

PENN-DELCO SCHOOL DISTRICT

SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

INITIAL ELIGIBILITY TO POTENTIAL EXIT

WELCOME- PENN-DELCO SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

- Regina McClure- Director of Student Services
- Monica Quinn- Supervisor of Special Education (Elementary K-5)
- Ryan Snyder- Supervisor of Special Education (Secondary 6-12)
- School Psychologists
- Home and School Visitor

OBJECTIVES

- To provide an overview of the processes and procedures that are followed when determining if your child needs special education
- To provide information about the role of parents/guardians in the processes
- To answer answers to questions you have

WHAT IS SPECIAL EDUCATION

In Pennsylvania, special education provides individualized instruction and support to students with disabilities, ensuring they receive a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) as mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
 - Pennsylvania's interpretation- Chapter 14 of PA School Code

WHAT SPECIAL EDUCATION IS NOT

- In Pennsylvania, special education is a service, not a place, meaning it's delivered to students in the placement that best meets their needs for a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).
- It should support students in accessing curriculum content, not make things easier
- It is an individualized support service to address an area of weakness not able to be successfully addressed through differentiation and intervention found in Chapter 4 (General Education), not the first source of supporting students who are faced with an academic or social challenge

WHAT IS CHILD FIND

- Districts in Pennsylvania are charged with identifying students who may require special education services.
 - Screening Process
 - Penn-Delco School District regularly reviews student records to identify students who may need special education. Some records reviewed may include attendance information, report cards, review of vision and hearing screenings, assessment results (classroom and standardized), benchmark testing, behavioral observations, etc.
 - Information from Parents or Caregivers
 - Parents and caregivers know the students the best and often share information that may lead to a request to evaluate

PATHWAY TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

Screening

- Penn-Delco School District has a screening process in place for all students that identifies students who may need support. This process may or may not lead to an initial evaluation for special education and should include:
 - Assessments at reasonable intervals to determine a student's performance based on grade-appropriate standards in core academic subjects
 - A review of the student's records, including attendance and report cards
 - A review of the student's vision and hearing
 - A systematic observation of the student's behavior in the classroom or area in which the student is displaying difficulty
 - Utilization of the Districts Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) process. All students are faced with academic challenges during their school career and all students are entitled to intervention services through MTSS to support an area of weakness. Academic weakness and struggles are part of a child's learning process and not the definition of a disability requiring special education support via an Individual Education Plan (IEP)

MTSS AT PDSD- INTERVENTIONS AVAILABLE FOR ALL STUDENTS

- Ensures that ALL students receive the support they need to succeed academically, behaviorally, and socially through a tiered system of interventions
 - Tier 1 is CORE instruction, available to all students
 - Tier 2 provides targeted intervention for students who need additional support
 - Need determined based on DATA (universal screening, behavior observations, academic data, attendance data, etc.)
 - Frequent progress monitoring to determine effectiveness of intervention
 - Tier 3 provides more intensive, individualized interventions
 - Need determined based on DATA

MTSS AT PDSD

- NOT a gateway to special education services
- Students can continue receiving interventions at Tier 2 or 3 for multiple cycles if continuing to show progress
- Evaluation may be recommended if student shows poor responsiveness to intervention or if other signs are present that may indicate presence of a special education disability that requires direct instruction and specially designed instruction

EVALUATION

If there is evidence of a suspected disability an evaluation would be the next step in the process. The school team would begin the evaluation process by creating a Permission to Evaluate for parents to sign.

The evaluation team gathers the information that will be used to determine if your child needs special education and, if so, the types of programs and services needed.

Your child may be evaluated by a school psychologist. Other evaluations may include tests by a hearing specialist for a child with a hearing problem, or an evaluation from a weakness that has not improved with intervention services. The evaluation must also include input from a certified professional if certain services, called “related services,” may be needed. Related services are needs related to a child's identified disability

District team asks for permission to conduct, and evaluation OR Parent has requested an evaluation.

- A permission to evaluate is generated and upon signature granting evaluation an evaluation is completed within 60 days.
- Parental permission is required
- Conducted by a School Psychologist

EVALUATION (CONT.)

- What will an evaluation tell you?
 - Information gathered about the student's skills, strengths, and needs
 - Review testing and assessments that were conducted, information from parents, classroom observations, and observations from educational professionals working with the student
- Determination of Eligibility- 2 prong process
 - To be eligible for special education a student needs to have both an identified educational disability AND needs specially designed instruction. **BOTH MUST BE TRUE.**

DISABILITY CATEGORIES

- Intellectual Disability
- Emotional Disturbance
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Deafness
- Speech and Language Impairment
- Visual Impairment, including Blindness
- Autism
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Deaf-Blindness

RELATED SERVICES

SERVICES AVAILABLE

- Speech & Language Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Audiological
- Vision
- Orientation and Mobility
- Pragmatic Language
- Health Services
- Counseling Services
- Social Skills Training
- Behavior Support Plans
- Educational Needs Assessment
- Transition Planning
- Psychological Services
- Psychoeducational Assessment
- Parent Involvement

THE EVALUATION IS COMPLETED

WHAT NEXT

Once an evaluation has been completed the school psychologist sends the report to the family and schedules a time to review the contents of the report with the family.

The parents are provided this opportunity to gain an understanding of the evaluation and the eligibility determination either eligible or noneligible

If the student is not eligible the family is presented with the Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP) indicating the child is not eligible for IEP level services and the school team discusses alternative supports

If eligible, a special education teacher reaches out to the family to schedule the initial IEP meeting. The meeting must be held within 30-calendar days of date parent received the evaluation report

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

- A written statement of the educational program designed to meet a student's needs
- Must be updated at least one time per year
- Contains information from evaluation, as well as information from teacher(s) and parents, and student (when applicable)
- Includes Measurable Annual Goals (MAGs), developed in consideration of areas identified as needs from the evaluation report
- Program Modifications and Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

- Transition Information (see next slide)
- Assessment Participation and Accommodations
- Extended School Year (ESY)
- Educational Placement
 - Level of Support (Itinerant, Supplemental, Full-Time)
 - Type of Support
 - Location of Program
- Percentage of time that the student is educated in the general education classroom

TRANSITION

- When a student will be turning 14 during the duration of an IEP, they begin to be invited to IEP meetings
- Focus of transition grid is to provide planning for Post-Secondary education and training, employment, and independent living.
 - Each area will have a service provided as well as an activity.
 - Career interest survey, student interview, parent information sheets, participation in events, etc..
 - Parental and student input is paramount
- Student voice is very important

NOTICE OF RECOMMENDED EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENT/PRIOR WRITTEN NOTICE (NOREP/PWN)

- The OFFICIAL way that the District proposes what is being recommended

AND

- The OFFICIAL way that Parent responds to what is recommended by the District



WHEN IS THE NOREP/PWN ISSUED?

- **To request parental consent to conduct an initial evaluation***
- To request parental consent to conduct a re-evaluation*
- If District declines a parental request for an evaluation
- If District evaluation finds student INELIGIBLE for special education
- **Following development of an Initial IEP**
- Following proposed changes to IEP
- If District is refusing to make changes to the IEP
- If the student meets criteria for EXITING special education

MORE ABOUT NOREP/PWN

- The District MUST receive written consent from parent to conduct an **initial** evaluation
- The District MUST receive written consent to **begin** providing special education services
- For all other actions/refusals, the District assumes parent agreement after 10 calendar days UNLESS the District receives disapproval in writing
 - Implied Consent

PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS

- Ensure parents' rights and participation in their child's education
- A resource for parents to understand the processes and procedures followed, along with parents' rights within each process
- Assists parents with how to work with the District if there is disagreement with District recommendations
 - Dispute Resolution Process

TIMELINES

- District must respond to parent requests in a "timely" manner
 - Approximately 10 calendar days
- Evaluation/Re-evaluation Report must be issued within 60 calendar days of the District's receipt of signed Permission to Evaluate/Re-evaluate
 - Re-evaluation report must be issued within 3 years of the date of the initial evaluation
 - Exception- Intellectual Disability classification (needed every 2 years)
- Initial IEP must be developed and proposed to parents within 30 days of the ER/RR issue date
 - IEP must be updated at least one time per year

EXITING SPECIAL EDUCATION

- We strive to work ourselves out of a job
 - Our goal is to provide the 'just-right' level of support so that students build their own toolboxes to improve skills at successfully accessing and participating in the curriculum
- Teams use progress monitoring to determine effectiveness of interventions and progress is reported to parents on same interval as report cards
- Teams can also adjust frequency of intervention to systematically fade support and monitor student performance as intervention is faded
- The re-evaluation process is used to determine continued eligibility for special education services

EXITING SPECIAL EDUCATION

- School personnel or parent may initiate the request to re-evaluate, or the timeline may indicate that a re-evaluation (RR) is required
- Evaluation team members will utilize the assessment types/tools listed on the permission to re-evaluate (PTRE) to determine if the student continues to meet both criteria as a student with a disability who needs specially designed instruction for meaningful access and participation within the curriculum
- If RR indicates that the student continues to be eligible for special education services, an IEP team meeting is convened
- If RR indicates that the student is no longer eligible, the NOREP/PWN is issued and upon receipt of parent approval (or a period of 10-calendar days), the student exits special education and is identified as a General Education Student.

DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

- PDSD offers a full continuum of special education services and supports from K-12, which maximizes our ability to support students with a variety of needs
- All buildings support inclusive practices
- Northley Café and Annual Craft Fair
- Peer Buddies
- Community Based Instruction at all three levels
- SVHS Traveling Coffee Cart
- Unified Sports

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS



FOR MORE INFORMATION.....



CONTACT US!

- Office Location
District Administration Building
2821 Concord Road
Aston, PA 19014
- Phone: 610 497-6300 x 1320
- Website: <https://www.pdsd.org/departments/pupil-services/special-ed>
- Email: specialeducationinformation@pdsd.org