

Introduction to Special Education

The Mahanoy Area School District provides a full range of meaningful programs aimed at meeting the special needs of exceptional children. The district in conjunction with the Schuylkill Intermediate Unit (IU#29) follow policies in accordance with federal and state regulations and guidelines to insure that students receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment. Parents of exceptional children receive a written copy of these rights as part of the guaranteed due process afforded to children with exceptionalities. Individuals may review a copy of these rights available at Mahanoy Area's Special Education office or on Mahanoy Area's website (www.mabears.net).

Special education services are available to children who qualify in accordance with the state and federal regulations and have one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities: autism; deafness; deaf-blindness; hearing impairment; mental retardation; emotional disturbance; multiple disabilities; orthopedic impairment; other health impairment (i.e. asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, Tourette's Syndrome); specific learning disability; speech and language impairment; traumatic brain injury; visual impairment; or who have been deemed gifted. Furthermore, these children must also be determined to be in need of special education by an individual education program (IEP) team based upon recommendation in a multi-disciplinary evaluation (MDE).

Children who qualify for special education services must go through a process of screenings/evaluations. If a disability is suspected parents, teachers, or other school personnel may refer a child for a screening/evaluation by contacting the school principal or the Special Education Office. Detailed information regarding parent's rights and special education services and programs are available from the school district upon request.

Students in the Mahanoy Area School District may receive services through a combination of district located classrooms/programs and/or contracted services provided by the Schuylkill Intermediate Unit. Special education is designed to meet the needs of each exceptional student, including specifically designed instruction conducted in the classroom, home, community settings, hospitals, or other appropriate settings.

Each school child receiving special education and related services must have an IEP. Each IEP must be a truly individualized document. The IEP creates an opportunity for teachers, parents, school administrators, related services personnel, and students (when appropriate) to work together to improve educational results for children with disabilities.

The IEP is the cornerstone of a quality education for each child with a disability. To create an effective IEP, parents, teachers, other school staff--and often the student--must come together to look closely at the student's unique strengths/needs. These individuals use knowledge, experience, and commitment to design an educational program that will help the student be involved in, and progress in, the general curriculum, to the greatest extent possible for the student. The IEP guides the delivery of special education support and services for the student with a disability. Without a doubt, writing--and implementing--an effective IEP requires teamwork. The writing of each student's IEP takes place within the larger picture of the special education process under IDEA/IDEA 2004.