

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

Annual Public Notice to Parents

The school district, charter school, or the intermediate unit provide special education services to resident children with disabilities who are ages three through twenty-one. The purpose of this annual notice is to describe the special education programs services that are available, the process by which each of the school entities screens and evaluates students to determine eligibility for special education services, gifted services, or Chapter 15/504 services, and information regarding the confidentiality of student educational records.

It is the responsibility of the school districts, charter schools, or the intermediate unit to ensure that all children residing in the Commonwealth, who are in need of Special Education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated. This responsibility is required by a federal law called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act as amended in 2004 (IDEA 2004).

The IDEA 2004 requires each school entity to publish a notice to parents, in newspapers or other media, including the student handbook and website. To comply with the above requirement, this publication is the annual public notice for the school districts and charter schools located in the Lincoln Intermediate Unit 12.

Services - Age 3 until School-Age

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. Developmental delay is defined as a child who is less than the age of beginners and at least 3 years of age 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.

Screening for preschool children is available each month at The York Learning Center (York 717-718-5902), the LIU Central Office (New Oxford 717-624-6490), and the Franklin Learning Center (Chambersburg 717-263-1732). To schedule an appointment for a screening or evaluation call one of the numbers listed above. For additional information, contact LIU #12 Preschool Office at (717) 624-6475.

Programs and Services Available for Children with Disabilities

It is the responsibility of each school district and charter school to ensure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities, including those in public or private institutions or other care facilities are educated with students who are not disabled. Special classes, separate schooling or other removal of students with disabilities from the general educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in general education classes, even with the use of supplementary aids and services, cannot be achieved satisfactorily. Special Education services are provided according to the educational needs of the child, not necessarily the category of disability.

Screening

Each school district or charter school has established and implemented procedures to locate, identify, and evaluate students suspected of having a disability. These procedures include screening activities. Screening is conducted in the student's home school unless other arrangements are necessary.

Screening is a pre-evaluation/pre-referral process that occurs in regular education.

Evaluation

When screening indicates that a student may be a child with a disability, the school district/charter school will seek parental consent prior to conducting an evaluation. An evaluation for special education services is conducted by an evaluation team that includes the parent, teachers, and any other qualified professionals. The process must be conducted in accordance with specific timelines and must include procedural safeguard procedures.

The evaluation process results in a written evaluation report. This report specifies a student's eligibility for special education based on the presence of a disability and the need for specially designed instruction. The evaluation report also makes recommendations for educational programming.

Parents who think their child may have a disability may request, at any time, that the local school district conduct an evaluation. This request should be made in writing to the contact person identified at the end of the public notice. If a parent makes an oral request for an evaluation, the school district, charter school, or intermediate unit shall provide the parent with a form for that purpose. Pre-Referral Team, Child-Study Team, or Instruction Support Team (IST) activities do not serve as a barrier to the right of a parent to request an evaluation, at any time, including prior to or during the conduct of instructional support activities.

Every public school has a procedure in place by which parents can request an evaluation. For information about the school district's procedures applicable to your child, contact the school, which your child attends. Telephone numbers and addresses for the school districts can be found at the end of this notice. Parents of preschool age children, age three through five, may request an evaluation in writing by addressing a letter as follows: Lincoln Intermediate Unit #12, P.O. Box 70, 65 Billerbeck Street, New Oxford, PA 17350. Telephone: 717-624-4616

Consent

School entities cannot proceed with an evaluation or reevaluation, or with the initial provision of special education and related services, without the informed written consent of the parents.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Development

Following the evaluation report, an IEP must be developed within 30 calendar days. The IEP team must include the parent(s) of a child with a disability. Other required members include at least one regular education teacher of the child (if the child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment), at least one special education teacher, and a representative of the school district/charter school. The IEP team develops a written plan called an IEP. The IEP shall be based on the results and recommendations in the evaluation report. The parents of the child have the right to be notified of and to participate in all meetings of their child's IEP team. The IEP is revised as often as circumstances warrant but at least annually.

Notice of Recommended Educational Placement/Prior Written Notice (NOREP/PWN)

The responsible school entity must notify you in writing whenever it proposes to initiate or to change the identification, evaluation, educational program or placement of a child or whenever it refuses to initiate or make a change in the identification, evaluation, educational program or placement requested by a parent.

Notice for Services for Protected Handicapped Students in Accordance with Section 504 and Chapter 15

Students who are not eligible to receive special education services may qualify as protected handicapped students and therefore be protected by other federal and state laws intended to prevent discrimination. The school district or charter school must ensure that protected handicapped students have equal opportunity to participate in the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate for each individual student. Section 504 covers qualified students with disabilities who attend schools receiving federal financial assistance. To be protected under Section 504/Chapter 15, a student must be determined to: 1) have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; 2) have a record of such impairment, or 3) be regarded as having such impairment. Section 504/Chapter 15 require that school districts or charter schools provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to qualified students in their jurisdictions who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

For further information on the evaluation procedures and provision of services to protected handicapped students under 504/Chapter 15, parents should contact the school district of residence or charter school.

Notice of Services for Gifted Students

While gifted is not included as one of the disabilities categories under the IDEA 2004, the Pennsylvania State Board of Education's regulations as set forth in Chapter 16, Special Education for Gifted Students, provide that gifted students are considered to be children with exceptionalities and are in need of specially designed instruction.

Under Chapter 16, each school district shall conduct public awareness activities to inform the public of gifted education services and programs and the manner by which to request these services and programs. These awareness activities shall be designed to reach parents of students enrolled in the public schools and parent of children not enrolled in public schools.

Screening

Chapter 16 requires that each school district shall adopt and use a system to locate and identify all students within the school district who are thought to be gifted and in need of specially designed instruction. Each school district shall determine the student's needs through a screening and evaluation process which meets the requirements of Chapter 16.

Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation

For students who are potentially gifted students, the district will take the following steps:

1. Conduct the Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation
2. Compile a Gifted Written Report
3. Convene a Gifted Individualized Education program team meeting to determine whether the student is gifted; and,
4. Develop a Gifted Individualized Education program if the student is a gifted student.

For students who are gifted and eligible for Special Education, it is not necessary for school districts to conduct separate screening and evaluations, develop separate IEPs, or use separate procedural safeguards processes to provide for a student's needs as both a gifted and eligible student.

Confidentiality of Student Information

All school entities maintain educational records concerning children enrolled in public school,

including students with disabilities. Educational records containing personally identifiable information about or related to children with disabilities are maintained in the strictest confidentiality.

Consent for Disclosure of Personally Identifiable Information

Your consent, or consent of an eligible child who has reached the age of majority under State law, must be obtained before personally identifiable information is released, except as permitted under Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The age of majority in Pennsylvania is 21. Each participating agency must protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information at collection, storage, disclosure, and destruction stages. One official at each participating agency must assume responsibility for ensuring the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information. Each participating agency must maintain, for public inspection, a current listing of the names and positions of those employees within the agency who have access to personally identifiable information.

Complaints concerning alleged failure of a public school to comply with the confidentiality requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act may be addressed to the United States Department of Education as follows:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20202-5920
Phone 1-800-872-5327

Summary

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. The address of the intermediate unit is as follows:

INTERMEDIATE UNIT
Lincoln Intermediate Unit #12 P.O. Box 70, 65 Billerbeck Street, New Oxford, PA 17350 Telephone: 717-624-4616

The public schools, intermediate unit, and charter schools prohibit discrimination in employment, educational programs, and activities on the basis of race, national origin, color, creed, religion, sex, age, disability, veteran status, marital status, or because a person is a disabled veteran. No preschool, elementary or secondary school pupil enrolled in a school district, intermediate unit, or charter school shall be denied equal opportunity or equal access to participate in age and program appropriate instruction or activities due to race, color, handicap, creed, national origin, marital status, or financial hardship.