

## ANNUAL PUBLIC NOTICE of SPECIAL EDUCATION

### Notice to Parents of Children Who Reside in the Bethlehem Area School District

**Special Education (Chapter 14):** The Bethlehem Area School District, either directly or through various other education agencies including Colonial Intermediate Unit #20, provides special education services, which children with special needs may require. In compliance with state and federal law, notice is hereby given by the Bethlehem Area 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 school 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:

1. Autism	8. Orthopedic impairment
2. Deaf-blindness	9. Other health impairment
3. Deafness	10. Specific learning disability
4. Emotional disturbance	11. Speech or language impairment
5. Hearing impairment	12. Traumatic brain injury
6. Intellectual disabilities	13. Visual impairment, including blindness
7. Multiple disabilities	

**Evaluation Process:** Bethlehem Area School District has a procedure in place by which parents can request an evaluation. If you believe that your school-age child may be in need of special education services and related programs, you may request screening and evaluation at any time whether or not your child is enrolled in the district's public school program. Child Find federal regulations also apply to highly mobile children, including migrant children. Requests for evaluation and screening are to be made in writing to the building principal, building guidance counselor, or to Claire M. Hogan; Director of Special Education.

**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 the Procedural Safeguards Notice which can be found at the PaTTAN website, [www.pattan.net](http://www.pattan.net) or the Bethlehem Area School District website. 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 (IEE) at public expense.

**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. Once the IEP team develops the program and determines the educational placement, a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP)/prior written notice is issued. Written consent is required before initial services can be provided. The parent has the right to revoke consent after initial placement.

**Early Intervention:** Early Intervention is a series of supports provided under the federal law called Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). All children had a right to Early Intervention Services when they are needed. Any family can use these services regardless of income status or health care benefits.

Early Intervention services provide services to the child and the family in a variety of settings with a focus on the use of natural settings. Early intervention services are family centered - meaning that the supports and services provided to the child and the families are based on the strengths and needs identified by the family. It is important to intervene as early as possible to maximize the child's development and to provide support to the family

Early Intervention is provided in Pennsylvania under the Office of Child Development and Early Learning and the Department of Public Education. The Office of Child Development and Early Learning funds Early Intervention from Birth to three years of age. The Department of Public Education funds Early Intervention services from 3 years to the age of beginners.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Children from birth to three years of age may receive services if:

- The child has a significant delay in development
- The child has a physical disability
- The child has a condition which has a high probability for developmental delay

There are children who may not meet the eligibility criteria for early intervention services but who may have conditions considered to be "at risk" **Infant Monitoring** can be provided for children who:

- Weigh under 3 ½ pounds at birth
- Have been cared for in a neonatal intensive care unit
- Are born to a chemically dependent mother
- Have been seriously abused or neglected
- Have confirmed lead poisoning

**Preschool Children with Special Needs (Age 3 to School Age):** Parents whose child has a developmental delay or one or more conditions as listed in the Special Education (Chapter 14) Notice above, and/or who have questions regarding their child's seeing, hearing, learning, talking, moving about, manipulating objects, understanding, showing emotions, getting along with others, playing with toys, taking care of himself/herself, should telephone Colonial Intermediate Unit #20 (CIU #20) at 610-252-5550, which offers Early Intervention, a preschool program for children with special needs. CIU #20 can provide information, screening, evaluation, programs, therapy, parent support, and referral to community agencies at no cost to the parent. For further information, call CIU #20 at 610-252-5550 or the Bethlehem Area School District Elementary Special Education Office at 610-868-8268.

**Protected Handicapped Students (Chapter 15):** In compliance with state and federal law, the Bethlehem 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 program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities.

In order to qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be school age with a physical or mental disability that 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 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, and rights to due process procedures regarding protected handicapped students, you may contact, in writing or by telephone, Claire M. Hogan; Director of Special Education or any building principal.

**Gifted Education (Chapter 16):** The Bethlehem Area School District provides gifted education services to school-age students identified as gifted who require these services to reach their potential. In compliance with state and federal law, notice is hereby given by the Bethlehem Area 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 gifted education services. If your child is identified by the school district as possibly in need of such services, you will be notified of applicable procedures. If you believe that your school-age child may be in need of gifted education services, you may request screening and evaluation at any time, whether or not your child is enrolled in the school district's public school program. Requests for evaluation and screening are to be made in writing to the building principal, guidance counselor, or Claire M. Hogan; Director of Special Education. 10181.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** All information gathered about your child is subject to the confidentiality provisions contained in federal and state law. The school district has policies and procedures in effect governing the collection, maintenance, destruction and disclosure to third parties of this information. Parents have the right to see and obtain a copy of their child's records. Personally identifiable information relative to an exceptional student will only be released with the permission of the parent and/or in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Pennsylvania Rules, Regulations, and Standards. For information about policies and procedures, as well as rights of confidentiality and access to educational records, you may contact in writing or by telephone, Claire M. Hogan; Director of Special Education or any building principal.