

# Annual Public Notice

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## Annual Public Notice of Special Education Services and Programs, Services for Gifted Students, and Services for Protected Handicapped Students

In compliance with state and federal law, notice is hereby given by the Pine Grove Area School District that it conducts ongoing identification activities as part of its school program for the purpose of identifying students who may be in need of special education and related services (eligible students). School districts (SDs), intermediate units (IUs) and charter schools (CSs) are required to conduct child find activities for children who may be eligible for services via Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 22 PA Code Chapter 16 (Gifted Services), and IDEA and Chapter 14 (Special Education). Individualized services and programs are available for children who are determined to need specially designed instruction due to the following conditions:

- Autism
- Deaf-Blindness
- Deafness
- Emotional Disturbance
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairments
- Other Health Impairments
- Specific Learning Disabilities
- Speech Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- Mentally Gifted & Talented

If you believe that your school-age child may be in need of special education and related services, screening and evaluation processes designed to assess the needs of the child and his/her eligibility are available to you at no cost, upon written request. You may request screening and evaluation at any time, whether or not your child is enrolled in the District's public school program. Requests for evaluation and screening are to be made to the Director of Special Education.

In compliance with state and federal law, the Pine Grove 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 public 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 school age with a physical or mental disability, which substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the public 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.

In compliance with state law, the Pine Grove Area School District provides services designed to meet the unique needs of gifted students. The Pine Grove Area School District identifies "gifted" students on a case-by-case basis based on state law and District policy. Such students may possess superior IQ scores or meet multiple criteria indicating gifted ability. If your child is suspected to be in need of such services, you will be notified of evaluation procedures. If you believe your school age child may qualify for gifted education services, you may contact the Director of Special Education at any time to request a determination of eligibility. Please note that entitlement to gifted services includes only those rights provided for by Pennsylvania law.

For further information on the rights of parents and children, provision of services, evaluation and screening (including purpose, time and location) and rights to due process procedure, you may contact the Director of Special Education, Mrs. Pamela Watts at 570-345-2731 or via email at pwatts@pgasd.com.

All information gathered about your child by the public school is subject to the confidentiality provisions contained in federal and state law. The District has policies and procedures in effect governing the collection, maintenance, destruction and disclosure to third parties of this information. For information about these policies and procedures, as well as definitions of disability-related terms and the rights of confidentiality and access to educational records, you may contact the Director of Special Education or a building principal.

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### **Evaluation Process**

Each school district, intermediate unit, and charter school has a procedure in place by which parents can request an evaluation. For information about procedures applicable to your child, contact the school, which your child attends. Telephone numbers and addresses can be found at the end of this notice. Parents of preschool age children, age three through five, may request an evaluation in writing by addressing a letter to the Early Intervention Program at Schuylkill Intermediate Unit 29. Telephone number and address can be found at the end of this notice.

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### **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, [www.Pattan.net](http://www.Pattan.net) or by contacting the Director of Special Education at the Pine Grove Area School District. Once written parental consent is obtained, the district will proceed with the evaluation process. If the parent disagrees with the evaluation, the parent can request an independent education evaluation at public expense.

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### **Program Development**

Once the evaluation process is completed, a team of qualified professionals and parents determine whether the child is eligible. If the child is eligible, the individualized education program team meets, develops the program, and determines the educational placement. Once the IEP team develops the program and determines the educational placement, school district staff, intermediate unit staff, or charter school staff will issue a notice of recommended educational placement/prior written notice. Your written consent is required before initial services can be provided. The parent has the right to revoke consent after initial placement.

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### **Rights Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

Some students with disabilities who are not in need of special education and related services are nevertheless entitled to adaptations and accommodations in their school program or in the physical environment of school buildings, grounds, vehicles and equipment when such adaptations or accommodations are required to enable the student to access and participate meaningfully in educational programming and extracurricular activities. Parents are entitled to a written description of the adaptations and accommodations that the public school is willing to offer. This written description is called a “service agreement” or “accommodation plan” and is available under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

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### **Confidentiality of Information:**

School districts, 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. Your 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, the parent can refer to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

This notice is only a summary of the Special Education services, evaluation and screening activities, and rights and protections pertaining to children with disabilities, children thought to be disabled, and their parents. For more information or to request evaluation or screening of a public or private school child contact the responsible school entity listed below. For preschool age children, information, screenings and evaluations requested, may be obtained by contacting the Intermediate Unit. The addresses of these schools are as follows:

**INTERMEDIATE UNIT**

Schuylkill Intermediate  
29 Avenue 17951 17 Maple Mar Lin, PA  
Tel: (570) 544-9131  
www.iu29.org

**SCHOOL DISTRICT OFFICES**

**Pine Grove Area School District**

**District Office**  
103 School Street  
Grove, PA 17963  
Tel: (570) 345-2731  
Fax: (570) 345-2790  
www.pgasd.com

**Pine Grove Area High School**  
Pine 101 School Street Pine Grove, PA 17963  
Tel: (570) 345-2731 Fax: (570) 345-2793

**Pine Grove Area Middle School**  
105 School Street  
Grove, PA 17963  
Tel: (570) 345-2731  
Fax: (570) 345-2791

**Pine Grove Area Elementary School**  
Pine 107 School Street Pine Grove, PA 17963  
Tel: (570) 345-2731  
Fax: (570) 345-2792