

GST Multidistrict Procedural Handbook

RIGHT TO EDUCATION

The GST Multidistrict assures that all children with disabilities ages 3 through 21 have the right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) including children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school.

Special education includes specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of the student which, in turn, involves adapting the content, methodology or delivery of instruction in order for the student to be involved in and make progress in the general curriculum, and to participate in extracurricular and other non-academic activities. **Related services** means transportation and developmental, corrective, and other supportive services that are necessary for a student with a disability to benefit from special education or to access the general curriculum.

A **child with a disability** means a child evaluated as having an intellectual disability, a hearing impairment including deafness, a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment including blindness, serious emotional disturbance (“emotional disturbance”), an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities, and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.

The GST Multidistrict ensures that:

1. The obligation to make FAPE available to each eligible child residing in the State begins no later than the child's third birthday;
2. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is in effect for the child by that date, and
3. If a child's third birthday occurs during the summer, the child's IEP team shall determine the date when services under the IEP will begin. The LEA must provide services during the summer if the IEP team determines the child needs Extended School Year (ESY) services in order to receive a free and appropriate public education.
4. Provision of FAPE for an individual who is at least three years of age but who has not reached age twenty-one before August first of the year in which the individual turns twenty-one.

CHILD IDENTIFICATION

The GST Multidistrict is the central referral point for information regarding identified children with disabilities ages birth through 21. The GST Multidistrict annually reports data on identified children with disabilities ages 3-21 to the NDDPI. These data are included in the Child Information data collection system used for Child Count each December. The unit works collaboratively with other community/regional agencies to develop a plan for location and identification of children ages birth through 5, to assure that selective screening is available and that children with disabilities identified as a result of the screening and subsequent evaluations are reported. The GST Multidistrict is responsible for unit-wide planning and implementation of child identification, location, and evaluation efforts.

Early Childhood Special Education

Before the age of three the special ed. multidistrict is notified by an outside agency that a child will be turning three and that they may qualify for special education services. The outside agency typically sends GST the **LEA Notification** when the child is 2 years 5 months. At that point GST staff completes the **Request for Tienet** notifying the GST office to add the child to Stars/Tienet. The outside agency service provider notifies GST staff and schedules a 2 year 7 month transition meeting. The outside agency sends GST a **Joint Notice of Meeting** stating the date and time of the 2.7 meeting. GST case manager is responsible for uploading **LEA Notification** and **Joint Notice of Meeting** to Tienet. At the 2.7 meeting, the team reviews most recent assessment information and the child's progress/updates; this information is used to develop the **ECSE Student Profile**. The team also discusses whether more information is necessary to determine eligibility. If more information is needed, the team plans the assessment and obtains parental **Consent for Evaluation** as long as the next meeting is held within 60 calendar days. Parents are also provided their **Parental Rights** information. GST staff presents possible options for when the child turns three years of age. At this meeting the team schedules a 2 year 9 month meeting. GST case manager completes **Prior Written Notice of Special Education Action** and uploads signed **Consent for Evaluation** to Tienet.

GST staff is responsible for sending the 2.9 meeting **Notice of Meeting**. At that meeting the team reviews most recent assessment information and the child's progress/updates. The **IWAR** is written and the team determines eligibility. If the child qualifies for special education, the **IEP** may be written at this time. Parents are then provided the **Parent Guide to Special Education** and **Consent for Initial Placement in Special Education** is obtained. GST case manager completes **Prior Written Notice of Special Education Action** and uploads the following documents on Tienet: **IWAR signature page** and signed **Consent for Initial Placement in Special Education**. Case manager sends an updated **Request for Tienet** notifying the GST office of the eligibility decision.

Procedure for Preschool/Kindergarten Screening

In January the early childhood special education teacher phones the local principals to set up screening dates for March/April to screen/assess the kindergarten students for the upcoming fall.

Once times/dates have been established an e-mail is sent to other staff to notify them regarding screening times/dates. Other staff includes OTs, SLPs, and local kindergarten teachers.

They gather and prepare materials and scoring sheets for the screening.

When all structured activities are completed, children are directed to free play activities. Children are then seen one to one for other observations. The SLP visits with each child to screen articulation skills and the OT asks each child to perform a series of motor skills. The kindergarten and ECSE staff have each child complete a page or two in the workbook each child received.

Throughout the 2 hour session all staff is constantly observing and charting children's skills (social interaction skills, self-help, problem solving, communication and direction following skills).

The scoring sheet is completed and copied to be sent home with each child. Some administrators prefer that NO sheets be sent home until all screening personnel have met and discussed each child and his/her skills. The team makes a recommendation as to whether or not they believe a child is ready for kindergarten and/or suspect a disability.

When necessary, the staff provides information/ideas to parents as to how to increase their child's skills in a specific area before entering kindergarten in the fall.

Procedure for MTSS Screening

When an MTSS team determines that more information is needed for a student's educational programming they must adhere to the following procedure:

1. Contact the parents regarding student concerns and the need for a selective screening.
2. Fill out and have the parent sign a Consent for Screening Form found on the GST website.
3. Email this form and other pertinent information to the GST Assessment Team
4. The Assessment Team will schedule requested screening, complete screening and the results will be sent to the school.

Schools in the GST Multidistrict are encouraged to use the MTSS model. This model includes the use of scientifically based interventions and consistent progress monitoring to determine if a student is responding to the supports provided. The team will use data based decision making to determine if the student qualifies under a specific learning disability and requires special education. The GST Multidistrict has established screening and identification procedures for secondary level students who may have dropped out or for other reasons have not received an adequate education program. Services include evaluations, programming, and referrals to other agencies when appropriate. An outcome of this activity is to identify students who may have disabilities and provide appropriate supports for them.

PROCEDURES FOR EVALUATION AND DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY

Referral to Special Education

In the event that the MTSS team determines that a referral to special education is necessary, the following documentation will need to be provided to the Multidisciplinary Team:

***NOTE:** This documentation must be collected from a variety of sources, both formal and informal. This evidence must include: records of intervention from team meetings, the student's intervention plan, data collected to monitor the effectiveness of the intervention(s), and the recommendations of the team. It should also include the following: review of the student records, attendance records, group and individual achievement test results, observations, teacher rating scales, grades, interviews of student, teacher, parent and other providers.*

The MTSS team must fill out the **GST Referral for Special Education** form which can be found on the GST website. This form must be given to the special education teacher in the building.

Documented evidence from general education that the student's current levels of functioning in any given area is below his/her expected level considering chronological age, grade placement, or overall ability. **(Screening Information)**

Documented evidence that the area of concern has existed over time (6 months or more) and is not of a sudden recent origin. **(Intervention Dates)**

Documented evidence to show that the student's area of concern is NOT due to an inconsistent educational program or insufficient or inappropriate instruction. **(Intervention Information)**

Documented evidence that the area of concern has been resistant to reasonable general education interventions (MTSS) that were implemented with integrity and that progress made was not adequate. **(Progress Monitoring) OR...**

Documented evidence to show that general education interventions (MTSS process) have been developed that are effective, but require substantial and sustained efforts. The student's response to these efforts may indicate a learning disability. **(Progress Monitoring)**

Documented evidence that would indicate from the team, the student's overall ability range (ie: discussion on students reasoning and problem solving skills, level of independence, listening/attending skills, etc). **OR...**

Further intellectual testing is indicated.

The above documented evidence must be summarized in the IWAR form and submitted to the GST office for the Assessment Team to Review. It is the responsibility of the Special Education Teacher, Regular Education Teacher(s) and Regular Education Administrators (MTSS Team/Multidisciplinary team) to complete this process. The members of the Multidisciplinary Team may represent the same roles as the members as the IEP team. Input must be obtained by multidisciplinary team members who, because of their expertise or special knowledge of the student, can observe, gather data and assess any aspect of the student's functioning that may be affected by the suspected disability.

Parent/Agency Referrals

If parents believe their child is not progressing as expected, or they notice particular problems in how their child learns, they may refer the child for a comprehensive evaluation or screening. The school should review the MTSS process with the parents to see if they would be willing to proceed with that process before entering into a formal assessment.

If agencies such as Headstart, Medical Professionals, Social Services etc. notice particular problems in how a child learns, they may refer a child for a comprehensive evaluation or screening. The school should review the MTSS process with the parents to see if they would be willing to proceed with that process before entering into a formal assessment.

The procedures for parental and agency referrals must be part of the school's written referral process. When the parents/agency request formal assessment, a special education staff member will facilitate the **Procedures for Initial Evaluation**.

Guidelines for Students with Behavior Concerns

Any student that presents with behavioral and emotional challenges that impact their ability to learn and experience social success or impedes the learning of others in the school and community should be addressed using the following procedure:

- ✓ The MTSS team needs to clearly define the behavior, implement an intervention and take data
- ✓ After 21 days the team should review the data to determine if the intervention is working and if they need an FBA/BIP

- ✓ If an FBA/BIP is needed the team, including the parents, must meet and obtain signed consent from the parents to develop the plan
- ✓ Implement the plan and take data to monitor progress
- ✓ If the intervention fails to accomplish the goal contact the GST Assessment Team for further evaluation

When the team determines that a BASC screening should be completed, the procedure will be as follows:

- ✓ BASC forms must be requested directly to the school psychologist (Bobbie Uglem)
- ✓ Sent the following required document to Bobbie Uglem at the GST Office:
 - Completed BASC forms,
 - Student **FBA/BIP form**,
 - **Consent for Screening form**
 - List of concerning behaviors
- ✓ Once the school psychologist (Bobbie Uglem) receives the BASC reports a meeting will be set up to go over the results with the team.

Initial Evaluation

If the Assessment Team/School Team recommends an initial evaluation for the purpose of determining if a student has a disability the following process needs to be followed: (The special education personnel in each particular building is responsible for the facilitation of this process).

- ✓ Set up a meeting to discuss plan for assessment
- ✓ Send **Notice of Meeting and Parental Rights for Public School Students Receiving Special Education Services** to parents for the assessment plan meeting.
- ✓ Prior to the actual meeting the school based special education staff should begin completing the **Student Profile** based on the information provided by the MTSS data.
- ✓ Describe the following areas: Cognitive Functioning, Academic Performance, Communicative Status, Physical/Health Characteristics, Social and Emotional Development, Adaptive Characteristics, Ecological Factors, and Transition, if appropriate. The evaluation team needs to assess all areas related to the suspected disability in any of these domain areas.
- ✓ Complete a **Prior Written Notice of Special Ed. Action** form the summarizes the decisions the team made at the assessment plan meeting. In completing this form check the top box, Initial Evaluation.

NOTE: In completing the **Notice of Meeting** for the purpose of this meeting check the top box.

NOTE: **Notice of Meeting and Prior Written Notice of Special Ed. Action** and **Consent for Evaluation** forms need to be provided in the Native Language of the parent and/or use an interpreter at a meeting.

Parental Consent

Parental consent must be obtained before:

- ✓ Selective screening
- ✓ Conducting an initial evaluation or reevaluation

- ✓ Initially providing special education and related services

The public agency proposing to conduct an initial evaluation must make reasonable efforts to obtain informed consent from the parent for an initial evaluation to determine whether the child is a child with a disability.

Two scenarios that could occur at this meeting are as follows

1. Scenario One (No Additional Information Needed)

- ✓ At the beginning of the meeting review the **Parent Guide to Special Education** AND obtain parent consent using **Consent for Evaluation**. Evaluation is defined here as the gathering, analyzing, & summarizing informal & formal assessment information.
- ✓ Review the **Student Profile** with team members at the Assessment Plan Meeting.
- ✓ Team members make any necessary changes.
- ✓ Add information provided by the parent.
- ✓ Decide if any additional assessment information is needed.
- ✓ **If no additional information is needed** school based special education personnel will complete the **IWAR** (Insert on Tienet)
- ✓ Add information to the IWAR provided through a formal observation
- ✓ Determine and document eligibility on the last page of the **IWAR** based on the 13 disability categories.
- ✓ A multidisciplinary team ensured that observations and other sources of data are gathered from a variety of settings in which the student demonstrates varying strengths and needs. The data gathered by each of the team members will be used as the basis for the IWAR and should include assessment measures that are valid and reliable and administered by qualified personnel.
- ✓ Complete the Supporting Documentation of the **IWAR** for those students whose eligibility is SLD by checking the required boxes #1-5. Check on the **IWAR** that the multidisciplinary team has considered that the child's disability is not due to lack of instruction in reading or math and/or limited English proficiency. Summarize the team's consideration of these factors if they are an issue.
- ✓ When determining other areas of disability (excluding SLD), it is best practice to compose an eligibility statement that describes how the student qualifies. This statement should be written at the end of the summary.
- ✓ Team members should sign the document, remembering to list their title.
- ✓ Give the parents a copy of the **IWAR** and documentation of the child's eligibility. This paperwork must be completed and finalized on Tienet within 30 days from the summary meeting.
- ✓ Complete the **Prior Written Notice of Special Education Action** and send to the parents

NOTE: *The **IWAR** should be written to allow descriptive information, including strengths and weaknesses that result from the disability for the Present Level of Academic Performance and Functional*

Performance (PLAPFP) and development of measurable annual goals that will enable the child to progress in the general education curriculum.

NOTE: Refer to the *Eligibility Criteria* to assist the team in making the disability determination. This can be found on the GST website.

NOTE: The Initial Evaluation process must be completed within **60-calendar days** from the signing of the *Consent for Evaluation*. Failure to do so results in the special education unit being out of compliance (the only reasons for not meeting the 60 day calendar time frame are parents not presenting the child, the child moving, extreme weather conditions or limited access to a qualified evaluator. This information must be documented in the student's *IWAR*).

NOTE: Parents may request an assessment to determine eligibility regardless of the determination that no additional data are needed.

2. Scenario Two (Additional Information Is Needed)

- ✓ At the beginning of the meeting **Review Parent Guide to Special Education** AND obtain parent consent using **Consent for Evaluation**.
- ✓ Review the **Student Profile** with team members at the Assessment Plan Meeting. Team members make any necessary changes. Add information provided by the parent.
- ✓ Decide if any additional assessment information is needed. **If additional information is needed**, the team will add those questions in the appropriate domain area of the **Student Profile**.
- ✓ Notify Assessment Team that the **Student Profile** is ready for their review.
- ✓ The assessment and other evaluation material used to assess the child should be selected and administered in a nondiscriminatory, racial or cultural basis and in the student's native language.
- ✓ If the team decides that a student needs an evaluation from an outside agency, complete the **Outside Referral**. If the child speaks another language, evaluation procedures must be administered in the child's **native language**.
- ✓ Set up a meeting to discuss evaluation results with the Team.
- ✓ Send **Notice of Meeting** to parents for the meeting.
- ✓ Assessment Team Facilitator will complete the **IWAR** on Tienet.
- ✓ Determine and document eligibility on the last page of the **IWAR** based on the 13 disability categories.
- ✓ Complete the Support Documentation section of the **IWAR** for those students whose eligibility is SLD by checking the required boxes #1-5. Check on the **IWAR** that the multidisciplinary team has considered that the child's disability is not due to lack of instruction in reading or math and/or limited English proficiency. Summarize the team's consideration of these factors if they are an issue.
- ✓ When determining other areas of disability (excluding SLD), it is best practice to compose an eligibility statement that describes how the student qualifies. This statement should be written at the end of the summary.
- ✓ Team members should sign the document, remembering to list their title.

- ✓ Assessment facilitator will send message to case manager that **IWAR** is completed and ready for case manager to review.
- ✓ Case managers are responsible for finalizing all documents.
- ✓ Give the parents a copy of the **IWAR** and documentation of the child's eligibility. This paperwork must be completed and finalized on Tienet within 30 days.
- ✓ *The following documents must be finalized and distributed to student's cumulative files, parents and other team members (if applicable): **Consent for Evaluation** (if applicable), **Notice of Meeting, Prior Written Notice of Special Education Action** (for both Plan Meeting and Summary Meeting), **IWAR, Outside Referral** (if applicable). **Release of Information** (if applicable)*

NOTE: Determine eligibility based on 13 disability categories. Some students may not be eligible. *Eligibility Criteria can be found on the GST website.*

NOTE: In completing the **Meeting Notice** for the meeting to discuss evaluation results, check box 4.

NOTE: Assessment Facilitators, if involved, will email scheduled appointments to the case manager. Case managers may need to arrange for space and should inform the teacher.

NOTE: The **IWAR** should be written to allow descriptive information including strengths and weaknesses that result from the disability for the Present Level of Academic Performance and Functional Performance and development of measurable annual goals that will enable the child to progress in the general education curriculum.

NOTE: The Initial Evaluation process must be completed within **60-calendar days** from the signing of the **Consent for Evaluation**. Failure to do so results in the special education unit being out of compliance (the only reasons for not meeting the 60 day calendar time frame are: parents not presenting the child, the child moving, extreme weather conditions, or limited access to qualified evaluator. This information must be documented in the student's **IWAR** or a **Tienet Event**).

NOTE: Send a **Prior Written Notice of Special Education Action** form documenting what was discussed at the assessment summary meeting.

Reevaluation

A reevaluation must occur at least once every three years. The special education personnel in each particular building is responsible for the facilitation of this process.

Reevaluation Meeting:

- ✓ Set up meeting.
- ✓ Send **Notice of Meeting and Parental Rights for Public School Students Receiving Special Education Services Guide** to parents for the assessment plan meeting.

NOTE: In completing the **Notice of Meeting** for the purpose of this meeting check boxes #3, #4 and #6.

- ✓ Prior to the meeting, create a new **Student Profile**.

- ✓ Parents must sign a **Consent for Evaluation** form on Tienet whether actual testing is being completed or not.

NOTE: *Notice of Meeting and Consent for Evaluation forms need to be provided in the Native Language of the parent and/or use an interpreter at a meeting.*

- ✓ Describe the following areas: Cognitive Functioning, Academic Performance, Communicative Status, Physical Characteristics, Social and Emotional Development, Adaptive Characteristics, Ecological Factors, and Transition, if appropriate. Descriptions should include existing evaluation data, classroom-based, local or state assessment information and observations by teachers/service providers.
- ✓ Review the **Student Profile** with team members at the reevaluation meeting. Team members include parents, student (if 16 or over), at least one special educator and/or related service provider, at least one regular educator, school administrator and individual who can interpret assessment results.
- ✓ Team members make any necessary changes.
- ✓ Add information provided by the parent.
- ✓ Decide if any additional assessment information is needed. If additional information is not needed this should be adequately documented and the team should proceed to disability determination and completion of the **IWAR**.
- ✓ Complete the **Prior Written Notice of Special Education Action** and send to the parents

NOTE: *Refer to the Eligibility Criteria to assist the team in making the disability determination. This can be found on the GST website.*

- ✓ Complete the Supporting Documentation of the **IWAR** for those students whose eligibility is SLD by checking the required boxes #1-5. Check on the **IWAR** that the multidisciplinary team has considered that the child's disability is not due to lack of instruction in reading or math and/or limited English proficiency. Summarize the team's consideration of these factors if they are an issue.
- ✓ When determining other areas of disability (excluding SLD), it is best practice to compose an eligibility statement that describes how the student qualifies. This statement should be written at the end of the summary.
- ✓ Team members should sign the document, remembering to list their title.
- ✓ Give the parents a copy of the **IWAR** and documentation of the child's eligibility. This paperwork must be completed and finalized on Tienet within 30 days from the summary meeting.
- ✓ Complete the **Prior Written Notice of Special Education Action** and send to the parents'

NOTE: *The IWAR should be written to allow descriptive information, including strengths and weaknesses that result from the disability for the Present Level of Academic Performance and Functional*

Performance (PLAPFP) and development of measurable annual goals that will enable the child to progress in the general education curriculum.

NOTE: *Parents may request an assessment to determine eligibility regardless of the determination that no additional data is needed.*

- ✓ If additional information **Is Needed**, school based special education personnel will include in the **Student Profile** questions that will assist the team in determining the educational needs of the child and his or her participation in the **general education curriculum or for preschool children to participate in appropriate activities.**
- ✓ Complete the **Consent for Evaluation.** (Document attempts to obtain consent, such as phone calls, correspondence, home visits)
- ✓ If the team decides that a student needs an evaluation from an outside agency, complete the **Outside Referral.**
- ✓ If the child speaks another language, evaluation procedures must be administered in the child's **native language.**
- ✓ Set up a meeting to discuss results of the evaluation with the Team.
- ✓ Send **Notice of Meeting** to parents for the meeting.

Completing an Outside Referral

- ✓ *The form is located on the GST website under Special Education Process-Referral/Assessment*
- ✓ *Be sure to complete all blanks paying special attention to parent contact number, address to Agassiz Associates (2424 32nd Ave. S. Suite 202 Grand Forks, ND 58201) effective dates and reason for referral.*
- ✓ *You need to make sure you get the parents signature in all three areas including all medical insurance information.*
- ✓ *This completed form along with a list of current concerns, FBA/BIP (if applicable) and a list of team questions must be sent to the GST office for approval by the director.*
- ✓ *The form and information will be faxed to Agassiz Associates and they will contact the parent(s) to set up an appointment.*
- ✓ *The GST Assessment Team will contact the case manager once a report is received.*

GST Plan for INITIAL EVALUATION that includes an outside referral

- ✓ *The team should conduct an Assessment Plan Meeting to determine if an outside evaluation is needed (cognitive testing, attending, emotional eval., etc.)*
- ✓ *If the team agrees that an outside eval. is necessary, have the parent sign the Outside Referral Form (**NOT** the Consent for Evaluation on Tienet)*
- ✓ **AFTER** the report has been received from Agassiz, the team will meet to determine if any further evaluation is necessary (**Student Profile**) or if eligibility can be decided (**IWAR**).
- ✓ *Have the parents sign the **Consent for Evaluation** on Tienet.*
- ✓ *Complete a **Student Profile** if there are further questions or an **IWAR** if eligibility has been determined.*

- ✓ Complete the **Prior Written Notice of Special Education Action** and send to the parents

NOTE: Determine eligibility based on 13 disability categories. *Eligibility Criteria can be found on the GST website.*

NOTE: A reevaluation is required before determining that the child is no longer a child with a disability or the area of disability is changing. Documentation verifies that a child is no longer a child with a disability and that the parent has received a written notice.

NOTE: In completing the **Notice of Meeting** for the purpose of the meeting to discuss evaluation results, check box #3 and #4.

Determination of Disability

Once the team has determined there is a disability based on the 13 disability categories, the team needs to decide if the student requires specially designed instruction (special education services) in order to be involved and progress in school. If so, they proceed with writing an Individualized Education Plan. If the student does not require special education services, the team needs to decide if the student's needs can be met on a 504 plan or other school based plan and proceed accordingly.

If the reevaluation process results in a determination that a student who has been receiving special education services no longer meets the disability criteria under IDEA, the team needs to determine if services are appropriate under section 504 or be referred to the MTSS team for additional support. An **Exit** form on Tienet must be completed and finalized.

Summary of Performance (SOP)

For students whose eligibility terminates due to graduation or exceeding the age of eligibility for FAPE under state law, the team must develop a **Summary of Performance** that contains a summary of academic and functional performance and recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting his/her postsecondary goals.

Procedure for Exiting Special Education due to Graduation

When a student receiving special education services graduates from high school with a regular diploma the case manager must follow the following procedure to exit them from services:

1. Open the Prior Written Notice of Special Education Action and under Identification check "No longer qualifies for special education and related services- graduated with a regular diploma" and complete the rest of the form. Finalize and send to parents/student.
2. Complete an Exit Form and check under Reason "graduating with regular high school diploma". Finalize and send to parents/student.

See Appendix A: Grades, Transcripts, diplomas, and Graduation for Students with Disabilities Policy Paper for more guidance.

Evaluation Considerations

Independent Evaluation: If parents do not agree with some aspect of the evaluation they have a right to request an independent educational evaluate at public expense. The school must provide to parents, on request, information about how and where an independent evaluation may be obtained. Parents must receive approval for an independent evaluation prior to obtaining it by writing a letter of request to the director of special education. Results from an independent evaluation must be considered by the team for evaluation activities or program planning. (See list of possible Independent Evaluators).

Nonbiased Assessment: The team must consider cultural, environment, motor, sensory, economical, or emotional factors that may interfere with the evaluation process.

Students ages 16-21: The assessment process for students in this age group should focus on transition into adult life. The process should begin with transition questions on the **Student Profile** that have not been addressed. To determine the skill levels the student has in the areas of transition, complete the **Transition Assessment**. This transition assessment should be completed by a special education staff member with the students, parents, and teachers who have knowledge about this student. The Transition Assessment Matrix (on the DPI Website) contains both formal and informal measures and may be useful for transition assessments. Results will be shared at the assessment summary meeting and will be embedded in the IWAR.

Functional Behavior Assessment: If the student is exhibiting behaviors that interfere with the student's own learning or the learning of others the process should begin with behavior questions on the **Student Profile** that have not been addressed. To determine the function of the student's behavior(s), complete the **Functional Behavior Assessment**. These results will be shared at the assessment summary meeting and embedded in the IWAR. If the local team feels they need more expertise in this area for the students they should consider a referral to an outside agency. At this time complete an **Outside Referral** and send it to the GST office.

Assistive Technology: To access educational environments including the general education curriculum, students may need Assistive Technology. Portions of the **Assistive Technology Assessment** may be used to assess these needs and help determine appropriate technology. When this information has been implemented and expertise is needed, a referral to an outside agency may be needed.

Tienet Notes:

NOTE: *When the Assessment Team is involved in reevaluations, please have the IWAR available to them at least 6 weeks prior to the due date. If you anticipate an Outside Referral, allow 2-4 months.*

NOTE: *Leave the IWAR in draft mode so the Assessment Team can review these documents. The assessment facilitator will change documents to review status when they are completed and send a message to the case manager.*

NOTE: For reevaluations, state in the **IWAR** the current disability determination in the appropriate area (i.e. Under academics, when describing reading include that the student is Learning Disabled in the area of Reading Comprehension).

NOTE: When finalizing documents, identify them (i.e. Prior Notice – Initial Evaluation etc.). Notify the GST secretary in a Tienet message when documents are finalized so documents can be tracked. Please include the document name and meeting date(s) in your message.

NOTE: If the team may possibly go into the IEP meeting from the meeting to discuss evaluation results, the **Notice of Meeting** should also be checked to indicate IEP meeting #5 (develop IEP) or #6 (review/revise IEP).

NOTE: DPI recommends that **documents be finalized within 30 days** from the meeting.

NOTE: If you need to copy from one document into a different document, use the Windows key and right arrow to shift the document to the right half of the screen. You can then Log in to Tienet again, open the other document and hit the Windows key and left arrow to shift the other document. This assists in copying and pasting from different documents. (i.e. **IWAR** into Present Level of **IEP**).

NOTE: Use the inserts available to assist with compliance.

NOTE: When outside referral information affects the **eligibility decision**, a new **IWAR** is completed. If the eligibility decision is not affected, the information should be included in the IEP Present Level.

NOTE: If considering exiting a student from special education services because the student no longer needs services, or the parent or student requests termination of services, the student graduates or drops out.... A **Prior Written Notice of Special Education Action** must be completed. Check Box #7. Before exiting a student from special education services, when services are no longer needed, a reevaluation must be completed. After reviewing the information with parents, if the decision to exit the student is made, an **Exit** form should be completed.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM

Getting Ready & Demographic Section

The IEP meeting must be held before the anniversary date. Initial **Individual Education Plan (IEP's)** must be within 30 calendar days from the date of the eligibility meeting.

- ✓ Contact required team members to set up the IEP meeting.
- ✓ Complete **Notice of Meeting**.

- ✓ Send **Notice of Meeting and Parental Rights for Public School Students Receiving Special Education Services**

The IEP will be implemented as soon as possible following the IEP meeting. The IEP must be in effect before placement is made in special education and before special education and related services are provided to a child. The effective date on the **Prior Written Notice of Action** should be the same as the starting date on the educational services page of the IEP.

NOTE: *Required team members include- parent(s) or guardian, at least one regular education teacher, at least one special education teacher or related service providers in area(s) of disability, an LEA representative, an individual who can interpret evaluation results, student (required if 16 or older) and adult agency representative for students over 16 if appropriate.*

NOTE: *Be sure to include transition services participants in the **To:** section of the notice of meeting form to document the invitation of this team member. The student should also be given a **Student Notice of Meeting** to document their invitation.*

- ✓ For students who have transition service providers (VR, DD, Job Service, Independent Living) as a part of the team, complete the **Request to Invite Outside Agency Representatives to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting for Secondary Transition Planning** and obtain necessary permission prior to sending a prior notice to that person. This has to be completed yearly. (if they are not yet eligible for services there is no need to invite them),
- ✓ If the team decides that VR services would benefit the student, the case manager should contact their local VR counselor and request a meeting and application packet. A request should be sent to the GST office along with a current assessment report and IEP. The **Consultant Worksheet** will be completed by office staff and returned to the case manager. Once a release is signed by the parent, the case manager should send the entire pack of information to their VR counselor (consultation worksheet, IEP and assessment report)
- ✓ If attendance of any required team member is not possible, the team member may be excused when:
 - The parent and agency agree due to the fact that the member's curriculum area is not being modified or discussed. Written agreement by parents and school to excuse team member is needed. **Excusal of Required IEP Team Members**. No written report necessary.
 - The parent and agency agree IEP Team Member's curriculum area or related service is being modified or discussed. Written consent by parents and school to excuse team member is needed. Complete **Excusal of Required IEP Team Members**. Member submits in writing to parent and IEP team input into development of IEP prior to the meeting.
- ✓ If the student did not attend, document his/her preferences.
- ✓ If a parent did not attend the meeting, document at least two contact attempts using different methods (note, telephone or offers to include parents in a teleconference) on demographic page of IEP.
- ✓ Complete ALL sections/information of the demographic/cover page.

Student Led IEP

- ✓ Student Led IEP's are not an option. They must be presented by each student yearly. The PowerPoint for both the transition student led IEP and ages 6-15 student led IEP can be found on the GST Website.
- ✓ A hard copy of the draft IEP should be available to team members to review during the meeting. An IEP overview form is also available as a tool to organize and share IEP information with the team. This form can be found on the GST website under tools.
- ✓ A member of the GST Assessment team should view one of your student-led IEP's yearly. Please contact them to set this up.

NOTE: *Not attending the IEP meeting does not relieve the school personnel of responsibility for implementing portions of the IEP assigned to that person. Student attendance is mandatory at all transition IEP meetings.*

NOTE: *If the language spoken in the home is other than English, document in the Notices/Consents/Rights/Assessments/IEPs/ who the person was that translated/interpreted the information to or for the parents or keep a translated copy of all documents.*

NOTE: *If the student has surrogate parents or foster parents document the identity and contact information of the surrogate/foster parent. Verify that the information in the IEP is consistent with information in the school office's enrollment records.*

T-1 Measurable Post-Secondary Goals

Draft appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that cover education or training (example: After high school, Mike WILL receive on the job training at the grocery store), employment (example: After high school, Mike WILL be a carryout at the grocery store), and independent living, as needed (example: Mike will live in a group home.) If you include an independent living goal there MUST be T-3 activities to coordinate with that goal. These goals need to occur after high school. These goals have to be updated annually. If there are no changes made document that in the Present Level.

Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)

In drafting the Present Level of Academic and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) consider the following:

- ✓ Cite data from a variety of sources (people and tools remember to ALWAYS include **parents**).
- ✓ Describe strengths & educational needs (including baseline information)
- ✓ Statement of how the child's disability affects the child's involvement in **general education curriculum progress (including functional developmental, academic information) or for preschool children, as appropriate, how the disability affects the child's participation in appropriate activities.**
- ✓ For students entering the transition age (16) include information/results from transition assessment. At least two different forms of transition assessment must be included and updated annually.
- ✓ Document parent input and concerns.

Consideration of Special Factors

Complete the Consideration of Special Factors making sure that each item marked yes is addressed in the IEP document, Adaptation Section, Goals, and Objective Section or separate document such as a FBA/BIP.

NOTE: *In the case of a child with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), there needs to be documentation in the IEP or Special Education file that the IEP team considered the language needs of the child as they relate to the IEP.*

NOTE: *If the child is blind or visually impaired, the IEP provides for instruction in Braille and the use of Braille, unless the IEP team determines, after an evaluation (including an evaluation of the child's future needs for instruction in Braille or the use of Braille), that instruction in Braille or the use of Braille is not appropriate for the child.*

NOTE: *If the child is deaf or hard of hearing, there is documentation in the IEP and/or Special Education file that in the development of the IEP, the IEP Team considered the communication needs of the child, including: 1) opportunities for direct communications with peers and professional personnel in the child's language and communication mode, academic level, and 2) full range of needs including opportunities for direct instruction in the child's language and communication mode.*

NOTE: *The IEP and/or file contains documentation that in developing the IEP, the IEP team considered whether the child required assistive technology devices and services. If the team determined that provision of an AT device will enable a child with a disability to be educated in a less restrictive environment, it should be provided. To assist the IEP team in documenting the consideration of AT, the IEP team may use the suggested worksheet, *The Assistive Technology Consideration Guide*. Additional questions to help guide the teams' decision can be found in the North Dakota Special Education Guidelines Appendix D.*

NOTE: *If the child's behavior impeded his/her learning or that of others, there is documentation in the IEP and/or special education file that the IEP team considered strategies, including positive behavior interventions, and supports to address that behavior. An FBA/BIP needs to be completed.*

T-2 Course of Study

Complete the Course of Study making sure that courses listed enable the student to meet their post-secondary goals. Include all graduation requirements. There should be a correspondence between courses and post-secondary goals. Tech Ed courses if they are going to be a carpenter, plumber or electrician. All academics if 4 year university is a goal, not functional courses. Job shadowing or work study should be included when possible. Complete ALL four years at the initial transition IEP. Make changes as appropriate in subsequent years.

Transfer of Rights

Procedural safeguards associated with IDEA transfer to the student at the age of majority unless parents or other adults have become the student's legal guardian.

- ✓ No later than one year before the child turns 18, the IEP must include a statement that the student has been informed of the rights that transfer to the student upon reaching the age of majority (age 18). Having this information also allows the team to discuss educational guardianship, when appropriate, and for parents to initiate the guardianship process.

- ✓ At the age of 18, the school must notify the parent and student of the transfer of rights. This notification may occur on the Parent **Prior Written Notice of Action** form.
- ✓ The student will sign the **Student Transfer of Rights** form.
- ✓ If parents or other adults have become the child's legal guardian, the student's file must contain a court order or other legal documentation verifying guardianship.

T-3 Transition Services Strategies and Activities Needed to Assist the Student in Reaching Post-Secondary Goals

Complete the Transition Services Section making sure that these service/activities enable the student to meet their post-secondary goals. There should be a correspondence between services/activities and post-secondary goals and checkmark at least one activity per area (education/training, employment, independent living-optional). If plans are to attend a four-year college, an activity could be a tour of the college. Timelines should include current and upcoming years. Once the activity has been completed, transfer the information to the present level. Do not list people responsible for these activities if they are not a part of the IEP team.

Annual Goals and Objectives

Develop measurable annual goals related to meeting the child's needs that result from the child's disability, to enable the child to be involved in and make **progress in general education** and meet the child's other educational needs that result from the child's disability. The goal(s) must contain the intent or purpose, the behavior or skill and the desired ending level of achievement and specific criteria for meeting the goal.

- ✓ **At least one annual goal needs to be related to the student's transition service needs.**
- ✓ If the student is alternately assessed and/or receives alternate curriculum, it is best practice that each measurable annual goal on the **IEP** includes a description of short-term objectives and/or benchmarks that gauge, at intermediate times during the year, how well the child is progressing toward achievement of the measurable annual goal.
- ✓ If you are including short term objectives you are required to have a minimum of two per goal.
- ✓ Short term objectives must include the condition under which the behavior is performed, measurable criteria, evaluation procedures, and schedules for determining of objectives are being achieved.
- ✓ Characteristics of services for each goal must include a description of where, how, and by whom the services will be delivered, unless the goal includes short term objectives that include this information.
- ✓ The Standard Protocol was designed to direct you to research based interventions for a specific learning disability and achievement level. This tool can be found on the GST website under Tools/Resources. Each building is equipped with these researched based tools and can be found in the resource room.
- ✓ Describe how the child's progress toward the annual goals will be measured.
- ✓ Describe when periodic reports on the progress the child is making toward meeting the annual goals (such as through the use of quarterly or other periodic reports, concurrent with the issuance of report cards) will be provided.

NOTE: The **IEP** must include a description of benchmarks and short-term objectives for students taking an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards.

NOTE: Related services are specially designed developmental, corrective, or supportive services that are necessary for the student to benefit from special education. Examples of related services are occupational therapy, physical therapy, transportation, counseling and medical diagnostic procedures. Related services can be offered only when necessary to meet an education need and the goals related to that need. Related services should appear on the IEP only as objectives that support instructional goals and/or in characteristics of service.

Progress Monitoring/Periodic Review

All goals must be monitored using an approved progress monitoring tool. GST Multidistrict has chosen the online tools of AIMSWEB Plus for academic monitoring and Behavior Advantage for behavior monitoring the IEP goals. All GST resource staff will have access to AIMSWEB Plus and Behavior Advantage accounts using a login and password. For questions and login information contact the GST office staff.

The following components **MUST** be completed when documenting on the progress reports:

- ✓ Progress Report Date
- ✓ Progress Code (No progress, Very little progress, Some progress)
- ✓ Drop down menu box (Select from choices)
- ✓ Measurable Data

Consider the following components when writing progress reviews:

- ✓ State where the student was at the beginning of the review period
- ✓ State where the student is at the end of the review period
- ✓ State progress toward the annual goal
- ✓ Describe any changes to be made in the next review period

Parents must receive a periodic review of the child's progress toward the annual goals and the extent to which that progress is sufficient to enable the child to achieve the goals by the end of the year. The periodic review includes a description of the student's progress toward meeting each goal. The review must utilize the same measurement criteria specified in the goals.

Adaptations of Educational Services

The **IEP** addresses adaptations of educational services, accommodations, modifications, supports, and other adjustments that enable the student to participate in the general curriculum and other school offerings as fully as possible.

- ✓ The entry here is intended to be a summary of accommodations, supports and adjustments. Consideration must also be given to the special factors identified in the **IEP** section E.
- ✓ If the student needs instructional and related core materials in an accessible specialized format this format must be documented.
- ✓ The IEP indicates which state assessment the child will take (state assessment without accommodations, general state assessment with accommodations or the alternate assessment).

- ✓ The IEP contains a statement of any individual accommodations in the administration of state or district-wide assessments of student achievement that are needed in order for the child to participate in the assessment.
- ✓ Accommodations used during testing must match those accommodations already identified in the Adaptations of Educational Services sections and that are allowed as indicated in the ND State Test Coordinator's Manual.
- ✓ The IEP team must provide justification of why the child cannot participate in a particular district-wide or the North Dakota State Assessment, **and** why the alternate assessment selected is appropriate.

Description of Activities with Students Who are Not Disabled

Interactions with peers who are not disabled must be specified in the child's IEP in the areas of Physical education, program options, and nonacademic and extracurricular activities.

- ✓ Document the type of physical education program the student receives and a list of Academic and Nonacademic activities that the student participates in with students who are not disabled.

Educational Environment LRE

The purpose of the LRE discussion is to consider the continuum of educational environments and document decisions made by the IEP team regarding the environment in which the child will receive most of his/her education. The IEP team needs to review and discuss the environment options considered and compare them as a more or less appropriate means to address the student's specific identified needs.

- ✓ The IEP must include documentation that the placement selected and the reason this placement is the most appropriate to meet the student's unique needs. The IEP also documents whether the selected placement will have any potential harmful effect on the student.
- ✓ The statements must be individualized and based on the needs of the student. Document that harmful effects of the child's proposed placement were considered. If the team answers "yes" explain how the harmful effect will be minimized.

Special Education and Related Services

The IEP team must annually discuss, determine and document the specific service, the amount of time the service will be provided, the starting date for each service, the anticipated duration, the service provider's job title, and where the service is to be provided, in a manner that is clear to all who are involved in both the development and implementation of the IEP.

- ✓ If individual needs of the student required programming during school holidays, for an entire twelve-month period, or an extended school year, the IEP must state specifically those additional time periods.
- ✓ Include the number of minutes that a paraprofessional supports a particular student.

Extended School Year Procedure

Every year the IEP team must consider ESY. The team must adhere to the following procedure when determining ESY.

- ✓ At the annual IEP meeting the team needs to determine if ESY is needed based on current data or if they need to gather more information to determine ESY. How do you determine ESY?

Refer to the ESY form that provides guidance on ESY decision making which can be found on the GST Website. Some questions that can be discussed are:

1. Will learning that occurred during the regular school year be significantly jeopardized if ESY services are not provided? Consider these factors: degree of regression, ability of parents to provide educational structure at home, child's rate of progress, availability of alternative resources, child's vocational needs and child's behavioral and physical problems.
 2. What data supports the need for ESY services? Collect data before and after long breaks such as Christmas, long weekends and/or summer. Not having data is not an excuse to deny ESY services.
- ✓ If the team determines that the student does not require ESY then the appropriate box should be checked on the IEP under Sec. G and justification should be made.
 - ✓ If the student does qualify for ESY then the appropriate box should be checked on the IEP under Sec. G and the Extended School Year Plan must be completed.

Prior Written Notice of Special Education Action

- ✓ Complete all section of the Prior Written Notice of Special Education Action form and send to parents. See example on the DPI website.
- ✓ The "this action will take effect date" on the Prior Notice form should be the same as the "start date" on the IEP
- ✓ Refer to the Prior Written Notice of Special Education Action PowerPoint on the GST Website for specific guidance on completing these forms.

Other Considerations

- ✓ Children and youth with disabilities who attend private schools or other special schools, or are served in residential schools, detention centers, correctional facilities, also remain eligible for services under IDEA.
- ✓ If a young person is incarcerated in an adult correctional facility, the school district of residence may not be required to provide FAPE. That is, FAPE is not required if the person is not identified as having a disability upon entry into prison and does not have an IEP in place at the time. However, this does not relieve the facility from inquiring about educational services the person was receiving or contacting school districts to determine whether that person was identified as having a disability.
- ✓ Children and youth with disabilities who are home educated may still be eligible for services under IDEA.
- ✓ ALL Transition IEP's must be checked by the transition coordinator at the GST office before finalizing

Annual Review of IEP

An IEP meeting must be initiated and conducted at least once every twelve months. The review meeting is required to be held at least one day prior to the current IEP date.

- ✓ Make sure to update the date on page one of the IEP.
- ✓ IEP's must be finalized within 30 days of the meeting date.

Consent for Initial Placement

After the IEP team, including the parent, determines the initial placement for a child in the least restrictive environment, the LEA must obtain informed parental consent from the parent for the proposed placement by completing the [Consent for Initial Placement in Special Education](#).

Tools for Parents

- ✓ **Parent Paperwork Folder:** Once a student has been placed in special education the case manager should present the parent with a paperwork folder and explain its purpose. Paperwork folders can be requested from the GST Office.
- ✓ **Special Education Process for Parents Booklet:** At the initial IEP meeting share this resource with the parents. It can be found on the GST website and can be shared as a PowerPoint.

Revocation of Consent

If a parent/guardian revokes consent, in writing, for the continued provision of special education and related services, the district must honor the revocation and provide the parent with the completed [Prior Written Notice—Revocation of Consent](#) form.