



San Mateo
County
SELPA

Special Education Local Plan Area

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POLICY

EDUCATIONAL SETTING OBSERVATIONS BY PARENTS AND PARENTAL REPRESENTATIVES

The San Mateo County Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) recognizes that, from time to time, parents of students attending school within the SELPA will request the opportunity to observe their child's educational program or a program that has been proposed for their child. It is the policy of the SELPA that all Local Education Agencies (LEAs) shall ensure that parents are full and equal participants in the development of an appropriate Individualized Education Program (IEP) for their child. Therefore, it is the policy of the SELPA to encourage member LEAs to guarantee parents and their representative(s) a reasonable opportunity to observe their child's current educational setting(s) and/or proposed placement.

Adopted and Approved by SELPA Governing Board:

December 13, 2016

Amended March 28, 2017

For the purposes of this document, Parent(s) will be considered to apply to parents and/or guardians.

PROCEDURES REGARDING EDUCATIONAL SETTING OBSERVATIONS

In order to ensure the confidentiality of all students in educational settings and the smooth operation of all classroom environments, the following standards of practice are recommended. LEAs will implement the following procedures for facilitating observations of students and programs:

1. To the maximum extent possible, parents and parental representatives shall be asked to obtain required observational information in settings outside the classroom environment. Should a parent(s) and/or their representative have questions around a student's social and behavioral issues, an observation should include an equal proportion of unstructured time outside of the classroom, as well in the classroom.
2. Observations will not occur without prior arrangement and/or with such frequency that such observations actually or arguably create a disruption in the educational setting.
3. Observations shall not be used as a means to evaluate a teacher, specialist, paraeducator or other school staff member. In the event that an observer has any concerns regarding the performance of any staff member, such concerns shall not be included in any written report developed by the observer. Concerns shall be directed, in writing, to the administrator of special education, site administrator or designee.
4. Parent(s) and/or parental representative(s) may not expect to have a copy of lesson plans. However, parents do have full access to review textbooks, consumables, and ancillary texts. These will be provided for review at the time of the observation.
5. The teacher will be briefed prior to the observation by the site administrator and/or designee, including the reason why the observation has been requested. At this briefing, the teacher will receive a copy of the **Observation Request** form. This information will assist in the scheduling and planning of the observation.

Before the Observation

1. Observations shall be scheduled in advance and be approved by the LEA special education administrator or designee.
 - a. Under ordinary circumstances, a request to observe a student, or a program proposed for the student, should be made at least five (5) school days in advance of the proposed observation.
2. All requests for observations by the parent(s) or parental representative(s) will include the reason for the observation, which is to be clearly stated on the **Observation Request** form. All requests for observations that will include a parental representative shall include the observer's curriculum vitae, the name of the agency with which the observer is affiliated (if any), and the specific standardized observational measures to be used (if any) in addition to the **Observation Request** form.
3. Observations are to be for a reasonable period of time, generally limited to one (1) hour, with the start and end times clearly specified to the parent(s) and/or parental representative prior to the observation.
4. If the observer is not the parent(s), prior to the parental representative observing a specific student at school, the parent(s) of the student shall provide written consent to the LEA on a SELPA Release of Information form to allow the LEA to share information about the student with the parental representative prior to, during, or subsequent to the observation.
5. Prior to observation, any observer, including the parent(s), shall complete the **Classroom Observation Confidentiality Acknowledgement Form**, which outlines standard confidentiality expectations for all adults who enter the educational setting.

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During the Observation

1. The observer shall be accompanied at all times during the observation by an LEA staff member selected by the special education administrator or designee
2. The number of parental representative observers shall be limited to one (1) per observation, although the parent(s) may accompany the observer during the observation.
3. The observer shall be informed that his/her presence might influence the performance of the student, as well as the performance of other students in the class.
4. The accompanying LEA staff member will seat the observers in an unobtrusive location within the classroom and/or other educational settings.
5. Individuals requesting the opportunity to observe a student and/or an LEA's educational program shall conform to the policies and procedures of the LEA. The observer shall not interfere with the educational environment of any educational setting. When observing, observers may not talk to students or in any way interfere with the class or activity. If an observer is disruptive or inappropriate, the accompanying LEA staff member will cease the observation, and the observer will be asked to leave the school grounds.
6. The observer will not have access to confidential information regarding students in the classroom (other than the student to which the observation request pertains), including but not limited to grade books, papers, and Individualized Education Program documents (IEPs).

After the Observation

1. Immediately following the observation, the accompanying LEA staff member will meet with the observer to discuss the observation for a period not to exceed 15 minutes. If parent or observer wishes a longer period of time to ask questions or to process observation with LEA staff, an appointment can be made at a mutually convenient time.
2. The accompanying LEA staff member will accompany the observer back to the school office to sign out and to obtain a copy of any observation notes that have been taken immediately following the observation.



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**(This form is optional)
Classroom Observation Request Form**

Date of Request: _____

Name of Individual Making Request: _____

Student Name: _____

Name and Title of Parent(s)/Observer: _____

Purpose of the Observation: _____

Preferred Visit Days and Times:

Contact Information: _____

Please submit a paper or electronic copy to your District Special Education Administrator

For District Use

Date Received: _____

Date Authorization for Exchange of Confidential Information Received: _____

Date of Observation: _____

Accompanied by: _____

Date of Email Notification to Teacher(s): _____



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(This form is optional)

Classroom Observation Confidentiality Acknowledgement Form

I, _____, request to observe a classroom or program attended by students with disabilities. In exchange for permission to observe, I agree to abide by the following conditions:

1. During the observation, I will not seek to engage the teacher or support staff present, interact with students, or otherwise disrupt the teaching and learning.
2. During the observation, I will remain in the location directed by the teacher so as to not disrupt the educational process.
3. I will not ask questions pertaining to the students in the classroom related to their services, disability, or achievement.
4. I will not seek to study or look at work samples from the students during the observation.
5. I will maintain confidentiality of any student identifying information to others related to the observation, including a description of the students observed, their educational needs, and/or their performance as demonstrated during the observation.
6. I acknowledge that school student record information, including all information related to the student's disability and individualized education program, is highly confidential information protected by the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* and the *California Public Records Act*, and that I have no right to access such information for students without permission. To the extent that I glean information related to another student's disability, educational needs, and/or educational program during the observation, I must maintain it in strict confidence.

Signature of Observer

Date