

# Establishing a Request for Assistance Process

A request for assistance process provides a venue through which social-emotional and mental health support can be sought for students demonstrating a pattern of behavior over time, ideally based on multiple data sources. Schools may consider setting benchmarks for requests for assistance based on specific criteria (e.g., after 3 ODRs, student is referred for Tier 2 support). Districts/schools should develop a universal request for assistance process for staff, students, and families, so that the pathway to seeking and initiating social-emotional and behavioral health support is clearly defined and easily accessible to all.

## Who handles requests for assistance?

Identify a team that will be responsible for processing all requests, including those for community mental health providers contracted to work on school grounds. This team will then match students to the appropriate supports, which may necessitate a facilitated referral to community providers for services not offered on school grounds (see **Developing Facilitated Referral Pathways** guidance for more information about referrals to outside agencies).

## Creating your request for assistance form

The MTSS-B Toolkit offers a **Sample Request for Assistance** template for adaptation by districts and schools. Setting up an electronic system would be ideal. Schools with the Google platform could make requests for assistance using Google Forms, which would feed into a spreadsheet for the identified team to track and manage referrals. Use of Google Forms/Sheets within your school system should be HIPAA and FERPA-compliant; districts using Google's G Suite for Education can arrange for proper encryption of data by establishing a Business Associates Agreement (BAA) with Google.

Whatever form it takes, be sure to educate all members of your school community about the Request for Assistance process, including all teachers, administrators, and other staff – as well as students and families. Placing the referral form – with appropriate contact info – on a district/school website is one option for making it accessible to all. Be sure to include information about what referents should expect after submitting a referral: how referrals are handled, timelines for follow-up, and if/when referents should expect to hear back about their referral. Districts should also consider including information about how staff and families should handle more urgent concerns and emergencies.

