

Northland Learning Center

Programs and Services

The Northland Learning Center programs and services are available to our member districts. The services and program delivery processes and procedures are outlined below. If you have any questions, please contact the primary contact(s) listed or the Executive Director. We are here to assist you with providing the best education options and support for your staff, students, and families.

Focus - Setting IV Programs

Criteria for Consideration of Services

- ☐ Student must meet Minnesota Special Education Disability Criteria.
- ☐ Student must have a **current** Individual Education Plan (IEP), including a Positive Behavior Support Plan (PBSP) or Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).
- ☐ Student must have a specific goal related to the student's behavioral needs.
- ☐ Student must have a **current** Evaluation Report (ER) including a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA).
- ☐ Student must exhibit an educational need for a Federal Setting IV (4) program and have been serviced at least 60% of the school day in a special education setting [i.e. Federal Setting III (3)].

Referral Process Steps

- ☐ **If receiving Special Education services from an NLC member district**, notify your Coordinator/Assistant Director of Special Education of the need for a referral.
 - ☐ The Coordinator/Assistant Director of Special Education will present the information that they have to the SAT team to discuss and determine:
 - ☐ what current placement options look like,
 - ☐ review the preliminary information/data, and
 - ☐ provide the Coordinator/Assistant Director of Special Education next steps.
 - ☐ Make sure all necessary parties have been notified of the referral. (It is best practice to obtain consent from the student's legal guardian and other outside professionals who will provide information during the referral process prior to submitting the student information and proceeding with the referral process.)
 - ☐ Legal guardian,
 - ☐ Social worker,
 - ☐ ADAPT service provider,
 - ☐ Check and Connect service provider,
 - ☐ Itinerant service providers.

- ☐ **If moving into your district with a high setting of special education services**, contact and discuss with your Coordinator/Assistant Director of Special Education of the possible need for a referral. The Coordinator/Assistant Director of Special Education will forward you the online Focus NLC Referral Form. (Filling this out does not guarantee Setting 4 Enrollment).

Transition to Resident District from Setting IV

It is the goal to have all students who enter our Focus Setting IV Programs be able to successfully return to their resident district. There is not a time table for such returns as all students' needs are individually analyzed. When a student reaches goals that are designed to help the student be successful in a mainstream setting, the teacher here at the NLC will create a contract with the student.

When that contract is successful, the NLC case manager will set up a meeting to discuss what a possible return could look like. This initial meeting includes the NLC case manager, NLC Setting IV Asst. Director, NLC Coordinator/Asst. Director for Resident District, Resident Building Principal and Resident Case Manager. The initial return usually looks like a partial day that is decided with input from the resident principal and case manager.

After this meeting, the parents will be asked to attend another meeting so everyone is aware of the transition procedure and criteria. The team will discuss a timeline with criteria before increasing more time for the student before full enrollment is handed over to the resident district.

45- Day Placement

Legal Criteria for 45 Day Placement Consideration:

Under certain circumstances a student can be removed from his or her public school if, while in the school building, on school premises, or at a school function, he or she: 1) carries a weapon to, or is in possession of a weapon; 2) knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance; or 3) inflicts *serious* bodily injury upon another person.

Placement Steps

If considering placement in a Home-Based Setting for a student:

- Document the Incident that precipitated the possible need for an Emergency Placement.
- In your district/school team, complete the [Threat Assessment Analysis](#).
- Notify your Coordinator/Assistant Director of Special Education of the precipitating incident. Schedule a Manifestation Determination meeting within 10 days of suspension (total in the year).
- Begin providing home-based special education services once 10 days of suspension are up.

- Amend the IEP to clarify the 45 day placement.
 - This should include:
 - A statement in the present levels section.
 - Add on a service on the service grid to address this with the end date when the 45 days are up (should be minimum 1 hour home-based services per school day).
 - Clarify in a statement in the LRE section.
 - Assistance will be given on any of this upon request.
- Send the Amended IEP, Agreement to Amend, and a PWN to the parent/guardian.
- Document and finalize all changes in SpEd Forms.

If considering Placement in the ALC or NLC Focus Programs:

- Document the incident that precipitated the possible need for a placement.
- In your district/school team, complete the [Threat Assessment Analysis](#).
- **Notify your Coordinator/Assistant Director of Special Education** of the precipitating incident. A meeting will be scheduled (virtually) by your Coordinator/Assistant Director to discuss all options with NLC Administration.
 - Gather/Review the following information for Meeting with NLC Administration:
 - Detailed account of the precipitating incident
 - Results of the “Threat Assessment” team discussion
 - All discipline/suspension records
 - Current IEP, including any Positive Behavior Support Plan (PBSP) or Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).
 - Evaluation/Reevaluation Report, as relevant to the incident.
- Schedule and hold a Manifestation Determination meeting within 10 days of suspension (total in the year) to discuss options with the parent/guardian.
- Begin providing home-based sped services once 10 days of suspension are up.

If NLC/ALC Placement is accepted at the Manifestation Determination Meeting:

- Amend the IEP to clarify the 45 day placement.
 - This should include:
 - A statement in the present levels section.
 - Add on a service on the service grid to address this with the end date when the 45 days are up.
 - Clarify in a statement in the LRE section.
 - Assistance will be given on any of this upon request.
- Send the Amended IEP, Agreement to Amend, and a PWN to the parent/guardian.
- Document and finalize all changes in SpEd Forms.
- Send the NLC Enrollment Paperwork to the parent/guardian.

*The NLC Enrollment Paperwork and PWN need to be signed by the legal guardian and in the

hands of the Program Team at the NLC prior to the determined start date.

****To be placed, even temporarily, in the NLC Focus Program: Student must meet Minnesota Special Education Disability Criteria and have a current Individual Education Plan (IEP).**

*****Possible ALC Placement Options will be determined on individual criteria once previous steps are completed.**

******The local district should schedule a “Re-entry” meeting with the student and family the week prior to the end-date of the 45 day placement to determine any transition needed once back at district school**

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Bridge to Independence

What is Bridge to Independence?

Bridge to Independence (BTI) is a secondary special education program for adult students ages 18-22 in northeastern Minnesota. The BTI program offers a focus on the acquisition of skills in the areas of post-secondary education and training, employment and vocational skills, community participation, independent living skills, and recreation and leisure activities. The BTI program is designed to provide students with the greatest opportunities for an independent and fulfilling future.

Bridge to Independence is a secondary special education program designed for students who:

- Are 18-22 years old
- Have a variety of disabilities
- Have a current IEP
- Have significant transition needs
- Do not have a high school diploma

Where is Bridge to Independence located?

Bridge to Independence is located on the north side of Virginia at 610 9th Ave. N.

When should 18-22 transition services be considered?

At the age of 14, the IEP team needs to consider transition services for students. This includes considering individual student needs in the areas of post-secondary education and training, employment, and independent living. The team should consider the student's strengths, interests, and preferences in addition to needs when planning. With each team meeting, the team should monitor and plan for progress on the student's transition goals.

11th Grade: Case managers should facilitate a conversation with the team regarding consideration of 18-22 transition services. The [BTI Work Experience Brochure](#) (link) should be shared with the family. Contact a BTI representative with any questions.

12th Grade: Case managers should invite a BTI representative to the IEP team meeting to assist with goal setting and future planning. Student and parent visits to BTI are arranged to assist with decision making.

Who determines if a student will attend Bridge to Independence?

A student's IEP team, including the student and parent, determines if transition services beyond high school are necessary and appropriate. Based on the student's needs, as determined by the most recent evaluation and IEP, the team will consider and make a recommendation for transition services when appropriate or necessary.

Will instruction at Bridge to Independence look a lot like high school?

Instruction at BTI will look quite different from the high school experience. Learning at BTI takes place in a kitchen, social skills space set up to feel like a gathering place in a home, or vocational space. The community also serves as a learning environment whenever possible to provide authentic learning and support generalization of skills.

How is the diploma earned?

BTI students may participate in the graduation ceremonies at their home schools with their graduating class, but the diploma is held by the district if they attend BTI. The diploma is then earned when a student meets their goals and objectives on their IEP or ages out. The IEP team is the decision-making group that would decide when the diploma has been earned through completion of goals and objectives. Students are eligible for services through the age of 22.

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Alternative Learning Center

The Alternative Learning Center is a general education program that provides practical education options for students who are experiencing difficulties with the traditional system. This program is offered to students beginning their second semester of ninth grade. Qualifying criteria for acceptance into the program:

1. A pupil under the age of 21 or who meets the requirements of section [120A.20](#), subdivision 1, paragraph (c), is eligible to participate in the graduation incentives program, if the pupil:
2. performs substantially below the performance level for pupils of the same age in a locally determined achievement test;
3. is behind in satisfactorily completing coursework or obtaining credits for graduation;
4. is pregnant or is a parent;
5. has been assessed as chemically dependent;
6. has been excluded or expelled according to sections [121A.40](#) to [121A.56](#);
7. is a victim of physical or sexual abuse;
8. has experienced mental health problems;
9. has experienced homelessness sometime within six months before requesting a transfer to an eligible program;

10. speaks English as a second language or is an English learner;
11. has withdrawn from school or has been chronically truant

Referral Steps:

1. Home district administrator (Principal) completes the online referral form located on the NLC Website.
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1kkeym9Nm_SJLRz1N8Mm7bLh1j3awApGc86pCMawt85A/edit
2. The NLC Assistant Director, Jackie Ward, and Dean of Students, Bryan Carey, will review the referral and contact the home district before a student meeting is scheduled to ensure said student meets the requirements.
3. If it is decided by the NLC and district teams that the student meets the requirements, a Discovery meeting will be scheduled with students and parents/guardians to review transcripts and develop a graduation plan.

Please Note: *The NLC does not offer an online school option.
 Students **MUST be registered and referred through their home district.

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Early Childhood Special Education

Early Childhood Special Education serves children birth through the age of 6. Kindergarten students are not always served by ECSE teachers. This is assigned on a district by district and sometimes building by building basis. Children turning 7 must be exited from ECSE or have a categorical evaluation done by their seventh birthday. The categorical evaluation will be done by the special education teacher who will be providing the services, NOT the ECSE teacher. ECSE teacher license is for birth to age 6, so unless they have dual licensure they are unable to serve children age 7 and above.

Referrals through the Help Me Grow system are for children birth to five (pre-kindergarten) age.
helpmegrowmn.org

Children enrolled in Kindergarten must go through the MTSS intervention process with interventions done for 12 weeks regardless of outcomes on screening tool.

Resources for families can be found at:
[Help Me Connect: Home](#)

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MTSS

EXPLANATION

Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) is a systematic, continuous-improvement framework in which data-based problem solving and decision-making is practiced across all levels of the educational system for supporting all students. This includes students receiving special education services. The MTSS paradigm shift focuses on **all** students, identifies what help **each student needs**, and is intentional in design and redesign of services and supports matched to the needs of each student.

There are three tiers of support in an MTSS model.

- **Tier 1** includes universal, high quality classroom-wide instruction and support for all students. This is best practice with differentiated instruction in place.
 - Districts should aim to have 80-90% of students in Tier 1.
- **Tier 2** provides targeted support through group interventions based on a similar need to address a student's gap in skills.
 - Districts should aim to have 5-15% of students in Tier 2.
- **Tier 3** involves intensive, individualized interventions with frequent progress monitoring.
 - Districts should aim to have 1-5% of students in Tier 3.

The goal is to improve outcomes for students using:

1. Data for decision making
2. Evidenced-based practices for student outcomes
3. Systems which adults need in order to support implementation efforts
4. Fidelity and consistency to adequately measure outcomes

According to the [MDE MTSS guidebook](#), MTSS is a “team sport.” Successful implementation of MnMTSS requires well-functioning teaming across and within the school district, school and intra-school levels. This guidebook is intended to help district and school-based teams implement the expectations found within the MnMTSS framework and unleash the collective wisdom and expertise of educators and stakeholders. Successful teaming leads to good decisions, effective support of educators and ultimately positive student outcomes.

STUDENT SUCCESS TEAM (SST)

The Northland Learning Center has created a four part process to support the NLC member districts MTSS/SST teams. All forms and resources are located on the Northland Learning Center's website [Northland Learning Center](#) under the **Student Success Team** tab and are also linked below. They may be printed or filled in electronically.

Forms:

- [Part 1: Team Discussion](#)
- [Part 2: Intervention Data](#)
- [Part 3: Team Data Review](#)
- [Part 4: Referral for Special Education Evaluation](#)

Resources:

- [Multi-Tiered Systems of Support \(MTSS\) Student Support Process Resource Guide for Student Success Teams](#)
- [NLC's MTSS Intervention \(SRBI\) Bank 2022](#)

Note: *If completing the forms electronically, make sure to make a copy first in Google Drive.*

Part 1: Team Discussion - When a student is struggling in school and is in need of intensive support (academic, behavioral, social/emotional, etc.), the **general education** teacher completes the MTSS Form **Part 1: Team Discussion** to bring to the Student Success Team (SST) meeting.

The information on this form is designed to include the whole team to use a whole child lens to help “tell the child’s story” so that they are able to collaborate and make decisions to support the student through the MTSS process beginning with SBRI interventions..

Vision and hearing screening should be completed prior to beginning interventions to rule out possible vision and/or hearing concerns that may be contributing to the student’s challenges. All supplemental data should be printed and brought to the SST meeting.

Once the data is reviewed, the team will indicate the areas of concern and then prioritize the top 2-3. The team will then consider interventions ([NLC's MTSS Intervention \(SRBI\) Bank 2022](#)) to address each area of concern and choose a SBRI intervention which is then assigned to a staff member who will be responsible for completing it.

Part 2: Intervention Data - Each intervention should have its own **Part 2: Intervention Data** sheet.

- The intervention for each area of concern will be documented on its own **Part 2: Intervention Data sheet**.
- The person responsible for implementing each intervention will be responsible for completing the intervention data.
- The purpose/goal (what we are measuring i.e. increase number of using words to have needs met, decrease in hitting, ect.) will be identified on the **Part 2: Intervention Data** sheet.
- Each intervention is implemented for 30 school days. This can be tracked by marking the Yes and No box on each day. Engagement and Participation should be completed daily as well.
- Progress monitoring for each intervention must take place a minimum of **one time per week** for academic interventions and **three times per week** for behavioral interventions.
- Before the data is brought back to the SST meeting for review, staff should complete a line graph.
This may be completed by:
 - Hand drawn
 - Excel spreadsheet
 - Graphing website
 - If you are entering data in Prolific or another intervention tracking program, you may print the graph from that program.

Note: *When in doubt, consult with your School Psychologist.*

Part 3: Team Data Review - The referring staff member will collect all **Part 2: Intervention Data** sheets and bring them to the SST meeting. The team will review the **Part 2: Intervention Data** sheets and graph(s) from the intervention using the following questions.

- What does progress monitoring data indicate for each area of concern?
- Did the student's skill level increase, decrease, or stay the same?
- Is the student at a place where they can be moved to a watch list in this area or should we implement Round 2 of interventions?

The SST then decides on the next steps, which are documented on the **Part 3: Team Data Review** sheet.

- Students who are making adequate progress will move to a watchlist to monitor and are removed from the SST review process.
- Students who are not making adequate progress in Round 1 will move to a Round 2 intervention.

After Round 2 interventions are complete, the team may decide to implement a third optional round of interventions or may decide to move forward to **Part 4: Referral for Special Education Evaluation**. *Note: Round 1 and Round 2 are both documented on the same Part 3: Team Data Review Sheet.*

Special Education Referral

Part 4: Referral for Special Education Evaluation - After a student has completed 2 rounds of interventions addressing the same area(s) of concern and the SST analyzes progress monitoring data and determines the student should be evaluated for special education eligibility, the **Part 4: Referral for Special Education Evaluation** form should be completed at the SST meeting.

A member of the team will be chosen to complete the referral form and should collect Parts 1-3, along with all required supplemental documentation, to submit to the special education case manager. The original paperwork should be kept for the due process file and a copy should be sent to your school psychologist, who will begin the evaluation planning process.

Primary Contact: District NLC Representative <coordinator/assistant director> @northlandsped.org

504 Referral

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (34 C.F.R. Part 104) is a federal civil rights statute that assures individuals will not be discriminated against based on their disability. All school districts that receive federal funding are responsible for the implementation of this law.

What is a 504 plan?

504 plans are formal plans developed by schools to give students with disabilities the support they need. They protect a student with an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, whether the student receives special education services or not.

- Examples of physical or mental impairments that may be covered under Section 504 include: epilepsy, AIDS, allergies, vision impairment, broken limbs, cancer, diabetes, asthma, temporary condition due to accidents or illness, ADD/ADHD, learning disabilities, autism, depression, intellectual disability, traumatic brain injury, and post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Examples of major life activities that can be affected by the student's disability include: learning, thinking, concentrating, reading, speaking, walking, breathing, sleeping, caring for oneself, as well as major bodily functions, including brain function, immune system function, or digestive functions. This is not an exhaustive list.

504 plans provide accommodations, aids and services in the general education setting to help students overcome barriers. They don't change what students learn in school. Instead, they change how students learn and how students get their work done. Here are four types of accommodations that address different needs:

- **Presentation:** A change in the way information is presented. Example: Audiobooks for people with reading challenges.
- **Response:** A change in the way people complete assignments or work. Example: Keyboards for students who struggle with handwriting.
- **Setting:** A change in the learning or working environment. Example: Quiet test rooms for students with ADHD.
- **Timing and scheduling:** A change to the time for a task. Example: Extra time on homework, or flexible work hours.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has no enforcement authority for this law. [The U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights \(OCR\)](#) takes complaints regarding Section 504.

OCR Region Office for Minnesota:
U.S. Department of Education
John C. Kluczynski Federal Building
230 S. Dearborn Street, 37th Floor
Chicago, IL 60604
Telephone: 312-730-1560
Fax: 312-730-1576

The difference between an IEP and 504 plan
[Difference between IEP and 504](#)

Resource for Staff from MDE
[MDE Essentials of 504 Training Series](#)

Resource for Families
[504 Family Resource](#)

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Professional Development

The Northland Learning Center offers professional development opportunities for all our member districts. The request for professional development to be delivered by our staff can be accessed here via this link <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1pF8STqgct54BjXetK5ir55eaWxYZXYMY55BXhwdX6sU/edit> and on our website. We require a thirty-day notice unless the request is for CPI training in which you should contact Amanda Slattery at aslattery@northlandsped.org or Hannah Helander at hhelander@northlandsped.org directly. If you have any questions about the form or professional development delivery, please contact your coordinator, assistant director or the executive director.

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