

ANNUAL PUBLIC NOTICE

Port Allegany School District Screening and Evaluation Procedures

1. Health Examinations

Although the physical and mental health of each child is primarily the responsibility of the home and parents, the school district provides not only state-mandated health services, but also functions to maintain and improve the health of each student while in school.

Each pupil shall receive a comprehensive health examination in kindergarten, in sixth grade and in eleventh grade. These examinations will be conducted by the school physician or physician's assistant. A private examination conducted at the parents' request, at their expense, will be accepted in lieu of the school examination.

Each pupil shall receive a comprehensive dental examination in kindergarten, third and seventh grades. The examinations will be conducted by the school dentist. A private examination conducted at the parents' request and at their expense will be accepted in lieu of the school examination.

For each pupil transferring to the schools of this district, the Superintendent shall request an adequate health record from the transferring school.

Beginning with kindergarten and continuing through the twelfth grade, the school district will maintain for each student a developmental health history. This health history includes required vision and hearing screenings.

The individual pupil records of health examinations shall be maintained as a confidential record subject to statute and the policies of this district.

2. Assessments

In accordance with the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education of the Port Allegany School District has approved a testing program designed to provide information concerning the proficiency of children in the district on standardized tests of academic achievement and aptitude in grades 2 through 8 and grades 10 and 11.

The results of these tests provide a continuing record of each child's academic progress in comparison with national norms. They are also an invaluable aid to the child's teacher and counselor in diagnosing individual strengths and weaknesses in order to provide effective individualized instruction. During the school year, the following tests will be administered to students as part of this program: Terra Nova, PSSA & DIBELS.

Additional educational/psychological testing is available through the school psychologist with parental permission. Parents may also initiate psychological testing for their child by contacting the elementary or secondary principal.

Additional remedial testing is available through the Title I Reading and Math specialists, Instructional Support Team, or the secondary guidance programs on a need or referral basis per parental notification.

The following tests are available and are given as needed, usually on an individual basis.

READING/MATHEMATICS

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)
Individual Reading Inventory
Curriculum-Based Assessment

DIAGNOSTIC TESTS (GENERAL)

Autism Diagnostic Observation Scale
Wechsler Preschool and Primary
Scale of Intelligence – Revised
Wechsler Intelligence Scale
for Children – IV
Stanford – Binet Edition IV
Slosson Intelligence Test – Revised
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test – Revised
Woodcock – Johnson Tests of
Achievement – III
Wechsler Individual Achievement Test – II
Wide Range Achievement Test – III
Denver Developmental Screening Test
Alpern-Boll Developmental Profile
Learning Accomplishment Profile – Revised
Bender – A Visual Motor Gestalt Test
for Children

Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale
Mooney Problem Checklist
Copeland Symptom Checklists
Conners' Parent/Teacher Rating Scales
Behavior Rating Scales
Sentence Completion Test
Goldman-Fristoe-Woodcock: Test of
Auditory Discrimination
Test of Auditory Perceptual Skills
Clinical Evaluation of Language
Fundamentals – Revised
Goldman Test of Articulation
Wepman Auditory Discrimination Skills
Classroom Observations

At the elementary level, all referrals begin at the pre-referral level. A parent or staff member may initiate the referral process by submitting a written request. Screening information will be used by the Instructional Support Team to meet the child's specified needs or to document the need for further evaluation. If it is determined that a child needs additional services, the Instructional Support Team will make adjustments relative to such things as the child's learning style, behavior, physical disabilities, and speech problems. Recommendations are made and put into effect in the regular classroom. Parents are involved in the pre-referral process. If a student does not make progress with pre-referral involvement, which may last up to 60 school days, parents will be asked to give written permission for necessary individual professional evaluations.

At the junior/senior high school level, parents may request or school personnel can recommend that a child be evaluated for a possible learning disability. A review of the child's educational and behavioral history is conducted by the Instructional Support Team and/or the high school guidance counselor. This evaluation would include grade reports, standardized test scores, teacher and parent interviews. Learning and teaching strategies that have been used in the past are reassessed for their effectiveness and new strategies are implemented in the regular education program if appropriate. If the child continues to have difficulties, and no progress seems to have been made, parental permission for evaluation and professional services is required for the process to continue.

For further information on the rights of parents and children, provision of services, evaluation and screening (including purpose, time and location), and rights to due process procedures, you may contact the District Superintendent or any building principal.

The next step in the process for both the elementary and secondary level is the written permission from the parents for permission to evaluate. This evaluation will be conducted by the Seneca Highlands Intermediate Unit Nine by a certified school psychologist.

After all of the evaluations are completed, an Evaluation Report will be compiled with parent involvement and include specific recommendations for the types of intervention necessary to deal with the child's specified needs. Parents are then invited to participate in a meeting where the results of the Evaluation Report (ER) will be discussed. An Individual Educational Program (IEP) will be developed for students identified with a specific learning disability.

Parents are then presented with a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP) which they may choose to agree or not agree with. If parents disagree with the program being recommended, the issue may be taken to a due process hearing. Information about parents' rights to arbitration, mediation or due process procedures, specific special education services and programs offered by the district, and the district's educational records policy are available upon request to the building principal.

The Port Allegany School District protects the confidentiality of personally identifiable information regarding children with disabilities, children thought to have disabilities, protected disabled students (if not protected by IDEA '97 or Pennsylvania's Special Education Regulations) and children who are identified as gifted, in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and other applicable federal and state laws, policies, and regulations.

School Records

Your child's school records will be maintained as per our School Records Policy as long as your child attends school in the Port Allegany School District. Should your child transfer to another school system, his or her records will be transferred to the new school system. Only legally authorized individuals and agencies will be permitted to inspect your child's records without your written permission. (When your child reaches the age of eighteen or enrolls in postsecondary school, your consent is not required.)

Occasionally, certain general Directory information (name and address of student, date and place of birth, names and addresses of parents, awards received, activities, etc.) may be released. Unless you notify the school Superintendent in writing within 20 days following the date of this notice, it will be assumed that you do not object to this type of disclosure.

Law enforcement may request records without parental consent. This is called Referral To and Action by Law Enforcement and Judicial Authorities (34-CFR 300.529).

Copies of the Student Records Policy and Regulations are available in the Superintendent's office, the School Board Secretary's office, and the Principals' offices. Should you wish to examine your child's record file or to read the Student Records Policy and Regulations, you may arrange to do so by making an appointment.

Information about all of these services and procedures may be obtained by calling building principals or District Superintendent.

3. Educational Support Programs and Services

Gifted Support

The Gifted and Talented Support Program is designed to meet the needs of mentally gifted students. Activities and units of study are presented in various subject areas. Overall goals include enhancing student self-esteem, building leadership, communication, interpersonal skills, and applying higher-level thinking skills.

Speech-Language Support

The Speech-Language Support Program provides specially designed instruction for students who have difficulties in communication skills. Areas of difficulty which may be addressed include: articulation (specific speech-sound production), language skill, development (form, content, and use), voice quality, and fluency (stuttering). One on one or small-group instruction is provided in the speech therapy room or within the child's class-room, depending on which arrangement best meets the individual's communication needs.

Learning Support Resource Rooms

The Learning Support Resource Rooms provide students, whose expected levels of achievement will vary, with an atmosphere conducive to an individualized level learning. Reading, language arts, math, and socialization skills are areas in which educational goals are developed. These programs are designed to help students who require special services to develop their knowledge and skills. Learning Support students are to be included in regular education whenever possible.

Life Skills Support

Life Skills Support classes serve students with delays which require multiple hands on experiences for mastery to occur. Instruction is given individually or in small groups. Students participate in special activities with their peers. Students are taught the important skills in a functional setting. The Life Skills Support classes serving children in K-6 are located at the Otto-Eldred Elementary and Coudersport Elementary schools. For students in grades 7-12, the Life Skills Support class is located at the Oswayo Valley Jr./Sr. High School or at Cameron County High School.

Emotional Support

An Emotional Support classroom provides an individualized, highly structured program for students with severe social and emotional disabilities. These disabilities can result in slowed academic growth and limited social interaction. The main goal of the program is to achieve acceptable social and behavioral skills. Attaining these skills will allow the students to experience academic growth and enable them to function in socially acceptable ways. The Emotional Support class is at the Coudersport Elementary School and serves children in grades K-6. The Junior High class is at Austin High School.

Multiple Disabilities Support

The Multiple Disabilities class is designed for students who have been identified with two or more impairments that cause educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in programs for one of the impairments. This class will stress motor/perceptual development, communication development, and acquisition of daily living needs. Northern Potter Children's School is the location for the Multiple Disabilities Support Classroom.

Physical Therapy

The scope of physical therapy services within education is directed toward assisting a student with a disability to participate in and benefit from his or her individual education program through the use of intervention strategies and specially designed instruction.

Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapy in the education setting is directed toward assisting students with disabilities to participate in and benefit from his or her individual education program. Occupational therapy provided as a related service must relate to the student's educational goals and enhance the implementation of those goals.

Hearing Support

The Hearing Support Program provides several services to the school district and its students. From initial screening assistance to special instruction, the hearing teacher is available as a "second opinion" to the school nurse before a student is referred to an audiologist. If a child shows a significant loss, and difficulty in classes, special sessions are scheduled to provide auditory, speech, reading, and language instruction. Depending upon the severity of loss and need, intervention can range from consultation to inclusion in a resource room.

Vision Support

The Vision Support Program provides service to children who are blind and/or visually impaired. Children who qualify must have a visual field of less than 20 degrees and/or 20/70 or worse in the best eye with correction. Children from 3 to post 12th grade are served. Support may be provided in the home or in the school.

Chapter 15

In accordance with Chapter 15, the Port Allegany School District will provide protected disabled students with the services and accommodations that are designed to meet the educational needs of these students as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students are met. The Port Allegany School District does not discriminate against protected disabled students and the district's responsibilities under the Chapter.

Title I Program

The Title I Program in the Port Allegany School District offers support to students in Grades K-6 who need assistance and instruction in reading and math. The support could include smaller classes, additional teachers and assistants and extra reading and math instruction using a variety of teaching methods and materials. Dynamic Indicators for Basic Early Literacy Skills, Terra Nova, and PSSA assessments are used to determine eligibility.

Early Intervention

If a young child is experiencing delays in development, early intervention may help. Delays can occur in one or more of the following areas: physical development, language and speech development, social and emotional development, self help skills (adaptive skills), and cognitive development. The Potter County and McKean County Early Intervention Program provides services from birth to 3 years of age. For more information contact: 814-274-7193, 814-887-9287 or 1-800-800-2560.

The Seneca Highlands Intermediate Unit Nine Early Intervention Program serves eligible children and their families from the ages of 3 to school age. Services are provided in the child's home or in classroom settings. For more information contact the Early Intervention Office at 814-887-9287 or 814-887-5512.

Transition or Preparation for Adult Life

Transition or the Preparation for Adult Life Program is a very visible program in aiding students, parents, out-side agencies, and school staff in helping students make vocational decisions. The program is very specific for students with IEPs in place. Parents and representatives or agencies will be invited to a meeting near the student's sixteenth birthday to do an initial PAL program. A second meeting will occur early in the senior year to update the PAL program to reflect the student's current desires and needs. Parents are highly encouraged to be involved in the process of transition from school to the work environment.

For more information on any of these programs contact the guidance office at the High School (642-2544) or the Elementary School (642-9557).

NOTICE TO PARENTS OF CHILDREN WHO RESIDE IN PORT ALLEGANY SCHOOL DISTRICT

PROGRAMS FOR ELIGIBLE OR PROTECTED DISABLED STUDENTS

In compliance with state and federal law, notice is hereby given by the Port Allegany School District that it conducts ongoing identification activities as a part of its school program for the purpose of identifying students who may be in need of special education and related services (eligible students). If your child is identified by the District as possibly in need of such services, you will be notified of applicable procedures. Individualized services and programs are available for children who are determined to need specially designed instruction due to the following conditions:

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| 1. Autism | 7. Traumatic brain injury |
| 2. Visual impairment | 8. Other health impairments |
| 3. Hearing impairment | 9. Orthopedic impairment |
| 4. Developmental delay | 10. Emotional disturbance |
| 5. Mental retardation | 11. Specific learning disability |
| 6. Multiple disabilities | 12. Speech and language impairment |

If you believe that your school-aged child may be in need of special education services and related programs, or young child (age 3 to school-age) may be in need of early intervention, screening and evaluation processes designed to assess the needs of the child and his/her eligibility are available to you at no cost, upon written request. You may request screening and evaluation at any time, whether or not your child is enrolled in the District's public school program. Requests for independent educational evaluations of students with disabilities will follow the provisions of 34 CFR 300.502. They are as follows:

- (a) General. (1) The parents of a child with a disability have the right under this part to obtain an independent educational evaluation of the child, subject to paragraphs (b) through (e) of this section.
- (b) Parent right to evaluation at public expense. (1) A parent has the right to an independent educational evaluation at public expense if the parent disagrees with an evaluation obtained by the public agency. (2) If a parent requests an independent educational evaluation at public expense, the public agency must, without unnecessary delay, either - (i) Initiate a hearing under 34 CFR 300.507 to show that its evaluation is appropriate; or (ii) Ensure that an independent educational evaluation is provided at public expense, unless the agency demonstrates in a hearing under 34 CFR 300.507 that the evaluation obtained by the parent did not meet agency criteria. (3) If the public agency initiates a hearing and the final decision is that the agency's evaluation is appropriate, the parent still has the right to an independent educational evaluation, but not at public expense. (4) If a parent requests an independent educational evaluation, the public agency may ask for the parent's reason why he or she objects to the public evaluation. However, the explanation by the parent may not be required and the public agency may not unreasonably delay either providing the independent educational evaluation at public expense or initiating a due process hearing to defend the public evaluation.
- (c) Parent-initiated evaluations. If the parent obtains an independent educational evaluation at private expense, the results of the evaluation - (1) Must be considered by the public agency, if it meets agency criteria, in any decision made with respect to the provision of FAPE to the child; and (2) May be presented as evidence at a hearing under this subpart regarding that child.
- (d) Requests for evaluations by hearing officers. If a hearing officer requests an independent educational evaluation as part of a hearing, the cost of the evaluation must be at public expense.
- (e) Agency criteria. (1) If an independent educational evaluation is at public expense, the criteria under which the evaluation is obtained, including the location of the evaluation and the qualifications of the examiner, must be the same as the criteria that the public agency uses when it initiates an evaluation, to the extent those criteria are consistent with the parent's right to an independent educational evaluation.

Requests for evaluation and screening are to be made in writing to:

High School Principal
20 Oak Street
Port Allegany, PA 16743

Elementary Principal
85 Clyde Lynch Drive
Port Allegany, PA 16743

In compliance with state and federal law, the Port Allegany School District will provide to each protected disabled 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 to the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities. In order to qualify as a protected disabled student, the child must be school age with a physical or mental disability which substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program. These services and protections for "protected disabled students" are distinct from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional students enrolled (or seeking enrollment) in special education programs.

For further information on the rights of parents and children, provision of services, evaluation and screening (including purpose, time and location), and rights to due process procedures, you may contact in writing the building principal.

Confidentiality: All information gathered about your child is subject to the confidentiality provisions contained in federal and state law. The district has policies and procedures in effect governing the collection, maintenance, destruction and disclosure to third parties of this information. For information about these policies and procedures, as well as rights of confidentiality and access to education records, you may contact in writing the building principals.

**NOTICE TO PARENTS AND ELIGIBLE STUDENTS
WHO RESIDE IN THE PORT ALLEGANY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

NOTICE OF RIGHTS UNDER FERPA FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY STUDENTS IN THE PORT ALLEGANY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provides for its parents and students who are over eighteen years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the date the District receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal or other appropriate school official a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible students of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading.

Parents or eligible students may ask Port Allegany School District to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.

If the District decides not to amend the records as requested by the parent or eligible student, the District will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding their request for the amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the District as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; person or company with whom the District has contracted to perform a specific task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her task.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

(Optional) Upon request, the District discloses educational records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

4. The right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office, U. S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D. C. 20202-4605.

Consistent with the recent changes to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the District is notifying you of the following changes to the Notice of Parents Rights:

Prior to a due process hearing, parents must provide written notice to the District regarding their problem with the District's proposed or existing program, placement, evaluation or identification.

Parents requesting a due process hearing must notify the school in writing of the nature of the problem with the school's proposed or existing program, placement, evaluation or identification; facts relating to such problem; and a proposed resolution of the problem to the extent known and available to the parents at the time. This notice is mandatory, and failure to provide it to the school can diminish or extinguish a claim for attorney's fees and costs if the parents are represented by counsel.

Parental claims for tuition reimbursement can be reduced or denied entirely—

1. If a parent does not advise the school at the last IEP team meeting prior to withdrawal of their child from school or at least ten business days prior to withdrawal of their child from school
 - A. that they are rejecting the school's program and placement offer;
 - B. their concerns with that offer; and
 - C. their intent to enroll the child in a private school at public expense.

OR

2. If prior to withdrawal, the school notifies the parents of its intent to evaluate with its reasons therefore, and the parents refuse to make their child available for such evaluation.

OR

3. If the court finds that the parents acted unreasonably.