

Important Terms in Special Education / Section 504

Accommodation: An alteration in the way material is presented, or in the environmental settings or task demands and/or conditions as necessitated to "work around" interference from a disability. Accommodations do not change what is being measured or taught, only the way it is delivered.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP): Part of a student's IEP if that student exhibits behavior that interferes with the learning of either that student or others. Using the results from a Functional Behavioral Assessment, the BIP is a plan of action for managing a student's behavior. It may include ways to change the environment so as to prevent the behavior from occurring, provide positive reinforcement to promote good behavior and provide alternative methods for achieving the same results as the undesired behavior. It will also identify the consequences for negative behavior.

Change of Placement: An action that substantially or materially alters an educational program. In the context of discipline, a change of placement occurs if the removal is for more than 10 consecutive school days or if the student has been subjected to a series of removals totaling 10 school days, if such removals constitute a pattern.

Child Find: A federal mandate that local educational agencies initiate programs to identify and provide services to students with disabilities.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE): Defined slightly differently under IDEA and Section 504. The determination of whether education is "appropriate" is made on a case by case basis according to the unique needs of each student.

Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA): A process for collecting data to determine the possible causes of problem behaviors and to identify strategies to address those behaviors. In particular, the FBA looks at the conditions under which the problematic behavior occurs, what drives the behavior, what reinforces the behavior, and what time of day or other patterns can be detected. This assessment is then used to create a Behavior Intervention Plan for the student.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): An individualized plan designed to address the student's unique learning issues. The IEP must include: a statement of the student's present level of performance, annual educational goals, the special education services, related services and

supplementary aids and services to be provided to the student, classroom modifications, testing accommodations, and transition services for students who have reached a specific age or grade level.

Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE): If the parent disagrees with the results of a school district's special education evaluation conducted on their child, they have the right to request an independent educational evaluation. The district must provide parents with information about how to obtain an IEE. An independent educational evaluation means an evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the school district. Public expense means the school district pays for the full cost of the evaluation and that it is provided at no cost to the parent.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): The placement of a student with a disability in a manner promoting the maximum possible interaction with students without disabilities, while still meeting all of the child's learning needs. Placement options are offered on a continuum of services that include regular classroom with no supports, regular classroom with supports and services, self-contained special education classrooms, special education schools, private special education schools, and home or hospital instruction.

Manifestation Determination: Whenever the school district seeks to change the placement of a child with a disability because of violation of a school discipline code, the IEP or Section 504 team must review all relevant information in the student's file to determine if the conduct in question was caused by or substantially related to the child's disability or if the conduct was a direct result of the school district's failure to implement the child's IEP or 504 Plan.

Medical Impairment Form: While such a form is not included in the statute, some school districts require a doctor to complete a form detailing a student's disability and its effect on a major life activity prior to the initiation of services under Section 504.

Response to Intervention (RTI): a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. The process monitors how well students respond to different instructional methodologies.

Section 504 Plan: An individualized plan developed for a student with a disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The Plan specifies what accommodations and/or services the student will get in school to "level the playing field" so that they may derive as much benefit from their public educational program as their nondisabled peers.

Stay Put: The “pendency” provision in some due process situations (excluding discipline) whereby the student stays in the same placement while the dispute is resolved.