

## **Academy Charter School**

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

#### **Notice to Parents**

According to state and federal special education regulations, annual public notice to parents of children who reside within a school district is required regarding child find responsibilities. 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. For additional information related to Section 504/Chapter 15 services, parents may refer to Section 504, Chapter 15, and the Basic Education Circular entitled Implementation of Chapter 15. Also, school districts are required to conduct child find activities for children who may be eligible for gifted services via 22 Pa Code Chapter 16.

For additional information regarding gifted services, parents may refer to 22 PA Code Chapter 16. If a student is both gifted and eligible for Special Education, the procedures in IDEA and Chapter 14 shall take precedence.

This notice shall inform parents throughout the school district, intermediate unit, and charter school of the child identification activities and of the procedures followed to ensure confidentiality of information pertaining to students with disabilities. If parents believe that their child may be eligible for special education, the parent should contact the staff member identified for their school district of residence, listed at the end of this public notice. In addition to this public notice, the school district, intermediate unit, and charter schools shall publish written information in the handbook and on the web site ([www.theacademyschools.com](http://www.theacademyschools.com)). Children ages three through twenty one can be eligible for special education programs and services. Identification activities are performed to find a child who is suspected of having a disability that would interfere with his or her learning unless special education programs and services are made available. These activities are sometimes called screening activities. The activities include: review of group data, conducting hearing and vision screening, assessment of student's academic functioning, observation of the student displaying difficulty in behavior and determining the student's response to attempted remediation. Input from parents is also an information source for identification. After a child is identified as a suspected child with a disability, he or she is evaluated, but is not evaluated before parents give permission for their child to be evaluated. The Academy Charter School will be providing ongoing screening services. If you wish to learn more, have questions, or believe your child may need to be identified, please contact your child's school Principal.

The content of this notice has been written in English. If a person does not understand any of this notice, he or she should contact the school district (See Special Education Contact) and request and explanation.

#### **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 that your child attends. Telephone numbers and addresses can be found at the end of this notice.

A parent may file a written complaint alleging that the rights described in this notice were not provided to the following:

**Pennsylvania Department of Education  
Bureau of Special Education  
Division of Compliance  
333 Market St  
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333**

### **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). Once written parental consent is obtained, the district will proceed with the evaluation process. If the parent disagrees with the evaluation results, the parent can request an independent education evaluation at public expense.

### **SECTION 504 PLANS**

Services for Protected Handicapped Students, Other Than Special Education Services  
Under Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, some school age children with disabilities who do not meet the eligibility criteria outlined above might nevertheless be eligible for special protections and for adaptations and accommodations in instruction, facilities, and activities. Children are entitled to such protections, adaptations, and accommodations if they have a mental or physical disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program and otherwise qualify under the applicable laws.

The Charter School must ensure that qualified handicapped students have equal opportunity to participate in the school program and activities to the maximum extent appropriate for each individual student. In compliance with applicable state and federal laws, the Charter School provides to each qualifying 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 program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities and to the extent required by the laws.

These services and protections for "protected handicapped students" may be distinct from those applicable to eligible or thought-to-be eligible students. The Charter School or the parent may initiate an evaluation if they believe a student is a protected handicapped student. For further information on the evaluation procedures and provision of services to protected handicapped students, parents should contact the school's Director of Special Education.

### **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, and/or charter school staff will issue a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement/Prior Written Notice (NOREP/PWN). Your written consent is required before initial services can be provided. The parent has the right to revoke consent after initial placement.

**Confidentiality of Information:**

The 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 age 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, parents 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 your responsible school entity.

**SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Amy Abraham  
Special Education Director  
The Academy Charter School  
900 Agnew Rd  
Pittsburgh, PA 15227  
412-885-5200

The school entity or charter school will not discriminate in employment, educational programs, or activities based on race, color, national origin, age, sex, handicap, creed, marital status or because a person is a disabled veteran or a veteran of the Vietnam era. No secondary school pupil enrolled in a school district, intermediate unit, or charter school program shall be denied equal opportunity to participate in age and program appropriate instruction or activities due to race, color, handicap, creed, national origin, marital status or financial hardship.