

**STATEMENT REGARDING PARENT-INITIATED
EDUCATIONAL EVALUATIONS
UNDERTAKEN AT PARENT EXPENSE**

On occasion, parents obtain at their expense an evaluation of their child by a practitioner in private practice. The results of these evaluations are sometimes submitted to the School District for purposes of seeking placement in (determining eligibility for) special programs or services. The results of such an evaluation must be considered by the School District in any decision made with respect to the provision of a free, appropriate education to the child. This statement sets forth the manner in which the School District will consider such evaluation results and the conditions under which the School District may accept such an evaluation as the School District's evaluation.

Parents and private practitioners should recognize that determining student eligibility for a special program is more than administering a battery of tests. The eligibility criteria vary from one special program to another. Often a multi-disciplinary evaluation team is required to assess a student. Most categories of disability also require that parent conferences, observations, and interventions be attempted prior to referral and eligibility determination.

An evaluation by a private practitioner, including a psychologist or school psychologist licensed under Chapter 490, Florida Statutes, does not eliminate the need to assure that all procedures are followed for an eligibility determination. The School District will consider accepting the results of a private practitioner's evaluation as the School District's evaluation for eligibility determination provided that the following conditions are met:

1. The private practitioner must meet the credentialing requirements set forth in Fla. Admin. Code Rule 6A-6.0331 (1)(a) and licensed under Chapter 490, Florida Statutes should be familiar with laws and regulations regarding special program eligibility requirements. The school district will not accept test scores if the test was not administered by a licensed person, with the exception of an intern working under the supervision of an appropriately licensed practitioner, documented by the supervising licensed practitioner also signing the report.
2. The private practitioner must submit a written report of findings and recommendations including test results and the interpretation of those results, and be willing to submit test protocols to the District's Psychological Services office for review by the District's psychologist(s). It is the responsibility of the private practitioner to review the results with the parents. District School Psychologists shall not be responsible for interpreting to the parents the results of a private practitioner's evaluation.
3. The school psychologist assigned to the student's school must review the report and protocol(s) to verify the credentials of the evaluator and to determine the appropriateness of the evaluation and the procedures used in scoring the test(s). At this time, the evaluation becomes part of the student's school record. The school psychologist will

obtain a release for the private practitioner to send the test protocols (or copies), the item responses by the student, and the examiner's scoring, to the District's Psychological Services office directly. The school psychologist will then schedule a Case Review committee meeting as expeditiously as possible.

4. A review committee consisting of at least three school psychologists shall review the data to determine if the private practitioner's results are acceptable or if additional testing must be completed. If the review committee cannot determine whether to accept the private practitioner's results, the Director of Student Services will request permission for additional testing, at School District expense, to resolve the discrepancy. After the additional testing has been completed, a Follow-Up Case Review committee meeting will be held to determine what data will be utilized for eligibility decision-making. All evaluation information will then be provided to the exceptional education staffing committee for review.
5. When evaluating a student, the psychologist or school psychologist, whether in private practice or employed by the School District, should not administer an intellectual test that has been administered within the previous 12 months. Preferably, a different test than last administered to the student should be given, regardless of the time span between evaluations. The purpose of this limitation is to reduce or rule out the likelihood of practice effect on the scores of subsequent test administrations.
6. School District acceptance of an evaluation does not imply eligibility for exceptional education services. Eligibility is always determined by an exceptional education staffing committee after reviewing all pertinent data available on a student. Acceptance of an evaluation indicates only that the tests given appear to have been appropriately administered and scored by a qualified private practitioner and the reported test results will be considered in the staffing committee's final decisions regarding eligibility.
7. For eligibility determination, the School District will consider the scores obtained from only the most current edition of those instruments referenced in the St. Lucie County Special Programs and Procedures Statement.

NOTE: This statement does not limit or govern a parent's right to obtain an independent educational evaluation if the parent disagrees with the School District's evaluation. That right is generally governed by 20U.S.C. § 1415 (b) (1) A, 34 C.F.R. § 300.502, and Fla. Admin. Code Rule 6A-6.03311(4).