

## Indiana Area School District Notice of Special Education Services and Programs – Child Find

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Each school district, along with other public agencies in the Commonwealth, must establish and implement procedures to identify, locate and evaluate all children who need special education programs and services because of the child's disability. This notice is to help find these children, offer assistance to parents, and describes the parents' rights with regard to confidentiality of information that will be obtained during this process. The content of this notice has been written in English but can be translated into other languages. If a person does not understand any of this notice, he or she should contact the school district and request an explanation.

### **Identification Activities**

*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 cause a child to need services are: mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, specific learning disabilities, multiple-handicap and in the case of a child that is of preschool age, developmental delay. 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*. After a child is identified as a suspected *child with a disability*, he or she is evaluated, but is not before parents give permission for their child to be evaluated.

### **Confidentiality**

The School District maintains records concerning children enrolled in the school district, including students with disabilities. All records are maintained in the strictest confidentiality. Your 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 states. 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, the parent can refer to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

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 more information or to request evaluation or screening of a public or private school child, contact Ms. Roberta Mack, Coordinator of Special Programs, Indiana Area School District, 724-463-8713.

A parent may file a written complaint alleging that the rights described in this notice were not provided to: 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 and 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.

### **Education Services for Incarcerated Students**

Indiana Area School District, within whose boundaries a local correction institution is located, complies fully with the requirements of the IDEA and Chapter 14 regarding the identification, evaluation, placement and provision of special education services to all eligible school-age individuals housed therein. Eligible students are entitled to receive special education both when they are charged with a criminal offense and are awaiting trial and after they have been convicted of a criminal offense.

### **Services for Protected Handicapped Students**

Students who are not eligible to receive special education programs and services may qualify as protected handicapped students and, therefore, be protected by other federal and state laws intended to prevent discrimination. The school district must insure that protected handicapped students have an equal opportunity to participate in the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate for the individual student. In compliance with state and federal law, the school district will provide to each protected handicapped student, without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services or accommodations which are needed to provide 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. In order to qualify as a protected handicapped

student, the child must be of school-age with a physical or mental disability which substantially limits or prohibits participation in, or access to, an aspect of the school program.

### **Early Intervention Identification**

In Pennsylvania, a child between 3 years of age and the school district's age to begin school who has a developmental delay or one or more of the physical or mental conditions listed above is identified as an "eligible young child." The parents of these children have the same rights described above. The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing programs and services to eligible young children under Act 212 of 1990, the Early Intervention Services System Act. Screening for preschool children is available through the ARIN Intermediate Unit. For more information, contact the ARIN Early Intervention Service Coordinator at 724-463-5300.

### **Educating Students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and English Language Learners (ELL)**

The education of students whose dominant language is not English is the responsibility of every school district/charter school in the Commonwealth. English language learners must be enrolled upon presentation of a local address and proof of immunization. The school district/charter school must administer a home language survey (HLS) to all students as required by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR). The results of that survey must be retained in the student's permanent folder. For those students whose primary language is other than English (PHLOTE), the district must also determine the student's English language proficiency. Then, if appropriate, ESL instruction will be provided for the limited English proficient student with local/state funds.

The Indiana Area School District will provide ongoing screening services. If you wish to learn more, have questions, or believe your child may need to be identified, please contact: Ms. Roberta Mack, Coordinator of Special Programs, at 724-463-8713.

### **Title I Reading Services**

One of the most fundamental and necessary skills needed to succeed in today's society and workforce is the ability to read. Therefore, the objective of Title I is to help each child reach his/her potential and to give each child an opportunity to learn to read to his or her fullest capability. Students can then succeed in other endeavors as they begin to communicate and develop positive attitudes about themselves, their peers, books, and education. However, because of developmental differences, the diverse home lives of children, and their ability to become successful learners, the Title I Reading Program at the Indiana Area School District was developed to address these differences. The Title I Reading Program assures that every child is provided the freedom to make the most of these skills needed to function in today's fast-moving world. The Indiana Area School District is committed to providing an opportunity for children to learn to read. Together, parents, reading specialists and other school personnel can ensure the success of this objective for those children in need.

### **Services for Students Who are Mentally Gifted**

The definition of giftedness comes from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Special Education Rules and Regulations under Chapter 16 and states that a student who is mentally gifted demonstrates outstanding intellectual and creative ability, the development of which requires specially designed programs or support services, or both, not ordinarily provided in the regular education program or curriculum. This term includes a person who has an IQ of 130 or higher or when multiple criteria, as set forth in Chapter 16 and in Department Guidelines, indicate gifted ability. Determination of gifted ability will not be based on IQ score alone. Deficits in memory or processing speed, as indicated by testing, cannot be the sole basis upon which a student is determined to be ineligible for gifted special education. A person with an IQ score lower than 130 may be admitted to gifted programs when other educational criteria in the profile of the person strongly indicate gifted ability. Determination of mentally gifted must include a full assessment in accordance with Chapter 16. IASD uses multiple criteria to create information for consideration for gifted programming. These categories are: ability/aptitude standardized test scores, performance or achievement test results, teacher ratings, QPA (grades 6-12), results of individual intelligence tests (WISC IV or Stanford-Binet V). Once a student meets the requirements outlined through the above information, a Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE) is conducted and a Gifted Written Report (GWR) is generated. The GWR includes information provided by the parents, results of testing, academic functioning, learning strengths, and educational needs. Recommendations are made that are considered by the MDE Team in the development of the Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP). At the conclusion of the GIEP meeting, a Notice of Recommended Assignment (NORA) is issued.

Revised 7/22/2010