

## CHAPTER 9: PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Note: For the purposes of this Manual, the term “private school student” is the same as a “nonpublic school student.” A homeschool student is not considered a private school student. A student who is enrolled in a virtual public school is not considered a homeschooled student for the duration that they attend that virtual public school.

The IDEA and IDAPA include the following:

- statutory and regulatory language, which states that students who are voluntarily enrolled in private schools are not entitled to all of the same services, including the right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE), as public school students;
- district responsibilities for special education students under Idaho’s dual enrollment law; and
- the legal requirements that come into play when a parent unilaterally enrolls his or her child in a private school and asks the district for reimbursement of these costs.

### Section 1. Definitions of Private School Placements

In order to describe the district’s responsibilities for serving private school students, it is helpful to distinguish three separate ways that students are placed in private schools. These are defined by who enrolls or places the student in a private school and why.

#### **A. Definition of Voluntary Enrollment by a Parent**

A parent may choose to enroll his or her child in a private school for a variety of personal reasons, such as to obtain a religious education, to attend a school with a particular philosophy or curriculum, or because the parent is dissatisfied with the services offered or provided by the district. This is considered a voluntary enrollment. See Section 2 and Section 4 of this chapter for district responsibilities. Note: The IDEA distinguishes between for profit and nonprofit private schools. If a student is placed in a for profit private school by their parents the service plan provisions do not apply.

#### **B. Definition of District Placement**

At times, the district may place a student in a private school or facility to fulfill its obligation to provide FAPE. These placements are always made by an individualized education program (IEP) team in accordance with the requirements of Section 3 of this chapter.

### C. Definition of Unilateral Placement by Parents when FAPE is an Issue

A parent may enroll a student in a private school or provide services from a private provider at parental expense. The parent may initiate a due process hearing to seek reimbursement for the costs associated with the placement from the district. All students who are placed by a parent when FAPE is an issue are also voluntarily enrolled in a private school. Specific information regarding a parent's request for reimbursement of costs of student enrollment in a private school in this situation is included in Section 5 of this chapter.

## Section 2. Students Voluntarily Enrolled by Parents

### A. District Consultation with Private School Representatives (may be done in coordination with Title 1 requirements for consultation)

To ensure timely and meaningful consultation a district will consult with private nonprofit elementary and secondary school representatives and representatives of parents of parentally placed private school students with disabilities during the design and development of special education and related services for the students. The consultation process shall include:

1. **Child Find:** The Child Find process and how parentally placed private school children suspected of having a disability can participate equitably, including how parents, teachers, and private school officials will be informed of the process.
2. **Proportionate Share of Funds:** The determination of the proportionate amount of federal special education funds available to serve parentally placed private school children with disabilities under this subparagraph, including the determination of how the amount was calculated. Refer to Section 2G of this chapter for information regarding the calculation of the proportionate share of funds.
3. **Determination of Special Education and Related Services:** Given the amount of funds to be dedicated by the district, the discussion will include the consideration of how, where, and by whom special education and related services will be provided for parentally placed private school students with disabilities, including:
  - a. types of services, including direct services and alternate service delivery mechanisms;
  - b. how such services will be apportioned if funds are insufficient to serve all students;
  - c. how and when these decisions will be made; and
  - d. how the provided services will be evaluated.

4. Ongoing Communication: Clarify how the private school and district will operate throughout the school year to ensure that parentally placed private school students with disabilities identified through the Child Find process can meaningfully participate in special education and related services. Annual consultation is not required to make these decisions. The district determines the period between consultations based on changing circumstances within the district, such as significant changes in the total amount of funds to be expended and/or the number and location of private school students with disabilities.
5. Written Affirmation: When timely and meaningful consultation has occurred:
  - a. the district will obtain a written affirmation signed by the representatives of participating private schools;
  - b. if the representatives do not provide the affirmation within a reasonable period of time the district will forward the documentation of the consultation process to the State Department of Education (SDE).
6. District Decisions: Following consultation with the private school representatives, the district will make final decisions concerning items a-d addressed above in number 3.
7. Written Explanation by the District Regarding Services: If the district disagrees with the views of the private school officials on the provision of services or the types of services, whether provided directly or through a contract, the district will provide to the private school officials a written explanation of the reasons why the district chose not to provide services directly or through a contract.

## **B. Compliance with Consultation Process**

1. General Compliance: A private school official has the right to submit a complaint to the SDE that the district:
  - a. did not engage in consultation that was meaningful and timely; or
  - b. did not give due consideration to the views of the private school official.
2. Procedure for Complaint
  - a. If the private school official wishes to submit a complaint, the official will provide the basis of the complaint to the SDE consistent with the procedures provided in Chapter 13.
  - b. In response the district will forward the appropriate documentation to the SDE.
  - c. The SDE will render a written decision determining whether the district complied

with the consultation process requirements and provide the decision to the district and private school official.

- d. If the private school official is dissatisfied with the decision of the SDE, the official may submit a complaint to the Secretary of the US Department of Education by providing the basis of the complaint against the district to the Secretary, and the SDE will forward the appropriate documentation to the Secretary.

### **C. Child Find Requirements**

The district shall have an ongoing Child Find system to locate, identify, and evaluate all students with disabilities ages three (3) through twenty-one (21) who are educated within the district's geographic boundaries. This includes students who have been placed by a parent in a private nonprofit elementary or secondary school (including a religious school) located in the district regardless of the student's state or local residency. Note: Parents can also ask the district of residence (assuming it is different than the district where the private school is located) to evaluate their student. Both districts would have Child Find responsibilities and cannot share information between the districts without written parental consent. The district of residence would have Child Find responsibilities for students placed in for-profit schools and for children aged three (3) to five (5).

The Child Find process will be designed to encompass the following:

1. The Child Find process will ensure the equitable participation of parentally placed private and homeschool students with disabilities.
2. Child Find activities for private school students will be similar to Child Find activities for public school students, which include the evaluation process within comparable timelines.
3. The district will consult with private school representatives and representatives of parents who place their children in private schools regarding the Child Find procedures.

Note: The cost of Child Find is not counted toward the pro-rated proportionate share that the district must spend on services.

### **D. Annual Count of Eligible Students**

The district shall conduct an annual count of eligible students and report to the State Department of Education the number of private school children evaluated, the number found eligible and the number who are provided with special education services. Students aged three (3) to five (5) must have their special education services identified on an IEP or a Service Plan. This count will be used to determine the amount of funds the district shall expend providing special education and related services to private school students in the next school year (see

Section 2E). The district will consult with representatives of private school students to determine how to conduct the count.

### **E. Provision of Services**

Provision of services applies to all eligible students who attend non-profit private elementary and secondary schools within the district's geographical boundaries regardless of where they reside. Parentally placed private school students with disabilities do not have an individual right to receive some or all of the special education and related services that the student would receive if enrolled in a public school. Services offered to parentally placed private school students are determined through the district and private school consultation process.

#### **1. District Responsibilities**

- a. Private school students with disabilities may receive a different amount of services than public students with disabilities; they are not entitled to every service or the amount of service that they would receive if enrolled in public school. This means that it is possible for a private school student to receive only a related service or piece of equipment.
- b. Special education and related services provided to parentally placed private school students with disabilities, including materials and equipment, will be secular, neutral and non-ideological.
- c. The district is required to offer FAPE to private school students who reside in their district, including when the student attends a private school outside of the district boundaries. Unless the parent makes clear their intention to keep their child in the private school, the district of residence must develop an IEP.
- d. Services may be provided at a public school building or another agreed upon site (including parochial schools to the extent consistent with the law) determined by the district in consultation with appropriate representatives of private school students.
- e. Services provided to private school students with disabilities must be provided by personnel meeting the same standards as personnel providing services in the public schools.

#### **2. Eligibility for Services**

If an evaluation team determines that a student needs special education and related services:

- a. The district of residence shall offer to make FAPE available upon enrollment in a district public school. The district of residence must develop an IEP for the student who is parentally placed in private school unless the parent makes clear

an intent not to consider public school enrollment. The district has no obligation to implement that IEP unless the student enrolls in the public school.

- b. If the parent chooses not to enroll the student in the district of residence and designated funds are available in the district in which the private school is located, a meeting will be held to develop a Services Plan (SP). The meeting will include a representative of the private school to develop a SP. The SP is developed by the same members that would constitute the IEP team.
- c. Any services the district provides to a private school student shall be in accordance with an SP.

### 3. Service Plan (SP) Development

The SP shall describe the specific special education and related services that will be provided to the student in light of the determinations that have been made by the district. To the extent appropriate, the district shall initiate and conduct meetings to develop, review, and revise SPs in accordance with the following requirements:

- a. Given the services that the district has elected to provide to private school students, the SP must meet the requirements of the IEP to the extent appropriate (see Chapter 5). The SP excludes sections pertaining to:
  - 1) extended school year (ESY) services;
  - 2) participation in statewide and district wide assessments;
  - 3) placement determination (least restrictive environment);
  - 4) Child Count federal report settings; and
  - 5) elements that, although typical for an IEP, would be inappropriate given the services the district has elected to provide.
- b. An SP shall be in effect at the beginning of each school year and accessible to each person responsible for its implementation.
- c. Meetings shall be held to review and revise SPs at least annually to address any lack of student progress toward goals and in the general education curriculum.
- d. The SP team members include the same members as an IEP team. The district will ensure that a representative of the private school attends these meetings or participates by some other means.
- e. A parent shall be invited to SP meetings at a mutually agreed upon date and time. The invitation must indicate the purpose, time, and location of the

meeting. The parent shall be informed that he or she may bring other persons knowledgeable about the student to the meeting. A copy of the SP will be given to the parent.

- f. The team developing the SP will consider the student's strengths and results of the most recent evaluations. The private school general education teacher should participate in the development, review, and revision of the SP.
- g. If necessary for a private school student to benefit from or participate in the services the district has elected to provide, the district shall provide transportation from the student's school or home to the site where services will be provided. The district shall take the student back to either the private school or the home, depending on the timing of the services. In this sense, transportation is not a related service but a means of making the services offered accessible. Transportation costs may be included in the district's expenditure requirement. The district is not required to transport the student from home to the private school.

## **F. Dispute Resolution**

Due process hearings are available to parents of private school students only on the issue of Child Find and evaluation. Parents may challenge decisions regarding the provision of services by filing a state complaint with the SDE. (See Chapter 13 for more information on dispute resolution options.)

## **G. Determining the Proportionate Funding for Private School Students**

IDEA requires school districts to dedicate at least a proportionate share of funds received under Part B to provide services for parentally placed students with disabilities who attend private schools within the boundaries of the district, regardless of their place of residence. To determine this proportionate amount, the district shall first determine the number of these private school students through the Child Find activities developed in the consultation process with private school representatives.

The number of parentally placed private school students is divided by the total (public and private) number of students with disabilities in the district to arrive at the percentage of private school students with disabilities. This percentage is then applied to the total funding received by the district under Part B grants Section 611 (ages three (3) to twenty-one (21) and Section 619 (ages three (3) to five (5) to determine the district's obligation.

Example for the XYZ School District:

- a. The number of parentally placed private school children within the district on December 1, 2017: **10**

- b. The number of public school children with disabilities on December 1, 2017: **90**
  - c. Percentage of private school children with disabilities: A divided by A+B = **10%**
  - d. Total Part B funds allocated for school year 2017-2018: **\$150,000**
  - e. Amount the district shall spend on providing special education and related services to parentally placed private school students in 2017-2018: C x D = **\$15,000**
1. State and local funds may supplement but may not supplant the proportionate amount of federal funds required to be expended for parentally placed private school children with disabilities.
  2. The costs of private school consultations and of carrying out Child Find activities may not be paid from the proportionate share of funds.
  3. The cost of any special education or related service, such as direct service, consultation, equipment, materials, or transportation may be used to determine that the district has satisfied its expenditure requirement for private school students with disabilities.
  4. If all proportionate funds set aside for private school students in a given fiscal year are not expended in that year they shall be carried forward into the next year for the purpose of providing equitable services.

#### **H. Expenditure Guidelines**

1. The district may place equipment and supplies that are purchased with Part B funds in a private school for a period of time needed for a program for eligible students with disabilities; however, the district shall:
  - a. retain title and exercise continuing administrative control over all equipment and supplies;
  - b. ensure that all equipment and supplies are used only for Part B purposes;
  - c. ensure that all equipment and supplies can be removed without remodeling the private school; and
  - d. remove equipment and supplies if necessary to prevent unauthorized use.
2. The district may use Part B funds to pay an employee of a private school to provide services to students with disabilities when the employee performs the services:
  - a. outside of his or her regular hours of duty; and
  - b. under public supervision and control.

3. Part B funds shall not be used to:
  - a. finance the existing level of instruction in the private school or otherwise benefit the private school;
  - b. meet the needs of the private school; or
  - c. meet the general needs of students enrolled in the private school.
4. Part B funds shall not be used for repairs, remodeling, or construction of private school facilities.
5. If it is possible for classes to include students enrolled in both public and private schools, then the classes must not be organized separately on the basis of school enrollment or religion.
6. The district shall not appropriate any funds to private schools controlled by any church, sectarian, or religious denomination.

### Section 3. Students Placed by the District

When the district places a student with a disability in a private school or facility, as a means of providing special education services through the IEP team process, the district shall ensure the following:

1. All special education procedures and timelines are followed.
2. Special education and related services are provided in accordance with an IEP.
3. A representative of the private school or facility attends or participates in the meeting to develop the IEP. If the representative cannot attend other measures such as conference telephone calls will be used to ensure participation.
4. The responsibility for reviewing and revising IEPs remain with the district.
5. Services are provided at no cost to the parent, including reimbursement to the parent for transportation and other costs associated with participation at an IEP team meeting conducted in a geographical area outside the jurisdiction of the district.
6. The placement in the private school or facility is the least restrictive environment for that student.
7. The student is provided an education that meets state and district standards.
8. The student is afforded the same rights as students with disabilities who attend public

schools.

9. The parent is afforded the same rights as parents of students attending public schools.

In accordance with federal and state law, the SDE shall approve special education programs in private schools and facilities. The district shall ensure a program is approved prior to placing a student in that school or facility.

At the discretion of the district, once a student with a disability enters a private school or facility, meetings to review and revise the IEP may be initiated and conducted by the private school or facility. If the private school conducts a meeting, the district shall ensure that the parent and a district representative are involved in and agree to any proposed changes in the IEP before the changes are implemented.

#### Section 4. Dual Enrollment of Private School Students by Parents

According to Idaho Code, parents of private school students “shall be allowed to enroll the student in a public school for dual enrollment purposes.” Private school students who are dually enrolled are considered to be nonpublic school students. The district shall allow private school students who are eligible for special education and who are otherwise qualified to participate in school programs under the dual enrollment law to:

1. enroll in general education courses under the same criteria and conditions as students without disabilities; and
2. receive accommodations in the general education courses for which they are enrolled on a Section 504 plan, if needed.

Private school students may not dually enroll solely for special education and/or related services. The dual enrollment statute does not establish an entitlement to FAPE for a student with a disability. This means that there is no individual right to receive some or all special education services that the student would receive if enrolled in public school.

The reporting of attendance for private school students in the district is allowed under dual enrollment. If a student attends at least 2.5 hours per week without rounding hours, he or she shall be included in the weekly aggregate attendance. The average daily attendance (A.D.A.) is computed as .5 if the aggregate weekly hours are 2.5 or greater but less than 4.0 hours. When there are 4.0 hours or greater, divide by 4 to get the A.D.A.

Dually enrolled private school students could also be eligible to receive services that have been agreed upon through the district and private school consultation process. These services would be delivered through a SP.

## Section 5. Unilateral Placement of Student by Parents when FAPE is an Issue

### A. General Provisions for Reimbursement to the Parent

1. The district is required to make FAPE available to all eligible students with disabilities. If parents do not access FAPE, then the district is required to make provisions for private school students to receive Part B services consistent with Section 2E of this chapter.
2. The district is not required to pay for costs of tuition, special education, or related services and associated costs at a private school or facility for a student who was unilaterally placed there by a parent if the district made FAPE available to the student in a timely manner. If a parent disagrees with the availability of FAPE and there is a question about financial responsibility, the parent may request a due process hearing.
3. If the parent of a student with a disability enrolls the student in a private elementary or secondary school, without the consent of the district, a court or hearing officer may order the district to reimburse the parent for the costs of unilaterally placing the student in a private school if the court or a hearing officer determines that:
  - a. the district had not made FAPE available to the eligible student in a timely manner prior to the time the parent enrolled the student in the private school; and
  - b. the parent's placement is appropriate.
4. A hearing officer may find a student's placement in a private school or facility by a parent appropriate even if the private school or facility does not meet state standards. A private school will be deemed appropriate if the parent demonstrates that the private placement provides educational instruction specially designed to meet the unique needs of the child with a disability, supported by such services as are necessary to permit the child to benefit from that instruction.

### B. Denial or Reduction of Reimbursement to the Parent

A court or hearing officer may reduce or deny reimbursement to a parent for the cost of a unilateral placement in a private school or facility under the following circumstances:

1. The parent did not inform the district that he or she rejected the placement proposed by the district to provide FAPE and did not state his or her concerns and intent to enroll the student in a private school. This notification by the parent shall be provided to:
  - a. the IEP team at the most recent IEP team meeting prior to removing the student from the public school; or
  - b. the district, in writing, at least ten (10) business days (including any holidays that

occur on a business day) prior to removing the student from public school.

2. Prior to removal of the student from the public school, the district informed the parent of its intent to evaluate the student (including a statement of the purpose of the evaluation that was appropriate and reasonable), but the parent did not make the student available for the evaluation.
3. A judicial decision finds unreasonableness with respect to the actions taken by the parent.

Reimbursement shall not be reduced or denied under any of the following circumstances:

1. The district did not notify the parent of his or her obligation to provide the notice set forth in number 3 above or the district prevented the parent from providing that notice.
2. The parent had not received written notice.
3. The district's proposed placement would likely result in physical harm to the student.

Reimbursement may not be reduced or denied at the discretion of a court or hearing officer for failure to provide this notice if:

1. The parents are not literate or cannot write in English, or
2. The district's proposed placement would likely result in serious emotional harm to the student.

### Section 6. Out of State Students Residing in Residential Facilities

For school-age special education students from outside the state of Idaho who, due to the nature and severity of their disabilities, are residing in licensed public or private residential facilities within the state of Idaho, the school district in which the residential facility is located will provide education services to such students if requested by the licensed public or private residential facility and an agreement is entered into with the residential facility. The district will be given the opportunity to provide input on any federally required education programs or plans for such students.

#### **A. Contract for Education Services**

The contract with a residential facility will include the following provisions:

1. The education services to be provided by the district.
2. The amount to be paid by the licensed public or private residential facility.

The amount paid will be equal to the district's full cost of providing the education services delineated by the contract as determined by the district. Such students will be excluded from all average daily attendance and other reports provided to the state that would result in the distribution of state funding to the district.

In the event a residential facility fails to sign a contract with the district agreeing to pay the full cost for providing education services, the school district in which the residential facility is located will not be responsible for providing education services to the out-of-state students residing in the residential facility.

### **B. Determining Residency**

In determining whether a student is from outside the state of Idaho, the school district in which the residential facility is located will determine the primary residency of the student's parent or guardian. Proof of Idaho residency will be established by showing an Idaho motor vehicle driver's license, payment of Idaho state income taxes, or other documentation evidencing residency within the state of Idaho.

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