

# Parent Advocacy in Special Education

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**WAKE COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM**  
Special Education  
Services

■ WHAT  
■ STARTS HERE ■  
CHANGES EVERYTHING. ■ ■

# Who Are We?



# Who Are You?

Preschool Parent?

Elementary Parent?

Middle Parent?

High Parent?

Other?



# KWL Activity

- Use the post-it notes to write down some rights you know you have as a parent/guardian.
- Use the post-it notes to write down what you want to know about parent rights and responsibilities.
- At the end of the session we will review what we learned.

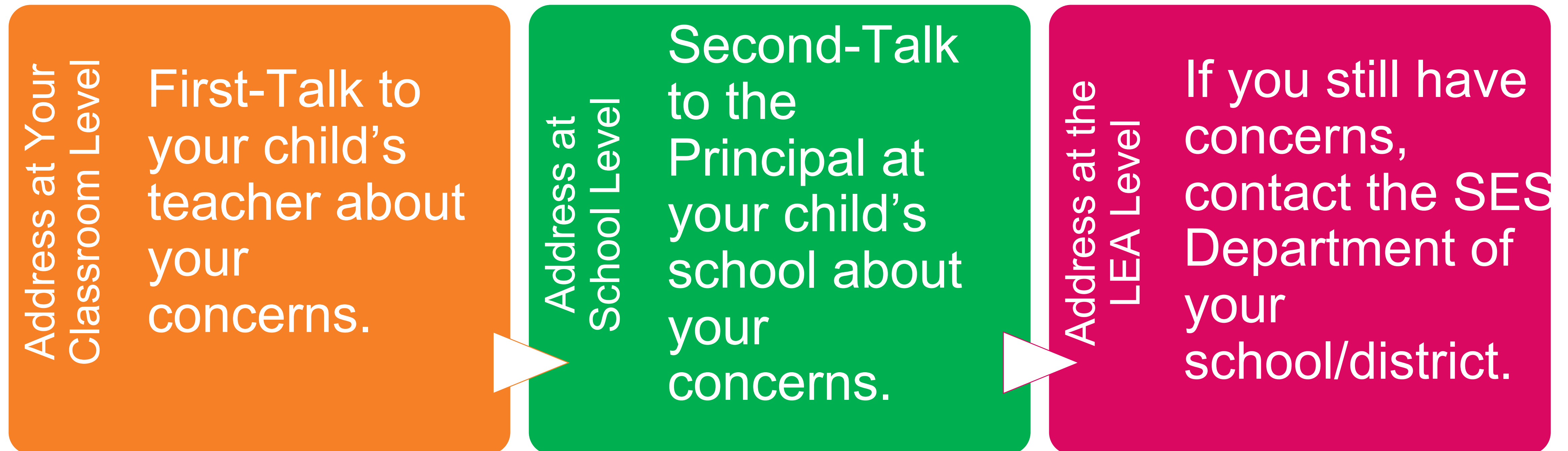
**KWL Chart**

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>K</b> What I already KNOW	<b>W</b> What I WANT to find out	<b>L</b> What I LEARNED

# Effective Ways to Address Concerns Regarding Your Child's Special Education Services

**Reminder:** If you have questions and/or concerns regarding your child's special education services, please use the flowchart below to help ensure they are addressed in the most effective and efficient way possible.



# Parental Rights/Regarding IEP Meetings

## Prior Written Notice of an IEP meeting, “Invitation to Conference”

- Prior Notice (at least 7-10 days)
- Purpose of the Meeting
- Date/Time
- IEP Team Members School has Invited

## Opportunities to participate in IEP Meetings

Copies of documents from the IEP meeting (IEP, Minutes, Prior Written Notice of Decisions from IEP team meeting)

Annual Notice of Procedural Safeguards (provided in Parent Rights Handbook)



# Tips for Effective IEP Meetings

Sign and return the Invitation to Conference as soon as possible so the school can prepare.

&

If the meeting date/time proposed does not work, suggest new dates/times.

&

Ask about participating by phone if you are not able to participate in person.

Before the IEP meeting, provide a list of concerns or questions you want to discuss at the IEP meeting so the school can gather information.

&

Let the school know if you plan on inviting others to the IEP meeting.

&

Be an active participant.

# IEP Team:

Team	Optional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parent/Guardian;</li><li>• At least one general education teacher (if the child is, or may be participating in the regular education environment).</li><li>• At least one special education teacher.</li><li>• A representative of the school system, (LEA role) who knows about special education, the general curriculum, and the availability of services.</li><li>• When needed, at least one member who can interpret evaluations results.</li><li>• When appropriate, the student with a disability.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School Psychologist</li><li>• Social Worker</li><li>• Occupational Therapist</li><li>• Speech/Language Therapist</li><li>• Physical Therapist</li></ul>





# Critical Reminders About the IEP Process

Identify need.  
The team uses  
data to  
determine  
appropriate  
services.

The IEP Team  
decides what is  
written into the  
IEP.

LEA makes the  
decision if there  
is not  
consensus.

The IEP is  
based on the  
students  
strengths,  
weaknesses,  
needs, and  
goals, all of  
which should be  
described with  
evaluation data.



- Prior Written Notice** to parents is required when the LEA initiates or changes, or refuses to initiate or change:
  - Identification
  - Evaluation
  - Educational Placement
  - Provision of a free appropriate public education of the student

- Prior Written Notice** must be provided in:
  - Written language understandable to the general public
  - The native language or other mode of communication used by the parent

# Progress Reports

District/school must provide quarterly reports of progress on IEP goals to parents.



# Disagreements, Speed Bumps, Avoiding Derailment

Disagreement	Speed Bumps	Avoiding Derailment
<p>If there is a disagreement between the parent and the other team members, always try and solve the problem at the school level first.</p>	<p>How to move forward when there is a disagreement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take a break</li><li>• Contact the School Administrator</li><li>• <a href="#"><u>Contact the WCPSS Family and Community Connections Team.</u></a></li><li>• Request a facilitated IEP meeting (with Special Education Services or DPI)</li><li>• Request Mediation</li></ul>	<p>Keep the student at the center of every conversation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Don't let opinions and differences of opinions take the focus off your student.</li><li>• Try to understand the perspective of the other IEP team members.</li></ul>

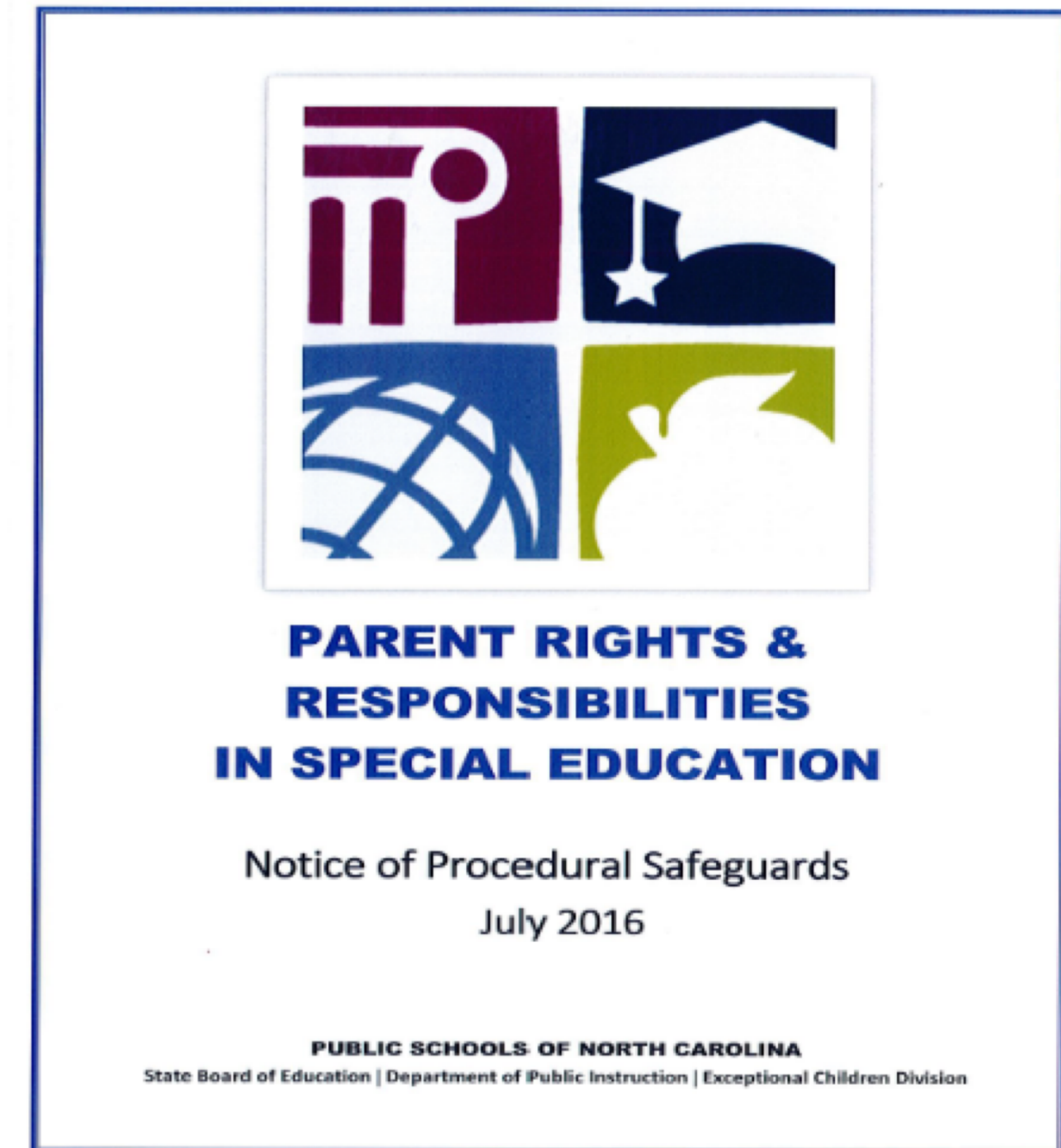


# Dispute Resolution

- If the parent believes that a violation of IDEA has occurred, there are dispute resolution procedures available:
  - Formal State Complaint
  - Mediation
  - Due Process Hearing

Refer to Parent Handbook pg. 24-27

# Handbook on Parents Rights Activity



# Parent Rights & Responsibilities in Special Education

1. I gave consent for my daughter to be tested to see if she qualified for an IEP. I have changed my mind and do not want her tested. Can I stop this process?



# Parent Rights & Responsibilities in Special Education

2. My son was evaluated at his school. I don't agree with the evaluation results. I do not believe the test results are a true reflection of his abilities. What can I do?

# Parent Rights & Responsibilities in Special Education

3. I asked to review my child's entire Exceptional Children file. This request was submitted in writing to the principal a month (30 days) ago. I have had no response. What are my rights?

# Parent Rights & Responsibilities in Special Education

4. I believe that my son's IEP has not been implemented as written and I want to file a complaint with the state department. What is the procedure for filing a complaint?

# Parent Rights & Responsibilities in Special Education

5. My daughter was involved in a fight at school and has been suspended for 10 days. She already has had 6 suspensions this year for breaking other school rules. The principal is recommending a long-term suspension for the fight. I have been given a notice for something called a Manifestation Determination Review to be held at her school. I do not know what this means. I also want to know if my daughter should be receiving some kind of services while she is suspended.

# Tips:



- If you intend to record the IEP meeting, let the IEP case manager know.
- If you are bringing an attorney or an advocate, please let the IEP case manager know.



# What to Expect: Attorney/Advocate Involvement

- If a parent intends to bring an attorney, please notify your IEP case manager with the name of the attorney.
- When a parent brings an attorney to an IEP meeting; WCPSS staff must also have representation.
- When you provide the name of the attorney, that allows the district attorney to contact the parent's attorney for scheduling and learning more about the parent concerns.

**WHAT TO  
EXPECT**

*“Nevertheless, no school can work well for children if parents and teachers do not act in partnership on behalf of the children’s best interests. Parents have every right to understand what is happening to their children at school, and teachers have the responsibility to share that information without prejudicial judgement...Such communication, which can only be in a child’s interest, is not possible without mutual trust between parent and teacher.”*

*Dorothy H. Cohen*

# KWL

What did you learn?

Were all of your “want to know” questions answered?





# Available Resources

- [Online Parent Handbook](#)
- NC Department of Public Instruction Website:  
<https://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/>
- [Family and Community Connections](#)
  - [facc@wcpss.net](mailto:facc@wcpss.net) , 919-431-7334
- Special Education Services- Policy Team, 919-858-1660