

# OPERATING PROCEDURES

## VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Goose Creek CISD

101911

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Legal Framework: VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

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Broad Category: EVALUATION

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### PROCEDURES:

#### VISUAL IMPAIRMENT (VI)

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**34 CFR § 300.8(c) (13); 19 TAC §§ 89.1040(c) (12), 89.1050(b), 89.1050(c) (3) (A); TEC § 30.002(c-1) (2)**

*Visual impairment including blindness* means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.

#### Evaluation Procedures

A student with a visual impairment is one who has been determined to meet the criteria for visual impairment as stated in 34 CFR § 300.8(c) (13). The visual loss should be stated in exact measures of visual field and corrected visual acuity at a distance and at close range in each eye in a report by a licensed ophthalmologist or optometrist. The report should also include prognosis whenever possible. If exact measures cannot be obtained, the eye specialist must so state and provide best estimates.

In meeting the criteria stated in 34 CFR 300.8(c) (13), a student with a visual impairment is one who:

1. has been determined by a licensed ophthalmologist or optometrist:
  - a. to have no vision or to have a serious visual loss after correction; or
  - b. to have a progressive medical condition that will result in no vision or a serious visual loss after correction; and

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2. has been determined by the following evaluations to have a need for special services:
  - a. a functional vision evaluation by a professional certified in the education of students with visual impairments or a certified orientation and mobility specialist;
    - i. The evaluation must include:
      - the performance of tasks in a variety of environments requiring the use of both near and distance vision; and
      - recommendations concerning the need for a clinical low vision evaluation.
  - b. a learning media assessment by a professional certified in the education of students with visual impairments; and
    - i. The learning media assessment must include:
      - recommendations concerning which specific visual, tactual, and/or auditory learning media are appropriate for the student; and
      - whether or not there is a need for ongoing evaluation in this area.
  - c. an orientation and mobility evaluation conducted by a person who is appropriately certified as an orientation and mobility specialist.<sup>2</sup>
    - i. The orientation and mobility evaluation must be conducted in a variety of lighting conditions and in a variety of settings including the student's home, school, and community and in settings unfamiliar to the student

#### Functionally Blind

A student with a visual impairment is one who has been determined to meet the criteria for visual impairment as stated in 34 CFR § 300.8(c) (13) based upon the preceding evaluations. A student with a visual impairment is functionally blind if, based on the functional vision evaluation and the learning media assessment, the student will use tactual

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media (which includes Braille) as a primary tool for learning to be able to communicate in both reading and writing at the same level of proficiency as other students of comparable ability.

### **One Time Medical Evaluation by Optometrist or Ophthalmologist for Evaluation Purposes**

If the parent is unable to financially access the optometrist or ophthalmologist, the district is required to contract with an outside vendor for the portion of the eye exam, and the evaluation will be completed at no cost to the parent.

### **Transportation to the Optometrist or Ophthalmologist**

If a contracted vendor is utilized as part of the Full Individual Evaluation process and the parent is not able to access transportation to the vendor's office, Coordinator for Evaluation must be notified to assist the parent with transportation arrangements at no cost to the parent.

### **Admission, Review, and Dismissal Committee (ARDC)**

A person who is appropriately certified as an orientation and mobility specialist must participate, as part of a multidisciplinary team, in evaluating data used in making the determination of the student's eligibility as a student with a visual impairment. In addition, for a student with a suspected or documented visual impairment, the ARDC must include a teacher who is certified in the education of students with visual impairments.

### **Re-evaluation Requirements**

The scope of any re-evaluation of a student who has been determined, after the full and individual evaluation, to be eligible for the district's special education program on the basis of a visual impairment must be determined, in accordance with 34 CFR §§ 300.303-300.311, by a multidisciplinary team that includes an appropriately certified orientation and mobility specialist.

### **Students (0-2)**

For a student from birth through two years of age with visual impairments and/or deaf or hard of hearing, an individualized family services plan (IFSP) meeting must be held in place of an ARD committee meeting in accordance with 34 CFR §§ 300.320-300.325, and the memorandum of understanding between the Texas Education Agency and the Department

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of *Assistive and Rehabilitative Services*. For students three years of age and older, school districts must develop an IEP.

<sup>2</sup> This requirement along with the requirements in the “Admission, Review, and Dismissal Committee (ARDC)” as well as the requirements involving an appropriately certified orientation mobility specialist found in the “Re-Evaluation Requirements” Section herein took effect beginning with the 2014-2015 school year. See 19 TAC § 89.1040(B)-(E).

### STAFF RESPONSIBLE:

**District Level:** Coordinator for Evaluation, Initial Evaluation Team, VI Teachers and Orientation and Mobility Specialist

**Campus Level:** Campus Based Evaluators

### TIMELINES FOR IDENTIFYING DISABILITY CONDITIONS:

- Initial evaluation timelines apply
- Reevaluations – REED meeting should be held no earlier than 60-75 days prior to the three-year re-evaluation due date.

### EVIDENCE OF PRACTICE:

- Forms or checklists used
- List of qualified evaluators with appropriate licenses and certifications
- Copies of evaluations