

Special Education Referral Procedures

When a student is suspected of having a disability which requires special education and related services, a referral to the Lincoln Academy Student Services Director may be made by the student's parent, by professional school staff, or by others with knowledge of the student using the following procedures:

- Referrals by parents. A parent may refer his or her student to special education at any time using the referral form obtained from the office of Student Services (563-3596, ext 120). Once the parent completes all known information requested on the form, it is returned to the Student Services Director who will circulate it among the student's teachers in order to receive additional information. It is then sent to the Special Education Director of the student's sending school district. The parent may also use assistance from a professional staff member (such as teacher, guidance counselor, social worker or administrator) in completing the referral form. Referrals cannot be made orally.
- Referrals by staff members or agency representatives. Any professional employee of the school or any agency representative with knowledge of the student may prepare a referral in writing which is to be submitted directly to the Student Services Director.

Receipt of Referral. When the referral received has been completed, the Student Services Director will then send it to the Special Education Director of the sending school to be signed and dated, indicating the date of the receipt of the referral.

Timeline for Processing Referral. Once the referral has been received by the sending school, a Consent to Evaluate form will be sent to the parent within 15 school days, which will allow the evaluation to take place. The Consent to Evaluate form will indicate the evaluations to be administered. Also upon receipt of the referral, the sending school will send the parent a Written Notice form that documents the referral.

Once the sending school's Director of Special Education receives the signed consent form from the parent, the sending school will have 45 school days to complete the evaluation and to hold an Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team meeting (at Lincoln Academy) to determine whether the student qualifies for special education services. If the student is identified as having a disability in need of special education, the Team will develop an IEP for that student either at the same meeting or within 30 calendar days of determining eligibility. Lincoln Academy will then implement the IEP as soon as possible following that IEP Team meeting, but no later than 30 calendar days after that meeting.

Transfer Students. Students who have already been identified as in need of special education services and who transfer into a district from another district in Maine (and who had an IEP that was in effect in a previous school in Maine) will, upon enrollment at Lincoln Academy and in consultation with the parent, be provided with Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), which would include services comparable to those described in the student's IEP

from the previous school. Lincoln Academy will either adopt the child's IEP or will develop and implement a new IEP. If the transfer student's current IEP from his or her prior school unit is not available, or is believed to be inappropriate by either the parent or the school, Lincoln Academy will develop a new IEP through appropriate procedures within a short time after the student enrolls at the school. If a child transfers into the school unit after the referral time line has begun in the previous school unit but before an eligibility determination has been made, the time line referenced above for completing that process does not apply if the sending school is making sufficient progress to ensure a prompt completion of the evaluation, and the parent and school unit agree to a specific time when the evaluation will be completed and the eligibility decision made.

References: Me. Dep't of Educ. Reg. ch. 101, §§ II(17), III, IV(2)(D), (E), V(4)(A) (May 2012).

Americans with Disabilities Act Section 504 Referral Procedure

1. A referral to consider Section 504 eligibility may be made by a parent/guardian, eligible adult student, or school staff for a student who is believed to need accommodations or related aids and services beyond what is routinely provided for all students. The guidance counselor, nurse, teacher, or social worker must complete the Section 504 Referral Form. A parent/guardian or adult student may, but is not required to, use the Referral Form. All referrals are to be forwarded to the Lincoln Academy Student Services Director.
2. Upon receipt of the referral, the parent will be given three pages—Information and Procedures for the student's diagnosing professional, Diagnosing Professional Guidelines which includes a release of information, and Certification of Diagnosis with Educational Implications to be completed by the diagnosing professional. These pages are to be completed and returned to the Student Services Director.
3. The Student Services Director will convene a 504 Team meeting within a reasonable time to consider the concerns raised in the referral as well as the available information. The Team will complete an Eligibility Determination form, the discussions and decisions will be summarized in the 504 Team meeting minutes, and the parent will be provided a Notice of Parent/Student Rights. A copy of the completed Eligibility Form will be sent to the parent/guardian within a reasonable time after the meeting and placed with the student's education records.
4. The Team must make decisions about eligibility and significant changes in programming or placement based upon an evaluation of the student's unique needs. If recommending an evaluation that includes a specific assessment of the student, the school must first obtain written consent from the parent or guardian. If a parent refuses to provide consent for an assessment to determine a student's 504 eligibility, the sending school may, but is not required to, initiate a 504 hearing challenging the parent's decision.
5. If the Team determines that a student is eligible under Section 504, the Team will complete a 504 Plan for the student. If the Team determines that, despite his or her

eligibility, the student does not require accommodations and/or related aids or services, the Team will specify this on the Section 504 Plan. If the Team determines that accommodations and/or related aids or services are required at this time, the Team will indicate this on the Section 504 Plan. Written consent from the parent or guardian must be obtained prior to the initial provision of any accommodations and/or related aids services through a Section 504 Plan with a Consent for Initial Placement Form.