

OBSERVATIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

1. Parents' may request to observe their child(ren), current program, or a potential placement must be made in advance with the Director of Student Services or designee and/or Principal. The Director of Student Services or designee shall contact the parent(s) for initial scheduling conversation within five (5) days of receipt of the parents' request.
2. When a parent requests an observation of a special needs student or program, the Director of Student Services and the building principal will approve the request before it is processed. Such approval may only be withheld for those reasons outlined within law and DESE regulation.
3. The Director of Student Services or designee and/or Principal will work with the classroom teacher and the observer to set up the specifics of the observation (including, but not limited to, scheduling and placement of the observer in the classroom).
4. The number, frequency, and duration of observation periods will be determined on an individual student basis in accordance with law and regulation. The start and end time of observation periods and a schedule of observation periods will be stated in advance. In order to minimize classroom or student disruption, the length of individual observation periods may be limited.
5. If the observer is not the parent, the parent must sign a release for the individual to observe.
6. The number of observers at any one time may be limited.
7. The observer will be informed that he/she is not to interfere with the educational environment of the classroom. If his/her presence presents a problem, he/she will be asked to leave. This notice is particularly important, since the presence of parents can influence both the performance of their child(ren) and those of others.
8. The observer will be asked to submit his/her report of the observation in advance of any follow-up TEAM meeting.

9. The observer will be informed that he/she is there to evaluate the appropriateness of a specific educational program to meet the needs of an individual child. He/she is not there to evaluate a teacher's ability to perform his or her contractual job duties.
10. The observer will be instructed regarding the disclosure of confidential or personally identifiable information relating to other children. Staff must be mindful of removing materials, which may be part of students' records from plain view. In the event that removal is not possible the observer may be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement.
11. A school administrator, or designee, also will observe at the same time and take notes as to what is observed, paying particular attention to note anything that is non-typical concerning the period. This observation summary will be placed in the student's file and provided to the parent(s) prior to any follow-up TEAM meeting. .

LEGAL REF.: MGL 71B:3
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary
Education Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2009-2 dated
January 8, 2009

CROSS REF.: KI, Visitors to Schools

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