Glossary of Terms

**Accommodations:** changes to the way a student learns. Accommodations involve a wide range of techniques and support systems that help individuals with disabilities work around limitations that result from their disability. Examples include allowing oral responses instead of written responses, extended time to respond, use of visual aids, etc.

**Adaptive Behavior:** includes age-appropriate behaviors necessary for people to live independently and to function safely and appropriately in daily life. Examples include real life skills such as grooming, dressing, safe food handling, following school rules, ability to work, money management, cleaning, making friends, social skills, and personal responsibility.

**Alternate Assessment:** assessments that provide students with significant cognitive disabilities more appropriate ways to demonstrate mastery of state standards other than the regular statewide assessments. Examples include checklists, portfolios, multiple choice responses, and performance tasks.

**Asperger’s Syndrome:** a pervasive developmental disorder similar to autism. Children with Asperger’s syndrome typically have normal intelligence and near-normal language development but may develop problems communicating as they get older. Common characteristics include problems with social skills, eccentric or repetitive behaviors, unusual preoccupations or rituals, communication difficulties, limited range of interests, coordination problems, exceptionally skilled or talented in a particular area.

**Assistive Technology:** any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

**Asthma:** a chronic (long-lasting) inflammatory disease of the airways. In those susceptible to asthma, this inflammation causes the airways to narrow periodically.

**Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD):** a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interactions, usually evident before age three that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. Other characteristics
often include engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.

**Cerebral Palsy (CP):** term used for a group of nonprogressive disorders of movement and posture caused by abnormal development of, or damage to, motor control centers of the brain. CP is caused by events before, during, or after birth. The abnormalities of muscle control that define CP are often accompanied by other neurological and physical abnormalities. Students with this disorder are typically classified under Orthopedic Impairment.

**Deaf-Blindness (Dual-Sensory Impairment):** concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with a visual impairment.

**Deafness/Hearing Impairment:** Deafness is a hearing impairment so severe that a student is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects the student’s educational performance. A hearing impairment is an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a student’s educational performance but that is not included under the definition of deafness.

**Diabetes:** a condition that causes high blood glucose (sugar) levels. It is a chronic condition that can be managed with appropriate treatment.

**Differentiated instruction:** instruction that meets the needs of individual students through differentiation of content, process, products, or learning environment. Flexible grouping and ongoing assessments are important components of differentiated instruction.

**Diplegia:** paralysis of corresponding parts on both sides of the body

**Disorder:** a physical condition in which there is a disturbance of normal functioning
Dyscalculia: a specific developmental disability affecting a person’s ability to conceptualize and perform mathematics.

Dysgraphia: an impairment of the ability to write, usually caused by brain dysfunction or disease.

Dyslexia: a language-based processing disorder that can hinder reading, writing, spelling, and speaking. Students with dyslexia may qualify for special education services through the specific learning disabilities program.

Eligibility Determination: Once the initial evaluation is completed, an eligibility meeting is held to review evaluation results and determine whether or not the student has a disability that requires special education services.

Emotional Disturbance: a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child’s educational performance:

- an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors;
- an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;
- inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;
- a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; and/or
- a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

Epilepsy: a medical condition in which the sufferer experiences seizures (or convulsions) or blackouts

Evidence-based Instruction/Intervention: an instructional strategy, intervention, or teaching program that has resulted in consistent positive results when tested through research

Exceptional Student Education (ESE): name used to describe special education services and programs for students with disabilities
Explicit Instruction: an evidence based practice that provides teachers with a lesson structure for explaining and demonstrating the application of concepts, processes, skills, and strategies that are invisible to many students. Explicit instruction can be used to teach any set of skills including academic, social, and daily living skills.

Expressive Language: the ability to use words in context, both verbally and/or nonverbally to communicate with others

Fine Motor: the use of small muscle groups for controlled movements, particularly in object manipulation

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE): an individualized educational program designed to meet the needs of a specific student with a disability. The educational program must provide the student access to the general education curriculum, meet state curriculum standards requirements, be structured so the student receives educational benefit in preparation for postsecondary education, employment, and independent living, and provide special education and related services at no cost to parents.

Gross Motor: the use of a person’s large muscles to move, for example walking, jumping, and running

Hearing Aid: an electronic device that amplifies sound and is worn to compensate for poor hearing

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): the federal law that governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to children with disabilities

Individual Educational Plan (IEP): a written plan that provides a clear and accurate description of the special education services and supports that address the educational needs of a student with a disability

Initial Evaluation: an evaluation conducted to determine whether or not a child has a disability. The evaluation must include an explanation of the nature and extent of the special education and related services that the child needs.
Intellectual Disabled (InD): students have significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning along with difficulty in adaptive behavior.

Intelligence Quotient (IQ): a measure of a person’s intelligence as indicated by an intelligence test; the ratio of a person’s mental age to their chronological age

Intervention: a specific program or set of steps designed to help a student improve in an identified area of need such as reading, math, or behavior.

Language Impairment (LI): an impairment in receptive language (the ability to understand and comprehend what is being said or read) and/or expressive language (the ability to use words in context, both verbally and/or nonverbally to communicate with others)

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): IDEA requires that children with disabilities must be educated alongside children with no disabilities, to the greatest extent possible. LRE is the principle that children should be educated alongside their peers.

Local Education Agency Representative (LEA): a required member of the eligibility team and IEP team. This person must be someone who has knowledge of the general education curriculum, can provide or supervise the provision of specially designed instruction for students with disabilities, and can direct district resources to the implementation of the IEP.

Modifications: changes what the student is expected to learn. Student is typically working on modified or below grade level standards.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS): the big umbrella that encompasses all systems within a school district that are used to support student learning. Examples of systems included in an MTSS framework are RtI, school improvement, school-wide behavior programs, differentiated accountability, instructional services, special education, and teacher recruitment and retention.

Nephritis: an inflammation of the kidney

Non-Disabled Peer: a peer without a disability
**Occupational Therapist:** a qualified person who provides services that include improving, developing, or restoring functions impaired or lost through illness, injury, or deprivation; to improve ability to perform tasks for independent functioning if functions are impaired or lost; and prevent through early intervention, initial or further impairment or loss of function

**Orthopedic Impairment (OI):** a severe orthopedic impairment that affects a child’s educational performance resulting from congenital anomaly, impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures)

**Other Health Impairment (OHI):** limited strength, vitality, or alertness including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli that result in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment that is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette syndrome; and adversely affects a child’s educational performance

**Physical Therapist (PT):** a qualified person trained to provide a specially prescribed program directed toward the development, improvement, or restoration of neuromuscular or sensorimotor function, relief of pain, or control of postural deviations to attain the student’s functional performance in an educational setting

**Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS):** a framework that provides schools and teachers with evidence-based academic and behavioral practices for improving outcomes for all students

**Problem Solving Team:** a school based team of educators who meet regularly to discuss student progress. The PST works through the problem solving cycle to identify the problem, plan for intervention, monitor progress, and determine next steps for students receiving intervention.

**Quadriplegia:** paralysis from the neck down; paralysis of all four limbs
Receptive Language: the ability to understand and comprehend what is being said or read

Related Services: refer to transportation and other supportive services required to assist a student with a disability. Examples include physical and occupational therapy, counseling services, school nurse services.

Response to Intervention (RtI): a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs

Sickle Cell Anemia: a condition in which your blood has a lower than normal number of red blood cells or if your red blood cells do not have enough hemoglobin

Significant Cognitive Disability: students who are severely behind their peers and have difficulty with mental tasks and processing information. These students require modifications to the curriculum and take the statewide alternate assessment.

Special Education: specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability

Specially Designed Instruction: adapting the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of the child that result from the child’s disability and to ensure access to the general curriculum, so the child can meet the required educational standards

Specific Learning Disability (SLD): a disorder in one more of the basic learning processes involved in understanding or in using language. It may appear as an imperfect ability to listen, speak, read, write, spell, or do math calculations. It does NOT include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities. It is not indicative of intelligence level.

Speech Impairment (SI): refers to difficulties producing speech sounds or problems with voice quality and may be characterized as

- a voice disorder (difficulty with the pitch, volume or quality of the voice),
- an articulation or phonological disorder (the failure to produce and use sounds appropriately, substituting one sound for another or omitting sounds), or
• stuttering (an interruption of the flow or rhythm of speech which is called dysfluency), or
• a combination of several problems listed above

Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP): (also referred to as speech therapists) a qualified person trained to assess, diagnose, treat, and help to prevent disorders related to speech, language, cognitive-communication, voice, swallowing, and fluency

Spina Bifida: a congenital defect in which the spinal column is imperfectly closed so that part of the meninges or spinal cord protrudes, often resulting in hydrocephalus and other neurological disorders

Tourette Syndrome: a neurological disorder characterized by repetitive, stereotyped, involuntary movements and vocalizations called tics

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual and motor abilities; psycho-social behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech. The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

Universal Design for Learning: a framework for guiding educational practice that provides flexibility in how students access and respond to information. UDL reduces barriers in instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges while maintaining high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who have limited English proficiency.

Visual Impairments/Blindness: an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child’s educational performance