

Annual Public Notice of Special Education Services and Programs, Services for Gifted Students, and Services for Protected Handicapped Students

Notice Requirements

State and federal special education regulations require each school district to provide annual notice to parents/guardians of children who reside within a school district regarding the school district's identification and screening, and evaluation activities including the location and time of the activities, by publishing an annual public notice to parents, in newspapers or by other accessible media. This notice shall inform parents throughout the school district of the child identification activities and the procedures followed to ensure confidentiality of information pertaining to students with disabilities or eligible young children.

The Derry Township School District ("District") is required to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to children with disabilities who are determined, through the evaluation process, to need special education and related services under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and 22 Pa. School Code §14. A school age child with a disability, who is determined to be in need of special education and related services, is identified as a child with a disability eligible for special education in need of specially designed instruction. The following are disability categories under IDEA: Autism, Deafness, Deaf/Blindness, Emotional Disturbance, Traumatic Brain Injury Hearing Impairment, Specific Learning Disability, Intellectual Disability, Multiple Disabilities, Other Health Impairment, Speech and Language Impairment, Orthopedic Impairment, Visual Impairment including Blindness

Early Intervention

Children age three through the age of admission to first grade are eligible if they have developmental delays and, as a result, need Special Education and related services.

Developmental delay is defined as a child who is less than the age of beginners and at least 3 years of age and is considered to have a developmental delay when one of the following exists: (i) The child's score, on a developmental assessment device, on an assessment instrument which yields a score in months, indicates that the child is delayed by 25% of the child's chronological age in one or more developmental areas. (ii) The child is delayed in one or more of the developmental areas, as documented by test performance of 1.5 standard deviations below the mean on standardized tests. Developmental areas include cognitive, communicative, physical, social/emotional and self-help. For additional information regarding Early Intervention Services you may contact CAIU #15 at 717-732-8400.

Screening

Screening activities are conducted by the District on an on-going basis throughout the school year. Screening is conducted in the student's home school unless other arrangements are necessary. Parents can request screening in writing for their children by contacting the school that the child attends. When screening indicates that a student may be a child with a disability eligible for Special Education, the District will seek parental consent to conduct an evaluation. Screening activities cannot inhibit the right of a parent to request, at any time, including prior to or during instructional support activities, an evaluation for the purpose of determining if the student is a child with a disability and eligible for Special Education services.

Evaluation Process

"Evaluation" is the procedure used to determine whether a child has a disability and if the child's disability is of the nature and extent that the child would be eligible for Special Education and related services. Evaluation procedures are determined on an individual basis by a Multi-disciplinary Evaluation (MDE) team, which includes the parents. Evaluation for the purpose of determining if a child is a child with a disability eligible for Special Education does not include the procedures or basic tests that are administered to all children.

Parents who believe their child is a child with a disability may request, at any time, that the District conduct an evaluation to determine if the child is eligible to receive Special Education and related services. This request must be made in writing to the Building Principal or Director of Special Education. If a parent makes an oral request for an evaluation, the District shall provide the parent with a form for that purpose within 10 days of the oral request.

Consent

School entities cannot proceed with an evaluation, or with the initial provision of Special Education and related services, without the written consent of the parents. For additional information related to consent, please refer the Procedural Safeguards Notice which can be found at the PaTTAN website, www.Pattan.net or on the District website. Once written parental consent is obtained, the District will proceed with the evaluation process.

Independent Education Evaluation (IEE)

If a parent disagrees with the evaluation, the parent can request in writing an independent education evaluation (IEE) at public expense. If an IEE is provided at public expense, the criteria under which the IEE is privately administered must be the same as the criteria that the District utilizes for evaluations.

Program Development

Once the evaluation process is completed, a team of qualified professional and parents determine whether the child is eligible. If the child is eligible, the individualized education program (IEP) team meets, develops the program, and determines the educational placement. Once the IEP team develops the program and determines the educational placement, the District will issue a notice of recommended educational placement/prior written notice (NOREP/PWN). Your written consent is required before initial services can be provided. The parent has the right to revoke consent after initial placement.

Gifted Education

Parents who suspect that their child is in need of specially designed instruction beyond that required in 22 Pa. School Code §4 (relating to academic standards and assessments) may request in writing that their child be evaluated under the criteria for Gifted Education Services in accordance with 22 Pa. School Code §16.22. If a student is both Gifted and eligible for Special Education, the procedures in IDEA and Chapter 14 shall take precedence. For additional information, please contact the Director of Special Education at 717-534-2501.

Protected Handicapped Students

In compliance with state and federal law, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (504) and 22 PA School Code Chapter 15, the District will provide to each protected handicapped student, without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and

obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities. In order to qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability that substantially limits a major life activity or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program. These services and protections for “protected handicapped students” are distinct from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional students with disabilities enrolled in Special Education programs.

For additional information related to Section 504/Chapter 15 services, the parent may refer to Section 504, Chapter 15, and the Basic Education Circular entitled Implementation of Chapter 15. Parents may also contact the Building Principal to request further information on the rights of parents and children, provision of services, evaluation and screening (including purpose, time and location), and due process procedures.

Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Student Information

The District and to some extent the other services providers may maintain records concerning children enrolled in the District, including students with disabilities. Records are maintained as long as they are educationally relevant. All records are maintained confidentiality and subject to the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Your consent, or consent of an eligible child who has reached the age of majority under State law, must be obtained before personally identifiable student information is released, except as permitted under applicable law. The age of majority in Pennsylvania is 21.

When educational records, other than those which must be maintained under applicable law, are no longer educationally relevant, the District must notify parents in writing, and may destroy the records, or at the request of a parent/guardian, must destroy the records. Please be advised that email communications possessed by the District do not constitute educational records. The District generally retains email communications electronically for two years from the date of origin..

For additional information related to student records, please refer to FERPA.

Retention/Destruction of State Assessment Materials

In accordance with 34 CFR § 300.624, please be advised of the following retention/destruction schedule for the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA), Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), and Keystone Exam related materials:

PSSA, Keystone Exam, and PASA test booklets will be destroyed one year after student reports are delivered for the administration associated with the test booklets.

PSSA and Keystone Exam answer booklets and PASA media recordings will be destroyed three years after completion of the assessment.

This notice is only a summary of the District’s Special Education services, evaluation and screening activities, and rights and protections pertaining to children with disabilities, children thought to be disabled, and their parents. For more information or to request an evaluation or screening of a public or private school child contact your child’s building Principal or the Director of Special Education at 30 East Granada Avenue, P.O. Box 898, Hershey, PA 17033 or 717-534-2501. For preschool age children, information, screenings and evaluations requested, may be obtained by contacting the Intermediate Unit.

