K12 Supporting Students with Autism
STUDENT CASE RECOMMENDATION FORM

ECHO Session Date: 3/13/25

Thank you for presenting your student at ECHO Idaho – K12 Supporting Students with Autism session. Please keep in mind that your School District policies and Health Services procedures, medication administration protocols, process guidelines, remain the guiding principles to your practice.

After review of the case presentation and discussion of this student's case among the ECHO Community of Practice, the following suggestions have been made:

Summary:
A highly intelligent and musically talented middle school student, currently in a self-contained classroom without paraprofessional support, exhibits a deep passion for saxophone, 50s music, video games, and chess. Though kind and capable of meaningful conversations, he has displayed disruptive behaviors, including making inappropriate comments, using different voices, and sending unsettling emails about anarchy and world domination, causing discomfort among peers. With no formal diagnosis but parental suspicion of autism, a behavior plan was implemented following a parent meeting to address these challenges and support his social and behavioral development.

Question:
Do you think these behaviors align with ASD traits, and how can I help him understand his behaviors, manage voice changes, and foster positive school connections now that he is opening up during our weekly check-ins?

Recommendations:
First, thank you for sharing this case. Kudos to you and your staff for the dedication you have for this child. Below are key recommendations that focus on supporting the student who may have autism, ADHD, or other developmental concerns:

Assessment and Professional Support
- **Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)**
    - Conduct an FBA to determine the purpose of the student's behaviors and identify strategies for prevention and intervention.
    - If the student engages in disruptive behaviors to gain attention, ignoring those behaviors while reinforcing positive interactions may be effective.

- **Expert Evaluations**
    - Work with his PCP to connect to therapy and make key referrals.
    - Refer the student for a neuropsychiatric evaluation and a developmental pediatric assessment to clarify diagnoses and inform intervention.
    - A developmental pediatrician or neuropsychologist can help distinguish between ADHD, autism, alexithymia, or other conditions.

Behavioral and Social Interventions

- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)**
  - Encourage participation in CBT to help the student understand their behaviors and develop coping strategies.
  - If the student struggles with emotional regulation, CBT can teach them techniques to recognize and manage their emotions.

- **Structured Social Support**
  - Rather than traditional social skills groups, place the student in interest-based groups to foster natural social connections.
  - If the student has a strong interest in music, pairing them with peers who share this interest may reduce stress and improve social interactions.

- **Behavioral Interventions at School**
  - Implement structured attention-seeking alternatives to channel behaviors into positive interactions.
  - If the student enjoys being the center of attention, assigning them a role like "Joke of the Day" at the start of class can provide structured attention.
  - Consider including music in early in his day.

Environmental and Family Support

- **Use of Music for Self-Regulation**
  - Allow the student to engage with music as a tool for emotional and sensory regulation.
  - Permitting the student to listen to music on an MP3 player during non-instructional times could help with self-regulation.
- **Parental Engagement and Medical Support**
  - Work closely with parents to ensure they recognize the challenges and seek professional support.
  - If parents are hesitant, framing the conversation around long-term consequences and social inclusion might encourage them to pursue evaluations.
- **Access to Additional Support Services**
  - Utilize Project Voiss, an AI-driven program that helps students develop social skills.
  - The program provides real-time feedback to students on how to improve their social interactions in school settings.