**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Can special education services be harmful to my child’s future?**

Special education services provide students with disabilities with the instruction and support necessary for them to reach academic and social goals and also to allow them to become more independent. Thanks to these services, students with disabilities may enjoy the same academic opportunities as their classmates. All information in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is confidential and is not shared with other databases or other people unless you give your consent.

**Are special education services only for students who have legal status in the U.S.?**

All children, regardless of their immigration status, have a right to participate in and enjoy a free public education. This includes any evaluations and other sources of support needed for students whose parents have concerns or fears regarding their child’s academic and social progress.

**Is being identified as an English Language Learner (ELL) the same thing as being identified as having a disability?**

No. When a student is identified as an ELL, the school has a duty to teach that student in her/his native language. There are students who are identified as ELLs who also receive special education services, but only when the student needs additional services because s/he also has a disability, and not merely because they have not yet learned how to speak English.

**Are all evaluations given in English only? Can they be translated into other languages?**

In accordance with the law, all testing conducted by the school to evaluate a student must be done in the student’s native language and all evaluations and results must be translated into a language that the parents can understand.
I do not understand English well. Do I have the right to ask for a Spanish interpreter to discuss my concerns about my child’s education with the school? And for IEP meetings or other meetings?

When parents are asked for their consent for Special Education services, all information must be communicated in a language they can understand. The IEP team has the responsibility to provide them with an appropriate interpreter whenever necessary and thus ensure that parents are well informed of all the services that will be provided to their child. Parents must ask for an interpreter at least 72 hours before the IEP meeting and they must do so in writing.