

Critical Questions for Special Education Identification

The site intervention team must ask the following questions when considering a student for special education placement.

Tier 1

- Did the student have ready access to essential grade-level curriculum as part of his or her core instruction?
- Did the student receive effective supports, accommodations, or differentiation to support his or her success in learning essential grade-level standards? What were these supports?
- Is there evidence that the school's core instructional practices are working for a large majority of students, including similar students?

Tier 2

- Did the school identify the student for supplemental support in a timely manner?
- What were the student's specific learning needs at Tier 2? (The team should be able to list exact standards, learning targets, and behaviors.)
- What caused the student to not learn these essential learning outcomes?
- What research or evidence-based interventions did teachers use to address the student's specific learning needs?
- Did the school provide these interventions in addition to Tier 1?
- Is there evidence that these interventions were effective for similar students?

Tier 3

- Did the school identify the student for Tier 3 interventions in a timely, proactive manner?
- What quality problem-solving process did the school use to better identify the student's specific learning needs and the cause of the student's struggles?
- What were the student's specific learning needs at Tier 3? (The team should be able to list exact standards, learning targets, and behaviors.)
- What research- and evidence-based interventions did the school use to address the student's specific learning needs?
- Did highly trained professionals in the student's areas of need provide these interventions?
- Did the school provide these interventions in addition to Tier 1 and Tier 2?
- How often did the school monitor the student's progress for each intervention? What revisions or modifications did the school make based on this information?
- Is there evidence that these interventions were effective for similar students?
- Are there any other interventions or supports the school should try before considering special education placement?
- Does the site intervention team unanimously feel that special education identification is necessary and appropriate for this student? What benefits will the student receive due to this recommendation that could not be provided without it?
- Would team members make the same recommendation if the student in question were their child?