

# Student Intervention Programs & Special Education Services



PETERS TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT



2011-2012

# WELCOME

Every day in Peters Township, more than 4,400 students enter our buildings ready to learn. At times, these children need additional challenges or assistance in attaining the appropriate educational, emotional and social goals. The dedicated team of professionals within our District works with students and families to help ensure that all students achieve. Within these pages you will learn more details about the range of options that are available for students with needs that go beyond our traditional curriculum and can serve as a guide to families utilizing these services.

Anyone with additional questions or concerns should contact their building administrative team or the District's Special Education Department.

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# STUDENT INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

## INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT TEAM (IST)

### What is IST?

The Instructional Support Process is a systematic search for what works with children. The goal of the Instructional Support Team (IST) is to maximize individual student success in the regular classroom, while at the same time serving as a screening process for students who may be in need of special education. A student is referred by talking with the instructional support teacher and/or completing a referral form. Teachers are familiar with the Instructional Support Process, as well as a letter explaining the process with a tentative meeting schedule is distributed at the beginning of each school year to the entire staff.

The Instructional Support Process has three types of meetings. The first meeting is the Entry Meeting. This meeting includes the classroom teacher, instructional support teacher, and administrator. The purpose of this meeting is for the classroom teacher to briefly explain the student's need(s) to the instructional support teacher and administrator so proper planning can begin. The second meeting is the Verification Meeting. This meeting includes the parent(s), classroom teacher, administrator, instructional support teacher, and two additional teachers serving as team members. Other support staff members, such as the guidance counselor, speech and language therapist, school psychologist, etc, are invited to attend based on specific student need. At the verification meeting, the team reviews a data compilation report, writes goals based on the data, and creates strategies to help meet those goals. The third meeting is the Outcome Meeting. This meeting includes the parent(s), classroom teacher, administrator, instructional support teacher, and two additional teachers serving as team members, as well as additional support staff members if needed. At this meeting, the team reviews progress monitoring information and data collected during the past thirty school days. The following are typical outcomes:

1. The goal is met and a maintenance plan is written. The student formally exits the IST process.;
2. The goal is not met, but the team feels a need to redesign the goal or continue to implement the strategies for an additional thirty days based upon the student's progress.;
3. The goal is met, but the degree of need for support is too great to continue over the long term. The team can decide to refer the student for a multidisciplinary evaluation.;
4. The goal is not met and the team decides there is a need for a multidisciplinary evaluation to gather more information about the student's specific learning needs.

### What students participate in IST?

Any regular education student may participate in IST, typically students who are not already identified with an individualized education plan (IEP).

### How often do students participate in the program?

While classroom interventions occur throughout the school day, formal meetings are typically held once or twice a month to discuss the student's progress.

### How are students referred to the program?

Students are referred to the program by a classroom teacher, or counselor. There is a referral form that must be completed by the District staff and parent/guardian.

### How is progress monitored?

As a child enters the program a meeting is set to review the student's current progress, discuss home variables, and set goals and strategies that will be carried out for 30 days. Ongoing, the IST teacher monitors progress on an individual basis through communication with the classroom teacher, and a review of assessment scores such as DIBELS and/or other teacher created progress monitoring materials.

### How do students exit the program?

Students exit the program through individually determined outcomes. Possible outcomes are: exited from IST intervention program with strategies in place, extension of time with strategies to make determination, or referral for MDE.

# STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS (SAP/eSAP)

## What is SAP/eSAP?

The purpose of our Student Assistance Program (STAR) is to help students who are experiencing behavior and/or academic difficulties which pose a barrier to their success. STAR offers support to students and parents of a student in need. The core of STAR is a team of school employees (i.e. teachers, counselors, administrators, and outside agency liaisons) who have received specialized training from Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Approved SAP Training Providers. A student can be referred to the STAR team by teachers, parents, counselors, and/or administrators. After a student is referred, the team will discuss the child's difficulties. If the student is made a formal referral, information is gathered from teachers, administrators, counselors, and nurses. Once the information is gathered, it is reviewed, and additional referrals or recommendations for services may be made. A student may also be placed on "monitor" status with no further action taken. Staff members are informed of this via email, newsletters, and general staff updates.

At the elementary level, the eSAP team is not permitted to discuss any student without signed parental permission. So, if it's a crisis situation, that would not really be eSAP because we would need to have a completed referral form and parental permission first. If it's truly a student in crisis, the counselor(s) would meet with the teacher and principal immediately to discuss the concern and make a plan from there (i.e., call Childline, 911, parent, etc.). However, if it's an at-risk student, the teacher can contact the parents regarding an eSAP referral. I attached several documents for you- one is the eSAP process and timeline, so you can see how it works here. I also included the Parent Letter & permission slip, the brochure and the Initial Referral Form. The nurse also completes a health form for student who are referred.

The eSAP team presented to the staff at our last staff meeting in December so they are aware of the program and how it works. Our eSAP team includes: both principals, both counselors, the nurse, a learning support teacher, 5th grade teacher, 4th grade teacher and P.E. teacher.

At the Middle and High School level, the Student Assistance Program (STAR) is designed to help students who are experiencing behavior and/or academic difficulties which pose a barrier to their success. STAR offers support to students and parents of a student in need. The core of STAR is a team of school employees (i.e. teachers, counselors, administrators, and outside agency liaisons) who have received specialized training from Commonwealth of Penn-

sylvania Approved SAP Training Providers. A student can be referred to the STAR team by teachers, parents, counselors, and/or administrators. After a student is referred, the team will discuss the child's difficulties. If the student is made a formal referral, information is gathered from teachers, administrators, counselors, and nurses. Once the information is gathered, it is reviewed, and additional referrals or recommendations for services may be made. A student may also be placed on "monitor" status with no further action taken. Staff members are informed of this via email, newsletters, and general staff updates.

## What students participate in the program?

Any student that demonstrates a need may be referred to the SAP program. If a student has been previously identified as student in need of special education service, SAP services may be initiated by the IEP team.

## How often do students participate in the program?

Students typically meet with the SAP team on a weekly basis for 45 minutes. The team may consist of teachers, administrators, the school nurse, school psychologist or outside service representatives.

## How are students referred to the program?

Referrals are done by teachers, counselor, parent, administrator, other staff, or self for concerns such as drug use, alcohol use, behavior, attendance, poor grades, family issues, mental health and any other general concerns affecting daily performance.

## How is progress monitored?

Progress is monitored during the weekly meetings, based upon the reason for referral. The process is often informal and may include a variety of factors and inputs from teachers and other staff members.

## How do students exit the program?

Students exit the program through individually determined outcomes determined by the SAP team.

# CHILD STUDY

## What is Child Study?

In order to meet the needs of the child across the spectrum of ages in our District, services may differ in buildings throughout the District. The Child Study teams are outlined below for each of the grade 4-12 buildings.

### McMurray Elementary

The purpose of the Child Study meeting is to brainstorm a list of strategies, suggestions, and ideas to meet the needs of individual children who are having academic difficulties. Typical outcomes include supports ranging from mild accommodations (signing assignment book, preferential seating, completed study guides, etc.) to extensive interventions (psychological testing in some cases, OT referral, speech screening). The participants include a principal, homeroom/subject area teacher, teacher who referred the student, instructional support teacher, school psychologist, and a school counselor by request. A child gets referred by completing a Child Study referral form. The teacher includes information such as their concerns, current DIBELS scores, PSSA scores, Pearson testing, SAT testing, current accommodations, etc. Following the referral, teachers can opt to participate in a follow-up meeting to discuss further steps to take in order to help the student(s) referred. As far as informing staff- most are aware of the process. New teachers/subs are filled in by their partner teacher. I don't know that a formal session is held to discuss Child Study for new staff.

### Middle School

The purpose of our Child Study Team is to identify students who experience academic difficulties that pose a barrier to their success. The Child Study Team consists of counselors, psychologists, and administrators that collaborate on a monthly basis. A student can be referred to Child Study by teachers, counselors, and/or administrators. Typically, a child has gone through the STAR Team process before becoming a child study candidate. Once referred the team will discuss and review the student's academic background. The school psychologist and the special education director will review the student's records and any other data that has been collected. If warranted, the team may proceed by gaining permission from the parents to evaluate the student. Staff members are informed of this via email and general staff updates.

### High School

Child Study is a group that meets on a monthly basis to identify any students that might be at risk for graduation or of failing a grade/subject. The participating members are all five high school counselors, a high school administrator,

the school district's social worker, and the director of special education. Anyone in the group can bring a student's name forward for discussion should the member feel that the student needs additional intervention, or should a teacher bring concerns forward. Generally, staff are informed of the meetings when they bring a concern to a counselor/administrator/social worker and that representative informs them about the resource. Outcomes from the meetings range from monitoring the student, to brainstorming ideas for intervention as a group, to referring the student for special educational testing.

## What students participate in the program?

Any regular education student may participate in Child Study, typically students who are not already identified with an individualized education plan (IEP).

## How often do students participate in the program?

Students typically meet with the Child Study team on a monthly basis for 45-60 minutes. The team may consist of teachers, administrators, the school nurse, school psychologist or outside service representatives.

## How are students referred to the program?

Students are referred to the program by a classroom teacher, or counselor. Counselors may also suggest names for discussion based on SAP referrals or other informal input from teachers, administrators, etc. At the High School level, there is an additional focus on seniors at risk for not graduating, but any student can be mentioned that is failing a course/struggling academically.

## How is progress monitored?

Guidance Counselors or the Child Study Coordinator may monitor progress through review of data (grades, teacher input, etc.).

## How do students exit the program?

Students exit the program through individually determined outcomes. Students typically exit with successful strategies in place, with a possible continuation through SAP process, a meeting of the IEP team if the student is already a student receiving special education services, or a referral for a multi-disciplinary evaluation.

# RESPONSE TO INSTRUCTION/INTERVENTION (RTII)

## What is RTII?

RTII (Response to Instruction / Intervention) is a systematic approach for meeting the needs of all children. It is a multi-tiered, problem-solving approach that addresses academic needs of ALL students. RTII is effective for students of all academic readiness at all levels of instruction from kindergarten through middle school. It is a proactive approach and incorporates both prevention and intervention.

### **Pleasant Valley Elementary & Bower Hill Elementary**

The RTII process at Pleasant Valley & Bower Hill has been established to monitor student achievement and facilitate academic growth for all students through the use of data. The process begins each year (Mid September) to review all current student data (SAT, DIBELS, curricular assessments). Once the data is collected and organized, the data teams conduct data meetings to identify students in need of progress monitoring and intervention. Once an intervention plan is established for each grade level; special area teachers, classroom teachers, and other support personnel work together to ensure that each student receives the necessary intervention. Intervention data is tracked using an intervention data sheet to monitor student progress. All staff members are accountable and have a stake in each student's success. The intervention is delivered during a common 30 minute RTII block. This RtII time allows for both enrichment and intervention and decreases the student to teacher ratio for all groups. Once new data is collected (typically 6-8 weeks) the grade level teams meet again to discuss the Rate of Improvement (ROI) of every child at the grade level and establish a new plan to intervene and meet student needs.

### **McMurray Elementary**

Response to Intervention and Instruction (RTII) is a process used in grades 4-6 at McMurray Elementary School to address the reading needs and challenges of our students. RTII is part of the master schedule and takes place 2 days out of the 6-day schedule for 41 minutes each. At the beginning of each year, all students are assessed using multiple means (e.g., DIBELS, Pearson SuccessNet, classroom-based assessments, etc.) to determine each individual student's greatest area of need. Additional data from previous years may also be analyzed to help support this process (e.g., SAT scores, PSSA scores, report card grades, etc.). Teachers then flexibly group their students into three tiers in order to provide the most appropriate level of support. Tier I interventions are for students reading on or above grade level who demonstrate a need for enrichment or additional challenging experiences in the area of reading. These students work with the enrichment facilitators during the RTII time. Tier

II interventions are geared toward students who demonstrate one or more needs in the area of reading and could benefit from a review of such skills. These students typically work with their classroom teachers during the RTII time which allows for a smaller teacher/student ratio and more direct instruction. Tier III interventions are for students demonstrating significant delays in reading comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, or phonics and need intense intervention to close the gaps. These students work in small groups with learning support teachers that typically utilize intervention series such as Reading Street or Sonday. Teachers analyze student data throughout the year and flexibly group their students based on what the data suggests.

### **Middle School**

At PTMS, all students take the Study Island benchmark test on the computer at the beginning of the school year in their language arts classes. These scores help to identify students who would benefit from additional diagnostic reading testing and all of those scores are factoring in with past grades and PSSA scores to identify who would best begin on Tier 2 and Tier 3.

All students in the school complete Tier 1 prompts throughout the school year (approximately 2 per month) during their homeroom periods. These prompts were written by the teachers in our subject area departments and are specifically designed to explore and assess the reading skills needed for success in those disciplines at the secondary level and beyond.

Students in Tier 2 and Tier 3 have met in small groups with our reading teacher and special education teachers during homeroom periods and study lab periods (1-2 times per week, depending on the intensity of student need) to address specific skills including relevant details, cause and effect, and point of view among others.

As last year was the first year of RTII at the middle school, we are continuing to analyze how to most effectively offer support to our students. However, we are very pleased with the efforts of our students and staff in ensuring that we are enabling each of our readers to maximize their individual potentials.

# **GIFTED EDUCATION**

## **What is Gifted Education?**

Gifted programming is offered at every level, K-12. These services are determined by a student's Gifted Individualized Education Plan. These services can be delivered in a variety of ways: through "push in" support conducted by an enrichment facilitator; enrichment activities conducted in the regular education classroom by the classroom teacher; or individual projects facilitated by the teacher of the gifted. The focus of these services are determined not only by students areas of giftedness, but also by the individual's interests and personal goals.

Below is a brief list of examples of programs that may be available to gifted students at the various grade levels:

### **Pleasant Valley School and Bower Hill Elementary**

Young Author and Illustrator Extraordinaire  
Logical reasoning sessions  
Advanced logic and problem solving session  
"Thinking Games" sessions- Blokus, Mastermind, Set  
Creative writing & language arts enrichment  
Independent research and project management  
Math enrichment and acceleration (4th grade level)

### **McMurray Elementary School**

Calcu-Solve Competition  
Student Leadership Committees  
Stock Market Game  
Individual Student Options: Technology Projects, Science Projects, Inventing, Creative Writing, Problem Solving, Bridge Building, Puppet Making, Service Projects etc.  
Spelling Bee  
Renzulli Learning Projects  
Language Arts Enrichment  
Small Group Enrichment  
Math Acceleration

### **Peters Township Middle School**

PA Junior Academy of Science  
Odyssey of the Mind  
Science Olympiad  
Carnegie Science Fair  
National History Day  
Forensics  
Geography Day  
MATHCOUNTS  
Newspaper  
Yearbook  
Carnegie Science Sci-Tech Days  
C-Mites (Carnegie Mellon)  
Calcu-Solve  
Future Cities Competition  
Johns Hopkins Talent Search  
CMITES  
Kennywood Education Days

### **Peters Township High School**

Media Literacy Project, Career outlook Project, Managing a Stock Portfolio  
Hometown High Q competition  
PA Math League  
National financial literacy test  
Creative Communications "A Celebration of Young Writers"  
Anthem Essay Contest  
National Center for Robotics Engineering Technology Education for Agile Robotics  
SCHLUEB Student Architectural Design Competition  
Expanding Your Horizon at RMU  
Siemens Engineering  
Health Scholars Academy  
Pittsburgh Tissue Engineering Initiative Internship  
Gifted Apprenticeships through AIU 3  
Environmental Careers Camp  
Andrew's Leap Summer Program and C-Mites at CMU  
Chemistry Olympiad  
Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science (PJAS)  
TEAMS, JETS (Junior Engineering Technical Society)  
Pittsburgh Regional Science and Engineering Fair  
Science Olympiad

## The Role of the Special Education Teacher and Paraprofessional

Peters Township School District employs highly qualified, state certified special education teachers. These teachers serve in multiple roles in the building – IEP case managers that facilitate the development and implementation of each IEP; consultant for regular education teachers, administrators and related service providers, and teachers that either have sole responsibility for lesson planning/instructional delivery or co-teaching in the regular education classroom. Throughout the District we also employ paraprofessionals who provide a variety of academic, social, emotional and behavioral support to students in Peters Township. Some serve in a one-to-one role with an individual student while others support a group of students. They support students in the general education classroom as well as the special education classroom.

## What Services does PTSD Provide?

Peters Township School District partners with various agencies to provide services for students who have been identified with a specific need. Many of these services are outlined below:

### **Hearing Services: Hearing Support, Audiologist, Sign Language Interpreting**

School based hearing support services are provided for students whose hearing loss is such that it impacts their progress within the general education curriculum. Hearing support can be in the form of instruction by a hearing support teacher, sign language interpreter, and/or an educational audiologist, as well as in the form of direct service or consultation.

### **Vision Services**

School based vision support program's ultimate goal of is to support students with varying degrees of visual impairment within their educational program.

Vision support services may be direct or indirect in the areas of: Concept Skills; Academic Skills; Auditory Skills; Sensory/Motor Skills; Orientation and Mobility Skills; Career/Vocational Skills; Organizational/ Productivity Skills; Braille Skills; Recreation/Leisure Skills; Assistive Technology Skills; Social Skills; Independent Daily Living Skills; Utilization of Low Vision Skills.

### **Occupational Therapy**

The goal of the school-based occupational therapist is to assess student's functioning of fine motor skills in the school setting. Strategies or direct services to help the student achieve their educational goals are provided. Service delivery models include direct individual or small group pull out therapy, classroom based therapy and consultative services. Occupational therapists can be utilized to help the educational team to address sensory needs as well.

### **Physical Therapy**

The goal of the school-based physical therapist is to assess student's functioning of gross motor skills in the school setting. Strategies or direct services to help the student achieve their educational goals are provided. Service delivery models include direct individual or small group pull out therapy, classroom based therapy and consultative services.

### **Speech and Language Therapy**

School based speech and language support services are provided for students who exhibit communication disorders in the area of articulation, language, fluency and/or voice that appear to be impacting his/her progress within the general education curriculum. Service delivery models include direct individual or small group pull out therapy, classroom based therapy and consultative services.

### **Social Work Services**

School based services to address social and behavioral needs that are higher in severity; direct instruction and assistance with strategies and skills to help them cope/manage their emotions throughout the day.

*(continues on the next page)*

**Counseling Services**

School based services to address classroom concerns with behavior and socialization, organizational skills, and overall questions/concerns regarding their educational programming.

**Evaluations & Assessments**

School Psychologists and Psychiatrists are available to conduct evaluations and assessments at request to provide individualized information to the educating team.

**Assistive Technology**

Assistive technology is technology used by individuals with disabilities in order to perform functions that will provide the same access as their peers.

**Extended School Year**

Students who are eligible for ESY through data collection will receive an individualized program to support their maintenance and retention of identified skills throughout the summer when school is not in session.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

**Special Education Department**

724-941-6251 x7225

**Peters Township High School**

724-941-6250

**Peters Township Middle School**

724-941- 2688

**McMurray Elementary**

724-941-5020

**Pleasant Valley Elementary**

724-941-6260

**Bower Hill Elementary**

724-941-0913