REQUESTS FOR INITIAL EVALUATIONS (Referral Procedures)

***Who Can Request/Who Must Request***

Requests for an initial evaluation may be made by a parent of a child or by an employee of a State educational agency, another State agency, a local educational agency, or a community service agency.

*When a school employee is aware of a diagnosis of a disability, he/she is obligated under Child Find to follow referral procedures.*

***Reason Request Can Be Made***

The reason for someone to request for an initial evaluation must be: 1) to determine if the student has a disability that adversely affects his educational performance AND, 2) to determine if the student needs special education or related services.

*Requests for evaluations for any other reason are not the responsibility of the local educational agency.*

***Requests by School Personnel***

Individual school personnel who want to make a request for an evaluation must follow the guidelines for pre-referral as established in their school building. This will most likely include referral to their school-based problem-solving team (e.g., Problem Solving Team, Student Assistance Program, or Response to Intervention Team). This process ensures that the person making the request has sought assistance and has implemented interventions prior to an evaluation.

Each building/district shall designate the persons to whom a request may be made. All persons in that building/district should be made aware of this designated person in case a request is received.

School personnel are highly encouraged to avoid submitting requests for initial evaluations after April 1st, however, no request shall be disregarded if submitted after that date.

***Requests by Parents or Other Agencies***

Parents or other agencies who are requesting an initial evaluation should be directed to speak to the building designee. Although the parent’s request may be verbal, it is recommended that written request be completed for documentation purposes. School personnel should assist the parent in completion of the written request as needed. Parents should be informed that the request will be considered and the parent will be notified of the school’s decision as to whether an initial evaluation is deemed to be necessary.

***Timeline for Responding to a Request***

When a request for an initial evaluation is received by a district *either verbally or in writing*, the district has **14 school days** to determine if an initial evaluation is deemed appropriate and to respond in writing with the district’s decision using the form “Parent/Guardian Notification of Decision Regarding a Request for an Evaluation.” (“School days” are defined as any day in which the district is open for business. School days are not equivalent to attendance days.)

***Process for Responding to a Request***

It is recommended, but not required, that the decision of whether or not an initial evaluation is necessary should be made by the IEP team following a “Domain Meeting.” (See Domain Meeting section.) The IEP team must provide written notice to the parent within **10 calendar days** of the domain meeting. Therefore, the domain meeting would need to be held within the 14 school days following the request. At the domain meeting, the team would review the available data, determine if an evaluation is required, and complete the Notification of Decision form.

Although not the recommended practice, the decision, “an initial evaluation is NOT appropriate,” could be made by district representatives with knowledge of the student and the student’s suspected disability (e.g., teacher, principal, and special education teacher and support service personnel) without a Domain Meeting. The Notification of Decision form would be completed and provided to the parent within 14 school days. If the team believes that an initial evaluation MAY be appropriate, then the team would give the parent 10-calendar days written notice for the domain meeting to discuss the evaluation request.

***Forms to Be Completed***

 *Data Required to Enter New Students*

It is the responsibility of a building designee to complete the *Data Required to Enter New Students* form. This form is to be sent to VASE for the purpose of entering the student’s identifying information into the Computerized IEP program for access to computerized forms. Required information includes the student’s name, address, birthdate, grade, school name, SIS number, ethnicity, parents name, address, and phone.

*Parent/Guardian Notification of Decision Regarding a Request for an Evaluation*

The Notification of Decision Regarding a Request for an Evaluation form must state:

1. name and title of the person making the request,

2. the reason(s) why the individual making the request believes

a. the child may have a disability, and

b. the child needs special education services or related services,

3. the reasons for the decision of whether the evaluation is deemed appropriate or not.

The reasons for the evaluation request should be as specific as possible, including the type of disability suspected, the areas of concern, the type of services believed to be needed, etc.

The date on the Notice would be the date the form was either mailed or handed to the parent.