

**BETHEL PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ANNUAL PUBLIC NOTICE -- 2019–2020**

The Bethel Park 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 but are not limited to 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 a 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 Services 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 Intervention 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. Student Assistance Team services are provided to students in grades kindergarten through 12. The pre-referral process identifies those students at-risk for academic or behavioral needs and includes parental involvement in making determinations as to whether a student may benefit from intervention services. Individual student plans are developed and monitoring of specific goals with data to determine student progress and efficacy of interventions are put into place. If a student is not making sufficient progress, a referral for evaluation may be issued by the school district or a parent may request a multi-disciplinary evaluation at any time.

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 Intervention 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 meet 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 specially designed instruction 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, Director of Special Services, or Assistant Director of Special Services 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 educational 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. Additionally, a parent may request a multi-disciplinary evaluation at any time. 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 Bethel Park School District provides a free, appropriate, public education to eligible students. To qualify as an eligible student, the child must be of school age, in need of 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 and Pennsylvania State Regulations: Autism, Deaf-Blindness, Deafness, Emotional Disturbance, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Specific Learning Disability, Speech or Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, or Visual Impairment including Blindness.

The Bethel Park 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 itinerant, supplemental, or full-time levels of intervention, depending on the student's individual needs. Inclusive intervention practices of the general education curriculum and classroom with supplementary aids and services are the first step in the continuum of placement options. Other placement options to meet the student's needs may include, but are not limited to services secured from the Intermediate Unit, another school district, an approved private school, or a private licensed academic school program. Placement options provide for a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for all eligible students. The District also provides related services such as, but not limited to: transportation, speech and language therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, nursing services, psychological services, social worker services, paraeducator support, and personal care assistant services.

The following programs are currently 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. As evidence of the full continuum of services, educational placements outside of the District have included, but are not limited to: Emotional Support at Pace School, Wesley School Programs, and Therapeutic Learning Center at Family Links; Learning Support at Katherine Dean Tillotson School; Life Skills Support at Mon Valley School, Pathfinder School, Education Center at the Watson Institute, 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 and the DePaul School for Hearing and Speech; Autistic Support at Wesley School Programs, Pathfinder School, Mon Valley School, Pressley Ridge Day School for Autism, and Therapeutic Learning Center at Family Links; and Multiple Disabilities Support at the Children's Institute and Pathfinder School.

### **Services for Students Identified as Homeless and/or Foster Care**

The Bethel Park School District follows all protections outlined in the McKinney Vento Act related to ensuring that any child identified as homeless or in foster care has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children. The District implements child find activities for other students in addition to those identified as homeless or in foster care such as wards of the state, highly mobile children, and migrant children in order to provide equal access to evaluations and services. Further information may be obtained by contacting the District's Special Services Department at 412-854-8410.

### **Services for Students in Nonpublic Schools**

Parents of non-public school students who suspect that their child has a disability and is need of special education may request a multidisciplinary evaluation through a written request to the District's Special Services Department. Parents can obtain further information by contacting their child's school principal or the District's Special Services Department at 412-854-8410.

### **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 including screening, evaluation, individualized education program planning, and provision of appropriate programs and 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, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15227, (412) 885-6000, or on the internet at <http://www.afil.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/>.

Bethel Park School District ensures that all students transitioning from early intervention programs to kindergarten or first grade programs within the District are transitioned without disruption of services. Parents of children entering school age programs are notified of the District's transition activities, which occur before kindergarten registration of each year. The District follows the federal and state regulations pertaining to the evaluation process and based on identified needs, subsequent documentation and provision of special education and related services.

### **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 Services Department at 412-854-8410.

Potential signs of developmental delay and other risk factors that could indicate the presence of a disability may include:

By the age of 3: Not saying many words; not using 2-3 word phrases and sentences; not walking; awkward gait (walking); excessive salivation; not answering "show" or "what" questions; and/or not using utensils 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; and/or difficulty following simple two-step directions.

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"); and not able to hop forward on one foot without support.

Other warning signs at any age: Little to 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; and/or plays with toys inappropriately (watches wheels spin on a car toy, but does not play with the car).

Additional information and fact sheets on child development from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY), and other resources may be found on the Special Services Department webpage located at [www.bpsd.org/SpecialServices.aspx](http://www.bpsd.org/SpecialServices.aspx).

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

The Bethel Park School District, in compliance with state and federal law, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Chapter 15 of the Pennsylvania Public School Code, 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 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. In order to qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability or diagnosis, 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 eligible or exceptional students enrolled (or seeking enrollment) in special education programs.

For further information on the evaluation procedures and provisions of services to protected handicapped students, contact the Special Services Department at 412-854-8410.

### **Confidentiality of Student Records**

Bethel Park School District and its employees are required by Federal Law and State and Federal Rules and Regulations to protect the rights of students including confidentiality of personally identifiable information for all students in accordance with state and federal law and the District's student records policy. 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. Education 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 Bethel Park 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 Bethel Park School District must maintain a written record of disclosure for the parents to inspect in case information has been released.

In accordance with 34 CFR §300.624, please be advised of the following retention/destruction schedule for the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA), Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), and Keystone Exam related materials:

- 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 Exam answer booklets and PASA media recordings will be destroyed three years after the completion of the assessment.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

The Bethel Park 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, Bethel Park, 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.



Benjamin Franklin Elementary School (K-4)  
5400 Florida Avenue  
**Teresa Doumont, Principal**  
412-854-8741

Abraham Lincoln Elementary School (K-4)  
1524 Hamilton Road  
**Jay Johnson, Principal**  
412-854-8618

Bethel Memorial Elementary School (K-4)  
3301 South Park Road  
**Eric Chalus, Principal**  
412-854-8506

George Washington Elementary School (K-4)  
515 Clifton Road  
**Fred Pearson, Principal**  
412-854-8546

William Penn Elementary School (K-4)  
110 Woodlet Lane  
**Brian Lenosky, Principal &  
Director for Cyber Education**  
412-854-8522

Neil Armstrong Middle School (5-6)  
5800 Murray Avenue  
**Kenneth Patterson, Principal**  
**Sheryl Kremer, Assistant Principal**  
412-854-8751

Independence Middle School (7-8)  
2807 Bethel Church Road

Bethel Park High School (9-12)  
309 Church Road

*David Muench, Principal*  
*Dr. George Spalaris, Assistant Principal*  
412-854-8677

*Dr. Zeb Jansante, Principal*  
*Joe Villani, Associate Principal*  
412-854-8581

**Special Services Department**

Bethel Park School District  
301 Church Road

*Lori Sutton, Director of Special Education*  
*Dr. Sarah Shue, Assistant Director of Special Education*  
412-854-8410