

TOPIC: Referral – Student Assistance Team

“If a parent initiates a request for evaluation, do we first convene an SAT (if one has not already been in progress) and wait until the team attempts different classroom interventions with the student over a certain period of time (e.g., 30 days), and then get signed consent from the parent if the interventions are not successful, OR do we get signed consent from the parents immediately after they initiate a request, and hold the SAT concurrently?”

92 NAC 51-006.01C states:

006.01C1 For a school age student, a general education student assistance team or a comparable problem solving team shall be used prior to referral for a multidisciplinary evaluation.

006.01C2 The SAT or comparable problem solving team shall utilize and document problem solving and intervention strategies to assist the teacher in the provision of general education.

006.01C3 If the student assistance team or comparable problem solving team feels that all viable alternatives have been explored, a referral for multidisciplinary evaluation shall be completed. A referral shall include information from the SAT or comparable problem solving team, meeting the requirements of 92 NAC 51-006.01C and a listing of the members of the SAT or comparable problem solving team.

The purpose of the student assistance team or comparable problem solving team is to determine whether there are intervention strategies which could be used in the general education classroom to assist the student. Rule 51 requires that a student assistance team be conducted for each school age student. Thus, if a parent refers a child for a special education evaluation, the school district should discuss with the parent the use of the student assistance team. The discussion should include information regarding the requirements for a student assistance team, the timelines and the personnel which will be included on the team. If, after conducting the SAT problem solving and intervention strategies, the district suspects the child may have a disability, a referral for a special education evaluation must be completed. The school district must seek consent from the parent prior to conducting an evaluation to determine eligibility for special education services.

Rule 51 does not specify the length of time or number of strategies which must be documented by the student assistance team or comparable problem solving team. This allows school districts to tailor the activities to the individual student. Therefore, for some students the student assistance team process may be very short. In other cases, the student assistance team activities may cover an extended period of time. However, parents can request an evaluation at any time during the SAT activities, and the school district must either obtain consent to evaluate and begin the evaluation, or, if the school district declines the parent’s request, issue a prior written notice as required by 92 NAC 51-009.05. Additionally, if at any time during the SAT process the district suspects the student has a disability and requires special education and related services, the district must seek consent to conduct an evaluation to determine eligibility for special education services.