# Referrals for Special Education

The *why* and the *how*

# Who is Special Education for?

Students with disabilities.

…not for *any* student who needs small group instruction

…not for *any* student who needs extra help or extra time

…not for *any* student whose skills are behind peers

# Who is Special Education for?

Other reasons a student may be behind or need extra help:

- *history of trauma,*

- *living in poverty,*

- *English-language learning*, and more...

These are NOT reasons to provide special education.

# Pre-Referral

**Before referring for a Special Education evaluation**

# Suspecting a disability is based on <u>data</u>

- Student shows little **academic** growth, *despite* evidence-based, targeted interventions

- Student shows little **social/emotional/behavioral** improvement, *despite* evidence-based, targeted interventions

- Student exhibits **unexpected changes** in academics, behavior, communication, or other performance

# Problem-Solving Teams
## (a Regular Education function)

- **Identify** the problem

- **Develop a plan** to address the problem

- Use **interventions** (evidence-based, targeted to the problem)

- **Take data** on intervention progress

- **Review data** and **decide** what happens next
  - Discontinue, continue, or change the intervention?
  - Refer for evaluation?

# Problem-Solving Teams
**(a Regular Education function)**

## The goal:

To prevent learning/behavioral *differences*

from becoming *disabilities*.

# Academic problem-solving

- Tier 1:  Student receives grade-level instruction
  - Use a measurement tool to determine if student is at-risk
- Tier 2:  Student receives additional in-class support
  - Provide instructional-level groups AND measure student progress
- Tier 3:  Student receives **targeted**, **evidence-based** interventions
  - Provide pull-out instruction to focus on specific skills AND measure student progress
- If student continues to make little or no progress, might refer for evaluation

# Behavioral problem-solving

- Tier 1: Student experiences schoolwide prevention activities
  - Use measurement tool to determine if student is at-risk
- Tier 2: Student receives additional behavior supports
  - Provide support AND measure student progress
- Tier 3: Student receives **targeted**, **evidence-based** behavior supports (BSP)
  - Provide supports targeted specifically for this child and this behavior AND measure student progress
- If student continues to make little or no progress, might refer for evaluation

# What does "evidence-based" mean?

- Research studies have been conducted and demonstrate that, when implemented consistently and appropriately, this curriculum or intervention will likely improve student skills.

Instruction and intervention (**at all Tiers**) should be evidence-based.

Check out *What Works Clearinghouse* to learn what research says about the effectiveness of your curricula and interventions.

- https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/

# A note about Exclusionary Factors

Cannot identify a student as having a disability if their lack of progress can be *primarily* attributed to:

1. Lack of appropriate instruction in reading;
2. Lack of appropriate instruction in math; or,
3. Limited English proficiency.

34 C.F.R. § 300.306(b)(1)

For Specific Learning Disability, add:

1. Cultural factors,
2. Environmental or economic disadvantage    34 C.F.R.§ 300.311(a)(6)

# Designing Schoolwide Systems for Student Success

**Academic Instruction**

Tertiary Interventions
(for individual students)
• Assessment-based
• High Intensity

1-5%

Secondary Interventions
(for some students)
• High Efficiency
• Rapid Response

5-10%

Universal Interventions
(for all students)
• Preventive, Proactive

80-90%

**Behavioral Instruction**
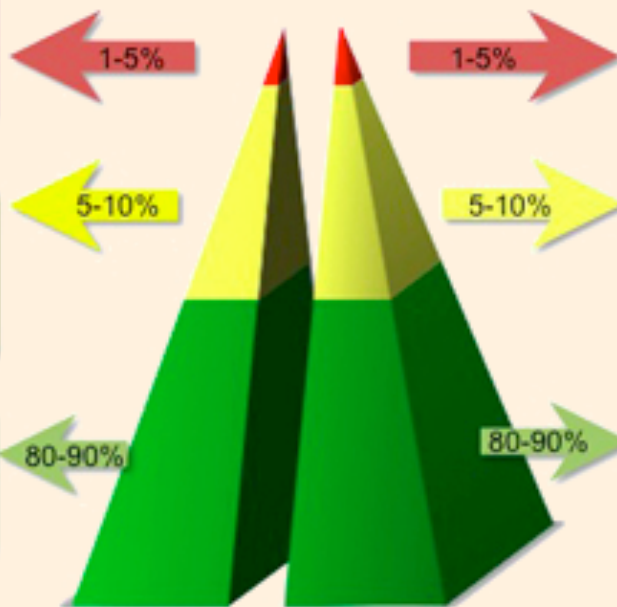
Tertiary Interventions
(for individual students)
• Assessment-based
• Intense, durable procedures

1-5%

Secondary Interventions
(for some students: at-risk)
• High Efficiency
• Rapid Response

5-10%

Universal Interventions
(for all students)
• All Settings
• Preventive, Proactive

80-90%

# Referral Process

What to do when the it's time to refer for evaluation

# Why do we have a Referral Packet?

- Equity for students

  - Students with similar experiences and challenges may or may not be evaluated, depending on school building

- Equity for staff

  - Some buildings refer a significantly higher number of students than others, even when demographics are taken into account

- Data-based decisions

  - All decisions about special education must be based on data and evidence, including evidence that general education options don't work

%Initial Ref
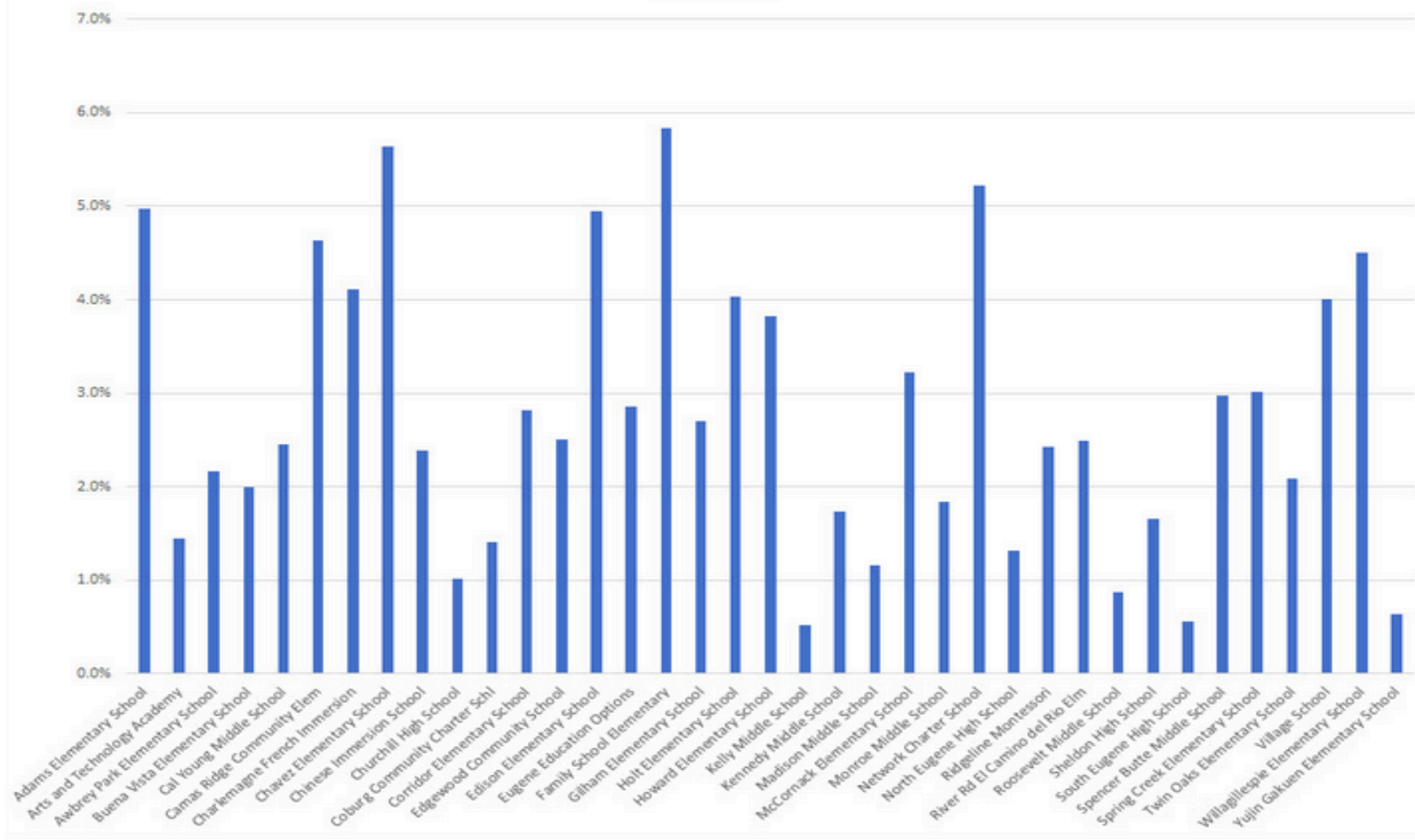
# Agency *or* Parent Referral

## STEP ONE:

**TALK to the parent** and tell them about the SpEd process

- Inform them the team will create a referral packet and send SSD.

- Offer to include any additional information they want to share.

- Remind them that Special Education = children with disabilities.

- Assure them there will be a meeting to discuss plans after the packet is returned.

# Proceeding with Referral

**Step 2**: Alert your School Psychologists/Consultant that parent has been informed.

(Required to send home the SpEd Notice of Referral).

**Step 3**: Building *team* members complete a referral packet as soon as possible, and gives to Psych/Consultant (who will send to Referral Review Team at SSD).

# Proceeding with Referral

**Step 4**: District Review Team will meet every two weeks to review referrals and write recommendations on how to proceed.

**Step 5**: Packet will be returned to the Psych/Consultant, who will a team meeting with the parent to discuss the Review Team's recommendations and make a decision about next steps.

# Filling out the Referral Packet

- The packet collects all the data that has *always* been necessary to consider before suspecting a disability for a student

  This should not be new to anyone!

- This is a TEAM activity

  No one person should be filling out the whole thing!

  Can attach info rather than filling in the blanks.

- Data Coordinators, School Psychologists, and Special Education Consultants will have access to the most current version.

# When to Use the Referral Packet

- All referrals should go through this process, except:
  - Speech articulation
  - Speech fluency (e.g., stuttering)
  - Voice disorders
- If Team or Parent is concerned about **anything** else, must use the referral packet process.
- *Do NOT skip the packet and appeal to your Speech-Language Pathologist to evaluate the student. They have been instructed not to proceed in this way.*

# Questions?

Contacts:

1. Your School Psychologist or Special Education Consultant

2. Coordinator of School Psychological Services:

    Karen Apgar  (apgar_k@4j.lane.edu)

3. Student Services Department Administrator:

    Kat Lange  (lange_k@4j.lane.edu)