Beaverton School District Special Education Referral Process

School Board Work Session

February 11, 2025

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Objectives

- Clarify the special education referral process
- Dispel common misconceptions
- Ensure evaluations are thorough, data-driven, and meaningful

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Beaverton School District Equity Lens

Our Equity Lens

In order to break the predictive link between student demographics and student success, we must apply the principle of equity to all aspects of our schools/departments.

QUESTIONS

As you make decisions to support your work, consider the following:

- Whose **voice** is and isn't represented in this decision?
- Who does this decision **benefit** or **burden**?
- Is this decision in alignment with the **BSD Equity Policy**?
- Does this decision **close** or **widen** the access, opportunity, and expectation gaps?

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Common Misconceptions

- **Myth: Any struggling student should be referred for special education.**
  - Fact: Many challenges can be addressed through general education supports and interventions.
- **Myth: Special education is a "cure-all" or "extra help."**
  - Fact: It is a targeted approach for students with specific, identified disabilities.
- **Myth: A medical diagnosis guarantees special education services.**
  - Fact: A diagnosis alone does not guarantee eligibility. The condition must also significantly impact the student's ability to access and benefit from education.

Big Picture Overview

Prior to Referral/Intervention Stage	Referral Stage	Evaluation Stage

- General education teams
- Research-based interventions (MTSS)
- Progress monitored through data collection

- Special education & general education collaboration
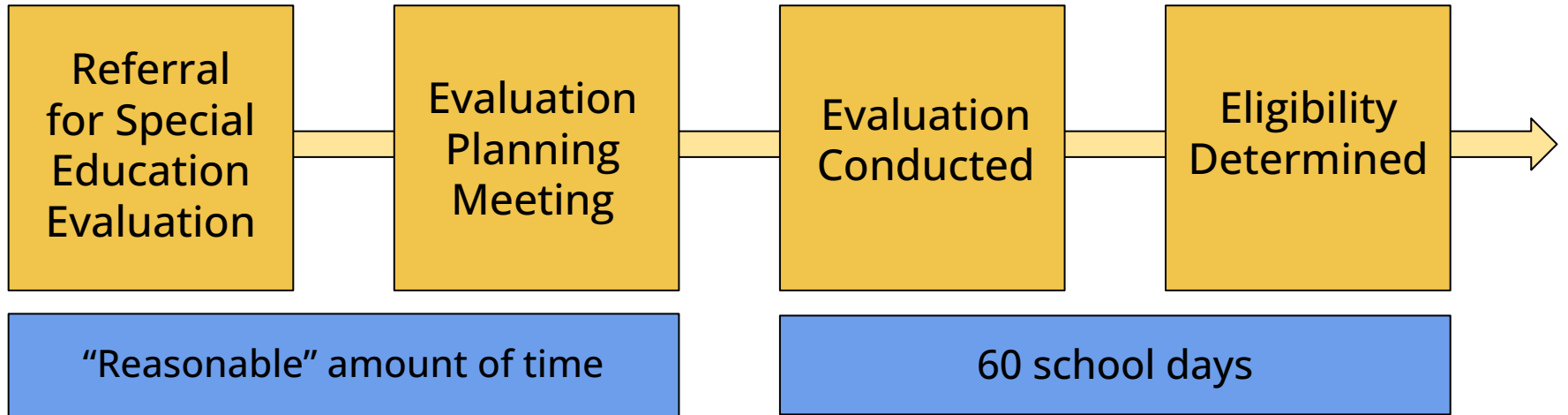- Review data

- Special education team
- Evaluate in all areas of suspected disabilities

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670

Currently in referral or evaluation

Year	Referrals	Found Eligible	Found Not Eligible
2021-2022	845	678	172
2022-2023	1019	829	190
2023-2024	850	678	172

Timeline for Evaluation Process

Referral for Special Education Evaluation

Evaluation Planning Meeting

Evaluation Conducted

Eligibility Determined

"Reasonable" amount of time

60 school days

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Referral to Special Education

- **When to Refer**:
  - School teams: Tiered interventions fail to show expected progress after an appropriate period of time
  - Parents may directly request evaluations

- **Steps**:
  - Intervention team partners with special education team
  - Data is reviewed
  - If indicated, an evaluation planning meeting is scheduled
  - Student continues to receive interventions
  - Team continues to collect data

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The Evaluation Process

Step 1: Evaluation Planning Meeting

Step 2: Parent Consent for Evaluation

Step 3: Evaluation Conducted

Step 4: Eligibility Determination

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Evaluation Stage

- **Planning Meeting**:
  - Review academic, social, and/or behavioral concerns
  - Review data
  - Determine if special education evaluation is indicated
  - Continue interventions

- **Evaluation Components**:
  - Observations, standardized assessments, informal assessments
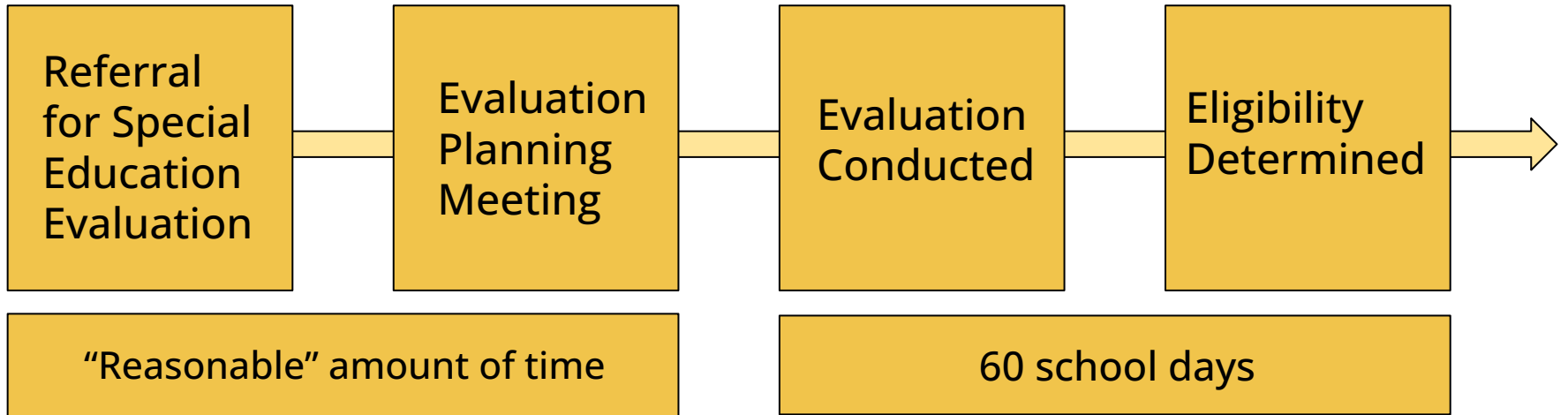 - Input from teachers, parents, specialists

Thoughtful Evaluations

- **Evaluations must be:**
  - Thorough & objective
  - Supported by multiple data sources
  - Culturally & linguistically responsive

- **Evaluations provide a comprehensive picture of a child's strengths and weaknesses to:**
  - Accurately identify if a student has a disability requiring special education services

- **Identifying a student with a disability and providing special education services is a significant decision:**
  - Affects their educational experience
  - Provides access to specialized services

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Eligibility Stage

- **Determining Eligibility**:

  - Team reviews evaluation results
  - Eligibility is determined based on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) criteria

- **Important Considerations**:

  - Thorough and objective evaluations
  - Multiple data sources to make informed decisions

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Timeline for Evaluation Process

Referral for Special Education Evaluation	Evaluation Planning Meeting	Evaluation Conducted	Eligibility Determined

"Reasonable" amount of time	60 school days

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Key Takeaways

- Not all students who struggle have disabilities

- Referrals are made by parents or school teams when a disability is suspected

- Timelines are driven by federal law (IDEA)

- Comprehensive evaluations lead to accurate identification and ensure students receive appropriate support

What questions do you have?

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