

West-MEC

West-MEC FAQs for Counselors

What is West-MEC?

Western Maricopa Education Center (West-MEC) is a Joint-Technical Education District that provides instruction and hands-on training leading to industry certification in several different career fields. West-MEC is considered public education and students from “member” districts are eligible to attend as high school students. Tuition is covered by public education funding although there may be some additional fees associated with a particular program. There is an application process to be considered for West-MEC participation, which includes requirements and academic prerequisites essential for success in the program. West-MEC programs vary in length from one semester to two years; students apply for admission in their sophomore, junior or senior year depending on the length of the preferred program. Additional tuition costs will occur if a student graduates or earns a GED before completing the program.

Does West-MEC Provide Special Education Services?

Students receive all Special Education (SPED) Services from the student’s school of record. West-MEC does not receive IDEA funding and, therefore, is not responsible for Child Find or for providing services to students. West-MEC does provide accommodations and modifications as outlined in the IEP. West-MEC has the same requirements to follow regulatory rules and laws regarding access and participation.

Does West-MEC have to follow the IEP developed at the high school?

Yes. West-MEC is a public school district and is held accountable for following students’ IEPs and 504s as written. This includes providing accommodations and modifications in the West-MEC program and helping to coordinate any services that are to be provided throughout the student’s school day (assistive technology, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Paraprofessional support)

Is West-MEC required to provide accommodations and modifications?

Yes, West-MEC is required to provide accommodations and modifications identified in the IEP. However, IEP team members should be aware that any modifications to a West-MEC program may not align with industry standards for licensure, certifications or endorsements awarded by state and federal entities. It is also important to note that some accommodations available in public education would be considered modifications to industry standards. Modifying the curriculum may prevent students from being eligible to progress in the program of study or sit for board certification examinations.

Do I need a release signed by the parent to release the IEP to West-MEC?

No. Parents have chosen to enroll their student at West-MEC and sign permission allowing West-MEC access to the student’s records at the home high school. For member districts, West-MEC also has a signed Intra-Government Agreement (IGA) stating that the member school is required to provide West-MEC with IEP and 504 documents.

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What role does West-MEC serve on the IEP team?

West-MEC is considered a regular education facility and West-MEC teachers, counselors and administrators are members of the IEP team. Special permission is not required for West-MEC staff to participate in annual IEPs as West-MEC is not an outside agency. Additionally, West-MEC staff or any member of an IEP team may call for an IEP review. As best practice, West-MEC staff should be invited to annual IEP reviews when a student is enrolled in a West-MEC program.

Can a homebound student or a student who is placed privately attend West-MEC?

When placing a student on homebound or at a private placement, the student should demonstrate a need for that restrictive of an environment. West-MEC typically resembles an industry environment or college campus, which will affect the student's Least Restrictive Environment. In these situations, West-MEC will contact the sending district office to find out how appropriate supports will be provided on the West-MEC campus.

Can a student at an alternative program or 45 day placement attend West-MEC?

If a student is placed in an interim setting due to discipline, the student is not eligible for West-MEC. Similarly, if a student is long term suspended, he/she cannot attend West-MEC. Students who are choosing to attend an alternative program, are welcome to apply to West-MEC.

I've heard that West-MEC doesn't have to follow the IEP because classes are 4:00 P.M. - 6:30 P.M., which is after the normal school day. Is this true?

West-MEC is a public school and is part of the student's high school day, regardless of what time the class takes place. The IEP must be followed when the student attends West-MEC.

How are West-MEC College Partner Programs different from West-MEC Central Programs?

Students participating in Cosmetology, Aesthetics, Massage Therapy, EMT or Fire Science are enrolling in a college program. These programs do not fall under the IDEA, but rather the ADA. Students in these programs are required to self-advocate to the disability resource office at their college campus to request reasonable accommodations in their college programs. The curriculum or pacing of a college program cannot be modified per college guidelines.