


Special Programs Criteria

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Waterford Public Schools

Background

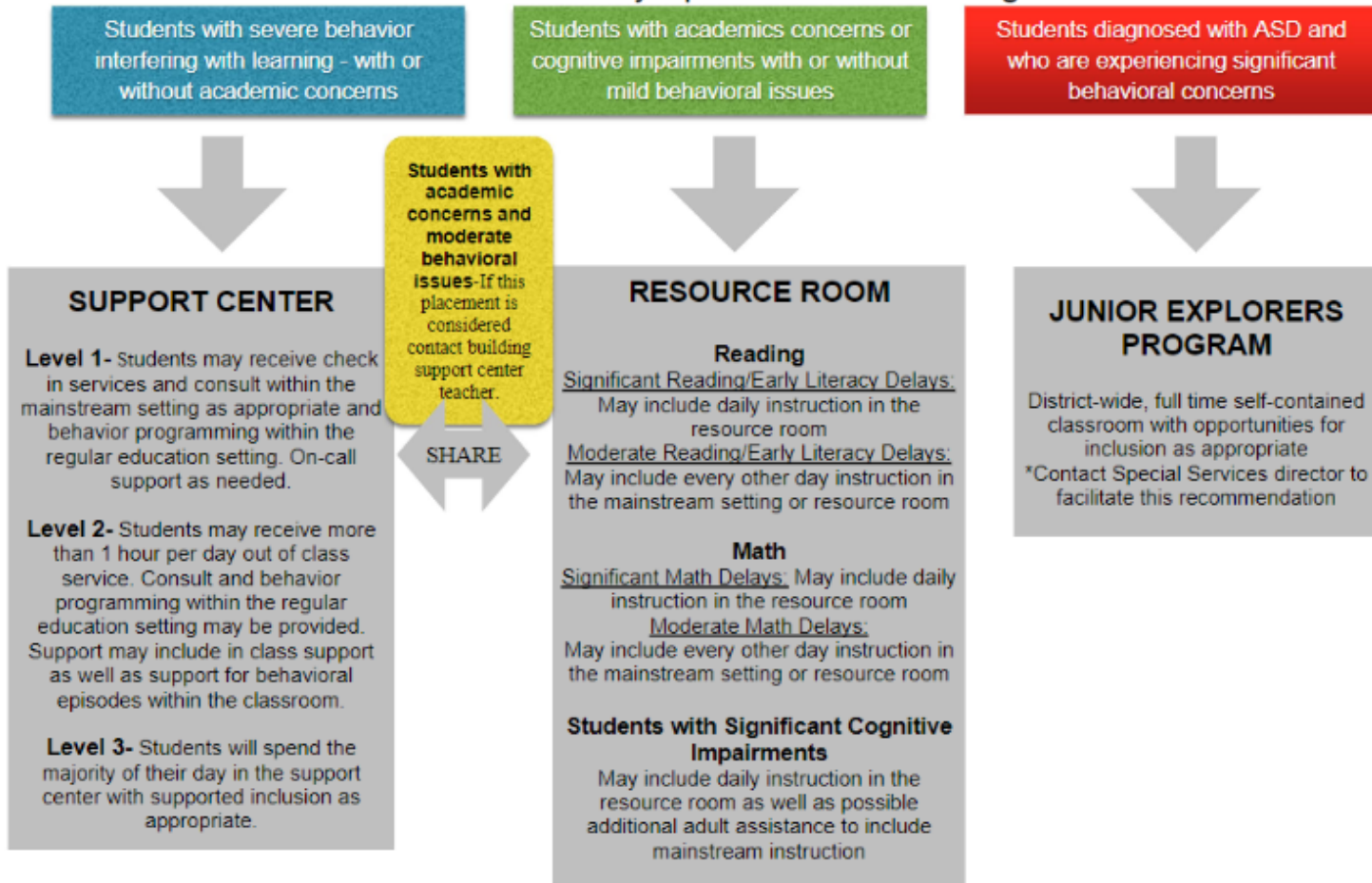
- ▶ Current prevalence of students with disabilities in the district 18.6% (2023 15.9%)
 - ▶ Added behavior support classrooms in each building about 13 years ago
 - ▶ Created classrooms for students with Autism about 15 years ago
 - ▶ Website not updated since creation
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Special Programs

Support Centers– One classroom in each building focused on supporting the needs of students with challenging behaviors that interfere with learning

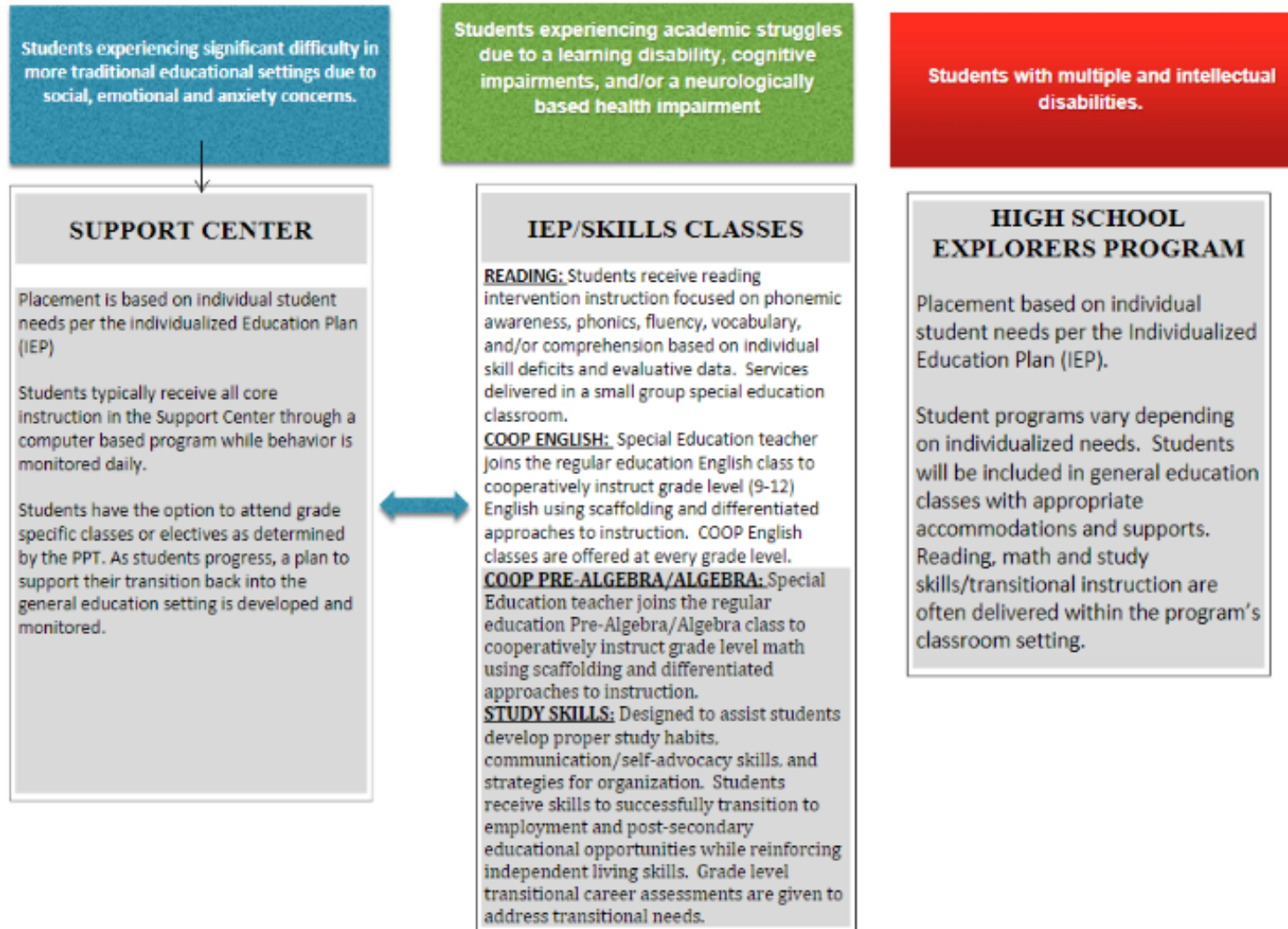
Explorers– Four classrooms (K–2, 3–5, 6–8, 9–12) focused on supporting students with cognitive and behavioral needs

Waterford Elementary Special Education Programs



**In IEP Direct, select SPED teacher/Para for service implementer for all academic/behavior services on grid.*

Waterford High School Special Education Programs



Students experiencing significant difficulty in more traditional educational settings due to social, emotional and anxiety concerns.

SUPPORT CENTER

Placement is based on individual student needs per the Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

Students typically receive all core instruction in the Support Center through a computer based program while behavior is monitored daily.

Students have the option to attend grade specific classes or electives as determined by the PPT. As students progress, a plan to support their transition back into the general education setting is developed and monitored.

Students experiencing academic struggles due to a learning disability, cognitive impairments, and/or a neurologically based health impairment

IEP/SKILLS CLASSES

READING: Students receive reading intervention instruction focused on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and/or comprehension based on individual skill deficits and evaluative data. Services delivered in a small group special education classroom.

COOP ENGLISH: Special Education teacher joins the regular education English class to cooperatively instruct grade level (9-12) English using scaffolding and differentiated approaches to instruction. COOP English classes are offered at every grade level.

COOP PRE-ALGEBRA/ALGEBRA: Special Education teacher joins the regular education Pre-Algebra/Algebra class to cooperatively instruct grade level math using scaffolding and differentiated approaches to instruction.

STUDY SKILLS: Designed to assist students develop proper study habits, communication/self-advocacy skills, and strategies for organization. Students receive skills to successfully transition to employment and post-secondary educational opportunities while reinforcing independent living skills. Grade level transitional career assessments are given to address transitional needs.

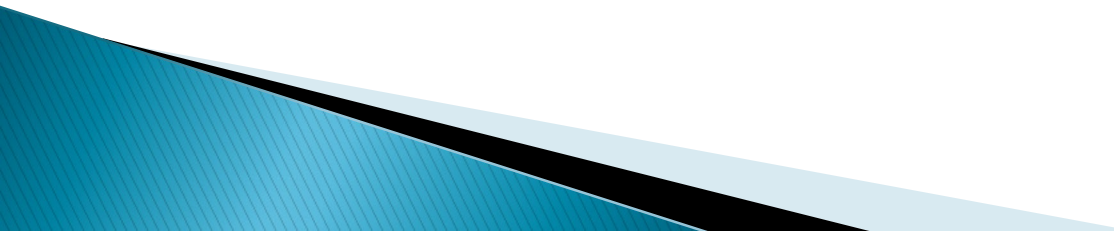
Students with multiple and intellectual disabilities.

HIGH SCHOOL EXPLORERS PROGRAM

Placement based on individual student needs per the Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Student programs vary depending on individualized needs. Students will be included in general education classes with appropriate accommodations and supports. Reading, math and study skills/transitional instruction are often delivered within the program's classroom setting.

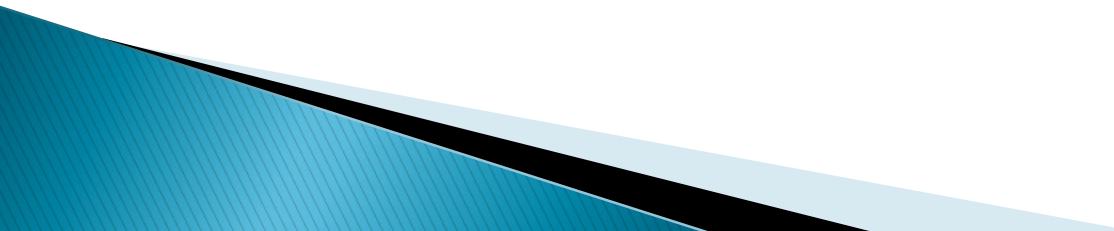
Need for Criteria and Referral Process

- ▶ Staff and related service providers expressing frustration
 - ▶ Programs have evolved since initial inception
 - ▶ Too many students placed in Support Centers without documentation of need
 - ▶ New staff unaware of programs
 - ▶ No procedures in place for referring to special programs
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Vision

- ▶ Through staff and families working together, all students will receive the programming they need to succeed socially, academically and emotionally in the least restrictive environment

Goal

- ▶ Through implementing clear criteria and referral processes for entrance to special programs across the district, consistency in programming and improved staff knowledge of procedures will result in PPTs working collaboratively to ensure students are accessing the appropriate supports.
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Collaborate

Administrators

Teachers/
Related
Service

Develop

Create
guidelines

Create
procedures

Implement

Elicit
feedback/
revise

Put into
practice

Collaborate

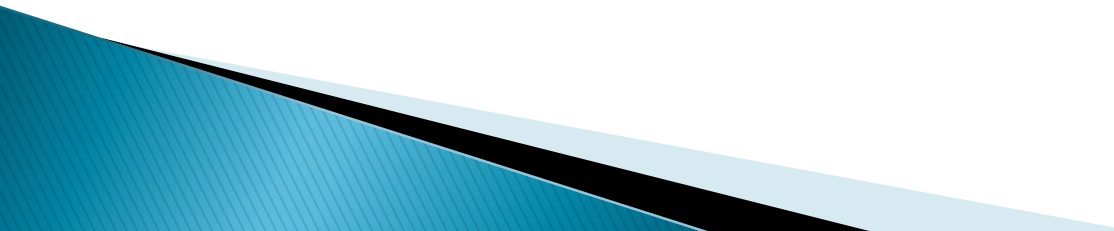
▶ Administrators

- Reviewed plan with Director of Special Services
- Solicited input and set the stage for the why at elementary and secondary ad team meetings
- Met individually with elementary principal that houses Explorers classrooms

▶ Teachers / Related Service Providers

- Met with BCBA's
 - Teacher teams
 - Related service providers
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Develop

- ▶ Creation of guidelines for Support Centers
 - Teachers and BCBA's were very excited to work on developing a plan of non negotiables and fidelity checks to provide continuity of programs
 - Draft was created and reviewed by administrators, Director of Special Services and attorneys for the district
 - Currently being revised and will be reviewed again by all parties
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Support Center Program Description and Referral Guidance

The Student Support Center, located within Waterford Public Schools, consists of special education programs designed to balance academic needs in addition to the development of social, emotional, and behavior skills.

The programs utilize various supports, including but not limited to: academic instruction and case management, provided by certified special-education teachers; social-emotional support, provided by a dedicated clinician; and behavioral support, provided by Board board-certified behavior Analysts (BCBAs) and paraprofessionals. Students have access to general education classes as well as teaching within the Support Center to increase social/emotional understanding and awareness, practice the use of pre-taught skills prior to generalization, and assist with academic needs as well.

Students referred to the Support Center are identified as having the following:

- **Individualized Education Plan and Behavior Intervention Plan**
- **Students were referred to PPT and placed diagnostically as part of the evaluation process**

In addition to above, students who access the Support Center for their special education services should also meet the following criteria: **(all decision are only to be made by the PPT)**

- Behavioral/ regulation concerns are the main area interfering with accessing the general education curriculum.
- The behaviors are frequent and severe resulting in disrupted learning for significant periods of the day.
- Other least restrictive strategies in the tier 1 environment have been documented, revised and have not shown an increase in positive behavior based on data collection.*
- BCBA consult was conducted, suggested strategies were implemented with fidelity and data did not show an increase in positive behavior.*

****Students serviced through 504s or SRBI plans who are exhibiting behavioral challenges will receive services through the tiered intervention model, with support from the building clinician (and BCBA as applicable).**

****Students on a tier 3 plan whose data does not show effective intervention over continued time should be recommended for referral to Special Education in order to assess individual needs for access to the Support Center.**

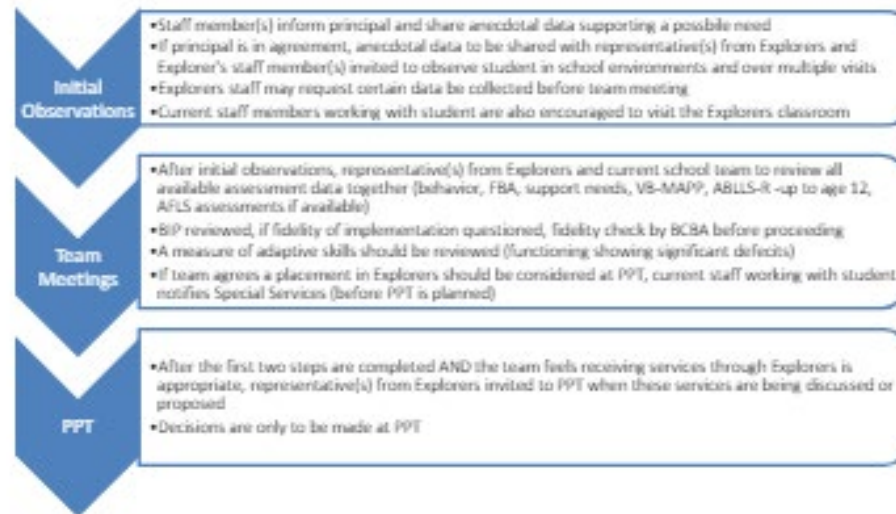
*It should be taken into consideration that when a new intervention or strategy is implemented, it often results in an increase in student behavior before the desired response.

Develop

- ▶ Creation of Referral Procedures and Criteria
 - Several individual meetings were held with various teachers regarding their frustrations in this area
 - Solicited lots of ideas! Everyone had an opinion
 - Created several drafts and had interested parties review and provide feedback
 - Validated all input (even if it didn't make its way into the plan)
 - Currently running through trial of referral for a preK student

Referral for Entrance into Waterford Public Schools Explorers

If a student is currently enrolled in the district and staff working with the student suspect services in Explorers may be appropriate the following procedure should be initiated.



Possible characteristics of a student that may benefit from their services being implemented through Explorers:

- Students with profound academic, behavioral, and/or emotional needs.
- Students whose behavior requires more extensive supports with one-on-one management plans driven by the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis.
- Students whose learning style requires OT as the primary method of instruction to support skill acquisition, retention, and generalization.
- Students who require intensive 1:1 support in all areas of the school day including activities of daily living, social, learning, communication, functional skills, etc.
- Students who have significant deficits in Adaptive Skills.

Explorers Staff

Little Explorers QH- Stephanie Brown

Junior Explorers QH- Jarica Nevins

Explorers CLMS- Michael Nevins

Explorers WHS- Mary Murphy

BCBAs

Quaker Hill & WHS- Rosemary Grace

CLMS- Bloom (Courtney Hartzler/ Rachel Guerni)

Special Services

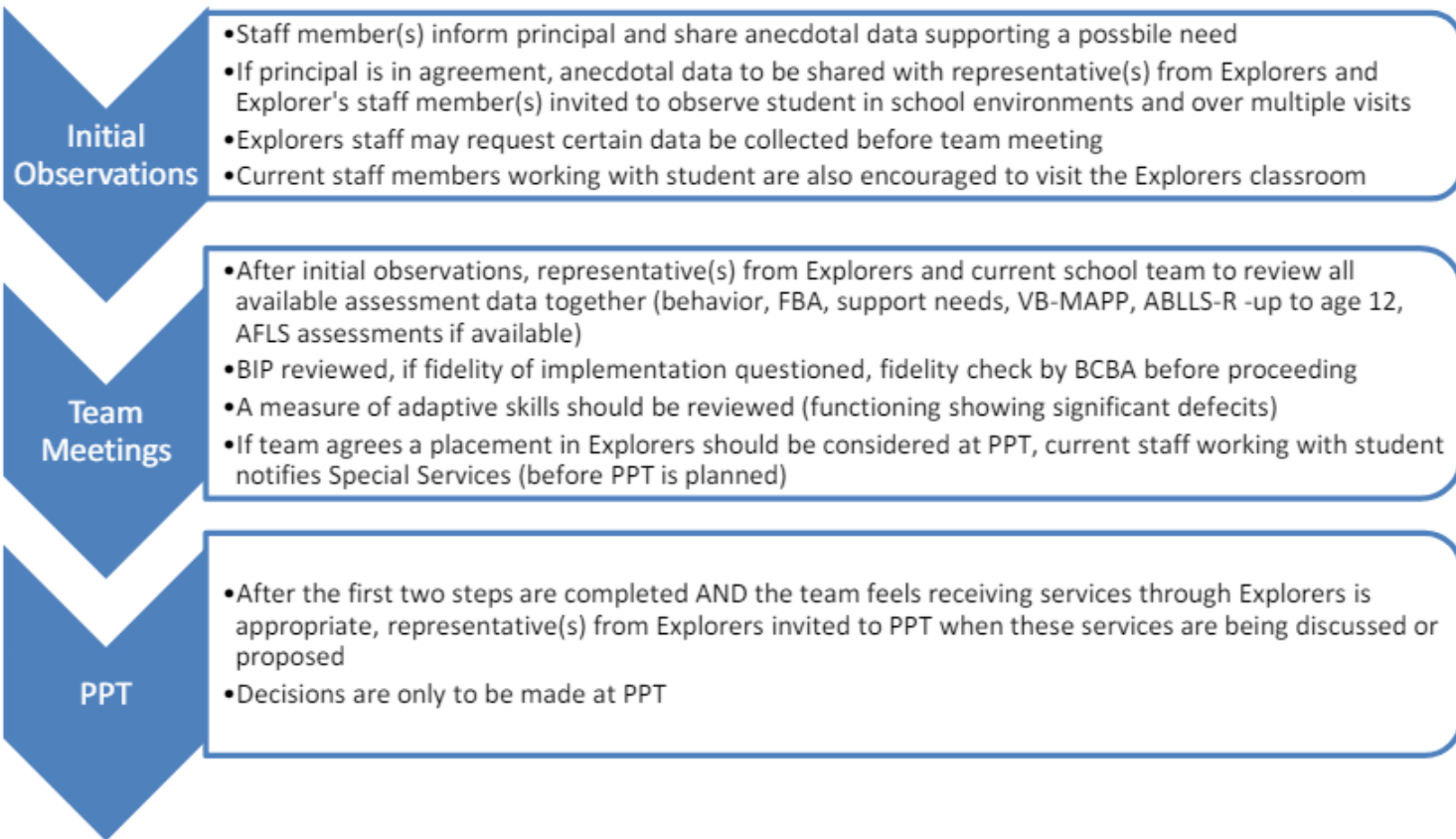
Director- Gina M. Wygonik

Supervisor- Wendy McCabe

Students currently enrolled in Explorers that are transitioning to a new school (elementary to middle, middle to high school), should follow the above procedures.

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Implement

- ▶ After trial, revisions will be made
 - ▶ Goal to have finalization by start of the 24–25 school year
 - ▶ Created a Special Services shared Google drive to allow easy access to all documents
 - ▶ Will introduce formally district wide at PD day in August
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