

# **SECTION C: STUDENT SUPPORT THROUGH SPECIAL EDUCATION**

## **I. CONFIDENTIALITY**

All information gathered about your child is subject to the confidentiality provisions contained in state and federal law (FERPA). AFPCS has policies and procedures in effect governing the collection, maintenance, destruction and disclosure to third parties of this information. These requirements are delineated in School Board Policy regarding Child Find, Special Education, Chapter 15, and Gifted Education.

In compliance with state and federal law, AFPCS conducts ongoing Child Find activities for the purpose of identifying students who may be in need of special education and/or related services, gifted education and/or a 504 Service Plan. A comprehensive evaluation is completed by AFPCS at no extra expense to parents to determine the specific needs of each student. If you feel your child may be in need of any of these services, please contact AFPCS' guidance counselor or the special education office to discuss your concerns and the evaluation process.

## **II. SPECIAL EDUCATION**

AFPCS provides a continuum of services to support eligible students in their educational program from K-8. Students may receive services ranging from supplemental aids and services in a general education class to a full-time placement program in a special education setting by certified special education teachers. If your child is determined to be eligible for such services, you will be notified of the need to develop an Individual Educational Program (IEP) and the related procedures.

Under the scope of Special Education but not limited to:

- Autism
- Emotional Disturbance
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Deafness
- Hearing Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Other Health Impairment
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Speech & Language Impairment
- Blindness/Visual Impairment
- Deaf-Blindness

## **III. NOTICE TO PARENTS**

According to state and federal special education regulations, annual public notice to parents of children who reside within a school district is required regarding child find responsibilities. School districts (SDs), intermediate units (IUs) and charter schools (CSs) are required to conduct child find activities for children who may be eligible for services via Section 504 of the

Rehabilitation Act of 1973. For additional information related to Section 504/Chapter 15 services, the parent may refer to Section 504, Chapter 15, and the Basic Education Circular entitled, "Implementation of Chapter 15."

For additional information regarding gifted services, the parent may refer to 22 PA Code, Chapter 16. If a student is both gifted and eligible for special education, the procedures in IDEA and Chapter 14 shall take precedence.

This notice shall inform parents throughout the school district, intermediate unit, and charter school of the child identification activities and of the procedures followed to ensure confidentiality of information pertaining to students with disabilities or eligible young children. In addition to this public notice, each school district, intermediate unit, and charter school shall publish written information in the handbook and on the web site. Children ages three through twenty-one can be eligible for special education programs and services. If parents believe that the child may be eligible for special education, the parent should contact the Special Education Coordinator.

#### **IV. EVALUATION PROCESS**

Each school district, intermediate unit, and charter school has a procedure in place by which parents can request an evaluation. For information about procedures applicable to your child, contact your student's teacher, Academic Director or the Special Education Coordinator.

The Public Schools/IU26 has procedures to identify children needing special education. Those procedures are "screening" and "evaluation." If a disability is suspected, teachers, other school personnel or parents may refer a child for screening and/or evaluation. Parents suspecting that a child may have a disability and need special education can request a screening or evaluation at any time by contacting their school principal. Screening activities include: reviewing immediately available data sources such as health records, parent interview and history; functional vision and hearing evaluations; determining the student's response to attempted remediation; and speech and language screenings are completed on request. If the screening leads to a recommendation for evaluation, the evaluation team will conduct the evaluations. No evaluations may be conducted without written parental permission. Consult your school counselor for further information. State and federal law affords many rights and protections to children with disabilities and their parents. A summary of this rights and protections follows. Interested persons may obtain a complete written summary of the rights and protections afforded by the law, together with information about free of low-cost legal services and advice, by contacting the special education coordinator or principal of the local public school.

#### **V. CONSENT**

School entities cannot proceed with an evaluation, or with the initial provision of special education and related services, without the written consent of the parents. For additional information related to consent, please refer to The Procedural Safeguards Notice which can be found at the PaTTAN website, [www.Pattan.net](http://www.Pattan.net). Once written parental consent is obtained, the district will proceed with the evaluation process. If the parent disagrees with the evaluation, the parent can request an independent education evaluation at public expense.

## **VI. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

Once the evaluation process is completed, a team of qualified professionals and parents determine whether the child is eligible. If the child is eligible, the individualized education program team meets, develops the program, and determines the educational placement. To facilitate development of the appropriate program, parents asked to submit the following documents, if applicable:

- Functional behavioral assessment (FBA)
- Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)
- Evaluation reports/reevaluation reports
- Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)
- Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP)
- Independent Education Evaluation (IEE)
- Individualized Transition Plan (ITP)
- Medical reports with a disability diagnosis
- Any other forms related to your child's behavior or academics

Once the IEP team develops the program and determines the educational placement, school district staff, intermediate unit staff, or charter school staff will issue a notice of recommended educational placement/prior written notice. Your written consent is required before initial services can be provided. The parent has the right to revoke consent after initial placement.

## **VII. CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION**

The SDs, IUs, and CSs maintain records concerning all children enrolled in the school, 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 stages. 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.

The school entity or charter school will not discriminate in employment, educational programs, or activities based on race, color, national origin, age, sex, handicap, creed, marital status, or because a person is a disabled veteran or a veteran of the Vietnam era. No preschool, elementary or secondary school pupil enrolled in a school district, intermediate unit, or charter school program shall be denied equal opportunity to participate in age and program appropriate instruction or activities due to race, color, handicap, creed, national origin, marital status, or financial hardship.

## **VIII. CHAPTER 15 – PROTECTED HANDICAPPED STUDENTS/504**

In compliance with state and federal law, AFPCS will provide those related aids, services or accommodations that are needed for each protected handicapped student, an 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 needs.

These related aids, services or accommodations will be provided without discrimination or cost to the student or family. To qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program.

For further information regarding the evaluation process and provision of services under a 504 Service Plan, contact the Director of Counseling or school guidance counselor.