

Navigating the World of MTSS/I&RS and Special Education

Presented by:

Derek Ressa, Executive Director of
Student Support Services

Elizabeth Asamoah, Supervisor
Counseling, Health, & Wellness



welcome



HPSD Mission & Vision

- Support the whole child by ensuring equitable access to academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports that foster growth, independence, problem-solving, self-awareness, inclusivity, and a love of learning.
- Build a collaborative community by partnering with staff, families, and community members to create a safe, nurturing, and diverse environment grounded in kindness, high expectations, and teamwork that empowers students to thrive.

Intervention & Referral Services



What do I do when my child is struggling?

Who can refer a child to Intervention and Referral Services?

- Teacher
- Administrator
- School Counselor
- Parent/Guardian

Who can help me? The I&RS Team

Teachers: Identify students who need additional help based on data, and then to implement intervention plans with fidelity.

School Counselors & Interventionists: Ensure and monitor the implementation of plans, and communicate with parents and students.

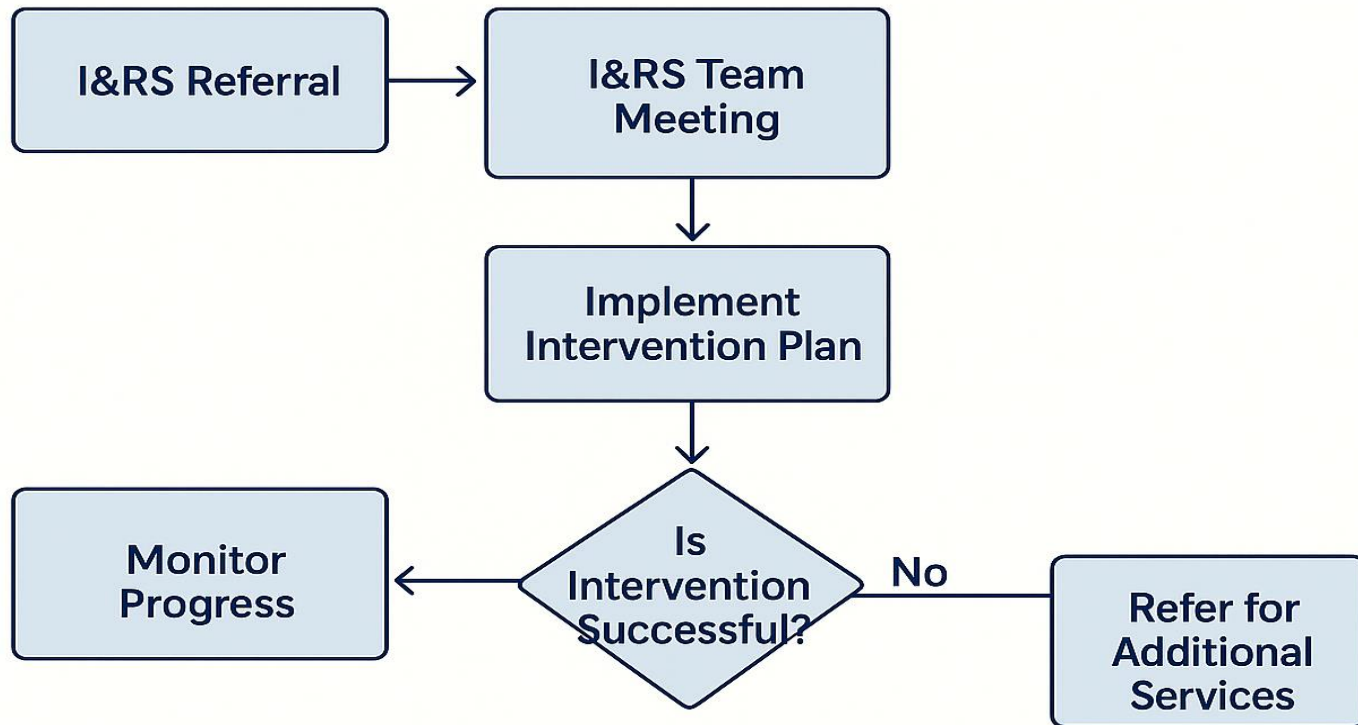
Parents: Attend meetings (when available), communicate with the school about their child's needs, limit student absences and tardies so that interventions are delivered consistently, and provide feedback about the intervention support plan.

Students (secondary level) : Self-advocate, familiarize themselves with their plans, participate in meetings, and provide input.

Administrators: Provide time, professional development, and other resources to teachers as needed in order to support student outcomes.

A look at the Intervention & Referral Services (I&RS) process

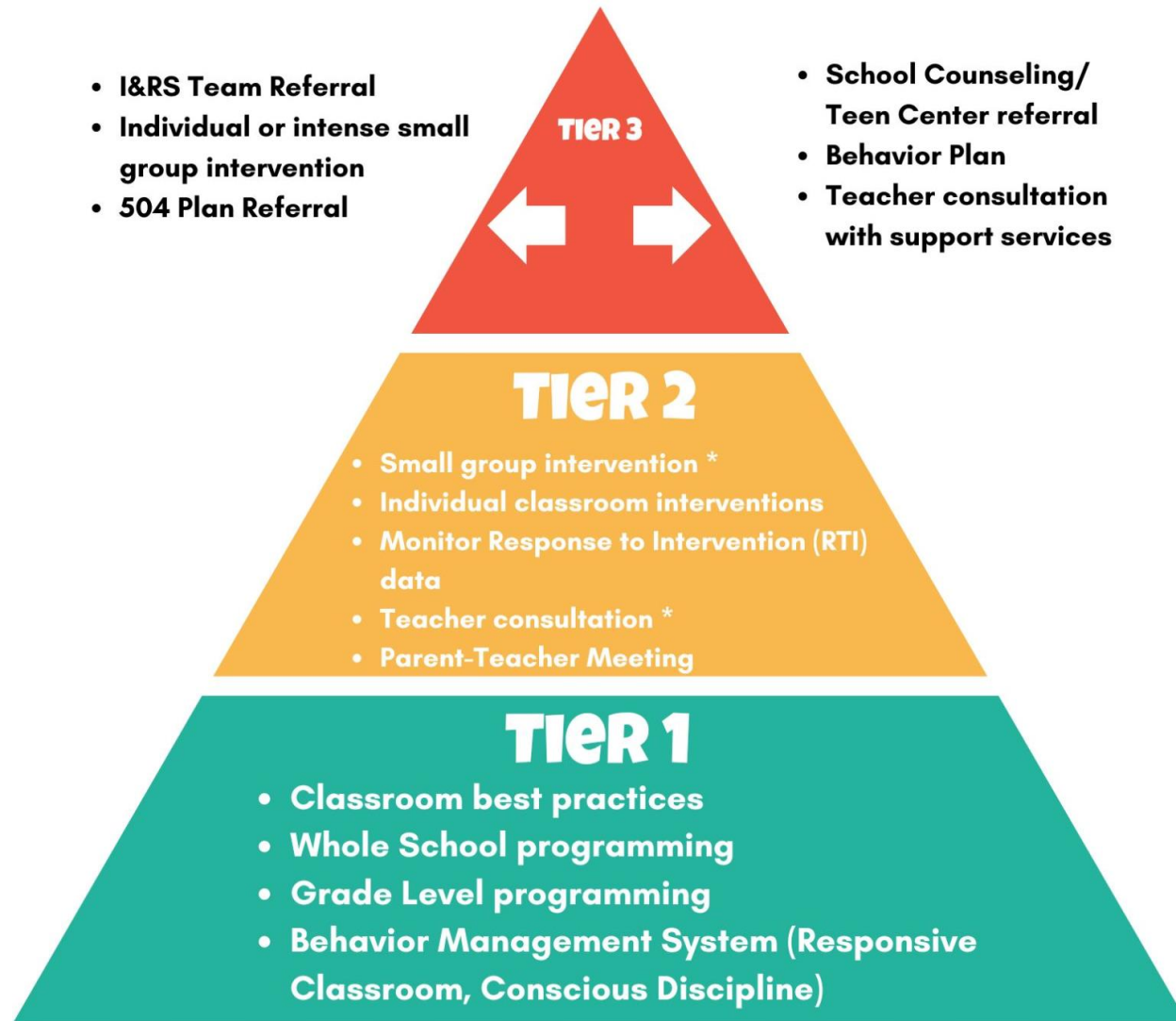
Intervention & Referral Services Process in New Jersey Schools



General Education Interventions

- General education staff maintain **written documentation** including:
 - ❑ The type of interventions utilized,
 - ❑ The frequency and duration of each intervention, and
 - ❑ The effectiveness of each intervention
- When it is determined through analysis of relevant documentation and data that interventions have not adequately addressed the educational difficulties and the student is not making progress, the student shall be **referred** for an evaluation

Multi-Tiered System Support (MTSS)



Scenarios

- Ida - Ida is a 3rd grader who has transferred to Bartle School from a neighboring district. She is an ML student who is about a year below grade level in reading comprehension. Her parents are very supportive of the school but have limited availability due to their work schedules. She has struggled in English Language Arts and reading and is starting to get very discouraged. What type of I&RS plan could be created for her situation?
- Ronald - Ronald is an excitable and energetic first grader at Irving School who has difficulty regulating his behavior. He is very bright and capable and seems to be able to grasp concepts quickly and easily. However, his off-task behavior gets in the way of his ability to attend to teacher directions and also is distracting to other students in the class. What type of I&RS plan could be created for her situation?
- Sam - Sam is a 7th grader that has been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. He is a very high functioning student and has gotten good grades but has various social difficulties and in many cases acts like a provocative victim, making comments that are inappropriate and inserting himself into conversations causing peers to distance themselves and even make unkind comments to him. He is performing on grade level for English language arts but below grade level in math.
- **Note: is important to recognize that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to intervention. These plans are individually tailored.**

General Education Interventions

- Interventions in the general education setting shall be provided to students exhibiting academic difficulties and shall be utilized, as appropriate, **prior to** referring a student for an evaluation of eligibility for special education and related services.
- However, intervention strategies may not be utilized to delay or deny a timely initial evaluation for children suspected of having a disability.

“Child Find”

- Under the IDEA, states and local districts have an **affirmative**, ongoing obligation of to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities residing within the jurisdiction that either have or are suspected of having disabilities and need special education as a result of those disabilities.
- This includes 1) children who are suspected of being a child with a disability under and in need of special education, **even though they are advancing from grade to grade**; and (2) highly mobile children, including migrant children.



- In 1990, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act was amended and renamed IDEA.
- The **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** is a four-part piece of American legislation that ensures students with a disability are provided with Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) that is tailored to their individual needs.
- In 2001 **the No Child Left Behind Act** reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965.
- In 2015 **Every Student Succeeds Act** was an act of Congress that took over where NCLB left off.
- It focuses on:
 - access to learning opportunities focused on higher-order thinking skills
 - multiple measures of equity
 - resource equity
 - evidence-based interventions.

This includes a push for more inclusive practices for students with disabilities.

Evaluation Process

- Timeline to complete evaluation for special education & related services
- Common evaluations (academic, behavioral, learning, adaptive)
- Eligibility Determination
- IEP Program Implementation
- Goals & Objectives created and monitored



- **Free Appropriate Public Education** is an educational right of all children in the United States that is guaranteed by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- **LRE (Least Restrictive Environment)** It is NOT a place — it's a principle that guides a child's education program.

Questions?

Who can I contact if I have a question that is about my student?

I&RS/MTSS: If you have a student without an IEP (general education), your chain of contact is:

Teacher → School Counselor → Building Principal → Ms. Asamoah → Dr. Ressa

Special Education & Related Services: If you have a student with an IEP (special education), your chain of contact is:

Teacher → Case Manager → Building Principal → Ms. Coppola → Dr. Ressa

Thank you!

We are happy to answer any immediate questions you may have.

If it is broader and specific to a particular department, please email us so that we can provide a more thorough explanation or response.

Elizabeth Asamoah (I&RS/MTSS) - easamoah@hpschools.net

Derek Ressa (Special Education & Related Services) - dressa@hpschools.net

Michele Rodrigues (Basic Skills) - mrodrigues@hpschools.net