

Scottsboro City Schools



Disciplinary Review Committee Handbook

Effective Jan. 4, 2024

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DRC Handbook

CHAPTER 1. Purpose and Disciplinary Process Guideline

Handbook Purpose and Disciplinary Process Guideline

This handbook describes how to operate the Disciplinary Review Committee to review and recommend student discipline. The handbook aims to equip the Disciplinary Review Committee (DRC) members with clear guidelines and the framework to apply those guidelines fairly and consistently.

If a student is alleged to have committed a Class One or Class Two Offense, the punishment, if warranted, is instituted at the school level by the Principal. A school principal has the authority to place the student on short-term suspension for up to five (5) school days or in-school detention for up to ten (10) school days. Any greater punishment must be approved by the Superintendent.

If the student is alleged to have committed a Class Three Offense, the principal shall inform the school resource officer and refer the matter to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will then review the matter and then either: (a) determine no action is warranted; (b) refer the matter back to the school principal for appropriate action; (c) refer the matter for a manifestation hearing; (d) or refer the matter to the Disciplinary Review Committee (DRC) for a disciplinary hearing and recommendation. The student may be suspended for up to 10 days pending review by the Superintendent and a DRC hearing.

If the matter is referred to the DRC for a hearing, the DRC shall follow the procedures stated herein and then make a recommendation to the Superintendent for appropriate discipline. The DRC's recommendation shall be communicated to the student's parent or guardian. Within three (3) school days of receiving notice of the DRC's recommendation, the parent or guardian may request a meeting with the Superintendent to discuss the proposed discipline.

After receiving the recommendation of the DRC, reviewing the pertinent information, and then meeting with the parent or guardian if requested, the Superintendent shall decide the proper punishment. If the Superintendent decides that expulsion is the proper punishment, this matter shall go before the Scottsboro Board of Education for a full hearing, and a decision by the Board. If the Superintendent decides that a punishment other than expulsion is warranted, the parents and/or student shall be informed of the Superintendent's decision, and the punishment shall be imposed. If the Superintendent decides to refer the matter to the Principal or to impose no punishment, the Superintendent shall refer the matter back to the Principal for appropriate action.

CHAPTER 2. Guidelines, Participants, and Definitions

Related Policies and Guidelines

Figure 1 shows the policies and other sources of information that guide the DRC in Scottsboro City Schools

Figure 1. Useful Resources for DRC

Source	Document
School	● Code of Conduct Handbook
Board	● Policy Manual for SCBOE
State Government	● ALSDE Prevention and Support - Discipline
Federal Government	● Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

Scottsboro City Schools Student Code of Conduct

Scottsboro City Schools believes that a uniform code of conduct for students is essential to the pursuit of academic excellence. The student code of conduct is in place so the students may have meaningful learning experiences. This can only be accomplished in schools where the environment is free from distraction caused by disruptive behavior.

Creating such an environment requires the cooperation of the parents/guardians, students, the board of education, and all employees of the school system. Each person connected with the school must understand the importance of a consistent set of behavioral standards for a positive environment to be established and maintained.

As students progress in our school system, it is reasonable to assume that an increase in age and maturity will result in students assuming greater responsibility for their actions. We recognize that differences in age and maturity require different types of disciplinary action; however, the actions identified in this handbook shall apply to all students in grades K-12. For effective instruction to occur there must be a cooperative relationship among students, parents, and educators.

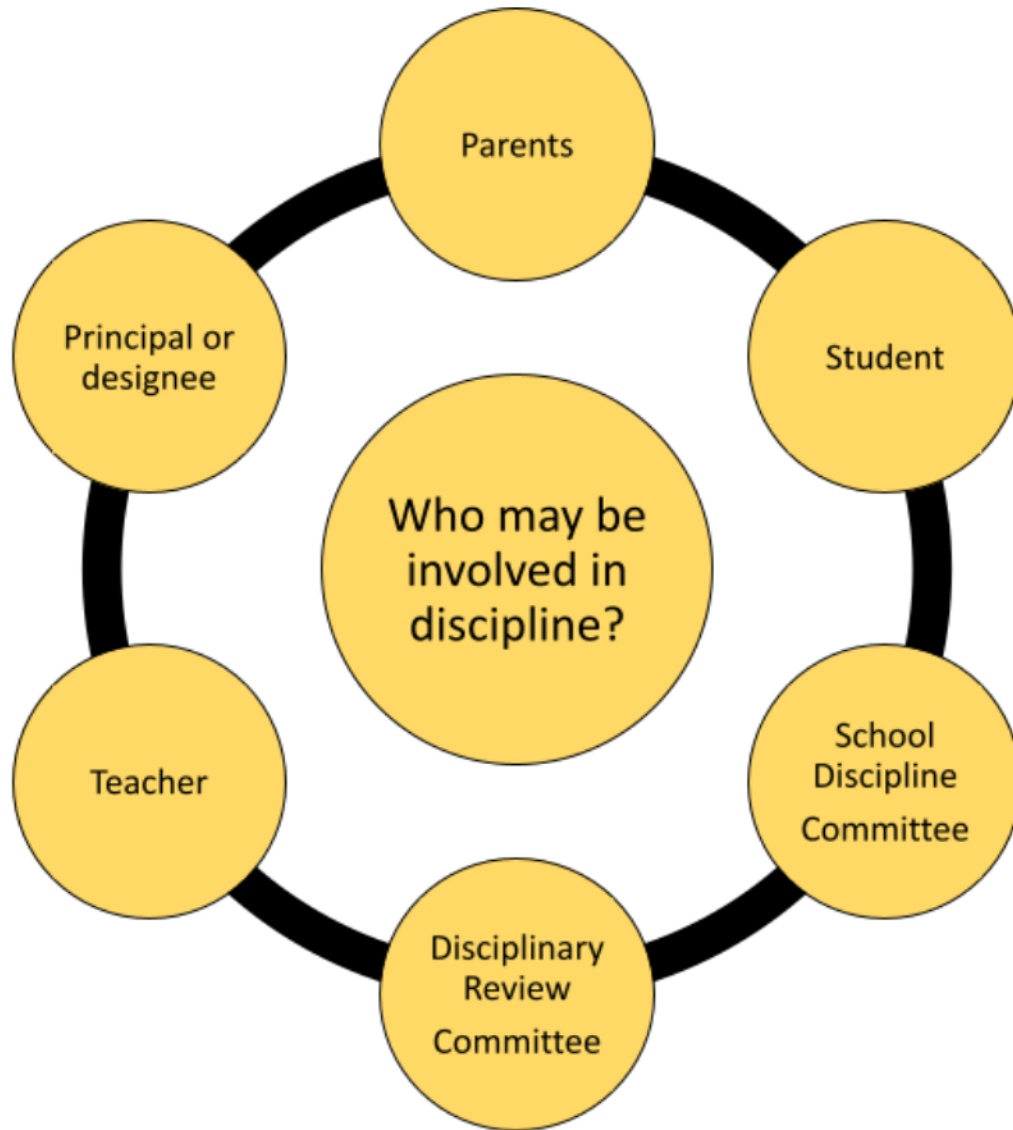
The Scottsboro City Schools' Student Code of Conduct may be found here -

https://cdnsm5-ss11.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_151020/File/23-24%20Scottsboro%20City%20Schools%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20FINAL.pdf

Rights and Responsibilities

Figure 2 shows the people or groups that may be involved in the discipline process. Their rights and responsibilities are described after the figure.

Figure 2. Possible Participants in the Discipline Process



Parents

Throughout this handbook, the term *parent* refers to both parents and legal guardians. Parents have the right to be informed about all disciplinary action involving their child and must be notified if their child is suspended from school.

Note: If the parents have trouble reading or writing in English, the principal should offer to provide an advocate to help them.

PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR CHILD (REN)'S CONDUCT

The Scottsboro City Board of Education advises parents/guardians of their responsibility for the conduct of their child based on Legislative Act 93-672 which amends Section 16-28-12, **Code of Alabama**. The Act has important implications for parents and students of the Scottsboro City School System.

Student

A student suspended for five days or less or assigned in-school detention for ten days or less must serve the placement.

Teacher

Teachers are expected to maintain a safe and orderly learning environment. If a student persistently disrupts the learning environment, the teacher should report the student to the school administration or other appropriate administrator. The teacher has no authority to suspend the student. Only the principal or designee may suspend a student. Teachers may not serve on the DRC when a student from their assigned school is considered for review.

Principal

The principal is responsible for creating and maintaining a safe and orderly learning environment. This includes the option to suspend a student from school for five days or less or in-school detention placement for ten days or less. When a student is suspended or placed in in-school detention, the principal or designee must immediately notify the following people: the student; the student's parents; and the system discipline coordinator/superintendent.

The principal has the authority to place a student(s) on short-term suspension for up to five (5) school days or in-school detention for up to ten (10) days. The short-term out-of-school suspension of a student shall not exceed a total of ten (10) school days per violation.

The principal or designee has the authority to request a Discipline Review Committee hearing when a student has committed a class III violation. This request must be made in writing to the discipline coordinator/superintendent. The discipline coordinator will work with the principal, parents, and discipline review committee members to arrange the DRC hearing as soon as possible. The DRC should consider the facts of the case and make its recommendation to the superintendent no more than ten days from the date of the incident.

Disciplinary Review Committee

The DRC exists to review student behavior and to ensure consequences are fair and consistent with the policies of the board. For details about committee membership and duties see page 9 of this handbook.

Chair of the Disciplinary Review Committee

The chair of the DRC is responsible for leading the committee meetings and informing the student, parents, principal, and superintendent of the committee's decision. For more information about communicating the decisions of the committee, see page 11 of this handbook.

DEFINITIONS

Positive Behavior Supports (PBS)

PBS is a general approach to preventing problem behavior and creating a positive school climate. It involves teaching and reinforcing mutually respectful behavior, and responding to inappropriate behavior.

Severely Disruptive Behavior

Severely disruptive behavior is defined as behavior that is frequent or serious enough to significantly disrupt the learning climate of the school, endanger the well-being of others, or damage school property.

School Day

To give the student the most beneficial interpretation, the days mentioned in the handbook should be considered as days when the school is in operation and students are expected to attend. When considering deadlines, *the day following the suspension should be considered the first day.*

Suspension

In this handbook, suspension means that the student's right to attend school is suspended.

Chapter 3. The DRC

RESPONSIBILITIES

The DRC has three specific responsibilities:

- provide the student with written notice of the charges and an opportunity to be heard (due process),
- hear, review, and weigh the evidence and information presented on behalf of the student and the school.
- recommend to the Superintendent discipline consequences concerning the minimum and maximum disciplinary sanctions required by board policy and the Student Code of Conduct.

MEMBERSHIP

The DRC shall be composed of the following persons/positions:

- DRC chairperson (discipline coordinator),
- two administrators from schools other than the school the student recommended for suspension attends,
- one counselor from a school other than the school the student recommended for suspension attends.

GUESTS

The DRC Chairman may invite guests who can provide expertise and guidance to both the student, parents, and the committee. These guests will be limited to;

- Scottsboro City Schools Mental Health Service Coordinator and Social Worker.
- Scottsboro City Police (School Resource Officer).
- Juvenile Probation Officer(s) (if applicable)

CHAIR

The Discipline Coordinator, or appointed district administrator, will serve as the chair of the DRC.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

If a member of the DRC has a conflict of interest in a particular case, or has information about the suspension that would not normally be revealed in the review process, that member should declare the conflict and excuse him/herself from the proceedings for that meeting. Personnel from the student's school of origin may not serve as a member of the DRC for that student.

ETHICS

The Code of Ethics requires all members of the DRC to respect the rights of students and board employees, respect confidentiality, identify areas of conflict, avoid personal agendas, and act in the best interest of the school and the students. If a member of the DRC disregards this code, the member may be removed from the committee.

MEETINGS

Generally, the DRC will meet on an "as needed" basis. To review a suspension or in-school detention placement of more than the aforementioned parameters, the meeting would typically occur at the end of the

regular school day. Since the timing of a meeting, for a long-term suspension is crucial, the chair may have to call for a meeting on short notice.

The committee meetings should take place in a formal setting, usually in a meeting or conference room. The DRC chairperson will ensure that the setting is comfortable. The tone of the meeting must be civil, professional, and fair. As a result, it is not appropriate to meet in an informal setting.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The deliberations and decisions of the DRC are strictly confidential. Only the Superintendent's final decision should be reported, and this should be reported only to the student, the parents of the student whose suspension is under discussion, the principal, and any school employee who must provide services as a result of consequences (i.e. Alternative-school teacher, counselor, etc.) and the superintendent.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

When serving on a DRC committee, committee members should:

- keep an open mind,
- carefully consider the documentation that is provided,
- allow time for all voices to be heard,
- listen to each other,
- allow for mutual influence,
- make every effort to reach a group consensus.

Whether the decision is reached by consensus or a vote, all committee members should agree to:

- support the recommendation of the group,
- keep the deliberations confidential,
- do nothing to undermine or "second guess" the recommendation once it is finalized.

DOCUMENTATION

The principal should ensure that the documentation provided to the committee is complete, accurate, and focused on the facts and processes of the case in question. The documentation should be in plain language and should meet all requirements for fairness. The guiding principle is full disclosure to all parties. All members of the committee should receive a copy of all documentation. The documentation the school administration should provide to the DRC chairman should include;

- Student Name
- Date of Incident
- Parent Name
- Parent Phone Number
- Code of Conduct Violation
- Completed Manifestation Hearing Meeting if Applicable
- Completed DRC Cover Page
- Attached Behavior/Academic Intervention Schedule
- Completed Summary of Incident

- Signed Student Code of Conduct
- Witness Statements
- STAR/CERT History
- Report Card/Progress Report
- Behavior Report
- Attendance Report

During the DRC hearing, an appointed DRC member will keep meeting minutes of the hearing. To ensure strict confidentiality, the committee does not keep minutes of its deliberations and does not record or report the discussions leading up to a recommendation or the position of individual committee members.

RECORD-KEEPING

DRC members do not keep any records about the student suspension or review process. During a review, the discipline coordinator keeps all documentation in a secure place. Figure 3 shows what happens to the documentation of a suspension of five days or less, or the documentation of a suspension leading to a DRC hearing.

Figure 3: Record Keeping for Student Suspensions

	For a Suspension of five days or less	For a suspension leading to a DRC hearing
The Principal will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enter discipline offense in SIS (PowerSchool) and make the Discipline Coordinator aware if necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inform the Superintendent and make a written request for a DRC Hearing. ● Collect and forward any pertinent documentation.
The Discipline Coordinator will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make the Superintendent aware of the suspension if necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keep on file the principal referral, DRC request, letter to parents, and student demographics. ● Keep on file a copy of the student’s discipline record ● Keep on file a copy of the student’s academic progress. ● Keep on file the student/parent’s signed acknowledgment of Code of Conduct

DISCIPLINARY REVIEW COMMITTEE ACTIONS

1. The DRC shall:

- Ensure that the student has notice of the charges and an opportunity to be heard,
- reference the Code of Conduct to the minimum and maximum disciplinary sanctions required by the Board policy,
- hear, review, and weigh the evidence and information presented on behalf of the student and the school,
- review the student’s total disciplinary record and previous disciplinary sanctions, and
- make a fair and reasonable recommendation concerning the best interest of the student and the school population.

2. **The DRC shall do the following:**

- a. forward a written outline stating the recommendation of the DRC to the superintendent for his/her approval or disapproval for consequences for the student,
- b. send a written notice via Email of the Superintendent's decision to the student's parent/guardian.

3. **The DRC is authorized to do the following:**

- a. Recommend to the Superintendent consequences within the minimum and maximum disciplinary sanctions required by board policy.
- b. Recommend to the Superintendent to re-admit the student to school on a probationary basis unless prohibited by the minimum action required by School Board policy.

Chapter 4. Suspensions

PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSIONS

The following procedures shall be applicable for out-of-school suspensions:

1. The parent/guardian of the student shall be notified in writing and/or verbally when possible of the suspension.
2. The superintendent or designee shall be notified in writing (PowerSchool Discipline Form) of the suspension.
3. The parent/guardian must attend a conference with school personnel before the student is readmitted.
4. The District Attorney and/or Juvenile Court may be notified of the suspension.
5. The principal may request a DRC for special circumstances.

If warranted, charges may be filed. Special situations may result in legal proceedings being instituted.

NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

The following minimal notification procedures shall be followed in out-of-school suspension cases:

1. The local school principal or designee shall enter the student's discipline incident in PowerSchool SIS and provide a copy to the parent.
2. The principal or designee shall make every effort to promptly notify (same day) the student's parent/guardian to explain the circumstances and the terms of the impending suspension.

EXTENDED TERM SUSPENSION

The Board defines extended term out-of-school suspension as "the removal of a student from school for violation of the system's code of conduct, local school rules and regulations, or otherwise causing interference with or disruption of the orderly operations of the school."

AUTHORITY

The authority to place a student on extended-term suspension rests jointly with the principal and superintendent.

LENGTH OF EXTENDED-TERM SUSPENSIONS

An extended-term suspension must be for a specified number of days ranging from one (1) school day up to a maximum of forty-five (45) school days. The maximum of forty-five (45) school days includes any short-term suspension days. Removal of a student from school for more than forty-five (45) school days must be processed through expulsion procedures.

DUE PROCESS FOR EXTENDED-TERM SUSPENSIONS

When a student is facing possible extended term suspension, ten (10) or more school days, the School Board requires that the following formal due process procedures be afforded the student:

1. the right to a written notice of the charge(s),
2. the right to a hearing before the DRC,

3. the right to written notification by the DRC outlining the hearing date, time, place, and possible discipline measures,
4. the right to be represented at the DRC hearing by his/her parent/ guardian or a person selected by the parent/ guardian, including legal counsel,
5. the right to a written statement of the DRC's recommendation to the Superintendent.

PROCEDURES

The principal or designee shall conduct a thorough investigation and report the findings of the investigation to the Superintendent or designee. If, after a review of the findings, the principal recommends that a student be placed on extended-term suspension and the Superintendent approves, the procedures listed below shall be followed:

PRINCIPAL'S ACTIONS

1. The principal or designee shall orally inform the student of the charges against him/her.
2. The principal or designee promptly shall notify (same day if possible) the student's parent/guardian of the charge(s) against the student, and enter the incident in the student's PowerSchool record. The principal or designee shall provide a printed copy to the parent.
3. The principal or designee shall request (same day if possible) the superintendent or designee to establish a DRC hearing to conduct the hearing.
4. The principal recommending the suspension shall initiate the collection of all available related information for presentation at the DRC hearing.

SUPERINTENDENT'S ACTIONS

1. The superintendent or designee shall hear the principal's request for an extended term suspension and review supporting documentation/findings and, if he/she feels that the principal's recommendation warrants suspension, will appoint a DRC.
2. Dependent upon the action recommended by the DRC after completion of the hearing, the Superintendent shall take one of the following actions:
 - a. If the DRC believes that a recommendation for an extended term suspension of the student is warranted and the superintendent concurs; a letter stating the DRC's recommendation and approved by the superintendent will be provided to the parent(s) by the superintendent or designee. In cases where the superintendent does not fully concur with the recommendation of the DRC, he/she may modify the terms and conditions of such recommendations.
 - b. If the DRC believes a recommendation for an extended-term suspension is not warranted and the superintendent concurs, the student will be readmitted to school on a probationary basis unless prohibited by the minimum action required by board policy. In cases where the superintendent does not fully concur with the recommendation of the DRC, he/she may modify the terms and conditions of such recommendations.

SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

Before suspending a special education student, the student's IEP shall be reviewed by the principal or designee and Special Education Coordinator to determine if an out-of-school suspension is appropriate. In the event it is determined that the student's behavior is not related to the disability, the student shall be treated as any other student, and out-of-school suspension may be used as a disciplinary measure. However, should it be determined that the disability is related to the student's behavior, then out-of-school suspension shall not be used as a disciplinary measure for the student without convening the IEP committee to reconsider and approve or disapprove the use of out-of-school suspension as a discipline measure. In addition, special education students placed on out-of-school suspension for more than ten (10) school days during the academic year must be provided with an alternative educational program during such suspensions, Legal Ref. **The Code of Alabama**, 16-1-4, 16-28-12; *Goss v. Lopez*, 95 S. Ct. 729 (1973).

Chapter 5. Expulsions

EXPULSION

The DRC may recommend to the superintendent, the expulsion of any student who has committed a serious breach of conduct according to the Code of Conduct. If the Superintendent approves of the recommendation or makes a recommendation for expulsion, a hearing date before the Board of Education will be set.

- I. Any student who is being considered for expulsion shall be afforded due process of law before expulsion. This shall include the following:
 - a. A written copy of the charges against the student;
 - b. The offer of a hearing at which the student may call witnesses and present evidence on the student's behalf;
 - c. The right to cross-examine witnesses;
 - d. The right to defend the student's actions;
 - e. Legal counsel at the student's expense to assist the student in presenting a defense; and
 - f. A written copy of the Scottsboro City Board of Education's findings or action.

- II. Provisions for the expulsion of exceptional education students shall be described and outlined in the Code of Conduct; however, the dismissal of an exceptional education student shall not result in a complete cessation of educational services. The Scottsboro City School System is responsible for providing the dismissed student's education during the expulsion under a revised individual education plan (IEP).

The Code of Alabama vests in the School Board the authority to prescribe rules and regulations concerning the behavior and discipline of students enrolled in the schools of the school system. The authority to expel a student is vested only in the School Board. The School Board may in its discretion require the removal of a student(s) who violates provisions of the conduct code or creates disciplinary problems in any classroom or other school activities and whose presence in the class may be determined.

Expulsion may be for one (1) school day, for the remainder of the semester, for the remainder of the school year, for a definite period extending beyond the remainder of the school year, or permanently. The length of expulsion shall be at the discretion of the Board.

The Board shall have the duty to review the evidence advanced by the principal, other school system personnel, and other interested parties in support of the recommendation for expulsion and to hear and review any rebuttal advanced by the student, parent/guardian, or representative.

At the end of an expulsion period, the School Board may require that the student and his/her parent/guardian appear before the superintendent and/or the School Board to determine if changes in behavior on the part of the student have occurred that indicate a willingness and ability to function in the school setting. Moreover, as a condition for re-admittance to school, the Board may require that the expelled student participate in activities that would reasonably be assumed to change the behavior in a positive direction.

SUSPENSION WITH AN EXPULSION RECOMMENDATION

If an incident or violation or series of incidents or violations are serious enough to warrant suspension with a recommendation for expulsion, said suspension may not exceed ten (10) complete school days pending school board action on the expulsion recommendation. Provided the School Board does not render a decision within the ten (10) school day period, the student shall be readmitted to the regular school setting or placed in an alternate educational setting until the board renders a decision.

Board's Actions – Expulsions

When a student is facing possible expulsion, the Board shall afford the student the following:

1. The right of a hearing before the Board of Education;
2. The right to be represented by counsel;
3. The opportunity for cross-examination of witnesses;
4. A written record at the hearing;
5. A written record of the decision; and
6. The right of appeal.

A school may not unilaterally expel, or cease the provision of educational services to a student with a disability whose education is governed by an individualized education plan (IEP).

Scottsboro City Schools
Disciplinary Review Hearing
Request Form

This form can be submitted electronically or in hard copy form. The final determination of the hearing request will be made by the Scottsboro City Schools discipline coordinator.

To be completed by referring school:

Name of person making the request: _____

Title of person making the request: _____

Requesting School: _____

Today's Date: _____

Date of Parent Meeting : _____

Name of Student: _____ Grade Level: _____

Number of Credits Earned (For High School Students Only): _____ G.P.A. _____

Number of School Days Missed: _____ Number of Discipline: _____ Referrals Number of Suspensions: _____

Parent Name: _____

Parent Phone Number: _____ (daytime)

Interventions

Check all that Apply for the student and attach supporting documentation

- Attendance Contract
- Computer Based Instruction.
- Credit Recovery Programs and/or Remediation *(Please Specify)*

- Response to Intervention (RTI) Tier II
- Response to Intervention (RTI) Tier III
- School Counseling Interventions and Support
- Tutoring
- Home Visit
- Other

- Behavioral Contract
- Positive Behavioral Support (PBS) Tier II
- Positive Behavioral Support (PBS) Tier III
- Parent Conferences

Is the student currently receiving Special Education services? Yes No
Is the student currently on a Section 504 Accommodation Plan? Yes No

