



ANNUAL NOTICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES AND CHILD FIND

Propel Schools provides a free, appropriate public education to 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 one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities as set forth in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act which was re-authorized in 2004.

- Autism/Pervasive Developmental Disorder
- Blindness/Visual Impairment
- Deaf Blindness
- Deafness/Hearing Impairment
- Emotional Disturbance
- Mental Retardation
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Physical Disability
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech and Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury

Students who are eligible for special education are provided with a continuum of services designed to meet their individual needs. These services may include supportive intervention in the regular class, supplemental intervention in the regular class, or in a special education resource program, placement in a part-time or full-time special education class in a regular school or placement in a fulltime special education class outside of the regular school. The extent of special education services and the location for the delivery of such services are determined by the IEP team (including parents and staff) at the IEP team meeting and is based on the student's identified needs and abilities, chronological age, and the intensity of the specified intervention. Propel Schools also provides related services, such as transportation, physical therapy, and occupational therapy, that is required to enable the student to derive educational benefits. Special education services within the school district include: learning support, emotional support, life skills support, speech and language support, vision support and hearing support.

SCREENING AND EVALUATION

Propel Schools has a three-part screening process in place that identifies any student who may need special education.

LEVEL 1: Review of Group-Based Data

The building principals, general education teachers, and resource teachers review enrollment information, academic and health records, and results from group-based tests such as Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Measure of Academic Performance Assessment (MAP), Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), 4- Sight Assessments, and the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA). For incoming kindergarten students, results from a kindergarten readiness screening are examined. Data gathered through a thorough review of records may prompt a referral for screening of a child for special education.

LEVEL 2: Review of Hearing, Vision, Motor, Speech and Language

As prescribed by Section 1402, Propel Schools routinely conducts screenings of a child's hearing acuity each year in kindergarten, first, second, third, and seventh grade. Vision acuity is screened annually in grades kindergarten through 8. Speech and language skills are screened in kindergarten and upon referral to the speech pathologist. Gross motor and fine motor skills, academic and social-emotional skills are assessed by the general education teachers, resource teachers, and support staff on an on-going basis. Specified needs from all of these screening sources are noted within the child's official file, discussed with parents and, and when appropriate, referred to the Instruction Support Team which meets monthly to conduct various on-going screening and to develop interventions

LEVEL 3: Instructional Support Team (IST)

IST is a group process aimed to maximize individual student success in the regular classroom, consider barriers to learning, and to serve as a screening process for students who may be in need of special education services. IST is a positive, team based process which uses intervention techniques to help remove educational, behavioral or affective stumbling blocks for all students in the regular classroom. IST program runs from kindergarten through grade 8. Referrals for IST may be initiated by the parent, classroom teacher or any staff member. IST includes general education teachers, special education teachers, math coach, literacy coach, guidance counselors, behavior coaches, and administrators.

IST Process:

- A. Identify the student's needs for academic and behavioral support and identify the strategies that have been tried within the classroom.
- B. Determine more specific interventions to be implemented
- C. Implement the interventions
- D. Determine if the interventions are addressing the student's needs
 1. If the interventions work, continue the interventions
 2. If the interventions do not work, determine if the interventions need more time to be implemented or refer the student for a multidisciplinary evaluation (MDE)

Parents or guardians may request that their child be screened or evaluated for special education services. Requests for screening or evaluation should be made in writing and directed to the attention of Ms. Mandi Davis Skerbetz, Pupil Services Coordinator.

All information collected as part of an individual student referral or evaluation is treated in a confidential manner and does not become part of the student's permanent record file. A written policy regarding the confidentiality of student records is available for review by contacting the Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Carol Wooten at 412-325-7305 ext. 106.

Parent or guardians should request an evaluation for special education services if their child demonstrates warning signs of a developmental delay.

What are the warning signs of a developmental delay?

There are several general “warning signs” of possible delay. These include:

- Behavioral Warning Signs
 - Does not pay attention or stay focused on an activity for as long a time as other children of the same age
 - Focuses on unusual objects for long periods of time; enjoys this more than interacting with others
 - Avoids or rarely makes eye contact with others
 - Gets unusually frustrated when trying to do simple tasks that most children of the same age can do
 - Shows aggressive behaviors and acting out and appears to be very stubborn compared with other children
 - Displays violent behaviors on a daily basis
 - Stares into space, rocks body, or talks to self more often than other children of the same age
 - Does not seek love and approval from a caregiver or parent

- Gross Motor Warning Signs
 - Has stiff arms and/or legs
 - Has a floppy or limp body posture compared to other children of the same age
 - Uses one side of body more than the other
 - Has a very clumsy manner compared with other children of the same age

- Vision Warning Signs
 - Seems to have difficulty following objects or people with his/her eyes
 - Rubs eyes frequently
 - Turns, tilts or holds head in a strained or unusual position when trying to look at an object
 - Seems to have difficulty finding or picking up small objects dropped on the floor (after the age of 12 months)
 - Has difficulty focusing or making eye contact
 - Closes one eye when trying to look at distant objects
 - Eyes appear to be crossed or turned
 - Brings objects too close to eyes to see
 - One or both eyes appear abnormal in size or coloring

- Hearing Warning Signs
 - Talks in a very loud or very soft voice
 - Seems to have difficulty responding when called from across the room, even when it is for something interesting
 - Turns body so that the same ear is always turned toward sound
 - Has difficulty understanding what has been said or following directions after once he/she has turned 3 years of age
 - Doesn't startle to loud noises
 - Ears appear small or deformed
 - Fails to develop sounds or words that would be appropriate at his/her age