

Public Notice – Screening and Evaluation

The New Brighton Area School District is responsible for locating, identifying, and educating school-aged students requiring special programs or services. If anyone in the community is aware of a child who is in need of special services and/or programs, please notify the Director of Student Services at 724-843-1795 (Ext. 346).

The District, as prescribed by section 1402 of the school code, routinely conducts screenings of a child's hearing (Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 7th, and 11th grade), visual acuity (every year beginning with Kindergarten), Body Mass Index (BMI) screening (Kindergarten through 12th grade), and screening for speech and language skills (when a referral is made by parent, teacher, or Child Study Team).

Gross motor and fine motor skills, academic skills, and social and/or emotional skills are assessed by classroom teachers and support staff on a continued basis. Screening activities include review of group-based data, such as cumulative enrollment and health records, report cards, and ability and achievement test scores. Identified needs from these screening sources as well as information obtained from parents and outside agencies, are assessed and noted within student records. These school records are always open and available to parents, and only to school officials who have a legitimate "need to know" information about the child. Information from the records is released to other persons or agencies only with appropriate authorization, which involves written permission by parents. Parents who have concerns regarding their student may contact building principals at any time to request a screening or evaluation of their child. Communication with parents and exceptional students shall be in English or the native language of the parents.

If appropriate, screening information will be used by the Child Screening Team within the student's school to meet his/her specific needs or to document the need for further evaluation.

If it is determined that a child needs additional services, the screening team will make adjustments relative to such things as the child's learning style, behavior, physical disabilities, and speech problems to be more compatible with traditional classroom expectancies. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the planning and implementation of intervention strategies. If a student does not make expected progress with this assistance, the team can revise the intervention plan or refer the student for a multidisciplinary evaluation (MDE). Parents must provide written informed consent before any evaluations can be completed. The purpose of the MDE is to establish the student's eligibility and need for special education and/or related services.

After all of the evaluations are completed, an Evaluation Report (ER) will be compiled with parent involvement and include specific recommendations for the types of intervention necessary to meet the needs of the child. When the ER is completed, in accordance with State regulations, a meeting of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team will be scheduled with parent involvement in order to develop a plan for the student who has been found to be eligible for, and in need of, special education services. Parents who suspect that their child may have a disability and be in need of specially designed instruction may request a multidisciplinary team evaluation (MDE) for their child by making a written request to the building principal. Information about early intervention, parent rights, medication, due process procedures, specific special education services and programs offered by the District and the District's educational records policy are available upon request from the building principal in each building. Further information about these procedures may be obtained by calling the Director of Student Services, at 724-843-1795 (Ext. 346).

Services for Protected Handicapped Students/Chapter 15 Regulations

In compliance with state and federal law, the New Brighton Area 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 programs and extracurricular activities to the extent appropriate to the student's abilities. 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.

These services and protections for "protected handicapped students" are distinct from those applicable to all students with disabilities enrolled (or seeking enrollment) in special education programs. To obtain additional information about the evaluation procedures and provisions of services to protected handicapped students, contact the Director of Student Services at 724-843-1795 (Ext. 346).

Public Notice – Student Records

New Brighton Area School District maintains a cumulative student record for each child. This information is kept in order to assist in the day-to-day operation of the educational programs as well as meeting the requirements of federal and state laws. These rights are guaranteed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 1974 and the Pennsylvania State Board of Education Regulations. These rights apply whether your child is exceptional or non-exceptional. The information regarding each child includes: student identification and attendance data, information on schoolwork completed and results of achievement and standardized group tests. Records of standardized tests taken by secondary students on a voluntary basis, usually for college entrance purposes, are also recorded.

FERPA also affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's educational records. These rights include: 1) the right to inspect and review the student's educational records within 30 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student 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 a parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate. Parents or eligible students may ask the school to amend a record they believe is inaccurate. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for 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 disclosures 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 has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

A school official is a person employed by the school 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; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a

special task (such as attorney, auditor, medical consultant or therapist), bus drivers, food service personnel 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 tasks. Student records may also be disclosed to a court without consent and without a court order or subpoena, if a parent or student over eighteen years of age initiates legal action against a school entity.

Complaints asserting FERPA violations are filed with and reviewed and investigated by the U.S. Department of Education, Family Compliance Office, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington D.C., 20202-5901. Phone: 202-260-3882. Informal inquiries may be sent to: ferpa@ed.gov. or ppra@ed.gov. The web site address is: www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guide/fpcd. If a child transfers to another school system, records will be forwarded after notification of enrollment is received from the new school. High School students' transcripts will be released to post-secondary or prospective employers with the written permission of the parents or eligible student.

At times, non-confidential information can be released to outside agencies. This includes information such as names of academic award winners and athletic team members. If you do not desire this type of information to be released, please notify the building principal in writing. Confidential information such as psychological, psychiatric, and other student information is only released with written parental consent.

According to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, directory information concerning a student may be included in publications such as sports programs, newspapers, radio and television news releases, award and graduation programs, yearbooks, musical and play programs and other school publications. This directory information may include data relating to a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major fields of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weights and heights of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received and other similar information. Parents who wish to have their children exempted from published lists of directory information may do so by informing the principal in writing.

Parents or students may request a copy of New Brighton Area's student records policy from the building principal or superintendent's office. If you would like to see any of these records at any time, please call to make an appointment with the principal. For further information regarding this policy contact the School Superintendent, New Brighton Area School District, 3225 43rd Street, New Brighton, PA 15066.

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232h; 34 CFR Part 98) applies to programs that receive funding from the U.S. Department of Education (ED). PPRA is intended to protect the rights of parents and students in two ways: It seeks to ensure that schools and contractors make instructional materials available for inspection by parents if those materials will be used in connection with an ED-funded survey, analysis, or evaluation in which their children participate; and it seeks to ensure that schools and contractors obtain written parental consent before minor students are required to participate in any ED-funded survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning: 1 Political affiliations; 2 Mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the student and his/her family; 3 Sex behavior and attitudes; 4 Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior; 5 Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships; 6 Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers; or 7 Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

Parents or students who believe their rights under PPRA may have been violated may file a complaint with ED by writing the Family Policy Compliance Office. Complaints must contain specific allegations of fact giving reasonable cause to believe that a violation of PPRA occurred.

For additional information or technical assistance, you may call 202-260-3887 (voice). Individuals who use TDD may call the Federal Information Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339. Or you may contact us at the following address: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington D.C. 20202-5920.

Services for School Age Students with Disabilities

The School District provides a free, appropriate public education to disabled students according to state and federal mandates. To be eligible, the child must be of school-age, need specially designed instruction, and meet eligibility criteria for mentally gifted and/or one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities as set forth in Pennsylvania State Standards: autism/pervasive developmental disorder, blindness/visual impairment, deafness/hearing impairment, intellectual disability, multihandicap, neurological impairment, physical disability, serious emotional disturbance, specific learning disability, speech/language impairment, and other health impairments.

Services designed to meet the needs of eligible students include the annual development of an individualized education plan (IEP), triennial multidisciplinary reevaluation (except for those students with an intellectual disability where reevaluation remains biennial) and supportive intervention in the regular classroom. All students receive special education services in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and are educated with non-disabled peers to the maximum extent possible. The extent of special education services and the location for the delivery of such services are determined by the IEP team based upon the needs of the child. The school district also provides related services such as speech therapy, transportation, physical therapy and occupational therapy when these services enable the student to derive educational benefits.

Students receiving special education services, including individuals with disabilities who are enrolled in approved private schools or cross-district placements, are encouraged to participate in the athletic and activity programs offered by the district.

Prior to the initiation of services, parents are presented a “Notice of Recommended Educational Placement” (NOREP) with which they may agree or disagree. If a parent disagrees with the initial recommendation for the provision of special education programs or services they have the right to request a pre-hearing conference, mediation and/or a due process hearing. They also have the right to deny special education at that time. If a parent disputes student eligibility they have the right to an Independent Education Evaluation (IEE) at tax-payer expense.

The Procedural Safeguards Notice (PSN) is mailed home when a Permission to Evaluate or Reevaluate is issued. The Procedural Safeguards are sent home to every special education student in August prior to the start of school. New students receive a copy upon enrollment. Under certain circumstances the PSN is issued when disciplinary action is being taken by the school district. A copy of the PSN is available in the offices of each school and at the District Offices. They are available to parents at no cost.

Gifted Support Program

The New Brighton Area School District operates a gifted support program that is available for all eligible students. Chapter 16 Special Education Regulations for Gifted Students in Pennsylvania defines a “mentally gifted” student in the following manner:

Outstanding intellectual and creative ability, the development of which requires individually

designed programs and/or support services not ordinarily provided in the regular education program. This term includes a person who has an IQ of 130 or higher when multiple criteria, as set forth in the Department Guidelines, indicate gifted ability. Determination of gifted ability will not be based on IQ score alone. A person with an IQ score lower than 130 may be admitted to gifted programs when other educational criteria in the profile of the student strongly indicate gifted ability. Determination of mentally gifted shall include an assessment by a certified school psychologist.

To gather all relevant information prior to determining a student's eligibility, a Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE) must be completed within 60 calendar days of the District's receipt of the parental permission for initial evaluation. Upon completion of this process, a Gifted Written Report (GWR) will be developed and presented to parents. The GWR will include information related to the student's strengths and needs as well as make recommendations as to whether the student is gifted and in need of specially designed instructions.

If a student is identified as being mentally gifted, a Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP) team, including the parent(s), must convene in order to develop a GIEP within 30 days of issuance of the GWR. The GIEP will outline the planned instruction to be provided for the gifted student. The GIEP is reviewed at least annually for its appropriateness and will include annual educational goals and short-term learning outcomes to help the student achieve the goals. Upon completion of the initial GIEP, parents are presented with a Notice of Recommended Assignment (NORA) with which they can elect to agree or disagree with the District's proposed program. If agreement between parents and the District cannot be reached, parents may request mediation or an impartial due process hearing.

To obtain additional information about the gifted support program, contact your child's building principal or the Director of Student Services at 724-843-1795 (Ext. 346).

English as a Second Language Services (ESL)

In accordance with federal law and state regulations, the New Brighton Area 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 New Brighton Area School District to identify possible LEP students. The ESL teacher 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 their child may have a limited English proficiency should contact the Building Principal for more information.

Services for Students in Nonpublic Schools

Special education programs are accessible to nonpublic school students following the multidisciplinary team evaluation which includes input from nonpublic schools via their attendance, conference call, or written input for development of an individualized education program (IEP).

Parents of nonpublic school students who suspect that their child is exceptional and in need of special education may request a multidisciplinary team evaluation (MDE) for their child through a written request to the Director of Student Services.

Services for Preschool Age Children

Act 212, the Early Intervention System Act, entitles all preschool age children with disabilities to appropriate early intervention services. Young children experiencing developmental delays or physical or mental disabilities are eligible for early intervention services. The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare is responsible for providing services to infants and toddlers, which is defined as children from birth through three years of age. For more information, please contact the Beaver County Behavioral Health and Developmental Services at 724-891-2827. The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing services to preschool age children from ages three through five. For more information, please contact the Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit, Early Intervention Program, at 724-774-7800 Ext. 3004.

Right to Participate

It is required by state and federal law that each year school districts notify parents of students with disabilities that their children have the same right to participate in extracurricular activities as do non-exceptional children. The reaction of most people to this notification is “Well, I already knew that.” The District is always pleased to hear that reaction, since it is hoped that no distinction is made. Nevertheless, the District wants parents and the public to know that students with disabilities have the right to participate in extracurricular activities.