

Moon Area School District

Annual Notices

Guidelines for Screening, Evaluating Students

The Moon Area School District is responsible for locating, identifying and educating school-aged students requiring special programs or services. If anyone in the community is aware of a child who is in need of special services and/or programs, please notify the Moon Area School District Director of Pupil Services Michael A. Haslett at 412-264-9440 (ext. 1114).

The district as prescribed by section 1402 of the school code, routinely conducts screenings of a child's hearing (kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 7th, and 11th grade), visual acuity (every year beginning with kindergarten), Body Mass Index screening (kindergarten through 12th grade), and screening for speech and language skills (when a referral is made by parent, teacher, or Child Study Team).

Gross motor and fine-motor skills, academic skills, and social and/or emotional skills are assessed by classroom teachers and support staff on an ongoing basis. Screening activities include review of group-based data, such as cumulative enrollment and health records, report cards, and ability and achievement test scores. Identified needs from these screening sources as well as information obtained from parents and outside agencies, are assessed and noted within student records. These school records are always open and available to parents, and only to school officials who have a legitimate "need to know" information about the child. Information from the records is released to other persons or agencies only with appropriate authorization, which involves written permission by parents. Parents who have concerns regarding their student may contact building principals at any time to request a screening or evaluation of their child. Communication with parents and exceptional students shall be in English or the native language of the parents.

If appropriate, screening information will be used by the Child Screening Team within the student's school to meet his/her specific needs or to document the need for further evaluation.

If it is determined that a child needs additional services, the screening team will make adjustments relative to such things as the child's learning style, behavior, physical inabilities, and speech problems to be more in keeping with traditional classroom expectancies. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the planning and implementation of intervention strategies. If a student does not make expected progress with this assistance, the team can revise the intervention plan or refer the student for a multidisciplinary evaluation (MDE). Parents must provide written informed consent before any evaluations can be completed. The purpose of the MDE is to establish the student's eligibility and need for special education and/or related services.

After all of the evaluations are completed, an Evaluation Report (ER) will be compiled with parent involvement and include specific recommendations for the types of intervention necessary to deal with the child's specified needs. When the ER is completed, in accordance with state regulations, a meeting of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team will be scheduled with parent involvement in order

to develop a plan for the student who has been found to be eligible for and in need of special education services. Parents of students who suspect that their child is exceptional and in need of special education may request a multidisciplinary team evaluation (MDE) for their child by making a written request to the building principal. Information about early intervention, parent rights, medication, due process procedures, specific special education services and programs offered by the district and the district's educational records policy are available upon request from the building principal in each building.

Further information about these procedures may be obtained by calling Michael A. Haslett, director of special education, at 412-264-9440 (ext. 1114).

Services for Students in Nonpublic Schools

Special education programs are accessible to nonpublic school students following the multidisciplinary team evaluation, which includes input from nonpublic schools via their attendance, conference calls, or written input for development of an individualized education program (IEP).

Parents of nonpublic school students who suspect that their child is exceptional and in need of special education may request a multidisciplinary team evaluation (MDE) for their child through a written request to the director of special education.

Services for Protected Handicapped Students / Chapter 15 Regulations

In compliance with state and federal law, the Moon 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 programs and extracurricular activities to the extent appropriate to the student's abilities. 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" are distinct from those applicable to all students with disabilities enrolled (or seeking enrollment) in special education programs. To obtain additional information about the evaluation procedures and provisions of services to protected handicapped students, contact Michael A. Haslett, director of special education, at 412-264-9440 (ext. 1114).

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, which is defined as children from birth through 2 years of age. Contact The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers, Hough Building 2nd Floor, 2801 Custer Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15227 Telephone 412-885-6000. The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing services to preschool age children from ages 3 through 5. For more information, please contact the Allegheny Intermediate Unit 3/ DART Program, 475 East Waterfront Drive, Homestead, PA 15120 at 412-394-5736.

Confidentiality of Student Records

Moon Area School District maintains a cumulative student record for each child. This information is kept in order to assist in the day-to-day operation of the educational programs as well as meeting the requirements of federal and state laws. These rights are guaranteed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 1974 and the Pennsylvania State Board of Education Regulations. These rights apply whether your child is exceptional or non-exceptional. The information regarding each child includes: student identification and attendance data, information on schoolwork completed and results of achievement and standardized group tests. Records of standardized tests taken by secondary students on a voluntary basis, usually for college entrance purposes, are also recorded.

FERPA also affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s educational records. These rights include: 1) The right to inspect and review the student’s educational records within 30 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. 2) The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that a parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate. Parents or eligible students may ask the school to amend a record they believe is inaccurate. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing. 3) The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as attorney, auditor, medical consultant or therapist), bus drivers, food service personnel 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. Student records may also be disclosed to a court without consent and without a court order or subpoena, if a parent or student over 18 years of age initiates legal action against a school entity. Complaints asserting FERPA violations are filed with and reviewed and investigated by the U.S. Department of Education, Family Compliance Office, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, D.C., 20202-5901. Phone: 202-260-3882. Informal inquiries may be sent to: ferpa@ed.gov. or ppra@ed.gov. The web site address is: www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guide/fpcd.

If a child transfers to another school system, records will be forwarded after notification of enrollment is received from the new school. High school students' transcripts will be released to post-secondary or prospective employers with the written permission of the parents or eligible student.

Various non-confidential information can be released to outside agencies. This includes information such as names of academic award winners and athletic team members. If you do not desire this type of information to be released, please notify the building principal in writing. Confidential information such as psychological, psychiatric, and other information regarding students' special needs may be released only with a written parental request.

According to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, directory information concerning a student may be included in publications such as sports programs, newspapers, radio and television news releases, awards and graduation programs, yearbooks, musical and play programs and other school publications. This directory information may include data relating to a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major fields of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weights and heights of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received and other similar information. Parents who wish to have their children exempted from published lists of directory information may do so by informing the principal in writing. Parents or students may request a copy of Moon Area's student records policy from the building principal or superintendent's office. If you would like to see any of these records at any time, please call to make an appointment with the principal. For further information regarding this policy, contact: Curt Baker, Superintendent, Moon Area School District, 8353 University Boulevard, Moon Township, PA 15108.

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232h; 34 CFR Part 98) applies to programs that receive funding from the U.S. Department of Education (ED). PPRA is intended to protect the rights of parents and students in two ways. It seeks to ensure that schools and contractors make instructional materials available for inspection by parents if those materials will be used in connection with an ED-funded survey, analysis, or evaluation in which their children participate; and it seeks to ensure that schools and contractors obtain written parental consent before minor students are required to participate in any ED-funded survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning: 1 Political affiliations; 2 Mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the student and his/her family; 3 Sex behavior and attitudes; 4 Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior; 5 Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships; 6 Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers; or 7 Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

Parents or students who believe their rights under PPRA may have been violated may file a complaint with ED by writing the Family Policy Compliance Office. Complaints must contain specific allegations of fact giving reasonable cause to believe that a violation of PPRA occurred.

For additional information or technical assistance, you may call 202-260-3887 (voice). Individuals who use TDD may call the Federal Information Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339. Or you may contact us at the following address: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington D.C. 20202-5920.

Right to Participate: It is required by state and federal law that each year school districts notify parents of students with disabilities that their children have the same right to participate in extracurricular activities as do non-exceptional children. The reaction of most people to this notification is, "Well, I already knew that." The district is always pleased to hear that reaction, since it is hoped that no distinction is made. Nevertheless, the district wants parents and the public to know that students with disabilities have the right to participate in extracurricular activities.

Services for School Age Students with Disabilities

The School District provides a free, appropriate public education to disabled 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 mentally gifted and/or one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities as set forth in the Pennsylvania State Standards: autism/pervasive developmental disorder, blindness/visual impairment, deafness/hearing impairment, intellectual disability, multi-handicap, neurological impairment, physical disability, serious emotional disturbance, specific learning disability, speech/language impairment, and other health impairments.

Services designed to meet the needs of eligible students include the annual development of an individualized education plan (IEP), triennial multidisciplinary reevaluation (except for those students with intellectual disabilities where reevaluation remains biennial), 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 full-time 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 parents and staff at the IEP team meeting and are based on the student's identified needs and abilities, chronological age, and the level of intensity of the specified intervention. The school district also provides related services, such as transportation, physical therapy, and occupational therapy, which are required to enable the student to derive educational benefits.

Students receiving special education services, including individuals with disabilities who are enrolled in approved private schools or cross-district placements, are encouraged to participate in the athletic and activity programs offered by the district.

Prior to the initiation of services, parents are presented a "Notice of Recommended Educational Placement" (NOREP) with which they may agree or disagree. If parents disagree with the program being recommended, they have the right to request a pre-hearing conference, mediation, and/or a due process hearing.

Copies of the Procedural Safeguards Notice are issued when the Permission to Evaluate/Reevaluate Form is sent to parents and at each IEP team meeting. Copies of this notice are also available in the offices of each school and at Central Administration.

English as a Second Language Services (ESL)

In accordance with federal law and state regulations, the Moon Area School District must identify all students who have "limited English proficiency" (LEP). These students typically have a primary language other than English that is used in their homes. Students identified with a limited English proficiency are eligible for ESL instructional services to help them attain proficient skills in their use of the written and spoken English language. All students must have a Home Language Survey completed by their parents prior to admission into the school district. This survey allows the Moon Area School District to identify possible LEP students. The ESL teacher will screen any student identified as possibly having a limited English proficiency and will provide direct services to students based on their level of need. Parents or guardians who feel their child may have a limited English proficiency should contact Michael A. Haslett, director of special education, at 412-264-9440 (ext. 1114) for more information.

Gifted Support Program

The Moon Area School District operates a gifted support (Challenge) program that is available for all eligible students. Chapter 16 Special Education Regulations for Gifted Students in Pennsylvania defines a "mentally gifted" student in the following manner:

Outstanding intellectual and creative ability, the development of which requires individually designed programs and/or support services not ordinarily provided in the regular education program. This term includes a person who has an IQ of 130 or higher when multiple criteria, as set forth in the Department Guidelines, indicate gifted ability. Determination of gifted ability will not be based on IQ score alone. A person with an IQ score lower than 130 may be admitted to gifted programs when other educational criteria in the profile of the student strongly indicate gifted ability. Determination of mentally gifted shall include an assessment by a certified school psychologist.

To gather all relevant information prior to determining a student's eligibility, a Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE) must be completed within 60 calendar days of the district's receipt of the parental permission for initial evaluation. Upon completion of this process, a Gifted Written Report (GWR) will be developed and presented to parents. The GWR will include information related to the student's strengths and needs as well as make recommendations as to whether the student is gifted and in need of specially designed instructions.

If a student is identified as being mentally gifted, a Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP) team, including the parent(s), must convene in order to develop a GIEP within 30 days of issuance of the GWR. The GIEP will outline the planned instruction to be provided for the gifted student. The GIEP is reviewed at least annually for its appropriateness and will include annual educational goals and short-term learning outcomes to help the student achieve the goals. Upon completion of the initial GIEP, parents are presented with a Notice of Recommended Assignment (NORA) with which they can elect to agree or disagree with the district's proposed program. If agreement between parents and the district cannot be reached, parents may request mediation or an impartial due process hearing.

To obtain additional information about the gifted support program, contact your child's building principal or Neil English, director of gifted, guidance and school counseling, at 412-264-9440 x1150.

Highly Qualified Teachers

No Child Left Behind requires that all public school teachers in core academic subjects (English, reading/language arts, mathematics, sciences, foreign languages, music and art, and social studies) be highly qualified. To satisfy the definition of a highly qualified teacher in Pennsylvania, teachers must:

1. Hold at least a bachelor's degree;
2. Hold a valid Pennsylvania teaching certificate (i.e., Instructional I, Instructional II or Intern certificate but not an emergency permit); and
3. Demonstrate subject matter competency for the core content area they teach.

In 2014-15, 100 percent of the teachers in the Moon Area School District met or exceeded the highly qualified criteria.

Parent's Right to Know

As stipulated in the No Child Left Behind Act, parents/guardians may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teacher(s). Specifically, individuals have the right to ask for the following information:

- Whether the student's teacher met state qualifying and licensing criteria for the grade level or subject he/she is teaching;
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status;
- The teacher's college major, the baccalaureate degree, and/or any advanced degrees earned by the teacher;
- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

To obtain this information, please submit your request in writing to Bill Addy, director of human resources, at the address listed. Each request should include the student's name, his/her teachers' names and the school he/she attends. Please be certain to include your name, address and a phone number at which you can be contacted during the day.

Moon Area School District
Attn. Bill Addy
Human Resources Department
8353 University Boulevard
Moon Township, PA 15108
412-264-9440 ext. 1153