



## **Education Services**

### **Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS)**

MTSS is a framework that helps educators provide academic and behavioral strategies for students with various needs. Within this framework, several programs work together to best serve every student. Data-based problem solving is used to take a comprehensive approach to educating the whole child by making systematic improvements across the campus.

### **Response to Intervention (RtI)**

For students having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts and open enrollment charter schools must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (RtI). The implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts and charter schools to meet the needs of all struggling students.

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a proactive approach to help all students. It is most often used for struggling learners, but may also be used to improve student behavior. Students are provided with interventions at increasing levels of intensity to meet their needs and progress is closely monitored by their classroom teacher(s) and RTI Team. The amount of time each student spends in RTI varies as each approach is personalized. The ultimate goal is student success and the RTI Coordinator will work with other educational professionals as needed to provide additional testing and/or supports. The Special Services program provides a comprehensive program for each student between the ages of three and twenty-one who has been identified as a student with a disability.

### **Special Education and Section 504 Services**

Specific guidelines and requirements are set by the state to determine a student's eligibility for services. Consideration of a student's need for special education services is initiated by a referral that may be made by the parents, a physician, a community agency, and/or school personnel. An ARD (Admission, Review, and Dismissal) Committee composed of administrators, teachers, parents, and others will meet to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and determine placement.

## **Special Education Referrals**

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his/her guardian may contact the school to learn about the school's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. A parent may request an evaluation for Special Education or Section 504 services at any time.

If a parent makes a written request for an initial evaluation for special education services, the school must respond no later than 15 school days after receiving the request. At that time, the district or charter school must give the parent a prior written notice of whether it agrees to or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards*. If the school district or charter school agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

A request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally and does not need to be in writing. Districts and charter schools must still comply with all federal prior written notice and procedural safeguard requirements and the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district or charter school to respond within the 15-school-day timeline.

If the district or charter school decides to evaluate the student, it must complete the student's initial evaluation and evaluation report no later than 45 school days from the day it receives a parent's written consent to evaluate the student. However, if the student is absent from school during the evaluation period for three or more school days, the evaluation period will be extended by the number of school days equal to the number of school days that the student is absent.

There is an exception to the 45-school-day timeline. If a district or charter school receives a parent's consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30th due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.

Upon completing the evaluation, the district or charter school must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost.

Additional information regarding special education is available from the district or charter school in a companion document titled *Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process*, located on our website. <https://www.artsacademics.org/academies/resources/special-education-resources/>

## **Section 504 Referrals**

Each school district or charter school must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in the district's or charter school's Section 504 program. Districts and charter schools must also implement a system of procedural safeguards that includes notice, an opportunity for a parent or guardian to examine relevant records, an impartial hearing with an

opportunity for participation by the parent or guardian and representation by counsel, and a review procedure.

### **English Learners**

A student identified as an English Learner (EL) may have services provided through the school. Students will enter the program and continue to demonstrate eligibility through the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS). The Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will meet multiple times each year to review and consider the classroom and testing needs of all English Learners.

### **Resources**

The following websites provide information and resources for students with disabilities and their families.

- [Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process](#)
- [Partners Resource Network](#)
- [Special Education Information Center](#)
- [Texas Project First](#)
- [Texas Transition and Employment Guide](#)
- [Fort Worth Academy of Fine Arts Special Populations Resources](#)
- [Procedural Safeguards - English](#)
- [Procedural Safeguards - Spanish](#)