



Huntsville
CITY SCHOOLS

STRONGER TOGETHER

LIMITLESS POSSIBILITIES

— An Inclusive Pathway —
For Every Learner



INSPIRE



ENGAGE



EMPOWER





HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Helping Your Family Navigate Student Supports

Whether you're exploring services for the first time or looking for answers along the way, this guide was created to help you understand the programs, processes, and supports available through Huntsville City Schools.

Inside, you'll find easy-to-understand information about:



SPECIAL EDUCATION

Students who need specially designed instruction through an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

YOU'LL LEARN:

- ✓ Referral Process
- ✓ Eligibility Process
- ✓ IEP Development
- ✓ Services/Related Services
- ✓ Supplemental Aids/Services
- ✓ Transition Planning
- ✓ Annual Reviews

Starts on Page 5



SECTION 504

Students with disabilities who need accommodations to ensure equal access to learning.

YOU'LL LEARN:

- ✓ Eligibility
- ✓ Evaluation Process
- ✓ 504 Plans
- ✓ Classroom Accommodations
- ✓ Annual Reviews
- ✓ Parent Rights

Starts on Page 41



GIFTED & TALENTED EDUCATION (GATE)

Students who demonstrate exceptional aptitude and benefit from advanced learning opportunities.

YOU'LL LEARN:

- ✓ Referral Process
- ✓ Screening & Assessment
- ✓ Eligibility
- ✓ Gifted Services
- ✓ Enrichment Opportunities
- ✓ Parent Resources

Starts on Page 49

THROUGHOUT THIS GUIDE YOU'LL FIND...



Easy-to-read explanations



Helpful Tips for Families



Frequently Asked Questions



Important Forms & Timelines



Parent Rights & Responsibilities



Contact Information & Resources



One Family.
One School System.
Endless Possibilities.



At Huntsville City Schools, every student deserves access to the support, services, and opportunities they need to learn, thrive, and reach their full potential.

Whether your child receives Special Education services, Section 504 accommodations, participates in Gifted Education, or is simply exploring available supports, we are committed to partnering with families every step of the way.





Commitment to Families

Huntsville City Schools believes that families are valued partners in every child's educational journey. By working together, families and schools can create a strong foundation that helps every student learn, grow, and succeed.

Our goal is to ensure that every student receives a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)—while being supported, challenged, and valued as an individual.

We understand that navigating special education can sometimes feel overwhelming. This guide was created to provide clear, parent-friendly information to help you:

- Understand the special education and IEP process
- Feel confident participating in meetings and decisions
- Support your child's academic and personal growth
- Build strong partnerships with your child's school

You are not just invited to the table—you are a valued and equal member of your child's educational team.

If you have questions or need support, please contact your child's school or the Huntsville City Schools Special Education Department at 256-963-9789.



Huntsville
CITY SCHOOLS

Understanding your Child's IEP

This section is designed to help families clearly understand how the IEP® is structured in Huntsville City Schools.



What is an IEP?

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a legally binding plan that is designed to meet your child's unique learning needs. It is developed collaboratively by a team that includes you, the school, and other professionals who support your child.



Key Parts of the IEP



Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)

A summary of your child's strengths, needs, and how their disability affects their involvement in school.



Measurable Annual Goals

Specific goals that your child will work toward over the next year.



Special Education Services

The services, supports, and instruction your child will receive.



Accommodations and Modifications

Changes to help your child learn or be assessed in a way that is accessible.



Participation in Assessments

How your child will participate in state and district assessments.



Your Role Matters

You are an essential member of the IEP team. Your insights, advocacy, and ideas shape the plan and ensure it reflects their unique needs.

You have the right to:

- ✓ Be informed and involved in all decisions
- ✓ Ask questions and receive answers
- ✓ Disagree or share concerns (if needed)
- ✓ Review and request changes to the IEP



Helpful Tip

Take time to read your child's IEP carefully. Don't hesitate to ask questions—most importantly, it helps your child succeed.



Huntsville
CITY SCHOOLS

Working together today for a brighter tomorrow.

Inspire

Engage

Empower

What is Special Education?

Special education provides individualized instruction and services designed to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities. These services are provided at no cost to families.

Instruction and supports are tailored so that students can:

- Access grade-level content
- Build important academic and functional skills
- Make meaningful progress over time

What terms or acronyms do parents or guardians need to understand?

- **Accommodation**
A change in how a student learns or demonstrates what they know without changing the learning expectations.
- **Assistive Technology (AT)**
Tools or equipment that help a student participate in learning, communicate, or complete school tasks more independently.
- **Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)**
A plan that outlines strategies and supports to help improve a student's behavior and promote success at school.
- **Child Find**
A process schools use to identify, locate, and evaluate children who may need special education services.
- **Evaluation**
A series of assessments used to determine whether a student has a disability and needs special education services.
- **Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**
Every eligible student has the right to receive special education and related services at no cost to the parent or guardian.
- **General Education Classroom**
The classroom where students receive instruction alongside their peers who do not have disabilities.
- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**
The federal law that protects the rights of students with disabilities and outlines how special education services are provided.
- **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**
A written plan that describes a student's strengths, needs, educational goals, and the services and supports the school will provide.
- **IEP Team**
A group that includes the student's family, teachers, school staff, and others who work together to develop and review the student's IEP.

- **Inclusion**

Providing students with disabilities opportunities to learn with their peers in general education classrooms while receiving the supports they need.

- **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**

A student should learn alongside peers without disabilities as much as possible while receiving the support needed to be successful.

- **Parent Consent**

Written permission from a parent or guardian that allows the school to complete certain actions, such as conducting an evaluation or beginning special education services.

- **Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)**

A summary of how a student is currently performing in school, including strengths, needs, and how the disability affects learning.

- **Progress Monitoring**

A way to regularly measure a student's progress toward IEP goals and determine if supports are working.

- **Related Services**

Support services that help a student benefit from special education, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, transportation, counseling, or audiology.

- **Special Education**

Specially designed instruction and services that meet the unique learning needs of a student with a disability.

- **Transition Planning**

Planning that helps prepare students for life after high school, including education, employment, and independent living, when appropriate.

- **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**

An approach to teaching that provides multiple ways for students to access information, engage in learning, and show what they know.

How Support Begins: MTSS in Huntsville City Schools

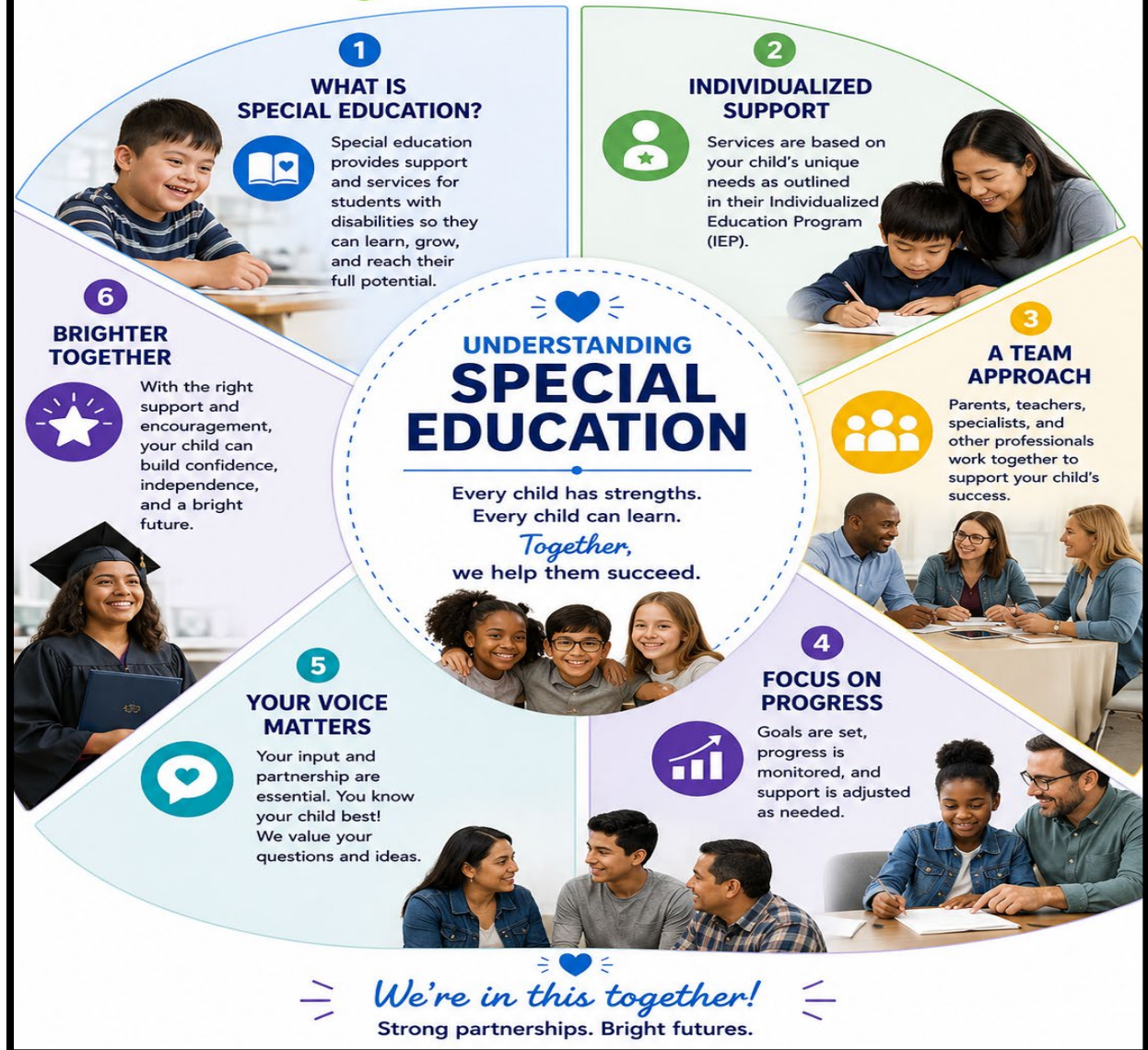
Before special education is considered, schools use a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to provide help early.

This includes:

- High-quality classroom instruction
- Targeted small group support
- Progress monitoring to track improvement

Why this matters...

MTSS helps identify student needs early and ensures that interventions are provided before referral, when appropriate.



Child Find in Huntsville City Schools

Child Find is a requirement under IDEA that ensures schools identify, locate, and evaluate students who may need special education services.

In Alabama, Child Find applies to all children ages birth through 21, including:

- Public school students
- Homeschooled students
- Private school students
- Highly mobile students (including homeless or migrant students)

How Does Child Find Work in HCS

Huntsville City Schools actively supports Child Find by:

- Conducting universal screenings
- Monitoring student progress
- Accepting referrals from parents, teachers, or community members
- Providing evaluations at no cost to families
- Anyone who suspects a student may have a disability may request a referral by contacting the school or Special Education Services at 256-963-9789

What is My Role as a Parent or Guardian in Child Find?

As a parent, guardian, or someone concerned that a child may have a disability, you can:

- Request an evaluation at any time by contacting your child's school or the HCS Special Education Services Department.
- Early Intervention and Special Education Services work closely with community service agencies and parents to locate children with disabilities ages 0-3. For more information about available resources for infants and toddlers ages birth to 3 years old, please contact AEIS Child Find at 1-800-543-3098.
- Share concerns about academic, behavioral, or developmental progress.
- Provide outside reports or medical information.

What Happens After a Referral?

1. Vision and Hearing Screening will be conducted for all referrals. These screenings will be completed before the referral meeting.
2. The IEP Team reviews the data submitted.
3. The parent or guardian is asked to give written consent for evaluation
4. Initial referral assessments must be completed within a 60 Day timeline.
5. A team meets to review results and determine eligibility.
6. Eligibility is based on the guidelines set forth in the Alabama Administrative Code.

What Information is Important for Families to Know?

- If accepted for evaluation, all assessments are provided free of cost to parents/guardians
- Any assessment of special education service cannot begin without your consent
- You will have the opportunity to participate in the review of all results and will receive a copy
- If eligible and enrolled in Huntsville City Schools, an IEP will be developed

Parent Rights & Procedural Safeguards

Empowering families with knowledge of their rights to ensure meaningful participation and the best possible outcomes for their child.



YOUR RIGHTS. YOUR VOICE. YOUR PARTNERSHIP.

Understanding your rights helps ensure that you are an equal partner in decisions about your child's education.



YOU HAVE A VOICE

You are an essential member of the IEP team.



YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION

Clear, timely, and understandable communications.



YOU HAVE PROTECTIONS

Procedural safeguards protect your rights.



YOU HAVE CHOICES

You can give or deny consent for services.



YOU HAVE SUPPORT

We are here to partner with you every step of the way.



Together,

we advocate. We collaborate. We empower.

We support student success.



As a parent, you are protected under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These protections are called Procedural Safeguards and ensure that you are informed, involved, and able to advocate for your child.

Parent/Guardian Rights Include:

Participation

You have the right to participate in all meetings and decisions regarding your child's education.

Prior Written Notice (NOPRA)

You must receive written notice before the school proposes or refuses changes related to:

- Identification
- Evaluation
- Services
- Placement

Consent

Your permission is required before:

- Evaluations begin
- Initial services are provided

Access to Records

You can review your child's educational records at any time.

Requesting Evaluations

You may request an evaluation if you have concerns about your child's progress.

Dispute Resolution Options

If you disagree with a decision, you may:

- Request a meeting
- Request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)
- File a complaint
- Request mediation or a due process hearing

What This Looks Like in Real Life

- If the school wants to change services → you receive a Notice of Proposed or Refused Action (NOPRA), which is also known as Prior Written Notice. This form is provided after the IEP meeting where discussion was held among all team members.
- If you have concerns → you can request a meeting at any time
- If you disagree with testing → you can request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE), which occurs outside of the school district at no cost to the parent/guardian.

Procedural Safeguards

You will receive a document called Procedural Safeguards, which explains your rights in detail.

We encourage you to:

- Keep a copy in your parent binder
- Refer to it when questions arise
- Ask for clarification at any time

YOU ARE PART OF THE TEAM

Together, we support your child's success.



TEACHER

Provides daily instruction and classroom support.



SPED TEACHER

Leads IEP development and provides specialized instruction and support.



PARENT

You know your child best and your voice matters.



ADMINISTRATOR

Supports resources, policies, and overall student success.



STUDENT

Your child is at the center of everything we do.



We each bring unique strengths to the team.

When we work together, our students thrive. 

The IEP Process

Understanding the IEP process helps you feel confident, informed, and prepared to support your child.

While each student's journey is unique, the process follows a clear set of steps.



A PARTNERSHIP FOR YOUR CHILD'S SUCCESS

The IEP process is a partnership between you, your child's school, and a team of professionals who are committed to helping your child learn, grow, and reach their goals.



TOGETHER, WE PLAN.

We work together to understand your child's strengths, needs, and goals.



TOGETHER, WE SUPPORT.

We put the plan into action with services and supports designed for your child.



TOGETHER, WE SUCCEED.

We celebrate progress and adjust as needed to help your child thrive.



YOUR VOICE MATTERS

You are an essential member of the IEP team. Your insights, questions, and advocacy help shape a plan that reflects your child's unique needs.

We're in this together.

Step 1: Referral

A concern about a student's learning, behavior, or development is identified.

- Referrals can come from teachers, parents, or outside providers
- Parents may request an evaluation at any time in writing

💡 *You do not have to wait for the school to suggest an evaluation.*

Step 2: Evaluation

The school gathers information to better understand your child's needs.

This may include:

- Academic assessments
- Observations
- Teacher input
- Parent input

✓ **Your written consent is required before testing begins**

Step 3: Eligibility Determination

A team (including you) meets to review evaluation results.

The team determines:

- Whether your child qualifies under a disability category
- Whether specialized instruction is needed

💡 If your child does not qualify, the school may still provide supports through general education.

Step 4: IEP Development

If eligible, the team creates an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

This includes:

- Present Levels (PLAFFF)
- Annual goals
- Services and supports

Step 5: Implementation

Once the IEP is finalized and consent is given:

- Services begin
- Teachers and providers follow the plan
- Supports are integrated into your child's school day

Step 6: Progress Monitoring

The school tracks your child's progress toward their goals.

- Data is collected regularly
- Updates are shared with families

Step 7: Annual Review

The IEP team meets at least once per year to review and update the plan. You may request a meeting at any time if concerns arise.



IMPORTANT REMINDER

You are a key member of the team at every step.

Your questions, insights, and concerns help ensure your child receives the right support.



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Participation in Assessments

How your child will participate in state and district assessments.



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You have the right to:

- ✓ Be informed and involved in all decisions
- ✓ Ask questions and receive answers
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- ✓ Review and request changes to the IEP



Helpful Tip

Take time to read your child's IEP carefully. Don't hesitate to ask questions—most importantly, it helps your child succeed.

The Profile Page: The Big Picture

The Profile Page provides a broad overview of your child. It includes:

- Strengths and interests
- Parent concerns
- General academic and functional needs
- Background information

💡 Think of the Profile Page as: ***“Who is my child as a learner?”***

The PLAFFP: The Instructional Roadmap

The Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAFFP) is one of the most important parts of the IEP.

It is based on:

- Classroom data
- Work samples
- Teacher observations
- Assessments (such as Teachers Assessments, Dibels, i-Ready, or ACAP etc.)

The PLAFFP Identifies:

- What your child can currently do
- Specific skill gaps
- Areas requiring specialized instruction

💡 Think of the PLAFFP as:

👉 ***“What does my child need instructionally right now?”***

Key Differences

- Profile Page = Big picture overview
- PLAFFP = Detailed, data-driven instructional needs

Both are required and serve different but equally important purposes.

Why This Matters

The PLAFFP directly drives:

- Annual goals
- Services and supports
- Instructional decisions



If the PLAFFP is clear and data-based, the IEP will be stronger and more effective.

What should parents look for when reviewing their child's IEP?

- Is the information based on current data?
- Does it clearly explain my child's needs?
- Do the goals match the needs described?
- Are services aligned with the level of support needed?

Inside the IEP

Every part of the IEP has a purpose.
Together, they help your child learn and grow.

A plan built for your child. ♥

Working together for meaningful progress.

- 1. PROFILE PAGE**
The big picture of your child—strengths, interests, concerns, and background.
- 2. PLAFPP**
Current levels of academic achievement and functional performance based on data.
- 3. ANNUAL GOALS**
Specific, measurable goals designed to help your child make progress.
- 4. SERVICES & SUPPORTS**
The services, supports, and accommodations your child receives to succeed.
- 5. PROGRESS & REVIEW**
Ongoing progress monitoring and regular reviews to ensure success.

Every piece of the IEP works together to support your child's learning journey.
Your voice. Your child. Our commitment. ♥

Annual Goals: What skills is my child working on?

Annual goals describe the specific skills your child is expected to develop within one year.

Goals are:

- Based on the **PLAFFF (current performance)**
- Measurable and data-driven
- Designed to support meaningful progress

What Makes a Strong Goal?

Each goal includes:

- A clearly defined skill
- Conditions (how the skill is practiced)
- Criteria (how success is measured)

Parent-Friendly Example:

Instead of:

✗ “Improve reading”

You may see:

✓ “Given grade-level text, the student will independently identify the main idea and two supporting details with 80% accuracy on 3 out of 4 trials. (ELA. 6.1.2)

Services: How Support Is Delivered

Services describe **how your child will receive specialized instruction.**

In Huntsville City Schools, services may include:

✓ Push-In (Collaborative Support)

- Support is provided in the general education classroom
- The special education teacher works alongside the classroom teacher

✓ Pull-Out (Resource Support)

- Instruction is provided in a smaller setting
- Focus on targeted skill development

✓ Related Services

- Speech therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Behavioral supports
- Other services based on need

✓ Each Service Includes:

- **Frequency** (how often)
- **Duration** (how long)
- **Location** (where services occur)

 *You should clearly understand when, where, and how your child is receiving support.*

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Students are educated with their peers **to the maximum extent appropriate**.

The IEP team determines:

- The setting where your child can be most successful
- The level of support needed to access learning

Important:

Placement decisions are based on **individual needs—not a one-size-fits-all model**.

Accommodations vs. Modifications

Understanding this difference is very important for families.

✓ Accommodations (HOW learning happens)

These supports help your child access the same content:

- Extended time
- Small group testing
- Preferential seating
- Read-aloud supports

Does NOT change what is being taught

✓ Modifications (WHAT is taught)

These change expectations or content:

- Reduced assignments
- Simplified curriculum
- Alternate standards

Changes what your child is expected to learn

How Parents Can Stay Informed

Ask your child's team:

- How will progress be measured?
- How often will I receive updates?
- What should I expect to see at home?

HCS Commitment

Services and supports are designed to be **individualized, data-driven, and aligned to student needs**.

HOW PROGRESS IS TRACKED

A Data Monitoring Cycle & Instructional Adjustment

to Ensure Your Child's Success

Your child's IEP includes a continuous cycle of monitoring and adjusting instruction to help them make meaningful progress.



YOUR PARTNERSHIP MATTERS

We share progress with you throughout the year. Your insights help guide decisions and support your child every step of the way.



Continuous monitoring. Thoughtful adjustments. Stronger outcomes.

TOGETHER, WE HELP YOUR CHILD THRIVE.



Data helps the IEP team understand:

- Where your child is currently performing
- Whether progress is being made
- When instruction or supports need to change

Types of Data You May See

In Huntsville City Schools, families may receive:

✓ Assessment Data

- i-Ready
- ACAP practice
- Classroom assessments

✓ Classroom Work Samples

- Daily assignments
- Writing samples
- Math work
- Reading samples

✓ Teacher Observations

- Engagement
- Behavior
- Skill development

✓ Progress Monitoring Data

- Ongoing tracking tied directly to IEP goals
- Collected regularly to measure growth

What Progress Monitoring Means

Progress monitoring is the process of:

- Collecting data regularly
- Measuring progress toward IEP goals
- Adjusting instruction as needed

💡 *This ensures decisions are based on data—not assumptions.*

How Progress Is Reported

Parents will receive:

- Progress reports aligned to IEP goals
- Updates during report card periods
- Communication from teachers as needed

What Parents Should Look For

When reviewing progress, ask:

- Is my child making consistent progress?
- Are the supports working?
- Does the data match what I see at home?

When Progress Is Limited

If progress is slower than expected:

- Instruction may be adjusted
- Services may be increased or changed
- Goals may be reviewed

💡 You can request a meeting at any time to discuss concerns.



Commitment

We use data to
guide decisions and
ensure that every
student is making
**meaningful, measurable
progress.**



DATA DRIVEN

We use reliable data to understand student needs and set goals.



INFORMED DECISIONS

Data helps us choose the right strategies, instruction, and supports.



MEASURABLE PROGRESS

We track growth over time to ensure students are moving forward.



STUDENT SUCCESS

Our goal is meaningful growth for every student, every step of the way.



Working together today for a **brighter** tomorrow.

Inspire | Engage | Empower

Parent Rights & Procedural Safeguards

Empowering families with knowledge of their rights to ensure meaningful participation and the best possible outcomes for their child.



YOUR RIGHTS. YOUR VOICE. YOUR PARTNERSHIP.

Understanding your rights helps ensure that you are an equal partner in decisions about your child's education.



YOU HAVE A VOICE

You are an essential member of the IEP team.



YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION

Clear, timely, and understandable communications.



YOU HAVE PROTECTIONS

Procedural safeguards protect your rights.



YOU HAVE CHOICES

You can give or deny consent for services.



YOU HAVE SUPPORT

We are here to partner with you every step of the way.



Together,

we advocate. We collaborate. We empower.

We support student success. 



Before the Meeting

Taking a few simple steps can make a big difference:

✓ Review Important Documents

- Your child's current IEP
- Recent progress reports
- Report cards or assessment data

👉 Look for what is working and what may need to change.

✓ Write Down Your Questions & Concerns

Think about:

- Academic progress
- Behavior or social skills
- Independence and organization
- Any concerns you've noticed at home

💡 *Bringing a written list helps ensure nothing is forgotten.*

✓ Gather Outside Information

If your child receives services outside of school, bring:

- Therapy reports
- Medical information
- Tutoring updates

✓ Talk With Your Child

Ask your child:

- What do you enjoy at school?
- What feels difficult?
- What would help you more?

👉 Their voice is important and can guide the conversation.

✓ Organize Your Materials

Keep everything in one place:

- IEPs
- Reports
- Notes
- Emails

✓ Consider Bringing Support

You may bring:

- A family member
- A friend

💡 Parent Tip

You are an **equal member of the IEP team**. Your input matters just as much as anyone else's.



QUESTIONS

You May Want to Ask

These questions can help guide the meeting:



What progress has my child made?



What data supports this progress?



What skills still need improvement?



Are the goals appropriate and challenging?



How will progress be measured?



What services will be provided—
and how often?



How will supports be used
in the classroom?



What can I do at home to help?



During the IEP Meeting

IEP meetings are designed to be collaborative and focused on your child's success.



WORKING TOGETHER FOR YOUR CHILD

Your voice and insights are an important part of the IEP team.
Together, we will create a plan that supports your child now and in the future.



COLLABORATIVE TEAM

The IEP team works together, including you, to create the best plan for your child.



SHARE & LISTEN

Share your perspectives and listen to others on the team.



FOCUSED ON SUCCESS

The goal is to support your child's learning, growth, and future opportunities.



MAKE A PLAN

Review goals, services, supports, and how progress will be tracked.



PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

Together, we make decisions that help your child thrive.



YOUR VOICE MATTERS

You know your child best. Your input helps shape a plan that reflects their unique needs, strengths, and goals.

Thank you for being such an important part of your child's team.



What to Expect

During the meeting, the team will:

- Review your child's strengths
- Discuss evaluation results and classroom performance
- Identify academic and functional needs
- Develop or review goals
- Determine services and supports
- Answer questions and gather parent input

Your Role as a Parent

You can:

- Share your insights about your child
- Ask questions if something is unclear
- Request examples or data
- Suggest ideas or supports
- Take notes

💡 ***You bring valuable knowledge about your child that the team depends on.***

Tips for a Positive Meeting Experience

- Focus on collaboration and problem-solving
- Ask for clarification when needed
- Take your time—decisions do not need to be rushed
- Keep the conversation centered on your child's needs

If You Need More Time

It is okay to:

- Request a break
- Ask to reconvene at another time

👉 **The goal is to ensure the plan is right for your child.**

After the IEP Meeting

Once the meeting ends,
the IEP becomes the plan
that guides your child's
instruction and support.



YOUR CHILD. YOUR TEAM. YOUR PLAN.

We will work together to put the plan into action and
support your child every step of the way.



THE PLAN IS ACTIVE

The IEP is put into
action right away to
provide the supports
and services your
child needs.



STAY CONNECTED

We'll keep you informed
about your child's
progress and how the
plan is going.



MONITOR PROGRESS

Your child's progress
will be tracked and
reviewed regularly
throughout the year.



FOCUSED ON SUCCESS

Together, we'll adjust
supports as needed
to help your child
reach their goals.



THANK YOU FOR BEING OUR PARTNER

Your involvement makes a difference. Together, we can
help your child learn, grow, and thrive.

We're in this together. ❤️



What Happens Next

- You will receive a finalized copy of the IEP
- Services begin as outlined in the plan
- Teachers and providers implement supports

Reviewing the IEP

Take time to:

- Read the document carefully
- Make sure it reflects what was discussed
- Ask questions if anything is unclear

Monitoring Services

As your child participates in school:

- Observe progress and changes in skills
- Communicate with teachers
- Review progress reports

 ***You should see a connection between the IEP and your child's daily experience.***

Staying Connected

Strong communication helps ensure success:

- Reach out to your child's teacher or case manager
- Schedule check-ins if needed
- Share updates or concerns

If You Have Concerns

You can:

- Request an IEP meeting at any time
- Ask for additional data or clarification
- Work with the team to adjust supports

Related Services and Supports

Huntsville City Schools provides a range of related services to support students with disabilities. These services are designed to help your child benefit from their special education program.



SUPPORTING SUCCESS. TOGETHER.

Related services work together with special education to help your child learn, grow, and thrive.



INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT

Services are tailored to meet your child's unique needs.



PROMOTING GROWTH

These services help students develop skills and overcome barriers to learning.



COLLABORATIVE TEAMWORK

A team of professionals works together with you to support your child's success.



INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES

Services help students participate, achieve their goals, and build confidence.



PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

We value your input and work together to support your child every step of the way.

Supporting the Whole Child

In Huntsville City Schools, special education services are designed to meet each student's unique learning needs. In addition to specialized instruction, some students may receive related services and supports to help them access, participate in, and benefit from their educational program.

These services are determined individually by the IEP Team based on student needs, evaluation data, and educational impact.

What Are Related Services?

Related services are supports that help a student benefit from special education services and participate successfully in school activities.

Not every student will require related services. The IEP Team determines whether a service is needed based on the student's individual educational needs.

Common Related Services & Supports

Speech-Language Therapy

Supports students with:

- Communication skills
- Speech production
- Language development
- Social communication
- Understanding and expressing ideas

Services may be provided individually, in small groups, or within the classroom setting.

Occupational Therapy (OT)

Supports students with:

- Fine motor skills
- Handwriting
- Sensory processing
- Daily school tasks
- Organization and self-help skills

Occupational therapists help students improve participation in classroom and school activities.

Physical Therapy (PT)

Supports students with:

- Gross motor skills
- Balance and coordination
- Mobility
- Physical access within the school environment

Physical therapists help students safely move and participate in educational activities.

Behavior Health Counseling Services

School-based counseling may support:

- Emotional regulation
- Coping skills
- Social interactions
- Behavioral needs
- School adjustment

These services help students build skills needed for school success.

Behavioral Supports

Some students may receive behavioral supports to:

- Improve positive behaviors
- Increase classroom participation
- Develop self-regulation skills
- Reduce barriers to learning

Behavior supports may include intervention plans, coaching, or consultation with staff.

Transportation Services

Specialized transportation may be provided when needed for a student to safely access school and educational services.

Transportation needs are determined individually by the IEP Team.

Assistive Technology (AT)

Assistive technology (AT) includes tools and devices that help students with disabilities access learning, communicate, and participate in classroom activities. These tools are generally categorized as **low-tech** or **high-tech**.

Benefits of Assistive Technology

- Increases student independence.
- Improves access to the curriculum.
- Enhances communication and participation.
- Supports academic achievement.
- Promotes inclusion in the general education classroom.
- Builds student confidence and engagement.

Assistive technology helps all learners access, participate, and succeed.



LOW-TECH ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY



Type	Purpose
	Writing Supports Improve handwriting, writing comfort, and written communication.
	Reading Supports Assist with reading accuracy, tracking, and comprehension.
	Organization Tools Help students plan, sequence, and complete tasks independently.
	Communication Supports Support students who need alternative ways to express themselves.
	Seating and Positioning Supports Improve posture, attention, comfort, and sensory regulation.
	Math Supports Assist with understanding mathematical concepts and problem-solving.
	Daily Living Supports Promote independence during classroom routines and activities.



HIGH-TECH ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY



Type	Purpose
	Text-to-Speech Converts written text into spoken words to improve access to reading materials.
	Speech-to-Text Converts spoken language into written text to support written assignments.
	Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Provides electronic communication options for students with limited verbal speech.
	Word Prediction Assists with writing by suggesting words and improving spelling and typing efficiency.
	Screen Readers Reads digital content aloud for students with visual impairments or reading disabilities.
	Screen Magnification Enlarges text and images for students with low vision.
	Digital Organization Tools Support time management, scheduling, and task organization.
	Electronic Note-Taking Helps students capture, organize, and review classroom information.
	Accessible Learning Software Provides curriculum materials in accessible formats.
	Adaptive Input Devices Enable students with physical disabilities to access computers and digital learning tools.

Benefits of Assistive Technology

- Increases student independence.
- Improves access to the curriculum.
- Enhances communication and participation.
- Supports academic achievement.
- Promotes inclusion in the general education classroom.
- Builds student confidence and engagement.

Nursing or Health Services

Some students may require health-related supports during the school day, such as:

- Medication assistance
- Health monitoring
- Medical procedures
- Emergency health planning

These services help ensure student safety and access to instruction.

Transition Planning

Planning today for
tomorrow's opportunities
helps your child build a
confident and successful
future.



PREPARING TODAY. EMPOWERING TOMORROW.

Transition planning helps your child explore goals, build skills,
and access the supports needed for a successful future.



EXPLORE GOALS

We help your child
identify their strengths,
interests, and future
aspirations.



BUILD SKILLS

We focus on learning
and life skills that
support independence
and success.



PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Together, we create
a plan for education,
employment, and
independent living.



CONNECT TO SUPPORTS

We connect you with
community resources
and services to help
your child thrive.



ACHIEVE SUCCESS

With the right plan
and support, your child
can reach their goals
and build a bright future.



Together,

we plan with purpose, support every step,
and empower your child for a successful future.



When Transition Planning Begins

In Alabama, transition planning typically begins **by age 14** and continues through graduation.

What Transition Planning Includes

The IEP team works with your child to develop a plan focused on:

✓ Postsecondary Education

- College
- Technical training
- Certification programs

✓ Employment

- Career exploration
- Job readiness skills
- Work-based learning opportunities

✓ Independent Living Skills

- Daily living skills
- Financial literacy
- Self-advocacy

Student Involvement

Your child plays an important role in transition planning.

The plan is based on:

- Interests
- Strengths
- Goals for the future

 ***Students are encouraged to attend and participate in IEP meetings as they get older.***

Outside Agency Support

The IEP team may collaborate with agencies such as:

- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Community organizations
- Workforce development programs

What Parents Should Look For

When reviewing transition plans, ask:

- Are goals aligned with my child's interests?
- Are there real opportunities for skill development?
- Is my child gaining independence over time?

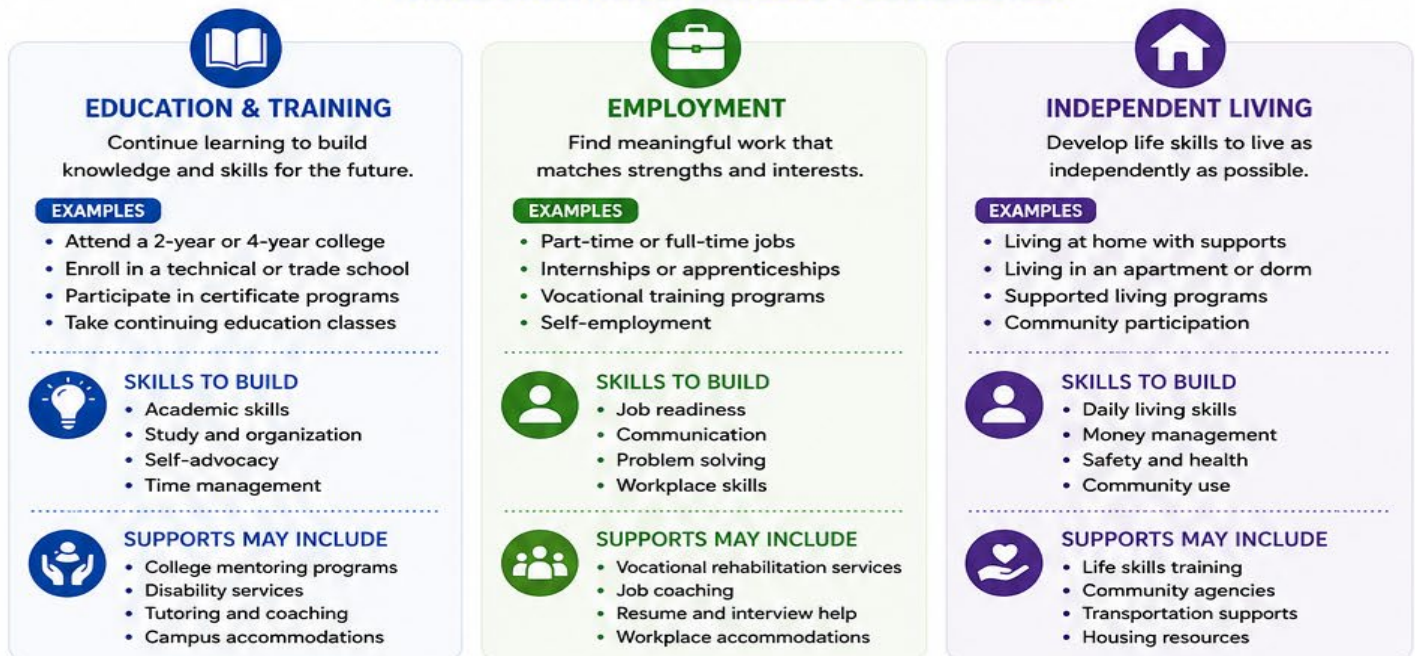
PATHWAYS TO THE FUTURE

PLANNING TODAY. PREPARING FOR TOMORROW.

Transition planning in the IEP helps your child build the skills and supports needed to reach their postsecondary goals and lead a meaningful, fulfilling life.



THREE PATHWAYS. ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES.





THE STUDENT IS AT THE CENTER.

Your child's dreams, strengths, and interests guide the plan. We work together to remove barriers and create opportunities for success.



WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER.



Big goals. Bright futures.



TOGETHER, WE CAN HELP YOUR CHILD BUILD A FUTURE THEY LOVE.

Moving Forward Together

As your child continues to learn and grow, the partnership between families and schools remains one of the most important parts of the educational journey. The IEP is not just a document—it is a working plan designed to support your child's success over time.

Each year brings new strengths, goals, opportunities, and questions. Huntsville City Schools is committed to working alongside families to ensure students receive meaningful support, high-quality instruction, and opportunities to thrive.

What Happens Next?

After the IEP meeting:

✓ The IEP Is Put into Action

Teachers and service providers begin implementing the services, accommodations, supports, and goals outlined in the IEP.

✓ Progress Is Monitored

Your child's progress toward annual goals will be monitored regularly through:

- Classroom performance
- Assessments and data collection
- Work samples
- Teacher observations
- Progress reports

The IEP Team uses this information to determine whether supports are helping your child make meaningful progress.

✓ Communication Continues

Families are encouraged to stay connected with teachers and school staff throughout the year.

Communication may include:

- Emails or phone calls
- Progress updates
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Report cards
- IEP meetings or reviews

 *Ongoing communication helps ensure everyone is working together to support student success.*

When Can an IEP Be Reviewed?

An IEP is reviewed at least once each year, but meetings can occur sooner if needed.

Parents may request an IEP meeting if:

- Concerns arise
- Progress is limited
- Needs change
- Additional supports may be needed

- Questions about services or accommodations arise

You do not have to wait until the annual review to discuss concerns.

Reevaluations

Students receiving special education services are reevaluated periodically to help determine:

- Continued eligibility
- Current strengths and needs
- Educational impact
- Appropriate supports and services

Families are important participants throughout this process.

Transitioning Between Grade Levels

As students move through elementary, middle, and high school, the IEP may evolve to reflect:

- Academic expectations
- Functional needs
- Independence skills
- Postsecondary goals
- Career interests
- Transition planning

The IEP is designed to grow with your child.

Tips for Families Moving Forward

Stay Organized

Keep copies of:

- IEPs
- Progress reports
- Evaluations
- Communication records
- Meeting notes

Ask Questions

Questions help build understanding and collaboration.

There are no “wrong” questions during the IEP process.

Celebrate Growth

Progress may look different for every child. Recognizing growth—both big and small—is important.

Stay Involved

Your voice matters. Families provide valuable insight into a child’s strengths, needs, and progress.

HCS Commitment to Families

Huntsville City Schools is committed to:

- ✓ Supporting meaningful family partnerships
- ✓ Providing individualized support for students
- ✓ Using data to guide decisions
- ✓ Promoting student growth and achievement
- ✓ Preparing students for future success

We believe that every child can learn, grow, and succeed when schools and families work together.

Final Encouragement

Together, We Support Student Success

Thank you for partnering with Huntsville City Schools. Your involvement, advocacy, and collaboration make a meaningful difference in your child's educational journey.

Together, we can help every student reach their fullest potential!

UNDERSTANDING SECTION 504 PLANS

EQUITABLE ACCESS. ACADEMIC SUCCESS.
EVERY STUDENT, EVERY DAY.



Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities. To qualify for protection under Section 504, a student must have a physical or mental health impairment that substantially limits a major life activity.

The purpose of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is to (1) eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity provided by school districts and other providers that receive federal financial assistance, and (2) ensure that students who are Section 504-eligible have equal opportunities to participate in the district's educational activities and programs which are equivalent to those of their nondisabled peers. Unlike the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 does not limit coverage to certain specific categories of disabilities, and no categorical labels are necessary. Instead, a student with a disability under Section 504 is defined as one who (1) has a physical or mental health impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.

What is Section 504?

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal civil rights law that protects students with disabilities from discrimination. The purpose of Section 504 is to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to educational opportunities and can participate fully in school programs and activities.

Unlike an Individualized Education Program (IEP), a Section 504 Plan does not provide specially designed instruction. Instead, it provides reasonable accommodations, supports, and services that allow students to access the general education curriculum alongside their peers.

Who May Qualify?

A student may be eligible if he or she:

- Has a physical or mental impairment.
- The impairment substantially limits one or more major life activities; and
- Needs accommodations or related aids/services to access school programs and/or school facilities.

Major life activities include, but are not limited to:

- Learning
- Reading
- Writing
- Concentrating
- Thinking
- Communicating
- Walking
- Seeing
- Hearing
- Breathing
- Caring for oneself
- Eating
- Sleeping
- Working

Examples of conditions that may qualify include:

- ADHD
- Diabetes
- Asthma
- Severe allergies
- Anxiety disorders
- Depression
- Epilepsy
- Hearing or vision impairments
- Medical conditions
- Temporary disabilities (in some circumstances)

Eligibility is determined individually. Having a medical diagnosis does not automatically qualify a student for a Section 504 Plan. The team must determine whether the condition substantially limits a major life activity and/or the student has a disability but does not need services to equally access the educational environment or to meet educational needs as adequately as those of nondisabled peers. The student will be protected against disability discrimination.



1

Referral



2

**Review Existing
Information/Evaluation**



3

Eligibility Meeting



4

Section 504 Plan Developed



5

Accommodations Implemented



6

Annual Review



7

Periodic Reevaluation

Section 504 Eligibility Process

Step 1 – Referral

A referral may be made by:

- Parent/Guardian
- Teacher
- School Administrator
- School Counselor
- Nurse
- Other school staff

Parents may request an evaluation for Section 504 at any time.

Step 2 – Review of Information

The Section 504 Team gathers information such as:

- Classroom performance
- Grades
- Attendance
- State and classroom assessments
- Teacher observations
- Medical documentation
- Behavior information
- Parent input
- Other relevant records

The team reviews multiple sources of information before making a decision.

Step 3 – Eligibility Meeting

A team of knowledgeable individuals meets to determine whether the student:

✓ The disability substantially limits one or more major life activities.

The parent is encouraged to participate as an important member of the team.

Step 4 – Develop the Section 504 Plan

If eligible, the team develops an individualized Section 504 Plan that outlines:

- Student strengths and needs
- Disability-related impact
- Classroom accommodations
- Testing accommodations
- Health or medical supports
- Staff responsible for implementation

The plan is shared with staff responsible for providing accommodations.

Step 5 – Implementation

Teachers and staff implement the accommodations outlined in the student's Section 504 Plan.

The plan should be followed consistently across all school settings.

Step 6 – Annual Review

The Section 504 Team reviews the plan **at least annually** to determine:

- Are accommodations still appropriate?
- Have student needs changed?
- Are additional accommodations needed?
- Should accommodations be discontinued?

Parents are encouraged to participate in each annual review.

Step 7 – Reevaluation

A reevaluation is conducted periodically and before any significant change in placement. Additional evaluations may also occur when requested or when student needs change.

Examples of Classroom Accommodations

Every Section 504 Plan is individualized. Accommodations should address the student's disability-related needs.

Examples of Instructional Accommodations

- Preferential seating
- Visual schedules
- Teacher check-ins
- Written directions
- Copies of class notes
- Graphic organizers
- Chunking assignments
- Frequent breaks
- Extended time for assignments
- Reduced distractions
- Organizational supports

Examples of Assessment Accommodations

- Extended testing time
- Small-group testing
- Separate testing location
- Frequent breaks
- Read-aloud directions (when appropriate)
- Use of assistive technology
- Large-print materials
- Calculator (when appropriate)

Examples of Medical and Health Supports Accommodations

- Access to medications
- Water bottle at desk
- Snack breaks
- Blood sugar monitoring
- Rest breaks
- Elevator access
- Nurse visits
- Emergency medical plans

Examples of Behavioral Support Accommodations

- Positive behavior supports

- Scheduled movement breaks
- Calm-down area
- Check-in/check-out system
- Visual reminders
- Modified transitions
- Cueing and prompting

Examples Organizational Accommodations

- Assignment notebook
- Color-coded folders
- Planner checks
- Extra set of textbooks
- Digital assignments
- Reminder systems

Parent Rights Under Section 504

Parents have the right to:

- Receive notice regarding identification, evaluation, and placement decisions.
- Participate in Section 504 meetings.
- Review educational records.
- Provide medical or educational information for consideration.
- Request an evaluation for Section 504 eligibility.
- Request a review of the student's Section 504 Plan at any time.
- Receive a copy of the Section 504 Plan.
- Be informed of procedural safeguards.
- File a grievance or request an impartial hearing if they disagree with decisions.
- File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR) if they believe discrimination has occurred.

Parents are valued partners in ensuring students receive appropriate accommodations and equal access to educational opportunities.

Huntsville City Schools' Commitment

Huntsville City Schools is committed to providing equitable access to educational opportunities for all students. Students who qualify under Section 504 are provided reasonable accommodations and supports that enable them to participate fully in school programs, activities, and services. Families are encouraged to work collaboratively with school staff to ensure accommodations effectively support each student's individual needs.

Parent Tip

If you believe your child may need accommodations because of a disability, contact your child's school counselor, administrator, or the district's Section 504 Coordinator to discuss the referral process. Families are encouraged to participate throughout the evaluation, planning, and review process.



IEP VS. 504



SUPPORTING STUDENTS. ENSURING ACCESS. PROMOTING SUCCESS.

Both IEPs and Section 504 Plans help ensure students have equal access to learn and succeed in school.

IEP

Individualized Education Program



A plan for students who have a disability that affects their educational performance and require specialized instruction and related services.



WHAT IT IS



Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)



FEDERAL LAW



Meets IDEA disability categories (13 specific categories) and requires specialized instruction and related services.



ELIGIBILITY



Access to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) through specialized instruction and related services in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).



FOCUS/PURPOSE



- Description of impairment
- Measurable annual goals
- Specialized instruction and related services
- Accommodations and supports
- Placement (LRE)
- Progress monitoring



PLAN CONTENT



Includes parents, general education teacher, special education teacher, related service providers, LEA representative, and others with knowledge of the student.



TEAM



At least annually



REVIEW



IDEA procedural safeguards apply (including manifestation determination for removals).



DISCIPLINE PROTECTIONS

504

Section 504 Plan

A plan for students who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities and need accommodations and/or supports.



Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973



Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.



Equal access to education and school programs by removing barriers and providing accommodations.



- Description of impairment
- Impact on major life activities
- Accommodations and/or supports
- Placement
- (No annual goals or specialized instruction services required)



Includes parents, 504 coordinator/designee, general education teacher(s), and others with knowledge of the student.



At least annually (more often if needed)



504 procedural safeguards apply (including manifestation determination for removals).



DIFFERENT LAWS. DIFFERENT PLANS. SAME GOAL.
Supporting every student to learn, grow, and reach their potential.



When in doubt, collaborate, accommodate, and do what is best for the student.

EQUITY. ACCESS. OPPORTUNITY. SUCCESS.



HUNTSVILLE
CITY SCHOOLS

Inspire • Engage • Empower



GATE / GIFTED & TALENTED EDUCATION

This section of the manual provides information about Huntsville City Schools' Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program, our commitment to advanced learning, and the services and opportunities available to our students.



EVERY STUDENT.
EVERY OPPORTUNITY.
EVERY DAY.

Huntsville City Schools is committed to identifying, nurturing, and challenging students with exceptional academic and creative abilities. Through equitable identification practices, differentiated instruction, and engaging learning experiences, we strive to help every gifted learner reach their full potential.

Gifted Education is a state-mandated program governed by the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE).

Who Is a Gifted Student?

According to the Alabama State Department of Education, intellectually gifted children and youth are those who perform or demonstrate the potential to perform at high levels in academic or creative fields when compared with others of similar age, experience, or environment. These students require educational services beyond those provided in the regular classroom to fully develop their abilities. Gifted learners are found in all populations, across all socioeconomic groups, and in all areas of human endeavor.

Gifted characteristics may include advanced reasoning, problem-solving, creativity, rapid learning, leadership, and exceptional verbal or mathematical abilities.

Gifted Identification Process

Huntsville City Schools uses multiple measures to identify students for gifted services.

- **Universal Child Find:** All second-grade students participate in the district's Child Find process to identify potential gifted learners.
- **Gifted Referrals (Ages 6–18):** Parents, teachers, administrators, counselors, students, peers, and community members may refer a student for gifted evaluation at any time.

Gifted Eligibility

Gifted eligibility is determined using multiple criteria—not a single test score or grades alone. Evaluation data may include aptitude, achievement, creativity, classroom performance, observations, and other supporting evidence. A multidisciplinary eligibility team reviews all evaluation data before determining eligibility.

Gifted Services

Huntsville City Schools provides a continuum of services designed to develop students' strengths and talents. Through Talent Development, Schoolwide Enrichment, and specialized Gifted Education services, students have opportunities to explore their interests, strengthen advanced thinking skills, and engage in meaningful learning experiences.

Kindergarten–Grade 2

- Talent Development experiences that foster critical thinking, creativity, problem solving, STEM exploration, and advanced learning skills.

Grades 3–5

- Gifted Education (GATE): Weekly pull-out instruction for identified gifted students provided by Gifted Specialists.
- Students engage in Service Learning, concept-based units of study, STEM, inquiry-based learning, research, engineering design, leadership, communication, and creative problem solving.

Grades 6–8

- Identified gifted students may apply to the Academy for Gifted & Talented, Huntsville City Schools' middle school magnet program.
- Additional opportunities include Honors courses, advanced coursework, STEM experiences, fine arts, academic competitions, clubs, and leadership activities.

Grades 9–12

- Advanced Placement (AP), Dual Enrollment, Honors courses, Career Technical Education pathways, research opportunities, internships, STEM learning experiences, fine arts, leadership organizations, clubs, and college and career readiness programs.

Schoolwide Enrichment

- Enrichment opportunities are available to all students through STEM activities, robotics, academic competitions, clubs, leadership experiences, and other opportunities that encourage creativity, innovation, and advanced learning.

Gifted Instruction

Gifted instruction supplements and extends the regular curriculum through learning experiences aligned with the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) Gifted Education Standards and Cognia STEM Standards emphasizing:

- Higher-order thinking and problem solving
- Inquiry, research, and project-based learning
- Creativity and innovation
- Collaboration and communication
- Leadership, Service Learning, and STEM exploration

Parent Information

Parents may refer their child for gifted evaluation at any time. Gifted eligibility is based on multiple sources of evidence—not a single test score or grades alone. Students who are not initially eligible may be referred again if additional evidence indicates gifted potential.

Families can support gifted learners by encouraging reading, curiosity, creative thinking, STEM exploration, perseverance, and participation in enrichment opportunities.

Parent Resources

- Alabama Association for Gifted Children (AAGC): www.alabamagifted.org
- National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC): www.nagc.org
- Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE): www.alabamaachieves.org
- Davidson Institute: www.davidsongifted.org
- Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth (CTY): cty.jhu.edu
- Khan Academy: www.khanacademy.org

Our Commitment

Huntsville City Schools believes every gifted learner deserves opportunities to grow, discover, create, and achieve. Through equitable identification, innovative instruction, and meaningful enrichment, we are committed to developing the talents and potential of every gifted student.

Contact Information: Rebecca Campbell 256-963-9764



HUNTSVILLE CITY SCHOOLS

GIFTED & TALENTED

EDUCATION (GATE) SERVICES

MISSION – EMPOWERING EVERY LEARNER



The mission of Huntsville City Schools Gifted Services is to equip high potential learners from every racial and socioeconomic background with rigorous, meaningful educational opportunities that nurture deeply inquiring minds, celebrate individual curiosity, talent, cultural identity, and academic preparation.

We challenge our students to engage in critical inquiry, navigate complex problems, solve creatively, and cultivate the essential skills needed for future achievements and community engagement.



ALABAMA DEFINITION OF GIFTEDNESS

According to the Alabama Administrative Code:

“Intellectually gifted children and youth are those who perform or who have demonstrated the potential to perform at high levels in academic or creative fields when compared with others of their age, experiences, or environment. These children and youth require services not ordinarily provided by the regular school program.”

AAC 290-8-9-.12(1)



Giftedness exists across all racial, cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic groups and can be found in all areas of human endeavor.

GIFTED STUDENTS OFTEN BENEFIT FROM:



Accelerated learning opportunities



Increased depth and complexity of instruction



Creative and critical thinking experiences



Advanced problem-solving opportunities



Real-world connections and meaningful challenges



Interaction with intellectual peers



Instruction from educators trained in gifted education



TO BEGIN THIS PROCESS, PLEASE CONSULT WITH THE GIFTED SPECIALIST TEACHER AT YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL.



HUNTSVILLE CITY SCHOOLS

GIFTED & TALENTED EDUCATION (GATE) SERVICES

EMPOWERING EVERY LEARNER TO REACH THEIR POTENTIAL

We identify and nurture the unique potential of gifted learners through a fair, thorough, and supportive process.

THE GIFTED IDENTIFICATION & REFERRAL PROCESS

1. CHILD FIND RESPONSIBILITIES



Within our district's Child Find framework, we proactively identify potential students for gifted programming and refer to the Huntsville City Schools Gifted Identification Committee for specialized evaluation.

2. REFERRAL SOURCES

For students age 6 and above



Parents, guardians, or community stakeholders



Classroom educators and school counselors



School administrators and peer groups



The individual student (self-referral)



Upon formal referral for gifted consideration, parents will receive official notification.

3. THE IDENTIFICATION FRAMEWORK

The committee uses a comprehensive body of evidence to determine eligibility, which may include:



Standardized aptitude and achievement measures



Documented classroom performance and work products



Observational data from teachers and parent input



Demonstrated creative and critical thinking tasks



Evaluations are conducted in accordance with state and district guidelines and Alabama Administrative Code mandates.



OUR PROMISE

We are committed to identifying and nurturing the unique potential of every gifted learner in HCS through a fair, thorough, and supportive process.

WHAT PARENTS SHOULD KNOW



Our goal is to provide every gifted learner with the right challenge, support, and opportunities to grow.



Services are designed to meet the individual needs of students through an Advanced Education Plan (AEP).



For information on Gifted Services and Referrals, Please reach out to Rebecca Campbell, HCS Gifted Coordinator 256-963-9794



TOGETHER, WE CAN HELP
EVERY LEARNER REACH
NEW HEIGHTS!



HOW TO BEGIN:

If you believe your child may be gifted, please reach out to your HCS Elementary School Gifted Specialist Teacher or School Counselor.

LET'S PARTNER TOGETHER!

Together, we can nurture curiosity, inspire greatness, and empower every gifted learner to achieve their highest potential.



Inspire
Engage
Empower



For more information, visit: www.huntsvillecityschools.org or contact your child's school.



PARENT TIPS SERIES

Simple reminders to help you feel informed and empowered.



- 1** You can request an IEP meeting at any time.



If you have concerns or questions, don't wait—your voice matters.



- 2** Keep a record of all communication with the school.



Write down dates, who you spoke with, and what was discussed.



- 3** You have the right to review your child's educational records.



You can ask to see tests, evaluations, IEPs, and progress reports.



- 4** You are an equal member of the IEP team.



Your knowledge about your child is important and essential.



- 5** You can request an evaluation if you have concerns.



Share your concerns in writing with the school.



- 6** Your child is entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).



The school must provide an education that meets your child's needs.



- 7** Services should be provided in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).



Your child should learn with peers without disabilities as much as possible.



- 8** You must give consent before evaluations or services begin.



You have the right to understand and agree before anything starts.



- 9** Disagreements can be resolved through mediation or due process if needed.



There are options if you and the school disagree.



- 10** Your voice matters. We're here to support you every step of the way!



You are your child's best advocate.



You are your child's best advocate. | We're in this together!





TOOL 1:

IEP MEETING NOTES PAGE

Use this page to take notes, ask questions, and keep track of important information from your IEP meeting.

Student Name: _____

Meeting Type: _____

Date: _____

School: _____



ATTENDEES

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



PURPOSE OF MEETING



TOPICS DISCUSSED



KEY TAKEAWAYS / ACTION ITEMS



QUESTIONS TO FOLLOW UP ON

PARENT QUESTION TRACKER

Write your questions.
Get the answers you need.

You ask. We support. ❤️



 QUESTIONS	 WHO TO ASK	 ANSWER



TOOL 3:

PROGRESS MONITORING LOG

Track progress. Celebrate growth.
Support success! ❤️

 DATE	 SKILL/GOAL	 PROGRESS NOTED	 NOTES



TOOL 4:

COMMUNICATION LOG

Stay organized. Keep track.
Strong communication helps your
child succeed. ❤️

 DATE	 CONTACT PERSON	 TOPIC	 OUTCOME

My IEP Document Checklist



Staying organized helps us work together for success!

Use this checklist to keep important IEP documents in one place. ❤️


☐

Current IEP


☐

Progress reports


☐

Evaluation reports


☐

Communication records


☐

Medical/therapy documents



Thank you for being an active partner in your child's success! ❤️



PARENT SHOUT-OUT!

♥ Celebrating Our Families & Partnerships ♥

1



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Your involvement makes
a difference every day.

From attending meetings
to supporting learning
at home, your partnership
matters.

2



YOU MAKE LEARNING STRONGER

When families and schools
work together, students
thrive.

Your encouragement
helps build confidence,
independence, and
success.

3



WE SEE THE IMPACT

Your child's growth
reflects your support.

Together, we are making
progress toward
meaningful goals
every day.

4



WE VALUE YOUR VOICE

Your input, questions,
and ideas help guide
decisions.

We are committed to
open communication
and strong
collaboration.



We appreciate you!

Your partnership helps us create
success for every student. ♥



“Our goal is to be a premier school system where we inspire, engage, and empower all students,” Dr. Sutton says. “This takes all of us uniting to promote our students, teachers, and staff members, and our school system. Let’s go forward together.” ”

Dr. Clarence Sutton
SUPERINTENDENT