



## **GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS**

### **POSITION STATEMENT: Best Practice in Conducting Re-evaluation Review Process**

GASP Position- Adopted during Spring Conference -May 2001

1. Recent changes in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its interpretation have resulted in an often wide degree of latitude in the decision making process regarding the reevaluation of identified special needs students. Prior to the reauthorization of IDEA, a student routinely received a complete reevaluation as a part of the triennial assessment requirement.
2. This complete reassessment provided for the process of ensuring that (1) the student continued to display eligibility for services, (2) the assessment information was current and available to assist in writing the Individual Education Plan (IEP), and (3) should additional areas of concern be discovered, the student would receive, upon determination of the appropriate eligibility, the benefit of instructional support in those additional areas of service. This process allowed for problem remediation and subsequent termination of eligibility for support services. However, in some cases, assessment data were at odds with classroom performance and led to conflict relative to continued eligibility decisions.
3. Best practice indicates that assessment must be understood to encompass a wide degree of evaluative methods that may or may not include the assessment efforts of a certified school psychologist. Such assessment can include, but is not limited to, the following: portfolio assessment, review of records, review of grades, extensive descriptions of student learning behavior by the student's teachers, information provided by the student's parents, review of information from outside the school system, classroom observation, discipline records, attendance information, social worker information, functional behavior analysis information, and many others sources. All of this is valuable data that can and should be used to evaluate student progress and capability. In addition, such information, in conjunction with previous assessment and eligibility data, can provide a firm foundation for a decision regarding whether a student remains eligible for special education support services. It is important to emphasize that a certified school psychologist is one of the most qualified school system personnel available to serve as an expert in the field of individual student assessment. Therefore, best practice strongly suggests that the school psychologist be a participant in the reevaluation considerations process.



## GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

4. The flexibility of reevaluation considerations appears to allow three possible assessment options:

- Complete assessment of the student to include any original concerns as well as any new learning issues. This allows for significant improvement in skills (i.e., significant remediation of the identified problems) as well as the emergence of newly identified areas of concern.

- Partial reevaluation in newly suspected areas of learning and/or behavior issues, and possible eligibility in new areas of service. This allows for continued eligibility in original areas as well as possible new areas of eligibility.

- No reevaluation needed if no additional information is needed, indicating continuation of eligibility in the original areas of concern. In this option, the reevaluation review process is the triennial reevaluation of the student.

In considering whether a complete or partial psychological reevaluation may be needed, the following examples may clarify such an indication:

- If previous eligibility was marginal or borderline

- If there are questions about continued eligibility as previously established

- If the student's current performance is inconsistent with previous assessment results

- If the student has been evaluated only once, especially if that evaluation was completed when the student was in preschool or early primary grades

- If additional information has become available that gives the IEP committee reason to believe some changes have taken place that may impact the student's eligibility to receive or benefit from special education support services

(It should be noted that some of these factors might indicate some assessment effort is appropriate in less than a three-year reevaluation considerations window.)

Psychological reassessment may be unnecessary, redundant, or not indicated in cases where:

- The evaluation history provides consistent results and also is consistent with current student performance

- The primary disability and reason for special education services is a permanent physical or sensory disability

- The motive for assessment is simple interest or curiosity regarding current scores

- The student's progress, as documented in the student's IEP, does not reflect substantial change in rate, sequence, or type of learning



## **GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS**

5. Reevaluation considerations should be multi-factored in approach and broad in the survey of available data. No reevaluation decision should be made in a vacuum or in a limited manner. The responsible, competent, and trained IEP committee members undertaking this decision should be cognizant of the serious nature of the decisions made by the committee members. The decision to reevaluate a student and the degree to which reevaluation data are needed for an appropriate decision should be made on a case-by-case basis. As this decision occurs under the auspices of the IEP committee, the Georgia Association of School Psychologists believes the reevaluation decision should be referenced and documented in the IEP minutes. This is consistent with current IEP practices that document present levels of performance, evaluation results (both current and prior), and eligibility considerations. Best practice further suggests that, should follow-up assessment be needed, the IEP contain some indication of the specific nature of the information being requested and the questions the IEP committee wishes to have addressed via the assessment process. This IEP annotation facilitates an assessment that addresses the issues raised by the IEP committee.

6. Reevaluation decisions should not be made based on time constraints, prior local practice, tradition, the availability of assessment resources, or other factors of expediency. Any decisions made based on these limited conditions do not meet either the meaning or the intent of IDEA as currently amended and the antecedent legislation that clearly was focused on the determination of appropriate individual need.