

WORK SESSION**ITEM FOR INFORMATION: SPECIAL EDUCATION REFERRAL PROCESS****SUMMARY**

The special education referral process ensures equitable identification of students who may have a disability and require specially designed instruction. It emphasizes the use of research-based interventions and data-driven decision-making to support students effectively before a referral. Once a referral is made, the process adheres to all applicable federal and state laws governing evaluation.

BACKGROUND

The special education referral process is a collaborative and systematic approach involving multiple stages:

1. Pre-Referral Intervention:

General education teams implement evidence-based interventions using a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS). These interventions address academic, social-emotional, or behavioral challenges while ensuring culturally responsive practices. Each intervention cycle typically lasts six weeks, with progress monitored to determine effectiveness.

2. Referral Stage:

If data shows limited progress after targeted interventions, a referral is initiated. Collaboration between general education and special education teams ensures all relevant data is reviewed. Parents may also directly request an evaluation.

3. Evaluation Stage:

The evaluation process must be completed within 60 school days of parent consent and includes observations, standardized assessments, and input from educators and families. Evaluations must be comprehensive and objective to determine eligibility under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

4. Eligibility Determination:

The team determines whether the student qualifies for special education services based on evaluation data. The process emphasizes accuracy and avoids unnecessary labeling, ensuring students receive tailored support.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff will present an overview of the special education referral process and timelines. No action is required.

Belong. Believe. Achieve.