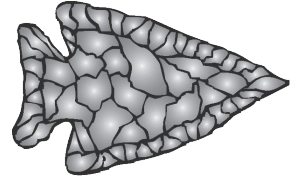


# ANNUAL NOTICE TO PARENTS



## PETERS TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Screening and Evaluation

The Peters Township School District uses the following procedures for locating, identifying, and evaluating specific needs of school-aged students requiring special programs or services. These procedures are described in this notice as required by law.

The District, as prescribed by Section 1402 of the School Code, routinely conducts screenings of a child's hearing acuity in grades Kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, 7, and 11. Visual acuity is screened in all grades annually. Speech and language skills are screened in Kindergarten and on a referral basis. New students are initially screened the year of admission. Gross motor and fine motor skills, academic skills, and social-emotional skills are informally assessed by classroom teachers on an on-going basis. Other screening activities include the review of cumulative group-based achievement and ability data; health and attendance records; grades; and information shared by the parents. Specific needs from all of these screening sources are noted within the child's official file.

School records are always open and available to parents and only to school officials who have a legitimate "need to know." Information from the records is released to other persons or agencies in most cases, with appropriate authorization that involves written signed permission by parents.

Parents with concerns regarding their child may contact building principals at any time to request a screening or evaluation of their child, or by contacting the Special Education Department (Names and phone numbers of the appropriate contacts are available on the District website at [www.ptsd.k12.pa.us](http://www.ptsd.k12.pa.us) under Staff Directory.) Communication with parents and eligible students shall be in English or the native language of the parents.

Screening information will be used by the Instructional Support Team or Student Assistance Team within the schools to meet their students specific needs or to document the need and refer for further evaluation. Instructional Support Team services are provided to public school students in grades Kindergarten through grade four. Student Assistance Team services are provided to public school students in grades five through 12. If it is determined that a student needs additional services, the team will make accommodations relative to such things as the student's learning style, behavior, physical challenges, and speech problems to be more in keeping with traditional classroom expectancies. If a student does not make progress, parents will be asked to give written permission for further individual, professional evaluations conducted by a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT).

The Multidisciplinary Team consists of parents, teachers, a certified

school psychologist, other related service personnel, and persons familiar with the student's educational experience and cultural background. The evaluations conducted by the MDT must be sufficient in scope and depth to provide information about the student's academic functioning, adaptive and social behavior, learning problems, strengths, and information obtained by the Instructional Support Team or Student Assistance Team and information from the parents. After all evaluations are completed, an Evaluation Report (ER) will be compiled and include specific recommendations for the types of interventions necessary to deal with the public school student's specific needs. This evaluation will be completed and a report sent to the parents within 60 calendar days from the date signed permission is received. Parents are then invited to participate in a meeting where the results of the evaluation will be discussed.

If the student meets criteria for the existence of a disability and need for specially designed instruction, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will then be developed for specialized services for the public school student within 30 calendar days. At a minimum, the IEP team must consist of: the student's parent(s), special education teacher, regular education teacher(s), and local education agency representative (LEA).

# PTSD Annual Notice to Parents *(continued)*

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Prior to the initiation of services, parents will be presented with a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP), which explains the services and placement recommendations. Parental consent must be obtained before providing initial special education and related services. The Procedural Safeguards Notice describes the parents' rights and options if they disagree with the individualized program presented.

## **Gifted Education**

When screening results suggest a student may be eligible for gifted education, the school district seeks parental consent to conduct a multidisciplinary evaluation. The initial evaluation is summarized in the Gifted Written Report (GWR) and used by the Gifted Individualized Education Program (GIEP) team to develop the GIEP. After the initial evaluation, students identified as mentally gifted are reevaluated before a change in educational placement is recommended or under recommendation of the GIEP team. The Notice of Recommended Assignment (NORA), signed by the parent, gives the school district permission to provide services.

## **Services for Eligible School-Age Students**

The Peters Township School District provides a full range of placement options and services to eligible public school students. Options in the district range from supportive intervention in the regular classroom to full-time classes, depending on the student's individual needs. Inclusive intervention practices are the first step in the continuum of placement options. If a placement option is not available within the District to meet the

student's needs, then services are secured by the District from the Intermediate Unit, another school district, an approved private school, or a community agency. Placement options provide for a free and appropriate public education for all eligible students. The District also provides such related services as transportation, speech and language therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, nursing services, psychological services, social worker services, and paraeducator support.

The following programs are provided within the District: Learning Support, Life Skills Support, Autistic Support, Blind or Visually Impaired Support, Deaf and Hearing Impaired Support, Speech and Language Support, and Gifted Support. Programs outside of the District include: Emotional Support, Learning Support, Life Skills Support, Blind or Visually Impaired Support, Deaf and Hearing Impaired Support, Autistic Support, and Multiple Disabilities Support.

## **Services for Students in Nonpublic Schools**

Public special education is accessible to resident students attending nonpublic schools by affording the opportunity for the nonpublic school student to enroll on a dual enrollment basis in a special education program operated within a District school. These services are accessible following a Multidisciplinary Team evaluation, determination of eligibility, and development of an Individualized Education Program. Parents of nonpublic school students can obtain further information by contacting their child's school principal or the Director of Special Education at

724-941-6251 x7271.

## **Services for Preschool Age Children**

Act 212, the Early Intervention System Act, entitles all preschool age children with disabilities to appropriate early intervention services. Young children experiencing developmental delays or physical or mental disabilities are eligible for early intervention services.

The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare is responsible for providing services to infants and toddlers, defined as children from birth through two years of age. Contact the Alliance for Infants and Toddlers at 2801 Custer Avenue, 2nd Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15227, (412) 885-6000.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing services to preschool age children from three to five years of age. Contact Intermediate Unit 1 at 1 Intermediate Unit 1 Drive, Coal Center, PA 15423, 724-938-3241 x220.

## **Information Regarding Signs of Developmental Delays and Other Risk Factors for Parents to Look for that May Indicate the Possibility of a Disability**

If your child is less than the age of beginners (age 5 before September 1) and at least 3 years of age, your child may be considered to have a developmental delay when difficulties exist in the areas of cognitive, communicative, physical, social/emotional or self-help development where the delay is measured in comparison to typical development. Parents who have questions about their child's development or possible presence of a disability may

# PTSD Annual Notice to Parents *(continued)*

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talk with their family physician or health care provider.

If you have questions regarding difficulties your child may be experiencing, please contact the Director of Special Education at 724-941-6251 x7271.

## **Protected Handicapped Students/ Chapter 15**

The Peters Township School District, in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Chapter 15 of the Pennsylvania Public School Code, will provide without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services, or accommodations which are needed to provide the student equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities. These services and protections for protected handicapped students are distinct from those applicable to all eligible students in special education programs.

For further information on the evaluation procedures and provisions of services to protected handicapped students, contact the Director of Special Education at 724-941-6251 x7271.

## **Confidentiality of Student Records**

Peters Township School District and its employees are required by Federal Law and State and Federal Rules and Regulations to protect the rights of students. The foundation of these rights comes from Federal legislation entitled, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (also known as the Buckley Amendments or FERPA). There are State Rules and Regulations dealing

with regular and special education students' rights and privacy. All students are covered by the State Regulations contained in Chapter 12 of the PA Public School Code known as Students' Rights and Responsibilities.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students" in the references below.

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have

written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31): School officials with legitimate educational interest; other schools to which a student is transferring; specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes; appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student; organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school; accrediting organizations; a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena; appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

Written parental consent is necessary for disclosure of Personally Identifiable Information and Educational Records. The consent must: (1) specify the records that may be disclosed; (2) state the purpose of the

disclosure; (3) identify the party or class of parties to whom the disclosure may be made. Furthermore, the Peters Township School District must maintain a written record of disclosure for the parents to inspect in case information has been released.

### **English as a Second Language Services (ESL)**

In accordance with federal law and state regulations, the Peters Township School District must identify all students who have “limited English proficiency” (LEP). These students typically have a primary language other than English that is used in their homes. Students identified with a limited English proficiency, who are not foreign exchange students, are eligible for ESL instructional services to help them attain proficient skills in their use of the written and spoken English language.

All students must have a Home Language Survey completed by their parents prior to admission into the school district. This survey allows the Peters Township School District to identify possible LEP students. A District representative will screen any student identified as possibly having a limited English proficiency and will provide direct services to students based on their level of need.

Parents or guardians who feel that their child may have a limited English proficiency should contact the Special Education office at 724-941-6251 x7271 for more information.

### **Title I Performance Report**

Pleasant Valley Elementary School receives Title I funds annually.

The funding is used to provide the Title I Reading Services to elementary students who are below basic or basic in their reading skills.

In the 2010-11 school year, 100% of the Peters Township Elementary Faculty met the No Child Left Behind Standards for highly qualified teachers. A highly qualified teacher, according to the United States Department of Education, is fully certified, has a bachelor’s degree, a content area major and has passed a content area test. In addition, fully certified teachers in Pennsylvania have completed pedagogical course work in education, including student teaching. We take pride in the tremendous skill and dedication of our faculty and staff.

### **Parent’s Right to Know**

As stipulated in the No Child Left Behind Act, parents/guardians may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child’s classroom teacher(s). Specifically, individuals have the right to ask for the following information:

- Whether the student’s teacher met state qualifying and licensing criteria for the grade level or subject he/she is teaching;
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status;
- The teacher’s college major, the baccalaureate degree, and any advanced degrees earned by the teacher;
- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

To obtain this information, please submit your request in writing to the Building Principal.

Each request should include the student’s name, his/her teachers’ names and the school he/she attends. Please be certain to include your name, address and a telephone number at which you can be contacted during the day.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

The Peters Township School District will not discriminate in its education programs, activities, or employment practice, based on race, color, national origin, sex, sexual preference, disability, age, religion, ancestry, union membership, or any other legally protected classification. Announcement of this policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Employees and participants who have an inquiry or complaint of harassment or discrimination, or who need information about accommodations for persons with disabilities, should contact: Human Resources Department, 631 East McMurray Road, McMurray, PA 15317, (724) 941-6251 x7228. ●