Frequently Used Educational Terms

**Accommodations** - Services or supports used to enable a student to fully access the subject matter and instruction. An accommodation does not alter the content or expectation; instead it is an adjustment to instructional methods.

**Advocacy** - Identifying and communicating needs, rights, and interests on behalf of a child.

**ARD Committee** - A multidisciplinary (individuals with different training and/or expertise) team that makes decisions for a child with disabilities who is receiving special education services. An ARD (Admission, Review, and Dismissal) Committee includes, but is not limited to: the parent(s), a general education teacher, a special education teacher, a school administrator, any related service providers working with the child, and the diagnostian (or evaluator).

**Assessment** - Process of identifying strengths and needs to assist in educational planning through methods such as observation, record review, interviews, and tests.

**Assistive Technology (AT)** - Products, equipment, and systems that enhance learning, working, and daily living for persons with disabilities.

**Child Find** - The responsibility of the school district to locate, identify, and evaluate children with disabilities in their district.

**Compensatory Services** - Services or education provided to a child to make up for those not provided or for some other deficit found in a child’s program.

**Compliance Complaint** - A complaint filed with the local school district or state department of education by a person who feels that an education law has been broken.

**Due Process** - A hearing conducted by a State Department of Education hearing officer to resolve a dispute between parents and a school district regarding special education. A due process hearing is designed to be a fair, timely and impartial procedure for resolving disputes.

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)** - FERPA is a federal law protecting the privacy of students and parents by requiring that personally identifiable information contained in school records must be kept confidential unless parents give consent to the release.

**Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** - The guaranteed right of

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Partners Resource Network

Offices in Lubbock, Houston, Austin, El Paso, and Dallas/Fort Worth

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children with disabilities to receive an education that meets their unique needs at no cost to parents.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** - IDEA is a federal law that provides for special education and related services to eligible children with disabilities.

**Individualized Education Program (IEP)** - A written plan to meet the unique educational needs of a child with a disability who requires special education services. The IEP contains information about the student’s disability, skills they need to learn, services the school will provide, and where learning will take place.

**Informed Consent** - An agreement, in writing, signed by the parent(s) that they have been informed, understand, and agree to the proposed special education decision(s). It is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time.

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** - The requirement that children with disabilities be educated to the maximum extent possible with children who are not disabled while meeting all their learning and physical needs.

**Modification** - A change in what a student is expected to learn and demonstrate. Modifications may include changes in instructional level, content, performance criteria, test format, or alternative assignments.

**Prior Written Notice** - A required written notice to parents when the school proposes to initiate or change, or refuses to initiate or change, the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child.

**Procedural Safeguards** - Legal requirement that ensure parents and children will be treated fairly and equally in the decision-making process about special education. Procedural Safeguards include: prior written notice, informed parental consent, mediation, and due process.

**Referral** - Written request for an assessment to determine if the child is a child with a disability who needs special education and related services.

**Regression** - The amount of loss of skills a child experiences over an instructional break.

**Related Services** - Any support services a student needs to benefit from special education services. Examples of related services include occupational therapy, physical therapy, transportation, etc.

**Retention** - The practice of having a student repeat a certain grade-level (year) in school.

**Section 504 (of the Rehabilitation Act)** - Anti-discrimination law. Requires a specially designed plan of modifications and accommodations for a child with a health, physical, mental, or learning impairment, who does not meet the more stringent requirements for special education services.

**Self-Advocacy** - Child’s ability to explain their own specific learning needs and seek necessary assistance or accommodations for themselves.

**Special Education** - Specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of an eligible child with a disability enrolled in public school, whose educational needs can’t be met through modification of the regular instructional program; provides for a range of options for services.

**Transition Services** - A coordinated set of activities for a student that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, continuing and adult services, independent living, or community participation.

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