

GREENSBURG SALEM SCHOOL DISTRICT
Annual Public Notice of Special Education Services and Programs Services
for School Age Children with Disabilities

It is the responsibility of the Pennsylvania Department of Education to insure that all children with disabilities residing in the Commonwealth (including children with disabilities attending private schools, regardless of the severity of their disabilities), and who are in need of special education or related services, are identified, located, and evaluated. This responsibility is required by a federal law called the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, Amendments of 2004 (IDEA 2004)

The Greensburg Salem School District provides a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to children with disabilities who need special education and related services. FAPE is provided to students who need specially designed instruction and have one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities:

- Autism
- Deaf-blindness
- Deafness
- Emotional Disturbance
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual Disability (MR)
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech or Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment including Blindness

Screening

Greensburg Salem School District (GSSD) has established and implemented procedures to locate, identify, and evaluate children suspected of having disabilities. These procedures involve screening activities which include, but are not limited to: yearly review of group-based ability and achievement test scores, cumulative records, enrollment records, health records, and report cards; hearing screening, vision screening, motor screening; and speech and language screening.

Early Intervention

The IDEA 2004 also requires the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education to children with disabilities between three years of age and the school district's age of beginners. In Pennsylvania, a child between three years of age and the school district's age of beginners who has a developmental delay or one or more of the physical or mental disabilities listed in the first section may be identified as an "eligible young child."

Eligible young children are afforded the rights of school age children with disabilities, including screening, evaluation, individualized education program planning, and provision of appropriate programs and services. The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing programs and services to eligible young children under Act 212 of 1990, The Early Intervention Services System Act. The Westmoreland Intermediate Unit (724-836-2460) provides programs and services to eligible young children on behalf of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Except as indicated above or otherwise announced publicly; screening activities take place in an on-going fashion throughout the school year. Screening is conducted in the child's home school unless other arrangements are necessary.

Evaluation

When screening indicates that a child may be a child with disabilities, the GSSD will seek parental consent to conduct an evaluation. "Evaluation" means procedures used in the determination of whether a child has a disability and the nature and extent of the special education and related services that the child needs. The term means procedures used selectively with an individual child and is not limited to tests administered to or procedures used with all children.

In Pennsylvania, this evaluation is conducted by a group of qualified professionals and the parent. The group of qualified professionals shall include a certified school psychologist when evaluating a child for autism, emotional disturbance, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, other health impairments, specific learning disability, or traumatic brain injury. The evaluation process must be completed no later than sixty school days after the district receives written parental consent and must include "protection-in-evaluation procedures," (for example, tests and procedures used as part of the multidisciplinary evaluation process may not be racially or culturally biased.) Upon completion of the administration of tests and the collection of other evaluation materials, a group of qualified professionals and the parent of the child will determine whether the child is a child with a disability and what the educational needs are of the child. Information obtained from a variety of sources, including aptitude and achievement tests, parent input, teacher recommendations, physical condition, social or cultural background, and adaptive behavior will be documented and considered carefully. If a determination is made that a child has a disability and needs special education and related services an Individualized Education Program (IEP) must be developed for the child.

Identification Activities

Parents who think their child has a disability may request, at any time, that the GSSD conduct a multidisciplinary evaluation. This request should be made in writing to the Building Principal or the Office of the Director of Pupil Services. If a parent makes an oral request for a multidisciplinary evaluation, the school district shall provide the parent with a form for that written request.

Parents also have the right to obtain an independent educational evaluation, if they disagree with the school district's evaluation. GSSD will provide to parents, upon request, information about where an independent educational evaluation may be obtained.

Educational Placement

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) describes the child's present levels of educational performance, including how the child's disability affects involvement and progress in the general curriculum; a statement of measurable annual goals, including benchmarks or short-term objectives, to enable the child to be involved and progress in the general curriculum; a statement of special education related services and supplementary services to be provided to the child; an explanation of the extent to which the child will not participate with non-disabled children in the regular class; any modifications in the administration of assessments; the projected date for beginning services and modification; and how progress toward annual goals will be measured. For each child with a disability, beginning at age sixteen or younger, a statement of transition service needs will be included. In determining student placement, consideration will be given to ensure that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are non-disabled. Classes and services that involve removal of children with disabilities from the regular environment will occur only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes, with the use of supplementary aids and services, cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Services for Protected Handicapped Students

Students who are not eligible to receive special education programs and services may qualify as protected handicapped students and, therefore, be protected by other federal and state laws intended to prevent discrimination. The school district must insure that protected handicapped students have an equal opportunity to participate in the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate for each individual student.

In compliance with state and federal law, the 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 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" may be distinct from those applicable to disabled or "thought-to-be disabled students". The school district or the parent may initiate an evaluation if it is believed a student is a protected handicapped student.

For further information on the evaluation procedures and provision of services for protected handicapped students, parents should call the GSSD Coordinator of Student Services @ 724-832-2906.

Services for Students Who are Gifted

The Greensburg Salem School District utilizes a system to locate and identify all students within the district who are thought to be gifted and in need of specially-designed instruction. For more information, please contact the building principal.

**DO YOU THINK YOUR
PRESCHOOL AGE CHILD
HAS A DEVELOPMENT,
SPEECH OR
LEARNING
PROBLEM?**



If so call the...

WESTMORELAND INTERMEDIATE UNIT

Preschool/Early Intervention Program - Phone: 724.836.2460

- No cost regardless of income
- Screening, testing and instructional services
- Ages 3 thru 5 years
- All information is kept confidential