

ROCKWOOD AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Annual Public Notice of Special Education Services and Programs 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 the individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Amendments of 2004 (IDEA 2004).

The Rockwood Area 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, Developmental Delay, Emotional Disturbance, Hearing Impairment, Mental Retardation, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Specific Learning Disability, Speech or Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, Visual Impairment including Blindness. The District engages in identification procedures to ensure that all students receive an appropriate educational program consisting of special education and related services, which are individualized to meet the educational needs of the student and reasonably calculated to yield meaningful educational benefit and student progress at no cost to the parents and in compliance with State and Federal law.

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, Intermediate Units, and Charter Schools 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." Also, school districts are required to conduct Child Find activities for children who may be eligible for Gifted Services via 22 PA Code Chapter 16. 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 website. Children of 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 Mary Gosnell, Supervisor of Special Education and Student Services, Rockwood School District. (814) 926-4688 Ext. 1116

Parents who think their child is exceptional may request, at any time, that the school district conduct a multidisciplinary evaluation. This request should be made in writing to the Building Principal or Supervisor of Special Education. If a parent makes an oral request for a multidisciplinary evaluation, the

school district shall provide the parent with a written request form. Parents also have the right to obtain an independent educational evaluation. The Rockwood Area School District will provide parents, upon request, information about where an independent educational evaluation may be obtained. Under certain circumstances, such an independent educational evaluation may be obtained at public expense.

Identification Activities:

Screening: The Rockwood Area School District has established and implemented procedures to locate, identify, and evaluate children suspected of having a disability. These procedures involve screening activities which include, but are not limited to: yearly review of group-based data (cumulative records, enrollment records, health records, and report records); hearing screening (at a minimum of kindergarten, special ungraded classes, first, second, third, seventh, and eleventh grades); vision screening (every grade level); motor screening; and speech and language screening. In addition, the Rockwood Area School District uses early intervening services to verify that the student was provided appropriate instruction in reading, including the essential components of reading instruction, appropriate instruction in math, and an assessment of the student's performance in relation to State-approved grade level standards. Screening or early intervening services do not serve as a bar to the right of a parent to request evaluation, at any time, including prior to or during the conduct of early intervening activities. Except as indicated above or otherwise announced public 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 student may be a child with a disability, the Rockwood Area School District 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 requires. The term means procedures used selectively with an individual child and does not mean basic tests administered to or procedures used with all children. In Pennsylvania, this evaluation is conducted by a multidisciplinary team (MDT) that includes the parents and qualified professionals. The evaluation process must be completed no later than sixty calendar days after the district receives informed 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. The evaluation process results in a written evaluation report that specifies a student's eligibility for special education based on the presence of a disability and the need for specially designed instruction.

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, at www.Pattan.net. After written parental consent is obtained, the district will proceed with the evaluation process. If the parent disagrees with the evaluation, the parent can then request an independent education evaluation at public expense.

Educational Placement: If it is determined the student is eligible for special education services and the parent agrees to initiate services, the IEP team develops an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). This team includes at least one regular education teacher of the child (if the child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment), at least one special education teacher, a representative of the local education agency, the student whenever appropriate, or beginning at age 14, and the parents. The IEP describes the child's present levels of educational performance, goals, objectives (when required), and the individualized programs and services the child will receive. For each child with a disability, beginning at age fourteen or younger when deemed appropriate, 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. For information or to request an evaluation to determine if there is a need for special education, contact: Mary Gosnell, Supervisor of Special Education and Student Services, Rockwood Area School District, 437 Somerset Ave., Rockwood, PA 15557, (814) 926-4688 Ext. 1116

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Chapter 15 of the regulations of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education

The following serves as Annual Public Notice

Services for Handicapped Students (Section 504): The Rockwood Area School District maintains policies and procedures compliant with Section 504 and ensures non-discrimination in the provision of educational services to students with disabilities. 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 exceptional or thought-to-be exceptional 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 a protected handicapped student, parents should call your child's Building Principal. (Please note that this is a regular education service and not one required by IDEA or Chapter 14.)

Gifted Services: The Rockwood Area School District utilizes a system in accordance to 22 PA Code Chapter 16 to locate and identify all students within the District who are thought to be gifted and in need of specially designed instruction. For information regarding Gifted services, please contact the Building Principal.

Early Intervention The IDEA 2004 also requires the provision of FAPE to children with disabilities between three years of age and the school district's age of beginners who have 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. Potential signs of developmental delay and other risk factors that could indicate disabilities and the possibility that a child is an eligible young child could include: **By the age of 3:** not saying many words; not using 2 or 3 word phrases and sentences; not walking; awkward gait (walking); drooling; not able to answer "who" or "what" questions; not using utensil to feed self; **By the age of 4 (all of the above included):** not toilet trained; difficulty with directional words (in, on, under, out); not playing with other children; not able to draw a circle, cross or imitate a vertical line; not able to understand the child's speech most of the time; difficulty following simple two-step directions (pick up the paper and put it in the garbage); **By the age of 5 (all of the above included):** unable to answer

“where” questions; unable to recall details from a story; not drawing a person with at least 6 parts; immature speech patterns (me instead of I); not able to hop forward with one foot without support; **Other warning signs-at any age:** Little or no eye contact; over/under sensitivities to pain, light, noise; hand flapping; no awareness of space-always bumping into other people or things;awkward hand or foot positioning; won’t touch or eat certain textures; child no longer can do things he/she used to do; developed normally, then stopped; echoes what is said; plays with toys inappropriately (watches wheels spin on the car but doesn’t play with the car).

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. Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8 provides programs and services to eligible young children on behalf of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Preschool age children information, screenings and evaluation requests may be obtained by contacting Amy Woomer, Intermediate Unit 8 Director of Educational Programs and Services at the Intermediate Unit 8 Executive Office, 4500 Sixth Ave., Altoona, PA 16602. Phone: (814) 940-0223 Ext 1372.

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age, certain rights with respect to the students’ education records. Parents or students over 18 years of age have the right to inspect and review that student’s education record. The school district will comply with the request to inspect and review education records without unnecessary delay and before any meeting regarding an IEP or due process hearing, but in no case more that 45 days after the request has been made. Requests should be submitted in writing, indicating the records the parents wish to inspect, to the Building Principal or Student Services Supervisor. Parents have the right to a response from the school district to a reasonable request for explanations and interpretations of the records. Parents have the right to request copies of the records. While the district cannot charge a fee to search for or to retrieve information, it may charge a copying fee, as long as it does not effectively prevent the parents from exercising their right to inspect and review the records. Parents have the right to appoint a representative to inspect and review their child’s records. If any education record contains information on more than one child, parents (or students over 18 years of age) have the right only to inspect and review the information relating to their specific child.

If a parent (or student over 18 years of age) thinks information in an education record is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the privacy or other rights of the child,an amendment of the record may be requested. Requests should be made in writing and clearly identify the part of the record to be changed,and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. The school district will decide whether or not to amend the record and will notify the parents (student over 18 years of age), in writing, of its decision. If the school district refuses to amend a record, it will notify the parents (student over 18 years of age) of their right to a hearing to challenge the disputed information. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parents (student over 18 years of age) when notified of the right to a hearing. The school district will inform parents (student over 18 years of age) when personally identifiable information is no longer needed to provide educational services to a child. Such information must be destroyed at the request of the parents (student over 18 years of age). Parents (student over 18 years of age) have a right to receive a copy of the material to be destroyed; however, a permanent record of the student’s name, address, and telephone number, his or her grades, attendance record, classes attended, grade level completed, and year completed may be maintained without time limitation. “Destruction” of records means physical destruction or removal of personal identifiers from information, so that the information is no longer personally identifiable. The school district will provide, upon request, a listing of the types and locations of education records maintained, the school officials responsible for

these records, and the school personnel authorized to see personally identifiable information. Such personnel receive training and instruction regarding confidentiality. The school district keeps a record of parties obtaining access to education records, including the name of the party, the date access was given, and the purpose for which the party is authorized to use the records.

Parents (or student over 18 years of age) have the right to consent to the disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorized disclosure without consent. "Consent" means: the parent(s) (or student over 18 years of age) have/has been fully informed regarding the activity requiring consent, in the native language or other mode of communication; they understand and agree in writing to the activities, and they understand that the consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time. Information may be disclosed without consent 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); person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a special 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 tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility. Directory information, as defined above, may be released without parent consent. Parents have the right to refuse to let an agency designate any or all of the above information as directory information. Upon request, the district discloses education records to officials of another school district, in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

Confidentiality of Information

Confidentiality: The Rockwood Area School District protects the confidentiality of personally identifiable information regarding children with disabilities, children thought to have disabilities, protected handicapped students (if not protected by IDEA 2004 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. The School District, Intermediate Units, and Charter Schools maintain records concerning all children enrolled in the school, including students with disabilities. All records are maintained in the strictest confidentiality. Parental 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, parents may refer to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Parent(s) (or student over 18 years of age) have a right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

"Education records" means those records that are directly related to the student, including computer media and videotape, which are maintained by an educational agency or a party acting for the agency. "Educational Agency", for purposes of this notice means the local school district, and/or the

Appalachia Intermediate Unit. For all students, the educational agency maintains education records which include but are not limited to:

Personally Identifiable Information is confidential information that includes, but is not limited to the student's name, name of parents and other family members, the address of the student or student's family, and personal information or personal characteristics which would make the student's identity easily traceable.

Directory Information is Information contained in an education record of a student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy, if disclosed. It includes, but is not limited to, the student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study (secondary students), participation in officially-recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the name of the most previous educational agency or institution attended.

Retention/Destruction of Student Records- Special Education

In accordance with state and federal regulations implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), this notice is hereby given that in accordance with 24CFR 300.573, the School District, Intermediate Unit and Charter Schools may destroy the special education records of students who exited from any special education program.

Special education records, which have been collected by the School District, Intermediate Unit and Charter Schools related to the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or the provision of the Special Education in the district, IU or charter school must be maintained under state and federal law for a period of seven (7) years after Special Education services have ended for the student. Special education services end when the student is no longer eligible for services, graduates, completes his or her educational program at age 21, or moves from the School District, Intermediate Unit, or Charter School.

After seven (7) years, the records are no longer useful to the School District, Intermediate Unit or Charter School and will be destroyed in accordance with state and federal law unless the parent/guardian or eligible (adult) student contacts the responsible district that the parent/guardian or eligible (adult) student wishes to maintain the information as a personal record. These records may be useful to the parent/guardian or former student when applying for post-secondary education/training, benefits or social services.

Records including student's name, address, grades, attendance, dates attended, grade level completed and year completed may be destroyed after seven (7) years have passed from the student's 21st birthday. If you wish to request records or need additional information you may contact the Student Services Office. Destruction will proceed where parents/guardians or eligible (adult) students have not requested records in accordance with the School District's, Intermediate Unit's or Charter School's Notice of Destruction of Special Education Records.

Destruction of State Exams

In accordance with 34 CFR 300.624 Pennsylvania Department of Education has advised that the PSSA, Keystone Exam and PASA test booklets will be destroyed one year after student reports are delivered for the administration associated with the test booklets. PSSA and Keystone Exams answer booklets and PASA media recordings will be destroyed three years after completion of the assessment. Please note that these test materials are housed with the Pennsylvania Department of Education and not at the Rockwood School District. Complaints may be filed with: Family Policy Compliance Office U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W. Washington, D. C. 20202-4605