

Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled: Overview of the History, Services & Eligibility Process



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<http://dese.mo.gov/divspced/stateschools/>

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Brief History

- 1959 State Law
- Population served
- Name changes (alphabet soup)
- Structure
 - Central Office in JC
 - Area Offices
 - Schools



MSSD Schools

- Number of schools
- Size of schools
- Catchment area
- Enrollment number
- School day
- Student/teacher/aide ratios
 - 1 teacher to 8-9 students
 - 2 aides per classroom



MSSD School Staff

- Building Administration
- Supervisors for Instruction
- Teachers
- Aides



MSSD students

- Types of disabilities
- Ages 5-21
 - Anytime after 5th birthday
- Typical graduate
 - Age 21
 - Post-graduate activities



MSSD Education & Related Services

- 6 hour school day
- Related services
 - OT, PT, speech/language plus bus
 - Average cost per student
- 30 days to review IEP
- Who pays:
 - MSSD pays
 - Billed tax effort in LEA



MSSD Transportation Services

- Length of bus ride
 - Average - 70 to 90 minutes
 - Range - 45 to 120 minutes
 - Average cost per student
- Driver and monitor
- Seatbelts



Student Medical Needs

- 25 full time nurses
- Annual staff training
 - Medical procedures
 - CPR and First Aid
- Homebound



Eligibility Determinations

- Guidelines:

<http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/stateschools/eligibilitydetermination2.html>

- FAQs:

<http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/stateschools/EligibilityFAQQuestions.html>



Eligibility Determinations

- **TWO CRITERIA:**

1. Cognitive Deficits

2. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

* Both criteria must be met for the student to be eligible for MSSD



Possible Outcomes

- Eligible
- Ineligible
- Need more information

*Decisions made by MSSD central office



Cognitive Deficits

Reported by Standardized Assessment -

1. Cognitive Assessment
2. Adaptive Behavior Assessment

* Looking for 4 standard deviations (SD) below the mean for *each* assessment



Cognitive Deficits

Reported by Pervasive Supports - if can't evaluate through standardized assessment

- Ten areas
- Multiple sources
- Skills of student

* Looking for the pervasive level of support required by the student



Cognitive Deficit Pitfalls

- Pitfall: Assessment can't measure 4 SD below the mean
- Pitfall: Assume the adaptive behavior assessment is not as important as cognitive assessment
- Pitfall: Over 3 years old
- Pitfall: IQ over 40



Justification for Separate School Placement (JOP)

- Eight questions to justify LRE
- May seem redundant
- Support you answers (ask why)



JOP Pitfalls

- Pitfall: No JOP!
- Pitfall: Keep talking about how bad or low
- Pitfall: Keep talking about how behavior interferes
- Pitfall: Expect interpretation



Documents to be submitted

- Evaluation Report (including current cognitive information)
- JOP
- 2 Previous IEPs
- Progress Notes



IEP Pitfalls

- Pitfall: Forgot to include two IEPs
- Pitfall: Behavior checked but no goal or BSP/BIP
- Pitfall: Behavior not marked but many behavior concerns
- Pitfall: No accommodations/modifications form or nothing marked



Eligibility Review Process: In General

- We read but do not interpret
- Additional information requested only once (sometimes twice)
- Not compliance police
- File is good for one year
- Rush times:
 - Beginning of school year
 - End of year for ESY



Eligibility Review Process: Common Questions

- How long does it take?

Range depends on several factors:

- ✓ Parent letter – one week to respond
- ✓ Information submitted
- ✓ Additional information requested & turn around
- ✓ Need for an observation



Eligibility Review Process: Common Questions

- What if the student is age 4?
- Will we rescind eligibility?



If Eligible Then What?

Referral Process:

- IEP team decision to place (or not)
 - Notice of Action
 - Public Separate Day Facility
 - 1800 minutes
- Referral Form

If Referred:

- Enrollment packet to parent

Questions





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