

5.006 Exceptional Children Services

Least Restrictive Environment

At Ascend Leadership Academy, children with disabilities shall be educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature of the disability is such that education in the regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Separate Setting

Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Related Services

Related services is defined as transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education. Related services include, but are not limited to, speech-language pathology and audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, counseling services and recreation.

ALA will contract with a third-party service provider to deliver these services where required by each student's Individual Education Plan.

Accountability

Ascend Leadership Academy's Board of Directors charges the administration to manage the core educational functions of the school in ways that guarantee equity, consistency, and ingenuity with the ultimate intent of maximizing achievement for all students.

Exceptional Children are part of, not separate from, the general education population. Special education accountability should strengthen, compliment, and align with other special education supports and initiatives.

When testing of children with disabilities Ascend Leadership Academy shall:

1. provide broad accommodations and alternate methods of assessment that are consistent with a student's individualized education program and section 504 plans
2. prohibit the use of statewide tests as the sole determinant of decisions about a student's graduation or promotion
3. provide parents with information about the Statewide Testing Program and options for children with disabilities.

All students with disabilities enrolled at ALA, including those with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and those identified under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, shall participate in the state assessment program using one of the following assessments as appropriate and as determined by the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan:

- a. The standard test administration with or without accommodations, or
- b. An alternate assessment with or without accommodations, if eligible.

Only students with significant cognitive disabilities may participate in a state-designated alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards.

Maintenance of Effort

Ascend Leadership Academy shall not use funds provided under Part B of IDEA to reduce the level of expenditures for the education of children with disabilities made by ALA from local funds below the level of those expenditures for the preceding fiscal year.

ALA may reduce the level of expenditures by the LEA under Part B of IDEA below the level of those expenditures for the preceding fiscal year if the reduction is attributable to any of the following:

- The voluntary departure, by retirement or otherwise, or departure for just cause, of special education or related services personnel.
- A decrease in the enrollment of children with disabilities.
- The termination of the obligation of ALA to provide a program of special education to a particular child with a disability that is an exceptionally costly program, as determined by the State Education Authority, because the child
 - (1) Has left Ascend Leadership Academy;
 - (2) Has reached the age at which the obligation of ALA to provide free and appropriate education to the child has terminated; or
 - (3) No longer needs the program of special education.
- The termination of costly expenditures for long-term purchases, such as the acquisition of equipment or the construction of school facilities.
- The assumption of cost by the high cost fund operated by the State Education Authority.

Child Find

ALA has established procedures that ensure that all children regardless of their circumstances and severity of their disability who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated. ALA will abide by the following procedures:

1. Classroom teachers will use classroom observations, formative assessment data, and other evaluations to identify students who are suspected of having a disability.

2. Teachers, administration, and parents will join together to create an individualized student success plan that will provide interventions at the classroom level with the goal of addressing any deficiencies the student may have. After 4 weeks, these interventions will be assessed.
3. If the team determines that the interventions put in place were successful, then the Success Plan will continue and the student's success will continue to be monitored.
4. If the initial interventions are not successful under the Success Plan, the team will move to more intensive research-based interventions under the Student Assistance Program (SAP). If these more intensive interventions do not contribute to improved student achievement it may be determined that the student will need to be evaluated for Special Education services.
5. ALA will utilize the services of a licensed Psychologist to administer the various evaluations that identify learning disabilities. The IEP team will determine student eligibility for Special Education services based on a variety of factors including the psychological evaluation.
6. If the IEP team determines that the student qualifies for Special Education services, an IEP will be written and implemented immediately. If it is determined that the student does not qualify for Special Education services, he/she may or may not be referred for 504 services.

The child find procedures also apply to children with disabilities with varying living circumstances including those who are highly mobile, migrants, and/or homeless.

Parent Requests for EC Services

Parents of a child suspected of having a disability may request to have their child evaluated by Ascend Leadership Academy. This request must be made in writing and should be addressed to ALA's administration.

Within ten (10) days of receipt of written notification of a request for evaluation, ALA shall issue a written response to the child's parent. The response shall include either an explanation of reasons ALA will not pursue the concerns or a date for a meeting in which ALA and the parent(s) will review existing data and determine whether a referral for consideration of eligibility for special education is necessary. This meeting shall take place in a reasonable amount of time.