



Provident Charter Schools

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Annual Notice of Special Education Services and Programs for Students with Disabilities



Updated July 1, 2025

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Special Education Services

CHILD FIND (§300.125)

It is the policy of Provident Charter School that all students with disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disability, who require special education and related services, will be identified, located, and evaluated. This responsibility is mandated by a federal law known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, 20 U.S.C. § 1200 et seq. ("IDEA 2004"). Chapter 711 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code requires the publication of a notice to parents sufficient to inform parents/guardians of children applying to or already enrolled in Provident Charter School of (1) available special education services and programs, (2) how to request those services and programs, and of (3) systematic screening activities that lead to the identification, location, and evaluation of children with disabilities enrolled in Provident Charter School.

Public Outreach & Awareness System

Provident Charter School utilizes a public outreach awareness system to identify and locate children who are thought to be eligible for special education. Provident Charter School provides details of where to find out more information about special education programs through announcements via electronic communications (e-notices and website), billboards, annual reports, and family engagement series (open to families and the community). This public awareness effort includes information regarding potential signs of developmental delays and other risk factors that could indicate disabilities. The process involves notifying parents throughout the school of child identification activities and the procedures followed to ensure the confidentiality of information related to students with disabilities or eligible young children, as outlined in this chapter.

Indicators & Risk Factors

Some indications that your child may be at risk for developmental, academic, adaptive, and/or physical, sensory, mental, or emotional disabilities may include:

- Consistent problems in getting along with others;
- Difficulty communicating;
- Difficulty performing tasks that require reading, mathematics, and/or writing;
- Difficulty seeing or hearing, which interferes with the ability to communicate;
- Health problems that affect educational performance, including attention problems;
- Lack of interest or ability in age-appropriate activities;
- Resistance to change, or
- An emotional disturbance over a long period that affects your child's ability to learn

Federal guidelines, as set forth in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, require local schools to identify children who are experiencing homelessness. The federal mandate and Provident Charter School intend to ensure that homeless children and youth have access to free, appropriate public education on an equal basis with other children. Children who are

experiencing homelessness, including those living with others in emergencies, may qualify for assistance with transportation and school lunch so that they can remain in their school of origin. If you believe your child may be eligible for these services, please contact the principal and or school counselor of your child's school.

Screening, Evaluation, & Placement Procedures

Provident Charter School's systematic screening and referral processes identify and refer students who are thought to be eligible for special education services for evaluation. These screening and referral processes include a review of group-based data such as cumulative records, enrollment records, health records, report cards, ability and achievement test scores, and the initial admissions academic placement tests. Provident Charter School has repeated achievement assessments, including standardized reading and mathematics assessments, classroom performance (academic and behavioral), and benchmark assessments.

Provident Charter School as required by section 1402 of the school code, routinely conducts screenings of a child's hearing (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 7th grade), visual acuity (every year beginning with first grade), Body Mass Index screening (1st grade through 8th grade), and screening for speech and language skills (when parent or teacher makes a referral).

The screening of a student by a teacher or specialist to determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation is not to be considered an evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services. Parental consent is required before a comprehensive evaluation may take place and shall not be construed as consent for their child to receive special education services and related services. Parents who suspect that their child is eligible for special education services have the right to request a multidisciplinary team evaluation at any time, regardless of the outcome of the screening process, through a written or verbal request to the Building Principal or Director of Pupil Services at 412-709-5160. A permission-to-evaluate form shall be readily available to parents within ten calendar days of the request.

Under IDEA 2004, an evaluation involves the use of a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information. Evaluations may include, but are not limited to, a review of the student's records, classroom observations, gathering input from both parents and teachers, individually administered tests of achievement and intelligence, and a functional behavioral assessment.

Independent Educational Evaluations

An Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) is an evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is not an employee of Provident Charter School. Parents have the right to request an IEE at public expense if there is a disagreement with an evaluation obtained by an LEA. A request can only be made once per school evaluation or reevaluation to the Director of Special Education.

Provident Charter School will respond within a reasonable amount of time without unnecessary delay by issuing a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP) of its approval or disapproval of the request. If the request for an IEE is denied at public expense, Provident Charter School must request a due process hearing.

If Provident Charter School approves the request, the following guidelines must be followed:

1. Completion of the "Release of Information" form(s): The parent must sign to release information to share the current evaluation report and IEP, if available, with the independent evaluator. The release shall also require the evaluator to release all information to Provident Charter School.
2. If the IEE is at public expense, it must be conducted within the state of Pennsylvania.
3. An evaluation of a child for autism, emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, other health impairments, specific learning disability, or traumatic brain injury must be done by a school psychologist certified in the State of Pennsylvania.
 - a. An evaluation for other disabilities (e.g., speech and language) must be conducted by a person licensed or certified to perform and interpret assessments in the area(s) of concern.
4. The IEE, at public expense, cannot exceed \$2,500 without approval by Provident Charter School.
5. Observation of at least 45 minutes of the student in the student's current educational setting.

The written report of the IEE must include the following criteria:

- a. A clear explanation of the testing and assessment results;
- b. A complete summary of all test scores, including, for all standardized testing administered, all applicable full-scale or battery scores, domain or composite scores, and subtest scores reported in standard, scaled, or T-score format;
- c. A complete summary of all information obtained or reviewed from sources other than testing conducted by the evaluator;
- d. The evaluator shall obtain information concerning the performance (academic and behavioral) from at least one current teacher of the student in the following subject areas: ELA, Reading, Math, Science, and Social Studies.
- e. Specific recommendations for educational programming;
- f. The evaluator must sign the report;
- g. The complete report must be submitted to Provident Charter School concurrently with submission to the parent.
- h. Administration of all testing and all assessment procedures shall rule in or rule out the existence of disabilities defined in IDEA and Chapter 14.

Failure to comply with the following guidelines may result in a denial of the parent's request for an IEE at Provident Charter School's expense. If the parent obtains an IEE, regardless of who funds the IEE, the results of the evaluation must be considered by Provident Charter School if it

meets the criteria in any decision made for the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to the student [34 CER § 300.502 (c)(1)]. It is important to remember that under IDEA 2004, the school's obligation is only to "consider" the results of any IEE. There is no requirement about how much weight the school must give to the IEE or that the school must incorporate any of the IEE recommendations into the student's educational program. This is true even if the IEE was at public expense.

Free & Appropriate Public Education

Provident Charter School provides a free and appropriate public education to eligible students in accordance with state and federal mandates. To be eligible, the child must need specially designed instruction and meet the eligibility criteria for one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities as outlined in the Pennsylvania State Standards:

- Autism
- Deaf-Blindness
- Deafness
- Emotional Disturbance
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech or Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment, including Blindness

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004 provides legal definitions of the above-listed disabilities, which may differ from those terms used in medical or clinical practice.

Programs and services designed to meet the needs of eligible students include:

- The annual development of an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)
- A triennial multidisciplinary re-evaluation for students with disabilities (except for those students with Intellectual Disabilities, where evaluation remains biennial).
- A full continuum of special education support, which includes:
 - **Itinerant:** Special education supports and services provided by special education personnel for 20% or less of the school day
 - **Supplemental:** Special education supports and services are provided by special education personnel for more than 20% of the day but less than 80% of the school day
 - **Full-Time:** Special education supports and services provided by special education personnel for 80% or more of the school day

- A full continuum of types of special education support, which includes:
 - **Autistic Support** – address needs primarily in the areas of communication, social skills, or behaviors consistent with those of autism spectrum disorders
 - **Blind/Visually Impaired Support** – students with the disability of visual impairment, including blindness
 - **Deaf/Hard of Hearing Support** – students with the disability of deafness or hearing impairment
 - **Emotional Support** – services for students with a disability who require services primarily in the areas of social or emotional development or functional behavior
 - **Learning Support** – services primarily in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, speaking, or listening skills related to academic performance
 - **Life Skills Support** – services primarily in the areas of academic, functional, or vocational skills necessary for independent living
 - **Multiple Disabilities Support** – students with more than one disability, the result of which is severe impairment requiring services primarily in the areas of academic, functional, or vocational skills necessary for independent living
 - **Physical Support** – students with a physical disability who require services primarily in the areas of functional motor skill development
 - **Speech and Language Support** – students with speech and language impairments who require services primarily in the areas of communication

The extent and location of special education services are provided according to the student's identified needs and abilities, as well as the level of intensity of the specified intervention, rather than the category of disability. An IEP will be developed for eligible students in conjunction with parents, educators, and other relevant individuals involved in the child's education.

Per IDEA 2004, Sec. 300.34, Related Services means transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education. Related services can include, but are not limited to, any of the following at no cost to parents:

- Speech and language services
- Hearing support and audiology services/programs
- Psychological services
- Physical and occupational therapy
- Counseling services
- Vision, orientation, and mobility support services/program
- School health services
- Parent consultation and training
- Transportation

Under state regulations, an IEP team meeting, with parent or guardian involvement, must be scheduled within 30 calendar days of the evaluation report date. When a student qualifies for special education services, copies of the evaluation report must be provided to the parent or guardian at least 10 school days before the meeting of the IEP team. If a parent or LEA requests a meeting of the IEP team before the ten-school-day timeline, it must be waived in writing by the parent.

Parents are then presented with a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP), which outlines the program, services, and location of the services. If the parent disagrees with the recommended program, the parent or Provident Charter School may choose to use an informal meeting, mediation, or impartial due process hearing to determine the most appropriate program for the child.

**Protected Handicapped Students: Chapter 15
(Section 504 Service Agreements)**

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Provident Charter School will provide reasonable accommodations and modifications to ensure that qualified students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in the school program and activities to the maximum extent appropriate. To qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must have a mental or physical disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program and otherwise qualifies under the applicable laws. These related services or accommodations are provided without discrimination or cost to the student or family.

These services and protections for students with disabilities may differ from those applicable to students eligible for special education services or those considered eligible. Provident Charter School or the parent may initiate an evaluation if they believe a student is a protected student with a disability that is covered by the regulations contained in Chapter 14. For further information on the evaluation procedures and provision of services to protected students, parents should contact the school's Director of Special Education.