

ANNUAL NOTICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Jersey Shore Area School District is committed to providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities. The District must annually provide notice to the public about special education services and procedures to identify, locate, and evaluate all students who may be eligible for and in need of special education.

The District operates learning support, life skills support, and emotional support programs. BLaST Intermediate Unit operates multiple disabilities support classrooms at the elementary and middle school levels. Jersey Shore Area School District also maintains two full time speech language pathologists and contracts for additional speech language services through BLaST Intermediate Unit. The District contracts for the following services: occupational therapy; physical therapy; vision and mobility services.

The District is a recipient of Pre-K Counts funding and has partnered with a local preschool to offer preschool services to underprivileged students. Meetings regarding the programming and academics involved occur about four times per year. Besides the preschool that the District has partnered with, there are two other pre-school programs that attend these meetings with the district.

Jersey Shore Area School District works in collaboration with BLaST Intermediate Unit, local school districts, and agencies to identify appropriate placements for students who demonstrate a need for educational programs that are not offered within the boundaries of the school district. The District makes arrangements and pays the cost of transportation.

Identification (Child Find) Activities

The Jersey Shore Area School District works in collaboration with the BLaST Intermediate Unit to identify young children who may need special education services upon transition from early intervention programs to kindergarten. Parent meetings are scheduled in late winter of each school year to begin the transition from early intervention to school-aged services. Permission to re-evaluate is obtained for students to assess their educational needs. Evaluations are completed and IEP meetings are conducted prior to entry into kindergarten from early intervention programs.

The District conducts kindergarten screening annually in the early spring. Parents schedule their children for screenings at the district office during the registration process. The elementary principals meet with parents of incoming kindergarten students during the kindergarten screenings. During those meetings the principals explain district services, the

screening process and what happens with the results, as well as other building procedures and schedules. Specific dates for kindergarten screenings are published in the school calendar. More details are published in local newspapers prior to the registration activities. Speech language pathologists and the occupational therapist are members of the screening team.

Building level teams meet regularly at elementary, middle, and high school levels to monitor concerns about student progress, to develop intervention strategies, and to identify students who may need multidisciplinary evaluations. The teams consider a variety of academic, behavioral, speech/language, and motor development information. Teachers within the district are aware of the referral procedures. Guidance counselors, working in collaboration with their district colleagues at all levels, are also important front line personnel in child find procedures.

All schools in the district have school-wide positive behavior support plans and teams that look at behavioral data. The data is also individualized for students so it can be utilized during CST and data team meetings to make informed decisions regarding individual students. All elementary schools, as well as the middle school, utilize a behavior screening tool three times a year to monitor and track behavior progress and interventions.

Jersey Shore Area School District has an assessment plan which specifies the type of evaluations that are administered at various grade levels. The analysis of assessment results is an important child find strategy, and students may be referred to the school psychologist for additional achievement screenings.

Potential Signs of Developmental Delays and Other Risk Factors for Disabilities

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) lists 13 disability categories. The following contains excerpts from the definitions:

1. **Autism** means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction usually evident before the age of three.
2. **Deaf-blindness** means concomitant hearing and visual impairments.
3. **Deafness** means a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing with or without amplification.
4. **Emotional Disturbance** is a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance 1). Inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors 2). An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers 3). Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances 4). A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression 5). A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.
5. **Hearing Impairment** means an impairment in hearing whether permanent or fluctuating that adversely affects a child's educational performance but that is not included in the definition of deafness.

6. **Intellectual Disability** means significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period.

7. **Multiple Disabilities** means concomitant impairments the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments.

8. **Orthopedic Impairment** means a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

9. **Other Health Impairment** means having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment that 1) is due to chronic or acute health problems 2) adversely affects a child's educational performance.

10. **Specific Learning Disability** is 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.

11. **Speech Language Impairment** means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

12. **Traumatic Brain Injury** means an acquired injury to the brain caused by external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

13. **Visual Impairment including Blindness** means an impairment in vision that even with correction adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Initiating an Evaluation

Parents who have concerns about their child's academic or developmental growth and believe that their child may have symptoms or characteristics similar to those noted above should contact the appropriate building principal, school guidance counselor, school psychologist, or the Special Education Office to request screening and/or evaluation. A parental request for a multidisciplinary evaluation should be made in writing.

Confidentiality of Student Records

If a screening procedure finds evidence of a possible disability and a multidisciplinary evaluation is recommended, the district must issue a Prior Written Notice for Initial Evaluation and Request for Consent Form to parents or guardians. Written consent is required prior to conducting the evaluation. An evaluation report is prepared after the assessments are completed. The written record of the results is called an educational record and is maintained by the District. The record contains information that personally identifies a child's name, name of parents or other family members, address, and other traceable information. The school district protects the confidentiality of personally identifiable information according to the district's Student Records policy and FERPA (Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act).

Further information about special education is available from building principals or the supervisor of special education at 570-398-5250.

