteristics of the gifted,

(c) Intellectual development, and

(d) May include those evaluation procedures specified in an approved district plan to increase the participation of students from under-represented groups in programs for the gifted.

(4) This rule shall take effect July 1, 1977.

Specific Authority 1001.42(4)(1), 1003.57 FS. Law Implemented 1000.01, 1001.42(4)(1), 1003.57(5), FS. History—New 7-1-77, Formerly 6A-6.3019, Amended 10-10-91, 5-19-98, 7-14-02.

6A-6.030191 Development of Educational Plans for Exceptional Students Who Are Gifted.

Educational Plans (EPs) are developed for students identified solely as gifted. Parents are partners with schools and school district personnel in developing, reviewing, and revising the educational plan (EP) for their child. Procedures for the development of the EPs for exceptional students who are gifted, including procedures for parental involvement, shall be set forth in each district's Policies and Procedures for the Provision of Specially Designed Instruction and Related Services to Exceptional Students document and shall be consistent with the following requirements.

(1) Role of parents. The role of parents in developing EPs includes:

- (a) Providing critical information regarding the strengths of their child;
- (b) Expressing their concerns for enhancing the education of their child so that they receive a free appropriate public education;
- (c) Participating in discussions about the child's need for specially designed instruction;
- (d) Participating in deciding how the child will be involved and progress in the general curriculum; and
- (e) Participating in the determination of what services the school district will provide to the child and in what setting.

(2) Parent participation. Each school board shall establish procedures which shall provide for parents to participate in decisions concerning the EP. Such procedures shall include the following:

(a) Each district shall take the following steps to ensure that one (1) or both of the parents of a student who is gifted is present or is afforded the opportunity to participate at each EP meeting:

1. Notifying parents of the meeting early enough to ensure that they will have an opportunity to attend; and

2. Scheduling the meeting at a mutually agreed on time and place.

(b) A written notice to the parents must indicate the purpose, time, location of the meeting, and who, by title and or position, will be attending. The notice must also include a statement informing the parents that they have the right to invite an individual with special knowledge or expertise about their child.

(c) If neither parent can attend, the school district shall use other methods to ensure parent participation, including individual or conference telephone calls.

(d) A meeting may be conducted without a parent in attendance if the school district is unable to obtain the attendance of the parents. In this case, the district must have a record of its attempts to arrange a mutually agreed on time and place such as:

1. Detailed records of telephone calls made or attempted and the results of those calls;

2. Copies of correspondence sent to the parents and any responses received; or

3. Detailed records of visits made to the parents' home or place of employment and the results of those visits.

(e) The district shall take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the parents understand the proceedings at an EP meeting, which may include arranging for an interpreter for parents and students who are deaf or whose native language is a language other than English.

(f) The district shall give the parents a copy of the EP at no cost to the parents.

(3) Educational plan (EP) team participants. The EP team shall include the following participants:

(a) The parents of the student in accordance with subsection (2) of this rule;

(b) One regular education teacher of the student who, to the extent appropriate, is involved in the development and review of a student's EP. Involvement may be the provision of written documentation of a student's strengths and needs;

(c) At least one teacher of the gifted program;

(d) A representative of the school district who is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of students who are gifted, is knowledgeable about the general curriculum, and is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the school district. At the discretion of the school district, one of the student's teachers may be designated to also serve as the representative of the school district;

(e) An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results who may be a member of the team as described in paragraphs (3)(b)-(d) of this rule;

(f) At the discretion of the parent or the school district, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the student. The determination of knowledge or special expertise of any individual shall be made by the party who invites the individual to be a member of the EP team; and

(g) The student, as appropriate.

(4) Contents of Educational Plans (EPs). EPs for students who are gifted must include:

(a) A statement of the student's present levels of performance which may include, but is not limited to, the student's strengths and interests, the student's needs beyond the general curriculum, results of the student's performance on state and district assessments, and evaluation results;

(b) A statement of goals, including benchmarks or short term objectives;

(c) A statement of the specially designed instruction to be provided to the student;

(d) A statement of how the student's progress toward the goals will be measured and reported to parents; and

(e) The projected date for the beginning of services, and the anticipated frequency, location, and duration of those services;

(5) Considerations in EP development, review and revision. The EP team shall consider the following:

(a) The strengths of the student and needs resulting from the student's giftedness.

(b) The results of recent evaluations, including class work and state or district assessments.

(c) In the case of a student with limited English proficiency, the language needs of the student as they relate to the EP.

(6) Timelines. Timelines for EP meetings for students who are gifted shall include the following:

(a) An EP must be in effect at the beginning of each school year.

(b) An EP shall be developed within thirty (30) calendar days following the determination of eligibility for specially designed instruction and shall be in effect before the provision of these services.

(c) Meetings shall be held to develop and revise the EP at least every three (3) years for students in grades K-8 and at least every four (4) years for students in grades 9-12. EPs may be reviewed more frequently as needed, such as when the student transitions from elementary to middle school and middle to high school or if the student's parent or teacher requests a review.

(7) EP Implementation. An EP must be in effect before specially designed instruction is provided to an eligible student and is implemented as soon as possible following the EP meeting.

(a) The EP shall be accessible to each of the student's teachers who are responsible for the implementation.

(b) Each teacher of the student shall be informed of specific responsibilities related to implementing the student's EP.

Specific Authority 1001.02(1), (2)(n), 1003.01(3)(a), (b), 1003.57(5) FS. Law Implemented 1001.03(8), 1001.42(4)(l), 1003.01(3)(a), (b), 1011.62(1)(c) FS. History--New 9-20-04.

6A-6.03313 Procedural Safeguards for Exceptional Students Who Are Gifted.

Providing parents with information regarding their rights under this rule is critical to ensuring that they have the opportunity to be partners in the decisions regarding their children. It is also critical that local school boards provide information about these rights to appropriate district and school personnel so that the needs of the student can be identified and appropriately met. The school board's policy and procedures for procedural safeguards shall be set forth in accordance with Rule 6A-6.03411, F.A.C., and shall include adequate provisions for the following:

(1) Prior notice. The school district shall provide parents with prior written notice a reasonable time before any proposal or refusal to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, educational placement of the student or the provision of a free appropriate public education to the student.

(a) The prior notice to the parents shall be written in language understandable to the general public and shall be provided in the native language or other mode of communication commonly used by the parent unless such communication is clearly not feasible to do so.

(b) If the parents' mode of communication is not a written language, the school district shall ensure:

1. That the notice is translated to the parents orally or by other means in their native language or mode of communication;
2. That the parents understand the content of the notice; and
3. That there is written documentation that the requirements of subparagraphs (1)(b)1. and 2. of this rule have been met.

(c) The notice to the parents shall include:

1. A description of the action proposed or refused by the district, an explanation of why the district proposes or refuses to take the action, and a description of any other options the district considered and the reasons why those options were rejected;
2. A description of each evaluation procedure, test, record, or report the district used as a basis for the proposed or refused action;
3. A description of any other factors that are relevant to the district's proposal or refusal; and
4. Information on how the parent can obtain a copy of the procedural safeguards specified in this rule.

(2) Content and Provision of the Procedural Safeguards to Parents.

(a) Parents must be provided a copy of their procedural safeguards which provides a full explanation of the provisions included in this rule.

(b) A copy of the procedural safeguards must be available to the parents of a child who is gifted, and must be given to the parents, at a minimum:

1. Upon initial referral for evaluation;
2. Upon refusal of a parent's request to conduct an initial evaluation;
3. Upon notification of each EP meeting; and
4. Upon receipt of a request for a due process hearing by either the school district or the parent in accordance with subsection (7) of this rule.

(3) Informed parental consent.

(a) Parents shall be fully informed of all information relevant to the action for which consent is sought in their native language or other mode of communication unless such communication is clearly not feasible.

(b) Written parental consent shall be obtained prior to conducting an initial evaluation to determine eligibility and prior to initial provision of services to students who are gifted.

(c) School districts shall document the attempts to secure consent from the parent as required by paragraph (3)(b) of this rule.

(d) Parental consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time before the action occurs.

(e) Except for formal, individual evaluation and the initial provision of services to the student, consent may not be required as a condition of any other benefit to the parent or child. Any proposal or refusal to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement or the provision of a free appropriate public education to the student after the initial placement is not subject to parental consent but

is subject to prior notice as defined by subsection (1) of this rule.

(f) Parental consent is not required before:

1. Reviewing existing data as part of an evaluation; or
2. Administering a test or other evaluation that is administered to all students unless, before administration of that test or evaluation, consent is required of parents of all children.

(4) Parents' opportunity to examine records and participate in meetings.

(a) The parents of students who are gifted shall be afforded, in accordance with Rule 6A-1.0955, F.A.C., Section 1002.22, Florida Statutes, and this rule, an opportunity to inspect and review their child's educational records.

(b) The right to inspect and review education records under this rule includes the right to have a representative of the parent inspect and review the records including all records related to the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the child and the provision of a free appropriate public education to the child.

(c) The parents of a student who is gifted must be afforded an opportunity to participate in meetings with respect to the development of their child's educational plan.

(5) Evaluations obtained at private expense. If the parent obtains an independent evaluation at private expense which meets the requirements of subsection (4) of Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C., the results of the evaluation must be considered by the school district in any decision made with the respect to the determination of eligibility for exceptional student education services.

(a) The results of such evaluation may be presented as evidence at any hearing authorized under subsection (7) of this rule.

(b) If an administrative law judge requests an independent educational evaluation as part of a hearing, the cost of the evaluation must be at public expense, as defined in paragraph (7)(c) of Rule 6A-6.03411, F.A.C.

(6) State Complaint Procedures. The Department of Education shall provide parents and other interested persons the opportunity to resolve allegations that a school district has violated state requirements regarding the education of students who are gifted through the establishment of state complaint procedures.

(a) Within ninety (90) calendar days after a complaint is filed, under the provisions of this rule, the Department of Education shall:

1. Carry out an independent on-site investigation, if the Department of Education determines that to be necessary;
2. Give the complainant the opportunity to submit additional information, either orally or in writing, about the allegations in the complaint;
3. Review all relevant information and make an independent determination as to whether the school district is violating a state requirement regarding the education of students who are gifted;
4. Issue a written decision on the complaint that addresses each issue presented in the complaint and contains findings of fact, conclusions, and the reason(s) for the Department of Education's final decision; and
5. Extend the time limit established in paragraph (6)(a) of this rule if exceptional circumstances exist with respect to a particular complaint.

(b) Procedures for the effective implementation of the Department of Education's final decision include the following:

1. Technical assistance activities;
2. Negotiations; and
3. Corrective actions to achieve compliance.

(c) Relationship to due process hearings.

1. If a written complaint is received that is also the subject of a due process hearing requested pursuant to subsection (7) of this rule, or the complaint contains multiple issues, of which one or more are part of

that hearing, the Department of Education shall set aside any part of the complaint that is being addressed in the due process hearing until the conclusion of the hearing. However, any issue in the complaint that is not a part of the due process action must be resolved in compliance with the procedures described in subsection (6) of this rule.

2. If an issue is raised in a complaint filed under this subsection that has previously been decided in a due process hearing involving the same parties, the administrative law judge's decision is binding and the Department of Education shall inform the complainant to that effect.

3. The Department of Education shall resolve any complaint that alleges that a school district has failed to implement a due process hearing decision.

(7) Due process hearings. Due process hearings shall be available to parents of students who are gifted and to school districts to resolve matters related to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the student or the provision of a free appropriate public education.

(a) Such hearings may be initiated by a parent or a school district on the proposal or refusal to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the student or the provision of a free appropriate public education to the student.

(b) A hearing shall be conducted by an administrative law judge from the Division of Administrative Hearings, Department of Management Services, on behalf of the Department of Education.

(c) An administrative law judge (ALJ) shall use subsection (7) of this rule for any such hearings and shall conduct such hearings in accordance with the Uniform Rules for Administrative Proceedings, Chapter 28-106, F.A.C., as deemed appropriate by the ALJ including, but not limited to: the authority of a party to request a pre-hearing conference, the authority of the ALJ to issue subpoenas to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of records, and the authority of the ALJ to issue summary rulings in absence of a disputed issue of material fact.

(d) Status of student during proceedings.

1. During the time that an administrative or subsequent judicial proceeding regarding a due process hearing is pending, unless the district and the parent of the student agree otherwise, the student involved in the proceeding must remain in the present educational assignment. If the proceeding involves an application for an initial admission to public school, the student, with the consent of the parent, must be placed in a public school program until the completion of all proceedings.

2. If the administrative law judge agrees with the parent and finds that a change of placement is appropriate, that placement becomes the agreed-upon placement during the pendency of the appeal.

(e) Hearing rights for all parties.

1. Any party to a hearing conducted pursuant to subsection (7) of this rule has the right:

a. To be represented by counsel or to be represented by a qualified representative under the qualifications and standards set forth in Rules 28-106.106 and 28-106.107, F.A.C., or to be accompanied and advised by individuals with special knowledge or training with respect to the problems of students who are gifted, or any combination of the above;

b. To present evidence, and to confront, cross-examine, and compel the attendance of witnesses;

c. To prohibit the introduction of any evidence at the hearing that has not been disclosed to that party at least five (5) business days before the hearing;

d. To obtain written, or at the option of the parents, electronic, verbatim record of the hearing at no cost to the parents; and

e. To obtain written, or at the option of the parents, electronic findings of fact and decisions at no cost to the parents.

2. Additional disclosure of information.

a. At least five (5) business days prior to a hearing conducted pursuant to subsection (7) of this rule, each party shall disclose to all other parties all evaluations completed by that date and recommendations based on the offering party's evaluations that the party intends to use at the hearing.

b. An administrative law judge may bar any party that fails to comply with subparagraph (7)(e)2. of

this rule from introducing the relevant evaluation or recommendation at the hearing without the consent of the other party.

(f) Parental rights at hearings. Parents involved in hearings must be given, in addition to the rights described in paragraph (7)(e) of this rule, the right to:

1. Have their child who is the subject of the hearing present; and
2. Open the hearing to the public.

(g) Duties and responsibilities of the superintendent or designee shall include:

1. Implementing procedures that require the parent of a child who is gifted, or the attorney representing the child, to provide notice to the school district. The notice required, which must remain confidential, must include: the name of the child; the address of the residence of the child; the name of the school the child is attending; a description of the nature of the problem relating to the proposed or refused initiation or change, including facts relating to the problem; and, a proposed resolution of the problem to the extent known and available to the parents at the time. However, the school district may not deny or delay a parent's right to a due process hearing for failure to provide this notice.

2. Immediately forwarding the Division of Administrative Hearings by facsimile transmission of the parent's request for a hearing upon its receipt;

3. Notifying all parties regarding their rights and responsibilities before, during, and after the hearing. This notice should include information to the parent of any free or low cost legal and other relevant services, which are available, if the parent requests this information or if the parent or school district initiates a hearing.

4. Determining whether an interpreter is needed and arranging for the interpreter as required;

5. Complying with the administrative law judge's rulings regarding requests for and exchanges of evidence; discovery; the filing of motions and, scheduling, so as to meet the requirements of this rule, and the deadlines established herein.

6. Arranging for the provision and payment of clerical assistance, the hearing, use of facilities, and a verbatim transcript of the hearing;

7. Completing other responsibilities specified by the school board.

(h) Duties and responsibilities of the Department of Education shall include:

1. Maintaining a list of persons who serve as administrative law judges including a statement of the qualifications of each of these persons; and

2. Maintaining an index of the final orders of such hearings and providing this information to the public upon request.

(i) Duties and responsibilities of an administrative law judge shall be:

1. To establish the date, time, and location of the hearing and any pre-hearing conference calls and motion hearings. Each hearing involving oral arguments must be conducted at a time and place that is reasonably convenient to the parents and their child;

2. To conduct the hearing in a fair and impartial manner;

3. To ensure that all discovery, motion practice, and pre-hearing procedures are conducted in an expedited manner, consistent with the deadlines established by this rule concerning the exchange of evidence and the issuance of the final decision.

4. To determine if the parent wants an electronic or written copy of the final decision and the administrative record of the hearing;

5. To determine whether the parent wants the hearing open to the public and whether the parent wants their child to attend the hearing;

6. To determine whether the parent's advisor or representative is sufficiently knowledgeable about or trained regarding students who are gifted;

7. To determine how evidence may be exchanged prior to and during the hearing;

8. To determine how witnesses may be compelled to attend, be cross-examined, and confronted during discovery and at the hearing;

9. To determine how evaluations and recommendations may be disclosed prior to and during a hearing;
10. To summarize the facts and findings of the case and to arrive at an impartial decision based solely on information presented during the hearing;

11. To reach a final decision and mail to all parties copies of the facts, findings and decision regarding the hearing within forty-five (45) days of the district's receipt of the parent's request or the filing of the district's request for a hearing, whichever is sooner;

12. To be accountable for compliance with all deadlines and procedures established by the statutes and rules for such hearings;

13. To maintain the confidentiality of all information; and

14. To rule on requests for specific extensions of time beyond the periods set forth in subsection (7) of this rule, at the request of either party.

(j) Civil action. A decision made in a hearing conducted under subsection (7) of this rule shall be final, unless, within thirty (30) days, a party aggrieved by the decision brings a civil action in state circuit court without regard to the amount in controversy, as provided in Section 1003.57(5), Florida Statutes. The state circuit court shall: receive the records of the administrative proceedings; hear, as appropriate, additional evidence at the request of a party; and, basing its decision on the preponderance of the evidence, shall grant the relief it determines appropriate. In the alternative, any party aggrieved by the administrative law judge's decision shall have the right to request an impartial review by the appropriate district court of appeal as provided by Sections 120.68 and 1003.57(5), Florida Statutes.

Specific Authority 1001.02(1), (2)(n), 1003.01(3)(a), (b), 1003.57(5) FS. Law Implemented 1001.03(8), 1001.42(4)(l), 1003.01(3)(a), (b), 1003.57(5) FS. History--New 9-20-04.