

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 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

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 collect and utilize data to write Action Plans, based on teacher/parent referrals and specific observable information. The plans focus on identified deficiencies one or two goals at a time and involve ongoing monitoring and data collection of the agreed upon strategies and charts outcomes. These plans are reviewed at least every four to six weeks to decide to continue, modify or conclude the plan. The I&RS Committee's primary focus is to assist staff with educational problems they are experiencing with their students.
- 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 IEP's which are reviewed annually, at a minimum
- Typically an I&RS Team is comprised of an administrator, counselor, teachers, and the coordinator. Other specialized members, such as a reading specialists, basic skills teachers or the nurse may also participate on an as needed basis

- 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

What if I receive a letter indicating that the I&RS team will meet to discuss my student? (Teachers)

- Your participation as the child's teacher is important to allow for the most effective and informed process to help the child
- Data sheets are often given to the child's teacher to help get a picture of the student's functioning across his or her schedule of classes. Other data will need to be gathered to support the identification of a problem as to eliminate subjective problem identification. It is important to the functioning of the committee that this information be provided
- If attending the meeting, you should be prepared to share data with the committee that would identify and support the specific problem observed in your class. Examples of data that might be presented during a meeting: test grades; absences from class; lateness to class; disciplinary write-ups; report cards, progress reports, state test performance; amount, accuracy or quality of class or homework assignments. Other methods of data collection may need to take place after meeting with the committee to establish a baseline for the target goal

What if I receive a letter indicating that the I&RS team will meet to discuss my child? (Parents)

- Your participation as the child's 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 I&RS Building Chairperson to make them aware of your ability to attend the meeting
- If you disagree with the process, you may contact the principal or the District I&RS Coordinator, 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?

- Teams meet with teachers, parents and other staff who have made referrals and requested assistance from the team
- Information is collected prior to the meeting to help identify the primary strengths and weaknesses of the student in question
- A specific problem is identified, goals for the intervention period are selected and brainstorming of possible strategies are identified and selected by the teacher
- New Action Plans are created for new referrals; Strategies for the classroom and sometimes the parent or student are identified and actively monitored for successful implementation
- Students previously referred are discussed; collected data is analyzed and progress is reviewed. Recommendations are made for changes, if any, to existing Action Plans. Decisions to continue, modify or conclude any aspect of the intervention are made
- Child Study Team recommendations are discussed, if collected data on the interventions attempted supports it

What types of issues are typically discussed?

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

Who do I contact to discuss the I&RS process further?

Every school in the district has a functioning I&RS Committee in place. You may contact the main office and ask to speak to the school's I&RS Chairperson for further information.