



Student Support Teams in Georgia

An SST team is required by federal judicial order to be in every public school in Georgia. SSTs are a joint effort of general and special education to identify and plan alternative instructional strategies for students prior to or in lieu of a special education referral. Prior to consideration for special education referral, non-special education options should be considered, interventions used, documented, described, and discussed at the special education placement meeting.

SSTs originated in a federal lawsuit known as Marshall vs. Georgia (1984), which dealt primarily with disproportionate placement of minority students in Special Education. While the state prevailed in this case, a shortcoming in Georgia schools became obvious – *There was no standard process for students to obtain individualized help in the **general education classroom** for learning or behavior difficulties. Instead, the route to such help usually led to placement in Special Education, often involving removal from the general education classroom.*

As part of its commitment to federal court to remedy technical violations found in the trial, the State of Georgia mandated that a Student Support Team would be established in every Georgia public school, K-12. The court accepted this commitment, thereby making the SST mandate a permanent injunction. The primary intent of the mandate was *to prevent inappropriate referrals to special education.*

Requirements for SST come from two places: a [State Board rule \(160-4-2-.32\)](#) and local school system policies, which comply with and may elaborate on the state rule. The state rule applies to all SSTs, but local school system policies only apply to SSTs in their district. These may be quite different across districts.

Student Support Teams at Mountain Education Charter High School

What is it?

At MECHS, a Student Support Team (SST) is an interdisciplinary group that uses a systematic process to address learning and/or behavior problems of students. It is comprised of members whose purpose shall be to collaboratively problem-solve for individual students who are not making adequate progress at MECHS. SST recommendations, which include a specific academic and/or behavior plan, are documented and provided to the student's teacher(s) and/or others to implement with the student. The team then meets periodically to review the student's progress and determine the need for continuing, modifying, or concluding the intervention. Students may be referred to SST by anyone such as teachers, parents, site administrators, or student services staff.

How is it carried out?



Each site shall establish a regular, monthly meeting date and time. Meetings must be held at least monthly. All new referrals and all follow-ups on past referrals will be reviewed on that day.

Six-Step Process:

1. Identification of needs
2. Assessment, if necessary
3. Educational plan
4. Implementation
5. Follow-up and support
6. Continuous monitoring and evaluation

Required Documentation:

- Student's name.
- Names of team members.
- Meeting dates.
- Identification of student learning and/or behavior problems.
- Any records of assessment.
- Educational plan and implementation results.
- Follow-up and, as appropriate, continuous evaluation.

Requests for service for a student from the SST may include interventions such as curriculum modification, individual tutoring, learning style assessment, behavior management techniques, achievement evaluation, home-school communication, or study skill assistance.

Who is involved?

The SST shall include a minimum of three members, two of which must be MECHS employees, as appropriate to the needs of the student:

- Student Services Representative
- Site Administrator
- Parent(s)
- Student
- Mentor
- Special Education Teacher
- ESOL Teacher
- School Psychologist
- Social Worker
- Special Education Representative

Site SST Chairs will gather and bring the following information to review at the first meeting:



- Georgia Longitudinal Data System (LDS) Printout
- Standardized Test Record
- Transcript
- Hours/Credits Report
- Academic Tracking System
- LAP Monthly Plan
- Mentor Log
- Prior SST Records
- Parental Concerns Form

MECHS SST Policy/GaDOE State Rule: [Rule 160-4-2-.32](#)

ASSISTANCE & RESOURCES

[GA Department of Education Student Support Teams \(SST\) website](#)

Parent/Student Assistance: Contact local Site Administration at MECHS.

Staff Technical Assistance: Contact the Site SST Chair or Site Administration for further help and information.