Overview:

* Sugar-Salem Joint School District #322 is responsible for Child Find activities which include locating, identifying and evaluating all students with disabilities who are enrolled by their parents in private schools or homeschools within the district boundary. The district’s Special Education Department manages referrals for private school students ages 3 through 21. To begin the referral process, personnel from the private school or parents contact the Special Education Department at 356-8802.
* Provision of services applies to all eligible students who attend non-profit private elementary and secondary schools within the district’s geographical boundaries regardless of where they reside. Parentally placed private school students with disabilities do not have an individual right to receive some or all of the special education and related services that the student would receive if enrolled in a public school. Services offered to parentally placed private school students are determined through the district and private school consultation process.
* Private schools and/or parents can obtain general information regarding the special education and related services that may be available for their students with disabilities by talking to the school principal or the district’s Director of Special Education.

Definitions:

* Child Find: Child Find refers to the active and continuing efforts of the school district to identify, locate, and evaluate any child, 3 through 21 years inclusive, who resides within the jurisdiction of the school district and is thought to be a child with a disability. This includes resident children who do not attend public school, but attend private schools within the district boundaries. It also includes non-resident children whose parents place them in private schools in the district boundaries. Homeschooled children can also participate in child find activities.
* FAPE [Free And Appropriate Education]: a basic IDEA requirement which states that special education and related services are provided at public expense (free); in conformity with an appropriately developed IEP; under public supervision and direction; and include preschool, elementary, and secondary education that meets the education standards, regulations, and administrative policies and procedures issued by the State Department of Education.
* FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act): A federal law protecting the privacy of students and parents by mandating that personally indentifiable information about a student contained in educational records must be kept confidential unless otherwise provided by law. FERPA also contains provisions for access to records by parents, students, staff, and others.
* I.D.E.A. (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act): A federal law ensuring services to children with disabilities. The IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to individuals with disabilities. Children and youth (ages 3-21) receive special education and related services under IDEA Part B.
* I.E.P.[Individualized Education Program]: A written document (developed collaboratively by an education school team and parents) which outlines the special education program for a student with a disability. This document is developed, reviewed, and revised at an IEP meeting at least annually. It is available through the local public school.
* Private School: A nonpublic school that is not funded by or under federal or state control or supervision. A homeschool is not a private school.
* Private School Voluntary Enrollment by Parent: A parent who chooses to enroll his/her child in a private school for a variety of personal reasons is considered a voluntary enrollment. Such personal reasons could be, and not limited to, obtain a religious education, attend a school with a particular philosophy, or curriculum, or dissatisfaction with services offered or provided by the local district.
* S.P. [service plan]: Services plan means a written statement that describes the special education and related services the local education association (a.k.a. district) will provide to a parentally-placed child with a disability enrolled in a private school who has been designated to receive services, including the location of the services and any transportation necessary. Students enrolled in a for-profit private school are not eligible for a service plan.
* Special Education: Refers to the provision of special education services along the continuum of placements under the least restrictive environment requirements, rather than a specific place or location, such as a specific classroom or school. The balance of setting and services to meet an individual student’s needs.
* Special Education in the public school setting: Specially designed instruction or speech/language therapy at no cost to the parent to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability including instruction in the classroom, the home, hospitals, institutions, and other settings; instruction in physical education; speech therapy and language therapy; transition services; travel training; assistive technology services; and vocational education.

Child Find Requirements:

* The district shall have an ongoing Child Find system to locate, identify, and evaluate all students with disabilities ages three (3) through twenty-one (21) who are educated within the district’s geographic boundaries. This includes students who have been placed by a parent in a private nonprofit elementary or secondary school (including a religious school) located in the district regardless of the student’s state or local residency. Note: Parents can also ask the district of residence (assuming it is different than the district where the private school is located) to evaluate their student. Both districts would have Child Find responsibilities and cannot share information between the districts without written parental consent. The district of residence would have Child Find responsibilities for students placed in for-profit schools and for children aged three (3) to five (5).
* The Child Find process will be designed to encompass the following:
  + The Child Find process will ensure the equitable participation of parentally placed private and homeschool students with disabilities.
  + Child Find activities for private school students will be similar to Child Find activities for public school students, which include the evaluation process within comparable timelines.
  + The district will consult with private school representatives and representatives of parents who place their children in private schools regarding the Child Find procedures.

Processes:

* Referrals: If a parent or school staff believe a student needs special education assistance, they can talk to the school principal and/or call the district’s Director of Special Education to begin the referral process.
* Consent: A signed consent from the parents begins the evaluation process. The evaluation process can take up to 60 days. At any time, consent for evaluations may be withdrawn by the parents. The school district will retain a file of any testing completed up to the point of the withdrawal. A parent may make a referral to restart the testing at any time in the future. The Evaluation Team will review the referral and determine whether testing is warranted.
* Special Education Records: The district will maintain educational records, including eligibility documentation and IEPs for at least 5 years after disenrollment from the district to determine fiscal accountability and program compliance with IDEA requirements. The district shall inform a parent/adult student when personally identifiable information collected, maintained, or used is to be destroyed because the information is no longer needed to provide educational services to the student.
* Evaluations: All evaluations and any provision of special education services will take place at a Sugar-Salem School District facility. For private school students who do not reside in the school district boundaries, the district school will be the servicing school. Once the district special education office receives a student referral, the district will convene an Evaluation Team (district staff, private school staff, and parents) meeting to determine whether the student needs to be evaluated for special education. If they determine that assessments are required, the district special education department will complete the assessments and hold an eligibility meeting. The time period for this process must not exceed 60 days from the date of the signed consent to evaluate. When the time comes for a reevaluation, the reevaluation should take place in the school district where the student is receiving special education services. The school providing services manages the student’s SP. Parents would be responsible to schedule the evaluation with the district special education office. Evaluations would be done during general district operating hours.
* In District Resident Services: After evaluations are completed, an eligibility meeting is held at the school district to determine eligibility. If the student is found eligible for special education, he/she will be offered placement at the appropriate district school with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). If the parent declines the placement and chooses to have the student remain at the private school, the student may be eligible for a Service Plan (SP), if the services are appropriate for the student’s needs.
* Non-district Resident Services: If the eligible student is not a resident of the school district, he/she will be offered a SP if appropriate. If the parent prefers an IEP he/she will need to develop an IEP with the appropriate school team in their home district. For non-resident students, the parents would make a request for services by contacting the resident school. The IEP/SP team would convene to determine whether updated information is needed and what, if any, services the student would receive. If the parent chooses to enroll his/her child in the public school, the IEP will be implemented at a public school. If the parent decides to have the student continue at the private school, a SP may be offered if the services in the SP are appropriate for the student’s needs and are in accordance with the Affirmation agreement between district and private school.
* Denying and Requesting Services: If a private school student is determined to be eligible for special education services and the parent rejects services offered through an IEP, the parent can later request support. SP services are outlined in the Statement of Services Agreement. For non-resident students attending a private school located within the Sugar-Salem District, the parents would contact the appropriate district public school closest to the private school and request a SP meeting. If the parent wants an IEP for the student, he/she would contact the school district in his or her school district of residence.

IEP verses SP: The IEP is a written statement that specifies the individual needs of the child and what special education and related services are necessary to meet those needs. These services are provided through the public schools. The SP indicates the service(s) the student may receive when the student attends a parentally-placed private school. A student with an SP may receive any service that is being offered through the Affirmation agreement between the school district and private school.

Confidentiality and Access to Records:

The district shall collect, use and maintain information about a student to make appropriate decisions concerning special education and the provision of FAPE. A student’s special education case manager should organize all relevant records specific to district guidelines and the IDEA requirements.

The IDEA and FERPA contain provisions to protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information in student special education records. These statutes also provide the right to review and inspect records.

A “record” is defined as personally identifiable information directly related to the student and maintained by the district or a party acting for the district. A student record can be written or electronic. The term “record” may include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Identifying data [name, address, parents, siblings, Social Security number, list of personal characteristics making identification reasonably certain by a person in the school community];
2. Academic work completed [courses taken, transcript, report cards, progress notes]
3. Level of achievement [grades, portfolios, performance assessments, scores on standardized achievement tests, etc.]
4. Attendance data;
5. Scores and protocols of standardized intelligence, aptitude, and psychological tests;
6. Records of teachers, counselors, medical personnel, and psychologists working directly with a student if disclosed to others;
7. Interest inventory results;
8. Observations and verified reports of serious or recurring behavior patterns;
9. Videotapes or audiotapes;
10. Health data including medical assessments;
11. Family background information;
12. Transportation records;
13. Student records maintained by agencies and individuals contracting with the district; and
14. Email, test messages, or other written notes sent regarding the student or the student’s family

General Operations:

* The district will follow the Idaho Special Education manual or related manual as adopted by the school board as the guiding documents for programing decisions. Technical assistance can be sought from the Idaho State Department of Education.