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| Special Services Playbook |
| 2017-2018 |
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| **Type Your School Name Here** |
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**Framing & Introduction**

At Achievement First, we believe that serving ALL scholars and holding ourselves to a high academic bar are not mutually exclusive. We CAN do both and, in fact, our mission compels us to do both.

**Purpose**

The purpose of the Special Services Playbook is to ensure that the Special Services Leader at each Achievement First school has a document which outlines school-wide practices for compliance in one easily accessible location. The Playbook is meant to be a living document that is shared with your special education staff and fellow leaders on the school leadership team. When used effectively, it is your “first line of defense” when encountering tough scenarios and challenges related to special education.

**Directions**

Within this document, you will find legal requirements for special education across the board, as well as detailed information for our schools in Connecticut, New York and Rhode Island. As was the case last year, for 2017-2018, the Playbook is both a resource *and* a readiness task. It is required that you read the Playbook in its entirety, even if you are a returning SSL, as the document has undergone significant updates since last year. What’s new for this school year is that we are providing this redlined version of the document, which allows you to see the changes we have made to the document. As you read through the Playbook, you will notice there are sections highlighted in green – these are your readiness tasks. **Each green section compels you to stop, think about planning and practice for your school and then dictate this practice within the Playbook itself.**

After you complete all green readiness tasks in the Playbook, it is your job to share the green sections with your fellow school leaders and special education teachers.

You will also be required to upload your completed Playbook on Many Minds, as explained via [these instructions.](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/How%20to%20Upload%20Your%20TSS%20Playbook.docx) This practice ensures Team Special Services has school-based special education practices living in one place and easily accessible by our team, Team Legal and other key players.

#### Readiness Task

Your first readiness task is right here! Below, indicate the day that you finished your Playbook, as well as when you shared it with fellow school leaders and special education staff. Also note the day you uploaded your Playbook onto Many Minds.

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| **Playbook was Finished On: Uploaded to Many Minds On:**  **Shared with School Leaders On: Shared with School Special Education Staff On:** |

**Letter from your Departing SSL**

At some of our schools, the Special Services Leader is departing after the 2016-2017 school year. In many of these cases, a replacement SSL has not yet been hired, or will not start until after the departing SSL has left. For those SSLs who are leaving their position in this year, it is a required task to write a letter to the incoming SSL replacing you. **If you are a new SSL, or an SSL who is returning to your position for the 17-18 school year, you may skip this section and move on to the Table of Contents on page 3**.

#### Letter to My Replacement (Departing SSLs only)

If you are leaving your role in 2016-2017, and you will not have contact with your replacement, we ask you to write a letter to the person stepping into your role next year. You may use this template to complete the letter to your replacement, either exactly as is, just filling in the blanks, or you can customize and make it your own. The hoped-for outcome is that the person filling your shoes feels welcomed by you, is excited about his/her new role and understands this resource.

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| Date  Dear New SSL at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School,  Welcome to your new position! I’m sure you’re feeling a myriad of emotions, from excited to overwhelmed. Rest assured that this all normal. I wanted to take the time to write you this note in the hopes of getting you excited about, and setting you up for success in, your new role.  One thing I’ve really loved about my job has been \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. *(Feel free to get creative, and add other things you’ve enjoyed as you see fit.)*  Of course, this role isn’t always easy. If I could give you one piece of advice it would be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. *(Get specific and add other pieces of advice.)*  I hope that this Playbook document will allow you to set up and maintain authentic systems of special services compliance at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School. Although I completed most of the Playbook Tasks (embedded throughout and highlighted in green), there were some tasks that required information I didn’t have yet. Whenever a task is not fully completed, you’ll see it is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(highlighted in yellow, commented on, etc.)* This is a signal to you that it needs to be finished as you get more information. Feel free to reach out to your Director of Special Services, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(Your Director of SS’s name if you know who it is for next year)* if you need help.  All best,  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Your Name |

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# IDEA and Corresponding Legislation

**What is special education?**

The *concept* of special education was first established in 1975 with the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. The basic premise was that the public school system was required to provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to all students across the country, regardless of need. In 1990 the law was renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA is a funding statute that provides a portion of federal funding to states to operate special education. In 1997, when IDEA was revised and reauthorized, it brought into question the success of the program. The number of students with disabilities was greatly increasing across the country and it was unclear why there were so many more reported cases of disability. The [1997 version](http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/iep.law.appendixa.htm) included many substantial changes to the law. It required states to assess students with disabilities (formally or alternatively); and students were now entitled to “progress,” in addition to “access” and “participation.” Additionally, the revised law clearly outlined what must be included in all IEPs, while before 1997 the components of an IEP varied widely from state to state.

In 2001, with the passage of [No Child Left Behind (NCLB),](http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/nclb.parent.guide.heath.htm) states were held accountable to “ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement measurement standards.” NCLB established a definition for what it means to be a highly qualified teacher, required research-based reading instruction and intervention and expanded the public choice options for parents of students with disabilities. Law makers aligned NCLB and IDEA when IDEA was reauthorized [in 2004](http://www.wrightslaw.com/idea/law.htm) and again when it was amended in 2006. IDEA now requires schools to establish goals for children with disabilities that are “consistent with goals and standards for nondisabled children.” In addition, states are now required to improve graduation rates and academic progress of children with disabilities.

Although IDEA is the most prolific special education law, four other Federal Statutes and a wide range of Special Education case law also impact special education. They are briefly described below.

* Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 – A broad civil rights law that applies to all individuals with a disability. The overarching purpose of the law is to strike down discriminatory practices that would limit access to individuals with disabilities. This includes prohibiting the exclusion of students from school activities (i.e. field trips, being sent home early, or providing unequal/separate services.) Students may receive accommodations under Section 504 through a 504 plan. School responsibilities for identifying students and creating 504 plans as needed are discussed in more detail [here](#_Section_504).
* Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 – Prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, state and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation and telecommunications. To be protected by the ADA, one must have a disability or have a relationship/association with an individual with a disability.
* Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) – Protects students’ educational records from being shared publically and gives parents rights to inspect and review educational records.
* McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act – Requires that children whose families are homeless have access to school; this includes families of children with disabilities. When IDEA was reauthorized, it incorporated the definition of “homeless children” from the McKinney-Vento Act.

There is also a body of ever-growing Case law that defines the scope of Special Education and Special Services. A selection of this Case law can be found [here](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Pages/Special-Education-Case-Law.aspx)

**IDEA and IEPs Overview**

IDEA requires each State Educational Agency (SEA) and its Local Education Agency (LEA) to educate students with disabilities in accordance with the law’s requirements; each LEA must ensure that students with disabilities are identified, evaluated, and—if found eligible—provided with a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Depending on the state and local laws, [charter schools’](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201405-charter.pdf) LEA status varies. Charter schools are either:

1. part of another LEA
2. an independent LEA (Rhode Island)
3. an independent LEA, *except* for special education, which remains the responsibility of the LEA in the city where the charter school is located (New York, Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven)

The majority of our schools operate in areas where we partner with the local district in order to provide special education services for students with IEPs, although there are nuances to how we operate across our various districts.

**Section 504 Overview**

**Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights law that applies to students and adults with disabilities. This act affords all individuals with disabilities protection from discriminatory practices** and it mandates that everyone has equitable opportunities to participate in the programs and services offered to the population at large (encompassing school and other public services.)

For our scholars, this includes providing them the support they need to participate in school activities like field trips or physical access to all classrooms. At AF, the 504 process is implemented **without** the input of our district partners and is not attached to any federal or state funding.

There is a great deal more information about 504 plans later in the Playbook, [here](#_Section_504).

# District Partnerships

**Overview**

The Local Education Agency (LEA) is the entity responsible for providing specialized services to a scholar with an IEP. **In New York and Connecticut, schools partner with local districts (LEAs) to manage the special education process. In Rhode Island, schools have the unique opportunity to be their own LEA, but work with neighboring districts to learn from best practices.**

On the next pages you will find Guiding Principles for working with *all* districts, followed by district-specific information. See the below chart for effective guidelines for working with our district partners, and see the appendix for a [sample](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Sample%20District%20Communication.docx) email that has been annotated for best practice.

## Guiding Principles for Working with District Partners

Partnering with districts adds a layer of communication that schools need to navigate purposefully and effectively. Cultivating these partnerships is critical to the success of special services and supporting all scholars. For this reason, it is essential that we align as a network on what exemplar communication should look like with districts. The table below outlines guiding principles for building a strong relationship with district partners.

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| **When communicating with district partners, all correspondence should:** | **What does this look like?** | **Examples** | **Common Pitfalls** |
| **Engage with a true spirit of partnership.** | Utilizing district partners as experts and working with partners to learn from each other. | * Requesting feedback on documents (IEPs, Behavior Plans) * Previewing initial referrals * Reaching out after sufficient internal research to clarify an open question | * Reaching out for artificial input (i.e. asking for feedback for the sake of soliciting feedback rather than to truly learn and improve) * Reaching out too late in the process or once a problem has become acute * Reaching out too often or without first aligning with the school team |
| **Be friendly and professional.** | Using warm greetings and clearly stating what you need or what you are asking them to do. | * Addressing district partners with Mr./Ms./Dr. until the relationship is formed and you can transition to first names * Sharing scholar work and success in every interaction | * Answering e-mail using casual colloquialisms before establishing the relationship * Overusing common platitudes without truly engaging (i.e. opening every e-mail with “How are you?”) |
| **Be direct and provide context.** | Providing any supporting documents or previous communication that was sent so that all information is in one place. | * Highlighting and underlining questions/requests * Referencing date/time of previous messages * Including original e-mails as attachments * Providing scholar details (i.e. OSIS/SASID numbers) * Attaching any documents necessary for partners to fulfill your request (i.e. all academic data for an initial referral request) | * Requesting information from partners without providing background * Waiting to schedule meetings until all information is gathered (i.e. requesting an MDR without providing behavioral information or explaining the scholar’s behavior history) |
| **Be responsive and on time.** | Following-up with districts within 24 hours (in-person meetings, phone calls, e-mails) and arriving on time for meetings/calls with districts. | * Sending a follow-up email to the district after an IEP meeting, to confirm when documents will be finalized * Coordinating arrival time and confirming participant attendance in advance of a meeting to ensure starting on time | * Delaying response to time sensitive e-mail requests * Arriving late to meetings/phone calls * Notifying district at the last minute of participant changes |
| **Be collaborative.** | Providing multiple ways of following up (phone, e-mail, in-person) and engaging in co-problem solving | * Proactively providing times that are open in your schedule when requesting a meeting * Suggesting convenient touch points (i.e. “I’ll be at the district next week, do you have any time available?”) | * Expressing annoyance when district partners do not practice AF communication norms * Neglecting to ask for input from district partners because they do not understand the school’s systems |

#### District Partnerships

Read through the district partnership information on the previous page and your own specific district information on the following pages. List the individuals who serve as your district chairperson and other contacts you have in the district. It is possible that you may not have this information prior to September, in which case, please indicate that you’re unsure in the box so your Director of Special Services can follow up with you and help ensure you get the need-to-know information. If you’re in Rhode Island, indicate your district collaborators (administrators in your sending districts.) If you’re in New York, list your district CSE number (5, 6, or 8) and DBN number (your Director of School Operations can help with this.)

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| **My District Name:**  **My District Chairperson (Main Contact) & Contact Information (Email, Phone number if available):**  **Other District Contacts & Contact Information (Email, Phone number if available):**  **My District CSE and DBN Number (New York Only):** |

#### Funding Formulas (Brooklyn only)

In our schools in Brooklyn, special education funding is determined based on scholar special education hours as reported to the state from Infinite Campus. In order to ensure the correct funds are being collected, it is imperative that the funding categories be updated in IC on a regular basis, and that the SSL is communicating regularly with the DSO about changes to scholars receiving special education. Reflect on the following questions in the box below.

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| **My District:**  **Person Responsible for Updating Funding Categories in IC (in most cases this is the SSL):**  **Regular Meetings to Discuss Funding:**   * **Who attends?:** * **When do they happen?:** * **How often do they occur?:** * **Who is responsible for facilitating and scheduling meetings?:** |

## District Information and Funding: Brooklyn

**In Brooklyn, the LEA is the Department of Education (DOE).** See the appendix for the [CSE Contact information in Brooklyn](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/New%20York%20CSE%20Contact%20Information%202017-2018.docx) and the [NYC DOE Standard Operating Procedures Manual](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Standard%20Operating%20Procedures%20Manual%20for%20NYC%20SpEd%20-%20updated%202009.pdf). The DOE has established Committees on Special Education (CSEs) who are responsible for overseeing the special education practices in charter schools. Our schools partner with three CSE offices: 5, 6, and 8. CSEs have many teams and each CSE office has assigned one team to be responsible for working with all AF schools. The CSE Contact Information table in the appendix details the team designated for AF in each CSE and the schools they work with in their office. A quick guide to the partnership can be found below:

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| **Special Services Area** | **What do the roles look like?** | |
| **Evaluations** | **AF:** The CSE completes all evaluations. If a scholar has an external evaluation (at a school or at a private doctor), the CSE is not required to accept that evaluation, *though frequently does*. (In cases where the evaluations do not occur within the required time frame, loop in TSS.) | **CSE:** Owns the evaluation process including all academic testing and coordinating testing. |
| **IEP Annual Reviews** | **AF:** SSLs draft specific portions of the IEP using academic/behavioral data and coordinate participation for school-based team members. Specific portions:   * Present Levels of Performance * Academic IEP Goals * Counseling Goals (if school provides this service) * Accommodations, Modifications, and Management Needs * Testing Accommodations | **CSE:** Opens IEP drafts in SESIS, co-facilitates meetings with SSLs, and finalizes documents in SESIS. |
| **MDR** | **AF:** SSL and DOS collaborate to collect behavioral data and put interventions in place before a scholar hits 10 days of suspension. The SSL contacts CSE and parents when the student reaches the 10th day of suspension to schedule a MDR meeting. For more information see the [MDR section](#_Manifestation_Determination_Review). | **CSE:** Once the CSE receives the communication from AF, they schedule and hold the MDR meeting within 10 days of being notified. |
| **504 Plans** | **AF:** Schools own all aspects of the 504 process, from initial consideration and annual reviews, to exiting a scholar from a 504 plan. The school also owns the MDR process for scholars with 504s. The CSE has nothing to do with 504s *unless* a request for evaluation for an IEP was requested and 10 days have passed since the request – at this point the CSE is looped in to the conversation. | **CSE:** Does not attend meetings or engage in the process. Connect with the district to provide transportation services for scholars with special transportation in their 504 Plans |
| **Related Services** | **AF**: Schools can choose to contract and pay for services OR request services from the DOE. If you request DOE services, then your school cannot claim funding for those services. | **CSE:** If schools request DOE providers, then they send a provider to the school. |

**New York: Special Education Funding**

Special Education revenue comes from two sources: Federal IDEA Funds and State funds funneled through New York City.

**Federal Funding**

Federal IDEA funds are distributed once a year and are based on a headcount of all scholars with an IEP as of October 1st of the ***previous*** academic year. The NYC DOE aligns IDEA reimbursement with federal guidelines and pro-rates reimbursement based on the level of special education service the school provides. The table below explains how this year’s funding will be determined.

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| **Academic Year** | **Funding Allotment Per Pupil** | **Examples** |
| **2017-2018** | $1,087.00 | The funding for the 2017-2018 academic year is based on the headcount from the previous year.  For example: During the 2016-2017 academic year the population at AF Imagine increased and they reported 37 scholars with IEPs. At $1,087.00 per pupil, they would receive $40,219 for the 2017-2018 academic year. |
| **NOTES:**   * New schools do not receive federal funding in their first year. They will begin receiving federal funding in year two based on the headcount from their first year. (They do receive state/city funding.) * Full grown schools will receive funding based on the headcount from the previous year. | | |

**New York: City/State Funding**

City/State funding represents the bulk of special education revenue and is determined by the minutes of IEP-mandated services a scholar receives. **An eligible minute of service meets the following three criteria:**

1. The service is provided by a Highly Qualified or Certified special educator (NYS certified Special Education teacher OR a teacher who is Highly Qualified to teach students with disabilities)[[1]](#footnote-1).
2. The service is no more restrictive than the IEP mandates.
3. The school pays for the service (i.e. via salary or direct payment for contract services).

The number of eligible minutes of service aligns to one of three funding categories. The chart below describes the categories and funding for each school level. This information is accurate as of spring 2016 and is subject to change.

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| **Funding Category** | **Explanation** | **Minutes of Service Per Week (approx.)** | **Amount of Funding Per Pupil** |
| 0% - 19% | A student receiving IEP-mandated special education services between 0% and 19% of the school day | ES: 0-300 | $0 |
| MS/HS: 0-225 |
| 20% - 59% | A student receiving IEP-mandated special education services between 20% and 59% of the school day | ES: 300-900 | $10,390 |
| MS/HS: 225-1050 |
| 60% + | A student receiving IEP-mandated special education services more than 60% of the school day | ES: >900 | $19,049 |
| MS/HS: >1050 |

**Per Pupil Invoice**

The Per Pupil Invoice (PPI) is the online portal schools use to report minutes of service to the city for funding allocation[[2]](#footnote-2). SSLs should collaborate regularly with DSOs to ensure schools submit accurate information. This process can take anywhere between 15 minutes and 2 hours depending on the size of the school and number of recent IEP changes.

## District Information: Bridgeport

In Bridgeport, the school district is the LEA. See the appendix for [district partner contact information for Bridgeport.](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Connecticut%20District%20Partner%20Contact%20Information.docx) Each year, Bridgeport assigns a Director of Special Education to our Bridgeport schools. The Director is responsible for overseeing the special education practices at AF Bridgeport. A quick guide to the partnership can be found below:

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| **Special Services Area** | **What do the roles look like?** | |
| **Evaluations** | **AF:** Schools complete academic evaluations. | **Bridgeport:** Completes all psychological and related services evaluations. |
| **IEP Annual Reviews** | **AF:** SSLs draft IEPs using academic/behavioral data and coordinate participation for school-based team members. SSL schedules PPT with parent and BPS. SSLs are responsible for finalizing IEPs in IEP Direct, but should do so under the guidance of their TSS Director. | **Bridgeport:** Opens IEP drafts in IEP Direct, participates in the PPT meetings. |
| **MDR** | **AF:** SSL and DOS collaborate to collect behavioral data and put interventions in place before a scholar hits 10 days of suspension. The SSL contacts BPS and parents when the student exceeds 10 days of suspension to schedule a MDR meeting. For more information see the [MDR section](#_Manifestation_Determination_Review). | **Bridgeport:** Attends all PPT meetings, including MDRs for scholars with IEPs. |
| **504 Plans** | **AF:**  Schools own all aspects of the 504 process from the initial meeting, to annual reviews, to exiting a scholar from a 504 plan. The school also owns the MDR process for scholars with 504s. | **Bridgeport:** Connect with district to provide transportation services for scholars with special transportation in their 504 Plans. |
| **Related Services** | **AF:** Support district’s related service providers. | **Bridgeport:** Provides all related service providers to scholars with IEPs. |

## District Information: Hartford

The district partner Hartford is the LEA. See the appendix for [district partner contact information for Hartford.](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Connecticut%20District%20Partner%20Contact%20Information.docx) Each year, Hartford assigns a Director of Special Education to each school. The Director is responsible for overseeing the special education practices at AF Hartford.

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| **Special Services Area** | **What do the roles look like?** | |
| **Evaluations** | **AF:** Schools administer academic evaluations and contract the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) to administer psychological and related service evaluations. | **Hartford:** Reviews evaluations. |
| **IEP Annual Reviews** | **AF:** SSLs draft IEPs using academic/behavioral data and coordinate participation for school-based team members. | **Hartford:** Opens IEP drafts in IEP Direct, participates in meetings with SSLs and finalizes documents in IEP Direct. |
| **MDR** | **AF:** SSL and DOS collaborate to collect behavioral data and put interventions in place before a scholar hits 10 days of suspension. The SSL contacts HPS and parents when the student exceeds 10 days of suspension to schedule a MDR meeting. For more information see the [MDR section](#_Manifestation_Determination_Review). | **Hartford:** Attends all PPT meetings including MDRs for scholars with IEPs. |
| **504 Plans** | **AF:** Schools own all aspects of the 504 process, from initial consideration, to annual reviews, to exiting a scholar from a 504 plan. The school also owns the MDR process for scholars with 504s. | **Harford:** Connect with district to provide transportation services for scholars with special transportation in their 504 Plans. |
| **Related Services** | **AF:** Contract all related service providers from the CREC. | **Hartford:** Provides funding for all related services. |

## District Information: New Haven

The district partner New Haven is the LEA. See the appendix for [district partner contact information for New Haven](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Connecticut%20District%20Partner%20Contact%20Information.docx). Each year, New Haven assigns a team of special education leaders to our New Haven schools. This team is responsible for overseeing the special education practices at AF New Haven schools.

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| **Special Services Area** | **What do our roles look like?** | |
| **Evaluations** | **AF:** Schools rely on the district for the completion of all evaluations. | **New Haven:** Approves and completes all evaluations. |
| **IEP Annual Reviews** | **AF:** SSLs draft IEPs using academic/behavioral data and coordinate participation for school-based team members. | **New Haven:** Opens IEP drafts in IEP Direct, participates in meetings with SSLs and finalizes documents in IEP Direct. |
| **MDR** | **AF:** SSL and DOS collaborate to collect behavioral data and put interventions in place before a scholar hits 10 days of suspension. The SSL contacts NHPS when the student exceeds 10 days of suspension, so they can schedule a MDR meeting. For more information see the [MDR section](#_Manifestation_Determination_Review). | **New Haven:** Reaches out to parents and schedules an MDR meeting. |
| **504 Plans** | **AF:**  Schools own all aspects of the 504 process from initial consideration to annual reviews to exiting a scholar from a 504 plan. The school also owns the MDR process for scholars with 504s. | **New Haven:** Connect with district to provide transportation services for scholars with special transportation in their 504 Plans. |
| **Related Services** | **AF:** Support district’s related service providers. | **New Haven:** Provides all related service providers to scholars with IEPs. |

## District Information: Providence

Serving scholars from four Rhode Island districts (Providence, North Providence, Cranston and Warwick), Achievement First is the LEA. As such, **all special education responsibilities are the responsibility of Achievement First.** Each year, with support from Team Special Services and under the guidance of each school’s SSL, the school has the opportunity to hire and contract with special education and related services providers. Under the leadership of the school SSL, this team is responsible for overseeing the special education program at AF Providence Schools. This team is accountable for ordering, executing and maintaining all special services areas, such as evaluations, IEP annual reviews and IEP triennial reviews, MDRs, 504 plans and related services.

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| **Special Services Area** |
| **Evaluations** | **AF:** Schools administer academic evaluations and contract with CBS Therapy or TherapyWorks to engage in related service provider evaluations. (At some schools, a related services provider may be on staff and that person will provide evaluations). Schools contract with independently licensed psychologists to administer all other evaluations. Psychologists must have a license to work in schools. |
| **IEP Annual Reviews** | **AF:** SSLs or case managers set up IEP meetings with parents and school-based staff and draft IEPs using academic/behavioral data. SSLs finalize IEPs in IEP Direct after the meeting and ensure that Medicaid billing forms are signed. Team Special Services will occasionally provide oversight and review IEPs as requested/required. |
| **MDR** | **AF:** SSL and DOS collaborate to collect behavioral data and put interventions in place before a scholar hits 10 days of suspension. The SSL contacts parents when the student exceeds 10 days of suspension to schedule a MDR meeting. The student may not be suspended before the MDR meeting is held at the school. For more information see the [MDR section](#_Manifestation_Determination_Review). |
| **504 Plans** | **AF:** As with the IEP process, schools own all aspects of the 504 process, from initial consideration, to annual reviews, to exiting a scholar from a 504 plan. The school also owns the MDR process for scholars with 504s. |
| **Related Services** | **AF:** SSLs work with Team Special Services and their DSOs to hire related service providers from CBS Therapy, TherapyWorks, or another reputable agency. Providers work on contract, which needs to be signed before they start at the school. In some cases where the need is high, a school may hire their own related service providers as part of the staff (social workers, SLPs, etc.) |

# Special Education Program

A student’s Individualized Education Program is written by an IEP team and takes into account the student’s current environment and needs. A part of the IEP is the explicit program recommendation. Consider the following when determining a student’s IEP program:

* Achievement First’s core, tier 1 program is strong: Achievement First's core program –intensive reading focus, data-driven instructional decisions and tiered, researched-based response to intervention—incorporates many best practices from the foundations of strong special education programs. Therefore, our schools can serve the vast majority of students who come to us with more restrictive placement recommendations on their IEPs. When a student with an IEP enters our schools, we partner with the local district (in New York and Connecticut) and student’s family to ensure the student’s IEP takes into account the new academic environment. At the beginning of the year, a new IEP/PPT meeting should be held for all students new to Achievement First. The objective of this meeting is to update the IEP to reflect the current school program, when necessary.
* Students must be served in the Least Restrictive Environment: The program should provide the supports needed by a scholar to make meaningful academic, behavioral and socio-emotional progress *and* maximize time with general education peers and the general education curriculum; this is known as the **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**. The extent to which this happens is outlined in the scholars’ IEP but should be the “maximum extent appropriate.” For every scholar the LRE will be different and is based on current academic, emotional and social abilities. The purpose behind LRE is for schools to **limit the amount of time scholars with disabilities are educated apart from their general education peers in “more restrictive,” homogenous environments.[[3]](#endnote-1)** A student with a disability should be removed from participation in the general education environment only when his or her disability is so severe that the child cannot progress, even with the help of aides and services, in a general education setting. These exceptions are rare and reflect a *very* small percentage of our population.

Support for a scholar with an IEP increases along a continuum as the scholar’s needs increase. The vast majority of students can be served within the continuum of services available at AF schools. The next page illustrates our continuum of services from least to most restrictive.

**Continuum of Services**

A student’s IEP is written taking into account his or her current environment. The programming and continuum of services a student might receive at AF may differ from the programming in district schools. Therefore, when a student enters our schools, we partner with families and district partners (in Connecticut and New York only) to ensure an IEP aligns with the programming a student is receiving at AF. Click [here](#_Formal_Special_Education), for more information about different types of formal meetings that may occur to facilitate this alignment. The continuum of services—from least to most restrictive—is below. Achievement First offers the first four tiers below (General Education, Interventions/SETSS, CTT and Resource Room) across all schools, and self-contained classes are available in New York only, at AF Empower. The last two tiers (self-contained class in a specialized school and home/hospital instruction) are only available through district schools or external placements (Rhode Island only) at this time.

Related Services, IEP mandated accommodations, and para-professional support can be provided throughout the continuum.

General Education Classes (with supplemental aids and accommodations)

SETTS (NY) and Resource Room (CT/RI) Supplemental to Core Content (including interventions taught by special educators)

Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) /

Integrated Co-teaching (ICT)\*

Self-Contained Class

Self-Contained Class in a Specialized School

Home/Hospital Instruction

Achievement First schools recognize that we can serve the vast majority of students with IEPs in the context of our general education programs.

LRE

🡨---- more restrictive -------- less restrictive -----🡪

\*We aim to serve the vast majority of students in an inclusive environment through ICT/CTT Classrooms.

**IDEA requires school districts to place students in their Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) to the maximum extent appropriate.**

MRE

#### The Special Education Continuum

Review the table below, which describes the special education continuum of services at Achievement First. Then, list who will provide each of these supports at your school. You may not have all of this information until August, at which point you should come back and update the readiness task accordingly.

|  |
| --- |
| **My ICT/CTT Teaching Pairs (Put an asterisk next to the special education teacher in each pair):**  **The SETSS/Resource Room Teachers are as follows:**  **\**Note on Tier II and III Interventions: These interventions can serve as SETSS/Supplemental Resource Room, so long as they are provided by a special educator or specialized provider!*** |

**The table below provides an explanation of the programs offered along our continuum of services.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Program**  **(LRE to MRE)** | **What is it?** | **When/How is it provided** | **Who Provides the Service** |
| **Support in the General Education setting** | For some scholars with disabilities, additional supports in the general education setting are sufficient to meet the scholar’s IEP goals and to make adequate progress in the general curriculum. Possible supports in the general curriculum include (from least to most restrictive):   * Supplemental aids and accommodations, potentially including modifications * Related service provider consult or classroom support * Special Educator/Related Service Provider support in the classroom | These supports are provided in the general education setting during regular class time. The objectives of these supports are to maximize student access, participation and progress in the general classroom/curriculum. | The special education teacher and/or related service provider designs these supports based on student data and needs.  General educators, paraprofessionals, special educators, and related service providers are all potentially involved in providing the supports. |
| **CTT / ICT** | Students have two teachers—one general educator and one special educator—who co-own the class. Co-teaching allows teachers to provide more feedback, offer targeted supports, and collect more data to lead students to the same rigorous academic and behavioral outcomes. | Co-teaching typically occurs in math, reading, and writing. Most schools ensure one section per grade, per content is co-taught.  CTT/ICT sections should be heterogeneously grouped (approximately 40% students with IEPs and 60% students in general education). | One special educator and one general educator |
| **Resource Room (CT) / SETSS (NY) / Pullout Services (RI) (includes formalized intervention)** | SETSS (NY) / Supplemental Resource Room (CT) / Pullout services (RI) is specially designed remedial and/or supplemental instruction provided by a special education teacher.  \*\*Note on Tier 2/3 Interventions: Tier 2 or 3 interventions can also serve as SETSS/Supplemental Resource Room so long as they are provided by a special educator or specialized provider. | SETSS (NY) / Supplemental Resource Room (CT) / Pullout (RI) occur outside of the classroom in addition to core content and should be provided by a teacher highly qualified to teach special education.  **NY Only**:  SETSS can also be provided as a push-in service where a special educator pushes into a content class to provide in support. All pull-out SETSS can be an extension of ICT and count as ICT mins. | Learning Specialist (Special Educator)  General Educator  Interventionist |

**The following services can be added to any program along the continuum.**

#### Paraprofessional Breakdown

Review your caseload for the 17-18 school year, thinking about scholars who have paraprofessional support listed in their IEPs. This may include looking at your current SPATA reports and talking to your feeder elementary or middle school to determine incoming student needs. Needs may change in August once rosters are finalized, at which point you should update the Readiness Task.

|  |
| --- |
| **Number of scholars with paraprofessionals: Number of returning paras: Number of new paras:**  **In a brief paragraph, describe the training that any new paras will need. Consider your school, the AF network and, most importantly, the scholar(s) in question.** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Program** | **What is it?** | **When/How is it provided?** | **Who Provides the Service** |
| **1:1**  **Para-professional** | Some of our scholars have full-time paraprofessional support, although this is used *rarely*.  Paraprofessionals provide short-term or crisis support to complement the differentiation efforts of the classroom teacher OR provide health support to ensure the student’s health needs are met during the day. | Because paraprofessionals provide instructional support, they should **not** be planning direct instruction. While *providing* instructional support, the paraprofessional must be supervised by a certified teacher.  The general education teacher should plan for what the paraprofessional will do in the general education classroom and how they will execute it. General education teachers partner with the Special Education Teacher or SSL to plan how to effectively engage a paraprofessional during instruction. If a paraprofessional is implementing a student’s accommodations, modifications, and/or IEP goals/objectives, the Special Education Teacher or SSL must provide supervision to the paraprofessional. The Special Education Teacher or SSL should regularly collaborate with the paraprofessional to ensure the paraprofessional has clear expectations /tasks/outcomes in order to know HOW to meet the needs of scholars.  However, there are times when it is appropriate for the Para to just support the student during high-need parts of the day (i.e. after lunch through after school). | Paraprofessional (hired as an AF employee, through a contract agency, or assigned by the district) |
| **Related Services** | Related Services can be provided in addition to any of the programs above or a scholar may only receive related services. See the [Related Services](#_Related_Services:_Summary) section. | | |

#### Disability Breakdown

Review your IEP and 504 caseload for the 17- school year. This may include looking at your current SPATA reports and talking to your feeder elementary or middle school to determine incoming student needs. Needs may change in August once rosters are finalized, at which point you should update your Readiness Task. Indicate the number of scholars you will have in each disability classification, below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Speech or Language Impairment:**  **Specific Learning Disability:**  **Other Health Impairment:**  **Intellectual Disability:**  **Traumatic Brain Injury:**  **Deafness:** | **Autism:**  **Emotional Behavior Disorder:**  **Hearing Impairment:**  **Multiple Disabilities:**  **Visual Impairment:**  **Deaf-Blindness:** |

# Disabilities

**Disabilities include a range of physical, mental, emotional and sensory impairments that impact a scholar’s ability to successfully access the general education curriculum independently and/or perform basic life functions**. A disability does not define a person, but it *can* provide important context on the needs of a scholar. **IDEA clearly outlines disability classifications that are uniformly used in all 50 states**. Below is a brief description of the disabilities outlined under IDEA.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Disability** | **Brief description of how this disability is diagnosed** |
| **Speech or Language Impairment** | A Speech or Language Impairment is a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairment, or a voice impairment, that adversely affects that student’s educational performance. (Students may also qualify for Speech/ Language Therapy, even if Speech or Language impairment is not identified as their primary disability.) |
| **Specific Learning Disability** | A Specific Learning Disability is a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. This includes conditions such as perceptional disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.  NY, RI, and CT: RTI Model is used to determine eligibility.   * The IEP Team determines that the student is not responding to research-based interventions or responding at a rate that is significantly slower than his/her peers in similar interventions.   NY: The Discrepancy Model can be used to determine eligibility.   * The IEP Team determines that a severe discrepancy between cognitive potential (as measured by a standardized intelligence test), and achievement (as measured by a standardized test of knowledge), is present. A significant discrepancy value is greater than or equal to a value of +1.50 standard deviations. (This diagnosis method is antiquated and slowly being phased out across the country.) |
| **Other Health Impairment** | The student has limited strength, vitality, or attentiveness including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli which can all result in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment. This may be due to chronic or acute health problems (including, but not limited to: a heart condition, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, nephritis, asthma, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, epilepsy, lead poisoning, leukemia, diabetes, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or Tourette’s syndrome) AND must adversely affects that student’s educational performance. *This disability type is very broad and encompasses a large range of scholars.*  Some of the students we serve have chronic health problems (i.e. heart condition, asthma, sickle cell anemia, ADHD, etc.). If a student’s health condition leads to excessive absences or trouble with work completion, the school should work with the parents to ensure appropriate supports (e.g., IEP accommodations; IEP services; homebound/hospitalized instruction, where necessary) are put into place to support this student. |
| **Autism** | A developmental disability, significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction that adversely affects educational performance and is generally evident before age 3. |
| **Emotional Behavioral Disorder** | A condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects the student’s educational performance:  • An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors  • An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers  • Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances  • A generally pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression, or  • A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems |
| **Hearing Impairments** | An audiologist diagnoses the student with hearing impairment, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects the student’s educational performance, but that is not included under the definition of deafness in this section. |
| **Intellectual Disability** | An intellectual disability is a disability characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual function and in adaptive behavior, which covers social and practical skills. The disability originates before the age of 18.  Intellectual disability is an umbrella term that encompasses many different types of disabilities, such as mental retardation, Down’s Syndrome, Fragile X, or Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder. One of the biggest misconceptions about students with intellectual disabilities is that they cannot learn; **this is not true**. It simply means that the rate or capacity of their learning may be different. |
| **Orthopedic Impairment** | A student with a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by congenital anomaly (i.e., clubfoot.), impairments caused by disease (i.e: poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.), and impairments from other causes (i.e., cerebral palsy, amputation, etc.). |
| **Multiple Disabilities** | A student with concomitant impairments (such as intellectual disability-blindness, intellectual disability-orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which cause educational needs that cannot be accommodated in a special education program solely for one of the impairments. |
| **Traumatic Brain Injury** | A student with an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force or by certain medical conditions such as stroke, encephalitis, aneurysm, and anoxia, or brain tumors with resulting impairments that adversely affect educational performance.  The term includes open or closed head injuries or brain injuries from certain medical conditions resulting in mild, moderate or severe impairments in one or more areas, including cognition, language, memory, attention, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgment, problem solving, sensory, perceptual and motor abilities, psychosocial behavior, physical functions, information processing and speech.  The term does not include injuries that are congenital or caused by birth trauma. |
| **Visual Impairment** | A student with impairment in vision including blindness that, even with correction, adversely affects that student’s educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness. |
| **Deafness** | A student with a hearing impairment that is so severe that the student is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, and thus adversely affects the student’s educational performance. |
| **Deaf-Blindness** | A student with concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for students with deafness or students with blindness. |

# Related Services: Summary of Services Provided

**Overview**

Related services are defined as developmental, corrective and other support services required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from instruction. **Related Services are provided to students with disabilities to deliver extra support in specific areas, such as speaking, moving and socializing.**

**What Related Services do we provide?**

Related services can happen in the classroom or in a pull-out setting. These services are provided by full-time staff members, contracted from external agencies, or provided by district partners. Related Services can be provided in push-in or pull-out settings and in group or 1:1 sessions. The table below describes related services in more detail.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Related Service** | **Who Provides Service** | **Purpose (How it Works)** | **When/Where does the service happen?** | Readiness Task: **Indicate who provides related services if you know at this time. Indicate “TBD” if you do not know yet.** |
| **Mandated Counseling** | Social Worker/Guidance Counselor | Mandated counseling supports a scholar in social emotional development. This is usually a small percentage of the total counseling that a Social Worker/Counselor does in Connecticut and New York (in Rhode Island, the Social Worker is the only provider, so first prioritizes scholars with counseling on their IEPs.  As a member of the IEP team, the Social Worker/Guidance Counselor participates in screening, evaluating, program planning and interventions. The Social Worker/Guidance Counselor designs and implements counseling interventions, including teaching and training of family and education personnel as well as measurement and documentation of progress to help the student achieve his/her IEP goals. | Breakfast/Snack: good time for brief check-ins to support the scholar starting the day but does not provide adequate time for social work services.  Lunch: good time for brief check-ins to support the scholar throughout the day. Depending on school structure and activities during lunch, formal sessions may or may not be appropriate.  Non-core classes: varying the class that the student is pulled from (SSLs should partner with general education teachers to ensure a student has the opportunity to make up missed work).  NY ONLY: After school on Fridays is a GREAT time for mandated counseling. | **Name**:  **If not an AF staff member, provide contact information.**  **Contact Info (Email or Phone):**  **Agency (if applicable):** |
| **Speech** | Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)  OR  Bilingual Speech-Language Pathologist | Speech-Language Pathologist supports scholars in understanding or in using spoken or written language. Speech needs vary and may manifest in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write and spell. Services can occur within the context of the classroom or in a pull-out setting.  Speech services may be provided as a bilingual service (for scholars who are regularly exposed to a language other than English) and/or may be provided to scholars who have hearing impairments.  **Push-in services** are recommended when a student is receiving speech to address deficits in auditory processing, comprehension and use of semantics, syntax, pragmatics, or expressive language *and* the student can immediately apply speech goals in class.  **Pull-out** **services** are recommended when the student is receiving speech to address deficits in articulation/phonological skills and voice production. These deficit areas are best taught and practiced outside of the classroom and apply to younger students.  As a member of the IEP team, the SLP participates in screening, evaluating, program planning and interventions. The SLP designs and implements speech and language therapy interventions, including teaching and training of family and education personnel and measurement and documentation of progress, to help the student achieve his/her IEP goals. | Push-In: any core class with sufficient opportunities for oral language. Writing is recommended because of the expressive-receptive language link that speech can provide. If pushing in, the SLP should come in at strategic points in the lesson.  Pull-Out: avoid pulling students from core academic classes like reading, writing and math. If a scholar is pulled for a non-core class, he/she must be exempted or retaught the material.  For HS students, best practice is to incorporate speech services into the classroom. Alternatively, some students and families prefer to have speech services outside of the school day so that students are not missing courses. | **Name**:  **If not an AF staff member, provide contact information.**  **Contact Info (Email or Phone):**  **Agency (if applicable):** |
| **Occupational Therapy** | Occupational Therapist (OT) | Occupational Therapy is designed to maintain, improve or restore function of neuro-musculoskeletal function (i.e. range of motion, muscle strength, endurance, posture control), motor function (i.e. fine motor skills, oral motor control, visual motor integration), and sensory and perceptual function (i.e. integrating and processing of tactile, visual, auditory information).  OT maintains and promotes function through the use of purposeful activities and development of compensatory strategies that enhance school performance. As a member of the IEP team, the OT participates in screening, evaluating, program planning and interventions. The OT designs and implements occupational therapy interventions, including teaching and training of family and education personnel and measurement and documentation of progress, to help the student achieve his/her IEP goals. | Push-In: the OT/PT should come in at strategic points in the lesson where the scholar can practice skills in-the-moment.  Pull-Out: avoid pulling students from core academic classes. If a scholar is pulled from a non-core class, he/she must be exempted or retaught the missed material. | **Name**:  **If not an AF staff member, provide contact information.**  **Contact Info (Email or Phone):**  **Agency (if applicable):** |
| **Physical Therapy** | Physical Therapist (PT) | Physical therapy emphasizes physical function of gross motor skills and independence in different settings. Physical therapists increase a student’s ability to participate in various school functions by remediating or compensating for musculoskeletal, neuromuscular, or cardiopulmonary impairments. Physical therapists employ various techniques including addressing deficits in body structure and function, suggesting adaptations to physical tasks, recommending assistive devices and adapting the environment.  As a member of the IEP Team, the PT participates in screening, evaluating, program planning, and interventions. The PT designs and implements physical therapy interventions, including teaching and training of family and education personnel and measurement and documentation of progress, to help the student achieve his/her IEP goals. | **Name**:  **If not an AF staff member, provide contact information.**  **Contact Info (Email or Phone):**  **Agency (if applicable):** |

## Managing Related Services

Schools need to establish and maintain regular and clear communication with all providers in order to ensure services are high quality, provided consistently and aligned to the scholar’s program.

SSLs do this by:

* **BOY expectations meetings**: SSLs have a meeting at the beginning of the year to ensure that the Related Service provider understands Achievement First’s high academic and behavioral expectations and to confirm schedules are aligned with the academic calendar.
* **Tracking service delivery:** SSLs engage in tracking delivery of related services, either via a sign-in/sign-out sheet, Case Management logging via ClaimsPro (RI only), or other accountability system.
* **Ongoing communication:** SSLs meet with related service providers on an ongoing basis to discuss student progress, ensure that providers are reinforcing what the student is learning in the related service, align on upcoming IEP meeting input and troubleshoot any issues that arise.
* **Participation at IEP / triennial meetings:** SSLs ensure that related service providers attend and provide input to IEP and triennial meetings. The following table outlines how to manage related services across your school.

#### Managing Related Services

Read the table below and the “Initiating Related Services” sections *for your region* on the following pages. Think about each action step essential for effectively working with related service providers. In the third column, outline who is responsible for the task (99% of the time it will be the SSL at the school) and when it will be due in 2017-2018.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Timeline: When you have to do this** | **Action Step: What you have to do** | Readiness Task: **Who engages in this action? When is it due?** | **Task Breakdown : How to do the task** | **Additional Information** |
| **Before Scholars Arrive** | Compile related services rosters | * **Who:** * **When**: | * Review scholar files for program recommendations. * For each related service, compile a roster that includes scholar name, frequency of service, duration and grouping mandates. | *Best Practice Tip*: include scholar grade and homeroom if you know it, as this will be helpful when considering grouping options |
| Meet with Principal and DSO to determine how you will pay externally contracted services (District specific) | * **Who:** * **When**: | * New York: meet with your SLT to confirm which services will be provided by the DOE and which will be contracted. Confirm pricing and budget. * Bridgeport & New Haven: not applicable unless related services are provided for scholars with 504 Plans. * Hartford & Rhode Island: meet with DSO for quarterly billing cycle. | Remember, in most of our schools the only related service that is provided in house is counseling. The exception is Rhode Island schools. |
| Meet with Leadership Team to confirm related services logistics | * **Who:** * **When**: | * Review class/grade level schedules. * Identify suggested areas for RS to happen (non-core classes). * Meet with School Leadership Team and decide when related services will take place. * Establish norms, as part of your school’s common picture, for scholars leaving class to attend RS and expectations for teachers. * Establish norms for Related Service provider sign-in/sign-out system. * Identify locations where services will be consistently provided. | A solid related services program is dependent on clear and consistent communication. In order to clearly communicate with RS providers about their schedules, the LT needs to come to a consensus on when is best for related services to take place during the school day and align on the messaging to staff about scholar participation in related services.  Related service providers will need an area to meet with scholars, preferably a private area with storage space for any materials. |
| **Before Scholars Arrive** | Review AF and district partner school calendars, note days when scholars are not in attendance that will require an alternate schedule to make up services. Draft an alternative schedule for make-up services. | * **Who:** * **When:**   \*Note: Not applicable **when utilizing your own providers** in Rhode Island, Hartford and New York. | * Review AF and district partner calendars and identify any days when scholars will not be in the building or have challenging schedules like IAs, state tests, etc. * Share dates with providers. * Draft a plan to make-up missed service minutes. | Service minutes are mandated in scholar IEP documents and it is the responsibility and legal obligation of the SSL to plan ahead for potential interruptions in service.  *Best Practice Tip*: due to the tight schedules for many providers, planning to extend sessions by 10-15 min. either before or after breaks can help make up minutes without causing major disruptions in service |
| Meet with teachers to discuss related services schedule, norms for scholars receiving services | * **Who:** * **When:** | * Provide teachers with a list of scholars in their classes who will receive related services. * Share the RS schedule and norms for scholars attending. * Explain expectations for scholars making up any missed work. | Teachers play a key role in the success of a related services system. It is important that they are informed of the schedule for related services as well as the scholars on their class lists who will be participating in the services. |
| Set-up individual BOY meetings with each service provider | * **Who:** * **When:** | Intended outcomes:   * Discuss services and caseload * Review schedule * Explain sign-in and sign-out procedure * Establish communication norms * Align on important dates * Discuss observations * Review calendar and timeline for IEP Goals and Progress reporting * Teach related service provide to use ClaimsPro and explain expectations around logging time (RI only) |  |
| Set-up Sign-In/Sign Out procedures | * **Who:** * **When:** | Designate an area for RS providers to sign-in and out when in the building  Determine where and how sign-in and out records will be maintained (scanned weekly or monthly and stored electronically is recommended.) | This should be completed after meeting with LT and service providers. This sign in and out process should be part of your school’s common picture if needed. |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Bi-Monthly** | Conduct Observations and Check-In Meetings with providers | * **Who:** * **When:** | During check-ins:   * Share feedback based on observation. * Discuss the services and caseload updates:   + Scholars progressing well and scholars facing challenges.   + Review techniques to use in classes to support scholars. * Review schedule and confirm any upcoming changes. * Follow-up on sign-in/sign-out procedure. * Touch base on upcoming annual reviews and evaluations. |  |
| **Monthly** | RI only: Ensure providers are entering services into ClaimsPro, the Medicaid billing website. | * **Who:** * **When:** | When engaging in case management entering into ClaimsPro:   * Randomly check a few scholars to ensure related services have been entered that month * Follow-up with RS provider if this is not occurring | Entering services in ClaimsPro is vital to ensure that RI schools receive funding from Medicaid on a quarterly basis |
| **Quarterly** | Coordinate Progress Monitoring | * **Who:** * **When:** | See [IEP Progress Reports](#_IEP_Progress_Reports) section. |  |
| **Ongoing** | Coordinate IEP documents work | * **Who:** * **When:** | See [IEP Meeting Protocol](#_IEP_Meeting_Protocol) section |  |

## Initiating Related Services in New York

**Related Services can either be provided from a school site staff member, a DOE provider, or a contract provider.** With the exception of a school social worker or counselor, most Achievement First schools do not hire related service providers as full time staff members. Therefore, schools must use DOE service providers or hire contract providers.

**How the DOE Process Works:**

The chart and table below outline the payment and provider options available in New York. There are two ways to provide services:

Option A – Contract Related Services via an Agency:

In this case, you can choose the agency and the provider and count the related service minutes of service when calculating City/State funding. Depending on the service minutes and exact student IEPs, this may include an additional cost for the school.

Option B - Request that the CSE/DOE provide the service:

In this case, you cannot choose the agency or the provider, but there is no additional cost to the school. (The related service minutes are not counted toward minutes of service when calculating City/State funding.) The DOE will first try to assign a provider from an agency. If the CSE cannot find a provider, they will send Related Service Authorizations (RSAs) to the families. The SSL must collect these RSAs and use them (like cash coupons) to contract with an agency.

Both processes are outlined in detail on the next page.

Please note any related services provided to scholars with a 504 Plan **are not** billed to the district partner. These are costs incurred by Achievement First.

#### Initiating Related Services in New York (New York only)

Initiating Related Services has been a pain point at some New York Schools in the past. In the chart on the next page, answer the questions about RS providers and how they will be paid for in 17-18. Then, think about your program in previous years and reflect on how each step in initiating RS has happened in the past. Note that if you are a new SSL this year, you may need to speak with your Principal about this.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **New York: Initiating Related Services** | | | |
|  | (**BEFORE** August)  Pre-requisite Steps:   * Meet with your Principal to determine how you will provide services (via the DOE or contracting with a provider). * Compile a list of all of the Related Service needs for students with IEPs in an Excel sheet or Google doc (include student name, OSIS #, service type, frequency, duration and group size). * Readiness Task: **Answer the questions in the box below to explain how this works at your school.**  |  | | --- | | **Related Services Provided by a school staff member:**  **Related Services *school* will pay for:**  **Related Services school will *acquire* through the CSE/DOE:**  **Timeline for compiling the list of students and services they require (date by which your related services list will be compiled):** | | | | |
| **If you are using a NYC DOE Provider:** | | Readiness Task **Read the notes about each step of initiating Related Services at left and right. Then, indicate notes regarding how this has looked different at your school in the past. Note: If you’re new this year, you will need to discuss with your Principal to complete the task.** | **If the school is paying for a provider**  **(via a contract service):** |
| **Take the complied list of all students with IEPs for whom you will need a DOE service provider (include the student name, OSIS #, service type, frequency, duration and group size) and email this list to your CSE team contact in August, including your building’s DBN number, and let them know you need a DOE service provider.** Call to follow up that the information was received and went to the correct people. (Each CSE handles this process slightly differently and it will be the SSL’s job to figure out the nuances of working with your unique CSE.) | |  | **Email this list to your CSE team contact and let them know you’ll provide services yourself**. Call to follow up that the information was received and went to the correct people. (Each CSE handles this process slightly differently and it will be the SSL’s job to figure out the nuances of working with your unique CSE.) |
| The local CSE has 10 days to assign a Related Service agency to your school site. If they find an agency, they will send the agency (like OMNI or RCM) to your school site.  Notes:  - There have been times when an agency has sent a provider to a school without giving the SSL advanced warning. In the case that this happens, contact the agency and let them know that you need at least 48 hours’ notice to set-up an interview.  - If your school is assigned an agency, your school cannot “ask for” RSAs. You must stick with the assigned provider or talk to your principal about paying for services from the school’s budget. | |  | Reach out to available agencies, interview providers, select a provider and ask the agency to draft a contract.   * 1. Reach out to the agency and introduce yourself. Explain scheduling needs, AF professional policies, volume of caseload and request a provider who is able and willing to meet the expectations of working in an AF school. Set-up an interview with one of their providers.   2. Interview the agency’s providers—if the first person is not strong, it is OK to ask the agency to send someone else. |
| If you are assigned a DOE Provider:   * 1. Reach out to the agency and introduce yourself. Explain scheduling needs, AF professional policies, volume of caseload and request a provider who is able and willing to meet the expectations of working in an AF school. Set-up an interview with one of their providers.   2. Interview the agency’s providers—if the first person is not strong, it is OK to ask the agency to send someone else though they are not required to comply. | |  | Ensure your DSO has a copy of the agency’s contract and has signed/sent it back. The DSO is ultimately responsible for signing and sending the contract to the contract service. |
| If, after 10 days, the CSE cannot find an agency for your school, they will send a Related Service Authorization (RSA) “voucher” to the families’ homes or your school site.   1. Collect the vouchers and contact a DOE approved agency to coordinate services.   **Note:** The CSE will send an updated “DOE approved agencies” list at the beginning of the year. If you do not receive one, please reach out to your CSE. (The lists are specific for each geographical district.) | |  |  |

## Initiating Related Services in Connecticut

**Overview**

**Services can either be delivered through a provider from the district or contracted from an agency.** With the exception of a school social worker, most Achievement First schools do not hire related service providers as full time staff members. In New Haven and Bridgeport, schools are required to use district providers and in Hartford, schools contract with the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) for related services providers.

Although school begins in August, related services begin when our district partner begins school.

**How the Related Service Process Works:**

The chart and table below outline the payment and provider options available in Connecticut:

Please note any related services provided to scholars with a 504 Plan **are not** billed to the district partner. These are costs incurred by Achievement First.

#### Initiating Related Services in Connecticut (Bridgeport, New Haven and Hartford only)

Think about the action steps you must take to initiate Related Services for your scholars for 17-18. In the chart on the next page, fill in the blank spaces (highlighted in green) regarding when and how you will engage in various best practices to effectively get services up and running.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Connecticut: Initiating Related Services** | | | |
| (**BEFORE** August)  Pre-requisite Steps:   * Compile a list of all of the students’ IEPs Related Service needs in an Excel sheet or Google doc (student, ID#, service, frequency, duration and group size). * HARTFORD: Meet with your Principal and DSO to discuss the services your scholar’s need, the previous CREC service providers and the process for billing HPS. * Readiness Task: **Fill in the information below! You may need to confirm with your principal or DSO.**  |  | | --- | | **Related Services provided by a school staff member:**  **Related Services school will pay for (and reimburse in Hartford):**  **Related Services school will acquire through the district:**  **Timeline for compiling the list of students and services they require (date by which list will be compiled):** | | | | |
| **If you are using a District Provider:** | | Readiness Task **When will you engage in this action?** | **If the school is paying for a provider (Hartford):** | |
| Email your related services list to your district partner contact and determine what services the district provides. | |  | Review available service providers from CREC and select related service providers for speech, social work, occupational and physical therapy. Choose to continue the providers from the previous year or meet with potential new providers. | |
| When you are assigned a District Provider: reach out and introduce yourself. Explain scheduling needs, AF professional policies and volume of caseload and request a provider who is able and willing to meet the expectations of working in your school. Set up an initial meeting before services begin to discuss services, systems & schedule. | |  | When you finalize your CREC provider: explain scheduling needs, AF professional policies and volume of caseload and request a provider who is able and willing to meet the expectations of working in your school. Set up an initial meeting before services begin to discuss services, systems & schedule. | |
|  | |  | The DSO is ultimately responsible for signing and sending the contract to the contract service. It is the SSL’s job to ensure this happens. | |

## Initiating Related Services in Rhode Island

**Overview**

**Services can either be contracted from an agency or hired as full time staff members.** In Rhode Island, Achievement First has hired school social workers and speech pathologists as full time staff. Services can be provided as part of IEP requirements, 504 requirements, or as a response-to-intervention approach.

Because Rhode Island contracts or hires all providers, services should begin at the start of school, but no later than the second week of school.

**How the Related Service Process Works:**

The chart and table below outline the payment and provider options available in Rhode Island:

#### Initiating Related Services in Rhode Island (Rhode Island only)

Think about the action steps you must take to initiate Related Services for your scholars for 17-18. In the chart on the next page, fill in the blank spaces (highlighted in green) regarding when and how you will engage in various best practices to effectively get services up and running.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Rhode Island: Initiating Related Services** | | |
|  | (**BEFORE** August)  Pre-requisite Steps:   * Meet with your Principal and DSO to determine how you will provide services (via contracting with a provider or through a full time hire). Most schools will do a combination of both based on need and budget. * Compile a list of all of the Related Service needs for students with IEPs in an Excel sheet or Google doc (include student name, grade, service type, frequency, duration and group size). * Readiness Task: **When will you compile this list and meet with your principal? Put that information in the box below, and then send an Outlook invite for this meeting now!**  |  | | --- | |  | | | |
| **If the school is hiring a full time provider:** | | Readiness Task **When will you engage in this action?** | **If the school is paying for a provider**  **(via a contract service):** |
| **Reach out to Team Recruit, cc-ing your Principal and your Team SS Director to explain your related services need.** Team Recruit may need additional information from you, including job description (if it is a new full-time hire), potential interview questions and required certification. | |  | **Use this list to determine approximate number of hours and number of scholars in the caseload for each provider.** You will need this information when you reach out to local agencies. |
| **Attend interviews of potential providers.**  Notes:  -The final decision on whether to hire a provider is up to each school and is usually made by the school Principal and SSL.  -Team Recruit will own providing an offer letter to a selected candidate. | |  | **Reach out to available agencies (usually CBS Therapy or TherapyWorks), interview providers, select a provider, and ask the agency to draft a contract.**   1. Reach out to the agency and introduce yourself. Explain scheduling needs, AF professional policies, volume of caseload and request a provider who is able and willing to meet the expectations of working in an AF school. Set-up an interview with one of their providers. 2. Interview the agency’s providers—if the first person is not strong, it is OK to ask the agency to send someone else. |
|  | |  | **Ensure your DSO has a copy of the agency’s contract and has signed/sent it back.** The DSO is ultimately responsible for signing and sending the contract to the contract service. It is the SSL’s job to ensure this happens. |

# **Child Find Overview**

**Overview:**

Under federal and state special education requirements, Achievement First is obligated to identify students who may qualify for special education. When a student aged 3 – 21 has a disability recognized under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and when that disability negatively impacts educational performance, that student qualifies for special education and related services. Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, qualified students who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities are entitled to accommodations designed to meet those students’ individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met.

IDEA and Section 504 require that all students with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE), which means an identified student is provided special education, educational accommodations and/or related services (if necessary) that meet his or her individual needs at no cost to the student’s family.

**Common Challenges to Child Find**

As a network, we want to candidly clarify the challenges we may face when implementing Child Find, as well as our proactive approach to ensuring we are identifying the right scholars.

* *Difficulty Identifying Students who already have IEPs—*In order to best prepare for our incoming scholars, schools need to know which scholars have IEPs and the content of their IEPs in the spring and early summer. In Connecticut and New York, we don’t have consistent access to the district systems until a scholar enrolls. This means schools are not receiving updated copies of an IEP until September or sometimes October. In Rhode Island, we never receive access to the district systems, which means we rely entirely on families and contacts within the district to share scholar files.
* *Difficulty Identifying Students who already have 504 plans*— In many districts, including those AF partners with in CT and NY, 504 plans are kept at the school, not district, level. This means that even once access to the district systems is granted, the 504 plans may not be included in student records. This means the family is the main, and sometimes only, source of information regarding a student’s 504 plan.
* *Response to Intervention as a Barrier for Referral* —Schools use interventions to ensure every scholar receives the academic and behavioral support he/she needs to be successful in the classroom. Ensuring that strong interventions are occurring in most cases is important. Lack of strong interventions have occasionally resulted in a denial of evaluations by our district partners. In any event, although interventions are a great benchmark for the performance of a scholar, **denying or delaying evaluation for special education services on the sole basis that interventions are not in place is a violation of Child Find**. Therefore, while we rarely make referrals before scholars have been enrolled in interventions, there are cases where we may need to do so.
* *Inconsistencies in Referring Potential Students with Disabilities*— Across our network, schools’ referral rates vary greatly; last year alone, schools referred between two and twenty-one scholars to partner districts for evaluation for IEPs. Though we expect there to be some difference across schools (given that we work within five distinct districts), consistent referral practices and internal processes will reduce this variance and allow us to collect best practices.
* *Under-Enrollment of Students with Disabilities*— While we try to balance the over-referral and under-referral of potential students with disabilities, the majority of AF schools do not yet serve similar populations to our local community schools. Additionally, our various geographic locations set clear enrollment targets for students with disabilities based on the local district population. We are working to meet these targets as part of the charter reauthorization process.

**Our mission calls for us to overcome these challenges to implement a common Child Find process across the network. This consistent practice will ensure we have the right supports in place for scholars with disabilities.**

**How do we Implement Child Find?**

As a network we take steps throughout the year to identify new scholars who are already diagnosed with disabilities, as well as to uncover returning scholars who potentially have as-yet undiagnosed disabilities. Our common process includes:

* Identify newly enrolled scholars who have a disability and IEP/504 Plan throughout the matriculation to enrollment process,
* Use universal screeners in ELA and math to identify both new and returning scholars who are performing below grade- and age-level expectations,
* Use behavioral triggers to identify both new and returning scholars who have lagging skills leading to behaviors that impact their ability to consistently access the core curriculum and instruction,
* Leverage our core practices, including Response to Intervention (RTI) and Child Study Teams (CST)[[4]](#footnote-3) , to identify both new and returning scholars who may have disabilities.
* Data-driven, Team Special Services meetings at least three times annually, which include a holistic approach to looking at struggling scholar data (behavioral, academic, socio-emotional) and making recommendations to the school-based CST about best practices and next support steps, which may include referral for special education evaluation.

Although the Child Find statue is federally mandated, there are nuances across our partner districts. Below, we’ve outlined detailed processes for each district partnership so that we can consistently implement a common Child Find process across the network.

**Strategy for Identifying Incoming Scholars who Have IEPs or 504 Plans**

Throughout the enrollment process, schools must identify all incoming scholars who already have IEPs or Section 504 plans, or scholars who have received RTI interventions previously, in order to best prepare programs and school teams for their arrival. **Our goal is that all schools know which incoming scholars have disabilities and which scholars require additional intervention supports BEFORE the first day of school to ensure there are no gaps in services and supports.**

The graphic below illustrates our aggressive strategy for identifying scholars with disabilities throughout the enrollment process (from lottery application to matriculation). The process varies between each district partner, but there are a few milestones that are true for every AF school & partnership.

**Network Child Find Process**

#### Child Find for Incoming Scholars

After reading the graph on the previous page, think about how you will communicate with your operations staff to ensure that they are aware of their role in Child Find. At this meeting you should discuss how Ops is getting information from families about scholars who potentially have IEPs or 504 plans and which families you should reach out to during family chats. This meeting should also be a time to share the [recommended language for talking to a parent about their child’s disability status](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Recommended%20Language%20for%20Talking%20to%20Parents%20about%20their%20Child.pdf).

|  |
| --- |
| **Meeting Attendees:**  **Day and Time of Meeting:**  **I will know this meeting is successful if….** |

**General Guidance**

* At AF, we are guided by a deep commitment to provide a high-quality education to any scholar who comes through the lottery process. This is especially true for scholars eligible for Special Education Services who are impacted by the achievement gap in even more drastic ways.[[5]](#footnote-4)
* Obtaining IEPs, 504 plans, evaluations, and other pertinent paperwork through our host districts can be exceedingly difficult since we do not have access to the district’s online systems until a scholar formally enrolls in Connecticut and New York, or at all in Rhode Island. **Therefore, we know that asking parents directly for copies of paperwork is one of the most effective ways of obtaining a child’s IEP and evaluations.**
* We recognize that parents can be reluctant to let AF know if their child has an IEP or 504 plan. Charter schools are legally prohibited from discriminating against incoming students based on disability or intellectual ability, however in rare cases, charter schools have held “counseling out” conversations which contribute to parents’ hesitancy to share a child’s IEP/504 status. Parents are often fearful that their child might be rejected if they disclose their child’s disability status. It’s our responsibility to reassure parents that we cannot remove a scholar for having a disability and we are committed and legally required to provide their scholar an education which meets his/her educational needs. Communicate that it is **in the child’s best interest** to disclose this information early. Early access to the IEP or 504 plan will allow the school to adequately prepare for the scholar’s arrival.
* We recognize that parents may not always be certain of whether their child has an IEP or 504 plan, depending on how well the student’s prior placement has partnered with the family and communicated this information. Asking questions such as whether the student has ever been evaluated, whether the student has testing accommodations, or whether the student receives speech therapy, physical therapy, or other related services, can help determine whether a student has an IEP or 504 plan.
* Given that there is considerable room for miscommunication and that some families are understandably hesitant to disclose their child’s disability status, we ask parents in multiple ways throughout the matriculation process if their child has a disability AND partner with them to obtain all children’s IEPs/504 plans and evaluations.

## Considering Students’ Incoming Programs

Achievement First's core program – smaller class sizes, intensive reading focus, data-based instructional decisions and response to intervention approach – is based on a model that incorporates many best practices from the foundations of strong special education. While we cannot serve every child in every circumstance (no school can), we *can* serve the vast majority of students who come to us, including many students with more restrictive placement recommendations on their IEPs.

Almost all students can be served within our continuum of services. IEP program recommendations are written by an IEP team taking into account the student’s current environment. When the environment changes, we must revisit the recommendations and consider whether the child can be served well with a different IEP at AF, while recognizing that some students do indeed need a smaller, more specialized environment.

**New York Nuances**

NY policy gives us the latitude to work with the local district/CSE to re-write the IEP based on our approach. This is consistent with recommendations from our local districts, like NYC’s policy reprinted below.

“Recommendations for Students in Charter Schools: Charter schools are exempt from all State requirements relating to class size and instructional groupings, and are not required to follow or to provide program and services in accordance with the Department of Education’s continuum. Thus for a student enrolling in a charter school, the IEP Team should consider the school’s innovative approach to the delivery of special education in determining the programmatic needs of the student.”

- NYC Department of Education, page 101, Standard Operating Procedures Manual (for Special Education)

By law, we cannot deny a child a seat at an AF school because of his/her disability. The law is written below:

“Non-Discrimination Statement: “A charter school shall not discriminate against any student on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability or any other ground that would be unlawful if done by a school. Admission of students shall not be limited on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, disability, race, creed, gender, national origin, religion or ancestry. A school may not require any action by a student or family (such as an interview, an essay, attendance at an information session, etc.) in order for an applicant to either receive or submit an application for admission to that school. However, a charter school is permitted to be established as a single-sex charter school or a charter school designed to provide *expanded* learning opportunities for students at-risk of academic failure or students with disabilities and English language learners.” - [NY Charter Law](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/about.html)

“[Charter schools] must provide free, nonsectarian education to students enrolled, and must be accessible to all children, regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, sexual preference, proficiency in English, physical or mental disability, or athletic achievement.”

- [CT Charter Law](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/equity/charter/faqs.pdf)

“All students and prospective students of a charter school shall be deemed to be public school students, having all the same rights under Federal and Rhode Island law as students and prospective students at a non-chartered public school.” – [RI Statute](http://www.ribghe.org/pdfs/6a031113.pdf)

At the same time, we have the humility to recognize that AF is not the ideal setting for every child. Our goals in considering students’ incoming programs are to:

1. Welcome the family to AF and affirm their right to register their child at our school,
2. Provide clear information about what our program can and cannot provide relative to what is currently recommended on their child’s IEP,
3. Share context about results we have seen (and not seen) when working with students with similar IEPs or needs, and
4. Empower the family to make an informed choice about what they believe will be the best setting for their child

**How do we consider incoming students with more restrictive programs on their current IEPs?**

When students with IEPs that call for more restrictive placements than AF offer are accepted in the lottery, we always affirm the right of the parent to have a place at AF. We are also very clear about the strengths and challenges of our program, what we can and can’t offer and what supports we’ve given students who are similar in profile—acknowledging that every student is different and it’s hard to glean a great deal from files and brief introductions. We aim to share examples of similar students who have been successful and those who haven’t. Note that for the 17-18 school year, we are launching AF Empower, which *does* offer a 12:1:1 setting for New York elementary students only. **Because we are still determining entry criteria for this program, it is best practice to discuss any scholars with more restrictive settings on their IEPs with your TSS Director to determine next steps on an individual basis.**

See below for specific steps and more detail.

***When a student with a more restrictive environment (NY: 12:1:1 or smaller; CT: Typically 25+ service hours/week; RI: self-contained placement) enters an incoming class, the following process should occur:***

**Step 1: Collect Paperwork from Parents (Owner: SSL; Timeline: Spring and Summer)**

* Throughout the spring and summer, SSLs should work with the Operations Team to obtain all IEP paperwork.
* We do not have access to the district systems until the student is formally enrolled – waiting until September does not allow us to prepare for scholars’ arrival on the first day.

**Step 2: SSL and Director of SS Meeting (Owner: SSL; Timeline: August OR within 3 days of receiving the IEP, prior to the meeting with the PARENT of students with a more restrictive IEP.) For students with more restrictive IEPs, we try to have these meetings as soon as possible after we receive the information from a data system or from the parent. In most cases, the meetings happen before August.**

* Review more restrictive IEPs with your Director of SS in order to prepare for the in-person conversation. Bring this information to your check-in with Director.
* Review the student’s paperwork to prepare for the parent meeting. (TSS will be monitoring and tracking students who fall in this category.)
* Prepare [agenda](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Suggested%20Agendas%20for%20Meeting%20with%20Scholars%20with%20More%20Restrictive%20Placements%20on%20their%20IEPs.docx) and practice key messages for meetings (using table below).
* Schedule in-person conversations with families.

**Step 3: IN PERSON Conversation with parents of students with more restrictive placements (Owner: SSL and Principal; Timeline: August before the first day of school OR within 10 days of receiving the IEP)**

* Meet with families using the agenda /key messages that the SSL and Director of SS prepared, [in the appendix.](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Suggested%20Agendas%20for%20Meeting%20with%20Scholars%20with%20More%20Restrictive%20Placements%20on%20their%20IEPs.docx)
* Keep very clear records of this conversation in Infinite Campus – what the school said, what parents said – for reference in future conversations.

**New York Nuances**

The charter sector as a whole has shifted in the past several years. Special education systems have changed in the past decade which has impacted the reasons why families are choosing our schools. A decade ago, students received a classification for a specific service and then could essentially shop around for the program they wanted. Students could choose to not go back to their neighborhood school and we could partner with families to find great programs for kids who were not a total fit for the programs we offered. This process has changed this past year where students with IEPs are sent back to their district schools and district schools are expected to provide for a much wider range of settings for students. It has essentially limited options for parents of special needs kids in a big way. As a result, we’ve seen that parents are exploring alternative avenues to find better options for their students and so, we have families of students with a multitude of needs choosing to stay with us longer.

**Step 4: Progress Meeting Check (Owner: SSL and Principal; Timeline: 4-6 weeks after the first day of school OR within 20 days of receiving the IEP)**

* Key Points and Agenda: This is a follow-up from the original intake meeting.
  + The last time we spoke, we talked about the special education supports we typically provide and reviewed your scholar’s IEP.
  + We named your right as a parent to choose the best placement for your child, including at AF, what your child’s IEP called for, and what AF’s program does offer (and doesn’t offer.) Here is a summary of that: (refer to notes from previous conversation / agenda in step 2 to support this).
  + Today, we’re here to discuss how your student is doing.
  + [Share student’s progress – First, start with evidence that you see/appreciate/know the child, and then be as data-based as possible, including qualitative and quantitative measures. Also be as honest as possible, naming where the child is succeeding – and the level of challenge you are seeing, including issues where the child may be struggling with decreased supports.]
  + What else are you seeing?
  + Discuss what additional supports and interventions are needed at this time and can be put in place (Tier 2, Tier 3.)
  + If the child is being largely successful, affirm what is working and what the school and parent can do to continue the positive trajectory.
  + Explain that the next step will be for us to schedule a meeting with the district to revisit your child’s IEP. They may choose to wait until his/her annual review, or they may choose to schedule a meeting now to change your student’s IEP. What questions do you have?
* Throughout the process, parents have choice. They can continue to accept the AF placement or can choose to pursue a district placement.

\*\* In extraordinary and very rare cases, Regional Superintendents, Principals, or Directors of SS can convene a select committee (consisting of Doug, VP of Special Services, Regional Supt, and Director of SS) to problem-solve and potentially request expedited Tier 3 or 4 supports.

**Step 6: Follow Up and Continued Support (Owner: SSL)**

We continue to do everything in our power to best support the scholar. This includes communicating transparently with parents about the student’s progress, adjusting supports to meet the need of the scholar, and using data to ensure that our approach is working.

**Strategy for Identifying Current Scholars with a Potential Disability**

The Child Find process continues throughout a scholar’s academic career at AF. Our schools provide all scholars with a rigorous course of study in order to prepare them to go to and through college. At the same time, it’s a school’s obligation to identify scholars who are struggling both academically and behaviorally. In cases where this is true, schools must take steps to increase support and determine if a scholar may have a disability.

Our primary mechanism to identify students who may qualify for special education is the Response to Intervention (RTI) process.[[6]](#footnote-5) We believe that providing early and robust interventions[[7]](#footnote-6) which are scientifically-based can simultaneously help us identify students who may qualify for special education services *and* stem the over-identification of racial minorities in special education. We rely on regular data review and an active Child Study Team to determine which students may require more intense interventions and/or should be referred to the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) (CT), the Committee on Special Education (NY), or the Evaluation Team (RI) for an initial evaluation to determine eligibility for Special Education and related services.

RTI interventions encompass a high quality curriculum and instruction in the general education classroom, as well as tier 2 interventions (academic or behavioral supports beyond what is offered in the general classrooms) and tier 3 interventions (more rigorous, and/or individualized, and/or frequent intervention, and/or a behavior intervention plan[[8]](#footnote-7) ) for the scholars who need the most support.

**General Guidance**

* As leaders in the education reform movement, we have two responsibilities: ***ensuring that scholars have access to a strong, Common Core-aligned curriculum, and filling in remedial gaps to make sure students can access this curriculum.***
* AF uses a system of regular, research-based universal screeners to identify scholars who are preforming below grade level academically, ensuring that no scholars are overlooked in the classroom. Scholars who do not perform as expected on universal screeners are then given additional testing to identify the source of academic gaps. Scholars are then placed into RTI (Response to Intervention) programs to address individual needs.
* AF’s core practices involve strong culture systems and clear behavioral expectations. Scholars that consistently struggle with meeting behavioral expectations are identified through school and network-level triggers (such as the number and frequency of consequences assigned) and receive more individualized behavioral supports through RTI.”]
* The achievement gap is at the core of our RTI work. Historically, schools that are impacted by the achievement gap and lack a systematic RTI process for academic and behavior needs have misdiagnosed, or under- or over-diagnosed disabilities. With systematic interventions, we’re able to ***accurately*** parse out scholars who may have disabilities from scholars whose lack of previous strong instruction manifests itself as a potential disability.
* In conjunction with a universal screeners and a strong RTI program to assist schools in identifying scholars with a potential disability, we also implement school-based Child Study Teams (CST). CSTs are comprised of members of the Leadership Team and teachers from a variety of disciplines who collect and evaluate data, make recommendations for supports and determine if a scholar may have a disability and should be referred for a special education evaluation.

Although the RTI process is a best practice as a precursor to referral for special education, **there are times when a scholar will be in the referral process for special education while they are receiving interventions for the first time**.

**ELLs**

It is just as critical to our mission and the academic success of all our scholars to identify scholars who are English Language Learners as it is to identify students with disabilities. During the detailed process from lottery to matriculation, we should engage parents in identifying scholars who have received or will require English as a Second Language services. It is our duty and responsibility to provide ESL programs and supports to scholars who speak a language other than English.

# Case Management

Case Management is the process by which the SSL effectively assigns and manages the compliance work across special educators in a school. The SSL is responsible for the quality and timeliness of all components of every IEP/504 plan. However, it is not possible for a Special Services Leader to write *all* IEPs/504 plans and manage *all* compliance processes across a fully grown school. Through strong delegation (clear expectations, feedback and coaching), the SSL distributes responsibilities across learning specialists (NY)/special education teachers (CT/RI). For a more comprehensive list of the role of the learning specialist/special education teacher, please see the appendix for [R & Rs](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Learning%20Specialist_Special%20Education%20Teacher%20Roles%20and%20Responsibilities.docx).

**Case Management Structure**

Special educators across grade levels should be responsible for a cohort of scholars and these teachers’ responsibilities are outlined below. Ultimate ownership falls to the Special Services Leader who is responsible for ensuring all case managers, a) understand case management responsibilities, b) know when/how they should complete case management work and, c) engage in the work at a quality level. While this structure exists for most schools, it is worth mentioning that in the first several years of a school, the SSL is often the case manager for all students.

#### Case Management

Read the information below and then consider your staff for the 17-18 school year. (You may not have all of this information at this time – fill in what you *do* know now and come back to update the Playbook in August as needed.) Who will support scholars as case manager in each grade? How many scholars will each case manager support? How and when will you train case managers on their responsibilities?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **Name of Case Manager** | **Approx. Number of Students h/she will case manage** |
|  |  |  |
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| --- |
| **HOW and WHEN Case Managers will be trained on their responsibilities:** |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Dean of Special Services Responsibilities** | **Case Manager Roles and Responsibilities** |
| * Engage in all communication to the district (including scheduling IEP meetings, triennials, MDRs and initial referrals) * Facilitate all meetings * Ensure all IEP components and IEPs-at-a-Glance are high quality by coaching and providing feedback to case managers * Responsible for communication to related service providers, including gathering input for IEP meetings and progress reports * Update IC * Hold teachers accountable to implementing the IEP * Prepare for MDRs * Approve 504 plans and facilitate 504 meetings * Review Case Management in Claimspro (RI only) * Set up and oversee the Time Study for relevant staff, referring to the Claimspro [Time Study codes](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Time%20Study%20Codes.docx) and the [Claimspro Time Study Step-by-Step Guide (RI only)](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/ClaimsPro%20Time%20Study%20Guide_Step%20by%20Step.doc) | * Compile data for initial referrals and draft initial referrals * Gather teacher input forms * Draft PLAFPs/PLOPs and IEP Goals * Communicate IEP meetings to families * Attend IEP meetings (sometimes via phone) * Update IEPs-at-a-Glance and send out to team after IEP meetings * Draft IEP Progress Reports * Monitor student progress (as needed) * Gather input for and drafts 504 plans * Log Case Management (including providing services) in ClaimsPro (RI only) |

**Regular Communication Structures**

In order to facilitate effective, compliant special services at your school, regular communication to your team (both internal and external) is imperative. This communication is outlined at a high-level in the graph below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What it is…** | **What it entails…** |
| District [Communication](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/District%20Communication%20Wrap-Up%20Email%20Example.docx) Wrap-Up (NY and CT only) | At least monthly, send a single, clear email summary email to the district (cc-ing your Director of Special Services):   * Follow up on any outstanding asks * Confirm upcoming meeting dates for other scholars * Confirm upcoming evaluations for other scholars   This does not replace consistent day-to-day communication as needed, and is for students with IEPs ONLY (504 plans are handled at the school level.) |
| District Communication Wrap-Up (New York and Connecticut Only) **How frequently (what interval) will you send a wrap up email to your district?:**  **Draft a template of the email you will send below (see the** [**sample**](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Sample%20District%20Communication.docx) **in the appendix):** | |
| Summary [Communication](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Summary%20Communication%20to%20Case%20Managers.docx) to Case Managers | At least monthly, send a single, clear email to your internal team to summarize upcoming case management responsibilities (remember to include related services providers!). The email should:   * Confirm upcoming IEP or 504 meeting dates * Summarize upcoming asks by student (i.e.: “PLOPs for \_\_\_ due by \_\_\_”) * Clearly name specific action steps and due dates * Communicate learnings or outcomes from previous meetings (i.e.: changes in services or program) * Follow-up on any outstanding asks * Share best practices (i.e:. “When writing PLOPs, remember to …”) * Celebrate team members and build community |
| Summary Communication to Case Managers **How frequently (what interval) will you send communication to your case managers?:**  **Draft a template of the email you will send below (see the** [**sample**](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Sample%20District%20Communication.docx) **in the appendix):** | |

## Initial Referrals

**Overview**

**One of the most important Case Management responsibilities of the SSL is overseeing the initial referral process. An initial referral is a written statement (with supporting data) asking that the district evaluate a child to determine if s/he needs special education services available through an IEP.** In NY and CT, the referral can be initiated by the school or by the student’s family, and the referral must be submitted to the partner district that conducts the evaluations. In RI, the referral is an internal process that can be initiated by the school or by the student’s family. In all regions, we aim for the vast majority of referrals to be submitted *by* the school on behalf of the family, after discussion with the family.

Once a referral is submitted, **a *series of meetings and evaluations must occur in a specified timeframe. Informed parental consent is required to begin the initial referral process.*** The timeframe and consent parameters are mandated by the federal government and are made more specific by the state and local district.However, at a high level, the same process occurs whenever a student is referred; the student is evaluated and these evaluations are used to determine if the student has a disability and is eligible for services. For detailed and regional-specific information about timing and process, see the [Initial Referral Process by Region](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Initial%20Referral%20Process%20by%20Region.docx) chart in the appendix.

Although Achievement First has established a consistent school-initiated referral process across all five partner districts, there are distinctions in how schools partner with each district to complete the referral process.

|  |
| --- |
| * In New York, it is good practice for teachers, administrators and parents to meet to review student data and determine whether or not the student should be referred to the CSE for an evaluation before submitting the initial referral. **However, if a parent requests a referral for initial evaluation, do not wait to have a meeting. Submit the request to the CSE within 48 hours.** |

|  |
| --- |
| * In Connecticut, the referral leads to a PPT#1 with the parent, district representative and school personnel to determine whether the student should be evaluated for special education services. Physicians, clinic workers, or social workers, with parent consent, may also refer a student to a PPT#1 to determine his/her eligibility for special education and related services. In Connecticut, it is also expected that a PPT #1 be called when a child demonstrates a pattern of chronic absenteeism (usually 15 or more cumulative absences.) |

|  |
| --- |
| * In Rhode Island, a referral leads to a meeting conducted by the LEA (Achievement First) within ten days of receipt. At the meeting, the referral is reviewed by the parent and evaluation team to determine if a special education evaluation is warranted. |

**Components of an AF Initial Referral**

**Parental involvement is critical to the initial referral and evaluation process.** To ensure parents are an integral part of the process, the following statements **must be true**:

* Parents deeply understand a students’ support plan, progress to date and areas where additional support is needed.
* Parents know that a referral is the first step toward *potentially* receiving special education services.
* Parents understand the process, their rights, and how and when to advocate for their child.

The next stage is crafting an initial referral that is comprehensive to reflect a scholar’s documented need. **All initial referrals MUST include:**

* [The AF Initial Referral Form](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/AF%20NY%20Initial%20Referral%20Form%20-%20template.docx)
* CT and NY only: A letter from the [parent](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Parent%20Communication%20Requesting%20and%20Supporting%20Referral.docx) explaining why they support the referral request and/or why they are requesting the evaluation. (In rare cases, the school may submit an initial referral from the family. In these cases, loop in your Director of SS first.)
* RI only: [The Group Review of Referral and Evaluation or Re-Evaluation Report](http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Students-and-Families-Great-Schools/Special-Education/Special-Education-Resources/SLD-Guidance.pdf), on pages 62 – 65 of Rhode Island’s SL Guidance.
* All supporting data including:
  + Current academic data (assessment history, progress trackers and grades)
  + Attendance reports
  + Behavior data
  + RTI data including progress goals and tracking
  + Teacher input
  + Parent input

After SSLs have compiled all the necessary information, the referral is submitted to the district partner on behalf of AF and the scholar’s parents (CT/ NY), or is used to begin the evaluation process (RI).

### New York: Initial Referrals

The table below is an overview of the steps for the different ways an initial referral can be requested.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Referral Type** | **District/School Notification** | **Supporting Documentation** | **Parent Notification and Consent** |
| **Parent Initiated—directly to CSE**  **(rare)** | The CSE will forward a copy of the referral to the school **within 5 days** of receiving it. | SSL will submit all supporting documentation to the CSE when notified of the parent referral. | Within **ten school days** of receiving the referral request, the CSE needs to obtain signed consent from parents to evaluate the student.  If the CSE has not been able to contact parents for consent **within 30 calendar days**, they may close the case.  Parents can withdraw consent at any time in the process. If this happens, the CSE has **10 calendar days** from the parent withdrawing consent to send a Written Notice of Withdrawal of Consent to parents.  **School Initiated Requests:**  Within **10 schools days** of receiving the school request for referral, the CSE must make at least two attempts to contact parents by telephone at different times of the school day and a follow-up letter must be sent to the parent by mail. |
| **Parent Initiated—directly to school** | SSL:  The SSL must record the date the referral is received and submit the request (including all supporting documentation) to the CSE **within 24 hours** of receipt. | (SSL will submit supporting documentation with the request for initial referral.) |
| CSE:  Once the CSE receives the referral, they upload it into SESIS. |
| **School Initiated**  **(most common)** | SSL: Submits initial referral **and all supporting documentation** to the CSE. |
| CSE:  Once the CSE receives the referral, they upload it into SESIS. |

The table below outlines the process and timeline for the evaluation process:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Steps to Move Forward on an Initial Referral AFTER the CSE has received the request** | **Timeline**  **(school days)** | **SSL Responsibilities** | | **CSE Responsibilities** | **Parent Responsibilities** |
| **CSE receives request for initial referral** |  | The process is slightly different if the school initiates the referral, if a parent brings a request for referral to the school, or a parent brings a request for referral directly to the district. See initial referral section above. | | | |
| **Initial Referral is entered into SESIS** | Day 0  (The procedural safeguard timeline starts ticking when the CSE receives the referral.) | Check SESIS to see if the initial referral has been entered.  Call or email the CSE to prompt them to enter the initial referral into SESIS. | Enters the initial referral into SESIS. | | N/A |
| **Parent Notification and Consent**  **(Consent for Evaluation)** | Day 10 | Call the parents to explain what consent is, why it’s important, and how to contact the CSE if they have not received a consent form. | Within **10 schools days** of receiving the school request for referral, the CSE must make at least two attempts to contact parents by telephone at different times of the school day and a follow-up letter must be sent to the parent by mail. | | Give consent to evaluate. |
| **Evaluations are conducted** | Before Day 60 | Explain to the student (in student friendly language) what an evaluation is and what it is for. This can include introducing the student to the evaluator. | Scheduling evaluations with the parent and school | | Stay in close contact |
| **Prepare for eligibility meeting and have eligibility meeting (see meeting preparation protocols for more details)** | Day 60 | Follow-up with the CSE if you do not have the evaluations (See the “meeting participation” section.) | Share the evaluations with the parent and school  (See the “meeting participation” section.) | | Preview the evaluation materials.  (See the “meeting participation” section.) |
| If the timeline to conduct evaluations is overdue or beyond the procedural timeline, loop in Team Special Services for support. | | | | | |

### Connecticut: Initial Referrals

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Referral Type** | **District/School Notification** | **Supporting Documentation** | **Parent Notification and Consent** | **Evaluations** | **Eligibility Meeting (and sometimes IEP Meeting)** | **Follow-Up** |
| **Parent Initiated—directly to District Partner**  **(rare)** | The district parent will forward a copy of the referral to the school. Within 5 calendar days, the PPT 1 must be scheduled. | SSL will compile all supporting documents and confer with school team members to discuss during PPT 1. The documentation should be similar to the data collected for an AF initial referral although this was initiated by the parents. | At PPT 1, the team will decide whether to accept the referral and move forward with evaluations. If testing is accepted, parent consent is obtained at the meeting.  Parents can withdraw consent at any time in the process and must be documented during the PPT meeting or through signed consent stating their desire not to peruse evaluations. | The evaluation must be completed within 45 school days of receipt of the written referral.  See the Assessments and Evaluations section for more information on the assessments conducted during the evaluation. | Written notice of referral shall be sent to parents no later than 5 days after date of referral.  At least 5 school days prior to the PPT meeting, the district or AF school (depending on your partner district) must send this notice to parents to confirm the meeting date, time and location.  The notice must be sent in the parent’s dominant language.  At least 3 days prior to PPT #2, partner district or AF school (depending on who conducted evaluations) needs to send copies of all evaluations and if applicable, IEP, to parents and schools, upon parent request.  The eligibility and IEP meeting must be held within 45 school days of the district partner or AF Hartford submitting initial referral. (This timeline does not include the time necessary to get initial parental consent for evaluation)  Parents will be provided with a draft of the IEP during this meeting, which outlines recommendations for placement and services.  [See *Eligibility Meeting* section for more information.](#Eligibility) | The completed PWN should be given to the parent at the PPT meeting. This allows the implementation of the IEP to take place the next school day if both the parents and district agree. If the parents are provided with the PWN at the meeting, but do not agree with the proposed or refused actions, then the reasonable timeframe for implementation of the IEP is ten school days from receipt of the PWN.  If the PWN is not given to the parents at the PPT meeting, the second option is to send the IEP, with the PWN, to the parents within five school days. Parents must receive the PWN at least ten school days prior to the implementation of the IEP unless the parents and district agreed to an earlier IEP implementation date at the PPT meeting.  The completed IEP, if not provided at the PPT meeting along with the completed PWN, must, in all cases, be sent to the parents within five school days. |
| **Parent Initiated—directly to school**  **(rare)** | The SSL must record the date the referral is received, start a file for the scholar and submit the request to the district **within 24 hours** of receipt. | (SSL will submit supporting documentation with the request for initial referral.) |
| District partners will add a scholar in the IEP Database after PPT 1. |
| **School Initiated**  **(most common)** | SSL Submits initial referral and all supporting documentation to district partners. |

### Rhode Island: Initial Referrals

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Referral Type** | **District/School Notification** | **Supporting Documentation** | **Parent Notification and Consent** | **Evaluations** | **Eligibility Meeting (and sometimes IEP Meeting)** | **Follow-Up** |
| **Parent Initiated**  **(rare)** | The SSL must record the date the referral is received, start a file for the scholar and submit the request to the CST (usually encompassing relevant teachers and special educators, other Deans and/or the Principal) within 48 hours of receipt. | SSL will compile all supporting documents and confer with the evaluation team. The documentation should be similar to the data collected for an AF initial referral although this was initiated by the parents. | At the evaluation meeting, the team will decide whether to accept the referral and move forward with evaluations. If testing is accepted, parent consent is obtained at the meeting. Note that even if the referral was parent initiated the consent for testing form must be signed.  Parents can withdraw consent at any time in the process and must be documented during the evaluation meeting or through signed consent stating their desire not to peruse evaluations. | The evaluation must be started **within 10 school days** of receiving parental consent to evaluate. The evaluation must be completed within **60 school days** of parental consent.  See the Assessments and Evaluations section for more information on the assessments conducted during the evaluation. | **Within 60 days** of parental consent to evaluate, evaluations should be completed and a written report created. An eligibility team meeting must be held to determine whether the child has a disability and thus qualifies for special education.  If determined eligible, **within 15 school days**, an IEP meeting must be convened and an IEP developed.  Parents will be provided with a draft of the IEP during this meeting, which outlines recommendations for placement and services.  [See ***Eligibility Meeting*** section for more information.](#Eligibility) | Following the development of the IEP, all special education and related services must be put into place as soon as possible, but within 10 school days.  The finalized IEP must be sent to the parent within 10 school days. |
| **School Initiated**  **(most common)** | SSL Submits initial referral and all supporting documentation to evaluation team. | (SSL will submit supporting documentation with the request for initial referral.) |

## Formal Special Education Meetings

**The special education procedural safeguards are built around a set of formal meetings to ensure schools craft IEP programs that reflect scholars’ needs and include input from all stakeholders.**

* **What:** Formal special education meetings, which always include the student’s family or guardian, bring together a set of experts to finalize formal decisions about a student’s IEP program, services and supports.
* **Common Misunderstanding:** A common misunderstanding is that all thinking about how to best serve a student should happen within the bounds of a meeting. Rather, all participants should engage in pre-thinking prior to these meetings, and come to the table with recommendations.
* **Best Practice:** A best practice is to incorporate *informal* family meetings before and after these formal meetings to: a) demystify the process for families and explain how they can advocate for scholars, b) align with parents about core interests before walking into a formal meeting.

The table in the appendix details [the formal special education meetings](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Formal%20Special%20Education%20Meetings.docx), their purpose, required frequency and required participants.

### Initial Referral Meeting

An initial referral meeting is a team meeting to review student data and determine whether an evaluation for special education is appropriate.

**Before the meeting**

The SSL will:

* Contact the parent (and district in CT/NY) to set up a meeting time
* Organize current student data, including IAs, grades, discipline data, intervention data (with universal screening and progress monitoring data), CST referrals and action plans and teacher observation notes.
* Offer to meet with families to explain the purpose of an eligibility meeting, potential outcomes and their rights and participation in the meeting. Emphasize parent’s voice and value, explain that IEP/PPT meetings can seem formal and daunting but encourage parents to engage as much as possible[[9]](#footnote-8)
* Make phone calls to parents the day before the meeting to confirm attendance

**During the meeting (legally required in CT; AF consistent practice in NY and RI)**

The purpose of this meeting is to determine whether current data supports a suspicion that this student is a student with a disability and may qualify for special education services under IDEA.

**AGENDA**

1. *Introductions: Roles, Meeting Purpose, Signatures*
2. *Explanation of Procedural Safeguards*
3. *Strengths and Needs of Scholar*
4. *Review Interventions and Data*
5. *Determine Next Steps: Testing (if necessary), What Testing, Parent Consent for Testing\**

*\*NY Only: The CSE gets consent for Testing*

1. *Schedule Eligibility meeting*

**After the meeting**

If the team determines testing is appropriate, the SSL will make arrangements for all testing to occur within the evaluation timeline. In cases where there was insufficient or inconclusive data at the meeting, the team may determine appropriate interventions or supports for the short-term, and set a date to reconvene.

### Eligibility Meeting Protocol

When the evaluation is complete, the IEP team reconvenes to discuss the findings of the evaluation and determine eligibility for special education. If the scholar is eligible, the team may develop an IEP.

**Before the Meeting**

The SSL will:

* Confirm parents have received copies of all evaluation reports (**in CT, by law, these must be provided at least 3 days in advance of the meeting**)
* Confirm meeting date/time with parents and district partners
* Offer to meet with families to explain the purpose of an eligibility meeting, the potential outcomes and the family’s rights. If this meeting happens, it is a time to emphasize the family’s voice and value and encourage them to engage as much as possible, while also explaining that IEP/PPT meetings can seem formal and daunting, so parents are not caught unaware.
* Conduct analysis of all data (including evaluation results and classroom data) prior to the meeting
* Make phone calls to parents the day before the meeting to confirm attendance.

**During the Meeting**

When the evaluation is complete, parents will receive a copy of the evaluations, and the IEP team will meet to discuss the results. During this meeting, the team will determine:

1. If a scholar is eligible for special education and related services, and
2. If the scholar is eligible, the IEP team may also write the IEP immediately as an extension of the same meeting (see [IEP Meeting Protocol](#_IEP_Meeting_Protocol)).

**AGENDA**

1. *Introductions: Roles, Meeting Purpose, Signatures*
2. *Explanation of Procedural Safeguards*
3. *Strengths and Needs of Scholar*
4. *Review of Findings of Evaluation and Eligibility Determination*
   1. A scholar will be found eligible for special education services if:
      1. The scholar has one or more of the disabilities outlined for special education services and,
      2. The disability adversely affects the scholar’s educational performance
5. *Optional Step* (or save for second meeting): Develop an IEP (if the student is determined eligible)

**After the Meeting**

If a scholar is found ineligible for special education services, the IEP team may wish to consider if a referral for a 504 plan is appropriate, or in the alternative, design a plan for general education interventions to address the scholar’s needs. (The evaluation from the initial referral process can be used.) Parents may disagree with the determination by requesting mediation, a due process hearing, or an independent education evaluation.

### IEP Meeting Protocol (Annual Review or Triennial Review)

**Overview**

**IDEA states that the IEP Team must meet to review a scholar’s IEP and progress “not less frequently than annually.” In addition, at least once every three years, the team must convene to determine if a scholar’s current disability category is appropriate and if s/he continues to be eligible for special education services.** You should plan to have your annual review meetings and your triennial review meetings at least 10 school days before the date the last IEP was finalized (in NY and RI), or the date of the last annual review (in CT)[[10]](#footnote-9).

For triennial meetings, the team should engage in formal and informal testing prior to the meeting date. Testing is required if the team is considering exiting a scholar from special education. The team must complete testing and meet on or before the triennial review date to review the results. At this IEP/PPT meeting, the team may make recommendations for IEP or program changes based on the results of testing.

**New York Only: Triennial Waivers**

A student should be evaluated at least every three years. In New York, the CSE/ District Partner may recommend that a student continues to be eligible for special education and related services without additional testing; however it is our job to ensure that we push through this barrier. (Please see the appendix for a [strong example of making a case for triennial testing](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Sample%20case%20for%20testing%20to%20the%20district.docx)). The implications for scholars who do not have accurate, updated accommodations and support include being denied appropriate accommodations on [College Board](http://sat.collegeboard.org/register/for-students-with-disabilities) assessments (PSAT, AP, SAT, ACT), continuing in a placement that is too restrictive or not restrictive enough, or being stamped with an inaccurate classification. Parents are entitled to a triennial review and can require that the CSE conduct testing even if the CSE did not recommend triennial testing. (The district must obtain parental consent to waive the evaluation.)

**Scheduling the IEP or Triennial Meeting**

In NY and CT, the Special Services Leader will work with our district partners to facilitate the annual review, initial IEP and triennial meetings. In RI, the SSL will facilitate these meetings independently.

A best practice is for Special Services Leaders to review their caseload at the beginning of the year and plot out compliance deadlines with their Case Managers, to ensure all annual and triennial reviews are held on time.

**Triennial Review Assessments**

To determine the appropriate evaluations at the time of a triennial review, the team should consider the following:

* Does the student continue to meet the criteria for the identified disability?
* Is another disability suspected which might be contributing to the scholar’s struggle? Is a change in disability classification a possibility?
* Does the disability continue to adversely affect the student’s educational performance, or does the student require more services?
* Does the team need more comprehensive data on the student in order adequately identify the scholar’s educational needs?

**Types of Assessments**

A triennial evaluation should include evaluation tools which will support the committee on answering the questions outlined above. These may be administered by the school or the district. Evaluation tools include:

* Educational, speech/language, or cognitive standardized assessments
* Criterion referenced assessments (assess developmental/functional skills)
* Curriculum-based assessments (i.e. F&P, scored writing prompt, grade-specific math assessment, etc.)
* Behavioral assessments (i.e. Functional Behavior Assessment, observations, rating scales)

**Evaluation Tools**

During an evaluation, a battery of assessments must be provided which are sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the student’s special education and related services needs. The table below provides an overview of the types of assessments available for initial and triennial evaluations as well as annual reviews. The IEP team will determine which assessments are necessary depending on the needs of the scholar.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Assessment** | **When is this assessment done?** | **Who administers this assessment?** | **Explanation of Assessment** | **Examples of Specific Tests** |
| **Physical Examination** | Initial Evaluations | * Family’s physician * School physician * Nurse practitioner * Physician’s assistant | The physical examination must include: a signed and dated statement containing a summary of the results of the examination and, if a disease or medical condition is found, recommendations for treatment of the student, modification of the student’s activities, or plans for the health supervision of the student. | N/A |
| **Social History** | Initial and  Triennial | * Licensed Social Worker | The background data obtained through the social history provides a longitudinal perspective on the student’s development, changes in skill level, family conditions, and information regarding prior intervention strategies. | N/A |
| **Classroom Observation** | Initial and  Triennial | * Social Worker * School Psychologist * Special Educator * Special Services Leader | The classroom observation or other relevant settings, for a comparison of the target student with other students in the same instructional group. Observe the teacher-student interactions, patterns of language usage (in bilingual ESL classes), and other issues of relevance to the particular student. | N/A |
| **Psycho-educational Assessment**  **(NY, New Haven)** | Initial and Triennial | * Licensed Psychologist | The purpose of a psycho-educational assessment is to explore aspects of the student’s academic skill development, intellectual functioning, strengths and weaknesses in cognitive/learning processes and social/adaptive functioning. Included in this assessment are the student’s aptitudes for learning, academic functioning, social skills, self-help skills, physical and motor development, personality and emotional functioning. | Wechsler Individual Achievement Test III (WIAT III)  Woodcock Johnson IV-Revised (WJIV) |
| **Psychological Assessment**  **(Hartford, Bridgeport, RI)** | Initial and Triennial | * Licensed Psychologist | The purpose of a psycho-educational assessment is to explore and systematically student aspects of the student’s academic skill development, intellectual functioning, strengths and weaknesses in cognitive/learning processes and social/adaptive functioning. Included in this assessment are the student’s aptitudes for learning, academic functioning, social skills, self-help skills, physical and motor development, personality and emotional functioning. | Wechsler Intelligence Scale For Children Fourth Edition (WISC-IV)  The Beery-Buktenica Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration  The Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children, Second Edition (KABC – II) |
| **Education Assessment**  **(Hartford, Bridgeport, RI)** | Initial and Triennial  Annual | * Licensed Psychologist * Special Education teacher * SSL | Assessments measure basic reading skills, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, mathematics reasoning, oral expression, listening comprehension and written expression to explore aspects of the student’s academic skill development, intellectual functioning, strengths and weaknesses in cognitive/learning processes | Woodcock Johnson (WJIV)  Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement (KTEA) |
| **Functional Behavioral Assessment** | Required after a positive MDR  When a student’s behavior impedes his/her learning or the learning of others | * SSL * Licensed psychologist (if appropriate given the case) * Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) (if contracted—rare) | An FBA must be conducted and results incorporated into a behavioral intervention plan.  **In NY, the CSE may require that a DOE psychologist conduct the FBA and create the BIP with input from the school.** Therefore, if a school seeks to create an FBA, it should notify the CSE and to determine the level of involvement the DOE psychologist needs to have. A good time to do this is at the start of the data collection process. **If the DOE is not notified/involved from the beginning, it may not recognize the FBA as valid and the school will have to redo the assessment.** While AF forms and documents are helpful guidance in developing the FBA, any FBA created should be on the DOE’s FBA form. | Observations  Interviews: parent, teacher, student  Data Collection and Review  BASC |
| **Level I Vocational Assessment**  **(NY Only)** | Annually once a scholar reaches age 14 | * Special Education Teacher (District Partner) | The vocational assessment is required for all initially referred students age 14 or older and must be part of the information considered at the review of an IEP for all students receiving special education services who will turn twelve by the end of December in that school year. | N/A |
| **Speech and Language Assessment** | Initial and Triennial  At parent’s request | * Speech-Language Pathologist | The goal of speech and language assessment is to provide a description of a student’s communicative competence, meaning the student’s ability to comprehend, express and exchange information and the impact of those abilities on skill acquisition. Linguistically and culturally diverse students may not have a dominant language, but may use a mixed linguistic system. The assessment must explore a student’s performance using all the communication strategies with which the student is familiar. Social and cultural factors must be considered in conducting the assessment. | The Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals, Fifth Edition (CELF – 5) |
| **Physical Therapy Assessment** | Initial and Triennial  At parent’s request | * Physical Therapist | Conducted by a Licensed Physical Therapist, this assessment reviews gross motor function against developmental milestones to determine whether the student requires Physical Therapy | N/A |
| **Occupational Therapy Assessment** | Initial and Triennial  At parent’s request | * Occupational Therapist | Conducted by a Licensed Occupational Therapist, this assessment reviews fine motor function against developmental milestones to determine whether the student requires Occupational Therapy | N/A |

**Before the IEP or Triennial Meeting (for non-initial referrals)**

While they differ slightly in execution, the annual review and triennial review processes both gather input from various stakeholders in order to create a program that supports a scholar’s needs. The table below gives a suggested timeline breakdown to prepare for these meetings:

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| --- | --- |
| **Timeline** | **Tasks** |
| **Beginning of the Year** | * In CT and NY, if a triennial is necessary this year, reach out the district at the beginning of the year to indicate which students will need re-evaluations and to request evaluations. In RI, BOY is the time to calendar, schedule and plan to conduct or oversee the testing. See below for testing information. |
| **9 weeks (more than 60 days) before Triennial Meeting** | * NY only: Historically, our district partners often attempt to bypass testing at the triennial review and encourage schools and families to waive their right to a triennial evaluation. We know that our scholars are constantly growing and changing, and that updated data is vital to making programming decisions. In order to ensure we get the data we need, it is helpful to provide strong rationale to the CSE outlining why we are requesting testing. Please see the appendix for a [strong example of this](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Sample%20case%20for%20testing%20to%20the%20district.docx). |
| **6 weeks before IEP or Triennial Meeting** | * Reach out to the Case Manager in the appropriate grade to ensure they compile student data: * State tests, IAs, Reading Levels (F&P/STEP) * Teacher and Related Service provider input * Parent input * Attendance, suspensions (both OSS and ISS), removals * Updated FBA, BIP, and Behavior Intervention Progress Data (if applicable) – We are required to bring this data to the IEP meeting for students who have social/emotional goals **or** who are classified as “emotionally disturbed.” * In RI only, the [Meeting to Review Evaluation or Re-Evaluation Information form](http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Students-and-Families-Great-Schools/Special-Education/Special-Education-Resources/SLD-Guidance.pdf), on pages 66 – 69 of the SLD Guidance. |
| **4 weeks before IEP or Triennial Meeting** | * Confirm meeting date/time with CSE/District partners (NY/CT) and invite the appropriate Case Manager and Gen Ed teacher to the meeting * Delegate and oversee the appropriate Grade Level Case Manager to: * Use parent/teacher /student input and data to draft scholar Present Levels of Functional Performance (referred to as PLAAFPs or PLOPs) * Based on trends surfaced in the PLAAFPs, draft IEP goals * Using parent/teacher input and evidence of supports, update accommodations/modifications |
| **2 weeks before IEP or Triennial Meeting** | * Review PLAAFPs/PLOPs and IEP Goals with Case Managers to ensure accuracy and alignment * Revise PLAAFPs/PLOPs, goals, accommodations/modifications as needed * (if triennial) Reach out to obtain copies of evaluations (if you don’t have them already) |
| **1 week before IEP or Triennial Meeting** | * Send supporting documents to CSE/district partners (NY/CT) * Confirm logistics for all meeting participants (meeting time, location, conference call line, etc.) * Align with teachers and parents on their planned input during the meeting and any recommended program changes |
| **Day before IEP or triennial meeting** | * Make reminder phone calls to parents to confirm meeting logistics |

**Note:** There are many scholars with IEPs who also come from non-English speaking families. When considering that all of the IEP documentation will need to be translated in-house, ensure an adequate timeline for this to occur. Pushing up all deadlines by at least two weeks is best practice**.** This is particularly true in RI.

**Note:** It is best practice for SSLs to delegate the tasks of writing PLAAFPs and/or goals to Learning Specialists/Special Educators. In this case, you should add a two week buffer at the four weeks mark to allow for review and editing of these sections.

#### Triennial Reviews

Read the information on the following pages regarding triennial reviews. Then, think about your caseload for the 17-18 school year. Consider which scholars you know will need triennial evaluations this year and list these students below, and the month in which their meetings must occur.

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| **Students Requiring Triennial Reviews and Month of Each Review:** |

**During the Meeting**

Facilitation of annual or triennial review meetings may vary depending on the partnership with your district, however there are key elements necessary for a successful meeting. A sample agenda is included below.

**Annual or Triennial Review Agenda**

1. *Opening* 
   1. Introduction of all team members and roles
   2. Meeting participants sign attendance sheets
   3. Review purpose of meeting and agenda
   4. Provide procedural safeguards and restraint & seclusion rights\*\*
2. ***Triennial Meeting Only***
   1. ***Review Evaluations – the professionals who engaged in the evaluations share at a high-level what they measured, what they show for student strengths and weaknesses***
3. *Review Scholar’s Present Levels of Performance*
   1. Parental Input—academic and behavioral strengths and concerns, medical concerns, interests outside of school, interactions at home, etc.
   2. Overall Trends – attendance, behavior, grades, etc.
   3. Teacher Input —academic performance, functional performance, strengths to date, strategies leading to scholar success, barriers to progress, recommended areas of focus for the next year
   4. Related Services provider input —current performance, strengths to date, strategies leading to scholar success, barriers to progress, recommended areas of focus for the next year
4. *Review Annual Goals* 
   1. Review draft goals prepared by the Case Manger (with input from the SSL, teachers, parents, student)
   2. Adjust and bring to final
5. *Program Recommendations*
   1. Least Restrictive Environment recommendation (e.g. “CTT/ICT,” “Resource Room/SETSS,” etc.)
   2. Related Services recommendation (including any added services or changes in service minutes)
   3. Accommodations
   4. (in rare cases) Modified promotion / grading
6. ***(if older than 14) Transition Meeting (see section on transition meetings)***
7. *Parent Questions/Comments/Concerns*
8. *Parents receive draft copy of IEP*
9. *Review of Next Steps*
   1. Timeline for final IEP
   2. Start date for new related services (if applicable)
   3. NY ONLY: Parents sign the Notice of Final Placement which indicates that they are rejecting a DOE placement and electing to keep their child in the charter school (more on this below

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| \*In CT and NY, a copy of the state procedural safeguards must be given at least one time a year. In RI, new policy dictates that parents only **need** to receive them at the initial IEP meeting or when requested. Additionally the procedural safeguards must be given by the district at the following occurrences:   * The first time the parent or school district refers a scholar to PPT#1/IEP meeting * The parent requests a copy of the procedural safeguards * The first time in the school year the parent requests a due process hearing or files a state complaint * A decision is made to take a disciplinary action against a student which results in a change of placement (MDR)   CT ONLY: A copy of the Parental Notification of Restraint and Seclusion must be provided at the first PPT meeting following the scholar’s referral to special education, as well as the first PPT meeting at which the use of seclusion as a behavior intervention is included in the scholar’s IEP. |

**After the IEP or Triennial Meeting**

Services for a scholar are not triggered to begin until all documents are finalized.

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| * In New York this includes parent signatures on the Notice of Final Placement. Parents will automatically be offered a district placement if the program on the student’s IEP does not match the program occurring in the school. In these cases, parents should write on the school location notice, “I reject this placement and choose to keep my student at Achievement First.” If a parent wishes to receive district placement, they must affirmatively state this at the IEP meeting. It is the parent’s right and choice to continue to enroll their student at AF. |

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| * In Connecticut, the completed Prior Written Notice should be given to the parent at the PPT meeting. This allows the implementation of the IEP to take place the next school day if both the parents and district agree. If necessary, the PWN may be sent with the complete IEP to the parents within 5 school days of the PPT meeting. The parent must receive the PWN at least 10 school days prior to the implementation of the IEP, unless the parent and district agree to an earlier IEP implementation date at the PPT meeting. |

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| * In Rhode Island, the completed Prior Written Notice should be given to the parent at the IEP meeting. This form is to be completed every time the school district proposes or refuses to change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child or the provision of a FAPE to the child. This document allows the implementation of the IEP to take place the next school day if the parent agrees. |

**Infinite Campus must be updated to reflect any changes in disability, services and meeting dates**. We work with our district partners and families to complete the next steps outlined at the end of the meeting in a timely manner. SSLs need to follow-up on key items following the meeting:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Timeline** | **Task** |
| 1 week after meeting | * Update Infinite Campus * Facilitate any schedule changes (moving to CTT/ICT classes, add counseling, etc.) * Create or update the IEP-at-a-Glance and distribute to teachers and related service providers to ensure IEP implementation begins on the date indicated on the IEP |
| 2 weeks after meeting | * Update scholar files with new IEP documents (Print and put the IEP in the student’s file.) |

#### Transition Meeting (HS and some MS SSLs only)

As you read the Transition Meeting content on the next two pages, review your caseload for the 17-18 school year, thinking about scholars who will require transition planning as part of their IEP process. This may include looking at your current SPATA reports and talking to your feeder school to determine incoming student needs. Needs may change in August once rosters are finalized, at which point you should update the Readiness Task.

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| **Student names requiring transition meeting and month of each:**  **In a brief paragraph, describe your system for ensuring you can calendar and thoughtfully plan for transition meetings.** |

### Transition Meeting

**Overview**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) outlines requirements for postsecondary transition planning. **Beginning no later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 16—or younger as determined appropriate by the IEP Team—and updated annually thereafter,** the IEP/PPT team must consider the student’s need for transition services and design an appropriate IEP. In NY, transition planning begins the year the scholar turns 14 years of age. In CT, transition planning begins the year the scholar turns 15 years of age. With that age guidance in mind, the PPT/IEP team must meet to consider the student’s need for transition services and design an IEP that includes:

* Appropriate measurable post-school outcome goal statements based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to postsecondary education/training, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills
* At least one annual goal and related objectives for each post-school outcome goal statement
* The transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals
* The personal interviews, informal and formal assessments, and functional vocational assessments used to determine the student’s preferences/interests related to transition planning
* Documentation that the PPT/IEP team considered whether to invite an appropriate outside agency/service.

If the child is approaching high school graduation, or the end of the school year following his or her 21st birthday, the IEP team determines whether the student is likely to require continuing services from adult service agencies[[11]](#footnote-10). **The scholar must be invited to any IEP meeting where transition services are discussed.**

**AF Nuances**

At Achievement First, we know that expectations across the country have been lowered for students with disabilities and we work with incredible caution to ensure we never apply expectations which restrain a student from meeting his or her greatest potential. To that end, our expectation is that students with disabilities will meet our network’s rigorous [high school graduation requirements](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/TeamOps/Shared%20Documents/AF%20High%20School%20Policies_11.13.12.docx).

We also acknowledge that there is an exceptionally small group of students for whom neither four nor two year college is the most appropriate post-graduation path to pursuing the students’ most dignified life outcomes. The Achievement First High Schools Non-College Post Graduation Mindsets, Criteria Process & Policies [document](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/TeamOps/Shared%20Documents/AF%20High%20School%20Policies_11.13.12.docx) walks through planning for a non-college post-graduation pathway. This planning begins in the spring of a student’s 10th grade year.

**SSL R & Rs**

In order to provide the right secondary transition services, High School and occasionally Middle School SSLs must:

* Plan at the beginning of the school year, identifying students who need transition plans and inputting this into their personal IEP/PPT calendar.
* Conduct a skills and interest inventory (Career Exploration/ Vocational Assessment) with scholars during the data collection phase of the IEP drafting process. The transition assessments should be tailored to the student’s individual strengths and needs.
* Invite student to be present at his/her IEP/PPT meeting.
* Collaborate with PPT/IEP team members to design secondary transition services, which are recorded on the IEP (CT IEP pages 4-7 and NY IEP transition page) and should take into account:
  + The student’s post-school outcome goal statements for education/training, employment, and independent living (when applicable).
  + The skills a scholar needs in order to accomplish his/her post-school outcome goal statements.
  + Discussion and creation of annual goals designed to support the scholar in achieving his/her post-school outcome goal statement.

### Discontinuation/Exit Meeting

There are several reasons why a student may discontinue special education services. For students continuing in our schools after being exited, the school should closely monitor student progress after exiting services to ensure the student continues to demonstrate success. The table below outlines the reasons for discontinuing services and the requirements for each decision.

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| **Reason for Discontinuing Service** | **Requirements for Declassification** | **Additional Information** |
| **No Longer Eligible** | If the student has met all of his or her IEP goals with full independence, the IEP team can discuss the possibility of discontinuing the IEP or switching to a 504 plan for the student.  A full evaluation must be completed when considering declassifying a scholar who is suspected of no longer being eligible for services. | **NY** **ONLY:** In NY, students may continue to receive their accommodations/modifications for up to 2 years after they are declassified through a 504 plan. |
| **Revocation of Consent for Special Education Services** | Parents have the right to withdraw consent for special education services at any time. | Schools have the right to pursue Due Process if they feel this is not in the best interest of the scholar. |
| **Student Reaches End of the School Year in Which They Turn Age 21 or Graduate** | No evaluation is needed to declassify scholars who are graduating or who have aged out of special education. | Prior to a scholar aging out of special education a transition plan should be in place for post-secondary supports. |

## Accountability and Documentation

**Overview**

Legally, we have a responsibility to disseminate the content of our scholars’ IEPs and 504 plans, including the modifications, accommodations and services therein, to all staff who interact with these students. In addition, it is our duty to ensure that students’ families are regularly informed about the progress their scholars are making toward IEP/504 plan goals. As the SSL, an important legal obligation of your role is to delegate and oversee both inbound and outbound communication sent by Case Managers regarding scholar progress.

#### IEPs-at-a-Glance

Review the information below and start to think about the IEP-at-a-Glance document. Although it is named for the IEP, this overview document should also include 504 plans. This key tool ensures that all personnel are intimately familiar with the services and supports that scholars need to succeed. Reflect on the distribution of IEPs-at-a-Glance for the beginning of the year, and also as the year goes on after annual and triennial meetings.

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| **System**  **Where will your IEPs-at-a-Glance live online at your school so that they can be accessed by your team but not shared more broadly?**  ***Note: A best practice is to keep them in a password-protected folder on your school’s internal Many Minds page, or in a Google folder.***  **Beginning of Year**  **Describe the process for creating BOY IEP-at-a-Glance documents to share with teachers in August.**  ***Note: A best practice is to have the previous year’s special education teachers draft them before they leave for summer break since they know the scholars best.***  **Ongoing**  **Describe the process for updating and distributing the IEP-at-a-Glance after an IEP or triennial meeting within a week of the meeting.**  ***Note: This will usually be the responsibility of the Case Manager for each grade*.** |

### IEPs-at-a-Glance

The IEP-at-a-Glance is a key tool for communicating program specifics, including services, goals and accommodations to teachers and other school personnel. Each Case Manager must provide an IEP-at-a-Glance for each student who has an IEP or a 504. The document must contain:

* Basic student information, including name and grade
* Disability classification and annual review date
* Parent contact information
* Push-in and pull-out services
* IEP or 504 goals and objectives, including the evaluation procedure and performance criteria for each IEP/504 goal and objective to assist personnel with IEP/504 implementation and progress monitoring
* Accommodations and modifications
* Behavior supports required for the scholar to be successful
* Any other essential student information

For returning scholars, IEPs-at-a-Glance must be prepared and distributed to all teachers and personnel working with the scholars (i.e: specials teachers, teachers-in-residence, leadership team members) by the first day of school. For new scholars, the IEP-at-a-Glance should be completed within 5 school days of the first day of attendance. Additionally, the IEP-at-a-Glance should be updated and redistributed within 5 days of a PPT/IEP/504 meeting to reflect any changes to program.

When distributing IEPs-at-a-Glance, [use the Receipt of an IEP-at-a-Glance](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Receipt%20of%20IEP%20at%20a%20Glance.docx) form to document personnel who receive the file.

IEPs-at-a-Glance are confidential documents, which should be kept in a secure location and shredded when they are no longer current. See the appendix for a [sample of a completed IEP-at-a-Glance](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Sample%20IEP%20at%20a%20Glance-Template.docx).

### Accommodations Walkthroughs & Feedback

Writing accommodations into an IEP or 504 plan and sharing them in an IEP-at-a-Glance document are important first steps, but are not sufficient to ensure that accommodations are actually occurring with fidelity. In order to make sure that IEPs/504 plans are appropriately implemented, it is vital that you engage in regular accommodations walkthroughs.

#### Walkthroughs & Feedback

Read the information about walkthroughs, below. Then, consider how you will engage in these walkthroughs at your own school. In the box below, explain your process and procedures for walkthroughs and feedback.

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| **How often will walkthroughs occur?:**  **How will you ensure that you are seeing all advisories/teachers?:**  **When will you send batch feedback to staff after a walkthrough?:**  ***Note: Best practice is to send within 48 hours.***  **Where will you store observation data from previous walkthroughs?:** |

**Best Practice for Walkthroughs & Feedback**

Effective walkthroughs always include and utilize:

* + A clear [walk-through tool](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Accommodation%20Walkthrough%20Tools.docx) which collects data on accommodations that are being provided with fidelity an those that are not,
  + A clear [communication protocol](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Accommodation%20Batch%20Feedback.docx) for sending batch feedback to the team of teachers (and their coaches) implementing the accommodations (to provide accountability and build skill),
  + A schedule for regular walk-throughs for different teachers and advisories,
  + A central place where observation data from accommodation walk-throughs are stored.

Consistent implementation of accommodations does not happen by accident! Rather, you must be consistently collecting data on accommodation implementation, using data to share feedback and then providing coaching and support to teachers who struggle with executing supports outlined in a scholar’s IEP or 504 plan.

**Note:** A best practice is to regularly engage in walk-throughs that are grounded in output failure, using a tracker like the one found [here.](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Accomodations%20Walkthrough%20Tracker%20Exemplar.docx)

### IEP Progress Reports

**Overview**

IEP Progress Reports are the mechanism by which schools communicate progress towards IEP goals to parents. IEP Progress reports must be sent home at minimum as often as report cards, although the IEP team may determine an alternative schedule which best meets an individual scholar’s needs. **Schools should print two progress reports. One copy should be signed by the family and returned to the scholar’s IEP folder, and the second copy is for the family to keep.**

#### IEP Progress Reports

Review the information below and start to think about your plan for distributing IEP progress reports in the 2017-2018 school year. IEP Progress Reports should be distributed at the same time as report cards. However, since report cards are compiled and put together differently at every school, use the prompts below to describe the process you will use to ensure progress reports are distributed at Report Card Night. (Remember, this includes getting input from related service providers.)

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| **What are the case managers’ responsibilities in the IEP progress report process?:**  **What are the DSO/Operations’ teams responsibilities in this process?:**  **Who will be responsible for ensuring a signed copy of each IEP progress report is returned and put in every scholar’s folder?:** |

Electronic IEP management programs (i.e. IEP Direct, SESIS, Tienet) offer some IEP Progress Reporting. However these reports typically do not contain a thorough description of the scholar’s progress. The [supplementary Achievement First IEP Progress Report](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/IEP%20Progress%20Report%20Template.docx) should include:

* Measurable annual goals and objectives
* How progress will be assessed (evaluation procedure, performance criteria and trials)
* Current progress data (data on how the student has progressed toward the goal)
* Narrative of a student’s progress

**Parent Signatures**

Because IDEA mandates providing parents with regular progress on students’ progress toward IEP goals, it is vital that we receive signed confirmation from parents that they have received this documentation. Every time an IEP progress report is distributed, the parent should sign a school copy and return to the SSL. This documentation should then live in the student’s file.

**Note:** Particularly in RI, there are many scholars with IEPs who also come from non-English speaking families. When considering that all IEP progress reports will need to be translated in-house, ensure an adequate timeline for this to occur.

### Modified Promotional Criteria (New York & Rhode Island) and Modified Grading (Connecticut)

At Achievement First, we believe that all students should be held to rigorous academic standards. We set a high bar and, while we don’t lower the bar when students struggle, we *do* provide varying scaffolds and supports to ensure that scholars meet rigorous, Common Core-aligned goals. Thus, it is extremely rare that we modify the criteria which we use to measure readiness for the next grade.

In the instance in which the district and the school agree that a scholar would be best served by having modified promotional criteria, this will be documented in the student’s IEP. **Note: It is expected that you align with your TSS Director before a meeting in which you suspect that modified criteria or grading may be discussed. If this discussion occurs unexpectedly, it is your responsibility to loop in your TSS Director within 48 hours of the meeting**. **No scholar should have modified criteria if this has not been discussed and approved by someone on Team Special Services.**

#### Modified Promotional Criteria

Read the information below and then review your caseload for the 17-18 school year. Reflect on how many scholars have modified promotional criteria. This may require you look in SESIS, Tienet, or IEP Direct, or consult the SPATA or the SSL at your feeder school. Consider your plan to update and revise any MPC that is too vague or not measureable.

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| **How many scholars have modified promotional criteria/grading?:**  **Who is responsible for drafting the modified promotional criteria agreements and meeting with families?:**  ***Note: At most schools, this is the SSL.***  **Who is responsible for approving the modified promotional agreements?:**  ***Note: At most schools, this is the principal.*** |

Modified promotional expectations can be confusing to parents and the school (i.e: “Scholar will meet 45% of 8th grade ELA standards”) and have resulted in confusion at the end of the year regarding whether promotion is appropriate. As a *proactive* step towards clarity for the school and family, it is important to take the modified promotional criteria laid out by the CSE or PPT and clarify the specific criterion they will apply to determine a student’s promotion at the end of the year. This is an unofficial agreement between the family and the school saying, “These are the criteria we will use to determine if the scholar has met the modified promotion criteria” and serves to align the family and school at the beginning of the year. This “modified promotion criteria agreement” should explicitly outline the growth that the student will demonstrate and the way that growth will be measured (i.e: “Scholar will grow 1.5 grade levels to a Level V as measured by an F & P test.”) This criteria must be communicated to parents at the beginning of the year.

In cases where modified promotion is introduced during an IEP meeting, draft and align with the family on this agreement within 10 days of the formal IEP meeting. As a best practice, parents should sign off on the clarified Modified Promotion Criteria Agreement to indicate their knowledge of the criteria.[[12]](#footnote-11)

For a template to a Modified Promotion Criteria Agreement, see [here](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Modified%20Promotional%20Template.docx). For more information about promotional criteria at AF, see the [Principal Guidance for Promotional Criteria](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/TeamCAO/Shared%20Documents/PID/AF%20Promotion%20Overview%20for%20Principals_2015-16.docx).

# Manifestation Determination Review (MDR)

**Overview**

This section outlines federal requirements for conducting Manifestation Determination Reviews. A Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) is a process to determine if a student’s violation of the school’s code of conduct is the result of the student’s disability. A MDR must occur after a violation of the school’s code of conduct which results in a **change of placement** for a student with a disability—and **it is a legal requirement that the MDR is held BEFORE a change of placement (suspension or expulsion)**. Under the disciplinary procedural safeguards, a student with a disability is defined as a scholar with an IEP or a 504 plan, a scholar in the initial referral process, or a **scholar suspected of having a disability**.

**Definitions**

A **scholar is suspected of having a disability** if prior to conduct, either:

1. The parent of the child expressed concerns in writing to the child’s teacher or a school administrator that the child may need special education and/or related services;
2. The parent of the child requested an evaluation for special education services; or,
3. The teacher of the child, or other school personnel, has expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior directly to the SSL, or other supervisory personnel.

*Unless:*

1. The parent did not consent to evaluation for special education;
2. The parent refused special education services; or,
3. The student was evaluated and determined not to qualify as a student with a disability.

Under the IDEA, a **change of placement** occurs if:

1. The **removal** is for more than 10 consecutive school days; **or**,

2. Short-term removals make up a pattern because:

* The current removal when added to a series of previous short-term removals totals more than 10 schools days in a school year;
* The child’s behavior is similar to his/her behavior that resulted in previous removal(s); and of other factors (e.g., length of each removal; proximity of removals to one another).

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| **At Achievement First, any time a scholar with a disability is removed from his/her educational setting for more than 10 cumulative school days, we regard this as a change of placement and require a Manifestation Determination Review be held. You may not suspend a scholar with a disability or suspected disability beyond 10 days without first holding an MDR.** |

A **removal**, under the IDEA, is defined as any time a student is removed from his/her current placement for more than 90 minutes (in CT) or 4 hours (in NY and RI), unless the student receives an In-School Suspension (ISS) in which:

* The scholar is not segregated from his/her general education peers
* The scholar has continued access to the general curriculum
* The scholar continues to receive all services mandated in his/her IEP, 504 plan, or Behavior Intervention Plan.

*Each* instance of ISS should be judged individually to determine whether these three criteria were met. In determining whether the removal counts towards total days of suspension, the school must look at the setting used and the services provided while the student is in ISS. To ensure these criteria are met, the school should establish an ISS setting that is available to both students with and without disabilities. While in ISS, students should continue to receive class work, assessments and homework. Additionally, students with mandated services in IEPs or 504 plans should continue to receive these services while in ISS.

All In-School Suspensions which do not meet these standards, all Out of School Suspensions, and all Expulsions, including a 45-day removal to an Interim Alternative Educational Setting, constitute a **removal** and therefore factor into the 10 cumulative day calculation to determine a change in placement.

#### Manifestation Determination Review Meeting

Ensuring that MDR meetings are held in a timely manner for every scholar who needs one has been a pain point in years past. To that end, carefully read the information in the MDR section and think about how you will ensure you are holding and logging MDRs as necessary for scholars with disabilities and suspected disabilities.

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| **How often will you connect with your Dean of Students to review suspension data?:**  **How will you connect (via email, in-person check-in, etc.) and whose responsibility will it be to ensure this happens?:**  ***Note: At most schools, ensuring this happens will be the responsibility of the SSL.***  **What is your plan to communicate and over-communicate the scholars who have disabilities and suspected disabilities to your Leadership and Culture Team?:**  **What will be your process to ensure scholars with disabilities/suspected disabilities are not suspended or expelled for more than 5 days at a time, or 10 days total, without your knowledge?:** |

**Manifestation Determination Review Meeting**

Achievement First’s policy is to conduct an MDR any time a **scholar with an IEP or a 504 plan, a scholar in the initial referral process, or a scholar suspected of having a disability, has been suspended for more than 10 cumulative or consecutive days; has been expelled[[13]](#footnote-12); or when he/she is moved to an Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES) due to a behavior infraction**. Additionally, each subsequent removal after the initial MDR requires a new MDR to be conducted before the student serves any additional days of suspension, even if the behavior is different. Prior to an accumulation of suspensions or removals that equate to a change of placement, scholars may receive disciplinary actions in accordance with the Achievement First discipline policy. The information in this section is dense and can be a lot to take in – please refer to these graphics for [New York](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Conducting%20MDRs%20(NY).docx), [Connecticut](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Conducting%20MDRs%20(CT).docx) and [Rhode Island](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Conducting%20MDRs%20(RI).docx) for more information.

Federal requirements protect **students with disabilities** from disciplinary actions for behaviors which are considered manifestations of their disabilities. The purpose of a MDR meeting is for the district, the parent and relevant members of the IEP Team to determine:

* If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child’s disability; or
* If the conduct in question was the direct result of the LEA or Achievement First’s failure to implement the IEP.

Within **10 school days** of a disciplinary action resulting in a change of placement, the child’s IEP team (composed of at least a district representative, a parent, special education teacher, regular education teacher and individual qualified to interpret the child’s evaluation) shall convene. As with all IEP meetings, the parents must be advised of the Manifestation Determination Review meeting at least 5 days prior to the meeting in a written communication in their dominant language. **In Connecticut,** the parents must be provided a copy of their parental rights.

**Running the MDR Meeting**

During the MDR meeting the team reviews all relevant data to make a determination as to whether or not the misconduct or proposed change of placement is a manifestation of the scholar’s disability. The MDR should be documented using the partner district’s MDR forms.

**Suggested Agenda**

1. *Introduction of Team Members and Roles*
2. *Receipt of Procedural Safeguards*
3. *Parental Concerns*
4. *Review of Student Data (see below)*
5. *Review Student Disability*
6. *Review of the Suspensions (Review each suspension which led to the MDR)*
7. *Review of AF’s or the LEA’s Implementation of Supports and Services Mandated in the IEP*
8. *Determination (see below)*
9. *Next Steps*

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| **Scholars in the Initial Referral Process or Scholars Suspected of Having a Disability**  If a scholar is in the initial referral process, or is suspected of having a disability and receives more than 10 school days of suspension (cumulative or consecutive), the following steps should be taken:   1. Within 10 school days of the decision, the school should hold an MDR meeting; 2. Since the school does not have a current evaluation, the IEP team cannot determine whether the behavior was a manifestation of the student’s disability. The team will set aside the manifestation determination; 3. Expedite the completion of the evaluation; 4. While the evaluation is in process, the student may be referred to the placement determined by the school (including Out-of-School Suspension or expulsion) without services; 5. Once eligibility has been determined, the IEP team should reconvene the MDR meeting to complete the determination (this may occur at the eligibility meeting); 6. If the team determined the student’s conduct was a manifestation of the student’s disability, the school must amend the disciplinary record to remove the consequence in question AND provide compensatory educational services, as necessary. |

The documentation below represents data sources and documentation the IEP team should consider for review at an MDR meeting. Some of the items below might overlap, so this list is not designed as a “checklist.” Because each MDR is unique the team should coordinate collection of documents with the school’s special education team.

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| **Document Type** | **What to Collect** |
| Special Education File | * Current IEP * Progress Reports * Evaluation Reports (academic, psychological, social emotional) * Medical Diagnosis (if applicable) |
| Academic Records | * Grades/Progress Reports * F&P/STEP Data * Math Intervention Data * IA Data * State Assessment Data * Student work samples |
| Behavior Data | * Attendance * Behavior reports (tableau, kickboard) * Behavior Support Plan (BSP) * Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) * Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) * Progress Monitoring on Behavior Intervention * Detention Data * Removals * Suspensions (ISS and OSS) |
| Written Notices | * Suspension Notices (ISS and OSS) * MDR Notice |

If the team determines, **YES**, the scholar’s behavior is a manifestation of his or her disability or was due to the school or District’s failure to implement the student’s IEP:

* Complete the MDR Tracker with the findings from the meeting
* No further disciplinary action can be considered for this incident
* The student must return to school and his/her classroom immediately
* A Functional Behavioral Assessment **must** be conducted and a Behavior Intervention Plan implemented
* If an FBA/BIP has already been completed and created, the IEP/PPT will review and modify the existing plan
* Steps must be taken immediately to revise/fully implement the student’s IEP
* If determined to be necessary, a re-evaluation is requested

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| **In New York ONLY:** The CSE may require that DOE school psychologist conduct the FBA and lead creation of the BIP. Schools should notify the CSE before starting the FBA data collection process to determine what level of involvement the DOE psychologist will have. Also, while AF forms and guidance are helpful in developing the FBA and BIP, the final version of any FBA and BIP created must be on the DOE’s FBA and BIP forms in order to be recognized by the DOE. |

If the team determines, **NO**, the scholar’s behavior is not a manifestation of his or her disability or was not due to the school or District’s failure to implement the student’s IEP:

* Complete the MDR tracker with the findings from the meeting
* The scholar may be disciplined in the same manner and for the same duration as a student without a disability
* The scholar receives the same educational services a scholar without a disability would receive during the disciplinary action
* The scholar receives special education services during the disciplinary action
* Where appropriate, the IEP/PPT should convene immediately following the MDR to revise the IEP and the behavior intervention plan

See the [MDR scenario](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/MDR%20Scenario.docx) for an example of this determination process.

**Appealing an MDR Decision**

The parent of a child with a disability who disagrees with any decision regarding placement or the manifestation determination, or an LEA that believes maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others, may request a due process hearing. In this event, the child will remain in their current placement (“stay put”) until the hearing occurs.

**Behavior Intervention Plans**

A behavior intervention plan (BIP) should be written in cases where the student’s behavior impeded his/her learning, or the learning of others. If a student with a disability has a positive MDR and does not already have a BIP, an FBA must be done to determine whether a BIP should be developed. A BIP must be based on the results of the FBA and should identify target behaviors, replacement behaviors and interventions or accommodations. The BIP should also include the use of positive behavioral interventions, including positive reinforcements, social skills instruction and teaching replacement behaviors. If the BIP appears to be ineffective or if there are concerns for the health or safety of the scholar or others, the scholar’s IEP team should reconvene to consider changes to the BIP or IEP. **See the** [**behavior intervention guidance**](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/TeamCAO/CorePractices/Shared%20Documents/AF%20Behavior%20Intervention%20Guidance_15-16_final_4.14.15.docx) **for more information.**

**Weapons, Drugs and Serious Injury**

Regardless of the IEP team’s determination, a school district may remove a student to an IAES for **not more than 45 school days** without regard to whether the student’s behavior is determined to be a manifestation of his/her disability in cases where a child:

* ***Carries or possesses a weapon*** to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function
* ***Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs,*** or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school, on school premises, or at a school function
* ***Has inflicted serious bodily injury*** upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function[[14]](#footnote-13)

**TSS and Team Legal MUST be involved in determining whether a behavior meets the criteria outlined above**. If TSS and Legal agree that IAES should be pursued, the school district then holds an IEP meeting to discuss and determine the IAES. If the school district does not agree that IAES is appropriate, then the school would have to engage in a formal legal process to pursue IAES. This is why Team Legal must be involved from the start in any potential request for IAES.

**Tracking and Monitoring Discipline and MDR Data**

In order to ensure compliance with all state and federal requirements, and to give visibility to our disciplinary practices, Achievement First maintains written records of exclusions of ALL students. The records must include the name of the scholar, a description of the behavior infraction, the disciplinary action taken and a record of the time or number of days of the disciplinary action. The following disciplinary actions must be recorded in Infinite Campus:

* Removals
* In School Suspensions
* Out of School Suspensions
* Bus Suspensions
* Expulsions

For more information about behavior reporting in Infinite Campus, see the [Achievement First IC Behavior Guide](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/TeamLD/Shared%20Documents/Achievement%20First%20IC%20Behavior%20Guide%202013-14.docx).

Special Service Leaders and Deans of Students at each school should meet and develop systems to communicate and review removal data for students with disabilities. At a minimum, both parties should be alerted within 24 hours of a removal of a student with a disability to ensure a change of placement has not occurred. Some recommended practices:

* Daily email correspondence between the DOS and SSL to communicate all students who received a disciplinary consequence, including out-of-school suspension, in-school suspension, class removal, and detention during the course of the day;
* Weekly meetings between the DOS and SSL to review all students with multiple disciplinary consequences, to determine if any students should be referred to the Grade Level CST, the building-level CST or the PPT;
* The SSL should use the [Suspension Report](https://tableau.achievementfirst.org/views/Suspensions/FullStud_Data?:embed=yes&:toolbar=top#3) on Tableau (Full Stud. Data tab) to keep a list of the students with disabilities and suspected disability to keep track of total suspension days;
* The DOS and SSL should consult before deciding on any suspension more than 5 days (either consecutively or cumulatively) for a student with a disability or student with suspected disability to identify if a change of placement will occur with this suspension.

**Pre-MDRParent Meeting: Talking Points**

**It is recommended that SSLs engage in a “pre-MDR” meeting with families. The purpose of this meeting is to ensure that parents understand the more formal MDR process which will follow with the district.** Note that in RI and in cases of MDRs for scholars with 504 plans in all three states, this process is always handled at the school level, and thus the pre-meeting may not be necessary.

**Attendees:** Family, Special Services Leader

**Functions of the Meeting**

* Review observations, discuss suspensions, and present concerns;
* Collaborate with the family to agree upon supports, which should be consistent across school and home;
* Discuss the student’s suspensions & potential Manifestation Determination Review.

**Framing**

When your son/daughter is suspended for more than 10 school days, you are entitled to a special meeting, called a Manifestation Determination Review. This is because he/she has been diagnosed with a disability and we, as a school, are required by federal lawto review the current behavioral concerns, and to consider what role the disability may or may not play in those concerns.

**At this meeting, the IEP team will review all evidence, including the following:**

* Behavior and Suspensions
* Academic Performance
* Student’s IEP supports and services
* Attendance
* Disability Classification

**The meeting can have the following outcomes:**

* If your son/daughter’s behavior is not related to a disability and AF provided all supports required by the IEP, he/she will be treated like a general education child and will be suspended if he/she is not following our code of conduct as outlined in the Family Handbook.
* If your son/daughter’s behavior is not related to a disability *but AF failed to provide all supports required by the IEP or the BIP*, this means that your son/daughter cannot be suspended for not following the school code of conduct.
* If your son/daughter’s behavior is related to a disability, this means that your son/daughter cannot be suspended for not following the school code of conduct. An FBA will be conducted if it has not previously been done, and a BIP will be created or updated to reflect special supports and services to help prevent suspensions.

**Regardless of the outcome, we will continue to do the following:**

* Partner with you, conduct observations and seek further insight into the cause of your scholar’s behavior to find out better ways to support and assist him/her in excellent behavioral and academic outcomes
* Use behavior interventions (including a behavior intervention plan) to better support your son/daughter at school and reinforce positive behavior
* Revise her/her IEP or 504 Plan, as needed, to include these supports and services

**We ask that you do the following:**

* Provide honest and timely feedback/notification of your son/daughter’s behavior at home
* Celebrate and reinforce positive growth
* Keep the school informed of any developments in working with any external providers so we can coordinate our services with them.

# Due Process

As previously discussed, the Special Education Procedural Safeguards are built around a set of formal meetings and timelines. IDEA includes rules of procedure for resolving disputes between parents and schools. These disputes may arise from the outcome of a meeting or a missed timeline. These rules include [mediation](http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/mediation.index.htm), [due process hearings](http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/dp.index.htm), and appeals to state or federal court. A due process hearing is usually a formal, contested, adversarial trial. **Our goal is to minimize and eliminate the use of due process hearings by closely partnering with families and the district throughout the process.[[15]](#footnote-14)** However, there are times when mediation and/or due process against the district may be impactful (e.g. severe timeline delay, a final IEP is not the IEP discussed at the initial meeting, a district refuses to consider a triennial evaluation, etc.). In these cases, the parent has the right to initiate mediation or due process, and it is the SSL’s responsibility to help the parent navigate this process and attend mediations/meetings.

The federal statute and regulations are consistent across all five partner districts, while the state special education statute and regulations vary. The following is an overview so you are aware of the different types of due process and where to go for more information. **Remember, due process complaints can only be initiated by parents (not AF).**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Due Process Complaints** | **What is it?** | **How do PARENTS initiate it?** |
| **State Complaint** | Parents file a formal complaint with the state Department of Education, the Office of Civil Rights, or the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services regarding any district’s violation of special education law. | Parents have **60 days** to file a complaint with the state if they suspect a school has violated special education law.  The state will review the complaint and make a decision for schools to correct the violation, provides services, or award compensatory services. .  Parents have **180 days** to file a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) or the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)  There is a two year statute of limitations on filing a state complaint. |
| **Mediation** | Mediation is the process by which a neutral third party, typically a lawyer or judge, assists the school and parents to reach an agreement for a settlement or plan that both parties feel comfortable implementing.  The mediator helps resolve the disagreement. Any statements made inside the mediation are confidential and cannot be used during impartial hearings. It is not mandated to have a mediation prior to an impartial hearing. | When a parent has a disagreement with the outcome of an IEP meeting, they can request mediation.  NY: To request mediation in NY, a parent should submit a request to the CSE. See [here](http://www.advocatesforchildren.org/sites/default/files/library/impartial_hearings.pdf?pt=1) for more information. When parents request additional services or change in program or placement, they have the right to request a mediation with a DOE representative and an outside mediator.  CT: Parents/guardians or advocates will submit a complaint to the state. After the complaint is reviewed, both parties can voluntarily opt into mediation before moving to a hearing.  RI: To request mediation, a parent should submit a request through the Office of Student, Community and Academic Support (OSCAS) call center. See [here](http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Students-and-Families-Great-Schools/Special-Education/When-Schools-and-Families-Do-Not-Agree/informational-pamphlet-about-state-mediation-in-special-education-matters.pdf) for more information. |
| **Impartial Hearing/ Due Process Hearing** | This is a formal adjudicatory hearing before an impartial hearing officer. During an impartial hearing/ due process hearing, both the parent and school may be represented by legal counsel and may present evidence and sworn testimony to be considered by the hearing officer.  Prior to an impartial hearing, a ***resolution session*** must take place in an attempt to resolve issues outlined in the hearing request. This can only be waived if both parties agree. If one party disagrees and the session does not take place, the other party may request to have the hearing dismissed. | Impartial hearings/ due process hearings can be requested by parents when they feel their special education rights have been  violated or disagree with program recommendations or eligibility determinations.  During mediation or impartial hearings, a parent has the right to invoke ***pendency,*** which means they can request a scholar remain in their current placement until final decisions are made (also known as “stay put”).  There is a two year statute of limitations to file a hearing request and a decision must be made within 45 days. |

# Crisis Prevention Team (Connecticut only)

**Overview**

In Connecticut, P. A. 15-141 requires each local and regional board of education (including charter schools) to identify a crisis intervention team. This team should consist of professionals, paraprofessional staff and administrators who have been appropriately trained to respond to any incident in which the use of emergency restraint or emergency seclusion may be necessary to prevent immediate or imminent risk of injury to a student or others in the building.  At all AF schools in CT, we must ensure that the crisis intervention team is developed and identified.

#### Crisis Prevention Team (Connecticut Only)

Read the below information about the Crisis Prevention Team’s roles and responsibilities. Then, identify the members of your Crisis Prevention Team, along with the date in which they were trained in crisis prevention and intervention/restraint.

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| **List the Members of your Crisis Prevention Team and the date of De-escalation and Restraint Certification for each.**  ***Note: Training is good for one year. You may reach out to Team Special Services to get information on when certifications expire.***  **In a short paragraph, identify your plan for ensuring *each* team member knows they are part of the CPT, knows what the CPT is, and knows when they will need to be re-trained:** |

**Responsibilities of the CPT**

* Schools must have a Crisis Prevention Team (made up of the Deans of Students, Special Services Leader, Social Workers, and other staff) who have been trained in CPI and who will be available to respond if an emergency intervention is needed. Teams must participate in CPI training annually. CPI training will be offered at least three times throughout the year through network training for Crisis Prevention Team members.
* **It is crucial that all instances of restraint and seclusion are reported within 24 hours (following steps below). As a network, we are required to report this information to the state promptly.**
* If a physical restraint or seclusion is used 4 or more times within 20 school days with a student currently receiving special education, or with a scholar who is being evaluated, a PPT meeting must be convened to conduct or revise a behavior assessment, create or revise the BIP and create or revise an IEP.
* If a restraint or seclusion exceeds 15 minutes, an administrator or school health or mental health personnel, shall determine if continued restraint or seclusion is necessary to prevent immediate or imminent injury to the student or others, with a redetermination every 30 minutes thereafter. **This information should be included under the “notes” section on the Restraint and Seclusion tracker.**

**Required Reporting Requirements:**

In cases of restraint in CT and RI, the following 3 steps must be taken within 24 hours.

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| The student’s parents or guardians must be notified of the restraint and seclusion orally (via phone or in person) AND in writing. |
| The SSL must submit an [incident report](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Incident%20Report_Final.docx) on IC (see instructions in the appendix). |
| The SSL should complete the [Restraint and Seclusion Google Form](http://goo.gl/forms/S3GQWllsxl). |

# Local Advisory Committee (Rhode Island only)

**Overview**

In Rhode Island, section 300.900 requires each district to appoint a Local Advisory Committee (LAC) on Special Education. The purpose of the LAC is to discuss the needs of scholars with disabilities and to advise the district on programming. Because AF is our own district encompassing multiple schools, the LAC is shared by all schools in RI.

#### Local Advisory Committee (Rhode Island only)

**Note: This is a JOINT readiness task between all SSLs at RI – you should not complete this on your own.** Read the information below about the LAC requirement for RI. List the school-based members of your Local Advisory Committee, including their roles at the school and the school at which they are employed. In addition, list the four dates in which the LAC will meet in 17-18.These dates should be on your school calendar and every parent of a child with a disability should be made aware of them in formal communication at the time of annual, initial and triennial meetings.

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| **LAC Members (include role and school name):**  **Dates for 2017-2018 LAC meetings:** |

By law, the composition of the LAC should be at least 50% parents of students with disabilities, and should also include at least one special education teacher from each AF school in RI, a school administrator (SSL) from each school in RI and at least one general education teacher from each school in RI.

The LAC is required to meet at least four times per school year. At the first meeting, a parent advocate must be elected to chair the committee for the remainder of the year, with heavy support from the SSLs at RI schools. In addition, the LAC should use the first meeting to create or review a set of bylaws.

It is important that all parents of scholars with disabilities be notified that the LAC exists, what function it serves and when it is meeting. It is the responsibility of the SSLs in RI to coordinate beginning of year communication to parents, and to ensure that parents are notified of upcoming LAC meetings at annual, initial and tri-annual review meetings.

# Section 504

**What is the difference between an IEP and a 504 Plan?**

The most significant difference between scholars with IEPs and 504 Plans is around augmenting the core instruction and curriculum. Scholars with 504 plans **do not require specialized instruction**. Instead, scholars with 504 plans may need accommodations in the classroom or school building, or related services to support their learning. Schools do not receive additional federal or state funding under the Section 504 mandate.

If a child has a disability and an IEP, he or she is automatically covered by Section 504.The IEP is required to address **ALL** of a child’s needs that are related to a disability and provides scholars and families with more rights and protections than just a 504 plan. In other words, a scholar should never have an IEP and a 504 Plan (the IEP trumps the 504 and all 504 supports should be written in to the IEP.)

**Who is Eligible for a 504 Plan?**

To be covered under Section 504, a student must be between 3 and 22 years of age and have a disability. The definition of disability under 504 is broader than under the IEP. An individual with a disability under Section 504 means any person who: “(i) has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity; (ii) has a record of such an impairment; or (iii) is regarded as having such an impairment” [34 C.F.R. Section 104.3(j)(1)].

An “impairment” as described in Section 504 may include any disability, long-term illness, or disorder that ‘substantially’ reduces or lessens a student’s ability to access the educational setting because of a physical or mental condition. Ability to access the educational setting may be impacted if the impairment affects the student’s ability to perform a life function such as walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, reading, concentrating, thinking, or communicating. Examples of impairments and disabilities that may qualify a student for a 504 plan include diabetes, epilepsy, allergies, low vision, poor hearing, chronic conditions, HIV/AIDS, ADHD, communicable diseases, blood disorders, respiratory conditions, post-traumatic disorders, obesity, birth defects, arthritis and asthma.

#### 504 Breakdown

Review your caseload for the 17-18 school year, thinking about scholars who have section 504 plans. This may include looking at your current SPATA reports and talking to your feeder elementary or middle school to determine incoming student needs. In some cases, you may not be aware of incoming need (from feeder schools, or in the case of kindergarten scholars) at this time. Update the Readiness Task in August to include new scholars.

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| --- |
| **Number of scholars with 504s:**  **What is the role of Case Managers in drafting 504 plans?:**  **How will you approve and oversee the 504 plans at your school?:** |

**Referral**

Referral of scholars for Section 504 can be made by either school or family and is based on a classified physical or mental impairment. Generally, teachers and parents will make the referrals. The referring party should complete a[504 Referral Notice](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Section%20504%20Referral%20Notice.docx) and submit it to the Special Services Leader. When determining whether or not to refer a scholar, consider the following criteria:

* Scholar has a disability and doesn’t qualify for an IEP
* Scholar is suspected of having a condition or disability not otherwise covered under IDEA
* Scholar has a major health problem
* Parent or teacher requests consideration for Section 504 services
* Parent mentions disability status and how it affects the child

**Evaluation**

In comparison to IDEA, Section 504 is relatively vague legislation. Therefore, as a network we hold ourselves to the evaluative, meeting and timeline standards set by IDEA since it is a stricter standard. When determining if a student is eligible for a 504 plan, the student’s team will meet to review current data and determine if any additional data collection needs to occur. When determining eligibility for a 504 plan, the team must answer “yes” to three questions:

1. Does the student have a physical or mental impairment?
2. Does this impairment have a substantial impact on a major life function?
3. Does this student require accommodations to access the educational setting?

The team may decide to conduct one of two types of evaluations to answer these questions:

* **Passive Evaluation:** The team determines there is sufficient information and data to determine student eligibility for a 504 plan.
* **Active Evaluation:** The team determines additional testing or observational data must be collected to make an eligibility determination.

There may be times when a scholar has a health need (i.e: using an asthma pump, or taking medication at school) but does not qualify for a 504 plan. If the answer to at least one of the three questions above is “no,” this is likely the case. When this happens, Ops will enter the need as a “Health Alert” in Infinite Campus. No further action is taken by the SSL.

**Best practice is that RTI, the Child Study Team, Special Education’s Child Find and the 504 eligibility occur as an integrated process. Data for a 504 evaluation may be collected through RTI interventions or a comprehensive evaluation conducted to determine special eligibility.**

**The following data is required for 504 plans:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Data** | **Examples** | **When it’s used** |
| School-Based Data | IAs, grades, observations, state tests, etc. | Initial Meeting  Annual Meeting |
| Documentation of a physical or mental impairment (if you’re not sure if something qualifies as an impairment, reach out to Team Special Services and/or utilize the DSM-V) | Physician Evaluation *and Diagnosis*  Psychologist Evaluation *and Diagnosis*  Specialist Evaluation *and Diagnosis* (i.e. audiologist) | Initial Meeting  Triennial Meeting (every 3 years)  (More frequently if warranted) |

**504 Plan Meeting Matrix**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Meeting Type** | **Purpose** | **Frequency** | **Participants** |
| **Initial 504 Meeting** | Review professional diagnosis of an impairment and create an accommodation plan | Once | * Parents * Special Services Leader * General Education teacher (if applicable) * Medical practitioner (optional) |
| **504 Annual Review** | Review a scholar’s 504 plan and update accommodations if necessary | Annually | * Parents * Special Services Leader * General Education teacher (if applicable) * Medical practitioner (optional) |
| **504 Triennial Review** | At least once every three years, the scholar’s 504 team will review the current data and documentation to determine ongoing eligibility | At least every three years | * Parents * Special Service Leader * General Education teacher (if applicable) * Medical practitioner (optional) |

**Emergency 504 Plan**

The term “Emergency 504” does not exist as a legal distinction. This term denotes the sudden or unexpected onset of a physical or mental impairment which impacts access to education. Examples include a scholar breaking their dominant arm or being diagnosed with cancer. In this situation, a team meeting with the student’s parents, teachers, and the Special Service Leader should be called as soon as possible. If the team can answer “yes” to all three questions listed above, the scholar can receive a 504 plan. This plan can remain in place until the scholar no longer requires the accommodations.

**Ending services with a 504 Plan**

A 504 plan can be discontinued at any time and may be terminated if:

* A scholar qualifies for special education and will have an IEP to address the accommodations provided in the 504 Plan. **Note:** A child can NOT have both an IEP and a 504 plan. The IEP “trumps” the 504 plan and should include all necessary accommodations as documented in both.
* A parent decides to terminate the 504 Plan. Parents have the right to terminate the plan at any time and we must honor their request. If this happens, the SSL will document the parent request, have the parent sign a statement revoking consent and add it to the scholar’s file. This will terminate the accommodations this scholar receives in the classroom.
* The scholar’s previous medical diagnosis is no longer relevant, or the scholar does not have an up-to-date medical diagnosis from a physician, psychologist, or specialist.

**Initial 504 Meeting and Annual Review Meeting**

504 Meetings are essential to a scholar’s progress in school. Similar to the IEP/PPT process, we want to gather stakeholders to identify the right supports for every scholar with a 504 Plan. [Forms and templates for the 504 Planning Process](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/Forms/504%20Compliance%20Hub.aspx) can be found here.

**Before the Meeting**

SSLs will:

* Contact the parents to inform them of the scholar’s referral
* Share parental rights under Section 504 and explain the process
* Have parents sign a [HIPAA release form](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/HIPPA%20FORM.PDF) granting permission for the SSL to speak with the scholar’s doctor
* Compile scholar data (see [IEP Annual Review](#_IEP_Meeting_Protocol_1) section for more information on the data to collect)
* Confirm meeting date/time with parents and key stakeholders
* Conduct an analysis of all data prior to the meeting

**During the Meeting**

Once all information has been gathered and the SSL has spoken with the family and the medical professional, a team should be gathered to review the data available and determine what supports should be included in the plan.

**AGENDA:**

1. *Introductions/Roles, Purpose of Meeting, Signatures*
2. *Explanation of Parental Rights and Review of Agenda*
3. *Review Data*
4. *Parent input of strengths and needs*
5. *Teacher input of strengths and needs*
6. *504 Plan Determination and Design*
   1. If the scholar meets the criteria for a 504 Plan the team will review the list of recommended accommodations and related services from the medical professional as well as information from teachers on best practices to design the right accommodations to include in the plan.
7. *Create* [*504 Plan*](#_Section_504)

**After the Meeting**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Timeline** | **Task** |
| Within 1 week after meeting | * [Update Infinite Campus](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Pages/--Special-Services-Infinite-Campus-Guide.aspx) with scholar information * Update scholar files with new 504 documents * Provide a copy of the 504 plan to scholar’s family * Distribute copies of accommodations plan to teachers and ensure ALL teachers are aware of changes in 504 plan * (if applicable) Work with your Principal and DSO to coordinate paraprofessional or transportation services. * **New York Only:** **Section 504 paraprofessional support ends every school year on June 30. In order to continue to receive this services, parents must submit a re-authorization form.** |

# English Language Learners

**Scholars come to Achievement First in various stages of language and academic development and the same is true for our scholars classified as English Language Learners.** Asthe Special Services Leader, you are responsible for ELL programming at your school, with support from Operations in key areas. The process for identifying and exiting ELL scholars varies across our districts and is outlined at a high-level below.

**Identifying ELL Scholars**

The process for initially identifying scholars who speak English as a Second Language is similar across all of our schools. Once potential scholars are identified, the process of assessment is varied depending on the region. The process for identifying potential ELL scholars is outlined below.

## New York: ELLs Identification & Programming

The process for identifying ELL scholars begins with our lottery and continues through the school year. In New York, we administer the NYSITELL assessment when we believe scholars are English Language Learners. Scholars will only take the NYSITELL one time—when they first enter the DOE. Every spring we administer the NYSESLAT, which assesses a scholar’s English proficiency. Unlike the NYSITELL, scholars will continue to take the NYSESLAT until they score proficient on all sections and can exit ELL status. According to NYSESLAT guidelines, ELL proficiency levels include Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced and Proficient. Note that “advanced” is one step below “proficient.” In order to exit ELL status a scholar must score proficient in both the Reading/Writing and Speaking/Listening sections of the NYSESLAT assessment.

#### ELLs Identification (New York only)

Think about the action steps you must take to identify ELL scholars in your building for 2017-2018. In the chart below, fill in the blank spaces (highlighted in green) regarding when and how you will engage in various “must-dos” to identify all ELL students.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Timeline** | **Action Step: What you have to do** | Readiness Task **Who will engage in this task? (It will almost always be the SSL or the ELL Coordinator, if you have one.) When will this happen?** | **Task Breakdown : How to do the task** |
| **End of the Previous Academic Year** | Confirm NYSITELL test materials have been ordered | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Talk to your DSO and confirm testing materials have been ordered. |
| **Before scholars arrive** | Compile list of scholars flagged as potential ELL | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Meet with your DSO to collect all Home Language surveys that indicate any language other than English. |
| **Before scholars arrive** | Read NYSITELL administration and scoring guidelines | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Read and internalize NYSITELL administration and scoring guidelines. * Talk to your DSO to confirm responsibilities and timelines. |
| **Before scholars arrive** | Create schedule for testing scholars | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Meet with your Ops Team and LT to review list of scholars to be tested and confirm testing schedule for ELL scholars. |
| **Within 10 days of scholars enrolling in AF (first day of school)** | Administer NYSITELL assessment | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Administer the NYSITELL assessment. |
| **Within two weeks of administering NYSITELL** | Score NYSITELL Assessments | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Score all NYSITELL assessments. * Note scholars who qualify as ELL. |
| **At the time of scoring the NYSITELL** | Notify parents of ELL Status | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Draft letters like the NYSITELL/Entitlement to ELL Services letter [here](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/NYSITELL%20Score_Entitlement%20to%20Services%20Letter.pdf) to parents, notifying them of scholar ELL classification. |
| Update ELL Information in Infinite Campus | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * [Update scholar ELL status](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Pages/--Special-Services-Infinite-Campus-Guide.aspx) in Infinite Campus. |
|  | Give scored tests to your DSO to submit to the DOE. | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Once all assessments are scored and scholar information updated, give the tests and answer booklets to your DSO. * DSOs will submit the assessments to the DOE. |
| **Winter** | Confirm that the NYSESLAT is ordered | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Meet with your DSO to confirm list of scholars who will take the NYSESLAT. * Place NYSESLAT order. |
| **Beginning of Spring** | Ensure someone other than test administrators are trained to score the NYSESLAT | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Sign up for the training via the DOE or Charter Center. Your TSS Director will flag this for you. * Ensure there is a plan to score the sections in accordance with the guidelines. Some portions are scored by the SSL/school. |
| **End of Spring** | Administer the NYSESLAT | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Administer the NYSESLAT to all identified ELL scholars by the 2017-2018 deadline. |
| **End of Summer** | Receive scores from NYS and update ELLs status | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * [Update Infinite Campus](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Pages/--Special-Services-Infinite-Campus-Guide.aspx) with exit dates for any scholars who pass the NYSESLAT. * Draft letters like the NYSESLAT Score/Exit ELL Status letter [here](http://www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed/schools/parent-notification-lettersforms) to notify families when scholars exit ELL status. |
| **Throughout year** | Provide services |  | * Provide necessary accommodations/modifications for scholars to successfully access core content. * Ensure ELL scholars are in appropriate reading groups or after school tutoring. |

## Connecticut: ELLs Identification & Programming

Similar to New York, the process for identifying ELL scholars begins with our lottery and continues through the school year. In Connecticut, we administer the Home Language Survey and find that a scholar may be an English learner when his/her parents answer one of three questions indicating a language other than English. In those cases, we administer the LAS Links assessment to determine a scholar’s ELL status. We continue to administer the LAS Links assessment annually to measure English proficiency until a scholar exits the ELL program. Exit criteria for ELLs in Connecticut is determined by the state. A student needs to receive a 4 or a 5 on the test as a whole, as well as a 4 or higher in both the Writing and Reading sections in order to no longer qualify for ELL services. See [here](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&q=320848) for more information about exiting ELL status.

#### ELLs Identification (Connecticut only)

Think about the action steps you must take to identify and serve ELL scholars in your building for 2017-2018. In the chart below, fill in the blank spaces (highlighted in green) regarding when and how you will engage in various “must-dos” to identify all ELL students.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Timeline** | **Action Step: What you have to do** | Readiness Task **Who will engage in this task? (It will almost always be the SSL or the ELL Coordinator, if you have one.) When will this happen?** | **Task Breakdown : How to do the task** |
| **End of the Previous Academic Year** | Confirm LAS Links test materials have been ordered for fall testing | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Meet with your DSO and confirm testing materials have been ordered. |
| **Before scholars arrive** | Compile list of scholars flagged as potential ELL | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Ops team will identify scholars with Home Language Surveys indicating anything other than English on any of the three questions, update IC and set a copy of the surveys aside for SSLs. * Review the HLSs provided by Ops team with your ESL teacher, coordinator, or specialist if you have one, and ensure you are clear on which scholars to assess. |
| Read LAS Links administration and scoring guidelines | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Read and internalize LAS Links administration and scoring guidelines. * Create a timeline for administering and scoring the assessment. |
| Create schedule for testing scholars | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Meet with your Ops Team and SLT to review list of scholars to be tested and confirm testing schedule for potential ELL scholars. |
| **By October 1st** | Administer LAS Links Placement Assessment | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Administer the LAS Links placement assessment to **all NEW students who have indicated a language other than English on their Home Language Survey** |
| Score LAS Links Placement Assessment | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Score all LAS Links assessments. * Determine which scholars are eligible to receive ELL services and which are not. |
| Notify parents of **new** ELL Status | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Draft letters to parents notifying them of scholar ELL classification. A sample letter is [here](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/LAS%20Links%20Score_Entitlement%20to%20ELL%20Services-REVISED.docx), and ensures that parents have the right to select ELL programming for their children. * Unless your TSS Director tells you differently, note that during this process, parents are able to accept or reject a bilingual program for their scholar. If parents choose a bilingual program, notify your TSS Director immediately to discuss next steps. |
| Notify parents of **exited** or **continued** ELL status | * **Who?:** * **When:** | * With your Ops team, review the scores from last year’s LAS Links assessments. * Determine which scholars have exited ELL status and send an exit letter like [this sample](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/LAS%20Links%20Score_Exit%20from%20Services%20Letter.doc) to their families. * Determine which scholars continue to require ELL services and send a continuation of services letter like [this sample](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Documents/LAS%20Links%20Score_Entitlement%20to%20or%20Continuation%20of%20Services.doc) to their families. |
| Update ELL Information in Infinite Campus | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Once parents have returned paperwork, [update scholar ELL status in IC](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Pages/--Special-Services-Infinite-Campus-Guide.aspx) for program status, identification date, parent notification date and acceptance or refusal of bilingual program. * Also ensure you exit any scholars who exited the program in last year’s tests. |
| **Winter** | Administer the LAS Links | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Work with your Ops team and SLT to create a schedule to administer LAS Links to ALL identified ELL scholars (These tests are submitted to a testing company for scoring.) * Administer the tests by the 2017-2018 specific deadline. |
| **Throughout year** | Provide services |  | * Provide necessary accommodations/modifications for scholars to successfully access core content. * Ensure ELL scholars are in appropriate reading groups or after school tutoring. * Provide bilingual programming for scholars whose families have requested it. |

1. A teacher is HQ when he/she has a current teaching certificate, has passed the CST-SWD test, and has completed the online autism workshop. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Any minutes of related services provided by the DOE *cannot* be claimed on your PPI. If your school elects to have an in-house provider or pays for a contract provider, you can claim these minutes on your PPI because your school is paying for these services out of pocket. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. ## Rhode Island: ELLs Identification & Programming

   As in Connecticut and New York, the process for identifying ELL students begins with our lottery and continues through the school year. After parents take the Home Language Survey and engage in Home Language interviews in Rhode Island, we administer the WIDA Model assessment to any students we believe are English Language Learners. Scholars usually take the Model test one time—when they initially enter an Achievement First school, or when they enter a district partner school. Every spring we administer the ACCESS, which assesses a scholar’s English proficiency. According to WIDA guidelines, ELL proficiency levels range from 1 – 6 (1-Entering, 2-Emerging, 3-Developing, 4-Expanding, 5- Bridging and 6-Reaching). Unlike the Model, scholars take the ACCESS annually until they exit ELL status. In order to do so, students must obtain a Literacy score (writing and reading composite) of 4.5 or greater and a Comprehension score (reading and listening composite) of 5.0 or greater. See [here](https://www.wida.us/membership/states/WI/ExitCriteria.pdf) for more information about exiting ELL status.

   #### ELLs Identification (Rhode Island only)

   Think about the action steps you must take to identify ELL scholars in your building for 2017-2018. In the chart below, fill in the blank spaces (highlighted in green) regarding when and how you will engage in various “must-dos” to identify all ELL students.

   |  |  |  |  |
   | --- | --- | --- | --- |
   | **Timeline** | **Action Step: What you have to do** | Readiness Task **Who will engage in this task? (It will almost always be the SSL or the ELL Coordinator, if you have one.) When will this happen?** | **Task Breakdown: How to do the task** |
   | **End of the Previous Academic Year** | Confirm incoming families complete the Home Language Survey | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Talk to your DSO and confirm the HSL will be included with enrollment paperwork. |
   | **During Family Chats (returning SSLs) or During Summer (new SSLs)** | Conduct the Home Language Interview | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Meet with your DSO to collect all Home Language surveys that indicate any language other than English. * Have members of the LT give the HLI to families who indicate any language other than English on their HLSs. |
   | **Before scholars arrive** | Compile list of scholars flagged as potential ELL | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Review the HLSs provided by the LT with your ESL teacher, coordinator, or specialist if you have one, and ensure you are clear on which scholars to assess. |
   | **Before scholars arrive** | Review WIDA Model test administration and scoring | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Read and internalize WIDA Model administration and scoring guidelines. * Talk to your DSO to confirm responsibilities and timelines. |
   | **Before scholars arrive** | Create schedule for testing scholars | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Meet with your Ops Team and LT to review list of scholars to be tested and confirm testing schedule for ELL scholars. |
   | **Within 30 days of scholars enrolling in AF (first day of school)** | Administer WIDA Model assessment | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Administer (or have teachers and coordinator administer) the WIDA Model assessment. * Score all assessments. |
   | **At the time of scoring the WIDA Model** | Notify parents of ELL Status | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Draft letters to parents notifying them of scholar ELL classification. |
   | Update ELL Information in Infinite Campus | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Update scholar ELL status in Infinite Campus. Instructions for how to do so are [here.](https://manyminds.achievementfirst.org/sites/NetworkSupport/Team%20SS/Pages/--Special-Services-Infinite-Campus-Guide.aspx) |
   | **Winter** | Administer the ACCESS test | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Obtain logins for all teachers and leaders administering the ACCESS test from your TSS Director. * Ensure 100% of teachers and leaders who are administering the test have passed the [WIDA training manuals](https://www.wida.us/login.aspx). * Work with your Ops team and SLT to create a schedule to administer ACCESS testing to ALL identified ELL scholars (These tests are submitted to a testing company for scoring.) * Administer the tests by the 2017-2018 specific deadline. |
   | **Spring** | Receive scores from RI and update ELLs status | * **Who?:** * **When?:** | * Update Infinite Campus with exit dates for any scholars who pass the ACCESS. * Send parents a formal “exit from services letter” like the one found here. |
   | **Throughout the Year** | Provide services |  | * Provide necessary accommodations/modifications for scholars to successfully access core content. * Ensure ELL scholars are in appropriate reading groups or after school tutoring. |

   [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
4. Although the RTI process is a best practice as a precursor to referral to Special Education there are times when a scholar will be in the referral for Special Education process while they are receiving interventions for the first time. According to Child Find, if a scholar is suspected of having a disability, we cannot deny or delay an evaluation for Special Education on the on the sole basis that interventions are not in place. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. In rare cases (less than 1% of the time), we may want to partner with parents to ensure a scholar with a severe disability is in the best possible setting.  Making the decision to consider an alternative placement for a scholar requires a detailed process, parental cooperation and consent, heavy principal involvement and collaboration with our district partners. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
6. Connecticut state documents use the term Scientific Research Based Interventions (SRBI) to refer to the RTI framework. While we favor the use of the term “RTI” to promote a common nomenclature at the network, district partners may be more familiar with the synonymous term SRBI. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
7. An intervention is instruction and supports which supplement and intensify classroom instruction and systems. Examples of interventions include additional reading instruction, a computer-based math program, or a behavior support plan. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
8. **NY Only:** If an FBA needs to be conducted because either 1) a child has a BIP explicitly stated in his/her IEP, or 2) a child requires an FBA and BIP due to a positive MDR finding, then the school must use the CSE FBA form and consult with the CSE regarding who should conduct the FBA. For all other FBAs and BIPs, the school may use AF’s FBA and BIP forms and procedures. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
9. In Connecticut, parents have the right to request a meeting with a member of the PPT prior to the referral PPT meeting (PPT#1). The sole purpose of this meeting is to discuss the PPT process and address any concerns of the parent. **At Achievement First, we believe holding a meeting priority to the PPT process is also a best practice which equips parents with the information to best advocate for their child’s needs. You should offer to meet with a parent, regardless of whether the parent specifically requested the meeting.**  [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
10. In New York CSEs use the date the IEP was finalized to determine annual reviews. This is known as the compliance date. Historically by planning so close to the date, IEPs are more likely to go out of compliance when waiting for a meeting. We recommend using the 10-day window when scheduling meetings to prevent the documents from going out of compliance. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
11. “Under federal law, students with disabilities are entitled to special education and related services until the end of the school year following their 21st birthday or, whenever a student accepts a diploma—whichever comes first. Once a student accepts a diploma—regardless of the student’s age—the right to special education and related services terminates.” [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
12. To be clear, this agreement with the family does NOT determine whether a student has modified promotional criteria. The agreement with the family is to provide additional clarity when a decision that a student will have modified promotional criteria has already been decided by the IEP/PPT team. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
13. Prior to an expulsion hearing for a student with a disability, an IEP meeting must be convened to determine if the behavior was a manifestation of a disability. If the team determines that the behavior was a manifestation, the student cannot be expelled. The IEP team must also reevaluate the student’s current IEP or 504 plan to address the misconduct and ensure the safety of other students and staff at the school. If the behavior was not a manifestation of the child’s disability, the school may proceed with the expulsion. Whenever a child with a disability is expelled, the school must provide an alternative educational opportunity with meets the child’s educational needs for the entire period of the expulsion. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
14. IDEA defines serious bodily injury as injury which involves a substantial risk of death, extreme physical pain, protracted and obvious disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ or mental facility. This is a high standard and a hard condition to meet. Many behaviors that – from a common sense standard – seem to be serious bodily injury, do not in fact meet the **legal** standard. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
15. A parent can file mediation or due process against AF and/or against the district. Therefore, a key part of AF’s partnership goals with parents is to create a relationship where parent concerns with AF can be heard and addressed successfully such that the parent does not feel the need to file mediation or due process against AF. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)