

**Annual Child Find Notice
Northwestern Lehigh School District**

Annual Public Notice of Special Education Services and Programs,

Services for Gifted Students and Services for Protected Handicapped Students

Notice to Parents

According to state and federal special education regulations, annual public notice to parents of children who reside within a school district is required regarding child find responsibilities. This notice shall inform parents throughout the school district of the child identification activities and of the procedures followed to ensure confidentiality of information pertaining to students with disabilities or eligible young children. In addition to this public notice, the District publishes written information in the handbook and on the web site.

Special Education

Children ages three through twenty one can be eligible for special education programs and services. If the District identifies a child as possibly in need of such services, the parent or guardian will be notified of applicable procedures. If parents believe that the child may be eligible for special education, the parent should contact the appropriate staff member identified at the end of this public notice. Individualized programming is provided for students who are determined eligible for specially designed instruction due to the following conditions:

- Specific learning disability
- Emotional disturbance
- Intellectual disability
- Deaf or hearing impairment
- Blind or visual impairment
- Speech or language impairment
- Physical supports or Other Health Impairment
- Autism
- Multiple disabilities

Preschool Children with Special Needs

Children age three through the age of admission to first grade are also eligible if they have developmental delays and, as a result, need Special Education and related services. A child 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; or (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. Parents of young children with concerns about their child's seeing, hearing, learning, talking, moving about, manipulating objects, understanding, showing emotions, getting along with others, playing with toys, taking care of himself/herself, should contact the Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit – Project Connect at (610) 769-4111. Project Connect can provide information to parents about evaluations, programs, therapy, parent supports, and referral to community agencies at no cost to the parent.

Evaluation Process

Either parents or the school district can request an evaluation. If you believe your school-age child may be in need of special education services you may request screening and evaluation at any time whether or not your child is enrolled in the District's public school program. Child Find federal regulations also apply to highly mobile children, including migrant children. Requests for evaluation and screening are to be made

in writing to the appropriate staff person identified at the end of this public notice. Parents of preschool age children, age three through five, may request an evaluation in writing to Project Connect.

Protected Handicapped Students

The District completes child find activities for children who may be eligible for services via Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The District will provide to each protected handicapped student, without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related services or accommodations that are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities. These services and protections are distinct from those applicable to students receiving, or eligible to receive, special education and related services. To qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be school age with a physical or mental disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program. 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.

Gifted Students

The District completes child find activities for children who may be eligible for gifted services via 22 PA Code Chapter 16. Either parents or staff may request an evaluation to determine eligibility for gifted services. Parents who believe their child is gifted may send a request for evaluation once per school term, in writing to the appropriate staff members identified at the end of this notice. For additional information regarding gifted services, the parent may refer to 22 PA Code Chapter 16. If a student is both gifted and eligible for Special Education, the procedures in IDEA and Chapter 14 shall take precedence.

Consent

School entities cannot proceed with an evaluation or reevaluation, 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 to the Procedural Safeguards Notice which can be found at the PaTTAN website, www.pattan.net or at www.nwlehighsd.org. Once written parental consent is obtained, the district will proceed with the evaluation process. If the parent disagrees with the evaluation, the parent can request an independent education evaluation at public expense.

Program Development

Once the evaluation process is completed, a team of qualified professionals and parents determine whether the child is eligible. If the child is eligible, the individualized education program team meets, develops the program, and determines the educational placement. Once the IEP team develops the program and determines the educational placement, school district staff, intermediate unit staff, or charter school staff will issue a notice of recommended educational placement/prior written notice. Your written consent is required before initial services can be provided. The parent has the right to revoke consent after initial placement.

Confidentiality of Information

All school records are confidential. Personally identifiable information cannot be release without consent, except as permitted under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. The District shall ensure the confidentiality of personally identifiable information at collection, storage, disclosure, and destruction states. For additional information related to student records, the parent can refer to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

This notice is only a summary of the 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 evaluation or screening of a public or private school child, contact the responsible school entity listed below. For preschool age children, information, screenings and evaluations requested may be obtained by contacting the Intermediate Unit at www.cliu.org

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