

## **EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT SERVICES FAQs**

### **1) Q: What is Exceptional Student Services?**

A: ESS is the section of ADE responsible for ensuring that public education agencies in Arizona have special education programs, policies, and procedures that comply with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its implementing regulations, and that eligible children and youth with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

### **2) Q: Whom do I contact within ESS when I have questions or concerns about special education?**

A: Every school district and charter school is assigned an ESS Education Program Specialist who is the primary contact for any special education matter. Education Program Specialists are located in the Phoenix, Flagstaff, and Tucson offices.

To find out who is assigned as an Education Program Specialist for your district or charter school, please contact the following locations:

- i. Phoenix (602) 542-4013
- ii. Tucson (520) 628-6330
- iii. Flagstaff (928) 679-8100

ESS also has Parent Information Network Specialists (PINS) who can talk with parents about special education questions. The PINS can be reached through a toll-free hotline at 1-877-230-PINS (7467), or by e-mail at [PINS@azed.gov](mailto:PINS@azed.gov).

### **3) Q: What role does the ESS specialist play with regard to special education in the schools?**

A: The ESS specialist provides technical assistance to the local schools regarding state and federal special education requirements. Specialists also monitor districts and charters to ensure the special education programs provided are in compliance with requirements.

### **4) Q: What is an individualized education program (IEP)?**

A: Each child found eligible for special education has an IEP, which is a

document that identifies the services that will be provided, the goals that the services will target, the setting in which the services will occur, and the amount of time the services will be provided.

**5) Q: What are my legal rights as a parent of a child with a disability?**

A: IDEA gives parents specific rights with regard to special education. These rights are outlined in the procedural safeguards notice that can be found at:

<http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/resources/forms/ProceduralSafeguardsNotice-English.pdf>.

**6) Q: How can I find information about resolving a special education problem I am having with my child's school?**

A: IDEA and its implementing regulations require States to have in effect three processes to assist parents of a child with a disability and their schools in resolving special education–related issues. Specifically, States must offer:

- i. a mediation system,
- ii. a due process hearing system, and
- iii. a state administrative complaint system.

Information on each of these processes can be found on the Arizona Department of Education/Exceptional Student Services Web site at: <http://www.azed.gov/ess/dispute/>.

**7) Q: What is the purpose of the Parent Involvement Survey?**

A: Contact the school district in which you live or, if your children are already in school, contact the district or charter the child attends. Children aged birth to 2 years, 10½ months will be referred to the [Arizona Early Intervention Program \(AzEIP\)](#) for screening or evaluation. Children older than 2 years, 10½ months are screened and, if necessary, evaluated by the district or charter school.

**8) Q: Does the Arizona Department of Education provide for students with disabilities to attend private schools?**

A: Students with disabilities who have been placed by their parents in a private

school as a matter of choice have no individual entitlement to receive a FAPE, but may be entitled to some special education services provided by the local school district under the “proportionate share” requirement. If an IEP team determines that a private school is the most appropriate, least restrictive setting for a child with a disability, that placement is made at no cost to the parent.

**9) Q: Where can I find information about special education data?**

A: The website for information about special education data in the Arizona Department of Education is:

<http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/funding/datamanagement/DmHome.asp>.

The e-mail address for questions about special education data in the Arizona Department of Education is: [ESSDataMgmt@azed.gov](mailto:ESSDataMgmt@azed.gov). District and charter level data can be found under “Public Reports” at:

<http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/resources/>.