

# Parents As Partners and Leaders Conference

*April 13, 2024*

## The Special Education Process

*And Resources to Support  
Families and Students*



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## Rights under The Individuals with Disabilities Education ACT (IDEA)

- **Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** – Children with disabilities (from birth until 22 years old) who meet special education eligibility criteria are entitled to a public education, appropriate to their needs, at no cost to their families.
- **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** – Each public agency must ensure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with students who do not have disabilities. Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of a child with a disability from the regular educational environment should occur only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in the regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.
- **Supplementary Aids and Services (Related Services)** – Children with disabilities must be provided aids, services, and other supports to enable each child to be educated with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate.
- **Assessment** – An assessment must be completed to determine the needs of the child in all areas related to his or her suspected disabilities. This is done with the parent's/guardian's informed consent. After initial assessment and determination of eligibility for special education, the child must be reassessed at least every three years to determine continued eligibility and need for services.

## Protections under IDEA

**Due Process** – Due process is described in the legal procedural safeguards. They are designed to ensure that parents provide informed consent regarding special education programs offered. Further, due process provides a mechanism for the resolution of disagreements.

**Individualized Education Program (IEP)** – The IEP must be prepared at least annually for each child with a disability. It is developed by a team comprised of one or both of the child's parents or a guardian, special education teacher or provider, a general education teacher, personnel who assessed the child (if applicable), an administrator or their designee, service providers who have knowledge of the student, and, whenever appropriate, the student is encouraged to attend. Other persons may also attend at the discretion of the LEA or parent/guardian



## What To Do If You Have Concerns

### ASSESSMENT vs. SST (Student Study Team)

Talk to your school about the SST. Your child may benefit from classroom strategies implemented by their general education teacher after being carefully considered by the SST.

The assessment process has two major purposes:

To determine if a student is eligible for special education services, by gathering all of the information possible about the student in order to determine which are the most appropriate special education and related services for the student.

The parent's written consent is necessary before an assessment can be conducted (as well as before any special education services can be delivered to the child). The *written assessment plan must be prepared within 15 days after receiving the referral*, and must include an explanation of the assessment process and the tests which will be used, and who will be responsible for doing the testing and interpreting the results. You will be expected to sign and return the plan in 15 days. Once the team receives the signed plan they have 60 days to complete the assessment(s) and hold an IEP meeting.

Remember 15 days  15 days  60 days

## Preparing for Your Child's IEP Meeting

Respond to the Notice of Meeting: Plan to attend the IEP meeting. Contact the school if to reschedule if you cannot attend.

Consider excusing IEP team members who may not be able to attend all or part of the meeting.

Before the meeting, take time to review last year's goals and progress reports.

Ask to see any drafts of reports ahead of time if you need time to review them.

Write down questions or concerns and bring them to the meeting.

Consider bringing a binder of work samples and outside agency reports.

Share your child's strengths and interests.

You may audio record the meeting as long as you give 24 hours advance notice

The IEP can only implemented once you give your consent.

## Eligibility for Special Education Under One of the Thirteen Federally Defined Disability Categories:

- Hard of Hearing
- Deaf
- Visual Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Intellectual Disability
- Deaf-Blind
- Autism
- Orthopedically Impaired
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Emotionally Disturbed
- Speech Impaired
- Other Health Impaired
- Multiple Disabilities

Having one of more of these disabilities does not automatically qualify a child for special education. Assessments determine how the disability affects their ability to benefit from instruction.

## Each Annual Individual Education Plan (IEP) Will Include:

A statement about eligibility.

Parent concerns

Present levels in the areas of Pre-academic, Academic, Communication, Gross/Fine Motor, Social/Emotional/Behavioral, Vocational, Adaptive/Daily Living Skills, and Health.

Annual measurable goals written to address areas of need.

Any necessary accommodations or modifications.

Types and duration of related services

Supplementary Aides and Services

Special factors that impede learning

Transition Plan for Students turning 16.

## IEPs must show Educational Benefit

Goals must be written for every area of need.

Progress on goals must be monitored. Parents/guardians must receive progress reports on goals in addition to general education progress reports.

Goals should be based on present levels of performance (PLOPS)  
Present levels of performance should be updated annually based on past progress on goals, testing, and other measures such as teacher observation.

SMART Goals:

Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time based.

Related services and instruction are provided by specialists with a wide variety of expertise. Services support the student's educational program and are documented in the IEP with minutes provided. These service providers are responsible for developing and monitoring specific goals in the IEP. Examples of some related services are: speech therapy, occupational therapy, assistive technology, physical therapy, audiology services, orientation and mobility, and counseling.



## Placement and Services

When eligibility has been established by the IEP team, goals have been written to address the academic areas of need, and services have been added to ensure progress on goals can be addressed, it must then determine how to meet the student's individual needs in the least restrictive environment as close to home as possible. Assignments to special day classes or any other removal from the regular classroom setting should only occur when the nature and severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with additional, supportive aides and services cannot be satisfactorily achieved. Remember, under the law each child is entitled to placement in the **least restrictive environment**, which is that placement which gives the student the greatest amount of contact with their non-disabled peers.

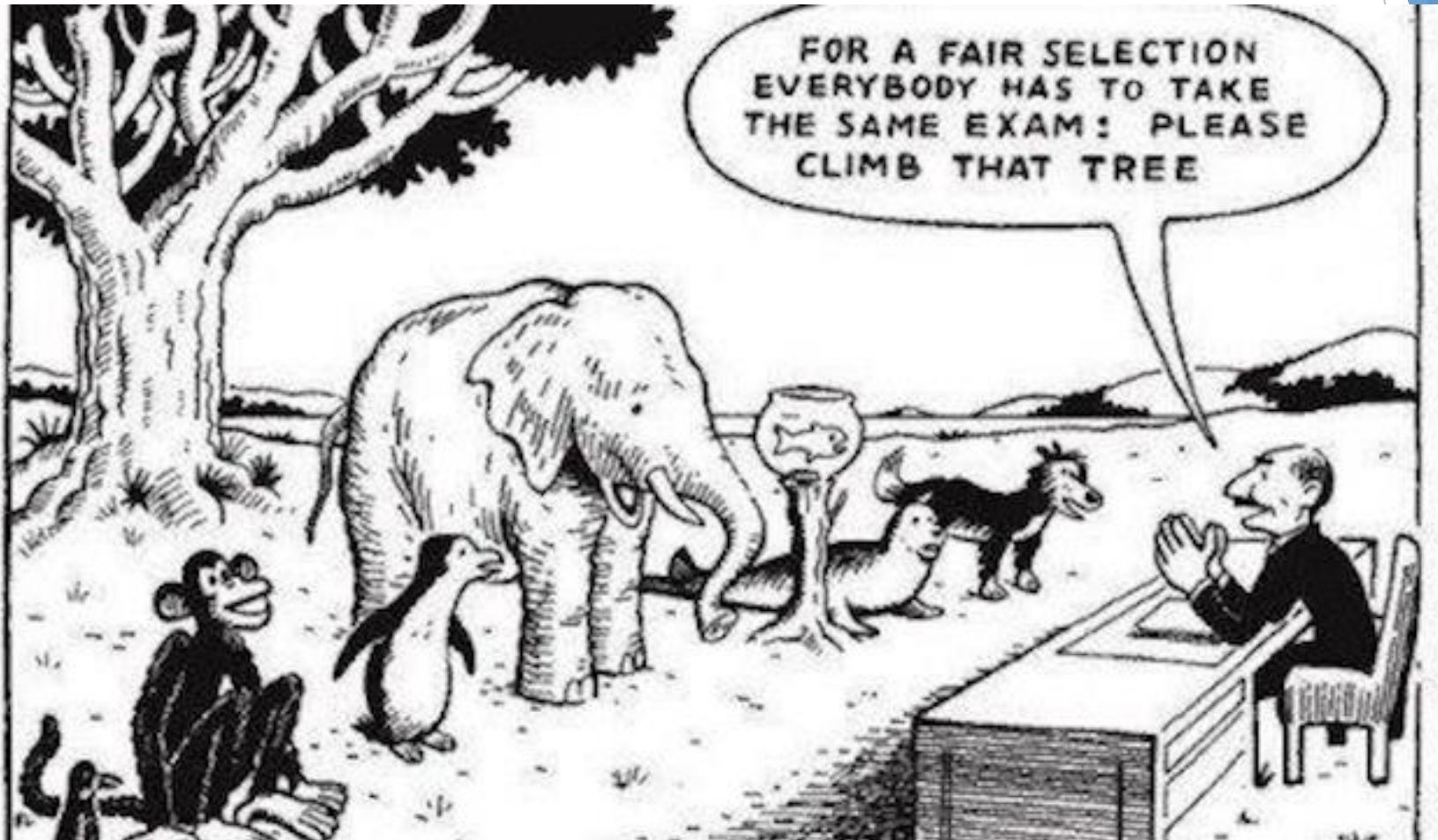
### Things to remember:

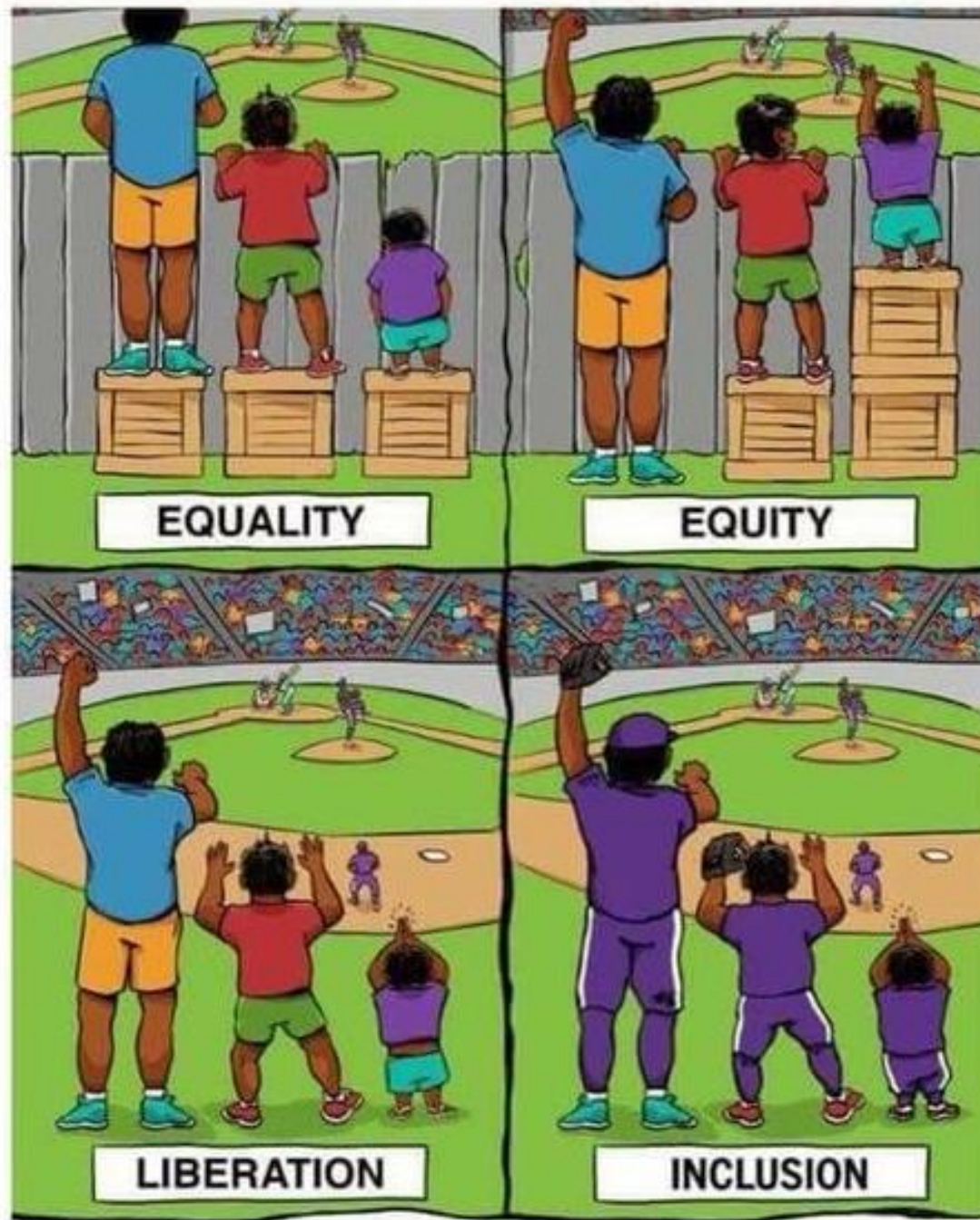
IEPs are held annually to address progress on goals and review appropriateness of services.

You should receive progress reports on each goal.

You have the right to revoke consent to special education services. However, re-entering special education will require re-assessment.

You must sign the IEP document if you agree with the content. The IEP cannot be implemented without your consent.





## When You have Concerns About Any Part of the IEP Process

All school districts across California offer assistance through **Alternative Dispute Resolution, ADR.**

Alternative Dispute Resolution offers a continuum of support to help you resolve problems that may arise.

The most efficient way to resolve any conflict is to try to speak with your child's teacher or principal at your school site. However, sometimes you may need additional support.

The Parent Liaison office and trained Resource Parents are available to hear concerns and offer assistance.

You can also request Alternative Dispute Resolution in the form of a facilitated IEP or dispute resolution session with a trained mediator. All of these are available at no cost.

**Parent Liaison/Resource Parents (510) 307-4669**



## **Resources to Help You Prepare for IEP,s Learn About Your Child's Disability, and Offer Support**

**Community Advisory Committees (CACs):** State Education Code mandates that each SELPA must have a CAC and that a majority of CAC members be parents. CACs advise district leadership on priorities in the SELPA.

### **Family Empowerment Centers:**

#### **Care Parent Network, Contra Costa County**

Offer specialized training, peer-to-peer support, information and referral services. They aim to assist parents to better understand their child's educational and developmental needs, serve as a resource for the IEP process, promote alternative dispute resolution, and support positive relationships between parents and professionals.

**Family Empowerment Centers, in Marin, Santa Clara and San Francisco have strong online support.**

**Regional Center of the East Bay:** If your child has a developmental disability, autism, epilepsy or cerebral palsy, they may qualify for services through RCEB. These services may support them into adulthood.

<https://www.wccusd.net/SpecialEducationParentResources>

## Who to Contact in the WCCUSD Special Education Office

Special Education Main Office 510 307-4630

SELPA Director Guthrie Fleishman

[gfleischman@wccusd.net](mailto:gfleischman@wccusd.net) 510 307-4630

Cameron Early Intervention

Shirley Priestley Interim Coordinator 510 231-1445

[Shirley.priestley@wccusd.net](mailto:Shirley.priestley@wccusd.net)

Perlita Vickroy Elementary Director of Special Education

[pvickroy@wccusd.net](mailto:pvickroy@wccusd.net) 510 307 -4640

Elementary Program Specialists 307 -4640

Chavon Pangilinan-Green, 510 307-4641

[Cpangilinana-green@wccusd.net](mailto:Cpangilinana-green@wccusd.net)

Secondary Program specialists 510 307-4641

Transportation Specialist 510 307-4645