



SPECIAL EDUCATION LAW

Parental Consent

Procedural Safeguards

The sections of this document that refer to Procedural Safeguards contain the language from the 2018 revised document entitled, “*IDEA Part B Parents’ Rights in Special Education (Age 3-21) Procedural Safeguards Notice.*” The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Federal law concerning the education of students with disabilities, requires schools to provide parents of a child with a disability with a notice containing a full explanation of the procedural safeguards available under the IDEA and the federal regulations. A copy of this notice must be given to parents only one time a school year, except that a copy must be given to the parents: (1) upon initial referral or parent request for evaluation; (2) upon receipt of the first State complaint under 34 CFR §§300.151 through 300.153 and upon receipt of the first due process complaint under §300.507 in a school year; (3) when a decision is made to take a disciplinary action that constitutes a change of placement; and (4) upon parent request.

PARENTAL CONSENT - DEFINITION

Consent means:

- You have been fully informed in your native language or other mode of communication (such as sign language, Braille, or oral communication) of all information about the action for which you are giving consent.
- You understand and agree in writing to that action, and the consent describes that action and lists the records (if any) that will be released and to whom; **and**
- You understand that the consent is voluntary on your part and you may withdraw your consent at anytime.

Your withdrawal of consent does not negate (undo) an action that has occurred after you gave your consent and before you withdrew it.

CONSENT FOR INITIAL EVALUATION

Your school district cannot conduct an initial evaluation of your child to determine whether your child is eligible under Part B of the IDEA to receive special education and related services without first providing you with prior written notice of the proposed action and without obtaining your consent as described under the heading **Parental Consent**.

Your school district must make reasonable efforts to obtain your informed consent for an initial evaluation to decide whether your child is a child with a disability.

Your consent for initial evaluation does not mean that you have also given your consent for the school district to start providing special education and related services to your child.

If your child is enrolled in public school or you are seeking to enroll your child in a public school and you have refused to provide consent or failed to respond to a request to provide consent for an initial evaluation, your

school district may, but is not required to, seek to conduct an initial evaluation of your child by utilizing the Act's mediation or due process complaint, resolution meeting, and impartial due process hearing procedures (unless required to do so or prohibited from doing so under State law). Your school district will not violate its obligations to locate, identify and evaluate your child if it does not pursue an evaluation of your child in these circumstances, unless State law requires it to pursue the evaluation.

SPECIAL RULES FOR INITIAL EVALUATION OF WARDS OF THE STATE

If a child is a ward of the State and is not living with his/her parent –

The school district does not need consent from the parent for an initial evaluation to determine if the child is a child with a disability if:

- Despite reasonable efforts to do so, the school district cannot find the child's parent;
- The rights of the parents have been terminated in accordance with State law; **or**
- A judge has assigned the right to make educational decisions and to consent for an initial evaluation to an individual other than the parent.

Ward of the State, as used in the IDEA, means a child who, as determined by the State where the child lives, is:

- A foster child;
- Considered a ward of the State under State law; or
- In the custody of a public child welfare agency.

Ward of the State does not include a foster child who has a foster parent.

PARENTAL CONSENT FOR SERVICES

Your school district must obtain your informed consent before providing special education and related services to your child for the first time.

The school district must make reasonable efforts to obtain your informed consent before providing special education and related services to your child for the first time.

If you do not respond to a request to provide your consent for your child to receive special education and related services for the first time, or if you refuse to give such consent, your school district may not use the procedural safeguards (i.e., mediation, due process complaint, resolution meeting, or an impartial due process hearing) in order to obtain agreement or a ruling that the special education and related services (recommended by your child's IEP Team) may be provided to your child without your consent.

If you refuse to give your consent for your child to receive special education and related services for the first time, or if you do not respond to a request to provide such consent and the school district does not provide your child with the special education and related services for which it sought your consent, your school district:

- Is not in violation of the requirement to make a free appropriate public education (FAPE) available to your child for its failure to provide those services to your child; and
- Is not required to have an individualized education program (IEP) meeting or develop an IEP for your child for the special education and related services for which your consent was requested.

PARENTAL CONSENT FOR REEVALUATIONS

Your school district must obtain your informed consent before it reevaluates your child, unless your school district can demonstrate that:

- It took reasonable steps to obtain your consent for your child’s reevaluation; **and**
- You did not respond.

If you refuse to consent to your child’s reevaluation, the school district may, but is not required to, pursue your child’s reevaluation by using the mediation, due process complaint, resolution meeting, and impartial due process hearing procedures to seek to override your refusal to consent to your child’s reevaluation. As with initial evaluations, your school district does not violate its obligations under Part B of the IDEA if it declines to pursue the reevaluation in this manner.

DOCUMENTATION OF REASONABLE EFFORTS TO OBTAIN PARENTAL CONSENT

Your school must maintain documentation of reasonable efforts to obtain parental consent for initial evaluations, to provide special education and related services for the first time, to reevaluation and to locate parents of wards of the State for initial evaluations. The documentation must include a record of the school district’s attempts in these areas, such as:

- Detailed records of telephone calls made or attempted and the results of those calls;
- Copies of correspondence sent to the parents and any responses received; **and**
- Detailed records of visits made to the parent’s home or place of employment and the results of those visits.

OTHER CONSENT REQUIREMENTS

Your consent is not required before your school district may:

- Review existing data as part of your child’s evaluation or a reevaluation; or
- Give your child a test or other evaluation that is given to all children unless, before that test or evaluation, consent is required from all parents of all children.

Your school district may not use your refusal to consent to one service or activity to deny you or your child any other service, benefit, or activity.

If you have enrolled your child in a private school at your own expense or if you are home schooling your child, and you do not provide your consent for your child’s initial evaluation or your child’s reevaluation, or you fail to respond to a request to provide your consent, the school district may not use its consent override procedures (i.e., mediation, due process complaint, resolution meeting, or an impartial due process hearing) and is not required to consider your child as eligible to receive special education services or equitable services (services made available to nonresident parentally-placed nonpublic school children with disabilities).

Nebraska Rule 51

The sections of this document that refer to Nebraska Rule 51 contain the language from the 2017 revised document entitled, “*Nebraska Department of Education Rule 51: Regulations and Standards for Special Education Programs. Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 51.*”

003.09 **Consent** means that the parent has been fully informed of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought, in his or her native language, or other mode of communication; that the parent understands and agrees in writing to the carrying out of the activity for which his or her consent is sought; that the consent includes a description of the proposed activity and a list of records (if any) which will be released and to whom they will be released; and the parent understands that the granting of consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time. If a parent revokes consent, that revocation is not retroactive (i.e., it does not negate an action that has occurred after the consent was given and before the consent was revoked). If the parent revokes consent in writing for their child's receipt of special education services after the child is initially provided special education and related services, the school district or approved cooperative is not required to amend the child's education records to remove any references to the child's receipt of special education and related services because of the revocation of consent.

009.08 Parental Consent

009.08A Parental Consent for Initial Evaluations

009.08A1 The school district or approved cooperative proposing to conduct an initial evaluation to determine if a child qualifies as a child with a disability under 92 NAC 51-003.08 must obtain informed consent, consistent with 92 NAC 51-003.09, from the parent of the child before conducting the evaluation.

009.08A2 Parental consent for initial evaluation must not be construed as consent for initial provision of special education and related services.

009.08A3 The school district or approved cooperative must make reasonable efforts to obtain the informed consent from the parent for an initial evaluation to determine whether the child is a child with a disability.

009.08A4 For initial evaluations only, if the child is a ward of the State and is not residing with the child's parent, the school district or approved cooperative is not required to obtain informed consent from the parent for an initial evaluation to determine whether the child is a child with a disability if:

009.08A4a Despite reasonable efforts to do so, the school district or approved cooperative cannot discover the whereabouts of the parent of the child;

009.08A4b The rights of the parents of the child have been terminated in accordance with the State law; or

009.08A4c The rights of the parent to make educational decisions have been subrogated by a judge in accordance with State law and consent for an initial evaluation has been given by an individual appointed by the judge to represent the child.

009.08A5 If the parent of a child enrolled in public school or seeking to be enrolled in public school does not provide consent for initial evaluation under 92 NAC 51-009.08A1 or the parent fails to respond to a request to provide consent, the school district or approved cooperative may, but is not required to, pursue the initial evaluation of the child by utilizing the procedural safeguards in 92 NAC 51-009 (including the mediation procedures or the due process procedures), if appropriate.

009.08A5a The school district or approved cooperative does not violate its obligation under 92 NAC 51-006 to locate and identify the child as a child with a disability if it declines to pursue the evaluation.

009.08B Consent for Services

009.08B1 A school district or approved cooperative that is responsible for making FAPE available to a child with a disability must obtain informed consent from the parent of the child before the initial provision of special education and related services to the child.

009.08B1a Participation in or attendance at programs by children with verified disabilities from date of diagnosis to age five shall be voluntary as specified by the parent.

009.08B2 The school district or approved cooperative must make reasonable efforts to obtain informed consent from the parent for the initial provision of special education and related services to the child.

009.08B3 If the parent of a child fails to respond to a request for, or refuses to consent to, the initial provision of special education and related services the school district or approved cooperative:

009.08B3a May not use the procedures in 92 NAC 51-009 (including the mediation procedures or the due process procedures) in order to obtain agreement or a ruling that the services may be provided to the child.

009.08B3b Will not be considered to be in violation of the requirement to make a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) available to the child because of the failure to provide the child with the special education and related services for which the parent refuses to or fails to provide consent; and

009.08B3c Is not required to convene an IEP Tteam meeting or develop an IEP under 92 NAC 51-007 for the child.

009.08B4 If at any time subsequent to the initial provision of special education and related services, the parent of a child revokes consent in writing for the continued provision of special education and related services, the school district or approved cooperative:

009.08B4a May not continue to provide special education and related services to the child, but must provide prior written notice in accordance with 92 NAC 51-009.05 before ceasing the provision of special education and related services.

009.08B4b May not use the procedures in 92 NAC 51-009 (including the mediation procedures and due process procedures) in order to obtain agreement or a ruling that the services may be provided to the child.

009.08B4c Will not be considered to be in violation of the requirement to make a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) available to the child because of the failure to provide the child with further special education and related services; and

009.08B4d Is not required to convene an IEP team meeting or develop an IEP under 92 NAC 51-007 for the child for further provision of special education and related services.

009.08C Consent for Reevaluations

009.08C1 Subject to 92 NAC 51-009.08C2, each school district or approved cooperative must obtain informed parental consent, in accordance with 92 NAC 51-009.08A1, prior to conducting any reevaluation of a child with a disability.

009.08C1a If the parent refuses to consent to the reevaluation, the school district or approved cooperative may, but is not required to, pursue the reevaluation by using the consent override procedures described in 92 NAC 51-009.08A5. The school district or approved cooperative does not violate its obligation to locate and identify the child as a child with a disability if it declines to pursue the evaluation or reevaluation.

009.08C2 The informed parental consent described in 92 NAC 51-009.08C1 need not be obtained if the school district or approved cooperative can demonstrate that:

009.08C2a It made reasonable efforts to obtain such consent; and

009.08C2b The child's parent has failed to respond.

009.08D Other Consent Requirements

009.08D1 Parental consent is not required before:

009.08D1a Reviewing existing data as part of an evaluation or a reevaluation; or

009.08D1b Administering a test or other evaluation that is administered to all children unless, before administration of that test or evaluation, consent is required of parents of all children.

009.08D2 A school district or approved cooperative may not use a parent's refusal to consent to one service or activity under 92 NAC 51-009.08A, 92 NAC 51-009.08B or 92 NAC 51-009.08C to deny the parent or child any other service, benefit, or activity of the school district or approved cooperative, except as required by this Chapter.

009.08D3 If a parent of a child who is home schooled or placed in a nonpublic school by the parents at their own expense does not provide consent for the initial evaluation or the reevaluation, or the parent fails to respond to a request to provide consent, the school district or approved cooperative may not use the consent override procedures (described in 92 NAC 51-009.08A5 and 009.08C1); and

009.08D3a The school district or approved cooperative is not required to consider the child as eligible for services under 92 NAC 51-015.

009.08D4 To meet the reasonable efforts requirement in 92 NAC 51-009.08A3, 009.08A4a, 009.08B2, and 009.08C2a, the school district or approved cooperative must document its attempts to obtain parental consent using the procedures in 92 NAC 51-007.06.

For more information about written parental consent, contact your child's special education teacher, a PTI Nebraska parent/professional at (800) 284-8520 and pti-nebraska.org, or the Nebraska Department of Education at (402) 471-2471 and education.ne.gov/sped/.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law that makes available a free appropriate public education to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures special education and related services to those children. See <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/> for more information on IDEA.

Rule 51 is the document that outlines regulations and standards for special education programs in Nebraska. Rule 51 can be found on the Nebraska Department of Education's website: https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Rule51_2017.pdf.

Rule 55 is the document that outlines rules of practice and procedure for due process hearing in special education contest cases. Rule 55 can be found on the Nebraska Department of Education's website: https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Rule55_2012.pdf