# Preparing for Your Student's Initial Eligibility Meeting for Special Education

Thank you for your participation in the special education eligibility processes on behalf your student. This document is designed to help outline what to expect at each stage of this process.

## PARENT/GUARDIAN CHECKLIST:
### Check Each Item as it Happens

○ **Referral**: You or your student's teacher, doctor, or outside provider has referred your student for an evaluation for special education eligibility.

○ **SST**: If your child attends MPS, you can expect your student to be referred to the **Student Support Team**, a group of educators who work to develop, implement, and monitor general education supports. This process is available to all MPS students. (SST Chair contacts below)

○ **Consent for Evaluation**: The district is required to assess and evaluate your student in any area(s) of suspected disability. Your Team Chairperson will send you paperwork that outlines the proposed assessment. The evaluation period begins upon receipt of signed consent.

○ **Testing and Evaluation**: Your student is evaluated by the Evaluation Team. *This takes up to 30 school days*.

○ **Reports**: Your Team Chairperson will get you copies to review two days before the meeting

○ **Eligibility Meeting**:  See Agenda

## TEAM MEETING AGENDA:
### Planning for the Meeting with the School

1. Introductions and Signing In

2. Discussion about Student Strengths and Areas of Interest (students 14 years or older should be part of this discussion)

3. Review of Evaluation Results and General Education Performance: Please be sure you have read the reports as this is a great time for questions and discussion.

4. Determination of Eligibility:  The Team will consider all sources data in addressing the following questions:

   a. Does the student have a disability? (see next page for information on disability categories)
   b. Is the student making effective progress?
   c. Is the student's lack of progress the result of the student's disability?
   d. Does the student require specially designed instruction to make effective progress?

5. Develop Appropriate Supports: The Team will identify and develop potential supports (e.g. IEP, 504, ICAP) based on the

## Team Chairs

| School | Name | Email Address |
|---|---|---|
| PreK | Jayme Szymczak | jszymczak@miltonps.org |
| Collicot | Alison McGrath | amcgrath@miltonps.org |
| Cunningham | Lindsay Moonan | lmoonan@miltonps.org |
| Tucker | Maggie Wagner | mwagner@miltonps.org |
| Glover | Elizabeth Bowen | ebowen@miltonps.org |
| Pierce (Grade 6) | Suzanne Shaw | sshaw@miltonps.org |
| Pierce (Grades 7 & 8) | Tracy Grandeau | tgrandeau@miltonps.org |
| Milton High School | Gaby Diller | gdiller@miltonps.org |

## SST Chairs

| Grades | Name | Email Address |
|---|---|---|

| K-5 | Maureen Butler | mbutler@miltonps.org |
| 6-12 | Caroline Mannion | cmannion@miltonps.org |

Parent's Notice of Procedural Rights and Safeguards: https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/prb/

## Federal and state guidelines and regulations outline the categories in which students qualify for Special Education.

These categories are for the purposes of the PROVISION OF IEP SERVIES and are not mean to replace any MEDICAL DIAGNOSIS your student's medical provider may provide. As you review your student's evaluation results, note these are the categories and definitions which will be discussed at the Team Meeting, so familiarizing yourself with these terms and categories before the meeting may be helpful.

**(a) *Autism* -** A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction.

**(b) *Developmental Delay*** - The learning capacity of a young child (3–9 years old) is significantly limited, impaired, or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: receptive and/or expressive language; cognitive abilities; physical functioning; social, emotional, or adaptive functioning; and/or self-help skills.

**(c) *Intellectual Disability*** - The permanent capacity for performing cognitive tasks, functions, or problem solving is significantly limited or impaired and is exhibited by more than one of the following: a slower rate of learning; disorganized patterns of learning; difficulty with adaptive behavior; and/or difficulty understanding abstract concepts. Such term shall include students with mental retardation.

**(d) *Sensory Disability*** – Hearing and Vision/Sight disabilities fall into this category.

**(e) *Neurological Disability*** - The capacity of the nervous system is limited or impaired with difficulties exhibited in one or more of the following areas: the use of memory, the control and use of cognitive functioning, sensory and motor skills, speech, language, organizational skills, information processing, affect, social skills, or basic life functions. The term includes students who have received a traumatic brain injury.

**(f) *Emotional Disability*** - As defined under federal law at 34 CFR §300.8(c)(4), the student exhibits one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects educational performance: an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. The determination of disability shall not be made solely because the student's behavior violates the school's discipline code, because the student is involved with a state court or social service agency, or because the student is socially maladjusted, unless the Team determines that the student has a serious emotional disturbance.

**(g) *Communication Disability*** - The capacity to use expressive and/or receptive language is significantly limited, impaired, or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: speech, such as articulation and/or voice; conveying, understanding, or using spoken, written, or symbolic language. The term may include a student with impaired articulation, stuttering, language impairment, or voice impairment if such impairment adversely affects the student's educational performance.

**(h) *Physical Disability*** - The physical capacity to move, coordinate actions, or perform physical activities is significantly limited, impaired, or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: physical and motor tasks; independent movement; performing basic life functions. The term shall include severe orthopedic impairments or impairments caused by congenital anomaly, cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures, if such impairment adversely affects a student's educational performance.

**(i) *Health Disability*** - A chronic or acute health problem such that the physiological capacity to function is significantly limited or impaired and results in one or more of the following: limited strength, vitality, or alertness including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli resulting in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment. The term shall include health impairments due to asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit with hyperactivity disorder,

diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, and sickle cell anemia, if such health impairment adversely affects a student's educational performance.

**(j) _Specific Learning Disability_** - The term means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. (Dyslexia, Dyscalculia…)

# WHAT'S the Difference? IEP? 504? ICAP?

IEPs, 504s, and ICAPs are all different mechanisms to outline supports students can receive. Each has its own purpose and place, and the right document is important. Familiarizing yourself with these terms before an Eligibility Meeting may be helpful.

| IEP: Individualized Educational Program | 504: Accommodation Plan | ICAP: Individualized Curriculum Accommodation |
|---|---|---|
| Student must have an identified disability and require special education services | Student must have an identified disability and require classroom accommodations | Student may or may not have a disability, and requires short- term interventions to support any area of deficit or |
| Goals and services in the IEP are provided by special education staff | Accommodations are provided by general education staff | Supplementary supports and individualized classroom accommodations are provided |
| • Meetings organized by Team Chairperson | • Meetings organized by Team Chairperson (elementary) and Guidance Counselor (secondary) | • Meetings organized by SST (Student Support Team) Chairperson |
| • Yearly meeting to review progress and services | • Yearly meeting to review progress and services | • Meetings held every 6-8 weeks during intervention period |
| • Three-year reevaluation to discuss continuation of services | • Three-year reevaluation to discuss continuation of accommodations | |