

Information for Parents about Volusia County Schools' Problem Solving Team (PST) Process

What are Problem Solving Teams?

Volusia County Schools Problem Solving Teams (PST) are intervention driven/progress monitoring teams at each school which assist students, families and teachers in seeking positive solutions for all students. The primary goal of the PST is to support teachers and parents by generating effective research-based academic and behavioral strategies for individual targeted students.

How do Volusia County schools problem solve?

The four steps of Volusia County Schools' problem solving model are:

Problem Identification (What is the problem?)

Analysis of Problem (Why is it occurring?)

Intervention Implementation (What do we do about it?)

Response to Intervention/RtI (Is the plan working?)

These four steps of problem solving assist educators in monitoring student progress and in designing appropriate interventions for your child when needed. Most importantly, by determining if the plan is working, educators and parents can make informed choices of how best to spend valuable instructional time. For more information, visit the district's website at www.myvolusiaschools.org.

How are interventions provided to my child?

Interventions are provided to students based on the type and severity of the problem and take into consideration the resources (both materials and people) available at the different schools sites. Interventions can address specific academic concerns (e.g., reading comprehension, math calculation or spelling). When addressing behavioral concerns, interventions are designed to address the specific problem such as anger control, motivation or social skills. The severity of the problem (academic and/or behavioral) typically determines how often your child will receive interventions. Based on the nature of the problem, intervention providers may include a reading specialist or academic coach if available at the school, an Exceptional Student Education (ESE) teacher, the school counselor, or the school psychologist.

How do I know if my child is having a problem that needs PST support?

Parents have access to readily available information concerning their child's performance in school. This information can be obtained via the Parent Portal or through communication with your child's teacher. If your child is struggling academically and/or behaviorally, you may ask your child's teacher or school counselor what is being done to help your child. If your child continues to have trouble despite these interventions after a reasonable period of time, you may request that your child be referred to the Problem Solving Team at your child's school. The

classroom teacher may also make the request for assistance for PST involvement when they find the attempted interventions have been unsuccessful in meeting the needs of your child.

What will happen at the PST meeting?

The PST Chair at your child's school will invite you to a meeting via a letter indicating the time and location of the PST meeting. During this meeting, a group of professionals that typically includes your child's teacher, school counselor, the school psychologist, the school social worker, and possibly school administrator will discuss your child's strengths and weaknesses. Your input is very important in helping the team to understand the unique needs of your child. The information that is discussed in combination with the academic and/or behavioral data that have been collected on your child will determine the types of interventions that should be designed to help your child. In addition, the Problem Solving Team will decide what steps should occur next. These steps may include a change in the intervention that is being implemented or the request for a psychoeducational evaluation. You will be asked to sign paperwork and you will be provided with a copy of the form(s) for your records.

Is my child's school required to make me aware of concerns regarding my child if there is a suspected disability?

State Board Rule 6A-A.0331 specifically indicates "Opportunities for parents to be involved in the process to address the student's areas of concerns must be made available. In addition, there must be discussion with the parent of the student's responses to interventions, supporting data and potential adjustments to the interventions and of anticipated further action to address the student's learning and/or behavioral areas of concern. Documentation of parental involvement and communication must be maintained."

Does the school district provide evaluations for dyslexia?

When a request is made for evaluation for a possible disability that has educational impact, the district must proceed with that request as a child find responsibility. As indicated in Florida's State Board of Education Rules for Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), dyslexia is an associated condition of a SLD. Furthermore, within the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-5th Edition (DSM-5) it is noted under Specific Learning Disorders that "Dyslexia is an alternative term used to refer to a pattern of learning difficulties characterized by problems with accurate or fluent word recognition, poor decoding and poor spelling abilities."

The following definition is cited in the State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.03018, F.A.C.:
A specific learning disability is defined as a disorder in one or more of the basic learning processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest in significant difficulties affecting the ability to listen, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematics. Associated conditions may include, but are not limited to, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, or developmental aphasia. A specific learning disability does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of a visual, hearing, motor, intellectual, or emotional/behavioral; disability, limited English proficiency, or environmental, cultural, or economic factors.

Can I request a psychoeducational evaluation when I suspect my child has a disability?

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 as well as under Florida State Board Rules, parents are entitled to request a psychoeducational evaluation for their child if they suspect that their child has a disability. However, although State Board Rule (Rule 6A-6.0331) indicates that a request can be made by the parent prior to the completion of interventions, eligibility cannot be determined until all activities of the rule are completed. In most cases (e.g., for students suspected of having a specific learning disability or emotional/behavioral disability), these pre-referral activities must occur concurrently with the evaluation. Pre-referral activities include the delivery of evidence-based interventions targeted to the area of concern. The decision of whether a student is a student with a disability is made in part by a child's response to these interventions. As a result, parents often wish to view their child's response to interventions before requesting an evaluation in order to determine if the interventions were successful in addressing the areas of concern.

While a parent may request an evaluation, a school has the right under Rule 6A-6.0331 to refuse the request. The request may be refused if your child is performing adequately for your child's chronological age or grade level and as a result, no interventions are being considered. In these cases, you may wish to share if interventions are being provided outside of the school setting to help your child succeed in school that the school may not be aware of (e.g., outside tutoring, counseling services). If you are requesting an evaluation for a child who is successful in school without interventions, the school may choose to refuse your request and will provide you with the form Prior Written Notice Informed Notice of Proposal or Refusal to Take a Specific Action which will indicate why the request was refused. In addition, you will be provided with a copy of the Summary of Procedural Safeguards.