

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Action Item

December 12, 2006

SUBJECT: Amendment to Rule 6A-6.03023, Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

PROPOSED BOARD ACTION

For Approval

AUTHORITY FOR STATE BOARD ACTION

1001.02(1) and 1003.57(1)(e), Florida Statutes

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This rule provides specific requirements for school districts related to the identification of students with disabilities who have autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The rule as amended reflects current knowledge in the field and adopts language consistent with the federal law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 20 U.S.C. Chapter 33, and its implementing regulations.

The title of the rule has been amended as “students with autism spectrum disorder” to more accurately reflect that the features of autism occur across a spectrum in varying degrees. This change also reflects the recommendations from research and the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)-IV*. The amended rule states that activities prior to referral and student evaluation must be conducted in accordance with Rule 6A-6.0331, FAC. In addition, requirements related to evaluation procedures have been removed as they must be included in districts’ *Policies and Procedures for the Provision of Specially Designed Instruction and Related Services for Exceptional Students* in accordance with Rule 6A-6.03411, FAC.

The definition of autism spectrum disorder has been amended to clarify that autism spectrum disorder may include autistic disorder, pervasive developmental disorder, Asperger syndrome, and other related pervasive developmental disorders. The proposed criteria for eligibility are consistent with the federal definition and provide clarification of previously vague terminology. The new language states that there must be an uneven developmental profile within or across the developmental domains; impairment in social interaction; impairment in verbal and/or nonverbal language or social communication skills; and restricted repetitive, and/or stereotyped patterns of behavior, interest, or activities. Also, the amended language deletes reference to evidence of onset during the first three years of life. ASD is a disorder that has a typical onset in early childhood; however, some children are not identified until later in their educational experience.

Supporting Documentation Included: Rule 6A-6.03023, FAC., Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Facilitators/Presenters: Cheri Yecke, K-12 Chancellor /Mary Jane Tappen, K-12 Deputy Chancellor