

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

State and federal special education regulations require each school district to provide notice to the community by publishing an annual public notice to parents, in newspapers, on the website, or by other media, regarding the school district's identification and screening activities, the location and time of the activities, and also any evaluation activity which takes place in the Palmyra Area School District.

The district is required to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to children with disabilities who are determined, through the evaluation process, to need special education and related services under IDEA and 22 PA School Code Chapter 14. A school age child with a disability, who is determined to be in need of special education and related services, is identified as a child with a disability for special education in need of specially designed instruction. The following are disability categories under IDEA:

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

Early Intervention: Children ages 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. Developmental delay is defined as a child who is less than the age of beginners and at least 3 years of age and 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. For additional information you may contact IU13 Early Intervention – Preschool Special Education @717-606-1601.

Screening Activities: The Palmyra Area School District conducts ongoing screening activities throughout the school year to identify students who may be a child with a disability and is in need of special education services. Screening is conducted in the student's home school unless other arrangements are necessary. If a child is identified by the district as possibly in need of such services, the school district will seek parental consent to conduct an evaluation. Parents can request screening in writing for their children by contacting the building principal.

Evaluation Process: When screening indicates that a student may be a child with a disability, the school district will seek parental consent to conduct an evaluation. "Evaluation" is the procedure used to determine whether a child has a disability and if the child's disability is of the nature and extent that the child would be eligible for special education and related services. Evaluation procedures used are determined on an individual basis by a Multi-disciplinary Team, which includes the parents. Evaluation for the purpose of determining if a child is a child with a disability eligible for special education does not include the procedures or basic tests that are administered to all children.

Parents who think their child is exceptional may request, at any time, that the school district conduct an evaluation. This request should be made in writing to the building principal. If a parent makes an oral request for an evaluation, the school district shall provide the parent with a form for that purpose within 10 days of the oral request.

Independent Educational Evaluation: Parents also have the right to obtain an independent educational evaluation. The school district must provide to parents, on request, information about where an independent educational evaluation may be obtained and criteria application for independent evaluations. Under certain circumstances, such an independent educational evaluation may be obtained at public expense.

Consent: School entities cannot proceed with an evaluation 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, <http://www.pattan.net/>. 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 (IEP) 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 (NOREP/PRN). Your written consent is required before initial services can be provided. The parent has the right to revoke consent after initial placement.

Gifted Education: The Palmyra Area School District conducts child find activities for children who may be eligible for gifted services via 22 Pa Code Chapter 16. Parents who suspect that their child is in need of specially designed instruction beyond that required in 22 PA School Code Chapter 4 (relating to academic standards and assessments) may request in writing that their child be evaluated under the criteria of 22 PA School Code §16.22. If a student is both gifted and eligible for special education, the procedures in IDEA and Chapter 14 shall take precedence. For additional information, please contact the Director of Special Education at 717-838-8835 Ex. 1.

Protected Handicapped Students: In compliance with state and federal law, and 22 PA School Code Chapter 15, the Palmyra Area School District will provide to each protected handicapped student, without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities. In order to qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability that substantially limits a major life activity or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program. These services and protections for “protected handicapped students” are distinct from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional students with disabilities enrolled in special education programs.

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. Parents may also contact the building principal to request further information on the rights of parents and children, provision of services, evaluation and screening (including purpose, time and location), and due process procedures.

Confidentiality: The Palmyra Area School District and to some extent the intermediate unit maintain records concerning children enrolled in the school, including students with disabilities. All records are maintained in the strictest confidentiality. 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 the 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 states. 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. 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 screening, evaluation, and services activities, and rights and protections pertaining to children with disabilities, children thought to be disabled and their parents. For information about these policies and procedures, rights of confidentiality and access to educational records, or to request an evaluation or screening of a public or private school child, parents should contact the Director of Special Education at 717-838-8835 Ext. 1.