# Navigating the Special Education Process:
## A Step-By-Step Guide

| Identifying Need for Intervention: | Based on class performance and district assessments  
Interventions given in class or separate instruction  
Interventions adapted if student doesn't improve |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Making a Referral:               | Team member, including family, concerns lead to referral for special education  
Referral based on intervention non-response or other indications  
Suspected disability necessary for referral |
| Referral Phase:                  | School has 25 school days to determine if a student will be evaluated after the receipt of a referral  
Referral is legally required to be in writing, but many teams will accept verbal referrals  
The district must notify parents of the decision, many teams will include parents in this decision, but that is not required |
| Evaluation Phase:                | School has 35 school days to complete the evaluation from the date of consent  
Written parent consent is required for evaluation  
Team decides evaluation areas and must cover all suspected areas of concern |
| **Determining Eligibility:** | Team decides eligibility based on evaluation data  
Whole team including parents participates  
Process available if you disagree with all or part of results |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Individualized Education Plan (IEP):** | Eligibility is followed by creating an IEP within 30 calendar days  
Full-time public school students accept all recommended services when they consent to placement in special education at the IEP meeting  
Partially enrolled students can decline specific services |
| **Crafting the IEP:** | IEP meeting separate from evaluation for thoughtful decisions  
Families are valued members of IEP team and participate in crafting plan  
Students should participate in the IEP process as much as able  
A draft IEP may be shared beforehand for parent consideration  
IEP identifies service start date, often shortly after the meeting, to include ensure family input |
| **Ongoing Support:** | Expect evaluations every three years and annual IEP meetings  
IEP meetings may follow re-evaluation, should be clearly communicated  
Evaluations can be completed more frequently if needed  
Family can always request additional meetings for IEP; for example to consider additional evaluation, if goals are met early, or if needs change |