

## Criteria for the Identification of Students with Multiple Disabilities

Recognizing the many factors involved in appropriately identifying students with Multiple Disabilities (MD), Middlesex County Public Schools' Office of Special Education, has established criteria to be used by eligibility committees for the purpose of decision-making.

### **State Definition:**

*Regulations Governing Special Education Programs For Children With Disabilities in Virginia (2009)* define Multiple Disabilities as “two or more impairments at the same time (for example, mental retardation-blindness, learning disability-orthopedic impairment), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf-blindness.”

**Note:** The term multiple disabilities does not include deaf-blindness. Children with multiple disabilities exhibit two or more severe disabilities that are likely to be life-long, significantly interfere with independent functioning, and necessitate environmental modifications to enable the individual to participate in school and society. A learning disability and speech or language impairment does not constitute a multiple disability. Likewise, a child with mental retardation who receives speech therapy as a related service would not be found eligible under this category.

### **Assessments:**

If the student is suspected of having multiple disabilities, then assessments may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Medical – Written report from a licensed physician or nurse practitioner indicating general medical history and any medical/health problems, which may impede learning. *NOTE: If the student receives ongoing medical intervention and/or treatment, it may be more appropriate to request a copy of those records rather than a medical evaluation.*
- Physical Therapy Evaluation and/or Occupational Therapy Evaluation (when appropriate) - Written report by a licensed or registered therapist with information based on a standardized motor assessment that may include the areas of fine motor, gross motor, and self-help (when appropriate).
- Classroom Educational Documentation – Written report from classroom teacher(s) describing the child's level of academic, developmental, social, or adaptive functioning including strengths, weaknesses, and other factors which affect educational performance.

- Psychological – Written report from a qualified school psychologist or other qualified professional based on the use of a battery of appropriate instruments which may assess cognition, emotionality, processing performance, adaptive skills, and social skills.
- Educational – Written report describing current educational performance/achievement and identifying instructional strengths and weaknesses in academic skills and processing performance.
- Developmental (ages 2-5) – (when appropriate) Written report of an assessment of how the child functions in the major areas of physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, and/or adaptive development.
- Sociocultural – Written report from a qualified visiting teacher or school social worker based on the use of information collected through social appraisal instruments which will include background and social/adaptive behavior in the home, school, and community (may include an assessment of adaptive skills completed by the parent when appropriate).
- Observation – Written report of the child’s academic performance and behavior in the child’s learning environment (including the general education classroom setting) to document the child’s academic performance and behavior in the areas of difficulty. NOTE: This observation should take place in a class where perceived weaknesses are indicated. \*In case of a child less than school age or out of school, a group member shall observe the child in an environment appropriate for a child of that age.
- Hearing Screening – Written report to assess the child’s hearing.
- Speech-Language (when appropriate) – Written report of an evaluation, which may assess the child’s articulation, voice, fluency, and expressive and receptive language skills.

**Eligibility Criteria:**

The following criteria should be met when determining a student eligible for services for students with multiple disabilities:

1. The child falls within 2-21 years of age, inclusive.
2. The student has documented multiple disabilities, all of which must be specified in the eligibility minutes.
2. The functional disability or impairment has an adverse effect on educational

performance and the student requires instruction and or support to benefit from education. These services cannot be reasonably provided solely through regular education.

3. The student exhibits such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments.
4. This disability excludes the category of deaf-blindness.