

Northgate School District Annual Notice Child Find-Special Education Services for School-Age Students

The Northgate School District provides a free, appropriate public education to special education students as set forth in the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) and the Chapter 16 regulations of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education and the Chapter 16 PA Regulations governing gifted education. To qualify as a special education student, the child must be of school age, in need of specially designed instruction and meet eligibility criteria for mentally gifted and/or one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities as defined by Chapter 14: autism, deaf-blindness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech and language impairment, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairment including blindness.

The school district utilizes identification procedures to ensure eligible students receive an appropriate education program consisting of special education and related services, individualized to meet student needs. At no cost to the parents, these services are provided in compliance with state and federal law and are reasonably calculated to yield meaningful educational benefit and student progress.

To identify a student who may be eligible for special education services various screening activities are conducted on an ongoing basis. Screening activities include the district wide kindergarten screening program in the month of August, review of group based data (cumulative records, enrollment records, health records, report cards, ability and achievement test scores); hearing, vision, physical, a speech/language screening and student case review at monthly grade level meetings and SAP meetings when appropriate. School district personnel and /or parents may refer a student for screening to the school principal at any time.

When screening results suggest a student might be a student with a disability, the school district seeks written parental consent to conduct a multidisciplinary evaluation. Parents who suspect their child may be a student with a disability may request an evaluation at any time through a written request to the school principal. The letter should indicate the parent's reason for the request. Parents who suspect their child may be eligible for gifted education may request an evaluation through a written request to the school principal.

When a multidisciplinary evaluation determines a student is eligible for special education services, a report is sent to parents. Special education reports and records are considered confidential and are protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and released only with written parental permission.

The extent of special education services and the location for the delivery of such services is determined by the IEP/GIEP team and are based on the student's identified abilities, needs, chronological age and the level of intensity of the specified intervention.

Parents may obtain additional information regarding special education services and programs and parental rights by contacting the child's school principal or the Coordinator of Special Services at 412-732-3300, ext. 2000.

Services for Preschool Children

Act 212, the Early Intervention Services Act entitles all preschool children with disabilities to appropriate early intervention services. Young children experiencing developmental delays or physical or mental disabilities are eligible for early intervention services. At risk children are eligible for screening and tracking.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing services to preschool children from age 3 until eligible for kindergarten. For information, contact Project DART, 475 East Waterfront Drive, Homestead, PA 15120, (412) 394-5816.

The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare is responsible for providing services to infants and toddlers, defined as children from birth through 2 years of age. For information, contact Allegheny County Assistance Office, 300 Liberty Avenue, Suite 301A, Pittsburgh, PA 15222, (412) 565-2146.

Annual Notification Speech and Language Screening

In accordance with Federal and State Law governing special education services, the School District is mandated to provide informal screening to determine whether a student has a language or speech articulation problem, which requires services by a certified speech therapist. Northgate provides this screening service at all grade levels throughout the year. Students are individually seen by the speech therapist to determine their needs for a possible complete evaluation. The screening process does not require parental permission, but is required by law. A student who demonstrates need during this informal screening will be referred to the building pupil services team. Parents are then notified by the district psychology office and are asked to provide written permission to the district for testing. Questions regarding this procedure may be directed to Ruth Strasser, 412-732-3300, ext. 2000.