

**Annual Public Notice of  
Special Education Services and Program and Services for Protected Handicapped Students  
PA Learners Online Cyber Charter School**

El contenido de esta nota se ha escrito en inglés. Si usted no entiende esta nota, debe contactar el distrito escolar (vea los contactos) y solicite una explicación.

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 Contacts) and request an explanation.

**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. The charter school is also 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, the parent may refer to Section 504, Chapter 15, and the Basic Education Circular entitled Implementation of Chapter 15.

This notice shall inform parents of the child identification activities and of the procedures followed to ensure confidentiality of information pertaining to students with disabilities. In addition to this public notice, each school district, intermediate unit, and charter school shall publish written information in the handbook and on the web site. Children ages three through twenty one can be eligible for special education programs and services. If parents believe that the child may be eligible for special education, the parent should contact the appropriate staff member identified at the end of this public notice.

PA Learners Online provides a free, appropriate education by offering individualized programming for students with learning needs, emotional needs, speech and language needs, and physical needs such as fine motor skill deficits. Students are eligible for special education services if they need specially designed instruction and have one or more of the following educational disabilities: Autism; Traumatic Brain Injury; Orthopedic Impairments; Mental Retardation; Visual Impairments including Blindness; Specific Learning Disability; Serious Emotional Disturbance; Speech and Language Impairment; Deafness/Hearing Impairments; Other Health Impairments.

**Screening**

PALO has established and will implement procedures to locate, identify and evaluate school age students thought to be eligible for special education services. These procedures include but are not limited to review of student records (cumulative records, enrollment records, health records, and report cards), hearing and vision screening, speech and language screening. The screening process will incorporate:

1. Curriculum based or performance based assessments for students who have academic concerns.
2. Observations of student behavior in the virtual classroom or elsewhere.
3. Required interventions based on the above assessment results
4. Compilation of data and assessment of the student's response to the interventions initiated.
5. Determination of whether the students assessed difficulties are due to a lack of instruction or limited English proficiency
6. Determination of whether the student's needs exceed the functional ability of the regular education program.
7. Information from parents.

If the student is thought to be in need of services, PALO will initiate the screening process and if after sixty days the students has made little or no improvement in their identified areas of difficulty or the screening process indicates that a student may be eligible for special education services, the student will be referred for a special education evaluation. The parents can at any time, request a formal evaluation prior to or during the screening process by contacting the appropriate school personal identified at the end of this document.

If you are concerned that your child might have a development delay, it is important that you contact your primary care physician to obtain more information. There are several general "warning signs" of possible delay. These include:

*Behavioral Warning Signs*

- Does not pay attention or stay focused on an activity for as long a time as other children of the same age
- Avoids or rarely makes eye contact with others
- Gets unusually frustrated when trying to do simple tasks that most children of the same age can do
- Shows aggressive behaviors and violence on a consistent basis

*Vision Warning Signs*

- Seems to have difficulty following objects or people with her eyes
- Turns, tilts or holds head in a strained or unusual position when trying to look at an object
- Has difficulty focusing or making eye contact
- Brings objects too close to eyes to see

*Gross Motor Warning Signs*

- Has stiff arms and/or legs
- Has a floppy or limp body posture compared to other children of the same age
- Uses one side of body more than the other
- Has a very clumsy manner compared with other children of the same age.

*Hearing Warning Signs*

- Talks in a very loud or very soft voice
- Turns body so that the same ear is always turned toward sound
- Has difficulty understanding what has been said or following directions after once she has turned 3 years of age
- Fails to develop sounds or words that would be appropriate at her age

For additional information you may contact your educational agency.

**Consent**

School entities cannot proceed with an evaluation or reevaluation, 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 your educational agency. 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.

**Evaluation Process**

PALO has a procedure in place by which parents can request an evaluation in writing. Telephone numbers and addresses can be found at the end of this notice. The evaluation is conducted by a multidisciplinary team comprised of teachers, school psychologist and other qualified professionals who work with the child and parents. This process is conducted within specific timelines and it results in a written evaluation report or ER. This report makes recommendations about a student's eligibility for special education services based on the presence of a disability or need for specially designed instruction.

**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 which includes information such as annual measurable goals and related service information. It also outlines the specially designed instruction your child will receive and determines the educational placement. Once the IEP team develops the program and determines the educational placement, 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.

**Reevaluation**

Every student who qualifies for special education services must be reevaluated every three years (except for students with the educational disability of mental retardation; those students must be reevaluated every two years and the process cannot be waived). The purpose of the reevaluation is to determine if the student continues to meet eligibility criteria for special education services. If a parent would like to request a reevaluation, they can do so by submitting their request in writing at any time to the appropriate school personnel outlined at the end of this notice.

**Confidentiality of Information**

The charter school maintains 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. PALO will provide, upon request, a listing of the types and locations of education records maintained, the school officials responsible for these records, and the personnel authorized to see personally identifiable information. PALO keeps a record of parties obtaining access to education records. PALO discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. For additional information related to student records, the parent can refer to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or request PALO's Educational Records Policy.

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 your child, **contact the responsible school entity listed below.**

**PA Learners Online Cyber Charter School**

475 East Waterfront Drive  
Homestead, PA 15120

**For information on special education programming or evaluation for eligibility of special education services:**

Special Education Supervisor  
Tina Tolkacevic  
412-394-5875  
[tina.tolkacevic@aiu3.net](mailto:tina.tolkacevic@aiu3.net)

**For information on screening or the general education curriculum:**

High School Principal  
Edward Mandell  
412-394-4985  
[edward.mandell@aiu3.net](mailto:edward.mandell@aiu3.net)

Elementary and Middle School Principal  
Kelly Sherbondy  
412-394-4939  
[kelly.sherbondy@aiu3.net](mailto:kelly.sherbondy@aiu3.net)