

Parents of disabled children have the right under federal and state regulations to obtain an independent evaluation at public expense under certain conditions.

#### *Independent Educational Evaluation*

An independent educational evaluation means an evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner(s), as defined in 34 CFR 300.12, who is not employed by the school district responsible for the education of the disabled child or child who is thought to be educationally disabled.

If the parent disagrees with the evaluation conducted by the school district, the parent has a right to obtain an independent educational evaluation at public expense. The parent is only entitled to one independent educational evaluation per each evaluation the parent disagrees with. The district may request the parent to specify the areas of disagreement with the district's evaluation. The school district may initiate an impartial hearing to show that its evaluation is appropriate, and if the hearing officer determines that the school's evaluation is appropriate, the parent would not have the right to a publicly-funded independent evaluation or the right to reimbursement for an independent educational evaluation they may have already obtained.

#### *Public Expense*

The district has established reasonable reimbursement rates for independent evaluators based on the reasonable and customary rates charged by providers within close geographical proximity to the district, as defined below. Absent exceptional circumstances, the school district will not pay more than the rates set forth on the rate sheet provided by the Special Education Department for all suitable examinations and evaluations to ascertain the physical, mental, and emotional factors which contribute to a suspected educational disability.

#### *Geographical Range*

The school district will not consider, at public expense, independent evaluators outside the counties of Orange, Ulster, Rockland, Sullivan, Putnam or Dutchess, absent exceptional circumstances. Requests for exception to this policy should be forwarded in writing to the Chairperson of the Committee on Special Education.

#### *District's List of Evaluators*

The district has established a list of qualified professionals in private practice or employees of other public agencies to whom parents may go to secure an independent evaluation. This list of independent evaluators which includes professionals in all areas of a child's suspected disability can be obtained from the Special Education Department. Any evaluator used must possess current license or certification from the New York State Education Department in the area of evaluation.

#### *Responsibilities*

When an independent educational evaluation is requested and approved by the school, and an independent evaluator is selected by the parent whether or not the evaluator is from the approved list, it then becomes the responsibility of that professional to contact the school to arrange for payment, dates of classroom visitations, and discussions with school staff.

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