

## **Notice of Special Education Services**

In compliance with state and federal law, the Tunkhannock Area School District has developed policies to insure FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education) to all school-age children residing within the district's boundaries.

The Tunkhannock Area School District provides no-cost screening to children residing within the Tunkhannock Area School District, who are suspected of having a disability that would interfere with his/her academic progress. Parents/guardians who suspect their child to be in need of specially designed instruction or related services under IDEA, may request a screening or evaluation at any time by contacting any of the following Tunkhannock Area School District administrators:

- Ms. Heather McPherson, Superintendent @ 570-836-8224
- Mrs. Mary Gene Eagen, Assistant to the Superintendent @ 570-836-8219
- Mrs. Mary Hvezda, Director of Special Education @ 570-836-8266
- Ms. Michelle Knoebel, Elem. School Principal (Roslund and Mehoopany) @ 570-836-8270 / 570-712-2031
- Mrs. Kathi Felker, Elem School Principal (Evans Falls and Mill City) @ 570-298-7011/ 570-219-4031
- Mrs. Sue Bugno, MS Principal @ 570-836-8235
- Mrs. Kelly Carroll, MS Assistant Principal @ 570-836-8263
- Mr. Gregg Ellsworth, HS Principal @ 570-836-8241
- Mr. Todd Bosscher, HS Assistant Principal @ 570-836-8223

The screening procedure may include, but not be limited to the following:

- Existing classroom data review.
- Cumulative educational records.
- Enrollment/attendance records.
- Ability/achievement scores.
- Vision and hearing screening.
- Participation in Child Study.
- Medical records review.
- Observation of classroom behavior.
- Reports/recommendations released by the parent/guardian from outside agencies.

The evaluation process, which will not proceed without parental consent, will include data collected through the screening process along with a multi-disciplinary evaluation. The multi-disciplinary team (MDT) may consist of the following:

- |                             |                                |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| - parent/guardian           | - school psychologist          |
| - teacher(s)                | - special education supervisor |
| - principal                 | - guidance counselor           |
| - speech/language therapist | - occupational therapist       |
| - physical therapist        | - other staff as necessary     |

Results of the evaluation are reviewed by the MDT to determine if the child qualifies as a student in need of specially designed instruction under IDEA. Special Education services will be recommended through an annual development/review of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to those students who qualify under one or more of the following exceptionalities:

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

### **Notice of Child Find**

**Child find** refers to activities undertaken by public education agencies to identify, locate, and evaluate children residing in the State, including children attending private schools, who are suspected of having disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disability, and determine the child's need for special education and related services. The purpose is to locate these children so that a free appropriate public education (FAPE) can be made available. The types of disabilities that if found cause a child to need services are: Autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment due to chronic or acute health problems, specific learning disabilities, speech or language, traumatic brain injury and visual impairment including blindness, and developmental delay for preschool age children. 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. In addition, school age individuals with IEPs in correctional facilities are entitled to FAPE, as are "Gifted" students, within the Commonwealth.

Each school district is required to annually provide notice describing the *identification* activities and the procedures followed to ensure confidentiality of *personally identifiable information*. This notice is intended to meet this requirement.

*Identification activities* are performed to find a child who is suspected as having a disability that would interfere with his or her learning unless special education programs and services are made available. These activities are sometimes called *screening* activities. The activities include: Review of group data, conducting hearing and vision screening, assessment of student's academic functioning, observation of the student displaying difficulty in behavior and determining the student's response to attempted remediation. Input from parents is also an information source for *identification*. Parents who suspect their child is eligible for special education services and programs may request an evaluation at any time through a written request to the building principal. After a child is identified as a suspected *child with a disability*, he or she is evaluated, but is not evaluated before parents give permission for their child to be evaluated.

### **Notice of Early Intervention Services**

In compliance with the Early Intervention (EI) Services System Act, the Tunkhannock Area School District cooperates with the Hazleton Area School District Luzerne/Wyoming Counties Early Intervention Program. An "eligible young child" is considered to be a child age 3 to school age, who has an identified disability or a developmental delay in one or more of the following areas:

- Speech / Language
- Learning
- Motor
- Adaptive
- Social
- Behavioral

An eligibility assessment is provided at no cost by contacting the Hazleton Area School District Luzerne/Wyoming Counties Early Intervention Program at (570)826-0850 or (570)454-1870.

### **Notice of Gifted Education Services**

In compliance with Title 22 PA Code Chapter 16, the Tunkhannock Area School District conducts ongoing screenings/evaluations of students who may qualify for gifted education. The screening/evaluation process includes, but is not limited to:

- IQ score
- Achievement/ability scores
- Rate of Acquisition/Retention
- Demonstrated Achievement
- Early Skill Development
- Intervening Factors Masking Giftedness
- Parent/guardian/school input

If a parent/guardian believes that a school age child may be in need of specially designed instruction, a written request may be submitted to the Tunkhannock Area School District. An evaluation will be completed upon receipt of a Permission to Evaluate.

Upon completion of a comprehensive evaluation, if the child meets the eligibility requirements, the Gifted MDT will convene to develop a Gifted Individualized Education Program (GIEP).

## **Confidentiality**

If after screening and a disability is identified, upon your permission your child will be evaluated. A written record of the results are called an education record, which are directly related to your child and are maintained by the school districts. These records are personally identifiable to your child. Personally identifiable information includes the child's name, the name of the child's parents or other family member, the address of the child or their family, a personal identifier such as social security number, a list of characteristics that would make the child's identity easily traceable or other information that would make the child's identity easily traceable.

The school district will gather information regarding your child's physical, mental, emotional and health functioning through testing and assessment, observation of your child, as well as through review of any records made available to the school district through your physician and other providers of services such as day care agencies.

The school district protects the confidentiality of personally identifiable information by one school official being responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of the records; training being provided to all persons using the information and; maintaining for public inspection a current list of employees names and positions who may have access to the information.

The school district will inform you when this information is no longer needed to provide educational services to your child and will destroy the information at the request of the parent, except general information such as your child's name, address, phone number, grades, attendance record and classes attended, grade level completed, may be maintained without time limitation.

As the parent of the child you have a number of rights regarding the confidentiality of your child's records. The right to inspect and review any education records related to your child at are collected, maintained, or used by the school district. The school district will comply with a request for you to review the records without unnecessary delay and before any meeting regarding planning for your child's special education program (called an IEP meeting), before a hearing should you and your school district disagree about how to educate your child who needs special education, and in no case, take more than 45 days to furnish you the opportunity to inspect and review your child's records.

You have the right to an explanation and interpretations of the records; to be provided copies of the records if failure to provide the copies would effectively prevent you from exercising your right to inspect and review the records and; the right to have a representative inspect and review the records.

Upon your request, the school district will provide you a list of the types and location of education records collected, maintained, or used by the agency. [Editor note: if a district will charge a fee, then the following two sentences are necessary; if the district will not charge any fees, then this sentence is unnecessary] Additionally, the school district will charge a fee for copies of records made in response to your request for copies except it will not charge a fee if doing so will prevent you from inspecting and reviewing your child's records. The district will not charge a fee to search or retrieve information.

You have the right to request the amendment of your child's education records that you believe are inaccurate or misleading, or violates the privacy or other rights of your child. The school district will decide whether to amend the records within a reasonable time of receipt of your request. If the school district refuses to amend the records you will be notified of the refusal and your right to a hearing. You will be given at that time, additional information regarding the hearing procedures and; upon request, the district will provide you a records hearing to challenge information in your child's education files.

Parent consent is required before personally identifiable information contained in your child's education records is disclosed to anyone other than officials of the school district collecting or using the information for purposes of identification of your child, locating your child and evaluating your child or for any other purpose of making available a free appropriate public education to your child. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Additionally, the school district, upon request, discloses records without consent to officials of another school district in which your child seeks or intends to enroll.

When a child reaches age 21, the rights of the parent with regard to confidentiality of personally identifiable information is transferred to the student. A parent may file a written complaint alleging that the rights described in this notice were not provided:

Pennsylvania Department of Education

Bureau of Special Education

Division of Compliance

333 Market Street

Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

The Department of Education will investigate the matter, issue a report of findings and necessary corrective action within 60 days. The Department will take necessary action to ensure compliance is achieved.

Complaints alleging failures of the school district with regard to confidentiality of personally identifiable information may also be filed with:

Family Policy Compliance Office

U.S. Department of Education

400 Maryland Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20202-4605