**The Student Assistance Team (SAT) Process**

**What is a Student Assistance Team (SAT)?**

This is a team made up of a student’s school administrator, a current teacher, and other appropriate professional staff (such as the school counselor, a social worker, or speech pathologist) whose job it is to help a student with issues that are interfering with learning. This may be anything from difficulties in reading or math, emotional challenges, inappropriate behaviors, organization, etc. The team discusses the problem and works together to find a solution that will help the student. The team meets as often as needed. (See Policy 2419 Chapter 2.3.C.)

Initially, the SAT may meet without a parent or family member to determine exactly what difficulties a student is having. They may decide that the student needs a few changes in the classroom to resolve the issue. The team might decide that they need to continue to observe the student before asking the parent to meet with them.

Sometimes more is needed to help a student. The SAT may invite the parent to become part of the team if they need additional information. The team then continues to work together to find solutions. For many students, the interventions put in place through this process, are sufficient to support the student’s learning needs. Thus, not all students who go through the SAT process will be evaluated for special education. However, if all possible interventions have been exhausted and the student is still not performing well academically, the team might recommend an evaluation to see if there is a disability. If the evaluation(s) meet(s) the state’s criteria for a disability, an IEP, or **I**ndividual **E**ducation **P**lan, is put in place.

**How does the SAT differ from an IEP team?**

The purpose of the SAT is to find ways to support the learning needs of a student so that special education services are less likely to be needed. A typical SAT might consist of a SAT chairperson, a school psychologist, a special education teacher, social worker and/or, a speech/language therapist with the student's parents. They meet before any special education testing is conducted. Though different school districts might have policies regarding how often a SAT is to meet, federal and state law have no such requirement.

The IEP Team, which includes the parent, work together to develop a plan for a student who requires special education. An IEP team discusses what additional services (speech, physical, occupational, etc.) may be needed for the student. Additionally, the IEP team discusses the student’s progress toward their goals and in their academic classes. The IEP team is required to meet annually. However, an IEP team could meet more often if any of the team members requests additional meetings.

**For more information.** For details specific to your county, contact your child’s school.