

Annual Public Notice of Special Education Services and Programs 2022-2023

Notice to Parents

According to state and federal special education regulations, Annual Public Notice to parents of children who reside within a school district is required regarding Child Find responsibilities. School Districts, Intermediate Units, and Charter Schools are required to conduct Child Find activities for children who may be eligible for services via Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. 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." Also, school districts are required to conduct Child Find activities for children who may be eligible for Gifted Services via 22 PA Code Chapter 16. For additional information regarding Gifted Services, the parent may refer to 22 PA Code Chapter 16. If a student is both gifted and eligible for Special Education, the procedures in IDEA and Chapter 14 shall take precedence.

This Notice shall inform parents throughout the School District, Intermediate Unit, and Charter School of the child identification activities and of the procedures followed to ensure confidentiality of information pertaining to students with disabilities or eligible young children. In addition to this Public Notice, each School District, Intermediate Unit, and Charter School shall publish written information in the handbook and on the website. Children of ages three through twenty-one can be eligible for special education programs and services. If parents believe that the child may be eligible for special education, the parent should contact the appropriate staff members identified at the end of this public notice.

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 three 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, parents may contact Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8.

Evaluation Process

Each School District, Intermediate Unit, and Charter School has a procedure in place by which parents can request an evaluation. For information about procedures applicable to your child, contact the school which your child attends. Telephone numbers and addresses can be found at the end of this Notice. Parents of preschool-age children, age three through five, and who do not reside in Altoona School District or Tyrone Area School District may request an evaluation in writing by addressing a letter to the Appalachia Intermediate Unit staff. Residents of Altoona School District should address their requests directly to Altoona School District. Likewise, residents of Tyrone Area School District should address their requests directly to Tyrone Area School District.

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, at www.Pattan.net. After written parental consent is obtained, the district will proceed with the

evaluation process. If the parent disagrees with the evaluation, the parent can then 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. School district staff, intermediate unit staff, or charter school staff will issue a Notice of Recommended Education Placement (NOREP)/prior written notice. Parental written consent is required before initial services can be provided. Parents have the right to revoke consent after initial placement.

Confidentiality of Information

The School Districts, Intermediate Units, and Charter Schools maintain records concerning all children enrolled in the school, including students with disabilities. All records are maintained in the strictest confidentiality. Parental 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 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.

For additional information related to student records, parents may refer to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Retention/Destruction of Student Records- Special Education

In accordance with state and federal regulations implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), this notice is hereby given that in accordance with 24CFR 300.573, the School Districts, Intermediate Unit and Charter Schools listed below may destroy the special education records of students who exited from any special education program.

Special education records, which have been collected by the School Districts, Intermediate Unit and Charter Schools listed below related to the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or the provision of the Special Education in the district, IU or charter school must be maintained under state and federal law for a period of seven (7) years after Special Education services have ended for the student. Special education services end when the student no longer is eligible for services, graduates, completes his or her educational program at age 21, or moves from the School District, Intermediate Unit, or Charter School.

After seven (7) years, the records are no longer useful to the School District, Intermediate Unit or Charter School and will be destroyed in accordance with state and federal law unless the parent/guardian or eligible (adult) student contacts the responsible district that the parent/guardian or eligible (adult) student wishes to maintain the information as a personal record. These records may be useful to the parent/guardian or former student when applying for post-secondary education/training, benefits or social services.

Records including student's name, address, grades, attendance, dates attended, grade level completed and year completed may be destroyed after seven (7) years have passed from the student's 21st birthday.

If you wish to request records or need additional information you may contact the responsible school entity.

Destruction will proceed where parents/guardians or eligible (adult) students have not requested records in accordance with the responsible school district's, Intermediate Unit's or Charter School's Notice of Destruction of Special Education Records.

Retention/Destruction of Student Records- PA State Assessments

In accordance with 34 CFR § 300.624, please be advised of the following retention/destruction schedule for the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA), Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), and Keystone Exam related materials:

- PSSA, Keystone Exam, and PASA test booklets will be destroyed one year after student reports are delivered to the administration associated with the test booklets.
- PSSA and Keystone Exam answer booklets and PASA test materials will be destroyed three years after completion of the assessment.

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 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 or Altoona School District for residents of Altoona or Tyrone Area School District for residents of Tyrone area. *The addresses of these schools are as follows:*

SPECIAL EDUCATION CONTACTS

Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8
Dr. Amy Woomer, Contact Person
4500 Sixth Avenue
Altoona, PA 16602
1-814-940-0223

Portage Area School District
Pete Noel, Contact Person
84 Mountain Avenue
Portage, PA 15946
814-736-9636, ext. 1605

The Intermediate Unit, School Entity, or Charter School will not discriminate in employment, educational programs, or activities based on race, color, national origin, age, sex, handicap, creed, marital status, or because a person is a disabled veteran or a veteran of the Vietnam era. No preschool, elementary, or secondary school pupil enrolled in a School District, Intermediate Unit, or Charter School program shall be denied equal opportunity to participate in age and program appropriate instruction or activities due to race, color, handicap, creed, national origin, marital status, or financial hardship.

The Intermediate Unit, School Entity, or Charter School will not discriminate in employment, educational programs, or activities based on race, color, national origin, age, sex, handicap, creed, marital status, or because a person is a disabled veteran or a veteran of the Vietnam era. No preschool, elementary, or secondary school pupil enrolled in a School District, Intermediate Unit, or Charter School program shall be denied equal opportunity to participate in age and program appropriate instruction or activities due to race, color, handicap, creed, national origin, marital status, or financial hardship.