

SOUTH ALLEGHENY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Alisa King
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Dr. Lisa N. Duval
Superintendent

Annual Public Notice: Parent Information Notice of Special Education Services

David McDonald
High School Principal

Katelyn Vogel
Elementary School Principal

Charles Michael
Elementary School Principal

Marc Mayer
Middle School Principal

Privacy Rights of Parents and Students

The South Allegheny School District and its employees are required by Federal Law and State and Federal Rules and Regulations to protect the rights of parents and students. Any formal evaluation to determine eligibility for service under PA Chapters 14, 15 and 16 MUST be conducted with written Parent permission identifying the specific assessment measures utilized in the evaluation. Once this permission is granted, any information directly related to the student becomes part of the education record maintained by the district.

When a student becomes eligible for services, members of the school district's professional staff must implement Chapter 15 Service Agreements or Chapter 14 and 16 Individualized Education Programs. Aspects of the educational records must be released (strengths, needs, specially designed instruction, behavior support plans, etc.) to allow the staff members to provide service to the student. Beyond this "need to know", Federal and State Law mandate that information about students cannot be disclosed without written parent consent.

There are different categories of information, **Educational Records** and **Personally Identifiable Information**. Educational Records consist of information directly related to a student, which are maintained by an educational agency. Personally Identifiable Information includes the student's name, the name of the parent or other family members and a personally identifiable list of characteristics which would make the Student's identity easily known. **Educational Records** and **Personally Identifiable Information** cannot be disclosed or released without written parental consent or if a student is 18 years of age or older, without student consent. The consent must: (1) specify the records that may be disclosed, (2) state the purpose of the disclosure (3) identify the party to whom the disclosure may be made. Furthermore, South Allegheny School District must maintain a written record of disclosure for the parents to inspect. Finally, the parents may obtain a copy of their child's education record at any time by contacting the District's Director of Special Education at 412-675-3070, Ext. 1204.

The South Allegheny School District is an equal opportunity education institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex and/or handicap in its activities, programs or employment practices as required by Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504. For information regarding civil rights, or grievance procedures, contact Dr. Lisa Duval, Superintendent, South Allegheny School District, 2743 Washington Boulevard, McKeesport, PA 15133—Telephone 412-675-3070, Ext. 1106.

Federal Law Section 504 / PA Chapter 15/Other Protected Handicapped Students

A "protected handicapped student" is a student who is school age and possesses a physical or mental disability which "substantially limits" or "prohibits" participation in or access to any aspect of the school program. This disability must be validated by a licensed physician or psychologist identifying the impact of this disability as it relates to the student's school program.

"Protected handicapped students" are distinct from those students who are being evaluated or already identified as "eligible exceptional students" whose educational needs require specially designed instruction from Certified Special Education Teachers.

In compliance with State and Federal Law, the South Allegheny 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." For further information on the evaluation procedures and the provision of services for protected handicapped students, contact the District 504 Coordinators, Mrs. Christy Chicklo at 412-675-3070 Ext. 2305 for secondary students or Ms. Nicole Price at 412-675-3070 Ext. 2316 for elementary students.

PA Chapter 14/Special Education Screening and Evaluation: Child Find Activities

The District participates in Early Intervention (ages 3-4) Education based upon a mutually agreed written arrangement (MAWA) with Allegheny Intermediate Unit 3 (AIU 3) Project DART and Head Start Centers. Screening for developmental delays and evaluation of eligibility for early intervention services is conducted by I.U. #3 Project Dart (412-394-5904). South Allegheny School District has intervention/prevention teams in place to support students as a pre-referral system. At the elementary level (K-6), MTSS/RTII and Elementary Student Assistance Program (ESAP) teams have been established as part of the pre-referral intervention process. The teams consist of principals, guidance counselor, general education teachers, special education teachers, reading specialists, and school psychologist. Parents are also part of this process and are contacted and strongly encouraged to participate in all phases of the MTSS/RTII and ESAP team process. The Teams assist teachers and parents with supporting students who are experiencing academic, behavioral, medical, emotional and social skills difficulties. Student Assistance Program (SAP) Teams are also established at the Secondary Level (7-12). The South Allegheny Early Childhood Center staff conducts kindergarten screening during spring registration. Results of the screenings are reviewed by the building principal and school psychologist to determine if a formal multi-disciplinary evaluation is necessary. Annual academic progress screenings are conducted by the building principals and guidance counselors to determine if a student requires an MDT evaluation. District-based group achievement test results, academic performance and MTSS/RTII and ESAP Team recommendations are assessed in these annual screenings.



Speech/Language screenings are conducted through a cooperative regular education teacher and speech/language therapist arrangement. The therapists are also trained in a multi-sensory approach to reading which allows them to screen for early reading disabilities.

Visual acuity is screened in every grade, while hearing is screened in kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, 7 and 11th grades. Gross and fine motor skills are screened initially during kindergarten registration and when a student presents a possible gross or fine motor deficit. A formal evaluation is contracted through Steel City Therapy, Inc. services. Audiological evaluations and functional vision assessments are contracted through Allegheny Intermediate Unit 3 (AIU 3). The District's school psychologists are the single point of contacts for all pre-screenings, screenings and requests for formal evaluations. District school psychologists conduct Functional Behavior Assessments. Assistive Technology, Mobility and Orientation, and Vocational Assessments are contracted through AIU 3 and related service providers following a review by the District's school psychologists.

You may find information regarding the appropriate developmental milestone descriptors for infants and toddlers at the Center for Disease Control (CDC) website: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/ActEarly/default.htm>. For additional information regarding the signs of developmental delays, please contact the District's Director of Special Education at 412-675-3070, Ext. 1204.

Services Available Within the District:

Learning Support, Emotional Support, Speech/Language Support, Vision Support, Life Skills Support, and Hearing Support.

Services Available Through Approved Private Schools or Contracting with a Neighboring District:

Life Skills Support, Physical Support, Autistic Support, Multiple Handicapped Support, Traumatic Brain Injury Support, Deaf / Blindness Support, and Orthopedic Impairment Support.

PA Chapter 16/Gifted Support Education

The South Allegheny School District has created a screening and evaluation system which is consistent with the "multiple criteria" established in PA Chapter 16 for the identification of mentally gifted students. Annual academic progress reviews of district-based group achievement test results and grade point average (G.P.A.) are the initial district "child find" gifted screen activities. Individual intelligence testing is conducted with parental permission by the district school psychologist. Teacher assessment of student work is conducted by evaluation of "Excellence of Product", "Higher Order Thinking Skills" and "Characteristics of Gifted Students", including "Rates of Acquisition and Retention" of instruction. Parent input regarding characteristics of gifted students and areas of intense academic interest are weighed in the Gifted Multi-Disciplinary Team Evaluation. Any member of the GMDT may request a gifted assessment of a student at any time. Due Process, Procedural Safeguards, Timelines and Confidentiality Laws are consistent with Chapter 14 students.

The South Allegheny School District provides gifted support services in every school through a combination of acceleration and enrichment activities which encompass both "pull-out" and "cooperative teaching activities".

Services for Students in Nonpublic Schools

Public school education may be accessible to resident students attending nonpublic schools on a dual enrollment basis in a special education program operated in a public school. A multidisciplinary evaluation which determines the child's eligibility for services must be conducted and, if eligible, an individualized education program plan (IEP) is developed. Parents of nonpublic school students who suspect that their child is disabled and in need of special education may request a multidisciplinary evaluation of their child through a written request to the building principal or Director of Special Education, 412-675-3070, Ext. 1204.

Identification of Children Eligible for Surrogate Parents:

Special needs preschool and school-aged children receiving a free and appropriate education in a public school or an approved private school, who meet one of the following criteria, are eligible for the assignment of a qualified surrogate parent:

1. The Child is a ward of the state, or 2. The Child's parent(s) or guardian(s) are unknown or unavailable, or 3. The Child is an unaccompanied homeless youth. To be identified as being in need of a surrogate parent, the preschooler or school-aged child must have special needs, or be thought to have special needs, and be in need of special education services in the South Allegheny School District or IU operated program or be enrolled in an approved private/private school. For additional information, contact Christy Chicklo at 412-675-3070, Ext. 1204.

English as a Second Language Services (ESL):

In accordance with federal law and state regulations, the South Allegheny 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 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 South Allegheny School District to identify possible LEP students. South Allegheny School District 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 ESL Coordinator at 412-675-3070, Ext. 1204 for additional information.