

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 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 Middletown 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 § 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 eligible for special education in need of specially designed instruction. The following are disability categories under IDEA:

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

Gifted Education

Parents who suspect that their child is in need of specially designed instruction beyond that required in 22 Pa. School Code § 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.

Early Intervention

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. 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 Eric Bostick, Supervisor of Early Intervention/Preschool, Capital Area Intermediate Unit #15, at ebostick@caiu.org, or at 717-732-8400, ext. 8619.

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 Evaluation team, which includes the parents. Parents are asked to provide permission to conduct the evaluation via a *Permission to Evaluate* form. The evaluation team takes into consideration cultural issues as they determine the assessment tools that will be administered for the

student. A single test or procedure cannot be the sole factor in determining that a child is eligible for special education services. The initial evaluation shall be completed and a copy of the evaluation report shall be presented to the parents no later than 60 days after the agency receives written parental consent. 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 a child with a disability may request, at any time, that the school district conduct an evaluation to determine if the child is eligible to receive special education and related services. This request must be made in writing to the Special Education Director. If a parent makes an oral request for an evaluation, the school district shall provide the parent with a *Permission to Evaluate - Evaluation Request Form* to complete.

Educational Placement

If the evaluation team has determined that the student is eligible for special education, an IEP team develops an educational program, based on the evaluation, which identifies the type of services, the level of intervention, and the location of intervention. The IEP team must include:

- a school district representative (LEA),
- the general education teacher,
- the special education teacher,
- the child's parents and the student when 16 years of age.

An IEP describes a student's current educational levels, goals, and objectives, and the individualized programs and services necessary to provide the student with FAPE. These services may include:

- Learning Support
- Life Skills Support
- Emotional Support
- Deaf or Hard of Hearing Support
- Blind or Visually Impaired Support
- Speech and Language Support Physical Support
- Autistic Support
- Multiple Disabilities Support

A student's special education placement must be made in the least restrictive environment in which the student's educational needs can be addressed. All students with disabilities must be educated to the maximum extent appropriate with their non-disabled peers. A student's IEP is reviewed on at least an annual basis.

Services for Protected Handicapped Students

In compliance with state and federal law, and 22 Pa. School Code Chapter 15, the 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 an equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school programs and participate in extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities.

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 one or more major life activities, which prohibit participation in, or access to, an aspect of school programs. These services and protections for "protected handicapped students" are different from those applicable to all students eligible or thought to be eligible for special education services and must be designed to meet individual educational needs of the handicapped individual as adequately as the needs of non-handicapped persons are met.

The school district or parent may at any time initiate an evaluation of a student. Parents who wish to have a child evaluated should contact their building principal or guidance counselor for further

information on the evaluation procedures and provision of services to protected handicapped students.

Confidentiality

The district protects the confidentiality of personally identifiable information regarding its students in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 and other applicable federal and state laws.

Parents have the right to inspect and review their child's educational record. The district will comply with a request to inspect and review educational records without unnecessary delay and before any meeting regarding an IEP or any due process hearing, but no later than 30 days after the written request has been made. Parents have the right to a response from the school district to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of the records. Parents have the right to request copies of the records. Parents have the right to appoint a representative to inspect and review their child's records. If any educational record contains information on more than one child, parents have the right only to inspect and review the information relating to their child.

For more information regarding any of the above services, please contact:

Middletown Area School District
Krystal Palmer, Director of Special Education
55 West Water Street
Middletown, PA 17057
(717) 948-3300