Understanding the Language of Special Education:

A Glossary for Families and Educators

PaTTAN
Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network

Introduction

Greetings! As with many specialized fields, there are terms used in special education that are unique. This guide is not a legal document and was developed to give families and educators in Pennsylvania an understanding of the language of special education, so they can more easily participate in effective educational decision-making.

Table of Contents

Agencies, Organizations, and Programs 1

Disabilities and Behaviors 6

Educational Terms 11

Assessments, Services, and Therapies 17

Government Regulations and Legalities 21

Index 23

Agencies, Organizations, and Programs

The **American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)** is a national professional association for speech-language pathologists and audiologists.
www.asha.org

The Arc of Pennsylvania promotes the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes.
www.thearcpa.org

The **Brain Injury Association of Pennsylvania** offers programs to prevent brain injury and to improve the quality of life for people who have experienced brain injury.
www.biapa.org

BrainSTEPS is a program that builds a bridge connecting the medical, rehabilitation, and education sectors, as well as families, following a K-12 student's acquired brain injury, providing support when the child reenters school.
www.brainsteps.net

The **Bureau of Special Education (BSE)** within the Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for the education of students with disabilities.
https://tinyurl.com/27k8w2ww

Child Find refers to the Pennsylvania Department of Education's policy that all children with disabilities residing in the State, including children with disabilities attending private schools, regardless of the severity of their disability, and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated. All public agencies in the State who provide special education and related services report annually to the State, through the Statewide data system, which children are being served and what services are being provided. This method applies to all children with disabilities, including highly mobile children (such as migrant and homeless children), and children who are suspected of being eligible under IDEA, even though they are advancing from grade to grade.

ConsultLine (1-800-879-2301) is the toll-free help line provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Bureau of Special Education to assist families and advocates of children with disabilities who have questions or concerns about the education of a school-aged child.
odr-pa.org/consultline

Agencies, Organizations, and Programs

(continued)

The **Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)** is the largest international professional organization dedicated to improving the success of children and youth with disabilities, and/or gifts and talents.
www.cec.sped.org

Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania (DRN) provides help to Pennsylvanians with disabilities who are experiencing problems or who have questions related to their disability. DRN helps people with disabilities in many areas such as abuse and neglect, access to community services, discrimination, ADA compliance issues, education, assistive technology, voting access, and access to Medical Assistance services.
www.disabilityrightspa.org

The **Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA)** provides training and technical assistance to local Infant/Toddler and Preschool Early Intervention agencies providing support and services to children birth to school age with developmental disabilities and their families.
www.eita-pa.org

FAMILIES TO THE MAX: Pennsylvania Statewide Family Network is a dedicated group of families, professionals, and community members who are leading change in our homes, schools, and communities by building awareness, empowering families, presuming competence, and fostering high expectations of students with disabilities.
http://www.tinyurl.com/f2max

Head Start is a federal program that provides comprehensive preschool education programs for children ages three to five from low-income families. Planned activities are designed to address individual needs and to help children attain their potential in mental and physical development before starting school.
paheadstart.org

Hispanics United for Exceptional Children (HUNE) is a Community Parent Resource Center in Pennsylvania. HUNE empowers families of children with exceptionalities to obtain a free, appropriate, quality education for their children and other children with disabilities. HUNE provides training programs on all aspects of special education and support, including transition services.
huneinc.org

An **Intermediate Unit (IU)** is a regional educational agency that provides services to local educational agencies including curriculum, special education, technology and information services, human resources, instruction, and professional development.
www.paiu.org

A **Local Educational Agency (LEA)** is a school district, charter school, or other educational entity responsible for providing free, appropriate, public education in accordance with Pennsylvania Department of Education statutes, regulations, and policies.

The **Medical Assistance Program (MA)** assures access to quality healthcare for Pennsylvanians eligible for services. Sometimes referred to as Medicaid, it provides payment for health care services on behalf of children with limited income and children with disabilities.
www.medicaid.gov

The **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)** believes that public policies and practices should promote greater awareness and early identification of mental health conditions. NAMI supports public policies and laws that enable all schools, public and private, to increase access to appropriate mental health services.
www.nami.org

The **National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)** offers support in the delivery of quality education to children and youth with disabilities throughout the country. Its activities include targeted training to address current issues, technical assistance, policy analysis, research, publications, specialized websites, national initiatives, and collaborative partnerships to enhance problem solving at the local, state, and national levels.
www.nasdse.org

The **Office for Dispute Resolution (ODR)** coordinates and manages Pennsylvania's special education mediation and due process systems. ODR provides help concerning procedural safeguards to families, advocates, school districts, charter schools, intermediate units, and approved private schools.
odr-pa.org

The **Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL)**, through the Pennsylvania Departments of Education and Public Welfare, promotes opportunities for all Pennsylvania children and families by building systems and providing supports that help ensure access to high quality child and family services. Early Intervention supports and services (infants, toddlers, and preschool age children) are administered by OCDEL.
https://tinyurl.com/PA-OCDEL

The **Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP),** within the U.S. Department of Education, is dedicated to improving results for infants, toddlers, children, and youths with disabilities by providing oversight, leadership, and financial support to assist states and local districts. OSEP administers the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
tinyurl.com/osep-gov

Agencies, Organizations, and Programs

(continued)

The **Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)** provides vocational rehabilitation services to help individuals with disabilities prepare for, obtain, and maintain employment.
tinyurl.com/PaVocRehab

The **Parent Education and Advocacy Leadership (PEAL) Center** is the Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) in Pennsylvania funded by the U.S. Department of Education. PEAL works with families, youth, and young adults with disabilities and special health care needs to help them understand their rights and advocate for themselves.
www.pealcenter.org

Parent to Parent of Pennsylvania is a nonprofit organization that links adults and families of children with disabilities or special needs to a volunteer peer support parent for the purposes of support and information.
www.parenttoparent.org

The **Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)** oversees 500 public school districts, more than 170 public charter schools, public cyber charter schools, Career and Technology Centers/Vocational Technical schools, public Intermediate Units, the education of youth in State Juvenile Correctional Institutions, Head Starts and publicly funded preschools, and community colleges. PDE also oversees policies related to public, academic, and school libraries, and the State Library of Pennsylvania.

The mission of the Department of Education is to ensure that every learner has access to a world-class education system that academically prepares children and adults to succeed as productive citizens.
www.education.state.pa.us

The **Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH)** is the state agency whose mission is to promote health and sound health policy, prevent disease and disability, improve health services systems, and ensure that essential public health functions and safety net services are available.
https://www.health.pa.gov

The **Pennsylvania Department of Human Services** is the state agency in charge of promoting, improving, and sustaining the quality of family life. This includes child development; children, youth, and families; developmental programs; income maintenance; medical assistance; mental health; and, substance abuse services.
www.dhs.state.pa.us

The **Pennsylvania State Board of Education** is the administrative regulatory body for elementary, secondary, and higher education in the commonwealth. It consists of 21 members, 17 of whom are nominated by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate for overlapping, six-year terms.
www.stateboard.education.pa.gov

The **Pennsylvania State Task Force on the Right to Education** was developed as a result of the historic PARC Consent Agreement. The primary purpose of the State and Local Task Forces is to ensure the intent and spirit of the Right to Education for students with disabilities is carried out throughout the commonwealth through recommendations, evaluation, advocacy, and monitoring.
https://www.pattan.net/Partners/State-Task-Force

The **Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN)** is an initiative of the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Bureau of Special Education, working in partnership with families and local educational agencies to support programs and services to improve student learning and achievement.
www.pattan.net

The **Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)** is a state advisory panel whose purpose is to advise the state special education staff regarding the education of eligible students with disabilities.That includes advising the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) on the education of students with disabilities educated through the use of public funds, including, but not limited to, children served in public schools, private schools, hospitals, prisons, and in the home.
https://www.pattan.net/about-us/partners/the-special-education-advisory-panel-seap/

The **State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC)** is an advisory group, made up of parents and professionals, whose purpose is to advise the Governor and the Departments of Education, Health, and Public Welfare about Early Intervention issues in Pennsylvania.
https://www.pattan.net/about-us/partners/state-interagency-coordinating-council-(sicc)/

Disabilities and Behaviors

Aphasia is an acquired neurogenic language disorder (resulting from a brain injury) that involves varying degrees of impairment in four areas: spoken language expression, spoken language comprehension, written expression, and reading comprehension.

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common childhood disorders and can continue through adolescence and into adulthood. Symptoms include difficulty staying focused and paying attention, difficulty controlling behavior, and hyperactivity (over-activity).

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability generally evident before age three that significantly affects verbal and nonverbal communication, social interaction, and educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with ASD include engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. The diagnosis of ASD includes several conditions that were formally diagnosed separately: autistic disorder, pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS), and Asperger syndrome. These conditions are now all called autism spectrum disorder.

Cerebral Palsy (CP) is a disorder of movement and posture control resulting from injury or lack of development in the brain during fetal life, the newborn period, or early childhood. Both genetic and acquired factors may be involved. The extent and location of the brain damage determine the type of cerebral palsy and the associated symptoms.

Childhood Apraxia of Speech (CAS) is a neurological speech sound disorder in which the precision and consistency of speech movements are impaired without the presence of neuromuscular deficits. Individuals with CAS often demonstrate inconsistent consonant/vowel errors in repeated productions, disrupted coarticulatory transitions (speech sounds are influenced by/become similar to preceding or following sounds), and inappropriate prosody. CAS is the ASHA preferred terminology, though it is referred to by several terms, including developmental apraxia of speech and developmental verbal dyspraxia.

Cognitive Delay is a disability in which a child's intellectual and adaptive behavior is below average, which impacts upon the child's education.

Deaf-blindness (DB) combines hearing and visual impairments, which cause such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that the child cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.

Deafness and Hearing Loss are terms used to describe the inability to process some or all information through the auditory channel. In audiological terms, a child who is deaf has a hearing loss of 90 decibels or greater. Culturally, an individual may have any degree of hearing loss and still consider himself/herself to be deaf.

Developmental Disabilities (DD) are a group of conditions due to an impairment in physical, learning, language, or behavior areas. These conditions begin during the developmental period, may impact day-to-day functioning, and usually last throughout a person's lifetime.

The **Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5 (DSM-5)** is the American Psychiatric Association's classification and description of mental disorders.

A **Disability** is a substantially limiting physical or mental impairment that affects such basic life activities as hearing, seeing, speaking, walking, learning, working, or caring for oneself.

Dyslexia is a language-based learning disability. Dyslexia refers to a cluster of symptoms, which result in people having difficulties with specific language skills, particularly reading. Students with dyslexia usually experience difficulties with other language skills such as spelling, writing, and pronouncing words. Dyslexia is referred to as a learning disability because it can make it very difficult for a student to succeed academically in the typical instructional environment.

Dyspraxia is an impairment of the ability to perform coordinated physical movements.

Disabilities and Behaviors *(continued)*

Emotional Disturbance (ED) is a condition in which a child exhibits one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree, adversely affecting educational performance: a) an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; b) an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; c) inappropriate types of behaviors or feelings under normal circumstances; d) a tendency to develop a generally pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or e) a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

Fluency Disorders are disruptions in the flow of speaking, characterized by atypical rate, rhythm, and disfluencies (such as repetition of sounds, syllables, words, phrases; prolonging sounds, and silent blocks). Often the disfluencies are accompanied by tension, speaking avoidance, and secondary behaviors (e.g., eye-blinking, clenching fists, tapping leg). Fluency disorders range from mild to severe and causes are thought to include genetic and neurophysiological factors.

Independent Living Skills and self-care skills are necessary for management of one's personal self-care and daily independent living, including the personal management skills needed to interact with others, daily living skills, financial management skills, and the self-management of healthcare/wellness needs.

Intellectual Disability (ID) means significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Multiple Disabilities are simultaneous impairments (e.g., intellectual disability and blindness, intellectual disability and orthopedic impairment), the combination of which causes such severe educational need that the child cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. Multiple disabilities do not include deaf-blindness.

Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) is a recurrent pattern of negative, defiant, disobedient, and hostile behavior, which generally begins during preschool years, but almost always before the early teen years and persists for at least six months.

An **Orthopedic Impairment (OI)** includes impairments caused by congenital anomaly, disease, and other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputation). A severe orthopedic impairment can adversely affect a child's educational performance.

An **Other Health Impairment (OHI)** is an educational classification that describes children who have acute or chronic health problems that cause limited strength, vitality, or alertness, and that adversely affect a child's educational performance.

Self-Stimulation, also known as stereotypical behavior, is repetitive body movement or object movement that may interfere with the child's ability to learn or participate in meaningful activities. This behavior is common in many individuals with developmental disabilities; however, it appears to be most common in autism.

Specific Learning Disability (SLD) means a disorder in one or more processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.

SLD does not include a learning problem that is primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of intellectual disability, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.

Speech-Language Impairment refers to a communication disorder that adversely affects a child's educational performance. A speech disorder is an impairment of the articulation of speech sounds, fluency, and/or voice. A language disorder is an impairment in comprehension and/or use of spoken, written, and/or other symbol systems. A language disorder may involve the form (phonology, morphology, syntax), content (semantics), and/or function (pragmatics) of language in communication.

Tactile Defensiveness is an abnormal sensitivity to touch indicated by avoidance or rejection of touching and handling. The child who has tactile defensiveness may resist something of an unusual texture, temperature, pressure, or wetness.

Disabilities and Behaviors *(continued)*

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is an acquired brain injury, which is sustained after a period of normal development. TBI is caused by an external force and results in physical, behavioral, or mental changes depending on which area of the brain is injured.

Twice Exceptional, also referred to as "2e," is used to describe gifted children who have the characteristics of gifted students with the potential for high achievement and give evidence of one or more disabilities as defined by federal or state eligibility criteria. These disabilities may include specific learning disabilities (SLD), speech and language disorders, emotional/behavioral disorders, physical disabilities, autism, or other impairments such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

A **Visual Impairment (VI)** is impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Educational Terms

An **Accommodation** changes how a student learns material or demonstrates knowledge. It can relate to classroom instruction or to district/state administered assessments that measure achievement. An accommodation does not change the content of an assignment or alter what a test or quiz measures. It should be agreed upon by the educational team and listed in the child's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Adapted Physical Education (APE) is a component of the educational curriculum in which physical, recreational, and other therapists work with children who exhibit delays in motor development and perceptual motor skills. APE is a related service that some children need in addition to, or in place of, physical education.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is the degree of progress expected of children in academic areas. AYP is annually established by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

The **Annual Performance Report (APR)** is the report submitted by the Pennsylvania Departments of Education and Public Welfare to the U.S. Department of Education that provides compliance data and the results of special education for children with disabilities. Results may be found on PaTTAN's website, www.pattan.net.

An **Approved Private School (APS)** is a private school that is licensed by the State Board of Private Academic Schools or Pennsylvania Charter Schools. APSs are eligible to receive funds from school districts and/or the commonwealth for the education of students with severe disabilities.

A **Basic Education Circular (BEC)** is an official document used by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to communicate with school districts regarding policy. Unless adopted and published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, BECs are only informational and advisory and are not binding on local school districts. BECs can be accessed online at www.education.state.pa.us.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) provides learning experiences where students develop skills that are applicable and necessary for employment in specific career areas or postsecondary study.

Educational Terms *(continued)*

Career and Technical Education Centers (CTC) are public schools that provide career and technical education to secondary school students, youth out of school, and adults in a geographical area comprised of, and operated by, one or more school districts. CTCs offer courses that are directly related to the preparation of individuals for paid employment in specific career areas.

A **Charter School** is an independent public school established and operated under a charter from the local board of school directors. A charter school must be organized as a public, nonprofit corporation and may not be granted to any for-profit entity.

A **Cyber Charter School** is an independent public school established and operated under a charter from the Department of Education. Cyber charter schools deliver a significant portion of instruction to their students through the Internet or other electronic means. A cyber charter school must be organized as a public, nonprofit corporation and may not be granted to any for-profit entity.

Due Process is a mechanism by which parents or educational agencies can resolve educational disputes. Due process differs from other dispute resolution opportunities in that a Hearing Officer decides the dispute for the parties. Throughout the due process proceedings, resolution through mediation remains available to the parties. In addition, during the proceedings the parties may settle some or all of the issues among themselves at any time.

A **Due Process Hearing** is a legal proceeding similar to a court proceeding wherein a hearing officer is presented with evidence by disagreeing parties and writes a decision.

A **Due Process Hearing Officer** is a trained and neutral individual who conducts a due process hearing.

Early Intervention (EI) refers to specialized services and supports designed to help families with children birth to age five who have developmental delays.

An **Equity Gap** refers to disparities in educational outcomes and student success metrics across race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, physical or mental abilities, and other demographic traits and intersectionalities.

Extended School Year (ESY) refers to the delivery of special education and related services during summer vacation or other extended periods when school is not in session. Not all students who receive special education require extended school year services.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is a federal mandate that all children with disabilities must receive appropriate educational programs, tailored to their unique needs, from which they receive educational benefit at no cost to families.

Gifted and Talented education is specially designed instruction for students who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities.

An **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** is an annual program developed by parents and educators of a child with a disability to meet the child's unique educational needs, as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

An **Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)** is a written plan for infants and toddlers that defines the Early Intervention services provided to a child and the child's family based upon family-identified priorities.

An **Intelligence Quotient (IQ)** is a score derived from a set of standardized intelligence tests that estimate a child's capacity to learn.

An **Interagency Agreement** is a document signed by the authorized representatives of at least two agencies, outlining mutually agreed-upon responsibilities to perform certain duties under specified conditions.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is an IDEA requirement indicating that children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, must be educated with children who are not disabled, to the maximum extent possible. Removal of children with disabilities from the general education environment occurs only when the nature and/or severity of their disabilities are such that education in general classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Learners refers to children whose primary language is not English and may need support to effectively communicate and have access to the general education curriculum.

Mediation is a process in which families and school personnel try to settle disagreements with the assistance of a specially trained impartial mediator provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Educational Terms *(continued)*

A **Modification** changes what a student is taught or expected to learn.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is defined as a comprehensive system of supports that includes standards-aligned, culturally responsive and high quality core instruction, universal screening, data-based decision-making, tiered services and supports, family engagement, central/building level leadership, RtII/SLD determination and professional development. PA-MTSS represents a broad set of evidence-based practices that may be implemented across a system to help all students meet with continual academic and behavioral success.

National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards (NIMAS) is the standard file format established by IDEA 2004 for producing and distributing digital versions of textbooks and other instructional materials so they can be easily converted to accessible formats, including Braille, large print, audio, and e-text versions.

A **Natural Environment** is a place, including the home and community settings, where a child would be if the child did not have a disability.

A **Neighborhood School** is the school closest to a child's home.

A **Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP)** The purpose of the Notice of Recommended Assignment/ Prior Written Notice is to summarize for the parents the recommendations of the local education agency (LEA) for the child's educational program and other actions taken by the LEA.

The **Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA)** is designed for students with severe disabilities who are unable to participate meaningfully in the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), even with accommodations.

The **Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)** is a standards-based criterion-referenced assessment used to measure student attainment of Pennsylvania's academic standards while also determining the degree to which school programs enable students to attain proficiency of the standards.

The **Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System (PVAAS)** is a statistical analysis used to measure the influence of a district and school on the academic progress rates of individual children and groups of children from year-to-year.

A **Preschool Early Intervention** program is one designed to meet the unique developmental needs of an individual child with a disability who is three, four, or five years of age. It is a child-focused educational effort sometimes referred to as Section 619 of the law.

Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance are statements written into an IEP that describe a child's current functioning including strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles.

The **Procedural Safeguards Notice (PSN)** is a summary of parents' rights and procedures that safeguard their rights under state and federal special education law. It is required to be given and explained to families at least one time per year (e.g., at an annual IEP meeting).

Recoupment refers to a child's ability to recover, in a reasonable time, critical skills that are lost following an extended break in the school year (e.g., summer vacation). Recoupment is a critical factor in determining the need for extended school year services.

Regression refers to the loss of critical skills within an extended break in the school year (e.g., summer vacation). Regression is a critical factor in determining the need for extended school year services.

A **Resource Specialist Program (RSP)** is a form of special education available to students with mild to moderate learning disabilities who are having trouble in one or more areas of classroom learning. Often taking the form of a replacement class once per day to help address ongoing learning challenges, all public schools in the United States are required to have RSP services available to students who require them.

Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) is a comprehensive, multi-tiered, and standards-aligned approach that enables early identification and intervening for children at academic or behavior risk.

A **School-Based Behavioral Health (SBBH)** partnership is one established between a school entity and a behavioral health provider to deliver behavioral health services within the school environment to children needing assistance.

Schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) is an approach comprised of intervention practices and organizational systems for establishing the social culture, learning and teaching environment, and individual behavior supports needed for students to achieve academic and social success.

Educational Terms *(continued)*

Short-Term Objectives break down annual IEP goals into small, measurable steps. These may not be included in all IEPs, but must be included in IEPs of students who take the PASA.

Special Education is specialized instruction tailored to fit the unique learning strengths and needs of students with disabilities. A major goal of special education is to teach the skills and knowledge a child needs to be as independent as possible. Special education programs focus on academics, therapy, and other related services to help the child overcome difficulties in all areas of development. These services may be provided in a variety of educational settings, but are required by IDEA to be delivered in the least restrictive environment.

Standards refer to the state academic standards, which are benchmark measures that define what students should know and be able to do at specified grade levels, beginning in grade three. The standards are state regulations and must be used as the basis for curriculum and instruction in Pennsylvania's public schools.

Student Study Teams, also termed Student Services Team, Child Study Team (CST), or Instructional Support Team (IST), are designated meetings involving school staff that focus on addressing student needs, including discussing interventions and making decisions about how to address curriculum support. An SST is usually the first step to further assessing students for special education and making initial recommendations for developing an Individualized Education Program or 504 Plan.

Supplementary Aids and Services (SaS) are aids, services, and other supports provided in general education classes or other education-related settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an approach to creating instructional materials and activities that are accessible to all, rather than simply adapting existing curricula and materials to provide access for persons with disabilities. UDL allows for multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement.

Assessments, Services, and Therapies

An **Advocate** is an individual who represents or speaks on behalf of another person's interests, as in a parent for his/her child.

American Sign Language (ASL) is a visual-gestural language produced on the hands, face, and body. It is not derived from spoken language, and it differs from English in vocabulary, grammar, and inflection. Non-manual markers, such as use of space, facial expression, body movement, body posture, directionality, and rate of sign, contribute to the meaning of the message. ASL is used in the United States and in some parts of Canada.

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is the scientific use of the principles of behavior (i.e., what we know about behavior) to increase desired behaviors or decrease problem behaviors in children.

Assessment is the gathering of information by qualified personnel about a child's development and the needs and priorities of his/her family. This information is used in planning the child's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

An **Assistive Listening Device (ALD)** is a device that amplifies sound for a child who is deaf or hard of hearing.

Assistive Technology (AT) refers to any item, piece of equipment, product, or system (whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized) that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of children with disabilities; not including surgically implanted devices. All public schools, including charter schools, are required to consider the need for assistive technology devices and/or services as one of ways to mitigate educational barriers for children with disabilities.

A **Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)** is a plan that is put in place to teach a child proper behavior and social skills. It should be positive in nature, not punitive.

A **Behavior Specialist Consultant (BSC)** is an individual who assists in the development of a treatment plan and works collaboratively with a team to closely monitor a child's progress and make any necessary adjustments or changes to the treatment plan.

Assessments, Services, and Therapies

(continued)

A **Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant (COTA)** is an individual who has received specialized training in the area of occupational therapy and can implement treatment plans created by an occupational therapist under the supervision of the occupational therapist.

An **Educational Interpreter** is an individual who provides interpreting or transliterating services, in an educational setting, to students who are deaf and hard of hearing.

An **Evaluation** is a series of tests and observations performed by a multidisciplinary team to find out whether a child has a disability and requires special education services. A parent may share with the team any assessment information provided by a qualified individual who is not employed by the local educational agency (LEA). The LEA is required to discuss the results of the evaluation with the child's parents.

A **Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)** is an assessment used to identify the reason for, or purpose of, a child's problem behavior(s); to develop and implement a plan to change the things that maintain the behavior; and to teach the child appropriate replacement behaviors.

A **Mobile Therapist (MT)** is a member of a behavior support team who provides intensive therapeutic services to a child and family in settings other than a provider agency or office (e.g., in the child's home).

An **Occupational Therapist (OT)** is a professional who provides therapy based on engagement in meaningful activities of daily life (e.g., self-care skills, education, work, social interaction) especially to enable or encourage participation in such activities despite impairments or limitations in physical or mental functioning.

Orientation and Mobility (O & M) is a related service provided to children who are blind or visually impaired by qualified personnel to enable them to move safely in school and other environments.

A **Paraprofessional** is a special education professional who works side-by-side with a special education teacher to provide appropriate and meaningful educational programs to students with special needs. A paraprofessional might be called a paraeducator, an educational aide, an instructional aide, an instructional assistant, a personal care assistant (PCA), or a teacher's aide depending on the school district, charter school, or intermediate unit where he/she works.

A **Personal Care Assistant (PCA)** provides one-to-one support and assistance to a student, including support and assistance in the use of medical equipment (for example, augmentative communication devices; activities of daily living; and monitoring health and behavior).

A **Physical Therapist (PT)** is a professional who improves a child's physical abilities through activities that strengthen muscular control and motor coordination.

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) refers to a comprehensive set of strategies meant to redesign environments in such a way that problem behaviors are prevented or inconsequential, and to teach students new skills, making problem behaviors unnecessary.

A **Reevaluation** is a series of tests and observations performed by a multidisciplinary team to find out if a child with a disability continues to require special education and related services. Reevaluations for children not diagnosed with intellectual disability (ID) are performed every three years and may be waived by parents. Reevaluations for children with ID diagnoses are performed every two years and cannot be waived.

Related Services are support services needed by a child in order to benefit from special education services. These may include transportation; speech/language, physical, occupational therapies; social work; or other services deemed necessary by the IEP team.

Screening is a preliminary process of looking at children's development to identify those who may be at risk of future difficulty in school (e.g., not being able to meet academic expectations) and those who may have special needs in learning (e.g., extraordinary abilities and talents or disabilities).

Sensory Integration (SI) is a technique of occupational therapy that provides playful, meaningful activities to enhance a child's sensory intake and lead to more adaptive functioning in daily life.

A school-based **Speech Language Pathologist (SLP)** is an integral member of education teams that works to prevent, assess, diagnose, and treat speech disorders, language disorders, social communication disorders, cognitive-communication disorders, and swallowing disorders.

Speech-Language Pathology Assistants (SLPAs) engage in duties that are planned, designed, and supervised by a licensed SLP including administering speech, language, and hearing screenings, recording/graphing data, maintaining clinical records, preparing clinical materials, and following documented treatment plans.

Therapeutic Staff Support (TSS) providers establish one-on-one relationships with youth within their own communities; and help youth to explore and enjoy recreational activities, identify career options, and evaluate educational alternatives.

Assessments, Services, and Therapies

(continued)

Therapy in early intervention and special education programs refers to treatment provided by specialized service providers, most commonly in the form of occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech language therapy.

Transition refers to the movement from one service, location, or program to another. Young children with disabilities transition at age three from early intervention to preschool in special education or other community settings. At age five they transition to school-aged services. In adolescence they transition from school to adult services.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is a service that assists individuals with disabilities in training for employment, maintaining employment, and living independently. In Pennsylvania, students are eligible to register with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation at age sixteen.

Wraparound Services are community mental health services that are prescribed by physicians to be provided in home and school settings. Services are based on medical necessity criteria (MNC) and are funded through Medical Assistance. Three components can be provided in almost any combination – behavior specialist consultation (BSC), mobile therapy (MT), and therapeutic staff support (TSS).

Government Regulations and Legalities

The **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** of 1992 (Public Law 101-336) defines the term *disability* and prohibits discrimination by employers, by facilities open to the general public, and by state and local public agencies that provide such services as transportation.

Chapter 14 is the section of Pennsylvania State Education Law that provides special education regulations in compliance with Federal education law, namely IDEA 2004.

Chapter 711 is the section of Pennsylvania State Education Law that provides special education regulations in compliance with Federal education law, and specifically pertains to students with disabilities who are enrolled in charter, cyber charter, or regional charter schools.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), was passed by President Obama in 2014 and is the successor of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). This amended act shifted a great deal of authority back to the states and local districts so they could decide specific standards, and evaluate teachers, among other items. This evolution included advances to equity through measures to uphold critical protections for disadvantaged and high-need students, and the development of more evidence-based interventions by local leaders and educators.

The **Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)** protects the privacy and transfer of student education records.

The **Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act (HIPAA)** outlines the confidentiality and protection of medical records.

The **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** provides the legal authority for early intervention and special education services for school-age children.

Government Regulations and Legalities

(continued)

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act protects the civil rights of individuals with disabilities. This law is closely intertwined with IDEA. Children with disabilities who are not eligible for special education may qualify for accommodations under Section 504.

A **State Performance Plan (SPP)** is a six-year plan built around 20 federally required indicators of compliance and performance. It contains measurable goals, rigorous targets for each year of the plan, and improvement activities to meet the targets, all of which are reported in an annual performance report (APR).

The **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)** is landmark legislation that is designed to strengthen and improve our nation's public workforce system and help get Americans, including youth and those with significant barriers to employment, into high-quality jobs and careers and help employers hire and retain skilled workers.

Index

Page

Accommodation 11
Adapted Physical Education (APE) 11
Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) 11
Advocate 17
American Sign Language (ASL). 17
American Speech-Language-Hearing
Association (ASHA). 1
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 21
Annual Performance Report (APR) 11
Aphasia 6
Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). 17
Approved Private School (APS) 11
The Arc of Pennsylvania 1
Assessment 17
Assistive Listening Device (ALD) 17
Assistive Technology (AT) 17
Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD) 6
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) 6
Basic Education Circular (BEC). 11
Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). 17
Behavior Specialist Consultant (BSC) 17
Brain Injury Association of Pennsylvania 1
BrainSTEPS 1
Bureau of Special Education (BSE) 1
Career and Technical Education (CTE) 11
Career and Technical Education Centers (CTC) 12
Cerebral Palsy (CP). 6
Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant (COTA). 18
Chapter 14 21
Chapter 711 21
Charter School 12
Child Find. 1
Childhood Apraxia of Speech (CAS) 6
Cognitive Delay 7
ConsultLine. 1
Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) 2

Index *(continued)*

Page

Cyber Charter School 12
Deaf-blindness (DB) 7
Deafness and Hearing Loss. 7
Developmental Disabilities (DD) 7
Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of
Mental Disorders 5 (DSM-5) 7
Disability. 7
Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania (DRN). 2
Due Process 12
Due Process Hearing 12
Due Process Hearing Officer 12
Dyslexia 7
Dyspraxia 7
Early Intervention (EI) 12
Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA). 2
Educational Interpreter 18
Emotional Disturbance (ED) 8
Equity Gap 12
Evaluation. 18
Every Student Succeeds Act 21
Extended School Year (ESY) 12
FAMILIES TO THE MAX 2
Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 21
Fluency Disorders. 8
Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) 13
Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) 18
Gifted and Talented. 13
Head Start 2
Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act
(HIPAA) 21
Hispanics United for Exceptional Children (HUNE) 2
Independent Living Skills 8
Individualized Education Program (IEP) 13
Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) 13
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 21
Intellectual Disability 8
Intelligence Quotient (IQ) 13
Interagency Agreement. 13

Page

Intermediate Unit (IU) 2

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) 13

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Learners 13

Local Educational Agency (LEA) 3

Mediation 13

Medical Assistance Program (MA) 3

Mobile Therapist (MT) 18

Modification 14

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) 14

Multiple Disabilities 8

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) 3

National Association of State Directors of
Special Education (NASDSE) 3

National Instructional Materials Accessibility
Standards (NIMAS) 14

Natural Environment 14

Neighborhood School 14

Notice of Recommended Educational
Placement (NOREP) 14

Occupational Therapist (OT) 18

Office for Dispute Resolution (ODR) 3

Office of Child Development and
Early Learning (OCDEL) 3

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) 3

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) 4

Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) 8

Orientation and Mobility (O & M) 18

Orthopedic Impairment (OI) 9

Other Health Impairment (OHI) 9

Paraprofessional 18

Parent Education and Advocacy Leadership
(PEAL) Center 4

Parent to Parent of Pennsylvania 4

Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA) 14

Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) 4

Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) 4

Pennsylvania Department of Human Services 4

Pennsylvania State Board of Education 5

Pennsylvania State Task Force on the Right
to Education 5

Index *(continued)*

Page

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) 14

Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) 5

Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System (PVAAS) 14

Personal Care Assistant (PCA) 18

Physical Therapist (PT) 19

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) 19

Preschool Early Intervention 15

Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance 15

Procedural Safeguards Notice 15

Recoupment 15

Reevaluation 19

Regression 15

Related Services 19

Resource Specialist Program (RSP) 15

Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) 15

School-Based Behavioral Health (SBBH) 15

Schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) 15

Screening 19

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act 22

Self-Stimulation 9

Sensory Integration (SI) 19

Short-Term Objectives 16

Special Education 16

Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) 5

Specific Learning Disability (SLD) 9

Speech-Language Impairment 9

Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) 19

Speech-Language Pathology Assistants (SLPAs) 19

Standards 16

State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) 5

State Performance Plan (SPP) 22

Student Study Teams 16

Page

Supplementary Aids and Services (SaS) 16
Tactile Defensiveness 9
Therapeutic Staff Support (TSS) 19
Therapy 20
Transition 20
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) 10
Twice Exceptional 10
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) 16
Visual Impairment (VI) 10
Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) 20
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) 22
Wraparound Services 20

Additional Information

Also available from PaTTAN is *Education ABCs*, a list of the most commonly used special education acronyms and initialisms. To order, go to www.pattan.net.

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Josh Shapiro, Governor

PaTTAN

Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network

revised 9/23