

Instructions for Utilizing Block Grant Funds for Diagnostic Evaluations

Block Grant funds emanate from our I.D.E.A. Part B Flow-Through Grant and are distributed to L.E.A.S.E. member districts based upon the following procedures.

DIAGNOSTIC EVALUATIONS

After the local district has paid for a specialized diagnostic evaluation, they are eligible to request 50% reimbursement through the L.E.A.S.E. Block Grant Funds. The following explains how to obtain this reimbursement. After the evaluation has been completed and paid for, to make a request for L.E.A.S.E. reimbursement, you must send:

- a completed L.E.A.S.E. **"BLOCK GRANT FUNDS REIMBURSEMENT (Diagnostic) CLAIM FORM"**.
- a copy of the **STUDENT EVALUATION REPORT** that was done.

L.E.A.S.E. will not be able to reimburse any district expense for specialized diagnostic evaluations unless both documents accompany any request for reimbursement.

If the complete case study cannot be completed within the sixty day time span due to the delay in obtaining a specialized evaluation, two optional courses of action may be taken:

1. Determine if other evaluators may be available that could perform the needed diagnostics sooner;
2. Contact the parent to see if they can locate a diagnostician to perform the evaluation sooner. (See the I.S.B.E. information quoted below from a September 24, 1996 letter from I.S.B.E. staff person, Terry David, to one of our local L.E.A.S.E. school districts.)

"However, the district is also under an obligation to inform parents that if they are unable to provide a required evaluation in a timely manner, the parent has the right to seek this evaluation from other qualified sources at the district's expense.

The question remaining to be answered is, has the district informed the parent of her right to seek such an evaluation at district expense? If so, no violation exists in this case. If not, the district is obligated to do so, and if the parent finds an evaluator qualified to perform such an evaluation, and the costs associated with this evaluation are reasonable, in comparison to the costs of such an evaluation obtained by the district then the district is obligated to pay for such an evaluation as well as any reasonable costs associated with such an evaluation.

The parent has an obligation to inform the district that she has found a qualified person or persons to perform such an evaluation, the costs associated with the evaluation and further to provide the district with a written copy of the evaluation report at the conclusion of the evaluation."

Instructions for Utilizing Block Grant Funds for Diagnostic Evaluations **(continued)**

A CHECKLIST

Specialized Diagnostic Evaluations

Paid for by the district and eligible for 50% L.E.A.S.E. Reimbursement

Examples of evaluations that are covered by this reimbursement procedure include: O.T., P.T., psychiatric, neurological, neuro-psychological, bi-lingual psychological, augmentative/assistive device, in-depth speech/language (i.e. voice, oral-motor) and a few select low incidence school psychological evaluations. To access this L.E.A.S.E. partial reimbursement, districts are to:

- ✓ Explore whether parent's insurance or Medicaid will pay for the evaluation.
- ✓ Make sure that the student is in the process of a case study or a case study re-evaluation.
- ✓ Make sure that the parent/guardian has signed a "PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FOR EVALUATION/REEVALUATION" with any specialized evaluation/s determined necessary clearly indicated on the consent form.
- ✓ Identify an evaluator.
- ✓ Make sure that the parent/guardian signed release of information in order to share information with the evaluator.
- ✓ Contact the evaluator. Determine the cost of the evaluation. Identify any student background information needed by the identified evaluator. Set up the appointment. Remind the evaluator that you must have a written report following the evaluation by a certain date in order to complete the case study in progress and within the 60 school day timeline.

Reminder: Specialized diagnostic evaluations and the 60 school day timeline for completion of the case study:

In the majority of cases, it takes at least thirty or more calendar days to complete many specialized evaluations done by private evaluators. When you request a private evaluation, ask the evaluator for an estimate of when he/she will be able to send you the completed evaluation report.

As you know, failure to complete a case study within the legally required 60 school day timeline could create liability for your district. Because of this possibility, it is very important that you review the sixty day time frame from the date the student was formally referred for either the initial or the re-evaluation case study.

- ✓ Call the parent/guardian to confirm the appointment time and to determine any transportation needs.
- ✓ Send a district purchase order to the evaluator and all requested student background information with a cover letter confirming appointment time and district contact person.
- ✓ Remind the parent/guardian of the appointment time and date several days before the appointment.
- ✓ Receive the written report from the evaluator before the I.E.P.
- ✓ Schedule an I.E.P. to consider the results of the specialized evaluation within 60 school days of the referral date.
- ✓ Send the following to L.E.A.S.E. upon completion of and payment for the evaluation:
 - 1. L.E.A.S.E. Block Grant Funds (Diagnostic) Reimbursement Claim Form.**
 - 2. Copy of the evaluator's report**

Instructions for Utilizing Block Grant Funds for Inservice Activities

INSERVICE

Special Education Block Grant Funds are available to reimburse your district for the cost of special education inservice activities. Some examples of typical activities that may be reimbursed are:

- Expenses associated with **special education** conference attendance (travel, lodging, meals, etc.);
- Substitute teachers for the staff member attending a **special education** inservice event;
- Payment of tuition and fees for **special education** coursework;
- Payment of a speaker's expense for **special education** presentations/workshops;
- Payment of subscriptions to **special education** journals.

This funding is not limited to benefiting only special education personnel. We encourage you to consider using this funding for professional development activities for any district employee including teacher assistants and parents. **The topic of the activity, however, must be related to special education.** Additionally, more than one school district may work cooperatively and fund joint ventures by pooling available funds.

After the local district has paid all expenses related to inservice activities, they are eligible to request reimbursement through the L.E.A.S.E. Block Grant Funds. To make a request for reimbursement, you must send:

- Block Grant Funds Reimbursement (Inservice) Claim Form.
- Make sure to include Voucher/Check # in order for claim to be processed.
- Retain appropriate documentation/receipts on file in the district.

Instructions for Utilizing Block Grant Funds for I.E.P. Substitute Teachers

IEP SUBSTITUTES

L.E.A.S.E. Special Education Block Grant Funding can be used to reimburse your district for the cost of substitutes, which are employed to allow teachers (special education and general education) to participate in I.E.P. conferences, Domain meetings or other planning meetings or activities related to serving students with disabilities

The L.E.A.S.E. Coordinator or Building principal verifies the reason for the planning/meeting when the claim is submitted for reimbursement to the L.E.A.S.E. Office.

After the local district has paid all expenses related to substitute usage, they are eligible to request reimbursement through the L.E.A.S.E. Block Grant Funds. To make a request for reimbursement, you must send:

- Block Grant Funds Reimbursement (IEP Substitute Teachers) Claim Form.
- Make sure to include Voucher/Check # in order for claim to be processed.
- Obtain LEASE Coordinator or Building Principal approval prior to submitting claim.
- Retain appropriate documentation/receipts on file in the district.

Instructions for Utilizing Block Grant Funds for Teaming Activities

TEAMING

Special / General Education Teaming Funding. **Special / General Education Teaming Funding** enhances the ability of special education teachers and general education teachers to collaboratively plan for inclusion or general education programming for students with disabilities. Teaming funds are available to reimburse teacher and/or other staff stipends for after-hours work, **OR** to reimburse substitutes employed in order to allow district teachers and/or other staff to attend special education/general education planning meetings during the school day for the purpose of joint educational planning for one or more students with disabilities.

These funds can also be used to support mentoring activities between certified special education staff and staff working in special education teaching positions without full special education certification. The same teaming forms and procedures will be in place for making these type of claims.

The Coordinator is available to consult with the staff and administration regarding any planned teaming meeting and will then pre-authorize the use of these funds to pay for either substitutes **or** to pay stipends for teaming teachers to work after school hours. The L.E.A.S.E. Coordinator assigned to the district or your building principal must, however, always approve use of the funds, prior to the actual date of the meeting. The L.E.A.S.E. Coordinator will, as appropriate, be a part of these meetings. After the Coordinator or principal has signed the claim form authorizing the use of these funds and the meeting has been subsequently held and the personnel have been paid by the district, the district will complete the remaining sections of the claim form and submit it to L.E.A.S.E.

Federal and State regulations indicate a clear mandate to educate students with disabilities first in the general education curriculum to the maximum extent possible. Scheduling planning time for general and special educators to collaborate in serving students with disabilities is a significant obstacle for many school districts. Two methods of alleviating this scheduling difficulty are addressed by **Special / General Education Teaming Funding as indicated above.**

After the local district has paid all expenses related to substitute usage, they are eligible to request reimbursement through the L.E.A.S.E. Block Grant Funds. To make a request for reimbursement, you must send:

- Block Grant Funds Reimbursement (Teaming) Claim Form.
- Make sure to include Voucher/Check # in order for claim to be processed.
- Obtain LEASE Coordinator or Building Principal approval prior to submitting claim.
- Retain appropriate documentation/receipts on file in the district.