

STATE SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND SERVICES

The State Special Schools & Services Division is a subdivision of the California Department of Education (CDE) that provides services to deaf, hard of hearing, blind, and visually impaired students, in addition to assisting school districts with special education programs including assessment services, technical assistance and staff development through their Diagnostic Centers.

The State Special Schools & Services Division operates schools for deaf and blind students, and also provides intensive, disability-specific educational services for students between the ages of 3-22.

Referral to Special Schools and Services for Further Assessment

A referral to a Diagnostic Center for the assessment of a student must follow the guidelines below.

1. Prior to referring a pupil for further assessment to California Schools for the Deaf or Blind or to one of the Diagnostic Centers, assessments shall first be conducted at the local level within the capabilities of the District. Results of these assessments shall accompany the referral request. The reason for the referral shall be discussed with the parents/guardian. The District refers a student by submitting an application packet. Applications are reviewed by the Admissions Committee at the State School or Diagnostic Center to determine if the applicant meets the admissions criteria set forth in 5 C.C.R. sections 17660-17663.
2. The Schools for the Deaf and Blind, and the Diagnostic Centers, shall conduct assessments pursuant to the provisions of Education Code section 56320.
3. A representative of the District shall participate in the staffing meeting and shall receive copies of the final report and recommendations.

Procedure for Referral to State Schools for Placement

The procedure for a placement referral is as follows:

1. Referrals for placement shall be made only as a result of recommendations from the IEP team, upon determining that no appropriate placement is available in the local plan area. Parents have the right to appeal any decision of the IEP team, including whether their child should be referred to a state special school.
2. Whenever a referral for placement is being considered to one of the state special schools, the IEP team shall include a representative of the District.
3. If the IEP team (including the representative from the District) determines that a referral to a state special school is appropriate, a case manager shall be designated to coordinate the referral process.
4. As provided within Ed. Code section 59300, the district of residence for the parent/guardian of any student attending a state special school is responsible for 10% of

the excess cost of the placement. The cost for a student placed less than a full year is prorated based on the number of days in attendance.

Review of Placement at State Special Schools

The District shall be notified of any upcoming review of students placed in state special schools. The District may request assistance from the County Office of Education (if appropriate) in attending the review, considering assessment results or any other activity needed.

Education Code Relating to State Schools

The California School for the Deaf is part of the public school system, and its purpose is to educate the deaf who, because of their severe hearing loss and educational needs, cannot be provided an appropriate educational program and related services in the regular public schools. While state special schools are public schools, they are not regularly funded by the State.

In establishing these state special schools, the Legislature declared the following:

- It is essential for the well-being and growth of deaf and hard of hearing pupils that educational programs recognize the unique nature of deafness and ensure that all deaf and hard of hearing pupils have appropriate, ongoing, and fully accessible educational opportunities.
- It is essential that a deaf or hard of hearing pupil obtain an education in which special education teachers, psychologists, speech therapists, assessors, administrators, and other school and residential program personnel understand the unique nature of deafness and are trained to work with a deaf or hard of hearing pupil.
- It is essential that a deaf or hard of hearing pupil obtain an education in which his or her special education teachers are proficient in the primary language mode of that pupil.
- It is essential that a deaf or hard of hearing pupil obtain an education in which his or her parents are involved in determining the extent, content, and purpose of programs.
- It is essential that a deaf or hard of hearing pupil, like all pupils, have programs in which his or her unique vocational needs are provided for, including appropriate research, curricula, programs, staff, and outreach.
- Each deaf or hard of hearing pupil should receive an education that allows him or her to master a primary language.