



SERVICES, RESOURCES, AND RESEARCH FOR EDUCATION

Does your child have special needs?

STUDENTS VOLUNTARILY

ENROLLED

IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Principals and Parents

Resource Guide

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Additional copies of this booklet may be downloaded from the
website: www.aiu3.net/idea

Does Your Child Have Special Needs?

**Is your child having difficulty in school?
Has your child been identified as needing special education services?**

If you believe your child may have a disability and may be in need of special education services, an evaluation process to access your child's needs is available to you at no cost through the school district in which you live or from the intermediate unit (IU) in which your private school is located. Special education often involves adapting materials and modifying instruction to better meet your child's specific learning needs.

If you request these services, your child will receive an evaluation from a team of experts trained in assessing children. This team will determine if your child has a disability and if so, is in need of special education. You are an important member of your child's evaluation team.

Before the school district of the intermediate unit proceeds with an evaluation, it will notify you in writing of the specific types of tests and procedures it plans to use, and of your rights throughout this process. The evaluation cannot be scheduled until you sign the written notice, indicating that you consent to the proposed testing and assessments, and return the notice to the school district of intermediate unit.

If, after an evaluation, your child is found to have a disability and to need special education, the public school will develop, with your participation, an *Individualized Education Program* (IEP). An IEP is a written document that specifically describes the services your child needs. The services in the IEP will be offered to your child in a public school-sponsored placement. If you wish to accept the offer, you will have to enroll your child in the public school. If you choose not to accept the program specified in the IEP, your child's private school may still be eligible for certain services.

If your child has already been evaluated and offered services in an IEP, and you chose not to accept the services, communicate this to your child's principal. Again, your child's private school may still be eligible for certain services.

Certain services are available to students identified as eligible for special education who are unilaterally placed by their parents in private schools through a federal requirement called *Equitable Participation* (EP). In Pennsylvania, the IU is the agency responsible for the implementation of the federal requirement for EP. EP requires that each IU, following a federal funding calculation, must expend a designated amount of federal IDEA funds on services and/or resources for students identified as eligible for special education services whose parents have unilaterally chosen to place their child in a private school. The IU is not required to offer the same services that would be offered as a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the public school. The IU is mandated those services determined by their annual consultation with their private school agencies. In circumstances where the allocation of funds for EP under the federal calculation is exhausted, the IU would cease to provide any EP services until the next fiscal year. The IU must participate annually in the notification, consultation, and collaboration with their private school agencies in their local geographic area as required under IDEA 2004 regulations §§300.130-300.144.

If you are interested in finding out more about the special education process, please speak with your child's principal. For additional information, feel free to contact the school district in which you live, or the intermediate unit in which your child's school is located.

SPECIAL EDUCATION DISABILITIES

❖ **Autism**

A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3 that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.

❖ **Deaf-Blindness**

Concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.

❖ **Deafness**

A hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects a child's education performance.

❖ **Emotional Disturbance**

Defined as follows: (i) The term means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance:

- An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health related factors.
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
- A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems,

(ii) The term includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance.

❖ **Hearing Impairment**

An impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance but that is not included under the definition of deafness in this section.

❖ **Mental Retardation**

A significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning, that exists concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

❖ **Multiple Disabilities**

A concomitant impairments (such as mental retardation-blindness, mental retardation-orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which caused such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf-blindness.

❖ **Orthopedic Impairment**

A severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by congenital anomaly (e.g., clubfoot, absence of some member, etc.), impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures).

❖ **Other Health Impairment**

Having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the education environment, that –(i) is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, and sickle cell anemia; and (ii) adversely affects a child's educational performance.

❖ **Specific Learning Disability**

Defined as follows:

- *General.* The term means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.
- *Disorders not included:* The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

❖ **Speech or Language Impairment**

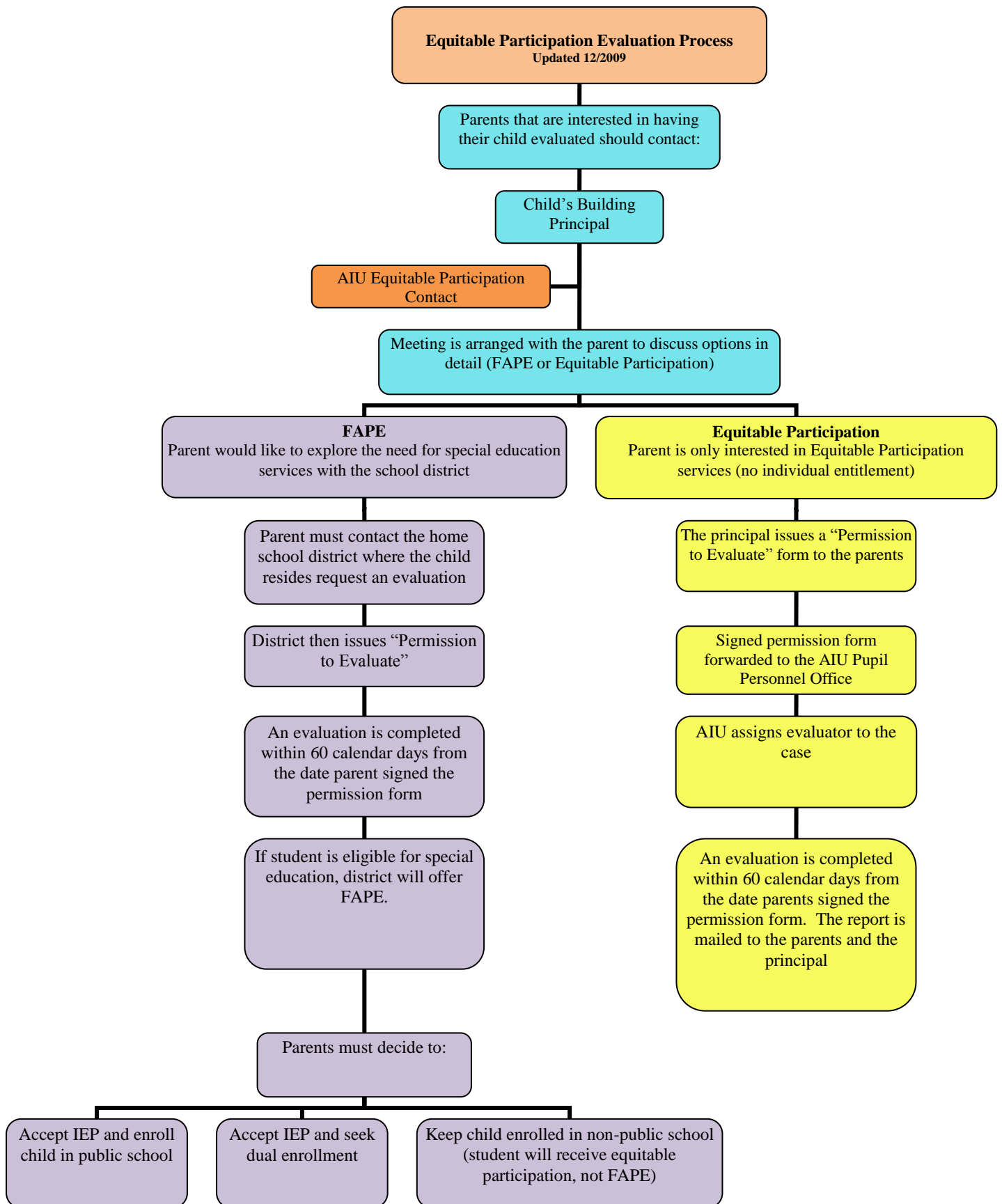
A communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

❖ **Traumatic Brain Injury**

An acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psychological behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech. The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

❖ **Visual Impairment including Blindness**

Impairment in vision, that even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.



Child Find and Evaluation Process Questions and Answers

- 1. What educational agency has Child Find responsibilities for Equitable Participation (EP)?**

A. For purposes of (Free Appropriate Public Education) FAPE, the school district of residence has child find responsibilities; whereas for purposes of equitable participation, the responsibility rests with the local education agency where the private school is located. In Pennsylvania this local education agency is the Intermediate Unit where the private school is located. It is conceivable that a parent could obtain evaluations from both entities.
- 2. Who makes the eligibility determination?**

A. Eligibility is determined by a group of knowledgeable professionals and the parents for both FAPE and EP. For purposes of FAPE, the qualified professionals should be from the district of residence; for EP purposes, the qualified professionals should be from the IU where the private school is located.
- 3. What process is required when the parent is seeking FAPE?**

A. (a) Evaluation; (b) Eligibility determination; (c) Offer of FAPE by the school district of residence; (d) Acceptance or refusal of FAPE by the parents.
- 4. What process is required when the parent is seeking EP only?**

A. (a) Evaluation; (b) Eligibility determination; (c) Offer of EP may occur if the (Local Education Agency) LEA (IU in PA) has determined that the EP funds will be directed to direct service for an individual student, however, there is no entitlement to EP services for individual children; therefore, the sequence may end at step (b); (d) Acceptance or refusal of EP by the parents.
- 5. If the parent is undecided regarding EP or FAPE what would the process be?**

A. The LEA (IU) must inform the parents of the child find process; PDE recommends use of the public information brochure developed by PaTTAN, King of Prussia available to all IUs. Once the parent understands the options, they are better prepared to make the choice between EP and FAPE.
- 6. Can parents insist that the school district of residence conduct an evaluation even if they know they do not want FAPE, and they indicate at the onset their intention is EP services at the private school?**

A. A parent can request an evaluation from their school district of residence under any circumstances. The school district has the option of either conducting the evaluation or issuing a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP) declining to evaluate and offering the parents the opportunity to initiate due process proceedings. The resident district cannot refuse to evaluate a child because the child is attending a private school or because the IU also has a duty to evaluate the child.

Equitable Services

Equitable services are services provided to parentally-placed private school children with disabilities in accordance with the provisions in IDEA and its implementing regulations at 34 CFR §§300.130 through 300.144.

The regulations at 34 CFR §300.137(a) **explicitly provide that children with disabilities enrolled in private schools by their parents do not have an individual right to receive some or all of the special education and related services they would receive if enrolled in the public schools.** Under the Act, LEAs only have an obligation to provide parentally-placed private school children with disabilities an opportunity for equitable participation in the services funded with Federal Part B dollars that the LEA has determined, after consultation, to make available to its population of parentally-placed private school children with disabilities.

The consultation process is important to ensure the provision of equitable services. Consultation among the LEA, private school representatives, and parent representatives must address how the consultation will occur throughout the school year so that parentally-placed children with disabilities identified through child find can meaningfully participate in special education and related services will be provided for parentally-placed private school children with disabilities is determined during the consultation process.

Equitable services for a parentally-placed private school child with disabilities must be provided in accordance with a services plan. A services plan must describe the specific special education and related services that will be provided to a parentally-placed private school child with disabilities designated to receive services.

SERVICES PLAN

A. WHAT IS A “SERVICES PLAN”?

Because the IDEA 04 and its final regulations provide for a proportionate amount of funding that is used to serve parentally-placed private school students, and such students have no individual right to special education, related services, or FAPE, the final regulations use the term “Services Plan” instead of the term IEP. The “Services Plan” is the document that sets forth the specific special education and related services that the Intermediate Unit will provide to an eligible private school student who has been designated to receive special education and related services under IDEA.

Once the Intermediate Unit has calculated the proportionate amount of funds that will be designated to provide IDEA services to eligible private school students, required consultation with private school representatives will take place to decide what services will be provided, which children will be receive services, how and where services will be provided and how services will be evaluated. The next step is the development of written plans that set forth the services that designated private school students will receive from the Intermediate Unit.

Under the new 34 CFR §300.455(b)(1), every private school student with a disability who has been designated to receive IDEA services must have a services plan that describes the specific special education and related services that the Intermediate Unit will provide. The services plan must be developed in the same manner as IEPs are developed; with the additional requirement that the Intermediate Unit must ensure that a private school representative either attends the services plan meeting or provides input through other means. 34 CFR §300.454(C).

In addition, the services plan must indicate the location where public school services will be provided to designated private school students, especially since this issue can sometimes be the most controversial aspect of serving privately placed IDEA students. The services plan form should also show that a representative from the private school has either attended the services to be provided, how they will be provided, and where they will be provided, among others.

The regulations also indicate that, to the extent appropriate, the services plans must be developed according to normal IEP procedures and meet general IEP content requirements, 34 CFR §300.455(b)(2)(ii) must be followed in developing services plans.

Provision of Services Questions and Answers

1. What is a Services Plan?

A. A Services Plan means a written statement that describes the special education and related services the LEA (IU) will provide to a parentally-placed child with a disability enrolled in a private school who has been designated to receive direct services, including the location of the services and any transportation necessary.

2. Does every student getting direct EP services get a Services Plan?

A. Yes, every student getting direct EP services is required to have a Services Plan.

3. If a child is not getting a direct service should they have a Services Plan?

A. If through the timely and meaningful consultation between the private schools and the LEA (IU) where the schools are located, EP includes services such as teacher consultation and/or professional development only; there would be no individual services plan. These services would be outlined in the EP Services agreed to by the LEA (IU) and the private schools through timely and meaningful consultation.

4. What does a Services Plan look like?

A. There is nothing in either IDEA 2004 or the 2006 implementing regulations that specifically describe the format of the Services Plan.

5. Can a child have a Services Plan and an IEP?

A. A child would not have both and EP Services Plan and an IEP; and EP Services Plan describes the EP services; while the IEP describes the FAPE. A child receives EP services in a private school, whereas, FAPE is provided in a public school in most cases.

6. Once a student receives EP Services, when may the services end?

A. A student no longer receives EP services when he is no longer eligible for such services; when funds for EP Services are exhausted; or after timely and meaningful consultation with representatives of private elementary schools and secondary schools and representatives of parents of parentally-placed private school children with disabilities, the LEA (IU) determines that it will no longer offer the type of services that the student receives.

7. How often must a student receiving EP services be re-evaluated?

A. A student receiving EP services must be re-evaluated following the same timelines for reevaluation as outlined in IDEA 2004 and its 2006 implementing regulations.

8. Does the LEA where the private school is located (IU) notify the district of residence that a re-evaluation is needed?

A. No, the LEA where the private school is located (IU) is responsible for conducting the re-evaluation. In fact, the LEA (IU) would have to secure written consent to share such information with the district of residence.

Principals and Parents Contact List for IU#3 School Districts	
<p>Allegheny Valley School District Attention: Special Education Supervisor 300 Pearl Avenue Cheswick, PA 15024 724-274-5300</p>	<p>Avonworth School District Attention: Coordinator of Student Services 1320 Roosevelt Road Pittsburgh, PA 15237-1063 412-366-7170 x211</p>
<p>Baldwin-Whitehall School District Attention: Supervisor, Special Education 4900 Curry Road Pittsburgh, PA 15236-1809 412-885-7583</p>	<p>Bethel Park School District Attention: Director of Special Education 301 Church Road Bethel Park, PA 15102-1696 412-854-8410</p>
<p>Brentwood Borough School District Attention: Special Education Coordinator 3601 Brownsville Road Pittsburgh, PA 15227-3117 412 881-4940 x628</p>	<p>Carlynton School District Attention: Pupil Services Coordinator 435 Kings Highway Carnegie, PA 15106 412-429-2500 x112</p>
<p>Chartiers Valley School District Attention: Principal of Special Programs 50 Thoms Run Road Bridgeville, PA 15017 412-429-2638</p>	<p>Clairton City School District Attention: Supervisor of Special Education 501 Waddell Street Clairton, PA 15025 412-233-9200 x144</p>
<p>Cornell School District Attention: Special Education Director 1099 Maple Street Coraopolis, PA 15108 412-264-5010 x113</p>	<p>Deer Lakes School District Attention: Director of Special Education 163 E. Union Road, P.O. Box 40 Russellton, PA 15076-0040 724-265-5300 x247</p>
<p>Duquesne City School District Attention: Director of Special Education 222 Grant Avenue Duquesne, PA 15110 412-466-8130 x3008</p>	<p>East Allegheny School District Attention: Pupil Personnel Services/Federal Programs 1150 Jacks Run Road, Route 48 North Versailles, PA 15137-2797 412-824-8012 x155</p>
<p>Elizabeth Forward School District Attention: Special Education and Pupil Services Liaison 401 Rock Run Road Elizabeth, PA 15037-2416 412-896-2309</p>	<p>Fox Chapel Area School District Attention: Coordinator of Educational Support/Special Education 611 Field Club Road Pittsburgh, PA 15238 412-967-2435</p>
<p>Gateway School District Attention: Director of Special Education 9000 Gateway Campus Boulevard Monroeville, PA 15146 412-373-5724</p>	<p>Hampton Township School District Attention: Director of Student Services 4591 School Drive Allison Park, PA 15101 412-492-6306</p>
<p>Highlands School District Attention: Director of Special Education 1330 Eleventh Avenue, PO Box 288 Natrona Heights, PA 15065 724-226-2400 x233</p>	<p>Keystone Oaks School Attention: Coordinator of Pupil Personnel/Special Education 1000 Kelton Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15216-2487</p>

	412-571-6163 (K-5) 412-571-6013 (6-12)
McKeesport Area School District Attention: Coordinator of Special Education 2225 Fifth Avenue McKeesport, PA 15132-1114 412-664-3622	Montour School District Attention: Director of Special Education 223 Clever Road McKees Rocks, PA 15136 412-490-6500 x6231

Principals and Parents Contact List for IU#3 School Districts	
Moon Area School District Attention: Director of Pupil Services 8353 University Boulevard Moon Township, PA 15108-2597 412-264-9440 x1114	Mt. Lebanon School District Attention: Supervisor of Special Education 7 Horsman Drive Pittsburgh, PA 15228 412-344-2012
North Allegheny School District Attention: Supervisor of Special Education 350 Cumberland Road Pittsburgh, PA 15237 412-635-4109	North Hills School District Attention: Asst. to the Superintendent for Pupil Services 135 Sixth Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15229-1291 412-318-1008
Northgate School District Attention: Coordinator of Psychological Services 591 Union Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15202 412-734-8065	Penn Hills School District Attention: Supervisor of Special Education 309 Collins Drive Pittsburgh, PA 15235 412-793-7000 x282
Pine-Richland School District Attention: Director of Special Education 702 Warrendale Road Gibsonia, PA 15044 724-625-7773 x6501	Plum Borough School District Attention: Supervisor of Special Education 200 School Road Plum, PA 15239 412-795-0100 x6368
Quaker Valley School District Attention: Director of Pupil Services 203 Graham Street Sewickley, PA 15143 412-749-3618	Riverview School District Attention: Pupil Personnel-Special Education 701 Tenth Street Oakmont, PA 15139 412-828-1800 x4060
Shaler Area School District Attention: Director, Pupil Personnel Services 1800 Mt. Royal Boulevard Glenshaw, PA 15116 412-492-1200 x2815	South Allegheny School District Attention: School Psychologist/Liaison, Special Education 2743 Washington Boulevard McKeesport, PA 15133-2099 412-675-3070 x1202
South Fayette Township School District Attention: Director of Pupil Personnel 2250 Old Oakdale Road McDonald, PA 15057 412-221-4542 x429	South Park School District Attention: Coordinator of Special Education/School Psychologist South Park Middle School 2500 Steward Road

	South Park, PA 15129 412-835-4055
Steel Valley School District Attention: Director of Pupil Personnel/Special Services East Oliver Road Munhall, PA 15120-2799 412-464-3602	Sto-Rox School District Attention: Director of Pupil Services 600 Russellwood Avenue McKees Rocks, PA 15136-3086 412-778-8871 x5260
Upper St. Clair Township School District Attention: Supervisor of Special Education Services 1820 McLaughlin Run Road Pittsburgh, PA 15241-2332 412-833-1604 x2213	West Allegheny School District Attention: Coordinator Pupil Personnel Services 600 Donaldson Road Oakdale, PA 15071 724-695-5221
West Jefferson Hills School District Attention: Personnel Director/Special Education 835 Old Clairton Road Jefferson Hills, PA 15025 412-655-8450 x2226	West Mifflin Area School District Attention: Coordinator of Pupil Personnel Services 515 Camp Hollow Road West Mifflin, PA 15122-2605 412-466-9138 x119
Wilkinsburg Borough School District Attention: Director of Special Education 718 Wallace Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15221 412-371-9667 x2120	Woodland Hills School District Attention: Director of Special Education 2430 Greensburg Pike Pittsburgh, PA 15221 412-731-1300 x0142

Allegheny Intermediate Unit Contacts

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SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING AN EVALUATION

Your Address
Your Phone Number

Principal's Name
Name of your Child's School
School Address

Date

Dear School Official:

I am the parent of _____, whose date of birth is _____.

My child has not been doing well in school and I am therefore requesting a comprehensive multidisciplinary evaluation to determine whether my child needs special education services, and if so, what services are needed.

I would like to participate with the rest of the IEP Team in the review to determine what data and testing are needed. I would also like to know when the testing (if any) will be held, and whether any meetings will be scheduled so that I can attend.

I understand that the evaluation must be completed, and a written report given to me, within 60 calendar days of my consent to the evaluation. I also understand that it is my right to request an evaluation, without enrolling my child in your district, so that I can make the most informed decision for my child. Please send me, as soon as possible, a permission to evaluate form to sign so that we can begin the process. [Or, I would like to come to the school and sign the form immediately].

Should you have any questions or problems with the request, please contact me at:

Thank you,

Sincerely,
Your name

Keep a copy of this letter for your file. We recommend that you hand-deliver this request to the School District Official, or that you send it certified mail, return receipt requested.

DISTRICT LETTERHEAD

ER Follow-up Action Form

Name of Student: _____ Meeting Date: _____

Parent Name: _____ School District: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

An Evaluation Report (ER) has been developed in accordance with your request for an evaluation of your child. As your child has been found to have a disability and in need of special education and related services, (s)he is entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Should you choose to keep your child in the private school, you may waive the writing of an IEP and request that a Services Plan be developed to assist the private school in meeting those needs stated in the ER. Please consider the following options and indicate your decision.

- Ⓒ The ER has been reviewed with me. I am interested in enrolling my child in the public school district and would like to proceed with the writing of an IEP for my child.
- Ⓒ The ER has been reviewed with me. I am interested in dual enrollment and would like to proceed to the writing of an IEP for my child.
- Ⓒ The ER has been reviewed with me. I choose to continue my child’s education in the private school. The school district has offered to make FAPE available, however I elect to decline FAPE and the development of an IEP for my child.
- Ⓒ I would like information about Equitable Participation Services for my child.
- Ⓒ I do not want information on the Equitable Participation Program at this time.

LEA Signature _____ Date _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

DISTRICT LETTERHEAD

FAPE Refusal Letter

Name of Student: _____	Meeting Date: _____
Parent Name: _____	School District: _____
Address: _____	Phone: _____

I have met with the IEP Team that has developed an IEP that describes a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for my child. However, I am electing to decline FAPE and continue his/her present enrollment at _____ located in _____, PA. I understand that my child has the right to return to the school district's program until he/she reaches the age of 21.

_____ I would like information about Equitable Participation Services for my child.

_____ I do not want information on the Equitable Participation Program at this time.

Parent(s) Signature

Date