

Bureau of Special Education (BSE) Topic Brief:  
Professional Courtesy  
June 2026

## What is Professional Courtesy?

The concept of “professional courtesy” pertains to those situations in which a student is attending is a public school in the school district in which one of the student’s parents is employed pursuant to the provisions of either a collective bargaining agreement or similar employment agreement between the parent’s employing district and its employees, and that district is different from the one in which the student resides. These employer-employee contracts are commonly known as “professional courtesy agreements.”

### **If a student is eligible for special education and attends a public school where a parent is employed but does not reside, is the school district required to implement the student’s IEP?**

No. Neither a student’s district of residence (“Resident District”) nor the Professional Courtesy District is responsible for implementing an IEP, completing annual reviews, or reevaluations. This is because a school district is required to provide special education and related services only to IDEA-eligible students who satisfy both of the following two criteria: 1) reside within their home-district’s town boundaries; and 2) are enrolled within the Resident District.

When a student enrolls in a separate Professional Courtesy District, the parent and student are voluntarily choosing to disenroll<sup>1</sup> from the Resident District and, as such, can no longer satisfy the second of the two above-referenced criteria. Consequently, the Resident District no longer has a responsibility to provide the student with a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) unless and until the student reenrolls in the Resident District.

At the same time, students who do not reside within the Professional Courtesy District’s town boundaries and are enrolled in the district pursuant to a professional courtesy agreement, do not satisfy the first of the two above-referenced criteria. Thus, they do not meet the definition under the IDEA for special education eligible students for whom the district would be required to provide FAPE. This is important because IDEA funds are specifically allocated for resident town students and may not be spent on non-resident Professional Courtesy Students. Districts should consult their legal counsel regarding the allowable use of local and state funds for non-resident students.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, if the Professional Courtesy District or parent refers a general education student to special education who is enrolled in the district pursuant to a professional courtesy agreement, the Resident District is responsible for Child Find, including determining the student’s eligibility under the IDEA and, if eligible, **drafting** an IEP offering FAPE in the Resident

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<sup>1</sup>Please note that a student cannot be enrolled in a Resident District and a Professional Courtesy District at the same time. To enroll in the Professional Courtesy District, the student must first be disenrolled from the Resident District. See the Reporting steps in PSIS section for additional information.

Bureau of Special Education (BSE) Topic Brief:  
Professional Courtesy  
June 2026

District. The Resident District, however, is not required to implement the IEP unless **and until the student reenrolls** in the Resident District.

**Are Professional Courtesy Students eligible for Individualized Services Plans (ISP)?**

No. Services plan is a term defined in the IDEA, associated with IDEA eligible private/not-for-profit schools. Students attending a **public school** do not meet this definition.

Please note, if the Professional Courtesy District voluntarily chooses to provide supports, services or interventions to a Professional Courtesy Student attending their school, it is not considered an IEP or ISP.

**Is the Professional Courtesy District responsible for the identification and provision of Section 504 for Professional Courtesy Students in their school?**

Yes. All public schools have a responsibility for ensuring compliance with Section 504, which includes the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of a child with a disability, for **all** students who attend their schools. The Professional Courtesy District may document necessary accommodations (including accommodations on statewide assessments), modifications, assistive technology, or adult support for eligible students in the CT-SEDS Section 504 module. The Professional Courtesy District is the Section 504 responsible district.

As general education students, all students attending under a Professional Courtesy are subject to the disciplinary policies and student codes of conduct that exist in the Professional Courtesy District, although those students protected under Section 504 are entitled to the same procedural safeguards as resident town students protected under Section 504.

**Professional Courtesy Scenarios:**

*A Parent Enrolls a Special Education Student in the Professional Courtesy District:*

1. The Resident District must convene a PPT with the family to inform them that by enrolling in the Professional Courtesy District the parent and student are voluntarily choosing to disenroll from the Resident District, thus terminating the provision of Special Education. If the parent chooses to remain in the Resident District, the student will continue to receive special education/related services. If the parent chooses to enroll in the Professional Courtesy District and decides in the future to return to Resident District and receive special education and related services, this would be processed as an initial referral to Special Education.
2. Enrolling the student in the Professional Courtesy District automatically terminates the provision of Special Education services in the Resident District. Therefore, a signed parental revocation is not needed. The Resident District must process this in CT-SEDS as a Revocation of Consent for the Provision of Services.

Bureau of Special Education (BSE) Topic Brief:  
Professional Courtesy  
June 2026

- a) To document the Parent Revocation of Consent, refer to the “**How to Enter a Special Education Revocation of Consent**” resource in the CSDE State tab of the Documents Widget in CT-SEDS. **Note:** The Prior Written Notice (PWN) should include the following actions:
    - i. The District is **proposing to change the provision of FAPE (IEP)**.
    - ii. Description/Reason: The district explained to the parent that if a student attends a public school under professional courtesy, this student is not entitled to receive special education and related services under the IDEA. Enrolling the student in the Professional Courtesy District automatically terminates the provision of Special Education services; and in the future, if the parent wants the student to return to the Resident District for special education services, an initial referral for special education would need to be made.
  - b) The PWN document must be uploaded as the **Revocation Documentation** using the “Attach Documentation” link in the Parent Revocation of Consent panel.
  - c) Set OSEP District to blank (Exit Date= Date this action will take effect from the PWN)
  - d) The Resident District unenrolls the student in PSIS.
3. Professional Courtesy District Reporting steps in PSIS and CT-SEDS:
- a) In PSIS, report student as special education = NO.
  - b) In CT-SEDS, set Enrollment Type to “Public Enrolled: Professional Courtesy” (Date = Date student enrolled in Professional Courtesy District)

**Note:** For any student for whom a district is charging the parent any amount to attend, report this in PSIS, Enrolled at No Local Expense = “03” (parent pays tuition). In CT-SEDS, set Enrollment Type to “Public Enrolled: Parent Pays Tuition.”

*Professional Courtesy Students Referred to Special Education:*

All students attending school under Professional Courtesy are general education students, including students who were previously identified for special education in their Resident District.

If a Professional Courtesy Student is referred to special education, the referral is the responsibility of the Resident District. The Professional Courtesy District is not responsible and should inform the parent to make the referral with the Resident District.

The **Resident District** should **submit a CT-SEDS Help Desk ticket** to request activation for a Referral for a student attending a Professional Courtesy District. Then the referral process should be followed in CT-SEDS. The ticket will remain open until the Referral process is completed.

If the student is found eligible for special education, the Resident District should **draft** an IEP offering FAPE in the Resident District. The Resident District will implement the IEP only **if the student reenrolls** in the Resident District. The draft PDF of the IEP should be downloaded and then uploaded to the student’s record in Create/View Documents. If the parent decides to decline initial provision of services and remain enrolled in the Professional Courtesy District, then neither the Resident District

Bureau of Special Education (BSE) Topic Brief:  
Professional Courtesy  
June 2026

nor the Professional Courtesy District are responsible for implementing an IEP, completing annual reviews, or reevaluations.

1. In the *Determination of Eligibility PPT 2* tile, in the *Eligibility Determination* panel, and the *Document Consent* Panel, enter the **denial** of Initial Provision of Services.
2. Set OSEP District to blank (Exit Date= Parent Denial Date)
3. Reason for Change = Professional Courtesy/Parent Pays Tuition (not IDEA SWD)
4. Update the CT-SEDS Help Desk ticket so the Help Desk can transfer the record back to the Professional Courtesy District.