

What is Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS)?

I&RS is a state mandated system of clearly defined steps that are taken to assist a struggling student in improving educational outcomes. These steps are taken by a multi-disciplinary team which meets, regularly, to monitor the success of students identified through the referral process, as needing specific academic and/or behavior “interventions” in order to be successful. These interventions are monitored over a period of time and may be modified, enhanced or discontinued as indicated by the needs of the student involved. The I&RS team aids students in the general education program, but also provides support for students determined to be in need of special education programs.



What are the functions of Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS)?

As stated in N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8.1, the functions of I&RS are as follows:

- Identify learning, behavior and health difficulties of students;
- Collect thorough information of the identified difficulties;
- Develop and implement action plans which provide for appropriate interventions based on the information collected and the desired results;
- Provide support, guidance and professional development to school staff to properly identify and implement interventions designed to address student difficulties;
- Actively involve parents and guardians in the development and implementation of I&RS action plans;
- Coordinate the services of community-based social and health provider agencies and other community resources;
- Maintain accurate records of all requests for assistance and all I&RS action plans;

- Review and assess the effectiveness of the I&RS action plans in achieving the outcomes identified and make modifications as necessary; and,
- Make recommendations to the school principal for improving school programs and services.

How can we determine if a student needs to be referred to the I&RS Team?

If a student exhibits specific observable behaviors that indicate that he or she is experiencing learning, behavior or health difficulties, he or she may benefit from a referral to the I&RS Team.

What are some of the specific observable behaviors to look for?

Any of the following may indicate that a student is experiencing difficulties:

- Failing grades
- Cheating
- Not completing assignments
- Falling asleep in class
- Chronic absenteeism
- Poor participation
- Erratic behavior
- Defiance of authority
- Bullying behaviors
- Eating disorders
- Alcohol, tobacco or other drug use
- Poor personal appearance and hygiene
- Early sexual activity
- Suicide attempts
- Anything out of the ordinary for that student

What are the steps that are taken in the I&RS process?

- 1) Request for I&RS intervention;
- 2) I&RS meeting is held;
- 3) Action Plan is designed and implemented; and,
- 4) Action Plan is monitored and reviewed; this plan is revised, expanded or discontinued depending on need.

Who participates in the I&RS process?

The regulations requiring I&RS allows the building I&RS teams to be as flexible as necessary in order to perform the necessary functions. Typically, the following individuals participate:

- Principal and Teacher
- Support staff: School Counselor, Nurse, Learning Disabilities Consultant; Psychologist; Social Worker
- Other: Parent; Community Agency Representative

What happens if the I&RS Plan succeeds or does not succeed?

If the I&RS Plan is successful in meeting the needs of the student, then the Plan may continue to be maintained and monitored or the Plan may be discontinued. If the I&RS Plan is not successful, then additional information is collected, additional professional advice is secured and additional resources are identified. In some instances referral to a basic skills or a special education program may be necessary.

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A GUIDE TO Intervention And Referral Services (I&RS)



School district boards of education, in New Jersey, are required to “. . . establish and implement a coordinated system in each school building for the planning and delivery of intervention and referral services that are designed to assist students who are experiencing learning, behavior or health difficulties . . .” and which are designed to “. . . assist staff who have difficulties in addressing students’ learning, behavior or health needs.” N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8.1