



## SPECIAL EDUCATION REFERRAL AND EVALUATION “CHEAT SHEET”

### When Should I Refer a Student for Testing?

#### A student should be referred to the special education team when...

- You have tried a few different general education interventions (e.g. RTI, a point card, small interventions in the classroom) and the student is still not making adequate progress
- The student's other teachers or teachers from the previous school year (if applicable) express similar concerns
- The student has demonstrated similar deficits or issues throughout the school year (i.e. the problem didn't just develop a week ago)
- The student's performance in your class is significantly discrepant from other students in behavior and/or academics – His/her performance or understanding of concepts is far below that of other students in the same class
- You believe the student's poor performance is a result of a genuine learning issue, not a lack of motivation or effort issue – The student works hard but still doesn't understand or do well on tests/assignments.
- The student is struggling significantly in a certain area (i.e. math) but is doing better in other areas

### What is the Process for Referrals and Evaluations?

#### The special education team follows these steps in regard to a special education referral/evaluation:

1. The teacher fills out a green pre-referral form and puts it in Rachel's box.
  - **PLEASE NOTE!** Referrals will not be processed until the following criteria have been met:
    - **1) General education interventions have been implemented by the teacher over an extended period of time.**
    - **2) The student's parents have been contacted by the teacher and the concerns have been discussed.**
2. Rachel will do a complete file review and bring information to relevant SPED team members.
3. The SPED team considers available information and determines whether further testing is warranted.
4. **If testing is not warranted**, Rachel will inform involved staff members that we will not pursue evaluation and document the referral in the student's cumulative file.
5. **If testing is warranted**, Rachel will draft a consent form, call the student's parents to discuss the evaluation process, and send paperwork home to be signed.
6. Rachel and/or Kimber have 60 school days from the date consent is signed by the parent to complete the evaluation.
7. When testing is complete, an eligibility meeting with staff and parents will be scheduled and results of the evaluation will be reviewed. Eligibility for special education is then determined.

# What Does the SPED Team Look for When Deciding Whether to Pursue Evaluation?

The major factors that the SPED team looks for that suggest an evaluation is warranted include...

- Good attendance – at or above 90% for this school year and for the previous 2 school years
  - *If a student has poor attendance (below 85%) during this school year or the previous 2 school years, we often will not pursue evaluation because we cannot justify adequate access to instruction.....they are probably struggling because they are missing a lot of instruction.*
- Previous school history: Is the student new to our district? Where and how many schools has he/she attended before?
  - *Similar to attendance: If the student has attended several schools, moved around a lot, or been homeschooled, it is difficult to justify that the problem is not simply a lack of instruction.*
- Failing or poor grades in the area of concern – not only this year but in previous years as well
- Oregon State Assessment results: Student has earned “Does Not Yet Meet” scores in the area of concern across several school years and is showing minimal improvement in his/her score
- EasyCBM scores: Student consistently earns scores within the “Intensive” zone (at or below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile) across multiple time points
- Health and/or family factors
  - Does the student have health conditions or medical diagnoses (e.g. seizures, ADD/ADHD, PTSD, anxiety, depression, etc.) that may be impacting their performance at school?
  - Are there family factors (e.g. poverty, conflict, crisis, homelessness, DHS involvement, etc.) or previous trauma (e.g. abuse, neglect, drug exposure, exposure to domestic violence) that might be impacting their performance at school?
  - *If there is a significant crisis or event going on in the student’s life that might be causing them to perform poorly at school, the SPED team may choose to postpone an evaluation until the home life “settles down.”*
- English Language Learner status: If the student is not proficient in the English language, it is difficult to determine whether his/her issues are a result of a learning barrier or a language barrier.
- Previous evaluations or referrals: Has the student been evaluated before? Is there any indication that concerns existed in previous grades, if applicable?
- Referral/discipline data: If behavior is a concern, is there a significant behavior history documented via referrals, a behavior plan, specialist involvement, point card, etc.? What strategies have been attempted to reduce the behavior?

**\*\*Please Remember:** Special education should be seen as a last resort, when all other efforts and interventions have failed. It is the most intensive form of intervention and should be reserved for our highest needs students.