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# SPECIAL PROGRAMS

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## **Identification of English Language Learners (ELL) Coordinator**

Meshell Hill

Special Programs Manager

[mehill@lavirtual.org](mailto:mehill@lavirtual.org)

4962 Florida Blvd, Baton Rouge, LA 70806

504.322.7543 x 3159

## **Identification of Section 504 Coordinator**

Jamie Gagliano

504 Coordinator

[jgagliano@lavirtual.org](mailto:jgagliano@lavirtual.org)

4962 Florida Blvd, Baton Rouge, LA 70806

504.322.7543 x 3059

## **Identification of Homeless Liaison**

Tom Payne

Family Resource Coordinator

[tpayne@lavirtual.org](mailto:tpayne@lavirtual.org)

4962 Florida Blvd, Baton Rouge, LA 70806  
504.322.7543 x 3110

#### **Identification of Foster Care Coordinator**

Tom Payne  
Family Resource Coordinator  
[tpayne@lavirtual.org](mailto:tpayne@lavirtual.org)  
4962 Florida Blvd, Baton Rouge, LA 70806  
504.322.7543 x 3110

#### **Identification of American with Disabilities (ADA) Compliance Act Coordinator/Special Programs**

Meshell Hill  
Special Programs Manager  
[mehill@lavirtual.org](mailto:mehill@lavirtual.org)  
4962 Florida Blvd, Baton Rouge, LA 70806  
504.322.7543 x 3159

#### **Request for Parent/Guardian Interpreter Services or Disability Accommodations**

Professional interpreter services may be requested at any time for parents/guardians of students by contacting Meshell Hill at [mehill@k12.com](mailto:mehill@k12.com).

Additionally, if any parent/guardian has a disability or other limitation that would impact their ability to participate fully in their child's educational planning process, LAVCA would be happy to discuss accommodations that may be available to maximize the parent/guardian's participation. Individuals seeking to discuss accommodations for this reason may contact Meshell Hill at [mehill@k12.com](mailto:mehill@k12.com).

#### **Procedural Safeguards**

In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requirement that all educational agencies provide parents of students with disabilities notice containing a full explanation of the procedural safeguards available under the IDEA and U.S. Department of Education regulations, please click <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/academics/louisiana's-educational-rights-of-children-with-disabilities.pdf?sfvrsn=12> to review the Procedural Safeguards Notice.

#### **Annual Public Notice of Special Services & Programs**

In accordance with federal and state regulations, LAVCA will provide an annual public notice to families informing them of LAVCA's child find responsibilities, procedures involved in the identification of educational disabilities and determination of students' service and support needs.

Families are encouraged to review the following information that describes these regulations. Information regarding LAVCA's internal practices to comply with these will be available in the LAVCA's Special Programs Manuals and Handbooks.

#### **Child Find**

LAVCA strives to identify, locate, and evaluate all enrolled children who may have disabilities. Disability, as stated in IDEA, includes such conditions as hearing, visual, speech, or language impairment, specific learning disability, emotional disturbance, cognitive disability, other health or physical impairment,

autism, and traumatic brain injury. The process of identifying, locating, and evaluating these children is referred to as *Child Find*.

As a public school, we follow federal and state mandates requiring the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to each child regardless of a child's disability or the severity of the disability. In order to comply with the Child Find requirements, LAVCA will implement procedures to help identify, locate, and evaluate students, including those who are homeless or wards of the state, in need of special education and related services.

Parent/Guardian permission and involvement is a vital piece in the process. Once a student has been identified as having a "suspected disability" or identified as having a disability, LAVCA will ask the student or the student's Parent/Guardian for information about the child such as:

- How has the suspected disability or identified disability hindered the student's learning?
- What has been done, educationally, to intervene and correct the student's emerging learning deficits?
- What educational or medical information relative to the suspected disability or identified disability is available to be shared with the school?

This information may also be obtained from the student's present or former teachers, therapists, doctors, or from other agencies that have information about the student.

All information collected will be held in strict confidence and released to others only with parental permission or as allowed by law. In keeping with this confidence, LAVCA will keep a record of all persons who review confidential information. In accordance with state regulations, parents have the right to review their child's records.

As part of the Child Find process, some services may include a complete evaluation, an individualized education program designed specifically for the child, and a referral to other agencies providing special services.

### **Consent**

LAVCA cannot proceed with an evaluation, or with the initial provision of special education and related services, without the written consent of a student's parents/legal guardians. For additional information related to consent, please refer to the Procedural Safeguards Notice which can be found at the Louisiana website, <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/academics/louisiana's-educational-rights-of-children-with-disabilities.pdf?sfvrsn=12> or by accessing the link via the Child Find section of the LAVCA website. Once written parental/guardian consent is obtained, LAVCA will proceed with the evaluation process. If the parent disagrees with the evaluation results, the parent can request an independent education evaluation at public expense.

### **Special Education (IEP) or Service Agreements (504 Plans)**

Once the evaluation process is completed, a team of qualified school personnel, parents/guardians, and other relevant service providers hold an evaluation determination meeting to come to agreement on whether the student meets eligibility for one of the disability categories under IDEA, <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/academics/louisiana's-educational-rights-of->

[children-with-disabilities.pdf?sfvrsn=12](#) for information related to eligibility criteria associated with the disability categories defined under IDEA. If the student is eligible and requires specially designed instruction, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be coordinated; during which the IEP team will review and finalize the proposed details of an appropriate educational program to meet the student's documented needs.

For students confirmed to present with special education needs, once the IEP team agrees on the IEP and the student's educational placement, a Prior Written Notice (PWN) will be sent to the parent/guardian for signature. This must be signed and returned to LAVCA can only proceed with implementing the student's IEP (or 504 Plan) upon receipt of the signed PWN. Some students are found to present with one or more disability, but do not meet the eligibility criteria outlined under IDEA (special education); however, their disability may still require LAVCA to develop a 504 Service Agreement (504 Plan) to outline the special provisions a student may require for adaptations and/or accommodations in school-based instruction, facilities, and/or activities.

Students may be eligible to certain accommodations or services if they have a mental or physical disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program and otherwise qualify under the applicable laws. LAVCA will ensure that qualified students with disabilities have equal opportunity to participate in the school program and activities to the maximum extent appropriate for each individual student. In compliance with applicable state and federal laws, LAVCA will provide students with disabilities the necessary educational services and supports they require to access and benefit from their educational program. This is to be done without discrimination or out of pocket cost to the student or family for the essential supplementary aids, services or accommodations determined to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities and to the extent required by the law.

Legal guardians have the right to revoke consent for services after initial placement. Please note, a revocation of consent removes the student from ALL special services and supports outlined on the IEP or 504 Plan, <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/students-with-disabilities/section-504-overview-and-the-individual-accommodation-plan-august-2016.pdf?sfvrsn=2>.

### **Privacy & Confidentiality**

To maintain privacy of students' special education records, both within its central office and across school systems and databases, ISPA follows protocols consistent with the federal regulations associated with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), <http://lavca.k12.com/privacy-policy.html>

### **Accommodations**

Notice of these rights is available, upon request, on audiotape, in Braille, and in languages other than English. Should you need further assistance or information regarding any of these accommodations, please contact the Related Services Coordinator at [lavcarelatedservices@lavirtual.org](mailto:lavcarelatedservices@lavirtual.org) or any member of your child's LAVCA team for guidance.

### **Translation Needs**

Professional interpreter service may be requested at any time for legal guardians of students by contacting Meshell Hill, Special Programs Manager at [mehill@lavirtual.org](mailto:mehill@lavirtual.org)

## **Special Education Grievances or Disputes**

LAVCA recognizes that despite best intentions of all parties, disagreements or miscommunications may arise between the school-based team and LAVCA families or students. Should this situation occur, the LAVCA special education case manager will initiate an IEP team discussion where the specific details contributing to any educational concern are fully discussed and addressed as the entire team determines would consider most appropriate for the student. Collaboration is a primary focus for this type of meeting, and the LAVCA Special Education Team seeks to establish and maintain the confidence of its families to always serve its students to maximize their educational success.

## **Dispute Resolution Options**

For students confirmed to present with special education needs, once the IEP team agrees on the IEP and the student's educational placement, a Prior Written Notice (PWN) will be sent to the parent/guardian for signature. This must be signed and returned to LAVCA can only proceed with implementing the student's IEP (or 504 Plan) upon receipt of the signed PWN. Some students are found to present with one or more disability, but do not meet the eligibility criteria outlined under IDEA (special education); however, their disability may still require LAVCA to develop a 504 Service Agreement (504 Plan) to outline the special provisions a student may require for adaptations and/or accommodations in school-based instruction, facilities, and/or activities.

- IEP Facilitation – IEP facilitation is a voluntary process that can be utilized when all parties to an IEP meeting agree that the presence of a neutral third party would help facilitate communication and the successful drafting of the student's IEP. This process is not necessary for most IEP meetings. Rather, it is most often utilized when there is a sense from any of the participants that the issues at the IEP meeting are creating an impasse or acrimonious climate.
- Mediation – A voluntary process in which both parties seek to resolve the issues involved in the concern with an unbiased, third party mediator from the Louisiana Department of Education. The mediator who will write up the details of the agreement that the parties come to through the mediation conference, the agreement is signed by both parties, and thus what the document states is mandated to be implemented; This process is overall less time-consuming, less stressful, and less expensive to complete than a due process hearing (see below)
- Formal Due Process - Families are NOT obligated to pursue the above alternatives to due process should they feel their concerns can only be resolved through a formal due process hearing. If a formal complaint against SCHOOL is submitted to the Louisiana Department of Education <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/academics/students-with-disabilities/dispute-resolution> .