THE REFERRAL PROCESS

How is a student referred for a Child Study Team Evaluation?
Students between the ages of 3 and 21 suspected of having an educational disability may be referred to the Child Study team for an evaluation by a variety of sources but generally they come from one of the following:

- **PARENT(S):** Parent(s) may initiate a Child Study Team referral for their child who may be experiencing significant academic and/or social/emotional difficulties in the classroom by contacting the Administrator of Special Services and forwarding the request in writing. *email referrals are not accepted*

- **IR&S: The Intervention and Referral Services (IR&S) is a building-based, inter-disciplinary group that meets regularly to provide intervention(s) for students experiencing significant academic and/or social/emotional difficulties in the classroom. Once the IR&S has exhausted its resources and determines that additional information may be necessary, or feels that the student may be educationally disabled, the IR&S forwards a Child Study Team referral to the Administrator of Special Services. The Administrator coordinates an Initial Planning Meeting with the parent(s), Child Study Team and the student’s teacher(s) to discuss the student’s academic and/or social/emotional difficulties and a possible evaluation for Special Education and Related Services.

- **ADMINISTRATORS or OUTSIDE AGENCIES:** The Principal or other building administrator or an individual from an outside agency (doctor, social worker, etc) may refer a student to the Child Study Team who is experiencing significant academic and/or social/emotional difficulties in the classroom.

Who are the members of the Child Study Team?
The New Jersey Department of Education requires that the Child Study Team include a School Psychologist, a Learning Disabilities Teacher-Consultant, and a School Social Worker. These professionals are all certified and employed directly by the Phillipsburg Board of Education.

What is the procedure after the referral is made?
Once the referral has been made the Case Manager has twenty (20) days to schedule an Identification Meeting. The necessary personnel expected to attend this meeting would be a social worker, psychologist, learning disabilities teacher-consultant, classroom teacher, speech & language specialist (if the suspected disability included that area or the child was age 3-5) and certainly the parent.

Are students automatically tested if the request is made?
No. Once a request for a Child Study team evaluation is made an Identification Meeting must be scheduled. At that meeting it is determined if a Child Study Team Evaluation is warranted and if so an Evaluation Plan is developed.

What is the procedure if the student is going to be tested?
Once it is determined that testing is necessary an assessment plan is developed and the parent/guardian gives written permission. The district then has ninety (90) days to complete the necessary evaluations. Within the ninety (90) days an Eligibility Conference is scheduled where the evaluations are interpreted and it is determined if the student is eligible for special education and/or related services.

If a student is eligible, does that mean he or she will be in a special education class?
Absolutely not. Before a student receives services and Individual Education Program must be developed and agreed to. In Phillipsburg the goal is to have the majority of students eligible for special education services receive those services within general education environment and/or classroom.

CHILD STUDY TEAM SERVICES

The Child Study Team (CST) is a group of professionals employed by the Phillipsburg Board of Education who provide consultative, evaluative, and prescriptive services to teachers and parents in regard to students who are experiencing school related difficulties.

Who are the members of the Child Study Team?
The members of the Child Study Team, as determined by the New Jersey Department of Education, are a school psychologist, a learning disabilities teacher-consultant and a school social worker.

What are the responsibilities of the school psychologist?
The school psychologist has expertise in determining a child’s level of cognitive and conceptual development. In addition the psychologist is concerned with the emotional status of the student, and how both internal and external factors may affect behavior and performance in school. The school psychologist works with both general education and special education teachers to maximize a student’s potential.

What are the responsibilities of the learning disabilities teacher-consultant?
The learning consultant (LDT-C) is trained to determine the learning styles of students, to determine specific achievement levels in a variety of content areas, and to recommend specific teaching methods and strategies that may benefit a student. This professional is generally called upon to model specific strategies and methods that may benefit students.

What are the responsibilities of the school social worker?
The expertise of the social worker lies in assessing the student relative to the family, the school, and the community. This professional generally gathers information concerning the student’s health, family, and school history as it pertains to the student’s current school functioning. The social worker is also the professional responsible for coordinating community resources on behalf of students and their families.
SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

What are Speech and Language Services?
The development of age-appropriate speech and language skills is essential to the learning process and to a student’s social, emotional, and academic growth. Students must be able to comprehend language, express their thoughts and opinions, interact effectively and efficiently with peers and adults, and produce speech with others that can easily understand.

The Phillipsburg School District provides speech and language services to students ages 3-21 who demonstrate a need to improve their speech and language skills in articulation, language, fluency, or voice disorder in order to achieve academic success.

How are students referred for speech and language services?
Students can be referred for speech and language services by their parents or their classroom teachers if they are concerned about a student’s speech and language proficiency as part of a Child Study Team Evaluation or in isolation. The goal of these services is to help students develop the speech and language skills necessary for positive interpersonal relationships and academic success.

Who provides speech and language services in Phillipsburg Public Schools?
The district currently employs 8 speech and language specialists.

OCCUPATIONAL & PHYSICAL THERAPY

What is Occupational Therapy?
Occupational Therapy is a related service which is designed to help students within a school setting who are showing an educational related difficulty, which impairs his/her ability to function in the school environment. Occupational Therapists use purposeful activity to facilitate a student's active participation in the areas of self-care, academic and/or vocational pursuits, as well as play and leisure activities. Using direct and indirect services, as well as assistive technology and environmental modifications, school occupational therapists collaborate with parents, teachers, and other education staff to help implement a child’s program. The goal of services is to assist a student to function well within the school setting.

What is Physical Therapy?
Physical Therapy is a related service, which is designed to help students access their school environment and participate safely and to the best of their ability in their academic curriculum. School physical therapists address functional limitations such as difficulties with mobility, transitions or gross motor skills, as well as interventions that address impairments that contribute to those functional limitations such as posture, balance, strength and coordination. Difficulties in these areas must impact upon student participation in their educational program and environment.

Who provides Occupational Therapy services in Phillipsburg?
Occupational Therapy services are provided to our students through Occupational Therapists Registered or OTR’s and through a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant or COTA.

Who provides Physical Therapy services in Phillipsburg?
Physical Therapy services are provided to our students through Licensed Physical Therapists who are under private contract.

BEHAVIORAL SPECIALIST & TRANSITION COORDINATOR

What is a Behavioral Specialist?
Our behavior specialist is primarily responsible for devising behavioral intervention plans for special education students. The behavior specialists may provide therapy sessions for students who are struggling with various social-emotional issues. In addition, the behavior specialist will be a resource for classroom teachers when dealing with challenging student behaviors.

Who provides Behavior Therapy services in Phillipsburg?
A New Jersey certified Learning Disabilities Teacher-Consultant, And/or a Board Certified Behavior Specialist acts in this capacity.

What are Transition Services and when do they begin?
Transition Services are defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as “a coordinated set of activities for a student that promotes movement from school to post-school activities.” The Transition component of the IEP is addressed in New Jersey when a student turns 14 years of age. Services become more involved when the student turns 16 years of age.

Who provides Transition Services in Phillipsburg?
Our Transition Coordinator is a certified School Counselor with a Master’s Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling and has related work experiences with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR).

SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT LEADERS

What is a Special Education Department Leader?
Each building is assigned a Special Education Department Leader - SEDL. Although not required, each SEDL possesses a Master’s Degree and/or New Jersey Supervisor/Principal certification. This position was created to assist principals in providing building-based educational programs and services to students with disabilities. They act as a resource to their peers and a facilitator to their building principal.

ELIGIBILITY OF STUDENTS

When is a student eligible for special education and related services?
A student shall be determined eligible and classified “eligible for special education and related services” when the student has one or more of the following disabilities as defined in 6A:14. There are 14 categories:

1. Auditory Impaired
2. Autistic
3. Cognitively Impaired
4. Communication Impaired
5. Emotionally Disturbed
6. Multiply Disabled
7. Deaf/Blind
8. Orthopedically Impaired
9. Other Health Impaired
10. Pre-School with a Disability
11. Social Maladjustment
12. Specific Learning Disability
13. Traumatic Brain Injury
14. Visually Impaired