**24:05:30:03.  Independent educational evaluation.** A parent has the right to an independent educational evaluation at public expense if the parent disagrees with an evaluation obtained by the district subject to the conditions in this section.

 Each district shall provide to parents, upon request for an independent educational evaluation, information about where an independent educational evaluation may be obtained, and the district criteria applicable for independent educational evaluations specified in this section.

 If a parent requests an independent educational evaluation, the district may ask for the parent's reason why he or she objects to the public evaluation. However, the explanation by the parent may not be required and the district may not unreasonably delay either providing the independent educational evaluation at public expense or filing a due process complaint to request a due process hearing to defend the public evaluation.

 If the parent requests an independent educational evaluation at public expense, the district must, without unnecessary delay, either file a due process complaint to request a hearing under this chapter to show that its evaluation is appropriate, or ensure that an independent educational evaluation is provided at public expense unless the district demonstrates in a hearing that the evaluation obtained by the parent did not meet district criteria. If the district files a due process complaint to request a hearing under this chapter and the final decision is that the evaluation is appropriate, the parent still has the right to an independent educational evaluation, but not at public expense.

 A parent is entitled to only one independent educational evaluation at public expense each time the district conducts an evaluation with which the parent disagrees.

 If the parent obtains an independent educational evaluation at public expense or shares with the district an evaluation obtained at private expense, the results of the evaluation must be considered by the district, if it meets district criteria, in any decision made with respect to the provision of a free appropriate public education to the child and may be presented by any party as evidence at a hearing under this chapter regarding that child.

 If a hearing officer requests an independent educational evaluation as part of a hearing, the cost of the evaluation must be at public expense. If an independent evaluation is made at public expense, the criteria under which the evaluation is obtained, including the location of the evaluation and the qualifications of the examiner, must be the same as the criteria which the district uses when it initiates an evaluation to the extent those criteria are consistent with the parent's right to an independent educational evaluation. Each district shall provide to parents, on request, information about where an independent educational evaluation may be obtained.

 For the purposes of this section, the term, independent education evaluation, means an evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the district responsible for the education of the child in question. For purposes of this section, the term, public expense, means that the district either pays for the full cost of the evaluation or ensures that the evaluation is otherwise provided at no cost to the parent consistent with §§ 24:05:14:01 to 24:05:14:01.05, inclusive.

 Except for the criteria described in this section, a district may not impose conditions or timelines related to obtaining an independent educational evaluation at public expense.

 **Source:** 16 SDR 41, effective September 7, 1989; 23 SDR 31, effective September 8, 1996; 26 SDR 150, effective May 22, 2000; 33 SDR 236, effective July 5, 2007.

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