



# **I&RS MANUAL**

## Rumson School District

Revised April 2024

## **Rumson School District: Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) Plan**

### **Building on a Strong Foundation: The MTSS Framework**

The Rumson School District is committed to providing a strong foundation for all students through a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework. MTSS is a proactive and preventative approach that utilizes a variety of evidence-based strategies to ensure all students meet the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. This framework serves as the foundation for the I&RS program.

New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:16-7(a) mandates that all school districts establish Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) committees. This regulation ensures a coordinated system of support for students experiencing learning, behavior, or health difficulties. The I&RS committee fosters collaboration among educators, specialists, and administrators, creating a multidisciplinary team to effectively address student needs. This requirement safeguards a structured approach to identifying student challenges, developing data-driven interventions, and monitoring progress.

### **The Purpose of I&RS Within MTSS:**

The I&RS program serves as the cornerstone of intervention within the MTSS framework, particularly in Tiers 2 and 3. Here's how I&RS fulfills its purpose within this structure:

- **Early Intervention:** I&RS facilitates early identification of student needs through data analysis from classroom performance, screenings, and progress monitoring. This allows for timely intervention before challenges escalate.
- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** The I&RS Committee utilizes multiple sources of data to inform Action Plans. This data includes classroom observations, screening results, progress monitoring measures, and parent input. By basing interventions on data, the I&RS program aims to ensure effectiveness and target the root causes of student difficulties.
- **Collaboration:** The I&RS Committee brings together a team of professionals, including general and special education teachers, school counselors, specialists, and administrators. This collaborative approach fosters a comprehensive understanding of the student's needs and allows for the development of a well-rounded Action Plan.
- **Individualized Support:** I&RS ensures that interventions are tailored to meet the specific needs of each student. Action Plans outline targeted interventions, strategies, and accommodations designed to address the student's unique learning style and challenges.
- **Progress Monitoring and Program Evaluation:** The I&RS program emphasizes progress monitoring to track student response to interventions. This data is used to determine the effectiveness of the Action Plan and make adjustments as needed.
- **Parent and Guardian Involvement:** The I&RS program actively involves parents and guardians in the intervention process. Parents are invited to I&RS meetings, collaborate on the development of Action Plans, and receive updates on their child's progress.

### **Initiating the I&RS Process:**

The I&RS program operates as a key intervention process within the Rumson School District's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework. MTSS provides a layered approach to supporting student needs, with I&RS playing a crucial role in Tiers 2 and 3.

- **Identifying Needs:** The I&RS request process often begins within Tier 1, where core instruction is delivered. This is the foundation of MTSS, where high-quality, research-based curriculum and instruction are provided to all students in the general education classroom. Teachers utilize differentiation strategies to address a variety of learning styles and needs within the classroom setting and use ongoing screening and progress monitoring to identify students who may require additional support beyond Tier 1 instruction.
- For students exhibiting academic or behavioral difficulties, staff completes a **Pre-Meeting Request**, documenting implemented strategies within the classroom. This initial intervention aligns with the Tier 2 focus of providing supplemental supports
  - Teachers document strategies and interventions implemented for a minimum of 15 days.
  - **Success at Tier 2:** If these strategies prove successful, staff continue using them to support the student's progress.
  - **Need for More Support:** If the implemented strategies are unsuccessful, a formal I&RS **Meeting Request Form** is completed. The appropriate school counselor will review with administration. Once the data is reviewed, a meeting with the committee may be scheduled.

### **The I&RS Meeting:**

The School Counselor reviews paperwork and schedules a meeting with the I&RS Committee and parents. During the meeting, the Committee discusses the student's strengths, weaknesses, and develops a data-driven Action Plan with measurable goals and targeted interventions aligned with the student's specific needs.

- **Implementation and Monitoring:** The Action Plan is implemented and monitored over a set period. Regular review meetings are held to assess student progress and make adjustments to the plan as needed. If a student continues to struggle despite Tier 2 interventions, the I&RS Committee may recommend additional Tier 3 interventions and in some cases a referral to the Child Study Team (CST) for a special education evaluation.
- **Year-Long Support:** The Action Plan remains valid for one school year, ensuring ongoing support for the student. However, plans are shared with new teachers in subsequent years to provide a comprehensive picture of the student's needs and successful interventions.

### **Referral to Rumson's Child Study Team (CST)**

While the I&RS process serves as the cornerstone of intervention within the Rumson School District's MTSS framework, parents have the right to request a Child Study Team (CST) evaluation independent of I&RS. This right is secured by New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:14-3.3e. This option acknowledges that some student needs may fall outside the scope of Tier 2 and 3 interventions offered through I&RS. Parents who suspect their child has a disability that qualifies for special education services may request an initial evaluation to determine eligibility for an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

It's important to consider the MTSS framework within this context. While bypassing I&RS is an option, the CST evaluation process may still utilize aspects of MTSS. For instance, the CST may review existing data collected during Tier 1 universal screenings or progress monitoring to gain a more comprehensive picture of the student's needs. Additionally, the CST may recommend interventions or suggest involving the I&RS team to explore support options that fall within the MTSS framework before developing an IEP. This collaborative approach ensures all available resources are considered to best support the student's success.

There isn't a predetermined time frame a student must spend in I&RS before a Child Study Team (CST) referral is made. The I&RS process focuses on progress monitoring and data-driven decision making.

Here's why a specific timeframe isn't outlined:

- **Individualized Needs:** Every student's situation is unique. Some students may respond quickly to interventions offered through I&RS, while others may require more time and exploration of different approaches.
- **Data-Driven Decisions:** The I&RS Committee relies on data from progress monitoring to determine the effectiveness of interventions. If a student isn't making progress despite consistent implementation of the Action Plan, a referral to the CST may be warranted.
- **Collaboration and Review:** Regular review meetings are held throughout the I&RS process. This allows the I&RS Committee, parents, and teachers to discuss progress, adjust interventions as needed, and determine if a CST referral is warranted.

In essence, the Rumson School District prioritizes a data-driven approach over a rigid timeframe. The focus lies on ensuring each student receives sufficient intervention and support before considering a referral to the CST.