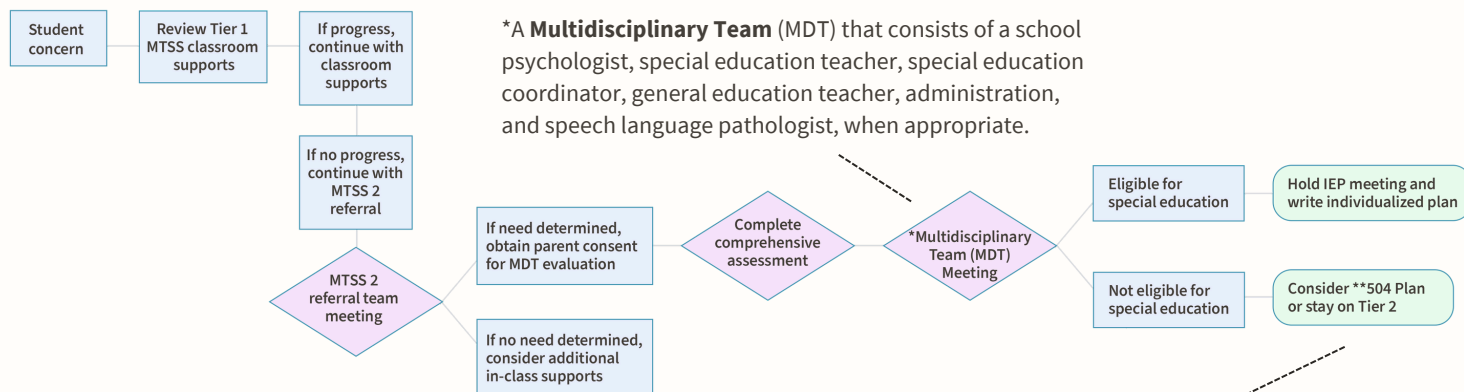


The Special Education Advocate

How to help support students who have an IEP

Evaluation for Special Education



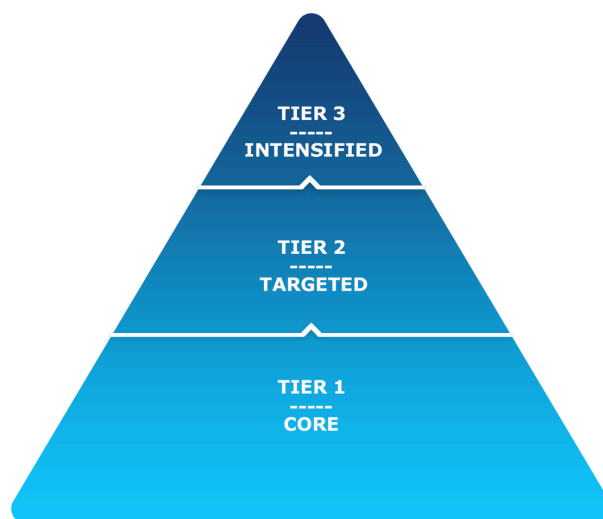
A **504 Plan is a blueprint for how the school will support a student with a disability and remove barriers to learning through classroom accommodations. The goal is to give the student equal access at school. A 504 plan is covered under the Rehabilitation Act and is not part of special education.

What is MTSS?

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is a framework used by many schools to screen all students and provide for early intervention of students who may be struggling with academic or behavioral challenges.

The goal of MTSS is to identify and support students with higher level needs and to provide more targeted support to assist them in catching up to their grade level peers.

There are three tiers to MTSS with all students being served at tier 1. Targeted or tier 2 interventions are traditionally provided for about 15 percent of the student population with 5 percent of students receiving the highest level of intensive intervention.



All kids need a little help, a little hope, and someone who believes in them. — Earvin "Magic" Johnson

The Evaluation Process

For a student to qualify for Special Education, there is a formal process in which a student must be referred and evaluated. When concerns are initially noted in a student's academic or behavioral performance, the first step is to contact the classroom teacher to review current programming and support.

If student concerns continue to exist, teacher may make a referral to the Multi-Tiered System of Support or MTSS Tiered 2 Team. The MTSS is a group of diverse educators who meet to review student data to determine if the student can be supported in the general education setting successfully with teacher support or if a referral to special education needs to occur to establish goals, individualized instruction, and to allow for classroom accommodations.

When a referral to special education is recommended by the MTSS, a school psychologist will reach out to parents/legal guardians for consent to proceed with testing. Testing will determine if the student qualifies under one of the 13 categories of special education as identified

under the federal law of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

If data supports special education eligibility, a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meeting will be held to discuss the results, followed by an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting. At this time, the student's team will individually set goals and services to meet those goals. An IEP meeting occurs annually or more often as needed.

For students who are evaluated and are not found to be eligible in one of the 13 categories of special education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, yet are still found to have a disability that requires accommodations within the classroom, the MDT team may suggest a 504 Plan. A 504 Plan is NOT part of special education, but rather a program overseen by the Rehabilitation Act. As such, the 504 Plan has different requirements and students who participate do not have annual goals or benchmarks, related services, or individualized instructions. Students with 504 Plans are provided classroom accommodations to support them in their learning.

IEP

- Must fit one of the IDEA disability eligibility categories
- Provides specifically designed instruction, not just accommodations
- Has goals and progress monitoring
- Procedural safeguards for parents
- School required to include parents
- IDEA/Dept. of Ed and states are the overseers
- All public schools must make this available to eligible students
- Annual meeting with revisions

BOTH

- FREE for parents
- Should meet the child's needs
- Requires a disability and evaluation: evaluation process is different for each situation

504 PLAN

- Any disability
- Focuses on how the child learns
- Limited rights and recourse if parent is not satisfied
- No goals or progress monitoring
- Not a special education program
- Overseen by OCR and HSS
- School does not have to seek parental input to develop plan
- School can change plan at any time without parental input
- Applies to any school receiving public funds