

## **WEST MIFFLIN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT ANNUAL PUBLIC NOTICE ON SCREENING AND EVALUATION**

The West Mifflin Area School District uses the following procedures for locating, identifying, and evaluating specified needs of school-aged students requiring special programs or services. These procedures are described in this notice as required by law.

The District, as prescribed by Section 1402 of the School Code, routinely conducts screenings of a child's hearing acuity in grades Kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, 7, and 11. Visual acuity is screened in all grades annually. Speech and language skills are screened in Kindergarten and on a referral basis. New students are initially screened the year of admission. Gross motor and fine motor skills, academic skills, and social-emotional skills are assessed by classroom teachers on an on-going basis. Other screening activities include the review of cumulative group-based achievement and ability data; health and attendance records; grades; and information shared by the parents. Specified needs from all of these screening sources are noted within the child's official file. School records are always open and available to parents, and only to school officials who have legitimate "need to know" information about the student. Information from the records is released to other persons or agencies only with appropriate authorization that involves written signed permission by parents.

Parents with concerns regarding their child may contact building principals at any time to request a screening or evaluation of their child, or by contacting the Special Education Department. (Names and phone numbers of the appropriate contacts are listed at the end of this notice.) Communication with parents and eligible students shall be in English or the native language of the parents.

Screening information will be used by the Instructional Support Team or Student Assistance Team within the student's school to meet his or her specific needs, or to document the need for further evaluation. Instructional Support Team services are provided to students in grades Kindergarten to grade four. Student Assistance Team services are provided to students in grades five through 12. If it is determined that a student needs additional services, the team will make adjustments relative to such things as the student's learning style and behavior, physical, or speech needs to be more in keeping with traditional classroom expectancies. If a student does not make progress, parents will be asked to give written permission for further individual, professional evaluations conducted by a Multidisciplinary Team.

The Multidisciplinary Team consists of parents, teachers, a certified public school psychologist, other related service personnel, and persons familiar with the student's educational experience and cultural background. The evaluations conducted by the Team must be sufficient in scope and depth to provide information about the student's academic functioning, adaptive and social behavior, learning problems, strengths, information obtained by the Instructional Support Team or Student Assistance Team, and information from the parents. After all evaluations are completed, an Evaluation Report (ER) will be compiled and include specific recommendations for the types of interventions necessary to deal with the student's specific needs. This evaluation will be completed and a report sent to the parents within **60 calendar days**. Parents are then invited to participate in a meeting where the results of the evaluation will be discussed.

If the student meets criteria for the presence of a disability and need for specially designed instruction, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will then be developed for specialized services for the student within **30 calendar days**. The IEP team must consist of: the student's parent(s), special education teacher, regular education teacher(s), and local education agency representative (LEA). The building principal, Special Education Liaison will serve as the chair/LEA, and a district psychologist, other specialists as needed, and other administrative staff when appropriate may attend.

Prior to the initiation of services, parents will be presented with a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement, which explains the services and class placement recommendations. Parental consent must be obtained before providing initial special education and related services. The Procedural Safeguards Notice describes the parents' rights and options if they disagree with the individualized program presented.

When screening results suggest a student may be eligible for Gifted Education, the school district seeks parental consent to conduct a multidisciplinary evaluation. The initial evaluation is summarized in the Gifted Written Report (GWR) and used by the Gifted Individualized Education Program (GIEP) team to develop the GIEP. After the initial evaluation, students identified as mentally gifted are reevaluated before a change in educational placement is recommended or under recommendation of the GIEP team. The Notice of Recommended Assignment (NORA), signed by the parent, gives the school district permission to provide services.

### **Services for Eligible School-Age Students**

The West Mifflin Area School District provides a full range of placement options and services to eligible students. Options in the district range from supportive intervention in the regular classroom to full-time classes, depending on the student's individual needs. Inclusive intervention practices are the first step in the continuum of placement options. If a placement option is not available within the District to meet the student's needs, then services are secured from the Intermediate Unit, another school district, an approved private school, or a community agency. Placement options provide for a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for all eligible students. The District also provides such related services as transportation, speech and language therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, nursing services, psychological services, social worker services, and paraeducator support.

The following programs are provided within the District: Learning Support, Life Skills Support, Emotional Support, Autistic Support, Blind or Visually Impaired Support, Deaf and Hearing Impaired Support, Speech and Language Support, and Gifted Support. Programs outside of the District include: Emotional Support at Pressley Ridge School, Pace School, Wesley Spectrum Highland School, Wesley Spectrum Academy, Wesley Spectrum Integrated Program, and Therapeutic Learning Center at Family Links; Learning Support at Katherine Dean Tillotson School; Life Skills Support at Mon Valley School, Pathfinder School, and the Children's Institute; Blind or Visually Impaired Support at Western Pennsylvania School for the Blind; Deaf and Hearing Impaired Support at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf a; Autistic Support at Pathfinder School, Mon Valley School, Pressley Ridge Day School for Autism, Therapeutic Learning Center at Family Links, and Education Center at the Watson Institute; and Multiple Disabilities Support at the Children's Institute, and Pathfinder School.

### **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, defined as children from birth through two years of age. Contact the Alliance for Infants and Toddlers at 2801 Custer Avenue, 2nd Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15227, (412) 885-6000, or on the internet at <http://www.afit.org/>.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing services to preschool age children from three to five years of age. Contact Project DART of the Allegheny Intermediate Unit at 475 E. Waterfront Drive, Homestead, PA 15120, (412) 394-5736, or on the internet at <http://www.aiu3.net/>.

### **Information Regarding Signs of Developmental Delays and Other Risk Factors for Parents to Look for that May Indicate the Possibility of a Disability**

If your child is less than the age of beginners (age 5 before September 1) and at least 3 years of age, your child may be considered to have a developmental delay when difficulties exist in the areas of cognitive, communicative, physical, social/emotional and self-help development where a delay in comparison to typical development is present. Parents who have questions about their child's development or possible presence of a disability may talk with their family physician or health care provider or contact the Allegheny County Health Department at 412-687-2243.

If you have questions regarding difficulties your child may be experiencing, please contact the Special Education Department at 412-948-1109.

### **Protected Handicapped Students/Chapter 15**

The West Mifflin Area School District, in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Chapter 15 of the Pennsylvania Public School Code, will provide without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services, or accommodations which are needed to provide the student 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. These services and protections for protected handicapped students are distinct from those applicable to all eligible students in special education programs.

For further information on the evaluation procedures and provisions of services to protected handicapped students, contact the Special Education Department at 412-948-1109.

### **Confidentiality of Student Records**

West Mifflin Area School District and its employees are required by Federal Law and State and Federal Rules and Regulations to protect the rights of students. The foundation of these rights comes from Federal legislation entitled, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (also known as the Buckley Amendments). There are State Rules and Regulations dealing with regular and special education students' rights and privacy. All students are covered by the State Regulations contained in Chapter 12 known as Students' Rights and Responsibilities.

The basic premise of the above-mentioned laws, rules, and regulations is that information about students cannot be disclosed without written parental consent. There are different categories of information: Educational Records, Personally Identifiable Information, and Directory Information. Educational Records consist of information directly related to students which are maintained by the educational agency. Personally Identifiable Information includes the student's name, the name of the parent or other family members, a personal identifier or a list of personal characteristics that would make the student's identity easily traceable.

Education Records and Personally Identifiable Information cannot be disclosed or released without written parent consent, or if a student is over 18, without student permission. There is certain information that can be released without consent, which is called Directory Information. Directory Information means information contained in an educational record of a student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. The School District designates what information is labeled as Directory Information. It shall include the following: the student's name, address, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student.

Disclosure of information means to permit access to or the release, transfer, or other communication of education records, or the personally identifiable information contained in these records, to any party, by any means, including oral, written, or electronic means. This means that information about a student cannot even be shared in conversation without permission. This also applies to other West Mifflin Area personnel who do not have an educationally relevant reason to possess knowledge of a student.

Written parental consent is necessary for disclosure of Personally Identifiable Information and Educational Records. The consent must: (1) specify the records that may be disclosed; (2) state the purpose of the disclosure; (3) identify the party or class of parties to whom the disclosure may be made. Furthermore, the West Mifflin Area School District must maintain a written record of disclosure for the parents to inspect in case information has been released.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

The West Mifflin Area School District will not discriminate in its education programs, activities, or employment practice, based on race, color, national origin, sex, sexual preference, disability, age, religion, ancestry, union membership, or any other legally protected classification. Announcement of this policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Employees and participants who have an inquiry or complaint of harassment or discrimination, or who need information about accommodations for persons with disabilities, should contact: Office of the Superintendent, 301 Church Road, West Mifflin Area, PA 15102, (412) 854-8402; or the Director of the Office of Civil Rights, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202-1100.

**Elementary Schools, grades K – 3**

**Clara Barton**

764 Beverly Drive, West Mifflin, PA 15122

Mrs. Noelle Haney, Principal

412-466-9131, Ext 4001

**Homeville**

4315 Eliza Street, West Mifflin, PA 15122

Ms. Melissa Welsh, Principal

412-466-9131, Ext 7002

**New Emerson**

1922 Pennsylvania Avenue, West Mifflin, PA 15122

Mr. Christopher Hanna, Principal

412-466-9131, Ext 6001

**Middle Schools, grades 4-8**

**West Mifflin Area Middle School**

81 Commonwealth Ave, West Mifflin, PA 15122

Mr. Brian Plichta, Principal

Mr. Michael Sable, Principal

Ms. Pamela Oliver, Assistant Principal

412-466-9131, Ext 2003

**West Mifflin Area High School**

91 Commonwealth Avenue, West Mifflin, PA 15122

Mr. Philip Woods, Principal

Mr. Robert Campana, Assistant Principal

Mr. Chad Licht, Assistant Principal

412-466-9131, Ext. 1005

**Special Education Department**

West Mifflin Area School District

3000 Lebanon Church Road

Mr. Clifford Bowers, Special Education Liaison

Ms. Karen McClain, Confidential Secretary - Special Education

412-466-9131, Ext. 2024