

STEP HANDOUT FOR PARENTS

Catholic schools strive to provide an inclusive education, built upon an engaging evidence-based curriculum and supportive school atmosphere for all students. Inclusion is about building a well-informed community that values, celebrates and responds to diversity, guided by current educational research, and fortified by respectful relationships among all stakeholders.

As inclusive schools, Catholic schools cater to students who have a diverse range of abilities, learning styles, personal characteristics, and experiences. Catholic schools strive to offer multiple forms of support for our diverse student body. Such offerings include differentiated and small group guided instruction, blended learning opportunities, accelerated and remedial online learning programs, and STEP (Support Team Education Plan) program integration.

The STEP program is a multi-tier model to help provide early identification of students with learning and mild behavioral needs. Struggling learners are provided various interventions appropriate to their needs, at increasing levels of intensity to improve learning, and the STEP program is an integral element in this process. The STEP program at Catholic schools supports students who may require targeted minor adjustments to facilitate access to grade-level curriculum, enable learning, and participate in the school community.

A student is first identified via teacher, parent, or student self-report. The designated teacher works with the student and parents to identify and document appropriate classroom supports. If a student shows progress, supports are continued as needed. If the student still experiences difficulty in the classroom, the teacher will submit a request for a STEP referral to the STEP coordinator. The STEP coordinator will assemble the STEP team, set a date to hold a STEP meeting with the parents, and invite an administrator, teacher(s) and any other personnel working with the student to attend the meeting.

During the STEP meeting, the team discusses the student's strengths, challenges, appropriate minor adjustments and strategies which serve to assist the student in meeting curriculum standards. Individuals who will be assisting the student are identified, and a timeline for follow-up is developed. The STEP team continues to monitor and assess the



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student's academic progress, and if the student does not show enough progress the team will reconvene and discuss options for moving forward, which may include discussing options for formally assessing the student. If parents wish to have their student assessed through their local public school, a Parent Request for Public School Assessment form will be jointly completed by the STEP coordinator and the parents. Parents will then take this form to their local public school to initiate the assessment process. If parents would rather have their student assessed by a private neuropsychologist, they may do so.

Once an assessment has been conducted, the STEP team will reconvene to explore the test report, and any additional suggested minor adjustments. Likewise, if a student enters a school with an existing psychological or neuropsychological report, IEP or 504 plan, parents are encouraged to meet with the STEP coordinator, administrator and teacher(s) to document and develop the student's STEP. All STEP information remains within the domain of the STEP resource program, and does not enter into a student's cumulative file.

