



PINE GROVE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Promoting Growth, Achievement, Success and Direction for ALL Children!
P.G.A.S.D. For ALL Children!*



Special Education Department

Heath Renninger
Superintendent

Pamela Watts
Director of Special Education

INDEPENDENT EDUCATION EVALUATION

I. DEFINITION

- A. An Independent Educational Evaluation is an evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the school district responsible for the education of the student in question.
- B. An Independent Educational Evaluation, whether conducted at public or private expense, shall comply with all criteria as set forth in this policy.
- C. Public Expense – means the school district either pays for the full cost of evaluation or the school district will ensure that the evaluation is otherwise provided at no cost to parent, consistent with the provision of Part B of the IDEA, which allow each State to use whatever State, Local, Federal and private sources of support are available in the State to meet the requirements of Part B of the Act.

II. CRITERIA

- A. An Independent Educational Evaluation must be conducted under the same criteria that the school district uses when it conducts an evaluation; to the extent those criteria are consistent with the parent's rights to an Independent Educational Evaluation.
- B. An Independent Educational Evaluation must be conducted by a qualified examiner in order to be considered by the school district when making educational decisions regarding the student.

INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION AT PRIVATE EXPENSE

I. CONSIDERATION BY THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

- A. If a parent obtains an Independent Education Evaluation at public expense, or presents an evaluation obtained at private expense that meets the school district's criteria for an Independent Educational Evaluation as set forth in this policy, the results of the evaluation shall be considered by the school district in decisions made with respect to the provisions of a free appropriate public education to the student.
- B. The results of the evaluation may be presented as evidence at a due process hearing regarding the student.

II. PRIOR TO EVALUATION BY THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

- A. If a parent requests an Independent Educational Evaluation prior to the school district conducting an initial evaluation, or more than 12 months after the last reevaluation was conducted, the school district shall notify the parent that the process to begin an initial evaluation or reevaluation will be initiated by the school district, as a parent may only request an Independent Educational Evaluation at public expense following disagreement with an evaluation conducted by the school district.
- B. Any evaluation provided by the parent prior to the school district completing an evaluation shall be considered an Independent Education Evaluation at parent expense, providing the evaluation complies with all criteria set forth in this policy.

INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION AT PUBLIC EXPENSE

I. GRANTING AND DENYING REQUESTS

- A. Parents of exceptional or thought-to-be exceptional students, other than those students whose sole category of exceptionality or suspected exceptionality is “mentally gifted,” are entitled to request an Independent Educational Evaluation at public expense if they disagree with the results of an evaluation conducted or sponsored by the school district within the twelve months immediately preceding such request. The request must be made in writing.
- B. The school district may only grant requests for an Independent Educational Evaluation at public expense in extraordinary circumstances. If the school district denies such a request, it shall so notify the parents in writing via Notice of Recommended Educational Placement/Prior Written Notice (NOREP/PWN) and will request a due process hearing to defend the appropriateness of the school district’s evaluation.
- C. The school district may grant a request for an Independent Educational Evaluation under the following circumstances:
 - 1. The student’s Multidisciplinary Team or Individualized Education Program Team concludes that the requested evaluation is required to develop an appropriate program or placement recommendation for the student and cannot readily and cost-effectively be accomplished by the school district; or
 - 2. Granting the evaluation request would be significantly more cost effective and efficient than denying the request; or
 - 3. The Independent Educational Evaluation could be conducted by a qualified examiner who is employed outside of the school district in which the student attends.
- D. Upon receipt of an Independent Educational Evaluation, the school district will convene the Multidisciplinary Team and/or Individualized Education Program Team to consider the information contained in the Independent Educational Evaluation. Depending upon the information provided, the Team may accept the information, reject the information, or determine that additional reevaluation data should be collected. If the team believes

additional information is necessary, a Permission to Reevaluate will be issued. The results of the additional evaluation will be reflected in the student's Evaluation Report.

II. REQUIREMENTS FOR EVALUATION

- A. An Independent Educational Evaluation provided at public expense shall meet all of the requirements applicable to evaluations conducted by the school district, including but not limited to the following:
1. Tests and other evaluation materials are (A) selected and administered so as not to be discriminatory on a racial or cultural basis; (B) provided and administered in the student's native language or other mode of communication, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so; (C) selected and administered so as best to ensure that if a test is administered to a student with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills, the test results accurately reflect the student's aptitude or achievement level or whatever other factors the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills (unless those skills are the factors that the test purports to measure); (D) validated for the specific purpose for which they are used in a manner generally accepted within the profession or discipline for which they are intended; € administered in accordance with sound professional practice by trained and knowledgeable personnel in accordance with any instructions or testing protocols provided by the producer or publisher of the test or materials; (F) tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely those that are designed to provide a single general score or quotient.
 2. Persons administering the evaluation shall possess current professional certification issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education qualifying the holder to perform the type of evaluation in question or, if a qualifying area of professional certification does not exist, such other licensure or certification issued by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as is required to qualify the holder to administer the type of evaluation in question.
 3. The evaluation shall include either a personal observation of the student in the relevant school environment by a person administering the evaluation or in consultation with appropriate school staff who regularly make such observations. A variety of additional assessment tools and strategies shall be used to gather further information relevant to the student's educational performance, progress, and needs. Tools and strategies to be used shall include, but shall not be limited to, input from the parent and other Multidisciplinary Team/Individualized Education Program Team members.
 4. The persons administering the evaluation shall prepare and sign a comprehensive report of the evaluation that includes, at a minimum, a state of all standard and scaled scores obtained, a description of the student's behavior as observed in school, a review of the input provided, an analysis of

the assessment results, and specific educational recommendations. This report shall be forwarded directly by the Independent evaluator to both the school district and the parent.

5. The persons administering the evaluation shall have no direct affiliation with the school district, the parent, or advocacy groups, and will conduct the evaluation in accordance with all other criteria set forth in this policy.
 6. The school district shall provide to the evaluator copies of records requested by the evaluator upon receipt by the district of a records release authorization signed by the parent and/or student, as the case may be, in such form as the district shall reasonably require.
- B. The scope of the Independent Educational Evaluation at public expense shall be limited to the areas of disagreement with the school district's evaluation, which shall be clearly defined by the parties prior to initiating the Independent Educational Evaluation.
 - C. When individual circumstances so warrant, the school district may agree to an evaluation that does not strictly comply with the requirements of subparagraphs (A) (3) and (A) (4) of this paragraph, as long as the evaluation complies with all applicable requirements of state and federal law.

III. PAYMENT

- A. The preferred method of payment for an Independent Educational Evaluation shall be direct payment to the provider of the evaluation. Direct payments shall be issued for an approved Independent Educational Evaluation upon receipt of the evaluation report, a statement from the provider indicating the type of activities performed, the date of those activities, the charge for each activity, the total charge, and any required taxpayer identification numbers or similar information.
- B. The school district may from time to time establish set fees or hourly rates for an Independent Educational Evaluation, which set fees or hourly rates reflect the average or above average fees and rates charged for similar evaluations within the community.

Independent Educational Evaluators

IV. APPROVED CERTIFIED SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

A. The following certified school psychologists meet the criteria established for school district evaluations and are acceptable to the school district to perform an Independent Educational Evaluation at public expense:

1. Thomas G. Bartlett, Ph.D.
1755 Oregon Pike
Lancaster, PA 17601
(717) 581-5255

2. Tegan Blackbird, PhD.
108 S Main St
Manheim, PA 17545
(717) 665-2675

3. James M. Cox, EdD.
563 Valley View Drive
New Holland, PA 17557
(717) 272-2031

4. Richard E. Hall, PhD.
3 Springview Drive
Litiz, PA 17543
(717) 354-1114

5. Lee Ann Grisolano, Ph.D.*
101 W Granada Avenue
Hershey, PA 17033
(717) 533-2601

*In addition to being a licensed psychologist and certified school psychologist, Dr. Grisolano is credentialed as a pediatric neuropsychologist.

B. The school district shall from time to time add to these lists of independent evaluators.