

# Evaluation Procedures

## Overview

CFISD will ensure that students referred for a special education evaluation are assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability or disabilities.

CFISD will use a variety of assessment instruments, tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental and academic information about the child, including information provided by the parent, in determining (a) whether the child is a child with a disability and (b) the need for specially designed instruction, including information related to enabling the child to be involved and progress in the general education curriculum.

Tests and other evaluation materials used to evaluate students must be selected and administered so as not to be racially or culturally discriminatory.

Tests and other evaluation materials used to evaluate students must be valid for the specific purpose for which they are used.

Tests and other evaluation materials used to evaluate students will be administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the tests. Personnel are also trained on the state and federal requirements related to evaluation. A variety of resources and tools are available. Specific assessment information is available in the CFISD appraisal handbook.

Tests and other materials used to evaluate students are those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely those that are designated to provide a single general intelligence quotient.

Tests are selected and administered to ensure that results for students with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills, accurately reflect the child's aptitude or achievement levels, or whatever other factors the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the child's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills (unless those skills are the factors that the test purports to measure).

No single procedure will be used as the sole criteria for determining whether a child has a disability and for determining an appropriate educational program for a child.

A variety of evaluation tools and strategies are used to gather relevant functional and developmental information about the child, including information provided by the parent and information related to enabling the child to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum.

The evaluation will include:

- Criterion-referenced or curriculum-referenced assessments designed to aid in the development of the student's IEP (including any district-wide and state testing, benchmarks, etc.) AND
- Information about the student's strengths and weaknesses AND
- The specific modifications of instructional content, accommodations, methods and/or materials required by the student to achieve and maintain satisfactory progress, including

those that can only be provided through special education services and those adaptations necessary for the student's progress in general classes, as well as other special and compensatory education programs

The multi-disciplinary team that collects or reviews evaluation data must include, but is not limited to:

- The child's parents AND
- A team of qualified professionals, including but not limited to, a licensed or certified professional for a specific eligibility category and a professional qualified to conduct individual diagnostic evaluations including a licensed specialist in school psychology (LSSP), an educational diagnostician, or other appropriately certified or licensed practitioner with experience and training in the area of the disability

The reevaluation of each child is conducted if conditions warrant or if the child's parent or teacher requests, but at least once every three years.

## **Full and Individual Evaluation (FIE)**

Evaluation means procedures used to determine whether a child has a disability and the nature and extent of the special education and related services a child needs. Evaluation tools are available at individual campuses and at the central office. Tools that are damaged or have been revised are replaced as needed.

The purposes of conducting an FIE are to:

- Determine the presence or absence of a physical, mental, or emotional disability that may be contributing to a student's educational need, including any disability that was not initially suspected
- Determine the presence or absence of a significant educational deficit requiring special education instructional services or related services
- Identify specific learning competencies and present levels of performance in instructional and related services
- Make recommendations for determining the grading criteria and procedures for participation in extracurricular and statewide or district-wide assessments.
- Provide information relative to the appropriate mastery level or levels at which the student should be expected to achieve in order to receive passing grades in all content areas of instruction
- Address assistive technology needs of the student
- Stipulate whether any additions or modifications to the special education program are needed to enable the student to meet educational goals and to participate, as appropriate, in the general curriculum
- Determine the complete educational needs of the student

Supervising administrative staff or a designee track referral data through a data management system. Additional information regarding these procedures is available in the CFISD appraisal handbooks.

Copies of all relevant documentation are maintained in the student's electronic audit folder.

Parents will be provided with a copy of the FIE prior to the ARD Committee meeting. Parents may choose to receive an electronic copy of all documentation. The FIE is provided at no cost to the parent.

### **Initial Evaluation**

Utilizing the procedures and forms provided in the MTSS/RtI process, campus staff gather and review data regarding the student's skills and needs, the instructional strategies that are being implemented, and the student's progress. If the decision of the campus student intervention Team (SIT) is a referral to special education for Full and Individual Evaluation (FIE), the required notices and consents are given, and signatures obtained. Procedural safeguards are explained, and all state and federal regulations are followed.

The CFISD must conduct a full and individual evaluation in accordance with 34 CFR §§300.305 and 300.306, before the initial provision of special education and related services to a child with a disability.

The initial evaluation must consist of procedures designed to determine (a) if the child is a child with a disability and (b) the educational needs of the child.

CFISD has elected to not use the REED as a part of the initial evaluation. A review of existing student information is completed in the Referral Committee Meeting, which include any information or outside evaluations provided by the parent. An educational diagnostician, licensed school psychologist, or licensed practitioner with experience and training in the area of the suspected disability may assist the referral committee in reviewing the outside evaluations, if needed.

Informed parental consent must be obtained before an evaluation is conducted. Parental consent for an initial evaluation shall not be construed as consent for placement or for receipt of special education and related services.

CFISD has a district framework for MTSS/RtI and each campus has a Student Intervention Team (SIT) process. Once a referral is completed and consent is signed by the parent, guardian or adult student, the referral paperwork is sent to the special education department on the campus. Appraisal personnel are available to consult with the SIT committee to review the referral paperwork before the consent is signed.

The campus special education appraisal staff receives the referral packet from the campus SIT committee once consent has been signed. The appraisal staff will review the referral packet and make note of the date consent was signed for timeline purposes. If incomplete, the appraisal staff will communicate with the campus SIT representative regarding missing/incomplete components of the referral packet and the SIT representative ensure the missing/incomplete components are addressed and submit them to the appraisal staff. Timelines begin when the consent is signed so it is important to complete the revisions in a timely manner.

The appraisal staff reviews the referral packet and determines area(s) of concern and evaluation(s) needed and contacts appropriate special education appraisal personnel to assist in and/or conduct evaluation(s) (e.g., if student is suspected of having an auditory impairment (AI), visual impairment (VI), bilingual, etc.).

The appraisal staff will determine the appropriate evaluation measures based on suspected disability, age of student, language capabilities, and/or functioning level.

The appraisal staff will administer a test battery. The procedures used must be appropriate for the student's most proficient method of communication.

Based on the referral's area(s) of concern, appraisal personnel will determine if any supplemental measures are needed to identify the disability.

The initial evaluation must be sufficiently comprehensive to identify:

- Any disability that an individual child may have, including any disability that was not initially suspected
- All of the child's special education and related service needs, to enable the child to participate, as appropriate, in the general curriculum.

CFISD requires that each student who is referred for a full evaluation is assessed (formally or informally) in all areas related to the suspected disability. Areas to be included:

- Language
- Physical (Health, Motor, Vision and Hearing)
- Sociological
- Emotional/Behavioral
- Cognitive/Intellectual
- Adaptive Behavior
- Educational/Developmental Performance
- Assistive Technology
- Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

## **Physical**

The evaluation of an individual's physical factors (including psychomotor abilities) must consist of an examination of physical conditions which directly affect the student's ability to profit from the education process. A general medical examination shall be required only when specified by eligibility criteria and if there are no indications of need for further physical evaluation. Vision and hearing must be assessed either formally or informally before formal testing is conducted.

## **Sociological**

The evaluation of an individual's sociological variables consists of identifying the child's family and community environmental situations that influence learning and behavioral patterns. Students will not be considered eligible for special education if the only deficiencies identified are directly attributable to a different cultural lifestyle or lack of educational opportunities.

## **Emotional/Behavioral**

The evaluation of an individual's emotional and behavioral concerns will consist of formally or informally identifying those characteristics manifested in in-school and/or out- of-school behavior which may impact learning. The evaluation will include behaviors related to the disability that may affect educational placement, programming or discipline.

## **Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)**

An FBA is completed as part of an FIE when a student's behavior interferes with his/her educational progress or the educational progress of other students in the classroom. The information below is important for the FBA.

- A clear description of the specific behavior that is impeding learning, including duration, frequency and intensity of any patterns of behavior
- Information from a variety of sources, including, but not limited to discussions, interviews, records, direct observation and standardized instruments, is available.
- Description of any antecedents-events that logically serve as the stimulus for the behavior
- Description of consequences-the action that follows and causes the student to maintain specific behavior
- Purpose of student's behavior-usually to get something, avoid or escape something or to control the antecedent event
- Relationship of the behavior to the event and possible variables that can be changed in the setting or the situation

This information should be used to develop the Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP). Alternatives to the behavior should be taught and positive reinforces should be used in addition to consequences. The plan should be implemented consistently, with an adequate amount of time allowed for the results of the BIP to be evident and reviewed as needed.

## **Intellectual**

Any student meeting criteria for Intellectual Disability or a Specific Learning Disability must have an individually administered intelligence test. If appropriate, an informal evaluation of intelligence may be used to determine intellectual functioning as part of an evaluation for a visual impairment, orthopedic impairment, or deaf-blindness. Some examples of informal evaluations include achievement test results, teacher observations, adaptive behavior, and grades.

A developmental scale may be used to assess functioning if a standardized intelligence test is not administered due to

- The student's low level of functioning OR
- A disability that impedes effective communication OR
- A severe impairment

If non-standardized procedures are used to administer a standardized test or developmental scale because of a severe sensory impairment, the nature or severity of the disability or because of

language or communication differences, the adaptations should be noted and the implications for test interpretation should be documented in the evaluation report.

CFISD has developed procedures for completing Functional Evaluations in this area.

### **Adaptive Behavior**

Although adaptive behavior may be considered informally for all students, formal measures are required when establishing a diagnosis of Intellectual Disability.

### **Educational/Developmental Performance**

The evaluation includes information regarding the student's academic/developmental profile. Formal assessments of academic performance and developmental levels of functioning, results of district and state assessments, historical grades, and observational data are included in this area.

### **Assistive Technology (AT)**

The evaluation team must address the threshold question: Are AT devices and/or services required in order for the student to receive FAPE?

Documentation of considerations of AT can be documented in:

- FIE reports of initial evaluations and reevaluations
- ARD Committee recommendations for modifications and supplementary aids and services
- Evaluation reports for related services
- Functional vision evaluations and/or learning media evaluations
- Assistive technology evaluation reports.

### **Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance**

The PLAAFP describes the competencies and needs a child has based on the evaluation results.

### **Timeline for FIE Completion**

The full individual and initial evaluation (FIE) report shall be completed no later than the 45th school day following the date on which CFISD receives written consent for the evaluation signed by the student's parent or legal guardian. CFISD has adopted a 40-school day timeline for the completion of the FIE.

For students under five years of age as of September 1 of the school year and not enrolled in public school and students enrolled in private school, the FIE shall be completed no later than the 45th school day following the date on which the school district receives written consent for the evaluation.

If CFISD receives written consent at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last day of instruction of the school year, CFISD will complete the FIE and provide it to the parent no later

than June 30th of the school year.

If a student is absent from school during the testing period on three or more days, CFISD will extend the timeline by the number of school days equal to the number of days the student was absent.

If CFISD receives written consent less than 35 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, the FIE shall be completed no later than the 45th school day following the date on which CFISD receives written consent for the evaluation.

If a child was in the process of being evaluated for special education eligibility by another school district and enrolls in CFISD before the previous school completed the initial evaluation, CFISD will coordinate with the previous school district as necessary and as expeditiously as possible to ensure a prompt completion of the evaluation. The parent and CFISD will agree to a specific time when the evaluation will be completed.

### **Parent request for Evaluation**

If a parent makes a verbal or written request for an evaluation to the Director of Special Education or to a CFISD administrator, the administrator will, no later than 5 school days after the date the request is made, respond to the parent's request with a Prior Written Notice.

### **Reevaluation**

A reevaluation (a) may occur not more than once a year, unless the parent and CFISD agree otherwise and (b) must occur at least once every three years unless the parent and CFISD agree that a reevaluation is unnecessary.

In consideration of a reevaluation, CFISD must ensure that a reevaluation of each child with a disability is conducted:

- If the district determines the educational or related service needs, including improved academic achievement and functional performance of the child warrant a reevaluation
- If the child's parents or teacher requests a reevaluation
- Before determining that the child is no longer a child with a disability.

**NOTE:** An evaluation is not required before the termination of a student's eligibility due to graduation from secondary school with a regular diploma or exceeding the age of eligibility for a free appropriate public education under state law; a summary of academic achievement and functional performance must be provided in these circumstances.

To distinguish an initial evaluation from a reevaluation, an initial evaluation of a child is the first completed evaluation of a child to determine if he or she has a disability under IDEA, and the nature and extent of special education and related services required. Once a child has been fully evaluated the first time, a decision has been rendered that the child is eligible under IDEA, and the required services have been determined, any subsequent evaluation of a child would constitute a reevaluation.

IDEA regulations stipulate that a reevaluation of each child is conducted if conditions warrant a

reevaluation, or if the child's parent or teacher requests a reevaluation, but at least once every three years. If the ARD committee determines that no additional data are needed to determine that the student is with a disability and to determine his/her needs, CFISD is not required to conduct an assessment unless requested to do so by the child's parents. Necessary steps in this process are described below.

The reevaluation process begins by completing a REED, with a necessary review of evaluation data. A special education evaluator usually facilitates this review at the campus level. The information is recorded on the CFISD REED document which becomes a part of the ARD Committee document.

- Multidisciplinary team members review cumulative and audit folders, evaluations and information provided by the parents, current classroom-based evaluations and observations, state assessment results and observations by teachers and related services providers (existing evaluation data). The group may conduct its review without a formal meeting. CFISD chooses not to complete a REED outside of an IEP meeting.
- The Review of Existing Educational Data (REED) is conducted to determine extent and scope of reevaluation. If it is determined that no additional data are needed and the existing data presented are sufficient, the school notifies the child's parent of (a) the determination that no additional data are needed and the reasons for that determination and (b) the right of the parent to request an evaluation to determine whether the child continues to be a child with a disability. In such case, CFISD is not required to conduct an assessment unless requested to do so by the child's parents/guardians. The information, with additional documents, is submitted as an evaluation report. A copy is maintained in the student's state audit folder.

**Note:** The scope of a reevaluation for the child with a visual impairment must be determined by a multidisciplinary team that includes a certified orientation and mobility specialist.

- If the ARD Committee determines additional evaluation measures are needed the parents are notified in writing of any evaluation procedures the school proposes to conduct. Parental consent is obtained before conducting any new test as part of a reevaluation. The student's ARD Committee establishes a due date for the completion of the additional evaluation measures.
- Test instruments and supplemental measures are administered as needed to determine
  - Whether the child continues to have a disability
  - The child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance and related educational and developmental needs
  - Whether the child continues to need special education and related services
  - Whether any additions or modifications are needed to enable the child to meet his/her IEP goals and to participate in the general education curriculum, as appropriate
- The written evaluation report must be completed on or before the calendar anniversary date of the previous evaluation or when determined to be due by the ARD Committee.
- Evaluation of any new areas must be completed within 30 school days or another established deadline set by the ARD Committee.
- Results of the evaluation must be reviewed in an ARD within 30 calendar days of the date of the completed report.



- A copy of the REED and the new condition report must be provided to the parent. FIE or additional testing reports are also provided to the parents.
- If a student does not continue to meet special education eligibility requirements, they may be considered for eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- Results of any reevaluation are used by the child's ARD Committee to establish eligibility, to review IEPs and revise as appropriate.

Consistent with best practice, in most cases, CFISD conducts at least two comprehensive FIEs for each child receiving special education services. Until two full FIEs showing consistent results are available to the ARD Committee, no reevaluation should be conducted without formal testing. Some specific cases in which this might not be necessary include, but are not limited to:

- A secondary student who has transferred from out of district who has only one FIE and an established history of special education services
- A student with a severe/profound disability that obviously is still in existence
- A student with irreversible sensory impairments.

If there is a specific reason that the committee would need to deviate from this practice, the Director of Special Education should be contacted for guidance.

**NOTE:** A major consideration in the reevaluation process for a student with a SLD should be the student's ability to meet the instructional demands of grade-level standards without special education and related services. In conducting a reevaluation for SLD eligibility, (a) use caution in determining that a child is no longer eligible for special education services; (b) carefully consider that child's response to removal of such supports and (c) examine whether the special education instruction has been appropriate and, if so, whether such evidence argues for continuation of SLD eligibility.

Parental consent must be obtained before conducting any new test as part of a reevaluation. If the parent fails to respond to the notice/request for additional testing, reevaluations may proceed if the school can demonstrate that it has taken reasonable measures to obtain that consent. Personnel should seek guidance from the Director of Special Education with regard to nonresponse. If the parent refuses consent, the Director of Special Education should be notified.

### **Dismissal**

CFISD must evaluate a child before determining that the child is no longer a child with a disability. This evaluation is not required if the child's eligibility is terminated due to graduation with a regular diploma or due to exceeding age eligibility.

### **Evaluations from Outside Agencies**

Parents may bring an evaluation from an outside agency (e.g., Texas Children's Hospital, Blue Bird Clinic, etc.) to the school for consideration. If the student is not in special education, the report will be reviewed by the SIT Committee which includes the special education evaluator and will make the following determinations:

- If a parent requests an evaluation, and educational need and disability conditions are probable based on a review of available data the campus should proceed with a referral for a special education evaluation

- If based on review of data from outside source(s), and any additional data the assessment personnel determines that educational need and disability condition(s) are probable, the campus should proceed with a referral for a special education evaluation.

If the student is currently being served in special education, an ARD Committee meeting shall be scheduled to consider the report. At that time, the committee may:

- Determine if the evaluation report is complete and meets district standards. If so, utilize information to make educational decisions (e.g., goals, objectives, services, placement, etc.). If not, request additional information as needed.
- Choose not to accept the report
- Conduct a REED for further evaluation and obtain written consent