

Annual Notice of Services

Special Education Policies

The South Williamsport Area School District has developed policies in accord with federal and state regulations and guidelines to insure the provision of a free appropriate public education to all school aged children, including those with disabilities.

DESCRIPTION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICIES

The South Williamsport Area School District provides appropriate special education programs and related services, and early intervention programs that are:

provided at no cost to parents
provided under the authority of a school entity, directly, by referral or by contact
individualized to meet the educational or early intervention needs of the child
reasonably calculated to yield meaningful educational or early education benefit and progress and designed to conform to an Individual Education Program (IEP)

Special education is designed to meet the needs of each exceptional student, including specifically designed instruction conducted in the classroom, home, community settings, hospitals, institutions or other setting. Instruction also is provided in skill areas such as physical education, speech and vocational education.

Early intervention programs are appropriate programs of educational development, specially designed to meet the needs of eligible young children and address the strengths and needs of the physical, sensory, cognitive, language and speech, social/emotional and self-help.

Related services available to students include transportation and developmental, corrective, and other supportive services that help an exceptional student benefit from special education. Examples include: speech pathology and audiology, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, social work services, school health services, early identification and assessment, medical services for diagnosis or evaluation, parent counseling and education, recreation, counseling services, rehabilitation counseling services and assistive technology services.

CHILDREN SERVED IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Special education services are available to children who have one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities:

- autism/pervasive development disorder
- serious emotional disturbance
- neurological impairment
- deafness/hearing impairment
- specific learning disability
- mental retardation
- multiple disabilities
- other health impairment
- physical disability
- speech and language impairment
- blindness/visual impairment and
- who have been determined by an IEP team, based upon recommendation in a multi-disciplinary evaluation, to need special education or who have been identified as gifted.

Early intervention services are available to children who are at least three years of age, but less than the age for beginning school, and who have one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities:

- autism/pervasive development disorder
- serious emotional disturbance
- neurological impairment
- deafness/hearing impairment
- specific learning disability
- mental retardation
- multiple disabilities
- other health impairment
- physical disability
- speech and language impairment
- blindness/visual impairment and
- developmental delay

REFERRAL OF CHILDREN FOR SCREENING AND EVALUATION

The South Williamsport Area School District and BLaST IU 17 have procedures to identify children needing special education. These procedures are “screening” and “evaluation.” If a disability is suspected, teachers, other school personnel or parents may refer a child for screening or evaluation. Parents suspecting that a child may have a disability and need special education or early intervention services can request a screening or an evaluation by contacting the superintendent’s office. Contact the principal’s office for times and locations of screenings.

SCREENING OF CHILDREN

Screening of children “using immediately available data sources such as health records, cumulative records, enrollment records and report cards” is conducted for hearing, vision, motor skills, and speech and language. Screening may lead to intervention by the Instructional Support Team (IST) made up of the building principal, regular classroom teacher, support teacher and others as appropriate. The Instructional Support Team will communicate with the parents about their

child’s needs and the instructional support services that will meet those needs.

EVALUATION OF CHILDREN

Before evaluation, parents are told the following information:

- who referred the child for evaluation
- why the child was referred
- how to review the child’s school records
- what procedures and types of evaluation will be used
- that parent involvement in any testing procedure be encouraged.
- the schedule for the evaluation process
- the rights of the parent regarding consent for evaluation.

Evaluations are conducted by a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) to determine such things as the child’s learning ability, behavior patterns, physical abilities and communication skills. The team is made up of the parents, a teacher, school principal and school psychologist. The team may include a special education teacher, supervisor, speech therapist, counselor and other staff as necessary. Methods used in the evaluation include observation, review of records, and group and individual testing information is gathered from school personnel, medical personnel and parents. Results of the evaluation are gathered from school personnel, medical personnel and parents. Results of the evaluation are reviewed by the team to determine if special education services are needed. If special education placement is recommended, parents are part of the team that determines exceptionality and develops an Individual Education Program

(IEP) for the child. No evaluation may be conducted without written parental permission. Parents who do not consent to an evaluation may be asked to attend a conference with the

teacher, principal, psychologist and other remedial education staff.

STUDENT RECORDS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The BLaST IU 17 and the South Williamsport Area School District is required by law to keep records of all students receiving special education and early intervention services.

Included in the records are:

- birth date, address, telephone number and other general information
- achievement test results
- psychological test results
- teacher progress reports
- comprehensive evaluation report
- routine medical records

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Detailed printed information about available special education services and programs and school district policies is available from the school district upon request. Anyone interested should contact the principal of the child's school or the school district superintendent's office.

As a child is reevaluated every two years, information is added to his or her file. The Blast IU and the school district have developed policies to ensure that all records are confidential. Only school personnel are permitted to see a child's file. Anyone else must have written approval of the parent to see the file or to receive copies of information in the

