

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Local policies and procedures provide guidance regarding the school district's interpretation and implementation of the state requirements included in Article 7. They support consistency in decision making, promoting equitable and appropriate services for students in the least restrictive environment.

WHAT IS REQUIRED BY ARTICLE 7?

Article 7 (at 511 IAC 7-42-10) specifically requires each public agency to have written policies and procedures in place to ensure that:

- To the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities, including students in public or private institutions or other care facilities are educated with nondisabled students.
- Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of students from the general education environment occurs only if the nature and severity of the disability is such that education in general education classes using supplementary aids and services cannot be satisfactorily achieved.
- The CCC determines the placement in which a student will receive services. The student's placement is: based on the student's IEP; reviewed at least annually; and in the school that the student would attend if not disabled, unless the IEP requires some other arrangement. If another arrangement is required, the placement should be as close as possible to the student's home school.
- A continuum of services, as described in subsection (b)(4) and (b)(5), that is available to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities and makes provision for supplementary services (such as resource room or itinerant instruction) to be provided in conjunction with general education placement.
- In selecting the least restrictive environment, consideration is given to any potential harmful effect on the student or quality of services needed.
- Each student with a disability has an equal opportunity to participate with nondisabled students in nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities to the maximum extent appropriate.
- Special education and related services are delivered in the least restrictive environment determined by the CCC, regardless of the identified disability.

- The provision of services to students with different disabilities at the same time and in the same classroom is permitted.
- Students with disabilities are in classes and buildings with their chronological peers unless an alternative is determined appropriate by the CCC and the reasons for that determination are documented in the written notice required by section 6 of this rule.
- Students with disabilities are not removed from education in age-appropriate general education classrooms solely because of needed modifications in the general curriculum.

Remember that the requirement is both for policies and procedures. The written document must show both the policies that the local agency has to support LRE as well as the procedural steps that will ensure that all of the above items happen for students.

WHAT OTHER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES SUPPORT LRE?

Other areas where policies and procedures that help to support providing a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment include:

- School-wide positive behavior;
- Equity;
- Seclusion and restraint;
- Curriculum and instructional approaches that are appropriate for students with varying abilities in the general education setting;
- Academic supports, interventions, and progress monitoring for students with varying abilities in the general education setting;
- Identification and documentation of the need for academic and behavioral supports; and
- Using data to identify and document the need for accommodations, modifications, and assistive technology.

WE HAVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES - NOW WHAT?

- Establishing policies and procedures is important, but it is only the first step.
- Staff should be trained on policies and procedures and have access to the written document for daily use.
- Determine if staff have the needed training to be able to implement procedures.
- Determine whether the public agency has adequate staff to implement procedures.
- Policies and procedures should be reviewed at least annually.
- Any changes to policies and procedures must be shared with staff, with instructions to replace outdated written information with new information.