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## **Child Identification (Child Find)**

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In accordance with federal regulations, the District assumes responsibility for the location, identification and evaluation of all children from birth through age 21 who require special education and related services. All children who are suspected of having a disability and who are in need of special education are part of the child find process in our District.

This includes students who are:

- advancing from grade to grade;
- enrolled by their parents in private elementary or private secondary schools, including religious schools, located in our District (regardless of the severity of their disability); and
- wards of the state and children who are highly mobile, such as migrant and homeless children.

In addition, our District identifies students (Kindergarten through Grade 12) who may be gifted or talented.

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### **❖ Role of the Planning and Placement Team**

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The Planning and Placement Teams (PPT) in each of our schools ensure that the student meets the eligibility requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act as amended in 2004 (“IDEA”) and state regulations.

In all cases, the Planning and Placement Team will not determine that a student has a disability if the suspected disability is because of a lack of instruction in reading or math. If the student is not proficient in English, our Planning and Placement team will not identify the student as disabled if the limited English proficiency is the cause for the suspected disability.

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### **❖ Child Identification Process**

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The District has a child identification process that includes the location, identification and evaluation of a child suspected of having a disability or suspected of being gifted and talented. Our Special Education Department coordinates the child identification process. The department and its staff use a variety of community resources and conduct many systematic activities in our efforts to identify children requiring special services. Our District staff members consult with appropriate representatives of private school students attending private schools located in our District such as the student’s parents, teachers and administrators of those private schools located in our District in carrying out this process. The District assures that this process for students attending private or religious schools located in our District is comparable to activities undertaken for students with disabilities in our public schools.

### **Identification of Children Between the Ages of Birth to Age Three**

The State’s early intervention system, the Connecticut Birth to Three System under the IDEA, Part C, (the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the federal special education law) is

responsible for identifying and providing services to children between the ages of birth and age three who are eligible to receive such services due to developmental delays or documented physical or mental conditions that have a high probability of resulting in developmental delay. Because of their overlapping responsibilities, the State Department of Education and the Connecticut Birth to Three System have an interagency agreement intended to ensure that children with disabilities are provided needed services in a timely manner. The State Department of Education asks Districts to ensure that children between the ages of birth to three are referred to the Connecticut Birth to Three System for an evaluation. Therefore, when our District becomes informed of a child between the ages of birth to three who has or may have a disability, we will either (a) make a child referral directly to the Connecticut Birth to Three System via the statewide toll-free number and/or (b) provide the parent with the information so that they can make the referral themselves.

Parents may opt out of and/or opt not to be referred to the Connecticut Birth to Three System. They may request an evaluation from the District to determine if their child has a disability that may require special education. These parents are entitled to an evaluation from our District, even if the child is between the ages of birth to age 3. Our District is responsible for providing an evaluation but is not responsible for the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for eligible children until the child is age 3. In such circumstances, no child or family should be instructed to wait for an evaluation until their child turns age 3.

## **Transition to Special Education from the Connecticut Birth to Three System**

The purpose of transition planning for children in the Connecticut Birth to Three System is to ensure that eligible children and their families experience a smooth and effective transition from the Connecticut Birth to Three System to our District.

- The District receives child specific information from the Connecticut Birth to Three System on those children who have been determined eligible and are receiving early intervention services. The District has a system of collecting and maintaining this data and other child specific information in order to track children receiving early intervention services over time to ensure that they are timely evaluated and provided a FAPE by age 3.
- The District has an assigned transition contact that is the primary person responsible for working with the Connecticut Birth to Three System and their programs on transition as well as one or more individuals who will attend all 90-day transition conferences convened by the Connecticut Birth to Three System. The District has the capacity to ensure the availability of school personnel to attend 90-day transition conferences throughout the calendar year – including during the summer months.
- The District will schedule a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting to discuss the referral of a child to the District. The District will schedule the PPT meeting sufficiently early (preferably soon after the 90-day transition conference) to ensure that an eligible child will receive a FAPE no later than their third birthday. Identification of PPT meeting dates can be a part of the discussion at the 90-day transition planning conference and a component of the child's written transition plan developed at the transition planning conference with the birth to three program, the family and the District.
- The District ensures that the child's birth to three providers are part of the PPT decision-making process and that the child's birth to three information, including the

child's Individualized Family Service Plan ("IFSP") is used in the decision-making process.

- If the child is scheduled to transition from the Birth to Three program to the District, and that child turns three years of age during the summer months, the District will determine if the child is eligible for a FAPE and whether the child requires extended school year services (ESY). If the child is eligible for the provision of FAPE and requires ESY services, the District will ensure the implementation of the IEP no later than the child's third birthday, regardless of the fact that this occurs during the summer months. If it is determined that the child is eligible for FAPE and does not require ESY services, then the IEP will be implemented on the first day of school.
- The Department of Education and the Connecticut Birth to Three System agree that late referrals to the Birth to Three System (33 months and older) should be made simultaneously to our District and the Connecticut Birth to Three System with the ultimate goal of ensuring that these children, if eligible, are provided with FAPE by their third birthday.
- In cases of children who are referred to the District at 34 or 35 months of age, the ultimate goal is to ensure that all eligible children are provided with a FAPE no later than their third birthday. In situations where that may not be possible, a "reasonable standard" would be the 45 school day rule – so that no more than 45 school days should pass from the date of referral to the implementation of the child's IEP, if that child is eligible for FAPE. Thus, a referral for a child who is close to age three may result in IEP services initiated after the child's third birthday.

## **Identification of Children Below School-Age**

For children who are not involved in the Connecticut Birth to Three System even under the age of 3, our District conducts on-going child find activities which include community screenings as well as individual child specific screenings to determine if a child requires further evaluation (and, to determine the eligibility of children age 3 and above for special education and related services.)

Through this process, children who may require special education services are referred to the Planning and Placement Team for consideration for further evaluation. Parents and other referring parties may also contact the special education department to refer a child to a PPT.

## **Identification of School Age Students (5-21 Years of Age)**

- **Transfer Students**

The principal or designee in each of our schools reviews the records of any new student transferring from another school system whether transferring from a District within Connecticut or from out of state. If the records indicate that the student has been identified as a student with disabilities and that the student requires special education and related services, the student is immediately enrolled in school and, in consultation with parents, given an appropriate program including services comparable to those described on the student's IEP. If the Individualized Education Program from the sending school requires revision, a Planning and Placement Team meeting is held at the earliest possible opportunity to develop, adopt and implement a new IEP. For students transferring from another state, our District may also conduct an evaluation if determined to be necessary and develop a new IEP, if appropriate.

- **Currently Enrolled Students**

Students attending our District schools receive the ongoing attention of professional personnel to help support their successful learning. Students whose behavior, attendance, or progress in school is considered unsatisfactory, at a marginal level of acceptance (i.e., potential drop-outs), or are suspended repeatedly, are promptly referred to a PPT by completing the District's standard referral form and notifying the parents within 5 school days of the referral by completing the Notice of Referral to PPT. A PPT is scheduled to discuss the referral concerns and to decide how the PPT will proceed. Such students are identified through anecdotal records, conversations with parents, individual performance records and standardized test results (including, but not limited to, the Connecticut Smarter Balanced Assessments or Connecticut Mastery/Academic Performance Tests).

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## **Alternative Procedures and Programs Prior to PPT Referral**

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Before our District personnel refer a student to a Planning and Placement Team, alternative procedures and programs in regular education are explored and implemented where appropriate. Each school in our District has a team that provides a variety of alternative strategies to the teacher. This team is called the Student/Teacher Assistance Team (STAT). Parents are encouraged to collaborate with the teacher and other involved staff during this time.

Parents or school personnel may request assistance from the school's Student/Teacher Assistance Team (STAT). The team works collaboratively with the classroom teacher and parents to develop and document strategies to assist the student within the regular education program. If the student's problems or difficulties persist, a prompt referral to a PPT is made.

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## **❖ Referral Form**

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A standard referral form is used to document all referrals to the Planning and Placement Team. This form is available at the Special Education Department or in each of our District's schools. Concerned parents and/or staff may complete the form. Once the form is completed, it is given to the school administrator or his/her designee. The completion of this referral form initiates the Planning and Placement Team process.