



**SOMERVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
Special Education Department

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To: Somerville School Committee

From: Ildefonso Arellano, Director of Special Education

Cc: Dr. Ruben Carmona, Superintendent  
Dr. Jessica Boston-Davis, Assistant Superintendent

Date: April 3, 2025

Re: Child Find

Dear School Committee Members:

I am writing to provide an overview of the Child Find process and our ongoing efforts to identify and support students who may have disabilities in accordance with state and federal special education requirements.

**Child Find Process**

Under both federal and state law (Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA 2004) and Massachusetts Special Education regulations 603 CMR 28.00), school districts are required to locate, identify, and evaluate all children with disabilities who may be in need of special education services. This process, known as Child Find, ensures that all children—whether attending public or private schools—receive appropriate services. In Massachusetts, school districts must conduct child find activities for all children with disabilities ages 3 through 21 residing in or attending private school in the geography boundaries of the district.

**Referral and Identification**

Parents or guardians who suspect that their child may have a disability can reach out to the Special Education Department for guidance. The district provides information to help families navigate this

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**SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

Ildefonso Arellano, Director  
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process. Child Find information, along with contact information, can be found on the Special Education Department's website: <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/district-departments/special-education>.

### **Community Screenings**

To facilitate early identification, the district offers community screenings for children ages 3-5. These screenings are designed to assess developmental milestones and determine if further evaluations are necessary. The district has scheduled community screenings throughout the year, and these are an essential component of our Child Find efforts.

The most recent community screening took place on February 26th. Another screening is scheduled for April 30th. These screenings are open to the public and provide an opportunity for families to seek guidance and support from our team of specialists. Information on the screening process can be found at <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/district-departments/special-education/preschool-screenings>

Should any issues be identified during these screenings, our screening team works closely with families to ensure that the necessary steps are taken to evaluate the child's needs. If further evaluation is required, we will proceed with the formal referral and evaluation process, which includes gathering information, conducting assessments, and meeting with families to discuss findings.

### **Child Find in Schools**

Child Find is an integral part of the school's efforts. As we continue to strengthen our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework, teachers and administrators are actively involved in identifying students who may be struggling and who may have an undiagnosed disability. If a teacher or administrator suspects a student has a disability that affects their learning, they can refer the student for an evaluation. This collaborative approach ensures that students receive the necessary supports and interventions early.

In accordance with Massachusetts law (M.G.L. c. 71, § 57 and 603 CMR 28.03(1)(f)), the district also conducts general education screenings at various grade levels to help identify students who may require additional support or locate students with suspected disabilities. These screenings, which may include vision, hearing, developmental, and academic screeners, play a crucial role in early identification and intervention, ensuring students receive timely support within the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework.

### **Child Find for Privately Enrolled Children**

As part of the Child Find requirements, the district is also responsible for identifying children with disabilities who are privately enrolled in schools within the district. To ensure that these students are properly identified and supported, the district engages in meaningful consultations with representatives from private schools located within our geographical boundaries. During these consultations, we discuss the Child Find process and share important information that can help private school staff identify students who may need special education services.

Private school representatives are encouraged to communicate concerns about students they suspect may have disabilities, and we work collaboratively to provide information to families regarding the referral and evaluation process. This ensures that privately enrolled children have access to the same opportunities for evaluation and potential services as their peers in public schools.

The Special Education Department remains committed to identifying children who may need special education services and ensuring that all families have access to the resources and support they need. If there are any questions or concerns regarding the Child Find process, please feel free to reach out.

Thank you for your continued support of our special education efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'I. Arellano', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Ildefonso Arellano

Director of Special Education