

# I&RS Frequently Asked Questions

## Why does the district have INTERVENTION AND REFERRAL SERVICES?

- New Jersey Administrative Code requires all school districts to have this service. The code is quoted below:

- 6A:16-8.1 Establishment of intervention and referral services

(a) District boards of education shall establish and implement a coordinated system in each school building for the planning and delivery of intervention and referral services that are designed to assist students who are experiencing learning, behavior or health difficulties and to assist staff who have difficulties in addressing students learning, behavior or health needs. District boards of education shall choose the appropriate multidisciplinary team approach for planning and delivering the services required under this subchapter.

## What is the purpose of I&RS?

- Identify learning, behavior and health difficulties of students.
- Collect thorough information on the identified learning, behavior, and health difficulties.
- Develop and implement action plans which provide for appropriate school or community interventions or referrals to school and community resources, based on the collected data and desired outcomes for the identified learning, behavior, and health difficulties.
- Provide support, guidance, and professional development to school staff that identify learning, behavior, and health difficulties.
- Provide support, guidance, and professional development to school staff that participate in each building's system for planning and providing intervention and referral services.
- Actively involve parents or guardians in the development and implementation of intervention and referral services action plan.

## How is I&RS similar to the Child Study Team?

- Both teams support teachers and students.
- Both are comprised of professionally trained staff.
- Both are regulated by statutes.

## How is I&RS different from the Child Study Team?

- I&RS teams write Action Plans, based on teacher referrals and specific observable information. These plans are reviewed annually, at a minimum.
- CST use test results to place students into different programs, such as resource centers, in-class support, self-contained, or alternative educational placements. Child Study Teams write Individualized Education Plans, or IEPs which are reviewed annually, at a minimum.
- Typically, an I&RS Team is comprised of the Principal, Director of Instruction, Counselor, and teachers. Other specialized members, such as a reading specialist, occupational/physical/speech therapists, or the nurse may also participate.

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### **What if I receive a letter indicating that the I&RS team will meet to discuss one of my students or my child?**

- Your participation as the child's teacher or parent is important to allow for the most effective and informed process to help the child.
- You are invited to attend, and should contact the Building Coordinator, or Director, to make them aware of your ability to attend the meeting.
- If you disagree with the process, you may contact the Director of Elementary Instruction or Principal, but there are no due process rights with regard to Intervention and Referral Services; the school is permitted to conduct the meeting with or without parental support.

### **What typically happens at an I&RS meeting?**

- Meetings are held monthly.
- Teams meet with teachers and other staff who have made referrals and have requested assistance from the team.
- New Action Plans are created for new referrals and are done so by incorporating suggestions from parents, teachers, and other staff.
- Students previously referred are discussed; progress or lack of progress is noted; recommendations are made for changes, if any, to existing Action Plans.
- Child Study Team recommendations discussed, if necessary.
- Section 504 Plans are written and reviewed, if necessary.
- Monthly monitoring reports are compiled and sent to appropriate staff and family members.

### **What types of issues are typically discussed?**

- Academic failure/lack of progress
- Health issues
- Behavior Issues
- Social & Emotional issues

### **What types of recommendations are made by the I&RS Team?**

- Recommendations may range from in-class accommodations, such as seat changes, extra time on assignments, bathroom or snack breaks, focusing cues, positive reinforcement strategies, study guides, etc., to more intensive recommendations, such as a Section 504 Plan or referral to the Child Study Team for full evaluation.

### **What is a Section 504 Plan?**

- A Section 504 Plan is a legal document falling under the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act. The 504 Plan is designed to plan a program of instructional services to assist students with special needs who are in a regular education setting. A 504 Plan is not an IEP, as is required for special education students. However, a student moving from a special education to a regular education placement could be placed under a 504 Plan for a period of transition.

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## Who is eligible for a Section 504 Plan?

- A student with a physical or emotional disability, or who is recovering from a chemical dependency, or who has an impairment (e.g. Attention Deficit Disorder) that restricts on or more major life activities may be eligible for a 504 Plan. Medical documentation may be needed to determine a student's eligibility for a Section 504 Plan.

## What are "major life activities"?

- Caring for oneself
- Performing manual tasks
- Walking
- Seeing
- Hearing
- Speaking
- Breathing
- Working
- Learning

## What accommodations may be included in a Section 504 Plan?

- A student with diabetes may be given opportunities to eat in class, and visit the nurse daily for testing and/or medication.
- Assignments may be adjusted.
- Additional materials may be made available for use at home.
- Therapeutic assistance may be needed during the school day.
- The presence of additional support personnel, such as a teaching assistant, may be required.

## What if I need more information?

Any of these district employees will be able to give you more information:

- Your child's teacher
- Building Intervention and Referral Coordinator
- Building Principal