

# The Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE): Top 10 Things for Parents to Know

An Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) is an evaluation conducted by a qualified evaluator who is chosen by the parent, and who is not employed by the child's school district. In some cases the parent or their insurance pays for an IEE, and in others it is paid for by the school district. The parent always chooses the IEE evaluator, even if the district pays for the evaluation, and the school district must always consider the results of an IEE when developing appropriate educational programming.

## Top 10 things for parents to know

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- # 1:** The parent should give a copy of the IEE to their child's IEP (Individualized Education Program) case manager, or school principal if the student is not on an IEP. The IEE should be accompanied by a written request for a meeting. The purpose of the meeting is for the school to consider the results of the IEE and make appropriate changes to the child's IEP, 504 Plan, or to consider the child's eligibility for one of these plans based on the results or recommendations of the evaluator.
- # 2:** The school district is not required to implement recommendations or agree with the results; they are only required to consider the results of the IEE. The best way to collaborate with the school is for the evaluator to participate in the meeting to explain their findings.
- # 3:** An evaluation paid for by the parent or their insurance is different than an IEE paid for by the school district. After the school has completed its own evaluation, parents may request that the district pay for an IEE. There are specific rules parents must follow if they want the school to pay for the evaluation.
  - The request that the school pay for an IEE must specify that the parents disagree with the school district's most recent evaluation. PACER recommends that this request, and all communications with the school district, be made in writing.
  - The school may ask the parent what they disagree with. The parent is not obligated to provide that information. Even if the parent previously indicated agreement with the evaluation, they may change their mind and disagree.
- # 4:** The school district must respond in writing to a parent's request that the school pay for an IEE by sending the parent a Prior Written Notice (PWN). While there is no legal timeline for the school to respond, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has determined that two weeks is an appropriate timeline. The PWN must state the school district's decision to either:
  - Agree to provide an IEE at school district expense, or
  - Advise the parent that the school district will file a due process hearing request to prove that their evaluation is appropriate
- # 5:** Because of the expense of a due process hearing, schools often agree to pay for an IEE, even when they believe their evaluation is appropriate.

- # 6:** If the school district agrees to provide an IEE at public expense, the district must give the parent the following information:
- A listing of IEE evaluators
  - The school district’s minimum qualifications for the evaluator, which cannot be greater than those the school requires when it completes its own evaluation
  - A reasonable geographical limit on where the IEE may be obtained
  - A price range for such an evaluation using community standards
- # 7:** The parent is not required to use an evaluator from the school district’s list. Parents may want to interview and check the availability of more than one evaluator. Parents may ask other private service providers, pediatric specialists, or children’s hospitals for referrals.
- # 8:** If the parent lives in greater Minnesota, and an appropriate evaluator is not available close to their home, they may request an evaluator from outside the geographic limit.
- Schools must pay the parent’s travel expenses if long distance or overnight travel to the evaluator is required. Sometimes the parent agrees to assume their own travel costs to encourage the school to agree to an evaluator outside their local area.
- Except for the minimum qualifications, location criteria, and that the fee charged be reasonable within the community, a school district may not limit or impose conditions or timelines related to obtaining an IEE.
- #9:** PACER encourages parents to interview more than one potential evaluator. Some questions parents may wish to ask include:
- How will your testing differ from what the school district has already done?
  - Are you familiar with Minnesota’s IEP and 504 Plan eligibility criteria?
  - What background or training do you have in evaluating children with my child’s diagnosis or challenges?
  - Will you be available to explain to me and a school team how my child’s challenges impact them in the classroom, and what services and programs are recommended for dealing with these challenges? Is there an additional fee for this?
- #10:** The IEE process may seem complex, but PACER is here to support you and answer any questions you may have. Contact PACER Center at 952.838.9000 and ask to speak with an advocate, or email [PACER@PACER.org](mailto:PACER@PACER.org).