

HOPE Program General Referral Information

The Rochester School District in collaboration with Strafford Learning Center, has designed the HOPE Program as an alternative education environment for students K-5. HOPE is designed for students with emotional and or behavioral challenges who need a structured and alternative educational setting. The program utilizes the Rochester School District curriculum and adheres to Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) as a framework for behavioral supports.

A student may be referred to the HOPE Program for possible admission when the student's home school has sufficient data indicating the need for an alternative school setting or they have transferred from another district with a similar program. Supporting factors will include:

- IEP goals are consistent with the need for an alternative placement.
- Disciplinary reports indicate a pattern of behavioral needs that cannot be addressed in a Less Restrictive Environment and documentation indicates that behavioral strategies have been implemented, with fidelity, and that the student has not made adequate progress behaviorally or socially.
- Student's home school has completed a Functional Behavior Assessment and has followed through with recommendations, with fidelity, for at least one quarter.

A student with a history of physical aggression or involvement with weapons **may not be appropriate for HOPE.**

HOPE Program Referral Process

The HOPE Program referral involves a team process that includes required special education meetings and information gathering. Following these steps will help to facilitate a smooth transition for students:

- Prior to formal referral, it is strongly suggested that the sending school contact the Director of Student Services to set up an informal student observation by the HOPE Program. The HOPE staff will share observation results with the school team and will be available for consultation with regards to behavior planning.

- If a referral is determined to be appropriate, a HOPE Program Referral Form will be sent to the Director of Student Services who will forward it to the sending school.

- Sending school gathers all referral documentation including any current/up-to-date academic, psychological, social/emotional, and neurological-psychological evaluations, IEP and behavioral reports.

- Referral Form is completed and returned to the Director of Student Services, along with all requested documentation to the HOPE Program Coordinator for review. The HOPE Coordinator will review referral with staff, including the designated district liaison.

- If a referral advances, the parent will have the opportunity to visit the program.

- The HOPE Coordinator will notify the Director of Student Services to have the sending school set up a placement team meeting. If the team determines that the proposed HOPE referral is the least restrictive environment for the student, a start date will be determined at the placement meeting.

*For transfer students this process may need to be expedited.

NOTE: Incomplete referral packet may delay the referral process.

Please refer to flow chart for referral process.

HOPE Program Procedures for Termination

A student's termination from the HOPE Program can occur for a variety of reasons. Regardless of the reason for termination, it will be accomplished by way of an informed process and in conjunction with the parent/guardian and the LEA. Except in rare circumstances related to safety, students are not discharged prior to the establishment of a new placement.

Possible reasons for termination from the HOPE Program (not an exhaustive list):

- The student's skills have advanced to the point that they no longer need a program as restrictive as HOPE and are ready to return to the public school setting. If a student is ready to return to the public school setting the public school will observe the student, review behavioral and academic data, confer with the HOPE Program Director and Director of Student Services. If in agreement a transition meeting is set up. If not in agreement a plan will be developed to address the students' needs and a meeting will be reconvened in 30 days.
- The student's needs are deemed to be greater than can be provided for and supported at HOPE.
- The student relocates to a community that is outside of the Rochester School District.
- The IEP/Placement team agrees to an alternative placement that is better suited to the student's needs.
- The student ages out of the program at the end of their fifth grade year.
- The student engages in significant and frequent physically aggressive behavior, causing an unsafe environment.
- The student is placed in another facility by order of the court.

A recommendation for termination due to extreme behavior will only occur after all reasonable program alternatives have been exhausted. The parent/guardian and the LEA will be kept informed of behavior concerns on an on-going basis. When deemed necessary, the child's IEP team will meet to discuss concerns and the appropriateness of the placement. Termination from the HOPE Program is finalized when a new placement has been determined and a discharge date is agreed upon with the LEA.

Sending school alerts the Director of Student Services of potential referral



Informal student observation by HOPE



Placement meeting regarding suggested HOPE Referral at sending school with HOPE in attendance



No ----- Hold and Wait ----- Go ahead with referral



Remains at present school



Sending school given HOPE Referral Form



Formal paperwork completed along with documentation given to Director of Student Services



Child and parent visit HOPE



Yes to placement

No to placement



Placement date determined,
transition planned



Alternatives explored



Review in thirty (30) days