
Standards for Special Education Evaluation & Eligibility

The Background:

State Board of Education Rule 0520-01-09-.11, Special Education Programs and Services, requires the State Board to review and approve the guidelines and standards for determining special education program eligibility criteria, evaluation procedures, and evaluation participants. A task force was convened to review and update the Standards for Special Education Evaluation & Eligibility, which were last updated in 2008. The multidisciplinary statewide task force consisted of special education supervisors, school psychologists, and speech and language pathologists as well as representatives of parents/advocates, vision specialists, hearing specialists, preschool specialists, gifted specialists, and representatives from the Tennessee Department of Education.

The initial task force meeting was convened on March 15, 2016, to determine whether the disability definitions, guidelines, and standards should be amended. After identifying possible needs, the task force created committees to research and recommend changes for each indicated category. Recommendations were provided to the Advisory Council in April 2016. They were also sent out to stakeholder groups (i.e., Tennessee Association of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists, Tennessee Association of School Psychologists, TN-Support and Training for Exceptional Parents/ Tennessee Disability Coalition on Education, and Tennessee Association for the Gifted) for feedback. Further recommended revisions were made after reviewing all feedback with task force committee groups for each disability.

The proposed revisions better align to updated clinical disability definitions and best practices, which allows for improved portability between states in regards to eligibility.

The attached Crosswalk document provides a detailed overview of the proposed changes.

The Fiscal Analysis Impact:

Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-1-212 requires that the Department prepare a fiscal analysis of any policy, rule or regulation proposed to the State Board of Education. This item has no financial impact on an LEA.

The Recommendation:

The Department of Education recommends acceptance of this item on first reading. The SBE staff concurs with this recommendation.