PENN HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT

Special Education Parent Handbook

A Family's Guide to Support, Staff & Resources

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Family Resource Guide

Understanding the IEP process, your rights, and support at home

2026/2027

Office of Special Education • Penn Hills School District

Penn Hills School District

Special Education Staff Directory

For Families — 2026-2027

This directory lists special education staff by building, divided into Intensive Support Teachers and Case Managers. Please contact your child's teacher or case manager directly with day-to day questions.

Penn Hills Elementary School

Principals

Name	Title	Email
Chris Cence	Building Principal	ccence@phsd.org
Cyrene Bey	Associate Principal	cbey@phsd.org
Daniel Denlinger	Associate Principal	ddenli@phsd.org
Patrick Gavin	Associate Principal	pgavin@phsd.org

Intensive Support Teachers

Teacher Name	Grade	Email
Shannon Barr	K-2	sbarr@phsd.org
Morgan Carnahan	K-2	mcarna@phsd.org
Jennifer Devine	K-2	jdevin@phsd.org
Allie Galvach	K-2	agalva@phsd.org
Rachelle Grubb	K-2	rgrubb@phsd.org
Jordan Hart	K-2	jhart@phsd.org
Sandra Kunkle	K-2	skunkl@phsd.org
Heather Shugats	K-2	hshuga@phsd.org
Caitlyn Young	K-2	cyoung@phsd.org

Teacher Name	Grade	Email
Mary Connell	3-5	mconne@phsd.org
Jill Kaplan	3-5	jkapla@phsd.org
Sarah Matthews-Krchnavy	3-5	smatth@phsd.org
Amanda Schmidt	3-5	aschmi@phsd.org
Darren Yuvan	3-5	dyuvan@phsd.org

Case Managers

Teacher Name	Grade / Caseload	Email
Annalise Deemer	K-2	adeeme@phsd.org
Kristen Postava	K-2	kposta@phsd.org
Paul Gogikar	2-4	pgogik@phsd.org
Andrea Hartley	2-4	ahartl@phsd.org
Stephanie Chapman	3-5	schapm@phsd.org
Keyana Clements	3-5	kcleme@phsd.org
Elise Otwell	3-5	eotwel@phsd.org
Melissa Lander	3-5	mlande@phsd.org

Linton Middle School

Principals

Name	Title	Email
Dr. Christopher Wolfson	Building Principal	cwolfs@phsd.org
Keiterez Bynum	Associate Principal	kbynum@phsd.org
Melissa Mosco	Associate Principal	mmosco@phsd.org

Intensive Support Teachers

Teacher Name	Grade / Caseload	Email
Allison Amato	6-8	aamato@phsd.org
Casey Creegan	6-8	ccreeg@phsd.org
Kim Majewski	6-8	kmajew@phsd,org
Camren Neal	6-8	cneal@phsd.org
Christopher Schell	6-8	cschel@phsd.org

Case Managers

Teacher Name	Grade / Caseload	Email
Eile Demkee	6	edemke@phsd.org
Amy Gdovichin	7	agdovi@phsd.org
Sophia Hogland-McGuirk	6-8	shogla@phsd.org
Megan McGee	6-8	mmcgee@phsd.org
Kristina Meacham	8	kmeach@phsd.org

Penn Hills High School

Principals

Name	Title	Email
Dr. Jah-Chant Robinson	Building Principal	jrobin@phsd.org
Nicholas DiCarolis	Associate Principal	ndicar@phsd.org
Jacqueline Dorsett	Associate Principal	jdorse@phsd.org
Dr. James McCoy	Associate Principal	jmccoy@phsd.org

Intensive Support Teachers

Teacher Name	Grade / Caseload	Email
Lou Borgia	9-12	lborgi@phsd,org
Robert Cash	9-12	rcash@phsd.org
Brian Francis	9-12	bfranc@phsd.org
Ryan Hoover	9-12	rhoove@phsd.org
Andrew Nelson	9-12	anelso@phsd.org
Amy Orner	9-12	aorner@phsd.org

Case Managers

Teacher Name	Grade / Caseload	Email
Melanie Goods	9-12	mgoods@phsd.org
Lisa Fallavollitti	9-12	lfalla@phsd.org
Farrah Hankey	9-12	fhanke@phsd.org
Greg Pittmann	9-12	gpittm@phsd.org

Teacher Name	Grade / Caseload	Email
Matthew Rindt	9-12	mrindt@phsd.org
Stephanie Snyder	9-12	ssnyde@phsd.org

Speech Therapists

Name	Building	Email
Amy Epstein	Penn Hills Elementary	aepste@phsd.org
Shannon Greco	Penn Hills Elementary	sgreco@phsd.org
Kelly Guarino	Penn Hills Elementary	kguari@phsd.org
Jillian Lovelace	Penn Hills Elementary	jlovel@phsd.org
Clare Mayer	Penn Hills Elementary	cmayer@phsd.org
Amy McKinley	Linton Middle School	amckin@phsd.org
Christine Zmuda	Penn Hills High School	czmuda@phsd.org

Occupational Therapists

Name	Building	Email
Christine Stupakis	All Buildings	cstupa@phsd.org
Emily Best	Penn Hills Elementary	ebest@phsd.org

Physical Therapist

Name	Building	Email
Tammy Cutshall	All Buildings	tammy.cutshall@aiu3.net

School Psychologists

Name	Building	Email
Cynthia Delehanty	All Buildings	cdeleh@phsd.org
Lindsay Prosdocimo	All Buildings	lprosd@phsd.org

Special Education Department Staff

Name	Position	Email
Stephanie Biancaniello	Director of Special Education	sbianc@phsd.org
Lynn Hanes	Special Education Coordinator	lhanes@phsd.org
Melonie Poziviak	Special Education Coordinator	mpoziv@phsd.org
Maggie Blain	Special Education Secretary	mblain@phsd.org

A Parent's Resource Guide to Special Education in Pennsylvania

Using PaTTAN (Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network) Resources

***PaTTAN** stands for the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network. It is part of the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Bureau of Special Education. PaTTAN does not work with your child directly — instead, it trains and advises school staff in areas like reading instruction, behavior support, autism, assistive technology, and transition planning, so the team writing and carrying out your child's IEP has current, research-based guidance.*

This guide walks through PaTTAN's key resources in the order a parent typically needs them: understanding what special-education eligibility means, decoding the IEP itself, communicating concerns, how to connect with other parents, helping your child at home, and transition planning.

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1. Start Here: Understanding What Just Happened

Resource: What Families Need To Know

Why it helps: This is PaTTAN's plain-language overview of the whole process. It answers the basic questions parents have right after eligibility is determined:

- **What makes it "special"?** Your child's instruction is specially designed around their individual needs, with the goal of helping them access the same general curriculum as their peers.
- **How did my child qualify?** Penn Hills School District (collectively called the "LEA," or Local Education Agency) conducts a Special Education Evaluation. If your child is found eligible under IDEA 2004 and PA School Code, they are legally entitled to services.
- **Who delivers the services?** The LEA is legally responsible, but various staff and related-service providers (speech therapists, occupational therapists, etc.) carry out what's written in the plan.
- **Where are services provided?** Special education is a service, not a place. By law, your child should be educated in the "Least Restrictive Environment" — as much as appropriate, alongside peers who don't have disabilities.

2. Understanding the IEP (Individualized Education Program)

Resource: Engaging Families in the IEP Process

Why it helps: This document explores how schools can reframe the IEP process and take active steps to include families as educational partners. When families are not just involved, but actively engaged, students achieve better grades, higher test scores, and increased graduation rates.

A family-friendly explanation of each section of the IEP is included, as well as considerations and conversation starters for use at the IEP team meeting.

What to look for inside:

- Explanation of each section of the IEP

- Conversation starters to use during IEP meetings
- How placement decisions are documented

3. Communicating concerns

Resource: Is Your Child Having Difficulty in School?
Why it helps: If you have concerns about your child's success in school, it is helpful if you can voice your concerns to school staff. When parents, teachers, and school officials communicate effectively, in a positive manner, and remain focused on meeting each students' needs, most concerns and issues can be resolved.

4. Connect with Other Families

Resource: Parent to Parent of Pennsylvania
Why it helps: This program matches you with another trained parent who has "been there" — someone who has personally navigated raising a child with similar needs or disabilities. It's peer support, not professional advice, and many parents find it invaluable simply to talk with someone who understands.

Resource: FAMILIES TO THE MAX
Why it helps: A statewide network of families who want to build leadership skills and connect with other families navigating special education, with training opportunities specifically for parents who want to get more involved.

5. Supporting Your Child's Learning at Home

Resource: Helping Your Child At Home
Why it helps: This page is built on the idea that families and educators working together improves outcomes for kids — and it gives concrete, doable ways to reinforce your child's IEP goals and school learning at home, even if your schedule doesn't allow you to attend every meeting or event in person. Key takeaways for the home environment:

- **Ask for consistency between school and home.** Ask your child's teachers what tools, language, routines, or technology they use in the classroom, and try to mirror them at home — consistency between the two settings helps your child learn and generalize skills faster.
- **Talk about school differently.** Instead of asking "What did you do in school today?" (which usually gets a shrug), ask your child to share their favorite part of a specific class or activity — it opens up richer conversation about what they're actually learning.
- **Involve your child in their own IEP.** Talk with them, at whatever level is age-appropriate, about their strengths, their learning differences, and why they get extra help. This builds self-advocacy, confidence, and independence over time.
- **Learn the vocabulary together.** Helping your child become familiar with basic special-education terms (like "accommodation," "goal," or "related service") demystifies their IEP and gives them ownership over their own plan.
- **Share your own skills.** If you or a family member has expertise in something — a trade, art, science, a language — offer to share it with your child's class or school; it's a way of staying connected to their education beyond homework help.

6. Looking Ahead: Transition Planning (Age 14+)

Resource: Transition Planning

Why it helps: Once your child nears their teen years, the IEP begins including transition planning — preparing them for life after high school (further education, employment, independent living). This page and the related Student-Led IEP Process: For Families resource help parents understand how to support their child in beginning to advocate for themselves.

Quick Reference Card

Need	Resource	Contact
Understand the basics	What Families Need to Know	pattan.net
Understand the IEP form itself	Annotated IEP	pattan.net/Special-Education-Forms/IEP-Information
Talk to another parent who's been there	Parent to Parent of PA	pattan.net
Reinforce learning & IEP goals at home	Helping Your Child At Home	pattan.net
Local PaTTAN office	PaTTAN East / Central / West	East: (800) 441-3215 · Central: (800) 360-7282 · West: (800) 446-5607

This guide summarizes and links to publicly available resources from the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN), a project of the PA Department of Education's Bureau of Special Education. Always confirm current details directly on pattan.net, as content and links may be updated over time.