

REFERRAL FOR POSSIBLE SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

ALIEF MONTESSORI COMMUNITY SCHOOL

101815

Template update May 2020

Legal Framework: REFERRAL FOR POSSIBLE SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

[Related Resources](#)

Broad Category: CHILD FIND

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

For those students who are having difficulty in the general education classroom, consideration is given to tutorial, compensatory services, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (RtI). The district offers multi-tiered systems of support, which include varying levels of support to meet academic, behavioral, and social/emotional needs of students. Whereas the implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the district's ability to meet the needs of all struggling students, however, participation cannot be required to delay a struggling student's referral to special education.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, the involved teaching, support staff and/or the parent/guardian should contact the campus administrator or designee about the school's overall general education referral or monitoring system for support services. Discussion includes a variety of support options available to the student, including making a referral for a special education evaluation to determine if the student has a disability and needs specially designed instructional supports or services. Contact information and procedural guidance about requesting a special education referral for students residing in the district is provided to parents through information posted on the district's webpage, community distribution of Child Find flyers, and training of campus personnel to provide information resources and contacts to parents of struggling students.

SPECIAL EDUCATION REFERRAL AND INITIAL EVALUATION

The district provides student referral procedural guidance and safeguards, including:

- Special Education Department leadership and their designees provide annual targeted training, reminders, and resources of special education referral procedures to campus staff involved in student monitoring. Areas addressed include student data assembly and completion of a Campus Referral Team (CRT) report which documents data and decisions related to offering or refusing a student's initial evaluation.
- Requests for a student to receive a special education referral can originate from involved educational staff with knowledge of the student, consulting support staff, private professionals and the parent. Each campus has designated general education staff (e.g., administrators, counselors) to receive referral requests. Campus general education designees have received training and access to resources for initiating a referral for special education.

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- A parent can request an evaluation for special education at any time verbally or in writing. If a parent makes a specific request for a special education initial evaluation to an administrative employee of the school district, the district must respond no later than 15 school days after receiving the request. By that time, the Campus Referral Designee (CRD) must convene the CRT (inviting parent) and give the parent a prior written notice accompanied by the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards* of whether the district agrees or refuses to evaluate the student.
 - If the CRT agrees to evaluate the student, the parent is offered the opportunity to give informed written consent for the evaluation in all areas of suspected disability as explained by a qualified evaluation specialist who provides the parent/guardian with a copy of the proposed evaluation consent notices and the *Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process*.
 - If the CRT refuses to evaluate the student, the CRD gives the parent prior written notification of refusal to evaluate which specifies considered data, reason for refusal and options to consider. With the *Notice of Refusal*, the parent is given the *Referral Committee Report* and *Notice of Procedural Safeguards*. The student's *Notice of Refusal*, *Referral Committee Report* and all considered student data are archived.
- If the district decides to evaluate the student, it must complete the student's initial evaluation and evaluation report no later than 45 school days from the day it receives a parent's written consent to evaluate the student. However, if the student is absent from school during the evaluation period for three or more school days, the evaluation period will be extended by the same number of school days that the student is absent.
- There is an exception to the 45-school day timeline for initial evaluation completion. If a district receives a parent's consent at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30th due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.
- Upon completing the initial evaluation, the district must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost and convene an ARD Committee meeting within 30 days from the date of the student's Full and Individual Initial Evaluation (FIIE).

REFERRAL PROCESS

Special Education Department leadership and their designees provide targeted campus staff training and resources about special education referral procedures which support the following processes:

- When a student is considered for initial evaluation (FIIE) for any reason, the CRD will initiate the process by:

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- Notifying parent of pending special education referral committee's review while requesting parent's input and any privately completed evaluations or documents. At that time, the parent is given the data used for determination and *Notice of Procedural Safeguards*.
 - Notifying educational staff and stakeholders to assemble student data necessary, which includes current campus-based screening of student's vision and hearing.
 - Scheduling a CRT meeting to include involved educational stakeholders, special education evaluation specialist(s) with knowledge of suspected disability(ies) and an invitation to parent/guardian/adult student.
- Per special education referral procedures, the CRD convenes and facilitates collaborative review of the student's data by the CRT. Parental participation is actively sought to contribute input and to attend the referral committee meeting.
- Required documentation, a report containing a summary of data addressed during the CRT meeting, the attending members, their roles with signatures.
- If the CRC recommends initial evaluation (FIE), a diagnostician receives the student's assembled referral data packet to promptly proceed with offering informed consent and prior written notice to parent/guardian for an initial evaluation in all areas of suspected disability addressing student eligibility for special educational services.
- If the CRT recommends actions that do not include initial evaluation, the CRD communicates the recommendations to the parent, accompanied by documentation including the signed report containing a summary of data, *Notice of Refusal*, and the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards*.
- The CRT will include persons with expertise to address the eligibility criteria for suspected disability(ies), including:
 - for students with eligibility of Visual Impairment or Deaf-Blindness—a representative of the Programs for the Visually Impaired
 - for students with eligibility of Deaf and Hard of Hearing or Deaf-Blindness—a representative from the Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
 - for students with eligibility of ADHD, Emotional Disturbance or Autism—a Diagnostician (HCSSE Director) to determine if an LSSP is necessary in the decision-making process.
- Based on assembled student data, teaching and service providers with expertise and knowledge of the student collaboratively assemble documentation of the student's current progress and present levels of performance and that of grade level peers.
- Per their documentation review, the CRT provide collaborative decisions of whether there is reason to suspect the student has a disability which may require special education services and supports for the student to access and progress within grade-level curriculum.

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REFERRAL PACKET FOR REVIEW

In determining whether there is basis to suspect the student may have a disability requiring special education services, the committee should consider the following:

- the individual sociological background of the student (i.e., school attendance; access to educational opportunities; cultural and linguistic factors)
- Information provided by parent, including documents of privately completed consultation or evaluations of the student
- Instructional demands of grade level standards regarding the degree to which the student can meet the instructional demands of grade-level standards, including peer group data (work samples)
- academic and skill performance across the grade level curriculum based on the district's student monitoring systems, including documented tiered services and supports, as well as parental collaboration
- physical, communication, functional, and emotional/behavioral factors derived from observations and reports from various settings for all students.
- At minimum, the CRT report should include:
 - Information from parents and educational providers
 - Observations provided by teachers and other professionals as deemed appropriate
 - Classroom-based, local, and state assessments
 - Information about the child's strengths and weaknesses
- Based on review of all student data (including parent and private sources), the CRT renders data-guided recommendation as to whether there is reason to suspect the student has a disability which requires special education services and supports. This recommendation reflects reasonable suspicion of a disability, not whether it is expected that a student may or may not meet eligibility criteria.
- The CRT's recommendation for initial evaluation (FIIE) is not contingent on a student's prior participation in an intervention program. Whenever there is reasonable suspicion of disability requiring special educational services for a student who has not participated in an intervention program, the CRT will recommend intervention supports and progress monitoring to occur simultaneously to the FIIE's completion.

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STAFF RESPONSIBLE:

District Level: Special Education Director, Diagnostician, LSSP, Teacher of Students with Auditory and/or Visual Impairments, Related Services Personnel

Campus Level: Administrators, Counselors, Campus Referral Designee (CRD), Campus Special Education Representative (CSER), Teachers, Parents

TIMELINES FOR IDENTIFYING DISABILITY CONDITIONS:

- Legal Framework
- Child Find Process
- Annual training for general education and special education staff

EVIDENCE OF PRACTICE:

- Forms or checklists used
- List of qualified evaluators with appropriate licenses and certifications
- Copies of evaluations
- Medical Documentation
- Prior Written Notice of Proposal or Refusal to Evaluate
- Written consent for evaluation
- Staff training artifacts (presentation handouts, sign-in sheets, etc.)
- Agendas from informational programs for parents