What is I&RS?

The Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) is designed for general education students and is intended as a primary way in which general education teachers or specialists can assist a student who is at risk for school problems within the general education environment. I&RS programs are not intended to replace traditional methods or resources for helping students to function effectively in school. Rather, they exist primarily to focus on particular student problems using available resources within the general education environment.

The primary purposes of the I&RS team are to identify students in need and then plan and provide appropriate intervention for those students within the general education community; to identify the responsibilities of building staff who participate in the planning and provision of intervention and referral services; to actively involve parents/guardians in the development and implementation of the I&RS plans; to review and assess the effectiveness of the services provided in achieving the outcomes identified in the intervention and referral plan; to provide professional development to general education staff members who either refer students to the I&RS or who assist in providing the intervention and referral services; and, finally, to coordinate the services of community-based social and health agencies.

An I&RS team is one of the many resources used by schools to intervene with student problems, prior to Child Study Team (CST) evaluation.

The Intervention and Referral Services Process (I&RS)

The Intervention and Referral Services Team process is a collaborative school effort between district personnel and parents to intervene when a student has been identified as making minimal academic and/or emotional progress in the regular education setting. The team or committee collects and evaluates relevant data in order to determine or identify specific barriers to student performance. Once these barriers have been identified, individualized interventions are determined and implemented through an action plan in order to alleviate the concerns. In general this model is based upon three components: the use of multiple tiers of increasingly intense interventions; a problem-solving approach to identify and evaluate instructional strategies; and an integrated data collection and assessment system to monitor student progress and guide decisions at every level. Student monitoring continues throughout this process by the identified individuals in the action plan. This process is ongoing, in that, it continues to identify and evaluate problems, solutions and progress within the student’s academic setting.

I&RS Phases

1. 1. Request for Assistance
2. 2. Information Collection
3. 3. Parent/Guardian Notification and Participation
4. 4. Problem Solve
5. 5. Develop I&RS Action Plan
6. 6. Support, Monitor and Continue the Process
7. 7. Problem resolved or referral to CST

If the I&RS process exhausts all of the available school based regular education interventions with minimal success, often, the student is referred to the CST for a comprehensive evaluation in order to gather additional information as well as to determine if the student is eligible for special education and related services. The recommendation for a CST evaluation could come directly from the I&RS team or from the parent at any time during the process.

What Intervention Is and Is Not!

The term intervention is used when teachers and other school personnel study and creatively problem solve educational issues that place a student at risk for school failure. Using a team approach that also significantly involves parents, each school carefully considers the needs of students who are identified “at risk” for learning, behavior, and health problems. After careful consideration, strategies are put in place to work with the student and effectively address the issues at hand.

By its nature, intervention is a process. It is often the case that plans are revisited and modified. In most cases, however, a successful intervention plan which is created and shaped over a period of time proves to be a powerful method tool for the at-risk student. If successful, it is preferable to special education referral which requires a student to have an identified disability and undergo an evaluation.

In some cases, intervention is not successful and a referral for special education is deemed necessary. Even in these cases, the prior period of intervention is valuable. Prior intervention will illustrate that a referral is appropriate (as required by law) and it will help inform the IEP team about strategies that have or have not produced success when it comes time to develop the written IEP. It is important that parents not see intervention as merely a waiting process or a “red tape” step for special education.

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCES ACADEMIC, BEHAVIORAL, OR HEALTH PROBLEMS.

THE TEACHER ACCESSES THE AVAILABLE RESOURCES INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM TO HELP THE STUDENT.

THE STUDENT IS SUCCESSFUL. NO FURTHER ACTION IS REQUIRED.

THE TEACHER REQUESTS HELP FROM THE INTERVENTION & REFERRAL SERVICES COMMITTEE (I&RS). THE PRINCIPAL REVIEWS THE REQUEST AND SCHEDULES THE MEETING.

THE STUDENT’S PROBLEMS ARE SIGNIFICANT. THE STUDENT RECEIVES 504 SERVICES.

THE STUDENT’S PROBLEMS ARE SEVERE. THE STUDENT IS REFERRED TO THE CHILD STUDY TEAM (CST).

THE I&RS COMMITTEE MEETS WITH THE TEACHER. AN ACTION PLAN IS DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED. FOLLOW-UP IS PROVIDED.

**FLOW CHART OF THE PRE-REFFERAL PROCESS**

THE ACTION PLAN IS SUCCESSFUL. THE I&RS COMMITTEE CONTINUES TO WORK WITH THE TEACHER AND PROVIDE SUPPORT TO THE STUDENT THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR.

**Point Road School**

**Intervention and Referral Services**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**1. Why does the school have an Intervention and Referral Committee?**

New Jersey Administrative Code (6A:16-8.1) requires all school districts to have this service. The code states:

**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.

**2. What is the purpose of the I&RS Committee?**

The purpose of this committee is to:

* 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 who identify* learning, behavior and health difficulties
* Provide support, guidance, and professional development to *school staff who 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

**3. How is the I&RS Committee similar to the Child Study Team?**

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

**4. How is the I&RS Committee 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, counselor, teachers, and the coordinator. Other specialized members, such as a reading specialist, occupational/physical/speech therapists, or the nurse may also participate
* Typically a Child Study Team is comprised of a school psychologist, a learning disabilities teacher consultant, and a social worker. Therapists, teachers, the nurse and counselors may also participate

**5. What if my child’s teacher contacts me to discuss bringing my child to the I&RS Committee?**

* 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 may request to attend this meeting, and should contact the Principal to make them aware that you would like to attend the meeting
* If you disagree with this referral, feel free to discuss your concerns with the teacher and if you are still unsure about this process, please contact the principal. Please note, however, that 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

**6. What typically happens at an I&RS Meeting?**

* Meetings are held monthly in each building
* Teams meet with teachers and other staff who have made referrals and requested assistance from the team
* Action Plans are created for new referrals; incorporating suggestions from parents, teachers, other staff
* Students previously referred are discussed; progress or lack of progress noted; recommendations made for changes, if any, to existing Action Plans
* Child Study Team recommendations discussed, if necessary
* Section 504 Plans are written and reviewed
* Monthly monitoring report is compiled

**7. What types of issues are typically discussed at these meetings?**

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

**8. 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.

**9. What is a 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.

**10. Who is eligible for a 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.

11. What are “major life activities”?

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

**12. 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

**13. What if I need more information or guidance?**

We encourage you to set up an appointment with your child’s teacher and if you still need additional information, please feel free to contact the guidance counselor, the school nurse or the building principal.