

REQUESTING AN INITIAL EVALUATION OF A CHILD

The Berlin Public Schools recognize their responsibilities to find students with disabilities, to determine eligibility for special education services and to provide a free and appropriate education to students with disabilities within the least restrictive environment. Students aged 3 to 21 may be identified as eligible for services due to physical, emotional, medical, intellectual or learning disabilities, as well as impairments in vision, hearing or speech and language.

The Berlin Public Schools provide a full range of special education and related services programs for students aged 3-21. These services include evaluations, development of an individualized education plan (IEP), specialized instruction to address areas of weakness, related services such as counseling or speech/language therapy if warranted, and teacher consultation. Professional development activities are provided to enable staff to keep abreast of cutting edge information they need to provide quality instruction and services to students with disabilities. Special education teachers, school psychologists, speech language pathologists, school social workers, occupational therapists, physical therapists and paraprofessionals provide services to students with disabilities in our schools. For more information regarding these services, you may contact Pupil Personnel Services at 860-828-6581.

The Referral Process:

Parents and teachers can refer students. Before a student is referred to the Planning and Placement Team, alternative strategies are explored and implemented within the student's general education classroom. Referrals for special education usually originate with a school assistance team (SAT). Prior to submitting a referral for determination of a disability, teachers must show evidence of having provided a wide array of appropriate teaching strategies, curriculum interventions, and individualized teaching strategies. Students should be provided the opportunity to benefit from instruction through all tiers of the Scientific and Research Based Intervention process (SRBI).

If a parent would like to make a referral, please contact the school principal for elementary students and the student's school counselor for Berlin High School and McGee students to discuss your concern. You will be provided with a referral form to complete. Assistance can be provided to you in completing the form and discussing the process. Please return the form to your school principal or school counselor as referenced above. Once the form is returned, a Planning and Placement Team meeting (PPT) will be scheduled to discuss your referral.

Following a referral to special education, a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting is held where the student's teachers, parents, the building administrator, and the pupil personnel staff work as a team to review information about the student from previous records, data from interventions implemented in the school, and information from parents, teachers, physicians, and other relevant sources. A student may be observed and/or tested as part of the diagnostic, information-gathering process. The Planning and Placement Team selects assessment tools to be used to identify the student's strengths and needs. When assessments are recommended they will be administered by more than one qualified professional. Following the gathering of standardized and observational information, results are shared and recommendations for appropriate action are considered. This is done at a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting.