



Student Support Teams (SST)

A Resource Manual

February 2008

**(please note: this manual is substantially the same as when originally published in 2001;
links and names have been updated.)**

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Preface

This document is intended to be a practical and useful guide to successfully administering a Student Support Team (SST) in Georgia schools. Each educator who coordinates an SST should have a copy. Our goal is to have this manual be as easy to use and reproduce as possible.

This manual provides the reader with:

- all of the regulatory documents that are directly pertinent to SST
- Sample forms, example modifications and a checklist for tracking cases
- descriptions of various models for structuring SSTs
- a definitive explanation of student records
- lists of available resources

This manual is not intended to be an extensive compendium of strategies for the many different problems that may be addressed by the SST process. There are numerous excellent materials available commercially and from professional literature or organizations. Some of the available resources are cited in the References section of this manual. They include, for example, an excellent SST strategies document, Alternative Strategies Manual, produced by the Georgia Learning Resources System (GLRS). It and numerous other resources are available for checkout at each GLRS Center in the state.

If you have questions about SST, call the Student Support Services division (404-656-2600), fax (404-657-0822), e-mail (fsmith@doe.k12.ga.us) or write:

Student Support Services Division
Georgia Department of Education
1862 Twin Towers East
Atlanta, GA 30334

STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM

GENERAL INFORMATION

Overview of the Student Support Team Process

The Student Support Team (SST) process was designed to provide support to the student and teacher through a collaborative approach. It is based on the premise that “two heads are better than one” when developing plans for students who are having difficulty in school. When approached in a positive manner, the SST can be a valuable tool in providing for an effective educational program for students.

Student Support Teams are most effective in schools in which all school staff have responsibility for all students and are skilled at engaging in collaborative problem solving.

The process involves six basic steps that focus on individual student needs, learning styles, program effectiveness, and home/school communication. These steps are as follows:

1. **Gathering of Information**
Prior to and during the first meeting, team members gather as much relevant information as possible regarding the student’s past and present educational and/or behavioral performance. Information should be gathered from a variety of sources including parents, official school records, and anecdotal records.
2. **Assessment (if necessary) and Evaluation of Data**
The team meets to discuss and interpret the information available to them. The team may decide that more information is needed and develop a plan for obtaining the information.
3. **Development of Educational Plan**
After evaluating the existing information, the team develops an individual educational plan specific to the student’s strengths and weaknesses. Strategies and techniques are brainstormed and agreed upon by all those involved in the implementation process. A timeline for follow-up and evaluation of progress is established.
4. **Implementation of Educational Plan**
The educational plan is implemented for a specified time period. Additional data is gathered if needed.
5. **Evaluation of Progress**
The SST reconvenes to discuss progress and additional data. The educational plan is changed as needed. Further course of action is discussed.
6. **Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation**
The SST monitors student progress and alters the plan as is necessary. If the educational plan is effective and no disability is suspected, the team should meet periodically to discuss the student’s progress.

At any time during this process, if the team has sufficient evidence that the student has a disability, the team should determine whether an evaluation or 504 Plan is necessary. For students with obvious severe disabilities and/or crisis and for whom delay of referral to special education or other supplemental or support services would be detrimental to the student, the SST may bypass implementation of alternative strategies prior to referral. The reason(s) for bypassing this process must be clearly documented in the SST minutes. When a student makes sufficient progress and/or modifications are no longer needed, the SST may dismiss the student from the process. Records of the SST activity are part of the student’s permanent record and thus should follow the student as he/she progresses through the educational system. The functioning of SST is addressed specifically by State Board of Education Rules and by the local school system’s Board of Education policies. Local school system policies should be established which comply with state rules and further clarify local procedures. Listed below is the Georgia State Board Rule regarding Student Support Team procedures.

160-4-2-.32 STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM.

(1) **DEFINITIONS.**

(a) **Student Support Team (SST)** - an interdisciplinary group that uses a systematic process to address learning and/or behavior problems of students, K-12, in a school.

(2) **REQUIREMENTS.**

(a) Each school shall have a minimum of one SST and shall establish support team procedures.

(b) Before a referral is made for other supplemental or support services an evaluation and/or assessment shall be conducted.

1. Prior evaluation(s) and/or assessment(s) of a student for a state or federal program shall be considered as having met this requirement.

(c) The SST shall include at a minimum the referring teacher and at least two of the following participants, as appropriate to the needs of the student:

1. Principal.
2. General education teacher.
3. Counselor.
4. Lead teacher.
5. School psychologist.
6. Subject area specialist.
7. ESOL teacher.
8. Special education teacher.
9. School social worker.
10. Central office personnel.
11. Section 504 coordinator.
12. Other appropriate personnel.

(d) Parents/guardians shall be invited to participate in all meetings of their child's SST and in the development of interventions for their child.

(e) Each school shall include the following steps in the SST process:

1. Identification of learning and/or behavior problems.
2. Assessment, if necessary.

160-4-2-.32 (Continued)

3. Educational plan.
4. Implementation.
5. Follow-up and support.
6. Continuous monitoring and evaluation

(f) Documentation of SST activities shall include the following:

1. Student's name.
2. Names of team members.
3. Meeting dates.
4. Identification of student learning and/or behavior problems.
5. Any records of assessment.
6. Educational plan and implementation results.
7. Follow-up and, as appropriate continuous evaluation.

(3) **EXCEPTIONS TO THE USE OF THE SST PROCESS.**

(a) School personnel and parents/guardians may determine that there is a reasonable cause to bypass the SST process an individual student. Documentation in the 160-4-2-.32 student's record shall clearly justify such action, including whether the parent or guardian agreed with such a decision. In cases where immediate referral is sought, the SST shall still determine what interim strategies, interventions, and modifications shall be attempted for the student.

(b) It is not necessary for students who transfer into the local school system/state operated program with a current Individualized Education Program or Section 504 plan to go through the SST process.

Authority O.C.G. § 20-2-152; 20-2-240.

Adopted: September 14, 2000

Effective: October 5, 2000

Student Support Teams in Georgia: Frequently Asked Questions

Just what is a student support team?

The Student Support Team is a regular education, problem-solving process in every Georgia school. Its purpose is to provide support to both students and teachers with the outcome being improved student performance.

Is this SST process mandated?

Yes. SST was a permanent commitment by the state of Georgia to federal district court as a result of Marshall vs. Georgia, 1984. It is defined in Georgia Board Rule 160-4-2-.32.

Why is there a renewed emphasis on SST?

- The 1997 re-authorization of IDEA emphasized that students with disabilities should receive the maximum time appropriate in the regular classroom. Those teachers often need support with specialized teaching methods.
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act has been emphasized by the federal government as applicable to the schools' handling of students with physical and mental disabilities. SST documentation can meet most Section 504 requirements.
- Educators realize that conditions beyond mere academics are often pivotal for students at risk of failure. The success of the broad approach used by Student Assistance Programs (SAP, from the federal Drug-Free Schools initiative) has shown the value of collaboration, especially across agencies.
- School-based management and team problem solving have become recognized successes in the national education reform movement.
- Increased concern about school safety has called for more effective classroom behavior management. Collective wisdom of SST members can assist teachers and administrators with this.

Who makes up the Student Support Team?

Membership varies from school to school. Three is the minimum number of SST participants as defined by Georgia Board Rule 160-4-2-.32. These may include an administrator, counselor, regular education teacher, special education teacher, school social worker, parent, ESOL teacher, school psychologist and others, as appropriate for the case under review.

As shown by the State Board Rule on SST, much latitude is given to local school systems in the design of their SST process. Whether these decisions are made at the school or district level, appropriate organization of the team is vital to its success.

From its inception, the Student Support Team process has been a regular education entity. Thus, it is advisable that the team leader be a regular educator. Leadership of an SST can take numerous forms, yet a few aspects are common to each team. Team leaders, whether representing the entire school or only one of several teams, assume substantial duties beyond their regular jobs. Extra hours, organization skills, accessibility, and good communication skills are essential to the success of the team.

How does one get on this team, and for how long?

Members may be appointed or may volunteer. Some members may serve as standing members while others are invited to serve on a particular case that needs their expertise. Service for standing members varies from a semester to several years.

One common factor to avoid is “burnout” from too long a period of service. A year or two on SST is time well spent, but it can be tiring, too. Stepwise rotation of team members can bring in new ideas while maintaining continuity of team expertise.

Who may request assistance from the SST?

The expertise of the SST is for the benefit of the entire school. Any unresolved problem that impedes learning may merit a request to SST by a teacher, administrator, parent, or student. However, the decision to apply the SST process is made by the team after careful consideration of the student’s needs.

What happens when SST addresses a problem?

A brainstorming process is used to generate recommendations for solving the problem. These recommendations are documented in SST records and given to a teacher to implement with the student. The team then meets periodically to review the student’s progress and determine the need for further intervention.

How long is the SST strategy implemented?

This depends on the specific problem. In most cases, 20 to 30 school days of intervention is recommended. This is usually sufficient for determining whether the strategies and modifications will succeed. The team must then determine whether to continue with the same interventions, formulate new strategies, or explore other options. Some cases are of short duration, yet some at-risk students may be followed by SST for their entire school career.

Should the SST refer all students for a hearing/vision screening?

This is left to the discretion of the local school system. However, difficulties with hearing and/or vision have a profound impact on a student’s learning. It is often beneficial to complete a screening early in the SST process. Any problems should be addressed immediately and the impact of the problem on the student’s learning should be carefully considered.

What other types of evaluation should be conducted as part of the SST process?

Each school district should determine whether formal testing will be a part of the SST process. Existing standardized test results and anecdotal information should be used as much as possible. Decisions of whether or not to refer a student for a psychological evaluation should never be made solely on the basis of test scores.

Is parental consent required for screenings and evaluations?

Consent is required for any screening or evaluation in which a student is singled out from his peers. Hearing and vision screenings given to every student in a particular grade do not require consent and can be used as part of the SST process

Can the SST refer students for evaluation for special education consideration?

Yes, but only after several important decision criteria are met: 1.) that reasonable classroom interventions of sufficient duration have been carefully attempted, without success; and 2.) that the cause of the problem is suspected to be a disability that cannot be resolved without special education services.

Do all referrals for special education need to go through the SST?

Generally speaking, all referrals should go through the SST referral process. The SST interventions can be bypassed for students for whom it would be detrimental or for students whose difficulty is so severe or so unusual as to render the SST of no help. This is a decision to be made by the school with parent input. Also, preschool children and students who have a current IEP or Section 504 plan may bypass SST. In any case, a bypass of SST interventions needs to be justified and documented in writing in the minutes of the SST meeting.

Can students with limited English proficiency be served through the SST?

An ESOL student may be referred for any available, appropriate program, including services of the Student Support Team, with no time restrictions. When an ESOL student's case is considered by the Student Support Team, the ESOL teacher should be a member of the team. If concerns persist in spite of interventions and/or participation in alternative programs to assist the student and there is concern that the student may have a disability, the SST may consider a referral to special education. If the ESOL student is not found eligible for special education services, the SST will continue to serve as a resource and to provide support to that student. However, the team should keep in mind the difference between cultural characteristics and the presence of disabilities.

Can students served through the Early Intervention Program be considered by SST?

Students may be considered for difficulties that would normally warrant an SST study. Placement in EIP should not be considered the basis for an automatic request for SST.

Can SST be used to satisfy requirements of the Chronic Disciplinary Problem Student Act and HB 605?

Yes. School systems may choose to use the SST process for fulfilling requirements of the Behavioral Support Process for both pieces of legislation. If a student's behavior difficulties are significant, request for the SST process should be considered.

How can local school systems determine the effectiveness of their SST process?

Many indicators can show success of the SST process, from teacher satisfaction to pre/post student performance. One inferential measure of effectiveness is the placement rate for initial referrals to special education. An eighty percent placement rate is considered extremely good and indicates a highly successful process.

What factors impact the effectiveness of SST?

The single most important factor in the degree of success experienced by an SST is the attitude with which school personnel view the process. It is most effective when it is looked upon as a team process for supporting the teacher and student. The effectiveness is greatly reduced when administrators and/or teachers see the process as being simply a paperwork requirement with which they must comply.

Secondly, the SST must be well organized with clear definitions of roles and responsibilities. All participants should be well trained in the procedures and legal aspects.

Finally, the paperwork should be teacher friendly and efficient while still meeting legal requirements and providing enough information to future teachers and service providers.

What incentives can be used to encourage SST service?

Schools may want to consider extended year or extended day contracts, a lighter teaching load or fewer administrative duties, SDU credits, and/or stipends.

What benefits can accrue to a school from successful SST efforts?

Benefits of an effective SST process often include the following: higher graduation rate, better test scores, fewer students retained in grade, better attendance (by both teachers and students), less teacher turnover, better discipline, ready-made needs assessment data on teacher training needs, more parent involvement, more successful inclusion of special education students in regular classes, and more.

Must parents be invited to all SST meetings held on their child?

Yes. The new Student support Team Rule 160-4-2-.32 requires that parents be invited to all SST meetings held on their child.

Must parents give consent for an SST meeting?

Although parents must be invited to all SST meetings, they do not have to give consent for the SST meeting to take place or to give consent for the SST plan to be implemented. Every effort should be made, however, to help parents view the student support team process in a positive light and to understand that this process is not a special education placement.

Guidelines for Developing the SST Implementation Model

The first step in developing an effective Student Support Team process involves identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses and developing an organizational model based on the identified strengths. The following information is provided to assist in working through the process and developing an appropriate implementation model.

1. Implementation models will vary by school and district. A model that may be appropriate for one elementary school within a district may not work for another within the same district.

Factors to consider when choosing a model include:

- school size
- faculty size
- functioning level of average students
- percentage of school population involved in SST
- training level of faculty members
- number of other duties assigned to personnel
- availability of supplements/stipends
- availability of planning time for faculty members

2. Teams may be designed as **Core** or **Flex Committees**. Core Committees are composed of members who have special training in the SST process and modification. These team members remain constant throughout the school year. Flex Committees usually involve all teachers at some point during the school year, depending upon the grade level of the students involved. When deciding whether to have a Core or Flex Committee, school personnel must take into account the training level of the staff as a whole. If the majority of the faculty are well trained in SST procedures, appropriate modifications, and requirements of FERPA, IDEA, and Section 504, it is usually better to have a Flex Committee. In schools where this is not the case, it is recommended that one or more Core Committees be trained and put into place.

Examples:

Core Committee: A teacher from each grade level receives specialized training in all aspects of the SST process. They serve as the SST for all requests. The requesting teacher and any other appropriate personnel (counselor, curriculum coordinator, etc.) serve as flex members based on the needs of the student being served.

Flex Committee: All teachers who teach the student serve as the SST.

3. Every school should have a Building SST Coordinator who is responsible for the proper implementation of the SST process. The Building SST Coordinator may have varying levels of involvement in the actual meetings. However, when making the decision as to the level of involvement he/she is to have, administrators should keep a realistic view of the amount of time that will be required.
4. A database should be maintained in each school that lists each student involved in the SST process and other relevant information. A database maintained at the central office level is often helpful in locating files for transient students.

5. The inclusion of an administrator and/or school psychologist in an SST meeting where referral to special education is being considered is very helpful in improving the appropriateness and quality of referrals. If referral is made, all paperwork should be forwarded to the appropriate person immediately.

The following chart is provided to assist in developing the implementation model for the SST. Its purpose is to help teams clearly identify the type of team needed and delineate roles and responsibilities

Student Support Team Organizational Chart

	District Level Coordinator	Building Level Coordinator	Team leader, chairperson or case manager	Core Committee (1 grade)	Core Committee (Multiple grades)	Flexible Committee (1 grade)	Flexible Committee (Multiple grades)	Parent	Requesting Teacher	Others
Notify Committee members										
Complete SST Request										
Complete parent contact										
Gather work samples										
Review information										
Develop educational plan										
Complete SST minutes										
Implement educational plan										
Collect data & document outcomes										
Complete behavior documentation										
Refer for evaluation										
Complete 504 Plan										
Maintain school data										
Maintain system data										

Student Support Team

Examples of Implementation Models

The following model SST organizational designs are provided as examples of the various ways schools and school systems have implemented the SST component. These models are provided to elicit ideas about which organization may serve your school and/or school system most efficiently.

Elementary School Models

Elementary: Model A

- Faculty divided into grade-level teams. The teams may be Core or Flex Committees (see page 11, section 3 for explanation)

- Team members:
 - complete SST request information
 - complete appropriate student background information
 - complete relevant medical information
 - complete documentation of previous interventions
 - organize/manage communication with parents

- Team members meet regularly to:
 - suggest strategies
 - document student's progress
 - complete Section 504 plan, if appropriate
 - complete summary of each SST meeting
 - obtain copy of student's report card for SST file
 - complete other actions, as directed by local SST procedures

- Grade-level Team Leaders:
 - chair the SST meeting
 - assure accurate documentation of all meetings
 - notify parents and members of meetings
 - complete packet if SST is referring student for special education evaluation
 - develop procedure(s) to assure confidentiality/maintenance of SST files throughout the school year and the summer
 - develop procedure(s) to assure organized re-distribution of SST files to the proper team in the fall each school year

Elementary: Model B

- Faculty divided into grade-level teams

- Team members meet regularly to:
(same as Elementary Model A, above)

- Grade-level Team Leaders or Building-Level Team Leaders:
 - complete SST request information
 - complete appropriate student background information
 - complete relevant medical information
 - complete documentation of previous interventions
 - organize/manage communication with parents

Elementary : Model C (similar to Models A and B above)

- Teams are formed across grade levels
example: K-1 team
 2-3 team
 4-5 team
- Grade-Level Team Leader acts as SST Team Leader
i.e., Team leader of K-1 team is SST Team Leader

Elementary : Model D

- Similar to Models A, B, and C above
- Building-Level SST Chairperson forms teams across grade levels
- Building-Level SST Chairperson acts as Team Leader

Middle School Models

Middle School : Model A

- Faculty divided into grade-level teams
- Team members:
 - meet regularly during their common planning time
 - discuss strategies
 - discuss student progress
- Requesting Team Member:
 - completes the initial SST request paperwork
 - completes SST folder
 - notifies/invites parent
 - obtains medical history and school records
- Team Leader:
 - chairs the SST meetings
 - keeps accurate documentation of all meetings
 - notifies parent and SST members of each meeting date/time
 - completes appropriate paperwork if student is referred to special education for an evaluation

Middle School : Model B

- Principal or Team Leaders select an SST Chairperson for each team
 - SST chairperson for grade 6 team
 - SST chairperson for grade 7 team
- SST chairperson for grade 8 team Chairperson selects a “case manager” for each student
 - Case manager responsible for:
 - completing SST request information
 - completing appropriate student background information
 - completing relevant medical information
 - completing documentation of previous interventions
 - organizing/managing communication with parents
 - documenting student’s progress
 - completing Section 504 plan, if appropriate
 - completing summary of each SST meeting
 - obtaining copy of student’s report card for SST file
 - completing other actions, as directed, by local SST procedures

High School Models

High School : Model A

- Teams formed around common planning periods
- Teams meet at least once a month to review progress and provide suggestions
- Team members assigned to several students to:
 - assure the implementation of the SST plan by all personnel working with a student
 - track the success of the SST plan in the various classes of the student
 - be responsible for paperwork (including SST meeting summaries) for students assigned to him/her
- Team Leaders:
 - notify parent/members of meetings
 - assure the maintenance of appropriate SST documentation

High School: Model B

- SST students divided among all homeroom teachers, distributed evenly throughout each grade level
- Homeroom teachers use teacher-made progress reports to monitor a student's progress
- Homeroom teachers communicate appropriate strategies/modifications to all teachers of each SST student
- Building-level team provides more intensive assistance to selected SST students (as requested by teacher, parent, or student) until such time that the case can be turned back to homeroom teacher for management

High School: Model C

- SST is operated through the school's existing advisement program.
- Advisors serve as case managers for the students.
- The program is set up much like a mentoring program.

STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

Student Support Team Process Checklist

The purpose of this checklist is to serve as a guideline for effectively implementing the SST process. Check all that apply.

1. Teacher notifies parent, student, principal and school SST coordinator that student is experiencing unresolved problems in school.
2. SST Coordinator provides teacher with the following:
 - SST request form, including background information.
 - Letter of invitation/notification to parent.
3. Classroom teacher completes SST request form.
 - Parent invitation/notification letter is mailed.
4. SST Coordinator schedules first SST meeting and invites parent/guardian and any of the following based on the needs of the student (minimum 3 team members total):
 - Classroom teacher(s) who work with the student.
 - Other classroom teachers.
 - Special education teacher.
 - Speech/language pathologist.
 - School psychologist.
 - School administrator.
 - School counselor.
 - School social worker.
 - Section 504 coordinator.
 - ESOL teacher.
 - Student, if appropriate.
 - Central office personnel.
 - Other appropriate personnel.
5. SST meeting #1 is held.
 - Background information reviewed.
 - Information provided by classroom teacher discussed.
 - Work samples reviewed.
 - Strategies previously tried by teacher discussed.
 - Develop new strategies specifically related to student's problem
 - Copy of suggested strategies provided to teachers.
 - SST meeting summary form completed.
 - Consent to test vision/hearing sent to parent/guardian or requested if parent/guardian is present.
6. Strategies implemented in classroom (suggested period of 20 school days).
 - Document dates implemented and specific outcomes of modifications.
7. Additional information requested at meeting #1 is gathered.
8. SST meeting #2 scheduled, with
 - Parents notified and invited to attend.

9. ___ SST meeting #__ held: Parents notified and invited to attend.
- ___ Outcome of modifications discussed.
 - ___ SST decides on plan of action.
 - ___ Develop new modifications.
 - ___ Continue current modifications, if successful.
 - ___ Consult with school psychologist or SST Coordinator for further plan of action.
 - ___ Section 504 plan developed, if appropriate.
 - ___ Refer for evaluation for possible special education eligibility.
 - ___ SST meeting minutes completed.
10. ___ Additional SST meetings held as needed to review student progress.
11. ___ Student referred for evaluation for possible eligibility for special education services.
- ___ Parental Consent to Evaluate sent to parent/guardian if parents are not present at meeting.
 - ___ Signature obtained.
 - ___ Referral packet sent to school psychologist or SLP immediately containing:
 - ___ SST request form, including background information.
 - ___ SST summaries from all meetings.
 - ___ Modification plans with outcomes and dates.
 - ___ Hearing and vision report (must be current within one year of testing date).
 - ___ Referral for psychoeducational evaluation form.
 - ___ Signed Consent for Evaluation forms.
 - ___ Appropriate documentation for area of suspected disability.
 - ___ Work samples (5 for each area of weakness).
 - ___ Behavior observation form.
 - ___ Speech/language information checklist.

Documentation Of The Student Support Team Process

Proper documentation is essential in the SST process. Forms should be easy to use and efficient while still providing adequate documentation of the team's activities. Written summaries of the team's actions should be kept for every meeting. The actions of the SST should be so clear that new teachers each year will have no difficulty determining what has been tried and found successful for the student in the past. All information should be dated. Team members should adopt the attitude of, "If it isn't written down, it didn't happen".

Documentation of SST activities should include the following:

- Student's name
- Name of team members
- Meeting dates
- Identification of student needs
- Any records of assessment
- Educational plan and implementation results
- Follow-up and, as appropriate, continuous evaluation.

A suggested list of forms to document the SST activities is as follows:

- **Organizational Checklist:** helpful in tracking the activities of the SST and assuring that all necessary procedures are implemented in a timely manner.
- **SST Request:** essential in gathering initial information on the student. The form should be easy to complete while still providing pertinent information about the student's difficulties, strengths, and weaknesses. Request forms which are a combination of checklist, narrative, and copies of student records are most beneficial.
- ❖ **Parent Notification/Invitation to Meeting:** should clearly inform parents of the purpose of the request and invite their participation in the process.
- **Background Information:** helpful in gathering developmental, behavioral, and environmental information about the student.
- ❖ **Meeting Summary:** must document the actions of the SST in each meeting. These should be written in a professional manner. Parents should be given a copy of the summary from each meeting. SST members should refrain from making diagnoses or judgment statements in SST summaries. The student's problems should be clearly defined. The discussion of the team should be summarized, and the recommendations should be documented. If the student is being referred to special education, considered for Section 504 eligibility, or no longer needs the services of the Student Support Team, the summary must reflect this decision.
- ❖ **Educational Plan:** must clearly define the strategies to be implemented and the outcomes after implementation. This may be included with the summaries or developed as a separate document. Team members should develop an appropriate Educational Plan (containing, in general, 3-5 appropriate strategies) based on the student's strengths and weaknesses. The plan should be implemented for an appropriate period of time (20 – 30 school days is suggested) as sufficient to determine its effectiveness. Plans should be

- ❖ updated as needed based on student response to the modifications. The outcome for each modification should be clearly documented as to the student's specific response.
- ❖ **Consent for Hearing/Vision/Educational Screening:** required prior to administering any individual hearing/vision screening or educational screening instrument.
- **Speech/Language Checklist:** should identify the student's weaknesses in the areas of voice, language, frequency, and/or articulation. This may be included with the SST Request.
- **Behavior Documentation:** should contain anecdotal information which documents the student's behavior difficulties. The information is most helpful when it includes antecedent, behavior, and consequences.
- **Dismissal Letter:** may be used to explain the decision to dismiss a student from SST if the parents do not attend the SST meeting.

- ❖ These are required components of SST Documentation.
- These are suggested components in implementing an appropriate SST process.

STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM

SAMPLE FORMS

The following forms have been developed over the course of several years in working with school systems in Georgia. They have been revised and amended based on teacher and administrator input. Each form is designed to be teacher friendly while still meeting legal requirements for the SST process. They are provided simply as examples to use in developing forms appropriate for your school system. Systems may use these forms, edit them for partial use, or develop forms of their own. In order to reduce confusion with Special Education due process terminology, the term “Request” is used to denote the action, and thus the form, used to ask for the assistance of the SST.

**STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM
REQUEST**

SST Request Date: _____

Student: _____ DOB: _____ Age: _____ Sex: _____
FTE: _____ School: _____
Grade: _____ Teacher: _____
Lives with: _____ Parents _____ Guardian _____ Foster Parent _____ Other _____
Names of the Above: _____

REASON FOR REQUEST

1. A review of available information suggests that this student's problem is PRIMARILY (check one):
____ Academic ____ Behavioral ____ Speech/Language (complete sections 4 – 11 and Speech Language request)
2. Identify any areas in which the student displays a significant strength (S) or weakness (W). Gather work samples that illustrate the student's weaknesses.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ____ Reading | ____ Math |
| ____ sight word recognition | ____ computation |
| ____ phonics skills | ____ reasoning |
| ____ comprehension | |
| ____ Written language | ____ Oral language |
| ____ sentence structure | ____ oral expression |
| ____ vocabulary | ____ communicating with peers |
| ____ organization | ____ communicating with adults |
| ____ spelling and/or punctuation | ____ comprehension of oral language |
| | ____ following verbal directions |

3. Identify areas in which the student displays significant difficulties or functions significantly below the expected level.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ____ Learning behaviors | ____ sequencing |
| ____ working in a group | |
| ____ working independently | ____ Social Adjustment |
| ____ distractibility | ____ develops appropriate friendships |
| ____ impulsivity | ____ relates appropriately to teachers - adults |
| ____ energy level too high | ____ emotional outbursts |
| ____ energy level too low | ____ withdrawal |
| ____ frustration tolerance | ____ chronic lying |
| ____ organization | ____ chronic cheating |
| | ____ chronic absences |
| ____ Processing | ____ stealing |
| ____ fine motor skills/eye-hand coordination | ____ bullying |
| ____ gross motor skills/general clumsiness | ____ difficulties at home |
| ____ reversals/transpositions (letters, words, numbers) | |
| ____ manuscript | ____ Adaptive skills (compared with same age peers) |
| ____ cursive writing | ____ socially immature |
| ____ copying from board | ____ immature language |
| ____ copying from book or paper | ____ delayed self-help skills |
| ____ visual memory | Comments: _____ |
| ____ right/left confusion | _____ |
| ____ auditory memory | |

4. Based on classroom performance, estimate the student's grade equivalent for each area:
 _____ Reading _____ Math _____ Written language
5. Attach copies of test reports, front of cumulative record and a complete profile for most recent standardized testing.
6. Attach copy of the most recent report card.

SCHOOL HISTORY

7. Attendance Record

Current School Year _____ Days Absent _____ Days Present _____ Tardy/left early _____

Grades in which absences exceeded 20 days:

Year	Grade	Days Absent	Days Present
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

8. Previous Schools Attended

Number of _____ System Schools attended _____

Number of schools outside _____ System _____

Most recent school attended (other than present school) _____

9. Grades retained _____

10. Documents available on this student:

	Date
Psychological	_____
Medical	_____
Other (Please specify)	_____

11. Previous special or remedial services:

_____ SIA /EIP _____ Remedial _____ Head Start

_____ Title I _____ Speech/Language _____ ESOL

_____ Other _____

INTERVENTIONS ATTEMPTED PRIOR TO SST REQUEST:

Outcome of intervention:

Student conference	
Parent contact	
Referral to counselor	
Consultation with colleagues	
Adjusted workload	
Alternative teaching methods	
Modified materials	
Modified presentations	
Change in text/materials	
Change in grouping	
Change in seating	
Behavior contract	
Token system	

STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM SPEECH/LANGUAGE REQUEST

SST Request Date: _____

Student: _____ DOB: _____ Age: _____ Sex: _____

FTE: _____ School: _____

Grade: _____ Teacher: _____

Lives with: _____ Parents _____ Guardian _____ Foster Parent _____ Other

Names of the Above: _____

REASON FOR REQUEST

1. Check each statement which has been true in the past few weeks. Compare the child to others of the same age.

- Speech sounds were omitted inappropriately.
- Sounds were substituted for other sounds inappropriately.
- Articulation errors interfered with daily communication.
- Student showed frustration with communication problems.
- Both expressive and receptive language seemed to be deficient.
- Student demonstrated a lack of comprehension of instructions and frequently needed repetition and rephrasing.
- Student demonstrated a lack of comprehension of basic concepts of time, sequence, quantity, position, direction, and/or quality.
- Student responded inappropriately to questions. Student confused who, what, where, how, why, and how on many questions.

2. Check all that apply, comparing this student to others in class.

Oral Expression

- Responds frequently with more than one or two responses
- Vocabulary development is comparable to peers
- Able to provide verbal labels for common objects in school or home environment
- Verbal statements communicate ideas adequately (not dependent on gestures)
- Grammatical structure is comparable to peer group (considering cultural and family communication style)
- Verbal fluency is comparable to peer group (has little difficulty "finding" words to describe intent)
- Uses inflection and tone in speech to communicate meaning
- Verbal production adequate when picture stimuli provided
- Able to relate experience, stories, or tales in sequential order when picture or work cues are provided

Listening Comprehension

- Attends to peers when they are talking
- Associates non-verbal environmental sounds with source
- Follows simple verbal directions i.e.,(requiring a single response)
- Can select an appropriate picture to identify the meaning of a sentence
- Follows multiple verb command
- Can order a series of pictures to demonstrate an understanding of an orally presented story or lecture
- Can verbally paraphrase sentences or stories presented orally
- Detects humor or sarcasm in the verbal expression of others

3. Please explain and /or give examples for any items checked above. _____

4. Based on classroom performance, estimate the student's grade equivalent for each area:
 _____ Reading _____ Math _____ Written language
5. Attach copies of test reports, front of cumulative record and a complete profile for most recent standardized testing.
6. Attach copy of the most recent report card.

SCHOOL HISTORY

7. Attendance Record
 Current School Year _____ Days Absent _____ Days Present _____ Tardy/left early _____
 Grades in which absences exceeded 20 days:

Year	Grade	Days Absent	Days Present
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

8. Previous Schools Attended
 Number of _____ System Schools attended _____
 Number of schools outside _____ System _____
 Most recent school attended (other than present school) _____

9. Grades retained _____

10. Documents available on this student:

	Date
Psychological	_____
Medical	_____
Other (Please specify)	_____

11. Previous special or remedial services:
 _____ SIA /EIP _____ Remedial _____ Head Start _____ Other Special Education
 _____ Title I _____ Speech/Language _____ ESOL
 _____ Other _____

INTERVENTIONS ATTEMPTED PRIOR TO SST REQUEST:

Outcome of interventions:

Student conference	
Parent contact	
Referral to counselor	
Consultation with colleagues	
Adjusted workload	
Alternative teaching methods	
Modified materials	
Modified presentations	
Change in text/materials	
Change in grouping	
Change in seating	
Behavior contract	
Token system	

Date

Dear Parent:

We are requesting assistance from our Student Support Team on behalf of your child. This is a regular education process whose function is to provide insight and specific suggestions to help the classroom teacher deal most effectively with every student. We made this request because: _____

A meeting has been set for _____ at _____. Through the collective efforts of the Student Support Team, which consists of teachers, administrators, and others we hope to develop successful methods of helping your child have a more productive school year. Parental input is considered very important and your attendance is appreciated and invited.

Enclosed you will find a Background Information form which is designed to give us more information about your child. We are interested in any information which you feel could help us better understand your child. Please complete the questionnaire and return it to me as soon as possible. All information will be regarded as confidential, and is accessible only to those who have a legitimate need to know it.

We appreciate your support of our efforts. If you have any questions, please contact me at (phone number) _____
_____.

Sincerely,

_____ Yes, I will attend the meeting.

_____ No, I cannot attend the meeting. Please contact me with the results.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Date

Dear Parent:

We are requesting assistance from our Student Support Team on behalf of your child. This is a regular education process whose function is to provide insight and specific suggestions to help the classroom teacher deal most effectively with every student. Reason for request: _____

A meeting has been set for _____ at _____. Through the collective efforts of the Student Support Team, which consists of teachers, counselors, and administrators, we hope to develop concrete and successful methods of helping your child have a more productive school year. Parental input is considered very important and your attendance will be appreciated.

Enclosed you will find a Background Information form which is designed to give us more information about your child. We are interested in any information which you feel could help us better understand your child. Please complete the questionnaire and return it to me as soon as possible. All information will be regarded as confidential.

As part of the SST process, we will conduct a hearing and vision screening. The purpose of this screening is to determine whether problems in these areas are causing or contributing to your child's difficulties in class. Please complete the information below so that we may proceed with this screening.

We appreciate your support of our efforts. If you have any questions, please contact me at (phone number) _____
_____.

Sincerely,

_____ Yes, I will attend the meeting.

_____ No, I cannot attend the meeting. Please contact me with the results.

_____ Yes, I agree for the _____ Schools to conduct hearing and vision screening on my child.

_____ No, I do not agree for the _____ Schools to conduct hearing and vision screening on my child. Please contact me for more information.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Date

Dear Parent:

As you are aware, your child is currently being served through the Student Support Team process. A meeting has been set for _____ at _____. Through the collective efforts of the Student Support Team, which consists of teachers, counselors, and administrators, we hope to develop concrete and successful methods of helping your child have a more productive school year. Parental input is considered very important and your attendance will be appreciated.

We appreciate your support of our efforts. If you have any questions, please contact me at (phone number) _____.

Sincerely,

_____ Yes, I will attend the meeting.

_____ No, I cannot attend the meeting. Please contact me with the results.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

**STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM
BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

(To be completed by parents or guardian)

Dear Parent: We would appreciate your help in completing this information regarding _____ and returning it to the school. This information will help us in working more effectively with your child. Information on this form will be treated in a confidential manner.

Child's Name _____ Date today _____
First Middle Last

Address _____ Birthdate _____

Name of parent or guardian with whom child lives _____ Home Phone Number _____

Agencies or specialist that have worked with this child or family:
Mental Health Clinic _____ Family Physician _____ Social Worker _____ Other _____

If any checked, please give the following information:

<i>NAME</i>	<i>TITLE</i>	<i>ADDRESS</i>	<i>DATE SEEN</i>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

FAMILY DATA

Mother's Name _____ Age _____ Education (optional) _____
Place of Work _____ Work Phone Number _____ Father's
Name _____ Age _____ Education (optional) _____
Place of Work _____ Work Phone Number _____
Stepparent's Name _____ Age _____ Education (optional) _____
Place of Work _____ Work Phone Number _____
Marital Status of Parents _____
If parents are separated or divorced, how old was child when the separation occurred? _____
Recent traumatic events _____

List all people living in household:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Relationship to Child</i>	<i>Age</i>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

If any brothers or sisters are living outside the home, list their names and ages:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Does custodial parent work outside the home? _____ If yes, who is the primary caregiver when the parent(s) is away? _____

In the case of older students, does the student work outside the home? _____

If yes, how many hours does he or she work during the school week? _____ On the weekend? _____

SCHOOL HISTORY

Number of years attended this school (circle one): 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Grades Repeated _____

Other Schools Attended _____

List any subjects that are especially difficult for your child. _____

Describe any serious problems your child has experienced at school. _____

Describe any serious problems your child has experienced at home. _____

Describe your child's study habits at home. _____

Who is the primary person who helps with homework? _____

How much time is spent on homework each night? _____

BIRTH HISTORY

List any illnesses or accidents occurring during pregnancy. _____

Full Term: Yes No Birth Weight _____ Length of labor _____

Delivery: Normal Breech Cesarean

Was there any evidence of injury at birth? Yes No

Were any of the following experienced before the child's second birthday?

_____ Feeding problems _____ Convulsions _____ High fever

_____ Fainting _____ Serious accidents _____ Head injuries

Please give additional information on any item checked above: _____

DEVELOPMENTAL DATA

Does your child have a history of ear infections? Yes No

At what age did each of the following behaviors first occur?

_____ Crawled
_____ Sat alone
_____ Walked alone
_____ Said first words besides "Ma-Ma" and "Da-Da"
_____ Speech was clearly understood by others outside the family

_____ Toilet trained during day
_____ Toilet trained during night
_____ Tied shoes
_____ Dressed self

Describe early childhood care (baby-sitter, nursery school, mother, etc.) Include child's age.

PHYSICAL CONDITION

My child's general condition is:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Seems to be in good health | <input type="checkbox"/> Tires easily, listless, lacks energy |
| <input type="radio"/> Overweight | <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeps too much |
| <input type="radio"/> Underweight | <input type="radio"/> Sleeps too little |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overly active, always on the move | <input type="checkbox"/> Awkward in running, walking, or playing |

List any physical handicaps, serious illnesses, hospital stays, accidents or head injuries (vision, hearing, speech, seizures, operations, diseases, etc.).

BEHAVIORAL CHECKLIST

(Please check the behaviors that best describe your child)

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feels happy with him/herself | <input type="checkbox"/> Sucks his/her thumb | <input type="checkbox"/> Wets the bed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demands excessive attention | <input type="checkbox"/> Overly dependent on others | <input type="checkbox"/> Cries often |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plays well with other students | <input type="checkbox"/> Overly anxious to please | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor self-control |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits uncooperative attitude | <input type="checkbox"/> Tries to control others | <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Has very few close friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Relates well to adults | <input type="checkbox"/> Sad or depressed often |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lacks motivation, lazy | <input type="checkbox"/> Aggressive | <input type="checkbox"/> Shy, withdrawn |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Does not adjust readily to change | <input type="checkbox"/> Fearful | <input type="checkbox"/> Daydreams often |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acts younger than other children
his/her age | <input type="checkbox"/> Openly affectionate to family members | <input type="checkbox"/> Easily frustrated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can be trusted | <input type="checkbox"/> Restless | <input type="checkbox"/> Jealous of brother(s)/sister(s) |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Loud | |

DISCIPLINE USED AT HOME

- 1. Child is disciplined (check one): frequently occasionally rarely
- 2. Punishment is administered by (check all that apply): mother father others
- 3. Type of discipline is used (check all that apply): spanking loss of privileges restricted isolated talking rewards
- 4. Reactions to discipline: becomes angry cries withdraws sulks and pouts fights back
- 5. Effectiveness of discipline: behavior improves remains same behavior changes behavior worsens

1. What activities do you do together as a family? _____

2. Describe any chores your child does around the house. _____

3. Bedtime hour _____ Time of getting up in the morning _____

4. What concerns you most about your child? _____

5. List your child's major interests (sports, hobbies, activities). _____

6. What do you enjoy most about your child? _____

7. Has your child ever been involved with the Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Corrections, or other law enforcement agencies? (if yes, please explain) _____

8. If you wish to add additional information, please add it below or attach to this form.

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date

**STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM
MEETING SUMMARY**

SST Meeting Number: _____

Date: _____

Student: _____ DOB: _____ Age: _____ Grade: _____

FTE: _____ School: _____

Purpose of Meeting: _____

Discussion Summary: _____

Summary continued on back _____

RECOMMENDATIONS

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| _____ Parental Contact | _____ Additional Screening _____ |
| _____ Behavior Observation | _____ Title I Reading _____ Math _____ |
| _____ Modification Plan (attached) | _____ Referral to Mental Health Services |
| _____ Behavior Management Program | _____ Repeat Present Grade |
| _____ Speech/Language Screening | _____ Hearing/Vision Screening |
| _____ Student Conference | _____ Medical Evaluation |
| _____ Learning Style Observation | _____ Referral to Court Services |
| _____ Referral to School Counselor | _____ Other (List recommendations below) |

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Follow up meeting: Date _____ Time _____

Team Members Present:

Name/Title	Name/Title
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM MODIFICATION PLAN

Student: _____ Grade: _____ School: _____ Date: _____
 Teacher: _____

The following strategies have been recommended by the Student Support Team in an effort to improve classroom performance for the student. Modifications should be implemented for a suggested period of twenty school days. Please give specific information regarding the results of the modifications.

	STRATEGY	DATE BEGIN/END	RESULTS
	MODIFY INSTRUCTIONAL STYLE		
	Infuse instructional strategies for different learning styles into instruction.		
	Give alternate assignments based on learning style.		
	Use cooperative learning.		
	Provide small group instruction.		
	Shorten instructional units.		
	Use overhead projector.		
	Use graphic organizers.		
	Provide extra repetition.		
	Provide unit outline or study guide.		
	Provide visual materials which illustrate written materials.		
	Give explanations in small, distinct steps.		
	Provide both auditory and visual directions and information.		
	Point to things you are talking about.		
	Relate information to past experiences.		
	Provide concrete examples.		
	Provide manipulatives.		
	Provide frequent opportunities for movement.		
	Use drama and role-playing.		

	MODIFY CONTENT		
	Provide alternate textbooks.		
	Use parallel curriculum (same subject, different content)		
	Reduce number of objectives to be mastered.		
	Use alternate objective (change math problems from multiplication to addition).		
	Reduce amount of work.		
	MODIFY EVALUATION		
	Oral or demonstration testing.		
	Individual or small group testing.		
	Change test format (ex: short answer rather than essay).		
	Assign project rather than written report.		
	Provide additional time to complete assignments.		
	Provide more frequent feedback.		
	Highlight directions.		
	Allow extra time for completion.		
	PROVIDE ASSISTANCE		
	Assign peer tutor.		
	Assign study partner for homework.		
	Provide assignment sheets.		
	Give frequent reminders.		
	Individual help from the teacher or paraprofessional.		
	Copy notes from teacher or other student.		
	Provide extra set of books for home use.		
	MODIFY INSTRUCTIONAL ENVIRONMENT		
	Change work area.		
	Provide less formal work area (standing workstation, floor, comfortable chair, bean bags, etc.)		
	Change lighting in the room.		
	Have two desks for the student to allow for movement.		

Allow student to keep water and/or food at desk.		
Provide study carrel.		
Provide “white noise” or background music using headphones.		
MODIFY MATERIALS		
Use large print materials.		
Use computer.		
Alternate textbooks.		
Highlight important information with pen or tape.		
Allow use of facts chart or calculator.		
Use graph paper to keep math problems aligned.		
Fold or cut paper in half.		
BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT		
Use behavior modification checklist.		
Use contract.		
Give special privileges.		
Time out in classroom for _____ minutes.		
Time out in another classroom for _____ minutes.		
Use tangible rewards.		
Verbal praise.		
Assign special responsibilities (class helper, line leader, etc.)		
Use planned ignoring.		
Use cues to refocus attention.		
Use timer to keep student on task.		
Use visual language: ex. “Close your mouth” not “Be quiet”.		
SPEECH		
Emphasize the correct sound to the student.		
Use cues or signals to remind the student to say sounds correctly.		
Give extra time to respond.		

**STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM
BEHAVIOR DOCUMENTATION**

Student's Name: _____

Completed by: _____

Use the chart to describe the problem behavior, its antecedents, and consequences. Documentation should be recorded for five consecutive school days. Absences should be noted, but documentation may continue when the student returns to school.

Day and Date	Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence

Date

Dear Parent/Guardian of _____:

Your child has been served through the Student Support Team during the _____ school year. The SST has met on several occasions and discussed his/her progress. At this point, the team feels it is no longer necessary to serve your child through SST based on the following:

Future requests may be made to SST at any time. Should you observe any problems that would warrant further SST intervention, please feel free to contact the school. We will continue to work for progress and the highest possible achievement for your child. We appreciate your support of our efforts. If you have any questions, please contact me at

Sincerely,

SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

Overview of Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Congress prohibited discrimination against persons with disabilities in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, in a segment most often referred to simply as “Section 504.” This was a broadly worded prohibition that covers both children and adults. It applies to programs that receive any federal financial assistance. The principles enumerated in this section were later expanded and served as the basis for the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Section 504 prohibits discrimination against individuals whose physical or mental impairment substantially limits one or more major life activities, including:

- Caring for one’s self
- Performing manual tasks
- Walking
- Seeing
- Hearing
- Speaking
- Breathing
- Working
- **Learning**

“Physical or mental impairment” was defined to mean:

“(A) Any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological; musculo-skeletal; special sense organs; respiratory, including speech organs; cardiovascular; reproductive, digestive, genito-urinary; hemic and lymphatic; skin; and endocrine; or

(B) any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.”

(34CFR104, p336-337)

Examples of impairments which may entitle an individual to 504 protection include:

- diseases such as AIDS, tuberculosis, or hepatitis B;
- medical conditions such as chronic asthma, diabetes, heart disease, or seizure disorder; physical disabilities such as cerebral palsy or muscular dystrophy;
- Attention deficit disorder with or without hyperactivity;
- alcohol/drug addicted students (does not protect individuals who are currently using drugs or alcohol);
- students with temporary disabilities; and
- students with pregnancy related complications.

It is important to remember that the presence of one of these conditions in itself does not qualify an individual for 504 protection. The impairment must also cause a substantial limitation of a major life activity.

Importantly, the federal regulations for Section 504 went further by prohibiting discrimination against any person who **“has a record of such an impairment”** or who **“is regarded as having such an impairment.”** In so many words, this refers to persons who are *treated* as if they have the impairment, even if they no longer do, or never did. These phrases were defined in the same regulations as follows:

Has a record of such an impairment means has a history of, or has been *misclassified* as having, a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.” (emphasis added)

Is regarded as having an impairment means (A) has a physical or mental impairment that does *not* substantially limit major life activities but that is treated by a [funding] recipient as constituting such a limitation; (B) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits major life activities *only as a result of* the attitudes of others toward such an impairment; or (C) has none of the impairments defined in...this section *but is treated by* a [funding] recipient as having such an impairment.” (emphasis added)

It is important to note that the second and third prongs of Section 504 (has a record of or is regarded as having an impairment) do not guarantee accommodations to the individual. These prongs simply afford the individual with protection from discrimination.

Determination of the applicability of Section 504 can be very difficult at times, and in-depth explanation of it is beyond the scope of this manual. Each school system has a contact person who should be consulted for guidance on Section 504 issues. In addition, the Georgia Department of Education document, A Handbook of Questions and Answers for Local School Systems: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, may be of assistance.

In some ways, Section 504 is similar to IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Act), in that it involves rights, evaluation, an individualized plan, follow-up, and reevaluation. There are, however, two very important differences: 1. Section 504 is a civil rights law that ensures accommodations for *equal access* to services (here, instruction) that non-disabled students receive in the regular classroom, whereas IDEA involves individualized instruction by specially trained teachers; and 2. IDEA brings extra funding to IDEA-placed students, whereas Section 504 brings no extra funding. Thus, they differ both in goals and extent.

Section 504: Frequently Asked Questions

Who is protected by Section 504?

Any otherwise qualified person who currently has an impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities is eligible for protection and services under Section 504. Any student who is regarded as having an impairment or who has a record of an impairment is eligible for protection from discrimination.

What is a major life activity?

Section 504 defines major life activities as those activities involving caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working.

What are "substantial limitations"?

This term is not defined in the act or the regulations and is left to each agency to define. However, the Americans with Disabilities Act suggested that the term "substantially limits" be interpreted to mean that the student "is unable to perform a major life activity that the average student of approximately the same age can perform, or that the student is significantly restricted as to the condition, manner or duration under which a particular major life activity is performed as compared to the average student of approximately the same age". This interpretation can provide some guidance in defining the phrase.

What is "reasonable accommodation"?

Reasonable accommodation in the school setting is a modification or adjustment of educational programs to afford students with disabilities equal opportunity to access the programs. Reasonable accommodation must be made for persons with disabilities unless the schools can show that the requested accommodations would impose undue hardship.

What protections are afforded to those with a "record of an impairment" or who are "regarded as having an impairment"?

Under these prongs of the act, individuals are only eligible for protection from discrimination. For example, a student who has a record of leukemia but who is currently in remission cannot be denied the opportunity to try out for the football team. Likewise, a student with an orthopedic impairment cannot automatically be regarded as disabled when in reality the student experiences only minimal limitations.

Are IDEA (special education) students protected by Section 504?

Students who are served through special education under IDEA are also covered under Section 504. However, individuals covered by Section 504 are often not covered by IDEA. The determining factor will be the severity of the disability and the need for special education and related services.

Do students who have an Individualized Education Program under IDEA need a 504 Plan as well?

No. The IEP should cover all aspects of a student's educational program.

When a student is dismissed from special education, is he automatically eligible for 504?

Yes and no. The student cannot be discriminated against based on history of an impairment. If the 504 Committee determines that the student continues to have a disability that substantially limits a major life activity even though he does not meet IDEA eligibility requirements, the student would then be eligible for services and protection under Prong 1 of Section 504.

Can a temporary disability qualify a child for accommodations under Section 504?

In some instances, students with temporary disabilities are eligible for 504 protection. The committee should consider the nature and severity of the impairment and what its permanent or long-term impact will be

What protections are afforded to alcohol and/or drug addicted students?

Section 504 does not provide protection to persons currently engaging in alcohol/drug use or to casual users. It does protect individuals who have successfully completed rehabilitation programs, persons who are participating in a rehabilitation program, and persons regarded erroneously as drug users.

Who is responsible for implementing Section 504?

Section 504 is considered to be a provision of general education. It is therefore the responsibility of classroom teachers and the principal to assure that Section 504 accommodations are carried out.

Who makes up the 504 Committee?

Basically the same individuals who make up the SST are appropriate for the 504 Committee. Many school systems choose to use the SST as the vehicle for implementation of 504, although it is not required.

Is evaluation necessary to determine 504 eligibility?

Some type of evaluation is necessary. However, the evaluation may involve review of information such as medical information, standardized test scores, and classroom data that is already available to the committee rather than a new formal evaluation.

Is a medical report always necessary to determine 504 eligibility?

No. Although the 504 Committee should attempt to get as much information as possible regarding the student's condition, a physician's statement is not required to determine eligibility. If the committee determines that a formal evaluation of any type is necessary to determine eligibility, it must be provided at no cost to the parents.

Must students have a written 504 Plan in order to receive protection or accommodations?

No. Eligible students are protected by Section 504 even if a formal plan is not in place. In many cases, an effective SST plan will provide for needed accommodations.

Can a teacher refuse to implement accommodations that are written into a student's 504 Plan?

After the 504 Committee has determined the accommodations that are necessary for a student, teachers are required to implement them. Failure to do so places the school district in violation of Section 504.

Does every child who takes medication at school need a 504 Plan?

No. Students may have accommodations such as administration of medication without having a formal plan. Local school system policy should be implemented.

If a student has a 504 Plan, will a teacher or paraprofessional be assigned to come and work with that student?

In most circumstances, no additional personnel will be assigned to carry out accommodations. Section 504 accommodations are generally carried out by the classroom teacher or other designated personnel within the school. However, a student who is unable to attend school may qualify for Hospital Homebound services and receive instruction from a visiting teacher.

Are there any special rules for PE?

The 504 Committee should determine to what extent a student will be able to participate in PE. Alternate assignments or exemptions should be addressed in the 504 Plan.

Is it possible for a 504 student to fail a class?

Yes. 504 protection does not automatically dictate that a student will receive passing grades. The 504 Committee must determine if the accommodations were appropriate and if they were implemented for the student. Team members must keep in mind that many factors influence a student's academic performance.

How does eligibility for Section 504 affect discipline?

Students may not be punished for behavior that is caused by a disability. If it is determined that the behavior was not related to the disability, the student could receive the same consequences as a student without a disability.

Can the 504 Committee order accommodations to the ACT/SAT?

The 504 Committee can make recommendations based on accommodations written into the 504 Plan. However, the Educational Testing Service makes all decisions regarding accommodations on an individual basis.

Can the 504 Committee order accommodations to district-wide standardized testing and the Georgia High School Graduation Test?

Accommodations as outlined in the testing manual can be recommended as part of a 504 Plan. However, committees should exercise caution in making these decisions. Ethically, students must need the accommodations during the rest of the school year and not just during weeks of standardized testing. 504 Plans should not be written for the sole purpose of providing accommodations on standardized testing. In fact, a student may be placed at a disadvantage if an accommodation is introduced for the first time at the administration of a standardized assessment.

Can a student be dismissed from 504?

Yes. Students who no longer have an impairment are no longer eligible for 504 services. They will continue to be eligible for protection from discrimination based on their history of impairment.

Does 504 eligibility automatically guarantee that a student is chosen for extracurricular teams/activities?

No. Students with disabilities must be given equal access to compete for and participate in these activities with reasonable accommodations. If the student fails to meet criteria for team membership, then he is not considered to be "otherwise qualified". Discrimination occurs when the decision not to allow the student to participate is based solely on the fact that the student has a disability.

Procedures for Writing Section 504 Plans

A. Evaluation Conducted

What is required for the Section 504 evaluation and placement process is determined by the type of disability believed to be present, and the type of services the student may need. The committee, composed of persons knowledgeable about the student, should consider all available information, including educational, medical, and psychological records as appropriate. In some instances, further evaluation may be necessary.

B. Eligibility Determined

Section 504 regulations should be reviewed to document the presence of a qualifying disability, the effect on a major life activity, and the impact on the student's education. All three areas must be documented. If it is determined that no disability exists, the committee should document this and go no further.

C. Necessary Accommodations Identified

The committee determines what accommodations and/or services must be provided in order that the student may receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

D. Learning Environment Identified

The committee determines the learning environment in which the student may be taught with the outlined accommodations.

E. Parental Rights Given

The student's parent/guardian is given a copy of the Section 504 Rights form. The rights are reviewed with the parent.

When formulating a 504 Plan, the committee should include all of the student's teachers, the parent/guardian, an administrator, and other individuals as appropriate. The 504 Plan should be kept as part of the SST file and reviewed as needed. The file should be forwarded if the student attends another school within the district. The 504 Plan may be forwarded to other districts upon request for SST records.

Determining Substantial Limitations

Three questions to consider in determining whether a person's impairment substantially limits one or more major life activities:

1. What is the nature and severity of the impairment?
2. How long will it last or is it expected to last?
3. What is its permanent or long term impact or expected impact?

The ADA provides some assistance in interpreting the phrase "substantially limits". In this law, the impairment or disability must be substantial and somewhat unique, rather than commonplace, when compared to the average person in the general population (Sec. 1630.2(j)(1)).

Thus...it is suggested that the term "substantially limits" be interpreted to mean that the student is unable to perform a major life activity that the average student of approximately the same age can perform, or that the student is significantly restricted as to the condition, manner or duration under which a particular major life activity is performed as compared to the average student of approximately the same age.

CASE, 1999

Reasonable Accommodation

- Reasonable accommodation in the school setting is a modification or adjustment of educational programs to afford students with disabilities equal opportunity to access the programs.

The Office of Civil Rights does not endorse a specific form of Section 504 Rights. School systems may develop their own or use the same rights that are developed for IDEA. However, any copy of Section 504 Rights must include the following, as outlined in the Section 504 Regulations:

1. Notice of any action taken with regard to the educational program of the student;
2. An opportunity to examine relevant records;
3. An impartial hearing with the opportunity for participation by the student's parents or guardians and representation by counsel; and
4. A review procedure.

The following pages contain samples of Section 504 Rights and Individual Accommodation Plan. School systems may use these forms or develop their own.

Rights Afforded by Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The following is a description of the rights granted by federal law to students with handicaps, as outlined under Section 504. The intent of the law is to keep you fully informed concerning decisions about your child and to inform you of your rights if you disagree with any of these decisions.

You have the right to:

1. have your child take part in, and receive benefits from, public education programs without discrimination because of his/her handicapping conditions.
2. have the local school system advise you of your rights under federal law.
3. receive notice with respect to identification, evaluation, or placement of your child.
4. have your child receive a free appropriate public education.
5. have your child receive services and be educated in facilities which are comparable to those provided to non-handicapped students.
6. have evaluation, educational, and placement decisions made based on a variety of information sources, and by persons who know the students and who are knowledgeable about the evaluation data and placement options.
7. have transportation provided to and from an alternative placement setting (if the setting is a program not operated by the local school system) at no greater cost to you than would be incurred if the student were placed in a program operated by the local school system.
8. have your child be given an equal opportunity to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities offered by the local school system.
9. examine all relevant records relating to decisions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, and placement.
10. request mediation or an impartial due process hearing related to decisions or actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program, or placement. (You and your child may take part in the hearing and be represented by counsel. Hearing requests must be made to your local school system superintendent.)
11. file a local grievance.

The Office for Civil Rights of the United States Department of Education enforces the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The address of the Regional Office (which includes Georgia) is: Office for Civil Rights, Region IV, 61 Forsyth Street, Suite 1970, Atlanta, Georgia 30303.

**SECTION 504
INDIVIDUAL ACCOMMODATION PLAN**

Plan date: _____
Projected review date: _____

Student's Name: _____ DOB _____ Age: _____
SSN: _____ School: _____ Grade: _____
Parent/Guardian: _____ Phone: W/H _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Committee Members Present:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Describe the student's physical or mental impairment, including history and prognosis as appropriate

Describe the educational limitations experienced by the student as a result of this disability.

Describe the medical limitations experienced by the students as a result of this disability.

List any other limitations which may affect the student's activities while at school.

List the accommodations which are necessary for this student to participate in the educational program.

List any anticipated discipline problems which may result from the disability.

Describe positive behavioral interventions which will be used to address this behavior.

List consequences which may be used when this behavior occurs.

To be completed if parent/guardian attended meeting:

I was invited to participate in developing this plan for my child. I have reviewed this plan and have received a copy of the Notice of Section 504 Rights. I understand my rights as outlined on the Notice.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

To be completed if parent/guardian did not attend meeting:

Indicate date copies were sent to the parent to serve as actions proposed or refused:

Date sent: _____ Copies sent: _____ IAP _____ Evaluation Report(s) _____ Section 504 Rights

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA, 1997)

Overview of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1997)

IDEA is the federal legislation which governs special education services, particularly funding and eligibility. Although the Student Support Team process is not mandated by IDEA, SST members must have some general knowledge about the requirements of the law in order to make informed decisions when making referrals to special education. It is important that they understand the **nature** of the various disabilities so that they know when to suspect that a disability may be the primary reason for a student's difficulties. However, it is **not** up to SST members to judge whether a student would **qualify** for a category before deciding to refer. That is for the multidisciplinary evaluation team to answer through a comprehensive, individualized team evaluation.

The job of the SST is to answer a basic question regarding a student with learning or behavior difficulties. That is, can this difficulty be resolved in a reasonable time with proven modifications in the regular classroom? Federal regulations for IDEA require that, in order to be referred for a special education evaluation, not only must 1) a disability be suspected as the source of the student's problem, but also 2) the student's identified difficulties must be documented as unable to be resolved without a special education program.

The SST is clearly appropriate for answering these questions in virtually every case. It is only when the SST has answered in the affirmative to both questions that referral for a special education evaluation becomes appropriate.

The following information outlines the basic characteristics of the most common disability areas identified in IDEA. This information is very basic and is not intended to provide all requirements for determining IDEA eligibility. Instead, its purpose is to give SST members a basic knowledge of the characteristics of the disabilities, thus helping the team make informed decisions about the appropriateness of a referral.

Specific Learning Disability (SLD) –

- Although some students with SLD may score below the average range on tests of intelligence, typically the student with specific learning disability has average to above average intelligence
- Processing deficit in one or more of the basic psychological processes (attending, discrimination/perception, sensory integration, organization, sequencing, short-term memory, long-term memory and/or conceptualization/reasoning, etc.) and evidence that this deficit has impaired the student's mastery of the academic tasks required in the regular curriculum
- Processing strength that is commensurate with estimated cognitive ability
- Significant deficit in one of the seven areas of learning (Oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading comprehension, math calculation and math reasoning) and the current achievement is below the student's grade placement level
- Evidence from a variety of sources, including classroom functioning
- Evidence that the discrepant performance is not primarily due to intellectual disability, hearing or vision impairment, emotional and behavioral disorder, environmental disadvantage, cultural difference, economic disadvantage, atypical educational history, and/or native or primary language other than English

Emotional and Behavioral Disorder (EBD)

- An emotional disability characterized by one or more of the following:
 - An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and/or teachers.
 - An inability to learn which cannot be adequately explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors.
 - Consistent or chronic inappropriate type of behavior or feelings under normal conditions.
 - Displayed pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
 - Displayed tendency to develop physical symptoms, pains or unreasonable fears associated with personal or school problems.
- Must document behaviors in a variety of settings through evaluation, observations, and social history
- Must document duration, frequency, and intensity of behaviors
- Must have emotional basis for behaviors. Should rule out juvenile delinquency and social maladjustment if possible.

Other Health Impairment (OHI)

- Having limited strength, vitality, or alertness (including a heightened awareness to environmental stimuli that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment) due to chronic or acute health problems
- Conditions must adversely affect the student's educational performance to the degree that the student requires special education

Intellectual Disability (MiID, MoID, SID, PID)

- IQ approximately 70 or below
- Deficits in adaptive behavior – significant limitations in an individual's effectiveness in meeting the standards of maturation, learning, personal independence or social responsibility and especially school performance that is expected of the individual's age-level and cultural group
- Deficits in academic achievement when compared with same age peers

Speech Language Impairment (SI)

- Impairment in the areas of articulation, fluency, voice, or language which differs so significantly in manner or content from that of peers that it disrupts communications or affects emotional, social, intellectual, or educational growth.

Autism

- Developmental disability, generally evident before age three, that significantly affects the following areas:
 - Developmental rates and sequences
 - Social interaction and participation
 - Communication (verbal and/or nonverbal)
 - Sensory processing
 - Repertoire of activities and interests

Orthopedic Impairment (OI)

- Severe orthopedic impairment affects educational performance to the degree that the student requires special education
- Should be functioning no lower than criteria outlined for mild intellectual disabilities

Deaf/Hard of Hearing (D/HH)

- Presence of a hearing loss, whether permanent or fluctuating, that interferes with the acquisition or maintenance of auditory skills necessary for the normal development of speech, language, and academic achievement
- Eligibility determined by results of audiological, otological, and education evaluations.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

- An acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects the student's educational performance.
- Does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative in nature, brain injuries induced by birth trauma or those resulting from internal occurrences such as stroke, tumor or aneurysm.
- Verification of the injury may be documented through:
 - Medical evaluation report from a licensed doctor of medicine indicating that TBI has occurred recently or in the past, or
- Another appropriate source, such as health department or social services reports, or parent's medical bills/records.

Visual Impairment (VI)

- Student's vision interferes with functioning in a regular school program. Student may have partial or total loss of vision.

SPECIAL EDUCATION and SST INTERFACE: Frequently Asked Questions

When should a Student Support Team refer a student to special education?

There is no “hard and fast” rule or answer to this question. The circumstances for each student are different and the progress a student makes under an effective SST plan is unique. However, a special education referral should be considered at any time that the SST, the classroom teacher, or the student’s parent has reason to know or believe that the student may be a student with a disability.

The SST has referred a student to special education. What should happen while the special education evaluation is in process?

Everyone who works with the student should continue to implement the accommodations, modifications, and other efforts outlined in the student’s SST plan.

The special education eligibility team met recently and determined that a particular student is not eligible for any area of special education. What should SST do?

As indicated above, the implementation of a student’s SST plan should continue while a special education evaluation and special education eligibility determination is in process. Once a special education eligibility team determines that a student is not eligible for special education, the SST should continue to provide assistance to the student. The SST should meet to review the information gained from the special education evaluation and eligibility processes, because this information provides important input applicable to helping the student. After review of this information, the SST should consider what changes may be necessary to the student’s current SST plan or if the student is eligible for a 504 plan.

Do students who have difficulty articulating their words have to be assisted by the SST before they can be referred to special education for a speech evaluation?

Yes. The SST process applies to all students. Attempts to assist students should occur through the SST before a referral to special education is made. Of course, if there is clear evidence that strongly suggests the presence of a disability, the school may bypass SST interventions and refer the student to special education. The evidence considered and the reasons for the SST bypass must be clearly documented by the SST team.

Can special educators be members of a school’s Student Support Team?

While there is no law, rule, or regulation that would prohibit a special educator from serving as a permanent member on an SST, it is not recommended. It is not uncommon for parents to experience confusion about the SST process versus the special education referral process. Having special educators as permanent members of the SST blurs the distinction even more and contributes to more confusion.

It is generally good practice for SSTs to consider individual situations in which a “specialist” might be requested to attend a certain SST meeting for a particular student. These specialists may include special education teachers, administrators, school psychologists, or any other individuals with specialized training who can provide recommendations or insight about the student.

If a student is in special education with an IEP, is the SST’s involvement completed?

If a student has an IEP that address goals/objectives and the student begins to display other weaknesses of concern, this information should be brought to the attention of the school’s special education staff so that an IEP team can be convened. The IEP team would then address those new areas of concern, determine if additional data are needed, (including formal and informal evaluation, if appropriate), and make appropriate recommendations regarding the collection of additional data. After

the additional information is available, the IEP team will determine, on a case-by-case basis, the appropriate avenue to address those concerns. In some cases, addressing the new concerns through general education efforts and/or SST might be determined to be appropriate. In other cases, the IEP goals/objectives and/or services might be expanded to address the concerns.

A parent has requested a referral to special education or has requested a special education evaluation. What should the SST do?

It is advisable to always contact the special education leadership team for assistance. If the student has not yet been studied by the school's SST when this parental request is made, a request to SST should be made right away. The parent should be informed of the SST meeting and invited to participate. As with other SST cases, the SST should develop a written plan to address the student's weaknesses and the plan should be implemented. If, after implementation of the SST plan, the student's progress is minimal, the SST should consider a referral to special education. Of course, when the presence of a disability is strongly suspected, the SST may meet and elect to by-pass the SST interventions. In such a case, the reason(s) for the by-pass must be documented and a modification plan should be implemented.

If a student is already involved with the SST and the parent makes such a request, it is important that the SST address the request immediately. Unless the SST has a preponderance of evidence that the student is not a student with a disability, the SST should respond to the parental request by referring the student to special education. The SST should follow its local procedures regarding referrals to special education.

If the SST has a preponderance of evidence that suggests an evaluation is not necessary, then the SST can elect **not** to make a special education referral. IDEA mandates that parents receive certain due process rights at this point. It is recommended that a member of the special education leadership team be involved so that all due process procedures may be followed.

Responsibilities for Student Support Teams Regarding Discipline as a Result of The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, 1997

The 1997 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) contained a new provision that addressed “protections for [students] not yet eligible for special education and related services” (Section 1415 k(8)).

What does this mean for the SST Process?

Simply stated, a general education student whose behavior elicits disciplinary action of the school or school system must be afforded all of the rights and procedural safeguards under the IDEA **if the school or school system knew or should have known that the student was a student with a disability**. Therefore, SSTs should be responsible for the following actions.

- A. All school personnel and SST members should consider whether SST students who have persistent problematic behaviors should be referred to special education. Chronic or escalating behaviors that persist in spite of appropriate SST intervention efforts could signal the need for a referral to special education. At the very least, the SST should consider inviting the school psychologist and/or the special education teacher to attend an SST meeting for the student in order to assist the team in decision making about a special education referral. Students with persistent or escalating behaviors should not remain on the same SST plan when progress is not detectable.

- B. All school personnel and SST members should consider whether they as individuals, or the team as a group, had knowledge that a student might have a disability. If such knowledge was present, the student should be referred to special education in a timely manner. The SST should follow its local procedures regarding referrals to special education but, again, this should be done in a timely manner.

If such a referral **did not take place** but the conditions outlined below existed, then individuals and/or the team would be **“deemed to have knowledge,”** according to the provisions of the federal IDEA regulation cited below.

1. **The student’s parent previously expressed concerns that his/her child might have a disability and might be in need of special education and related services.**

The parent might have expressed such concerns to an individual who serves on the school’s SST (such as a classroom teacher, a school principal or assistant principal, a school counselor). The parent might have voiced this concern to the student support team as a group during an SST meeting. In either case, it is important that school personnel communicate with each other when such parental expressions of concern are made so that appropriate school or school system actions/responses can occur. Although the regulations specify that the parent expressed the concerns *in writing*, an SST would be prudent if it explored the need for a referral to special education even when the parent expresses such concern verbally to school personnel or verbally within the context of an SST meeting.

2. The behavior or performance of the student demonstrates the need for special education.

Student Support Teams are in a unique position to be aware of a student's strengths and weaknesses in academic, behavioral, and social skills and to develop SST interventions to assist the student. If the student's behavior or performance suggests the distinct possibility that s/he might have a disability, then this constitutes "knowledge," as applicable to this IDEA regulation. In such a case, a referral to special education should be made in a timely manner. The SST should follow its local procedures regarding referrals to special education but, again, this should be done in a timely manner.

3. The parent has requested a referral to special education or has requested a special education evaluation.

If such a request has been made by the parent to personnel in the school, including the SST, it is important that the SST address the request in a timely manner. Unless the SST has a preponderance of evidence that the student is not a student with a disability, the SST should respond to the parental request by referring the student to special education in a timely manner. The SST should follow its local procedures regarding referrals to special education.

If the SST has a preponderance of evidence that suggests a special education evaluation is not necessary, then the SST can elect not to make a special education referral. *In such a case, however, "notice" requirements of the IDEA mandate that the parents receive a written notice containing:*

- A description of the action that the school is refusing (in this case, referral to special education is being refused);
- An explanation of why the school refuses to refer the student to special education;
- A description of any other options that the school considered and the reasons why those options were rejected;
- A description of each evaluation procedure, test, record, or report the school used as a basis for the refusal;
- A description of any other factors that are relevant to the school's refusal;
- A statement that the parents have protection under the procedural safeguards of the IDEA and the means by which a copy of the IDEA parental rights may be obtained; and
- Sources for the parent to contact to obtain assistance in understanding this information.

This written notice must be in language that is understandable to the general public. The notice must be provided in the parent's native language or other mode of communication, if necessary. The school must take steps to assure that the parent understands the content of this notice and that there is written evidence that the above requirements have been met. [Refer to CFR 300.503(b) and (c)]

4. Personnel in the local school system have expressed concern about the student's behavior or performance to the special education director or to appropriate personnel as part of a referral to special education

If this is the case, the SST should initiate a referral to special education in a timely manner. The SST should follow its local procedures regarding referrals to special education but, again, this should be done in a timely manner.

In summary, it is usually preferable for SSTs and school system personnel to refer students to special education if a disability is suspected. However, if this is not done and a general education student's behavior violates a school or school system's code of conduct (including violations involving weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, or controlled substances) AND one or more of the conditions in item B above existed, then that student must be afforded the rights and procedural safeguards of the IDEA while an expedited evaluation is conducted

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

An Overview of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) was enacted to clarify the rights of students and their parents regarding educational records. It contains very specific information detailing what is considered an educational record; how systems are to handle requests for records from parents, other school systems, and other agencies; and confidentiality of personally identifiable information. SST members should have a clear understanding of FERPA requirements due to the fact that they must deal with these issues on an ongoing basis.

The basic requirements of FERPA are outlined below. Additional information is contained in the Frequently Asked Questions immediately following this overview.

1. Parents have the right to inspect and review the educational records of their children. If any material or document in the educational record of a student includes information on more than one student, the parents have access to only the information which relates to their child. Educational records must be made available within a reasonable period of time, but in no case more than forty-five days after the request has been made.
2. Parents have the right to a hearing process in order to challenge the content of their child's educational records in order to insure that the records are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of students. Parents may have an opportunity to correct or delete any such inaccurate, misleading or otherwise inappropriate data contained in the record. They also have the right to insert into the educational record a written explanation regarding the content of the records.
3. Educational record is defined as those records, files, documents, and other materials which contain information directly related to a student and are maintained by an educational agency. It does not include (a) records of instructional, supervisory, and administrative personnel which are not accessible or revealed to any other person except a substitute; (b) records maintained by a law enforcement unit of the educational agency or institution that were created by that law enforcement unit for the purpose of law enforcement;
4. Parental consent **is not required** when records are released to the following:
 - other school officials, including teachers within the educational institution or LEA who have legitimate educational interests;
 - officials of other schools or school systems in which the student seeks or intends to enroll, upon condition that the student's parents be notified of the transfer, receive a copy of the record if desired, and have an opportunity for a hearing to challenge the content of the record;
 - in connection with a student's application for, or receipt of, financial aid;
 - organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, education agencies (with restrictions);
 - accrediting organizations in order to carry out their accrediting functions;
 - in connection with an emergency, other appropriate persons if the knowledge of such information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons; and
 - in connection with a subpoena.

5. The school district **is required** to **notify** the parents that the student's records are being released. This notification can be made in a letter to the parents or as part of the standard board policy. All records may be released, including academic and discipline records, special education records, and SST records.
6. In all other cases, parental consent must be obtained and must specify:
 - records to be released
 - the reasons for such release, and to whom,Copies of the records must be provided to the parent or student if requested.
7. Educational agencies must maintain a record to be kept with the educational records of each student, which will indicate all individuals (other than those specified above) agencies, or organizations that have requested or obtained access to a student's educational records and that will indicate specifically the legitimate interest that each such person, agency, or organization has in obtaining this information.
8. "Directory information" may be released without parental consent, provided parents have been given public notice of what information is released. Directory information may include the following:
 - students names
 - addresses
 - telephone listing
 - electronic mail address
 - photograph
 - date and place of birth
 - major field of study
 - dates of attendance
 - grade level
 - enrollment status (e.g. undergraduate or graduate, full-time or part-time)
 - participation in officially recognized activities and sports
 - weight and height of members of athletic teams
 - degrees, honors and awards received
 - most recent previous educational agency or institution attended
9. Personal information shall only be transferred to a third party on the condition that such party will not permit any other party to have access to such information without the written consent of the parents of the student.
10. Both parents have equal access to their child's educational records unless a court document can be produced which denies access or terminates parental rights to review the records. Either parent can grant permission in writing to a third party, such as a stepparent.
11. Rights are transferred to the student at age 18.
12. Parents must be notified of all rights under FERPA.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): Frequently Asked Questions

Are SST records considered a part of a student's general education records?

Yes. The SST is a general education function in Georgia and the records produced by the SST process are a part of the student's general education records, regardless of where the SST records are kept.

Should SST records be treated any differently from other student records?

No. The confidentiality of every student (general and special education students alike) should be protected, in all activities, including activities related to student records. Thus, SST records should be stored in a manner that protects their confidentiality and that allows access only by authorized persons as defined in FERPA.

Is there a special law that covers such procedures related to student records?

Yes, the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

What is FERPA?

FERPA is a federal law that applies to schools, educational agencies, or institutions that receive federal education funds. The law addresses requirements to protect the privacy of parents and students.

How does FERPA apply to the schools?

FERPA contains requirements related to students' educational records. Failure to comply with FERPA requirements results in the violation of a parent's/student's rights and a violation of a federal law.

How should FERPA be applied to SST or SST activities?

- SST practices and procedures should ensure the confidentiality of *educational records*.
- The term *educational record* applies to SST minutes, SST documents, SST test results, video or audio tapes made of the student under the SST process, observational data, and other student information gathered through the school's SST process.
- A parent, or eligible student, has the right to inspect and review the student's educational records.
- A parent, or eligible student, has the right to request amendment to the student's educational records.
- With a few exceptions, parental consent is required before *personally identifiable information* can be disclosed.
- SST records contain a great deal of *personally identifiable information*. This term includes, but is not limited to:
 - The student's name.
 - The name of the student's parent or other family member.
 - The address of the student or student's family.
 - A personal identifier such as the student's social security number or student number.

- A list of personal characteristics that would make the student’s identity easily traceable.
 - Other information that would make the student’s identity easily traceable.
- SST procedures should clearly address how to maintain (a) documentation of the requests for access to a student’s records and (b) the disposition of such requests, following FERPA requirements.

If a student moves from my school system to another school system, may we send the SST file to the new school system when they request the student’s educational records?

Yes, the SST record must be included in the student’s general education records when those records are transferred to the new school system. Schools may transmit student records to another school where the student will be enrolling without obtaining prior written consent from the parent if the school’s FERPA policy states that education records will be disclosed to the school or school system in which the student seeks to enroll.

If the school’s FERPA policy does not contain this statement, then the school must (a) make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or eligible student, at their last known address, that the records have been disclosed and (b) give the parent or eligible student, upon request, a copy of the records that were disclosed

Does this mean that SST records cannot be sent within my school system when a student moves to the next level (elementary to middle school, for example)?

No. Records may be transferred within the school system in order to follow the student’s movement. Schools may transmit student records to another school within the school system where the student will be enrolling without obtaining prior written consent from the parent.

Such records should be transferred and stored in a manner that respects their confidential nature. In other words, their access should be restricted to personnel who have a “need to know” about the content of the record. See question #2 above.

Can a parent or eligible student examine and/or receive a copy of test protocols that are in the student’s SST records?

Any protocols that are copyrighted materials cannot be duplicated. However, the parent or eligible student has a right to review the student’s educational records and this includes the protocols in the SST records.

Does the above information apply to the disclosure of education records to a Regional Youth Development Center (RYDC) or a Youth Development Center (YDC)?

Yes. The RYDCs and YDCs are a part of the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). Under Georgia law, the DJJ is a school system. Therefore, the above information applies to DJJ as it does to other school systems.

STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM

CASE STUDIES

The following case studies have been developed to provide examples of appropriate SST documentation. Case Study #1 includes some of the completed forms which would be used during the development of the SST plan. This example depicts a student who is successful with modifications and has an ongoing intervention plan. Case Studies #2 and #3 are given in narrative form only. Case Study #2 depicts referral for psychoeducational evaluation. Case Study #3 is an example of the development of a Section 504 Plan.

Student Support Team Process

Case Study #1

(Ongoing SST Process)

Name: Suzy Brown
Date of request: 1/26/00

Date of birth: 3/12/92
Current grade: 2

Suzy's academic history reveals that she did very well in kindergarten and most of 1st grade. Her 1st grade cumulative record shows satisfactory progress in all areas. However, Suzy is now experiencing significant difficulty in all subject areas. She is often off task and seems not to be listening. Sight word skills are at the 1.6 grade level as measured by a reading inventory that accompanies the reading series. Suzy consistently recognizes only 30 sight words. Reading comprehension is measured at 1.4 GE, but improves when comprehension questions are read to her and she is allowed to answer orally. Oral language skills are average for her age group. Suzy is able to add and subtract two digit numbers with and without regrouping. She can easily work simple word problems when given help reading the information. Memorization skills are poor; she has not mastered addition and subtraction facts. She is slow to complete her work, and her papers are messy and wrinkled when she turns them in. On two occasions, Suzy cried when copying spelling words from the board. Both times, she said she wanted to go to her mother, who is a parapro at the school.

Suzy is normally very friendly and outgoing. She has several close friends and likes to be a part of the group. At recess, her favorite activities are singing along with her friends and making up songs. After school, she enjoys visiting her mother's classroom and talking with the teacher who works with her mother.

Suzy lives with both parents in a modest neighborhood. Her father works in a local industry. She has a brother, age 9 and a sister, age 4. Suzy's brother has experienced similar problems in school. Suzy's parents report no problems at home.

Suzy's teacher is using the regular textbooks and materials. The reading series incorporates sight word and whole language instruction with limited emphasis on phonics.

Strategies already tried include the following:

- seating close to the board – no improvement in copying from the board or in attending
- reminding Suzy to get back on task – this helped in math class, but embarrassed her
- referral to counselor – Suzy stopped crying and was able to return to class

Main Street Elementary School

Dear Parent:

Assistance for your child has been requested from the Student Support Team. This is a regular education process whose function is to provide insight and specific suggestions to help the classroom teacher deal most effectively with every student. Reason for request: academic difficulty in Reading.

A meeting has been set for February 2, 2000 at 3:00 p.m.. Through the collective efforts of the Student Support Team, which consists of teachers, counselors, and administrators, we hope to develop concrete and successful methods of helping your child have a more productive school year. Parental input is considered very important and your attendance will be appreciated.

Enclosed you will find a Background Information form which is designed to give us more information about your child. We are interested in any information that you feel could help us better understand your child. Please complete the questionnaire and return it to me as soon as possible. All information will be regarded as confidential.

As part of the SST process, we will conduct a hearing and vision screening. The purpose of this screening is to determine whether problems in these areas are causing or contributing to your child's difficulties in class. Please complete the information below so that we may proceed with this screening.

We appreciate your support of our efforts. If you have any questions, please contact me at (phone number) (770) 234-5678.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Jane Smith

Yes, I will attend the meeting.

No, I cannot attend the meeting. Please contact me with the results.

Yes, I agree for the ABC Schools to conduct a hearing and vision screening on my child.

No, I do not agree for the ABC Schools to conduct a hearing and vision screening on my child.
Please contact me for more information.

Parent/Guardian Signature

**STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM
MEETING SUMMARY**

SST Meeting Number: 1 Date: 2/2/00
Student: Suzy Brown DOB: 3/12/92 Age: 7 Grade: 2
FTE: 123456789 School: Main Street Elementary

Purpose of Meeting: Review student information and work samples. Formulate modification plan.

Discussion Summary: Suzy is experiencing difficulty in all subject areas with special concern in Reading. She is presently working on 1.6 grade level in sight word skills. Reading comprehension is poor when reading independently; improves when read to her. Math computation skills are on grade level, however reasoning skills are poor when not read to her. She takes more time to complete work and is often off task. Papers are often messy. She becomes frustrated and cries when copying from the board. Counselor has been successful in calming Suzy and getting her back to class. Seating close to board has been unsuccessful. Reminding her to get back on task helped but embarrassed her.

The committee discussed possible reasons for Suzy's current difficulties. It is felt that she may benefit from a phonics approach to reading. She may also be experiencing vision problems as evidenced by her inability to copy from the board. A Learning Style Observation will be completed by Mrs. Smith to determine if she has a learning style preference. Suzy will be given additional time to complete assignments in order to relieve some tension. A card will be placed on Suzy's desk and will be discreetly marked by the teacher when Suzy is on task. A soft touch on the shoulder will be used to bring her back to task. Teachers will give Suzy a Xerox copy of all board assignments.

Suzy's mother stated that Suzy's brother has experienced similar problems in school. No problems are reported at home. Mrs. Brown agreed and signed consent for a hearing/vision screening to be completed by the school nurse. She will complete a Background Information form and return it to school as soon as possible.

A Modification Plan was developed and will be implemented during the next four weeks of school.

Summary continued on back _____

RECOMMENDATIONS

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parental Contact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional Screening <u>Hearing/Vision</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior Observation | <input type="checkbox"/> Title I Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Math <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Modification Plan (attached) | <input type="checkbox"/> Referral to Mental Health Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior Management Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Repeat Present Grade |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Speech/Language Screening | <input type="checkbox"/> Audiological Evaluation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student Conference | <input type="checkbox"/> Extensive Vision Evaluation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learning Style Observation | <input type="checkbox"/> Referral to Court Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Referral to School Counselor | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (List recommendations below) |

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Follow up meeting: Date March 2, 2000 Time 3:00

Team Members Present:

Name/Title

Katrina Johnson/ 2nd grade teacher

Lucy Brown/ parent

Terese Bowman/ School SST Coordinator

Jane Smith/ requesting teacher

Elizabeth Prince/ 2nd grade teacher

Main Street Elementary School

Dear Parent:

As you are aware, your child is currently being served through the Student Support Team process. A meeting has been set for March 6, 2000 at 3:00 p.m.. Through the collective efforts of the Student Support Team, which consists of teachers, counselors, and administrators, we hope to develop concrete and successful methods of helping your child have a more productive school year. Parental input is considered very important and your attendance will be appreciated.

We appreciate your support of our efforts. If you have any questions, please contact me at (phone number) (770)234-5678.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Jane Smith

Yes, I will attend the meeting.

No, I cannot attend the meeting. Please contact me with the results.

Parent/Guardian Signature

**STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM
MEETING SUMMARY**

SST Meeting Number: 2 Date: 3/6/00
Student: Suzy Brown DOB: 3/12/92 Age: 7 Grade: 2
FTE: 123456789 School: Main Street Elementary

Purpose of Meeting: to discuss the outcomes of Suzy's modifications and develop further plan of action

Discussion Summary: Suzy failed the far point vision screening. Mrs. Brown has scheduled an appointment with an optometrist and will share the results with the team. Copying from paper instead of the board has relieved anxiety. Teachers will continue providing copies of board work until vision problem is taken care of. Suzy continues to dislike reading and puts forth little effort. Phonics instruction has helped but not with significant progress. Despite extended time allocated, she still struggles to stay on task and complete assignments. She continues to progress rapidly in math computation, but has begun counting on her fingers to complete math problems. She enjoys solving word problems but continues to need help with reading portion.

Behavior management card will be continued because it was successful in bringing back her attention without singling her out. Teachers will continue to notify parents concerning excessive talking in class. Mrs. Brown has stated that she will provide consequences at home. The Learning Style Observation revealed a preference for auditory instruction. Suzy will listen to addition and subtraction facts set to music in the learning center. Mrs. Smith will incorporate auditory instruction into her lessons on a regular basis. She will also instruct Suzy using Touch Math to alleviate the tendency to count on her fingers.

Summary continued on back _____

RECOMMENDATIONS

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parental Contact | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Screening _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior Observation | <input type="checkbox"/> Title I Reading _____ Math _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Modification Plan (attached) | <input type="checkbox"/> Referral to Mental Health Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior Management Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Repeat Present Grade |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Speech/Language Screening | <input type="checkbox"/> Audiological Evaluation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student Conference | <input type="checkbox"/> Extensive Vision Evaluation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Style Observation | <input type="checkbox"/> Referral to Court Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Referral to School Counselor | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (List recommendations below) |

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Follow up meeting: Date: April 5, 2000 Time 3:00

Team Members Present:

Name/Title

Katrina Johnson/ 2nd grade teacher

Lucy Brown/ parent

Terese Bowman/ School SST Coordinator

Jane Smith/ requesting teacher

Elizabeth Prince/ 2nd grade teacher

Main Street Elementary School

Dear Parent:

As you are aware, your child is currently being served through the Student Support Team process. A meeting has been set for April 5, 2000 at 3:00 p.m.. Through the collective efforts of the Student Support Team, which consists of teachers, counselors, and administrators, we hope to develop concrete and successful methods of helping your child have a more productive school year. Parental input is considered very important and your attendance will be appreciated.

We appreciate your support of our efforts. If you have any questions, please contact me at (phone number) (770)234-5678.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Jane Smith

Yes, I will attend the meeting.

No, I cannot attend the meeting. Please contact me with the results.

Parent/Guardian Signature

**STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM
MEETING SUMMARY**

SST Meeting Number: 3 Date: 4/5/00
Student: Suzy Brown DOB: 3/12/92 Age: 7 Grade: 2
FTE: 123456789 School: Main Street Elementary

Purpose of Meeting: to discuss the outcomes of Suzy's modifications and develop further plan of action

Discussion Summary: Suzy was fitted with glasses last week. She can now copy from the board with little difficulty. Her reading skills are steadily improving. Phonics instruction will continue. Other modifications continue to be appropriate and Suzy is making steady progress. The team recommends that the modification plan continue for the remainder of this school year. The team will meet once more before school is out and will meet during the first 2 weeks of school next year.

Summary continued on back _____

RECOMMENDATIONS

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parental Contact | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Screening _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior Observation | <input type="checkbox"/> Title I Reading _____ Math _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Modification Plan (attached) | <input type="checkbox"/> Referral to Mental Health Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior Management Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Repeat Present Grade |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Speech/Language Screening | <input type="checkbox"/> Audiological Evaluation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student Conference | <input type="checkbox"/> Extensive Vision Evaluation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Style Observation | <input type="checkbox"/> Referral to Court Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Referral to School Counselor | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (List recommendations below) |

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Follow up meeting: Date May 20, 2000 Time 3:00

Team Members Present:

Name/Title

<u>Katrina Johnson/ 2nd grade teacher</u>	<u>Lucy Brown/ parent</u>
<u>Terese Bowman/ School SST Coordinator</u>	<u>Jane Smith/ requesting teacher</u>
<u>Elizabeth Prince/ 2nd grade teacher</u>	_____

**STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM
MODIFICATION PLAN**

Student: Suzy Brown Grade: 2 School: Main Street Elementary Date: 2/2/00

Teacher: _____

The following strategies have been recommended by the Student Support Team in an effort to improve classroom performance for the student. Modifications should be implemented for a period of no less than twenty school days. Please give specific information regarding the results of the modifications.

		DATE BEGIN/END	RESULTS
	MODIFY INSTRUCTIONAL STYLE		
	Infuse instructional strategies for different learning styles into instruction.		
	Give alternate assignments based on learning style.		
	Use cooperative learning.		
	Provide small group instruction.		
	Shorten instructional units.		
	Use overhead projector.		
	Use graphic organizers.		
	Provide extra repetition.		
	Provide unit outline or study guide.		
	Provide visual materials which illustrate written materials.		
	Give explanations in small, distinct steps.		
	Provide both auditory and visual directions and information.		
	Point to things you are talking about.		
	Relate information to past experiences.		
x	Provide concrete examples. (Touch Math)	3/4/00	Has stopped counting on her fingers and has improved math calc. skills
	Provide manipulatives.		
	Provide frequent opportunities for movement.		
	Use drama and role-playing.		
x	Provide music to help with memorizing math facts.	3/4/00	

	MODIFY CONTENT		
	Provide alternate textbooks.		
	Use parallel curriculum (same subject, different content)		
	Reduce number of objectives to be mastered.		
	Use alternate objective (change math problems from multiplication to addition).		
	Reduce amount of work.		
x	Use phonics materials for reading instruction	2/2/00	Steady improvement. Continue
	MODIFY EVALUATION		
	Oral or demonstration testing.		
	Individual or small group testing.		
	Change test format (ex: short answer rather than essay).		
	Assign project rather than written report.		
x	Provide additional time to complete assignments.	2/2/00 – 3/6/00	Quantity and quality of work did not improve.
	Provide more frequent feedback.		
	Highlight directions.		
	Allow extra time for completion.		
	PROVIDE ASSISTANCE		
	Assign peer tutor.		
	Assign study partner for homework.		
	Provide assignment sheets.		
x	Give frequent reminders. (card on desk)	2/2/00	Better able to stay on task. Continue
	Individual help from the teacher or paraprofessional.		
x	Copy notes from teacher or other student.	2/2/00 – 4/5/00	Was successful. No longer needed due to glasses.
	Provide extra set of books for home use.		
	MODIFY INSTRUCTIONAL ENVIRONMENT		
	Change work area.		

	Provide less formal work area (standing workstation, floor, comfortable chair, bean bags, etc.)		
	Change lighting in the room.		
	Have two desks for the student to allow for movement.		
	Allow student to keep water and/or food at desk.		
	Provide study carrel.		
	Provide "white noise" or background music using headphones.		
	MODIFY MATERIALS		
	Use large print materials.		
	Use computer.		
	Alternate textbooks.		
	Highlight important information with pen or tape.		
	Allow use of facts chart or calculator.		
	Use graph paper to keep math problems aligned.		
	Fold or cut paper in half.		
	BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT		
	Use behavior modification checklist.		
	Use contract.		
	Give special privileges.		
	Time out in classroom for _____ minutes.		
	Time out in another classroom for _____ minutes.		
	Use tangible rewards.		
	Verbal praise.		
	Assign special responsibilities (class helper, line leader, etc.)		
	Use planned ignoring.		
x	Use cues to refocus attention.	2/2/00	Helps Suzy get back on task.
	Use timer to keep student on task.		

	Use visual language: ex. "Close your mouth" rather than "Be quiet".		
	SPEECH		
	Emphasize the correct sound to the student.		
	Use cues or signals to remind the student to say sounds correctly.		
	Give extra time to respond.		

Student Support Team Process Case Study #2 (Referral for Psychoeducational Evaluation)

Name: Charles Cook

Date of birth: 5/13/92

Date of request: 12/1/00

Current grade: 2

Charles was retained in 1st grade due to failure to master most concepts. He was placed in 2nd grade with only minimal improvement in academic skills. He continues to function significantly below grade level in all academic areas. In reading, he knows approximately 12 sight words. He can name sounds of 20 letters when they appear at the beginning of a word. He knows only 5 sounds of word endings. He is unable to consistently name short or long vowel sounds. In math, he counts on his fingers to add single digit numbers. He is unable to subtract without assistance. He is able to tell time for each half hour interval. He knows the value of a quarter, but cannot consistently count coins or bills up to one dollar. All of his work is very slow and labored.

Charles cries easily when he is in unfamiliar surroundings or situations. Otherwise, he tries hard to please his teachers and parents and is very likable.

Charles lives with his mother, father, and two younger sisters. His mother stays at home with her children, while his father works as a custodian at a hospital. His parents are concerned about Charles' lack of progress in school.

Previously attempted strategies include:

- reduced number of math problems and spelling words
- use of manipulatives in math
- parent conferences

SST Meeting #1

The committee reviewed the background information and the permanent record. They discussed possible reasons for Charles' tendency to cry in unfamiliar settings. To alleviate this problem, Charles will be assigned a peer helper whenever he is in a new situation. Possible reasons for academic failure were discussed. Charles needs instruction which incorporates manipulatives and hands on activities into as many assignments as possible. New concepts must be related to things that Charles already knows. Charles will be tested orally in spelling, social studies, and science. Lower level reading materials which focus on sight word development will be used.

A hearing and vision screening will be completed by the school nurse. A learning style observation will be completed by Charles' teacher prior to the next scheduled meeting

A Background Information form will be sent to Mr. and Mrs. Cook, who were unable to attend the SST meeting.

Modification plan:

assign peer helper in unfamiliar or new situations
incorporate manipulatives and hands on activities into instruction
relate new material to familiar concepts
implement sight word reading approach

SST Meeting #2

The school nurse administered a hearing and vision screening on 12/15/00. Charles passed both exams. A learning style observation was administered by Charles' classroom teacher. Charles demonstrated characteristics of all four learning styles across different settings and showed no strong preference for either style. Charles showed no significant improvement when tested orally. In fact, his performance in science was much worse than before. He is able to complete more work from a lower level textbook. He has experienced some success with these materials and has become very excited about his accomplishment. Charles always responds well to verbal praise.

Last week, Charles went on a field trip with his class to World of Coke. While on the tour, Charles became separated from his group. After several minutes of searching, a security officer found him in a room which was off limits to tour groups. Charles was sitting on the floor crying. When his teacher asked him what had happened, Charles said he was looking for the bathroom and got lost. He had not remembered that he was supposed to ask an adult for help in locating a restroom.

Mrs. Cook attended the meeting and expressed continued concern over Charles' lack of progress. The Background Information Form was completed based on information she provided. It was found that Charles experienced some developmental delays, such as crawling at 11 months, walking at 15 months, and speaking in short but complete sentences at 4 ½ years. Charles is unable to dress himself for school without assistance.

Mr. Brown, special education teacher, was asked to join the meeting in progress. The committee requested assistance in determining whether Charles exhibited characteristics of a student with a disability. After reviewing the information, Mr. Brown agreed that there was sufficient information to warrant a referral for a psychoeducational evaluation. The referral process was explained to Mrs. Cook and she agreed that a referral was needed. Referral will be forwarded to the special education office. Due process forms will be completed at that time.

Teachers will continue to implement modifications while the evaluation is being completed.

Student Support Team Process

Case Study #3

(Section 504 Plan)

Name: James Gray

Date of birth: 11/23/84

Date of request: 10/25/00

Current grade: 10

James is returning to school after a car accident that occurred on September 22 in which he sustained multiple injuries. He was hospitalized for 5 days following the accident and underwent surgery to repair a broken right leg and right wrist. James is confined to a wheelchair. He tires easily and is returning to school for only a partial day. He is learning to write with his left hand, but efforts are very slow and labored. He is able to use a word processor to complete some work. After his casts are removed, he will see a physical therapist for 3 hours each week and an occupational therapist for 1 hour. These appointments will cause him to miss school at times.

James has received hospital homebound services since October 2. He is still approximately 2 weeks behind his peers in all subject areas. His current classes are as follows: Euclidean geometry, World Studies, Spanish II, and Band.

SST Meeting #1:

The team discussed James' current grades and missing assignments. Although James will be able to attend school for a partial day, he will continue to need hospital homebound services to assist with his other classes. He will also require additional time to complete all assignments and may need to be exempted from some assignments. Spanish II is the class in which James will have the most difficulty making up work. Class lectures have been recorded, but the hospital homebound teacher is unable to provide direct instruction to the extent that is needed in order to master the information. Options discussed included before or after school tutoring, exemption from portions of the curriculum, and dropping the class with no penalty. Because subject matter for a foreign language is cumulative, it was agreed that it would be very difficult to exempt portions of the curriculum. James and his parents chose to drop the class and focus on the other coursework. He will have the opportunity to take the class at a later time. After discussing all information, the team determined that James meets 504 eligibility and developed a 504 Plan to be implemented during his recovery. James' parents were present at the meeting and participated in writing the plan. Section 504 Rights were explained and a copy was given to them.

Accommodations:

While in class, James will have access to a computer for assignment completion.

He will receive copies of class notes from another student using NCR paper.

- Hospital homebound services will continue until James is able to return to school full time.
- James will be allowed to use the faculty restroom because it provides more space and privacy.
- Teachers will exempt James from assignments that are considered not to be necessary for mastery of information.
- James will be given additional time for assignment completion.

SST RESOURCES

INTERNET RESOURCES* for SST

CLASSROOM MODIFICATIONS

What Works Clearinghouse: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

Checklist of modifications: www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/teaching_techniques/mod_checklists.html

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

Center for Effective Collaboration and Practices- on emotional and behavioral problems: www.air.org/cecp

National Mental Health and Education Center for Children and Families, National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)- publications and resources: www.nasponline.org/resources/index.aspx

Partnership Against Violence: www.pavnet.org

You Can Handle Them All- discipline model for behavior challenges: www.disciplinehelp.com

SECTION 504 (of 1973 REHABILITATION ACT)

Federal regulations- <http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/get-cfr.cgi?TITLE=34&PART=104&SECTION=61&YEAR=1999&TYPE=TEXT>

CEC comparison of 504 and IDEA:

www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Search&template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=2334

ATTENTION DEFICIT- HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: www.chadd.org/

National Institute of Mental Health- on ADHD: www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/adhd.cfm

NASP position paper on attention problems: www.nasponline.org/about_nasp/positionpapers/attention.pdf

DISABILITIES-RELATED INFORMATION

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities: <http://nichcy.org>

Cultural and Linguistic issues in overrepresentation:

www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Search§ion=38_6&template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentFileID=2071

Foreign Language Teacher's Guide to Learning Disabilities: www.fln.vcu.edu/ld/ld.html

** As with nearly all Internet sites, the content of these cannot be verified or controlled, so they are provided for information only.*

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Title VI- Jennifer Hackemeyer, Legal Services (404) 656-4689
Title IX- Jennifer Hackemeyer, Legal Services (404) 656-4689
Section 504 and ADA- Jennifer Hackemeyer, Legal Services (404) 656-4689

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