

Sec. 6.3.1. ADMISSION, REVIEW AND DISMISSAL COMMITTEES

Life School shall establish an admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee for each eligible student with a disability and for each student for whom a full and individual initial evaluation is conducted. The ARD committee shall be the individualized education program (IEP) team defined at 34 CFR 300.321.

Sec. 6.3.2. ARD COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The ARD committee and Life School are responsible for:

1. Evaluating, reevaluating, and determining eligibility for special education and related services;
2. Placement of students with disabilities, including disciplinary changes in placement;
3. Development of student IEPs;
4. Development and implementation of service plans for students who have been placed by their parents in private schools and who have been designated to receive special education and related services;
5. Compliance with the least restrictive environment standard;
6. Compliance with state requirements for reading diagnosis and state assessments;
7. Development of personal graduation plans;
8. Development of accelerated instruction under Education Code 28.0211 and intensive programs of instruction under Education Code 28.0213;
9. Evaluation, placement, and coordination of services for students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired; and
10. Determining eligibility for extracurricular activities, under Education Code 33.081.

19 TAC 89.1050(a); 34 CFR 300.116(a), 300.321(a).

Sec. 6.3.3. COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Life School shall ensure that each ARD committee meeting includes all of the following:

1. The parents of a child with a disability;
2. At least one regular education teacher of the child (if the child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment) who must, to the extent practicable, be a teacher who is responsible for implementing a portion of the student's IEP;
3. At least one special education teacher, or where appropriate, at least one special education provider of the child;
4. A representative of Life School who:

- a. Is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities;
 - b. Is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum; and
 - c. Is knowledgeable about the availability of Life School's resources;
5. An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results, who may be a member of the ARD committee (who may be a member of the committee listed in items 2–5);
 6. At the discretion of the parent or Life School, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel as appropriate;
 7. The child, whenever appropriate;
 8. A representative from career and technical education, preferably the teacher, when considering initial or continued placement of a student in a career and technical education program;
 9. For a child with limited English proficiency, a member of the child's language-proficiency assessment committee (LPAC) when deciding upon the selection of assessments and appropriate accommodations;
 10. For a child with an auditory impairment, including deaf-blindness, a teacher who is certified in the education of children with auditory impairments; and
 11. For a child with a visual impairment, including deaf-blindness, a teacher who is certified in the education of children with visual impairments.

20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(B); 34 CFR 300.321; 19 TAC 75.1023(d)(1), 89.1131(b)(3)–(4), 101.1009

A Life School member of the ARD committee shall not be required to attend an IEP meeting, in whole or in part, if the parent and Life School agree in writing that the attendance is not necessary because the member's area of the curriculum or related services is not being modified or discussed during the meeting.

A Life School member of the ARD committee may be excused from attending an IEP meeting, in whole or in part, when the meeting involves a modification to or discussion of the member's area of curriculum or related services if the parent, in writing, and Life School consent to the excusal and the member submits, in writing, to the parent and the ARD committee, input into the development of the IEP before the meeting.

20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(C); 34 CFR 300.321(e)

Sec. 6.3.3.1. Transition Meeting Membership

If the ARD committee is meeting to consider postsecondary goals and the transition services needed to assist the student in reaching those goals, Life School shall invite:

1. The student. If the student does not attend, Life School shall take other steps to ensure that the student's preferences and interests are considered.
2. To the extent appropriate, and with the consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority, a representative of any other agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services.

34 CFR 300.321(b).

Sec. 6.3.4. PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Life School shall take steps to ensure that one or both of the parents of a student with a disability are present at each ARD committee meeting or are afforded the opportunity to participate, including:

1. Notifying the parents of the meeting early enough to ensure that they will have an opportunity to attend (the notice shall include all information required by applicable regulation); and
2. Scheduling the meeting at a mutually agreed time and place.

If the purpose of the meeting is to consider transition services, the notice must also indicate this purpose, indicate that the Student will invite the student, and identify any other agency that will be invited to send a representative. 34 CFR 300.322(a)–(b); 19 TAC 89.1045.

Sec. 6.3.5. ALTERNATIVE PARTICIPATION METHODS

If neither parent can attend an ARD committee meeting, Life School must use other methods to ensure parent participation, including individual or conference telephone calls. 20 U.S.C. 1414(f); 34 CFR 300.322(c).

An ARD committee meeting may be conducted without a parent in attendance if Life School is unable to convince the parents that they should attend. In such event, Life School must keep a record of its attempts to arrange a mutually agreed time and place, such as:

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

34 CFR 300.322(d).

Sec. 6.3.6. ARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Life School shall initiate and conduct ARD committee meetings for the purpose of developing, reviewing, and revising the IEP of a student with a disability. The committee shall review each student's IEP periodically, and, if appropriate, revise the IEP. A meeting must be held for this purpose at least once a year. The ARD committee must also determine the child's placement once per year.

A meeting does not include informal or unscheduled conversations involving Life School personnel and conversations on issues such as teaching methodology, lesson plans, or coordination of service provision. A meeting also does not include preparatory activities that Life School personnel engage in to develop a proposal or response to a parent proposal that will be discussed at a later meeting. 20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(4); 34 CFR 300.116(b)(1), 300.324(b), (c)(1); 300.501(b)(3).

Sec. 6.3.6.1. Meeting at Parent Request

A parent may request an ARD committee meeting at any mutually agreeable time to address specific concerns about his or her child's special education services. Life School must respond to the request by holding the meeting or requesting TEA's assistance through the mediation process. Life School shall inform parents of the functions of the ARD committee and the circumstances or types of problems for which requesting an ARD committee meeting would be appropriate. 19 TAC 89.1045(b)

Sec. 6.3.6.2. Transfer Students

If a student transfers to Life School, and the student had a previous IEP in place, Life School shall provide the student with a FAPE, including services comparable to those described in the previous IEP, in consultation with the parents, until:

1. In the case of a student who transfers within the state, Life School adopts the previous IEP or develops, adopts, and implements a new IEP.
2. In the case of a student who had an IEP in effect in another state, Life School conducts an evaluation, if determined necessary by Life School, and develops, adopts, and implements a new IEP, if appropriate.

20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(2)(C)(i); 34 CFR 300.323(e), (f).

Sec. 6.3.6.3. Transfer of Records

Life School shall take reasonable steps to promptly obtain the child's records, including the IEP and supporting documents and any other records relating to the provision of special education or

related services to the child, from the child's previous district. 20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(2)(C)(ii); 34 CFR 300.323(g).

Sec. 6.3.6.4. Military Dependents

Life School shall initially provide comparable services to a military student with disabilities based on his or her current IEP. This does not preclude Life School from performing subsequent evaluations to ensure appropriate placement of the student. Education Code 162.002 art. V, § C.

Sec. 6.3.7. ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATIONS

Upon completion of the administration of assessments and other evaluation measures, a team of qualified professionals and the parent shall make the determination of whether the child has a disability and of the educational needs of the child.

Life School shall provide a copy of the evaluation report and the documentation of determination of eligibility at no cost to the parent. 20 U.S.C. 1414(b)(4)(B); 34 CFR 300.306(a).

The ARD committee must make its decisions regarding a student's initial eligibility determination and, if appropriate, IEP and placement within 30 calendar days from the date of the completion of the written full individual and initial evaluation report. If the 30th day falls during the summer and school is not in session, the student's ARD committee has until the first day of classes in the fall to finalize decisions concerning the student's initial eligibility determination, IEP, and placement, unless the full individual and initial evaluation indicates that the student will need extended school year (ESY) services during that summer.

When a report is provided to a parent not later than June 30 as described at Timeframe for Completion of Written Report, above, the ARD committee must meet not later than the 15th school day of the following school year to consider the evaluation. If, however, an evaluation indicates that a student will need ESY services, the ARD committee must meet as expeditiously as possible. 19 TAC 89.1011(d), (e).

Sec. 6.3.8. INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Life School shall develop, review, and revise an IEP for each child with a disability. 20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(4); 34 CFR 300.320(a).

Life School shall have an IEP in effect for each child with a disability at the beginning of each school year. 20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(2)(A); 34 CFR 300.323(a).

The term “individualized education program” means a written statement for each child with a disability that includes:

1. A statement of the child’s present levels of academic achievement and functional performance;
2. A statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals;
3. A description of how the child’s progress toward the annual goals will be measured and when periodic reports on the progress of the child will be provided;
4. A statement of the specific special education and related services and supplementary aids and services, based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable, to be provided to the child;
5. A statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided for the child;
6. An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with nondisabled children in the regular class and in extracurricular and nonacademic activities;
7. The projected dates for initiation of services and modifications and the anticipated frequency, location, and duration of these services and modifications;
8. A statement of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on state or system-wide assessments;
9. If the ARD committee determines that the child must take an alternative assessment instead of a particular regular state or system-wide assessment, a statement of why the child cannot participate in the regular assessment and why the particular assessment selected is appropriate for the child;
10. Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child is 16, or younger if determined appropriate by the ARD committee, and updated annually thereafter, a statement of appropriate, measurable postsecondary goals and transition services needed to assist the child in reaching those goals; and
11. Beginning not later than one year before the child reaches the age of 17, a statement that the child has been informed of the rights that will transfer to the child upon reaching the age of majority.

20 U.S.C. 1414(d); 34 CFR 300.320; 19 TAC 89.1055

Sec. 6.3.9. TRANSLATING IEPs

If the child’s parent is unable to speak English, Life School shall:

1. Provide the parent with a written or audio-taped copy of the child’s IEP translated into Spanish if Spanish is the parent’s native language; or

2. If the parent's native language is a language other than Spanish, make a good faith effort to provide the parent with a written or audiotaped copy of the child's IEP translated into the parent's native language.

TEC § 29.005(d)

Sec. 6.3.10. AUTISM/PERVASIVE DEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS

For students with autism/pervasive developmental disorders, the following strategies shall be considered by the ARD committee, based on peer-reviewed, research-based educational programming practices to the extent practicable and, when needed, addressed in the IEP:

1. Extended educational programming;
2. Daily schedules reflecting minimal unstructured time and active engagement in learning activities;
3. In-home training and community-based training or viable alternatives that assist the student with the acquisition of social/behavioral skills;
4. Positive behavior support strategies based on relevant information;
5. Beginning at any age, futures planning for integrated living, work, community, and educational environments that considers skills necessary to function in current and post-secondary environments;
6. Parent/family training and support, provided by qualified personnel with experience in Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD);
7. Suitable staff-to-student ratio appropriate to identified activities and as needed to achieve social/behavioral progress based on the child's developmental and learning level (acquisition, fluency, maintenance, generalization) that encourages work towards individual independence;
8. Communication interventions, including language forms and functions that enhance effective communication across settings;
9. Social skills supports and strategies based on social skills assessment/curriculum and provided across settings;
10. Professional educator/staff support; and
11. Teaching strategies based on peer-reviewed, research-based practices for students with ASD.

If the ARD committee determines that services are not needed in one or more of the areas in 1–11 above, the IEP shall include a statement reflecting that decision and the basis upon which the determination was made. 19 TAC 89.1055(e)–(f).

Sec. 6.3.11. VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Life School shall adopt written procedures as required in Education Code 30.002(c)(10) for providing special education services to students with visual impairments, if such services are necessary. 19 TAC 89.1075(b).

Sec. 6.3.12. STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

Life School must develop an IEP for students who are deaf or hard of hearing in which the students have an education in which their unique communication mode is respected, used, and developed to an appropriate level of proficiency. Tex. Educ. Code § 29.303.

Sec. 6.3.13. COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

All members of the ARD committee shall have the opportunity to participate in a collaborative manner in developing the IEP. Decisions concerning the required elements of the IEP shall be made by agreement of the required members, if possible. The ARD committee may agree to an annual IEP or an IEP of shorter duration.

Sec. 6.3.13.1. Recess

When agreement about all required elements of the IEP is not achieved, the parent or adult student who disagrees shall be offered a single opportunity to have the committee recess for a period not to exceed ten school days. This recess is not required when:

1. The student's presence on campus represents a danger of physical harm to the student or others;
2. The student has committed an expellable offense; or
3. The student has committed an offense that may lead to placement in a disciplinary alternative education program.

These requirements do not prohibit the members of the ARD committee from recessing an ARD committee meeting for reasons other than failure of the parents and Life School to reach agreement about all required elements of an IEP.

During the recess, the committee members shall consider alternatives, gather additional data, prepare further documentation, and/or obtain additional resource persons to enable the committee to reach agreement.

The date, time, and place for continuing the ARD committee meeting shall be determined by agreement before the recess.

Sec. 6.3.13.2. No Agreement Reached

If, after the ten-day recess, the ARD committee still cannot reach agreement, Life School shall implement the IEP it has determined to be appropriate for the student. A written statement of the basis for the disagreement shall be included in the IEP. The members who disagree shall be offered the opportunity to write their own statements.

When Life School implements an IEP with which the parents or adult student disagree, it shall provide prior written notice in compliance with applicable regulations and Life School policy.

Parents shall have the right to file a complaint, request mediation, or request a due process hearing at any point, when they disagree with ARD committee decisions. 19 TAC 89.1050(h).

Sec. 6.3.14. IEP MODIFICATION

Changes to an IEP may be made either by the entire ARD committee or by amending the IEP by agreement, rather than redrafting the entire IEP.

After the annual IEP meeting for a school year, the parent and Life School may agree not to convene an IEP meeting for the purposes of making changes to the IEP and instead may develop a written document to amend or modify the child's current IEP.

Upon request, a parent shall be provided with a revised copy of the IEP with amendments incorporated.

To the extent possible, Life School shall encourage the consolidation of reevaluation meetings for the child and other ARD meetings for the child. 20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(3)(D)–(F); 34 CFR 300.324(a)(4)–(a)(6).

Sec. 6.3.15. LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Life School shall ensure that, to the maximum extent possible, children with disabilities shall be educated with children who are not disabled. Special classes, special schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment shall occur only when the nature or severity of the child's disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be satisfactorily achieved. 20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(5); 34 CFR 300.114(a)(2).

Sec. 6.3.16. EXTENDED SCHOOL-YEAR SERVICES

Life School shall ensure that extended school-year (ESY) services are available as necessary to provide a student with a disability with a FAPE.

ESY services must be provided only if the ARD committee determines, on an individual basis, that the services are necessary for a FAPE. Life School may not limit ESY services to particular categories of disability or unilaterally limit the type, amount, or duration of ESY services. 34 CFR 300.106; 19 TAC 89.1065.

Sec. 6.3.17. GRADUATION

A student receiving special education services who successfully completes the requirements of his or her IEP, including performance on a state assessment required for graduation, shall receive a high school diploma. A student's ARD committee shall determine if the student will be required to meet satisfactory performance on an assessment for purposes of graduation. 19 TAC 101.3023(a).

Sec. 6.3.18. STATE ASSESSMENTS

TEA shall develop or adopt appropriate criterion-referenced alternative assessment instruments to be administered to each student in a special education program for whom a state assessment instrument adopted under Education Code 39.023(a), even with allowable accommodations, would not provide an appropriate measure of student achievement, as determined by the student's ARD committee, including assessment instruments approved by the Commissioner that measure growth. The assessment instruments developed or adopted, including the assessment instruments approved by the Commissioner, must, to the extent allowed under federal law, provide a district with options for the assessment of students.

TEA may not adopt a performance standard that indicates that a student's performance on the alternate assessment does not meet standards if the lowest level of the assessment accurately represents the student's developmental level as determined by the student's ARD committee.

The student's ARD committee shall determine whether any allowable modification is necessary in administering to the student a required EOC assessment instrument under Education Code 39.023(c), and whether the student is required to achieve satisfactory performance on an EOC assessment instrument to receive a high school diploma.

Sec. 6.3.19. TRANSPORTATION

Life School shall provide special transportation with federal funds only when the ARD committee determines that the condition of the student warrants the service in order for the student to receive the special education and related services (if any) set forth in the IEP. 19 TAC 89.1096(e).

Sec. 6.3.20. TRANSITION SERVICES

Sec. 6.3.20.1. Definitions

“Transition services” means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that:

1. Is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child to facilitate the child’s movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.
2. Is based on the individual child’s needs, taking into account the child’s strengths, preferences, and interests; and includes:
 - a. Instruction;
 - b. Related services;
 - c. Community experiences;
 - d. The development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and
 - e. If appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and provision of a functional vocational evaluation.

20 U.S.C. 1401(34); 34 CFR 300.43.

Sec. 6.3.20.2. Individual Transition Planning

In accordance with Education Code 29.011 and 29.0111, not later than when a student reaches 14 years of age, the ARD committee must consider, and if appropriate, address the following issues in the IEP:

1. Appropriate student involvement in the student’s transition to life outside the public school system;
2. If the student is younger than 18 years of age, appropriate parental involvement in the student’s transition;
3. If the student is at least 18 years of age, involvement in the student’s transition and future by the student’s parents and other persons, if the parent or other person is invited to

- participate by the student or Life School or has the student's consent to participate pursuant to a supported decision-making agreement under Texas Estates Code, Chapter 1357;
4. Any postsecondary education options, including preparation for postsecondary-level coursework;
 5. An appropriate functional vocational evaluation;
 6. Appropriate employment goals and objectives;
 7. If the student is at least 18 years of age, the availability of age-appropriate instructional environments, including community settings or environments that prepare the student for postsecondary education or training, competitive integrated employment, or independent living, in coordination with the student's transition goals and objectives;
 8. Appropriate independent living goals and objectives; and
 9. Appropriate circumstances for facilitating a referral of a student or the student's parents to a governmental agency for services or public benefits; and
 10. The use and availability of appropriate supplementary aids, services, curricula, and other opportunities to assist the student in developing decision-making skills and supports and services to foster the student's independence and self-determination, including a supported decision-making agreement under Texas Estates Code, Chapter 157.

In accordance with 34 C.F.R. 300.320(b), beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student turns 16 years of age, or younger if determined appropriate by the ARD committee, and updated annually thereafter, the IEP must include the following:

1. Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills; and
2. The transition services, including courses of study, needed to assist the student in reaching the postsecondary goals developed under paragraph (1) of this subsection.

The student's ARD committee shall annually review and, if necessary, update relevant portions of the student's IEP.

20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII), 1414(d)(6); 34 C.F.R. 300.320(b); Education Code 29.0111; 19 TAC 89.1055(h), (j).

Sec. 6.3.20.3. Transition and Employment Guide

Life School shall post the transition and employment guide on the Life School website; provide written information and, if necessary, assistance to a student or parent regarding how to access the electronic version of the guide at: (i) the first meeting of the student's ARD committee at which transition is discussed; and (ii) the first committee meeting at which transition is discussed that

occurs after the date on which the guide is updated. Upon request, Life School shall provide a printed copy of the guide to a student or parent. *Tex. Educ. Code § 29.0112.*

Sec. 6.3.20.4. Graduation

Graduation with a regular high school diploma under 19 TAC 89.1070(b)(1), (b)(2)(D), (f)(1), (f)(2), or (f)(3)(D) terminates a student's eligibility for special education services. For students who receive a diploma according to 19 TAC 89.1070(b)(2)(A), (B), or (C) or (f)(3)(A), (B), or (C), the ARD committee shall determine needed educational services upon the request of the student or parent to resume services, as long as the student meets the age requirements.

Graduation from high school with a regular diploma constitutes a change in placement that requires written prior notice to parents.

Life School is not required to conduct an evaluation before termination of eligibility due to graduation from secondary school with a regular high school diploma or due to exceeding the age eligibility for a FAPE under state law.

Life School shall provide the child with a summary of the child's academic achievement and functional performance, which shall include recommendations on how to assist the child in meeting the child's postsecondary goals.

20 U.S.C. 1414(c)(5); 34 CFR 300.102(a)(3), 300.305(e)(2); 19 TAC 89.1070.