

**POLICY**

**Admission, Review and Dismissal Committees**

Heritage Academy shall establish an admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee for each eligible student with a disability and for each student for whom a full and individual initial evaluation is conducted. The ARD committee shall be the individualized education program (IEP) team defined at 34 CFR 300.321.

**ARD Committee Responsibilities**

The ARD committee and Heritage Academy are responsible for:

1. Evaluating, reevaluating, and determining eligibility for special education and related services;
2. Placement of students with disabilities, including disciplinary changes in placement;
3. Development of student IEPs;
4. Development and implementation of service plans for students who have been placed by their parents in private schools and who have been designated to receive special education and related services;
5. Compliance with the least restrictive environment standard;
6. Compliance with state requirements for reading diagnosis and state assessments;
7. Development of personal graduation plans;
8. Development of accelerated instruction under Education Code 28.0211 and intensive programs of instruction under Education Code 28.0213;
9. Evaluation, placement, and coordination of services for students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired; and
10. Determining eligibility for extracurricular activities, under Education Code 33.081.

19 TAC 89.1050(a); 34 CFR 300.116(a), 300.321(a).

**Committee Members**

Heritage Academy shall ensure that each ARD committee meeting includes all of the following:

1. The parents of a child with a disability;
2. At least one regular education teacher of the child (if the child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment);
3. At least one special education teacher, or where appropriate, at least one special education provider of the child;
4. A representative of Heritage Academy who:
  - a. Is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities;

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- b. Is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum; and
  - c. Is knowledgeable about the availability of Heritage Academy' resources;
5. An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results, who may be a member of the ARD committee (who may be a member of the committee listed in items 2–5);
  6. At the discretion of the parent or Heritage Academy, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel as appropriate;
  7. The child, whenever appropriate;
  8. A representative from career and technical education, preferably the teacher, when considering initial or continued placement of a student in a career and technical education program;
  9. For a child with limited English proficiency, a member of the child's language-proficiency assessment committee (LPAC) when deciding upon the selection of assessments and appropriate accommodations;
  10. For a child with an auditory impairment, including deaf-blindness, a teacher who is certified in the education of children with auditory impairments; and
  11. For a child with a visual impairment, including deaf-blindness, a teacher who is certified in the education of children with visual impairments.

20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(B); 34 CFR 300.321; 19 TAC 75.1023(d)(1), 89.1131(b)(3)–(4), 101.1009

A Heritage Academy member of the ARD committee shall not be required to attend an IEP meeting, in whole or in part, if the parent and Heritage Academy agree in writing that the attendance is not necessary because the member's area of the curriculum or related services is not being modified or discussed during the meeting.

A Heritage Academy member of the ARD committee may be excused from attending an IEP meeting, in whole or in part, when the meeting involves a modification to or discussion of the member's area of curriculum or related services if the parent, in writing, and Heritage Academy consent to the excusal and the member submits, in writing, to the parent and the ARD committee, input into the development of the IEP before the meeting.

20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(C); 34 CFR 300.321(e)

#### **Transition Meeting Membership**

If the ARD committee is meeting to consider postsecondary goals and the transition services needed to assist the student in reaching those goals, Heritage Academy shall invite:

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1. The student. If the student does not attend, Heritage Academy shall take other steps to ensure that the student's preferences and interests are considered.
2. To the extent appropriate, and with the consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority, a representative of any other agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services.

34 CFR 300.321(b).

**Parental Involvement**

Heritage Academy shall take steps to ensure that one or both of the parents of a student with a disability are present at each ARD committee meeting or are afforded the opportunity to participate, including:

1. Notifying the parents of the meeting early enough to ensure that they will have an opportunity to attend (the notice shall include all information required by applicable regulation); and
2. Scheduling the meeting at a mutually agreed time and place.

If the purpose of the meeting is to consider transition services, the notice must also indicate this purpose, indicate that the Student will invite the student, and identify any other agency that will be invited to send a representative. 34 CFR 300.322(a)–(b); 19 TAC 89.1045.

**Alternative Participation Methods**

If neither parent can attend an ARD committee meeting, Heritage Academy must use other methods to ensure parent participation, including individual or conference telephone calls. 20 U.S.C. 1414(f); 34 CFR 300.322(c).

An ARD committee meeting may be conducted without a parent in attendance if Heritage Academy is unable to convince the parents that they should attend. In such event, Heritage Academy must keep a record of its attempts to arrange a mutually agreed time and place, such as:

1. Detailed records of telephone calls made or attempted and the results of those calls;
2. Copies of correspondence sent to the parents and any responses received; and
3. Detailed records of visits made to the parent's home or place of employment and the results of those visits.

34 CFR 300.322(d).

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#### **ARD Committee Meetings**

Heritage Academy shall initiate and conduct ARD committee meetings for the purpose of developing, reviewing, and revising the IEP of a student with a disability. The committee shall review each student's IEP periodically, and, if appropriate, revise the IEP. A meeting must be held for this purpose at least once a year. The ARD committee must also determine the child's placement once per year.

A meeting does not include informal or unscheduled conversations involving Heritage Academy personnel and conversations on issues such as teaching methodology, lesson plans, or coordination of service provision. A meeting also does not include preparatory activities that Heritage Academy personnel engage in to develop a proposal or response to a parent proposal that will be discussed at a later meeting. 20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(4); 34 CFR 300.116(b)(1), 300.324(b), (c)(1); 300.501(b)(3).

#### **Meeting at Parent Request**

A parent may request an ARD committee meeting at any mutually agreeable time to address specific concerns about his or her child's special education services. Heritage Academy must respond to the request by holding the meeting or requesting TEA's assistance through the mediation process. Heritage Academy shall inform parents of the functions of the ARD committee and the circumstances or types of problems for which requesting an ARD committee meeting would be appropriate. 19 TAC 89.1045(b)

#### **Transfer Students**

If a student transfer to Heritage Academy, and the student had a previous IEP in place, Heritage Academy shall provide the student with a FAPE, including services comparable to those described in the previous IEP, in consultation with the parents, until:

1. In the case of a student who transfers within the state, Heritage Academy adopts the previous IEP or develops, adopts, and implements a new IEP.
2. In the case of a student who had an IEP in effect in another state, Heritage Academy conducts an evaluation, if determined necessary by Heritage Academy, and develops, adopts, and implements a new IEP, if appropriate.

20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(2)(C)(i); 34 CFR 300.323(e), (f).

#### **Transfer of Records**

Heritage Academy shall take reasonable steps to promptly obtain the child's records, including the IEP and supporting documents and any other records relating to the provision of special education or related services to the child, from the child's previous district. 20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(2)(C)(ii); 34 CFR 300.323(g).

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#### **Military Dependents**

Heritage Academy shall initially provide comparable services to a military student with disabilities based on his or her current IEP. This does not preclude Heritage Academy from performing subsequent evaluations to ensure appropriate placement of the student. Education Code 162.002 art. V, § C.

#### **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

Heritage Academy shall develop, review, and revise an IEP for each child with a disability. 20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(4); 34 CFR 300.320(a).

Heritage Academy shall have an IEP in effect for each child with a disability at the beginning of each school year. 20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(2)(A); 34 CFR 300.323(a).

The term “individualized education program” means a written statement for each child with a disability that includes:

1. A statement of the child’s present levels of academic achievement and functional performance;
2. A statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals;
3. A description of how the child’s progress toward the annual goals will be measured and when periodic reports on the progress of the child will be provided;
4. A statement of the specific special education and related services and supplementary aids and services, based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable, to be provided to the child;
5. A statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided for the child;
6. An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with nondisabled children in the regular class and in extracurricular and nonacademic activities;
7. The projected dates for initiation of services and modifications and the anticipated frequency, location, and duration of these services and modifications;
8. A statement of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on state or system-wide assessments;
9. If the ARD committee determines that the child must take an alternative assessment instead of a particular regular state or system-wide assessment, a statement of why the child cannot participate in the regular assessment and why the particular assessment selected is appropriate for the child;
10. Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child is 16, or younger if determined appropriate by the ARD committee, and updated annually thereafter, a statement of appropriate, measurable postsecondary

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- goals and transition services needed to assist the child in reaching those goals; and
11. Beginning not later than one year before the child reaches the age of 17, a statement that the child has been informed of the rights that will transfer to the child upon reaching the age of majority.

20 U.S.C. 1414(d); 34 CFR 300.320; 19 TAC 89.1055

#### **Translating IEPs**

If the child's parent is unable to speak English, Heritage Academy shall:

1. Provide the parent with a written or audio-taped copy of the child's IEP translated into Spanish if Spanish is the parent's native language; or
2. If the parent's native language is a language other than Spanish, make a good faith effort to provide the parent with a written or audiotaped copy of the child's IEP translated into the parent's native language.

Education Code 29.005(d).

#### **Autism/Pervasive Developmental Disorders**

For students with autism/pervasive developmental disorders, the following strategies shall be considered by the ARD committee, based on peer-reviewed, research-based educational programming practices to the extent practicable and, when needed, addressed in the IEP:

1. Extended educational programming;
2. Daily schedules reflecting minimal unstructured time and active engagement in learning activities;
3. In-home training and community-based training or viable alternatives that assist the student with the acquisition of social/behavioral skills;
4. Positive behavior support strategies based on relevant information;
5. Beginning at any age, futures planning for integrated living, work, community, and educational environments that considers skills necessary to function in current and post-secondary environments;
6. Parent/family training and support, provided by qualified personnel with experience in Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD);
7. Suitable staff-to-student ratio appropriate to identified activities and as needed to achieve social/behavioral progress based on the child's developmental and learning level (acquisition, fluency, maintenance, generalization) that encourages work towards individual independence;
8. Communication interventions, including language forms and functions that enhance effective communication across settings;
9. Social skills supports and strategies based on social skills assessment/curriculum and provided across settings;

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10. Professional educator/staff support; and
11. Teaching strategies based on peer-reviewed, research-based practices for students with ASD.

If the ARD committee determines that services are not needed in one or more of the areas in 1–11 above, the IEP shall include a statement reflecting that decision and the basis upon which the determination was made. 19 TAC 89.1055(e)–(f).

#### **Visual Impairment**

Heritage Academy shall adopt written procedures as required in Education Code 30.002(c)(10) for providing special education services to students with visual impairments, if such services are necessary. 19 TAC 89.1075(b).

#### **Collaborative Process**

All members of the ARD committee shall have the opportunity to participate in a collaborative manner in developing the IEP. Decisions concerning the required elements of the IEP shall be made by agreement of the required members, if possible. The ARD committee may agree to an annual IEP or an IEP of shorter duration.

#### **Recess**

When agreement about all required elements of the IEP is not achieved, the parent or adult student who disagrees shall be offered a single opportunity to have the committee recess for a period not to exceed ten school days. This recess is not required when:

1. The student's presence on campus represents a danger of physical harm to the student or others;
2. The student has committed an expellable offense; or
3. The student has committed an offense that may lead to placement in a disciplinary alternative education program.

These requirements do not prohibit the members of the ARD committee from recessing an ARD committee meeting for reasons other than failure of the parents and Heritage Academy to reach agreement about all required elements of an IEP.

During the recess, the committee members shall consider alternatives, gather additional data, prepare further documentation, and/or obtain additional resource persons to enable the committee to reach agreement.

The date, time, and place for continuing the ARD committee meeting shall be determined by agreement before the recess.

#### **No Agreement Reached**

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If, after the ten-day recess, the ARD committee still cannot reach agreement, Heritage Academy shall implement the IEP it has determined to be appropriate for the student. A written statement of the basis for the disagreement shall be included in the IEP. The members who disagree shall be offered the opportunity to write their own statements.

When Heritage Academy implements an IEP with which the parents or adult student disagree, it shall provide prior written notice in compliance with applicable regulations and Heritage Academy policy.

Parents shall have the right to file a complaint, request mediation, or request a due process hearing at any point, when they disagree with ARD committee decisions. 19 TAC 89.1050(h).

**IEP Modification**

Changes to an IEP may be made either by the entire ARD committee or by amending the IEP by agreement, rather than redrafting the entire IEP.

After the annual IEP meeting for a school year, the parent and Heritage Academy may agree not to convene an IEP meeting for the purposes of making changes to the IEP and instead may develop a written document to amend or modify the child's current IEP.

Upon request, a parent shall be provided with a revised copy of the IEP with amendments incorporated.

To the extent possible, Heritage Academy shall encourage the consolidation of reevaluation meetings for the child and other ARD meetings for the child. 20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(3)(D)–(F); 34 CFR 300.324(a)(4)–(a)(6).