

## MISSION STATEMENT

*The Shaler Area School District community challenges all learners with many educational opportunities in a safe and positive environment of mutual respect and trust. Each learner will discover and develop unique talents, learn and refine skills, and access and use information effectively. Each individual will become a life long learner who will be able to function as a confident, creative, and contributing citizen of our nation and the world.*

## VISION STATEMENT

### Our Students:

*In the Shaler Area School District, each person will learn and be successful. Our students will graduate with a desire to learn, the ability to process information efficiently and effectively and an appreciation for the value of life-long learning.*

*An integrated curriculum and activities will challenge students to be involved in the learning process. A variety of methods will be used to develop the abilities of each learner. The educational process will promote the worth and value of all individuals.*

### District Goals:

#### *PRIORITY: FOCUS ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT*

*Recommendations to increase student achievement:*

- 1. Establish a safe and disciplined learning environment that challenges students at all levels, involves parents in their child's education, and encourages the development of a strong work ethic.*
- 2. Promote collaboration and foster a professional learning community with the primary focus on student achievement through long-term, intensive staff development and high quality instruction.*
- 3. Align the written, taught, and tested curriculum through the development of challenging standards with a focus on reading, writing, speaking, and mathematics, emphasizing mastery of the basics and development of higher level thinking, and problem solving skills.*
- 4. Provide a support system that allows all students who fall behind to get extra help, then address those students at more frequent intervals to determine the effectiveness of remediation strategies.*

- 5. Support and enhance the comprehensive arts curriculum (visual, dance, theater, music, and physical education) emphasize components of the district wellness program, and incorporate the functions necessary to develop technologically proficient students.*

### SPECIAL EDUCATION MISSION STATEMENT

Special Education in the Shaler Area School District is a collaborative effort involving the school, family and community in developing an appropriate educational program which supports inclusionary practices and provides the opportunity for every student to maximize his/her potential and become a productive community member.

### DEFINITION OF INCLUSIONARY PRACTICES

Inclusionary Practices are student-centered and encourage the development of each student as an individual within the general education environment. Inclusionary Practices will be maximized to ensure the development of each student's potential.

#### Types of Services

Educators in the Shaler Area School District offer a variety of special education programs for students with special needs.

- **Learning support** - for students whose primary identified need is academic learning.
- **Gifted support** - for students who show outstanding intellectual ability, which requires more enrichment activities and opportunities in and out of the classroom.
- **Emotional support** - for students with personal, behavioral, or emotional issues that interfere with student learning and adjustment.
- **Life Skills support** - for students that need to develop skills for independent living.
- **Speech and Language support** - for students with communication impairments, which affect their academic achievement.

- **Hearing Impaired support** - for students with hearing impairments, which interfere with the development of their communications process.
- **Visually Impaired support** - for students who have visual impairments, which adversely affect their educational performance.
- **Social Work Services** - for all students in the special education program as part of the IEP. These services can include individual short term counseling, group work, classroom presentations, home visits, referrals to outside agencies, and/or student behavioral contracts to target a variety of issues including anger management, self esteem building, decision making, peer or family relationships, or survival issues.

#### Levels of Interventions

The IEP team determines the appropriate level of intervention required to meet the student's need and ability. The appropriate level of intervention is the level at which the student performs successfully in the least restrictive environment. Special education students in Shaler Area School District schools are assigned to one of the following levels of intervention:

- 1. Supplemental intervention in the regular classroom (itinerant):** Regular classroom instruction for all or most of the school day (80% or more), with special education services and programs provided by special education personnel inside of the regular class for part of the school day, including modifications to the regular instructional program.
- 2. Supplemental intervention in the resource classroom:** Regular classroom instruction for part of the school day (20-80%), with special education services and programs provided by special education personnel in a resource classroom for part of the school day.
- 3. Full-time special education class in the regular school:** Special education services and programs outside of the regular classroom but in a regular school for most of the school day (80% or more), with opportunities for participation in regular nonacademic, or extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate.
- 4. Full-time special education class outside of the regular school:** Special education services and programs outside of the regular school for the entire school day, with opportunities for participation in regular nonacademic or extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate.

## Special Education Screening Evaluation and Placement Procedures

The Shaler Area School District uses the following procedures, in accordance with state and federal laws, for locating, identifying, and evaluating the school age students who may require specialized services:

The district routinely conducts screenings of children's hearing acuity (grades K, 1, 2, 3, 7 and 11) visual acuity (all grade levels), dental hygiene (grades K, 3 and 7), scoliosis (grades 6 and 7), and speech and language skills (kindergarten and teacher referral). Physical exams are required in grades K, 6 and 11 while height and weight measurements are conducted annually. Gross motor and fine motor skills, academic skills and social/emotional skills are assessed by classroom teachers on an ongoing basis. Any concerns which are identified from screening procedures must be shared with parents by the child's teacher, principal and any other team member involved in the screening.

### **If you have concerns.....**

Parents who have concerns regarding their child may contact the building principal at any time to request a screening or evaluation of their child. All communication with parents and students shall be in English or the native language of the parents.

Screening information will be used by the Student Assistance Teams which are in place at every building to develop an intervention plan to better meet the student's specific needs.

### **If additional support is needed.....**

If a child requires additional services, the Student Assistant Program Team will make modifications to accommodate the child's learning style, behavior, physical limitations or speech/language problem. As an integral team member, parents are always included as a part of the process with their child. If a child does not progress with SAP involvement, parents will be asked to consider granting their written permission for an evaluation of their child. This evaluation will be coordinated by one of the district's school psychologists who will also participate in the evaluation process. As part of initiating a multidisciplinary evaluation, parents will receive a written document outlining Procedural Safeguards.

### **Parent and school cooperation is important.....**

After an evaluation is completed, a comprehensive Evaluation Report (ER) will be developed with parent involvement. This report includes evaluation findings, along with specific recommendations for educational strategies and techniques for helping the child as well as a statement regarding eligibility for special education services, based on Chapter 14 of the PA Special Education Regulations and Standards. The ER is contained within a student file housed in the Department of Pupil Personnel Services (PPS). Records are available to only those school staff who work with the child on a direct or indirect basis. Records are also available to parents. While ERs and IEPs can be released to other districts without written parent permission, information from the records is

released to other persons or agencies only with appropriate authorization, which requires written permission by parents.

After completion of the ER, parents are then invited to participate in a meeting where the results of the multidisciplinary evaluation will be reviewed and the Individual Education Program (IEP) will be developed for those students who are eligible for special education services.

All parents are presented with a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP), which formally specifies the school district's recommendations. Parents will again receive written information regarding their Procedural Safeguards. Parents may disagree with the program being recommended and may wish to suggest other alternatives. The Procedural Safeguards information outlines the parent's legal options if they disagree with the school district. Either the parent or school district may use mediation or due process hearing as an impartial method to arrive at an agreement on an appropriate program for their child.

### **Section 504/Chapter 15**

Chapter 15 of the Regulations of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education requires that school districts provide protected handicapped pupils enrolled in the district, without cost to the pupil or family, those related aids, services or accommodations which are needed to afford the pupil equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities without discrimination and to the maximum extent appropriate to the pupil's abilities.

Administrative procedures for protected handicapped pupils are available for implementation by principals. Teachers who suspect that a student may be eligible for aids, services or accommodations as a protected handicapped pupil under Chapter 15 should contact the school principal. Teachers who are requested by parents to provide aids, services or accommodations to a student with a disability should contact the school principal.

### **More information is available.....**

Information about Procedural Safeguards, Special Education and Section 504 services and programs offered by the district, and the district's Educational Records policy are available upon request from the building principal in your child's school.

High School Principal, Mr. Timothy Royall, 492-1200, Extension 1500

Middle School Principal, Mr. Marty Martynuska 492-1200, Extension 2500

Elementary School Principal, Mr. Ian Miller, 492-1200, Extension 3500

Burchfield School Principal, Mr. Jeff Rojik, 492-1200, Extension 4500

Jeffery School Principal, Mrs. JoAnne Townsend, 492-1200, Extension 5800

Marzolf School Principal, Rick Pelkofer, 492-1200, Extension 6500

Reserve School Principal, Ms. Eloise Milligan, 492-1200, Extension 7500

Rogers School Principal, Ms. Cynthia Foht, 492-1200, Extension 8500

## **Shaler Area School District**

# **SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

## **Department of Pupil Personnel Services**

### Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Mrs. Kathleen Graczyk (412) 492-1200  
Extensions 2815/2816

### School Psychologists (412) 492-1200

Mrs. Mary Lou Bentrem Extension 2818  
Mrs. Karen Constantakis Extension 2821  
Ms. Mindy Gabrielson Extension 2882

### School Social Workers (412) 492-1200

Miss Lisa Tagmyer Extension 4550  
Mrs. Laurie Cortazzo Extension 1527  
Mrs. LeeAnn Guido Extension 1526  
Mrs. Kathy Newport Extension 2523