

MARTHA'S VINEYARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WHAT TO DO IF I HAVE CONCERNS WITH MY CHILD'S PERFORMANCE IN SCHOOL

1. Talk to the school

- Have conversations with the teacher and/or school counselor
- Have discussion around areas of concern
- Teacher obtains evidence, classroom observations, work samples, data, universal screenings, progress monitoring, etc.:
 - team determines what interventions/supports could be utilized to address the area(s) of concern/limited - no progress
 - implement changes (ie, seating, different presentation of material, use of materials, etc.)
 - review progress of changes in 4-6 weeks (no longer than 8 wks.)
 - implement specific interventions
 - continue this cycle: review & assess progress (this process is called response to intervention)

2. If there is a concern that your child may have a disability*: It is suggested that #1 above questions/steps take place prior to a referral for determination of eligibility for special education. Special education is reserved for students who have been determined to have a disability *and* require specially designed instruction and/or a related service.

Determination of eligibility for special education is a complex process.

- A. An evaluation for Special Education examines all areas of the suspected disability(ies). Assessments are conducted to include: Educational History, Observations, classroom participation, and other evidence based on suspected disability.
- B. Sometimes parents have information or reports from outside services/providers. The team will consider the findings along with their assessments. The district(s) reserve their right to conduct their own evaluation in order to make eligibility decisions regarding special education.
- C. Assessments conducted to help the team determine:
 - 1. Does the child have a disability?** What type? Autism, Developmental Delay, Intellectual Impairment, Sensory Impairment (hearing/vision/deaf-Blind), Neurological Impairment, Emotional Impairment, Communication Impairment, Physical Impairment, Specific Learning Disability
 - 2. If a disability is determined the team asks: is the lack of progress a result of the disability?** There needs to be a direct link between the lack of progress and disability, and not a result of other factors such as attendance, missed or fragmented instruction, socio-economic factors, limited English, etc.
 - 3. If yes to above, the team determines: if specially designed instruction and/or related service is necessary.**
 - a. If yes, an IEP is to be developed.
 - b. If No to any of the three questions, the team may determine other accommodations, supports, or interventions.

3. How does this happen? A referral can be made by teacher/team, parent, etc.

- a) If made by the school, the parent will have already met with the school for a child study team meeting. The team sends a referral packet to the Special Education Office.
- b) If made directly by Parent/guardian they need to make a request (letter/email is preferable, however a verbal request is acceptable as well) to the classroom teacher or administration of their child's school or they may contact the MVYPS District Special Education Office.

4. Evaluation Process once a referral is received:

- If a parent makes a referral – school must respond to parent within 5 school days.
- The district will send a packet to the parent/guardian. It will contain a notice of proposal (N1) and consent form(N1A) along with procedural safeguards (information regarding process/rights).
- Parents may receive a call or email to acknowledge the receipt of the request and at times clarify or provide information to help the team determine what assessments would be necessary.
- The consent form must be signed and returned to the district in order for the evaluation to take place.
- Once the parent's consent is received by the Special Education office, the assessments will be conducted within 30 school days. This gives time for the student to demonstrate ability in multiple areas, settings, and the various assessments to be conducted by the evaluators, etc.
- The information is gathered and reports written. A meeting date/time will be set and an invitation will be sent to parents.
- The team will meet to review findings for consideration of eligibility and a determination is made by the team.

5. Determination: If your child is found to have a disability and require specially designed instruction they are eligible for special education. An Individual Education Program (IEP) and determination of placement will be developed by the team;

This plan will be sent to the parents. Parents need to review the documents, sign and return to the district.

**The plan can not be implemented without the parent consent/signature on the documents received by the district.

Any questions, please contact the Special Education Office.

Hope T. MacLeod, Director of Student Support Services,

508-693-2007 x 120; hmacleod@mvyps.org

***Additional Resources-**

1. Parent's Guide to Special Education <http://fcsn.org/parents-guide>
2. Federation for Children with Special Needs <http://www.fcsn.org/>
3. Is Special Education the Right Service (*this document has a list and definition of educational disabilities included)
http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/ta/elig_drft01.pdf
4. Procedural Safeguards <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/prb/>

****Please note school districts determine educational disabilities. If you have a concern about a medical diagnosis please contact your pediatrician.**