

South Fayette Township School District

Required Annual Notices

2016-2017

Highly Qualified Teachers:

All public school teachers with primary responsibility for direct instruction in one or more core content areas are required to demonstrate that they satisfy the definition of a "Highly Qualified Teacher." This requirement includes:

- Elementary level (grades K-2) teachers who teach all subjects to a particular grade;
- Intermediate level (grades 3-4-5) teachers who teach all subjects to a particular grade;
- Middle-and secondary-level (grades 7-12) core content area teachers;
- Special education teachers who provide direct instruction in one or more core content areas; English as a second language (ESL) teachers who provide direct instruction in one or more core content areas; and
- Alternative education teachers who provide direct instruction in one or more core content areas.

Pennsylvania's Definition of Highly Qualified Teacher:

To satisfy the definition of Highly Qualified Teacher, teachers must:

1. Hold at least a bachelor's degree;
2. Hold a valid Pennsylvania teaching certificate (i.e., Instructional I, Instructional II or Intern certificate but not an emergency permit); and
3. Demonstrate subject matter competency for the core content area they teach.

In Pennsylvania, the core content areas include English, Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, Sciences, Foreign Languages, Music and Art, and Social Studies (history, economics, geography, and civics and government).

In the 2015-2016 school year, 100 percent of the teachers at South Fayette Township School District met or exceeded the highly qualified criteria. Also, in the 2015-2016 school year, 100% of Title 1 and Special Education paraeducators have met the highly qualified criteria.

Parents' Right to Know:

Parents/guardians may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teacher(s). Specifically, individuals have the right to ask for the following information:

- Whether the student's teacher has met state qualifying and licensing criteria for the grade level or subject he/she is teaching;
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status;
- The teacher's college major, the baccalaureate degree, and/or any advanced degrees earned by the teacher;
- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

To obtain this information, please submit your request in writing to the Assistant Superintendent who oversees teacher/paraeducator certifications/qualifications. Each request should include the child's name, his/her teachers' names and the school he/she attends. Please be certain to include your name, address and a telephone number at which you can be contacted during the day.

South Fayette Township School District
Attn: Assistant Superintendent
3680 Old Oakdale Road
McDonald, PA 15057-3544
412-221-4542, Ex. 409

South Fayette Township School District's Annual Child Find Notice and Student Records Notice

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that affords parents the right to have access to their children's education records, the right to seek to have the records amended, and the right to have some control over the disclosure of personally identifiable information from the education records. When a student turns 18 years old, or enters a postsecondary institution at any age, the rights under FERPA transfer from the parents to the student ("eligible student"). The FERPA statute is found at 20 U.S.C. § 1232g and the FERPA regulations are found at 34 CFR Part 99.

It is the intent of this Annual Notice and policy to inform both the parent(s)/guardian(s) and eligible children (i.e. students 18 and older) of their rights relevant to their privacy rights in the collection, maintenance, release and destruction of these records as required by the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)*, 20 U.S.C. '1232g. 34 C.F.R. part 99.

Annual notice of this policy is given on the District's website, in the School Calendar, in building parent/student handbooks and hard copies are available in the main lobby of the administration building.

The different categories of information maintained by the school district are as follows; educational and health records, personally identifiable information and directory information. Information known as directory information can be released without consent. Parents may opt out of this by requesting in writing to the school principal that some or all directory information not be released. In addition, photographs and/or videos may be used in newspaper articles highlighting various school activities or television coverage of school events. If you do not wish your child to be photographed or videotaped for these purposes, you must inform the district in writing.

Education Records include records directly related to a student that are maintained by the South Fayette Township School District. The Educational Records of the District may include all of the following (this list is not intended to be exhaustive): grades, standardized test results, student evaluation reports, samples of student work, records transferred from sending schools, discipline records, medical records and any other records created and maintained by the school district directly related to the student. Educational records do not include communications with legal counsel that are attorney client privileged. Educational Records do not include records maintained solely by the creator for their personal use, not shared with others. Personal observation of students is not considered to be an educational record. The contents of a student's educational file shall be determined by the District unless a specific parental request is made or a complaint is made, consistent with this Notice.

The District shall permit the parent/guardian(s) of a student or an eligible special education student, who is or has been in attendance in the District, to inspect and review the education records of the student upon written request. The District will comply with a written request to review records within a reasonable period of time (never to exceed 45 calendar days from the date of written request) after the request has been made. When there are special cases and where necessary, a parental request to review records will be granted and arranged as soon as possible. Visits to review a student's records shall be arranged and facilitated by the building principal or designee, or any party selected by the District, for the purposes of security and assistance in explaining or interpreting the data.

The right to inspect and review education records includes:

1. The right to a response from the District to reasonable requests, made in writing, for explanation and interpretations of the record; and
2. The right to obtain copies of records from the District where failure of the District to provide the copies would effectively prevent a parent or eligible student from exercising the right to inspect and review the educational records (e.g. where the parent lives too far to come review the records personally). ***A reasonable fee of .25 will be charged per page for duplicate copies of documents already provided to parents/guardians.***

In accordance with FERPA, the District will not produce or compile documentation that does not already exist.

It is presumed by the District that both natural parent/guardian(s) of a student has authority to inspect and review the education records of the student at the school in the child's attendance area (main office) by appointment unless there is evidence that there is a legally binding instrument, or a State law or court order governing such matters as divorce, separation or custody, which provides to the contrary. A District designee will sit with the parent when the parent reviews the records in a private conference area of the main office.

Under federal law, parental consent is not required for the release of Directory information, which is information contained in an education record of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed.

The District designates the following as **Directory Information means:** information contained in an education record of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed.

- a) Directory information includes, but is not limited to, the student's name; address; telephone listing; electronic mail address; photograph; date and place of birth; major field of study; grade level; enrollment status (*e.g.*, undergraduate or graduate, full-time or part-time); dates of attendance; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; weight and height of members of athletic teams; degrees, honors and awards received; and the most recent educational agency or institution attended.
- b) **Directory information does not include a student's:**
 - 1) Social security number; or
 - 2) Student identification (ID) number, except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section.
- (c) Directory information includes a student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used by the student for purposes of accessing or communicating in electronic systems, but only if the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's identity, such as a personal identification number (PIN), password, or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user.

A written record of this information, or microfilm copy of the same, including grade level completed and year completed, may be maintained at least 100 years after a student attains age 21. A parent/guardian or eligible student may notify the District in writing of their refusal to allow the District to release directory information without prior consent. Such written refusal for consent must be sent to the Director of Pupil Personnel, South Fayette Township School District, 3660 Old Oakdale Road, McDonald, PA 15057-3544.

The District is required to release student directory information (access to names, addresses, and phone numbers of high school juniors and seniors) to **military recruiters and college admissions officers.** High schools are required to release information to colleges or other higher learning institutions upon request. Any parent/guardian or student who has reached age eighteen may notify the District **in writing of their refusal** for this information to be released. Letters seeking the withholding of information to military recruiters should be sent to: Director of Pupil Personnel, South Fayette Township School District, 3660 Old Oakdale Road, McDonald, PA 15057-3544.

Per federal guidance, **student medical records**, maintained by the nurses' office, are considered educational records and will be shared with staff who the district determines have a legitimate educational interest in the information and a need to know medical information to protect the safety and health of the student. **Once provided to the District, specific parental consent will not be sought to share information on a need to know basis. Parental requests to maintain the confidentiality of specific medical information must be made in writing to the nurse's office.** Requests for complete confidentiality of medical information will be granted at the discretion of the nurse. These requests will be granted unless dangerous to the student.

If the agency reported a crime committed by a student with a disability the district will ensure that copies of the special education records and disciplinary records of the student will be transmitted properly and only to the extent possible that the transmission is permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

The District shall obtain the written consent of the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student age eighteen before disclosing personally identifiable information, other than directory information, from the education records of a student to a third party. Consent is not required where the disclosure is to the parent/guardian(s) of a student who is not an eligible student or the student himself or herself.

Personally Identifiable Information:

The term includes, but is not limited to ---

- (a) The student's name;
- (b) The name of the student's parent or other family members;
- (c) The address of the student or student's family;
- (d) A personal identifier, such as the student's social security number, student number, or biometric record;
- (e) Other indirect identifiers, such as the student's date of birth, place of birth, and mother's maiden name;
- (f) Other information that, alone or in combination, is linked or linkable to a specific student that would allow a reasonable person in the school community, who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to identify the student with reasonable certainty; or
- (g) Information requested by a person who the educational agency or institution reasonably believes knows the identity of the student to whom the education record relates.

Uses of Personally Identifiable Information:

The district may disclose personally identifiable information from the education records of a student without written consent of the parent/guardian(s) or the student or the eligible student in several situations. See 34 C.F.R. Part 99. Some important examples of when no consent to release information include (list not exhaustive):

1. To other school officials, including teachers, guidance counselors, nurses, and I.U. personnel within the District who have been determined by the District to have legitimate educational interests or are providing instruction or services to students. The District has determined that all school employees involved in the direct supervision of a student (academic or non-academic) (including support staff) have a legitimate education interest in academic and health related student information if the information is necessary to ensure appropriate fulfillment of their professional duties and to ensure the health and safety of the student.
2. To officials of another school or school system or post-secondary schools in which the student seeks or intends to enroll, subject to the requirements set forth in 99.34. Parents may request a copy of the record sent.
3. To appropriate parties in a health or safety emergency, subject to the conditions set and 99.36, if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.
4. To authorized representatives of the U.S. Comptroller General, the U.S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the State educational agency in the parent or eligible student's State (SEA). Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirement of 99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal or State supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside agencies that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf.
5. Information designated by the District as Directory Information.
6. Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent/guardian or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
 - Specified officials for audit and evaluation purposes
 - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student
 - Organizations conducting studies for or on behalf of the school
 - Accrediting organizations
 - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
 - State and local authorities, within the juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law
 - Contracted, consultant, volunteer, or other party to whom an agency or institution has outsourced institutional services or functions may be considered a school official under this paragraph---
 - (1) Performs an institutional service or function for which the agency or institution would otherwise use employees;
 - (2) Is under the direct control of the agency or institution with respect to the use and maintenance of education records; and
 - (3) Is subject to the requirements of §99.33 (a) governing the use and redisclosure of personally identifiable information from education records.
 - (ii) An educational agency or institution must use reasonable methods to ensure that school officials obtain access to only those education records in which they have legitimate educational interests. An educational agency or institution that does not use physical or technological access controls must ensure that its administrative policy for controlling access to education records is effective and that it remains in compliance with the legitimate educational interest requirement.

When providing records to authorized third parties, the District will make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent/guardian(s) of the student or the eligible student of the transfer of the records at the last known address of the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student. Per state law, the District will not provide any notice of transfer of records of a student to a school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

The District maintains student records in a locked storage room located at South Fayette High School. This storage room contains special education student records, gifted education student records, student health records, 504 Student Service Plan records, etc. Current original special education records with psychological records are maintained in the Department of Pupil Personnel. All district records of students (K-12) who were evaluated by the school psychologist(s) and found not to be non-exceptional are kept and are secured in the school(s)' offices. All records are kept in a secure location and access to files is limited.

PLEASE NOTE: SOUTH FAYETTE TOWNSHIP SCHOOL BOARD POLICY 216 PROVIDES RESIDENT STUDENTS AND THEIR PARENTS WITH NOTICE THAT THE DISTRICT MAY DESTROY RECORDS UNDER THE FOLLOWING CIRCUMSTANCES AND TIMELINES:

- a. **Records that include a student's name, address, grades, attendance records, classes attended, grade level completed and year completed may be destroyed once 100 years have passed since the student's 24th birthday.**
- b. **Special Education records**, Section 504 records, Instructional Support Team (IST) records, and health records **may be destroyed once 10 years have passed from the date a student has graduated or reached graduation age** (if exiting the district before graduation) as long as there is no outstanding request to inspect and review the records and the records are no longer deemed useful to the school district.
- c. **Notice of destruction of these records is provided annually via this publication.** Educational records of a student are longer needed by the District to provide educational services at the end of one year following a student's graduation from the District. A parent/guardian may submit a written request for the destruction of all education records at that time.
- d. Destruction will proceed where parents or eligible students have not requested copies by November 1st of the year the records may be destroyed as per paragraphs A&B above. Parents or students over eighteen have the right to request a copy of their record before destruction.

Parents are reminded that copies of the records might be needed for the acquisition of Social Security benefits or for other purposes.

Amendment of Education Records:

A Parent/guardian or eligible student has the right to request amendment of a student's educational file if it is believed that any information is inaccurate, or in violation of a student's rights. The educational agency shall decide within a reasonable time whether to amend the record. If the school district decides not to amend the educational record it shall notify the parent/student of the right to and arrange an informal hearing. The hearing will be conducted by an official of the District without an interest in the outcome, who will be either the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment or their designee. The parent may present relevant evidence. The District will issue a written decision based on the hearing.

Informal inquiries may be sent to: ferpa@ed.gov or ppra@ed.gov. The website address is: www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guide/fpcd

Complaints regarding violation of rights accorded parent(s)/guardian(s) and eligible students with respect to student records are to be submitted to Director of Pupil Personnel, South Fayette Township School District, at 3660 Old Oakdale Road, McDonald, PA, 15057-3544, in writing. All Complaints will be investigated and responded to in writing within a reasonable period of time. If complaints cannot be satisfactorily resolved by the District, complaints can be filed with the following

**Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605**

Questions regarding the above information or requests for a copy of the records policy may be referred to: Director of Pupil Personnel, South Fayette Township School District, 3660 Old Oakdale Road, McDonald, PA 15057-3544.

Screening and Evaluation

The South Fayette Township School District employs the following procedures for locating, identifying and evaluating the needs of school age students who may require special education programs and/or services. These procedures, as required by state regulation, are as follows:

As prescribed by Section 1402 of the Pennsylvania school code, the district routinely conducts health screenings for kindergarten (K) through 12th grade students and new students without history of recent exams: Vision (Gr. K-12); Hearing (Gr. K, 3, 7 and 11 and any student with a known history of hearing loss); Mandated Physical Exams (Gr. K, 6, and 11); Dental Screenings (Gr. K, 1, 3, and 7); Scoliosis Screening (Gr. 6, 7) and Body Mass Index (BMI) screening (Gr. K-12). Also, school nurses provide vision and hearing screenings for students who are referred for an evaluation or re-evaluation regarding Chapter 14/Individualized Education Plan (IEP) special education services and Chapter 15/504 Student Services Plan accommodations.

Speech and language skills are screened in kindergarten and on a referral basis by speech clinicians.

Gross-motor and fine-motor skills, academic and social-emotional skills are assessed by the teachers and support staff. Screening activities include: review of group-based data such as cumulative enrollment and health records, report cards and academic skills scores. Identified needs from these screening sources, as well as information obtained from parents and outside agencies, is assessed, noted within the student's record and discussed with parents.

South Fayette Township School District has intervention/prevention teams in place to support students as a pre-referral system. At the elementary school (K-2) and the intermediate school (3-4-5), a child study team has been established as part of the pre-referral intervention process. The team consists of principals, guidance counselor, regular education teachers, reading specialists, school psychologist when needed and special education staff when needed. Parents are also part of this process and are contacted and strongly encouraged to participate in all phases of the child study team process. The Child Study Team assists teachers and parents with supporting students who are experiencing academic, behavioral, medical, emotional and social skills difficulties.

Also at the elementary school, the Kindergarten Express classrooms in kindergarten and the Reading Achievement classrooms in first and second grades provide students with research-evidenced based reading instruction. These classrooms provide intensive reading instruction for students that are considered below basic or basic. Our reading specialists and paraeducators have received intensive instruction on the reading process and have been trained to provide explicit and systematic instruction. Research-evidence based instruction include phonemic awareness activities, word building, syllasearch, developing vocabulary through Isabel Beck's model of robust vocabulary instruction, Questioning the Author strategy, Text Talk strategy, chunking text, "What are you thinking?" strategy, scrolling, character mapping, and color coding text.

Kindergarten students are screened using the Early Screening Profile from American Guidance Service during our kindergarten registration. Students identified as lacking readiness skills are placed in the Kindergarten Express classroom for half a day and the regular kindergarten classroom the other half. Students receive intensive instruction with a reading specialist and paraeducator. Instruction includes activities focusing on phonemic awareness, letter recognition and sounds, decoding (word building), sight word recognition, reading decodable text, and comprehension.

All first grade through fifth grade students (elementary and intermediate schools) are assessed using the assessments from the Reading Achievement Center at the beginning of each school year. Students are assessed on sight word recognition, decoding pseudo words, fluency, and comprehension. Students scoring below basic are placed in the Reading Achievement classroom at the beginning of the school year. Students scoring basic are either placed in the Reading Achievement classroom or monitored in the regular reading classroom. Placement of these students is determined by the degree of reading deficiency. Basic students not placed in the Reading Achievement classroom are monitored closely with reading strategies implemented in the regular reading classroom. If these students do not progress, they will be placed in the Reading Achievement classroom for intensive reading instruction. Each Reading Achievement classroom contains eighteen students.

The Reading Achievement classrooms in first grade through fifth grade (elementary and intermediate buildings) provide intensive small group instruction for the entire language arts block. Students rotate in groups among a reading specialist, classroom teacher, and a paraeducator in first and second grade. Students in third, fourth and fifth grades also rotate in small groups of six among a reading specialist and a classroom teacher. Students are provided intensive instruction in phonemic awareness, decoding (word building and syllasearch), vocabulary development, fluency, and comprehension strategies. Students are given numerous opportunities to apply these reading strategies to reading various types of text. Materials used in the Reading Achievement classrooms were developed by Harcourt Journeys, and the Allegheny Intermediate Unit Reading Specialists/Consultants. Students are routinely assessed on decoding, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension to monitor their progress.

The intermediate building has an after school math program as well. This initiative was developed to provide instructional support to students in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade math curriculum at the intermediate school. Students are selected by assessment scores and teachers recommendations. This program is formatted to meet the individual needs of the students by providing small group instruction twice a week. Lesson plans are the direct result of data taken from the PSSA and curriculum-based assessments from both the third and fourth grade math programs. Also, included in the lesson plan is instruction in the PSSA format. The students are assessed on a regular basis and parents as contacted as needed.

The middle school utilizes the ACHIEVE Program/course to move students to academic independence through learning skill instruction, tutorial assistance and academic support beyond the regular education school program. In addition, the ACHIEVE Program/course establishes a needed communication link between family and school, and attempts to change student attitudes through improved academic performance. A student's participation in the ACHIEVE Program is dependent upon a number of

factors. Students generally remain in the program/course for the duration of the school year; however, students may progress academically to the point where the parents and the teachers determine that the student is no longer in need of the program. There is no grade given for this course at the middle school.

In the middle school, the Academic Intervention Model (AIM) is utilized as the pre-referral intervention process for students who are in need of academic assistance. The AIM process is a team based intervention model. There are collaborative intervention team meetings with the parents to identify targeted interventions related to specific academic skill areas that need to be addressed for the student. Research-based intervention strategies are implemented for a period of time in the regular classroom setting to assist the student in an attempt to foster academic success. An implementation plan is developed and monitored by the student's team of teachers and reviewed and revised if necessary. If it is determined by the team that the interventions are not working and the student is not meeting success, the student may be referred for a multi-disciplinary team evaluation.

The South Fayette Student Assistance Teams (SAP) provides additional support used by the district to identify at-risk students. SAP teams are currently in place at the middle and high school levels. SAP is a cooperative effort with parents in utilizing the support staff, students, and community through contracted services with Chartiers MH/MR. It is a proactive prevention/intervention program that attempts to provide intervention before school performance is seriously compromised. The SAP Core Team of individuals are trained in the SAP Model and focus on screening/intervention for student who may be experiencing drug and alcohol, depression, and/or family issues, referrals to appropriate agencies or treatment facilities, aftercare for those returning from treatment, and crisis intervention as needed.

If appropriate, a referral process is initiated at each building level through the Child Study Teams, ACHIEVE Grade Level Teams, Student Assistance Teams (SAP), guidance departments, principals or the Department of Pupil Personnel Services. Assessment data is used by the team to meet the student's specific needs by recommending modifications or adaptations to the regular education program, creating interventions to address the problem and monitoring the student's response to intervention, or to document the need for further evaluation.

If it is determined that a student is in need of further evaluation, the student is referred for a multidisciplinary team (MDT) evaluation, which requires parent permission and includes parent input. Next, a "Prior Written Notice for Initial Evaluation and Request for Consent Form" is issued to the parent to sign giving the school district permission to conduct the evaluation. The school district has 60 calendar days to complete the evaluation. After the evaluation is completed, an evaluation report is prepared which includes specific recommendations for the types of intervention necessary to meet the needs of the student and to determine the child's eligibility for special education services based upon a disability.

When the evaluation report is completed parents are invited if necessary to a multidisciplinary team meeting to review findings and plan for the student's needs. After the MDT evaluation is completed, the parents are given a NOREP, which they sign to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the recommendation.

Parents of students who suspect that their child has a disability and is in need of special education may request an Intervention Team meeting or multidisciplinary team evaluation of their child through a written request to the building principal or Director of Pupil Personnel.

You may find information regarding the appropriate developmental milestone descriptors for infants and toddlers at the Center for Disease Control (CDC) website: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/ActEarly/default.htm> For additional information regarding the signs of developmental delays, please contact the Director of Pupil Personnel at 412-221-4542, Ext. 429.

Services for School Age Students with Disabilities or Mental Giftedness:

The South Fayette Township School District provides a free, appropriate public education to students with disabilities or mental giftedness according to state and federal rules. To be eligible, the child must:

- Be of school age.
- Have a disability or mental giftedness *and* be in need of specially designed instruction.
- Meet eligibility criteria for one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities as set forth in the Pennsylvania State Standards: autism, deaf-blindness, blindness, visual impairment, emotional disturbance, specific learning disability, other health impairment, traumatic brain injury, and speech/language impairment, orthopedic impairment, hearing impairment, deafness, multiple disabilities or mental retardation. Services designed to meet the needs of eligible disabled students include:
 - a) The annual development of an individualized education program (IEP or Gifted IEP).
 - b) A triennial multidisciplinary re-evaluation for students with disabilities (except for those students with mental retardation where evaluation remains biennial).
 - c) A range of supports for students from itinerant level to supplemental level to full time level special education support within the school district or placement in a full-time special education disabilities class outside of the regular school.

The extent of special education services for disabled or mentally gifted students and the location for the delivery of such services are determined by the parents and the district staff at the IEP team meeting and are based on the student's identified needs and abilities, chronological age and the level of intensity of the specified intervention. The school district also provides related services, such as transportation, physical therapy, occupational therapy and assistive technology if they are required to enable the student with disabilities to derive educational benefits.

- a) Prior to initiation of services, parents of a student with disabilities are presented a “Notice of Recommended Educational Placement/Prior Written Notice” (NOREP) and parents of a mentally gifted student with a “Notice of Recommended Assignment” (NORA) with which they agree or disagree. If parents agree to the program outlined by the multidisciplinary team and the parent signs either the NOREP or NORA, then the program is implemented for their child. If parents disagree with the program being recommended, they have the right to request IEP facilitation, mediation and/or a due process hearing. Parents are issued their “Procedural Safeguards” which outlines in detail their legal rights as a parent of a child identified as having a disability or considered mental gifted. Lastly, if a child proves to have a disability or handicapping condition under PA Chapter 15 and the American Disabilities Act and it is determined the child is entitled to services and accommodations that are necessary to enable them access and safety when participating in programs and activities of the school, then a 504 Student Services Plan is outlined between the parent, district LEA and district staff. Parents are also given “Procedural Safeguards” for Chapter 15 504 Student Services Plans which outlines their rights as a parent of a student who has a disability and requires accommodations.

Detailed information regarding Chapter 14 special education, Chapter 16 gifted education and Chapter 15 504 Service Plan/Agreement procedures and services may be obtained by calling the Pupil Personnel Department at South Fayette Township School Schools, (412) 221-4542, extension 429.

Services for Students in Nonpublic Schools:

Public school education may be accessible to resident students attending nonpublic schools on a dual enrollment basis in a special education program operated in a public school. A multidisciplinary evaluation which determines the child’s eligibility for services must be conducted and, if eligible, an individualized education program plan (IEP) is developed. Parents of nonpublic school students who suspect that their child is disabled and in need of special education may request a multidisciplinary evaluation of their child through a written request to the building principal or Director of Pupil Personnel.

Services for Protected Handicapped Students:

The school district will provide to each protected handicapped student without discrimination or cost to the student or family those related aids, services or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of school programs and extracurricular activities to the extent appropriate to the student’s abilities. To qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental handicap which substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program.

Services for protected handicapped students are distinct from those applicable to disabled students enrolled in special education programs. Protected handicapped students fall under Pennsylvania’s Chapter 15, sometimes known by its federal name, Section 504 (of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act). In contrast, students with disabilities who qualify for special education services are covered by regulations contained in Pennsylvania’s Chapter 14. While both Chapter 14 and 15 provide services to students, there are technical differences between the two. Additional information about evaluation procedures and provision of services to protected handicapped students is available by contacting the building principal.

Services for Preschool Age Children:

Act 212, the Early Intervention Systems Act, entitles all preschool age children with disabilities to appropriate intervention services. Young children experiencing developmental delay or physical or mental disabilities are eligible for early intervention services if it is determined that they meet eligibility requirements.

The **Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare** is responsible for providing services to infants and toddlers, defined as children from birth to three year of age. Contact the Early Learning Institute, 2510 Baldwick Road, Pittsburgh, PA, 15205-4104, 412-922-8322. The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing services to preschool age children from ages three through five. Contact the **Allegheny Intermediate Unit, Project DART**, 425 East Waterfront Drive, Homestead, PA 15120, 412-394-5941.

Confidentiality of Student Records:

The privacy rights of parents and students are mandated by federal legislation known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA - C.F.R. Part 99), most recently amended in November 1996, state regulations (Chapter 14-Special Education Services and Programs, Chapter 12-Student Rights and Responsibilities) and district policy.

South Fayette Township School District Public Notice on Surrogate Parents For Students with Special Needs

Federal law establishes the right of a free and appropriate public education for all children with disabilities. To ensure that this right is realized for all such children, procedures are written into the laws to ensure that children with disabilities who are wards of the state, or whose parents are unknown, unavailable, or have had their parental rights legally terminated, have appropriate representation when educational programming decisions are made. This is provided through the recruitment, training and assignment of volunteer surrogate parents who represent the child during the educational process. In Pennsylvania, Intermediate

Units have been given the responsibility of recruiting, training and assigning parents to children meeting the qualifications listed. The South Fayette Township School District works with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit #3 in providing this service.

Identification of Children Eligible for Surrogate Parents:

Special needs preschool and school-aged children receiving a free and appropriate education in a public school or an approved private school, who meet one of the following criteria, are eligible for the assignment of a qualified surrogate parent:

1. The Child is a ward of the state, or
2. The Child's parent(s) or guardian(s) are unknown or unavailable, or
3. The Child is an unaccompanied homeless youth.

To be identified as being in need of a surrogate parent, the preschooler or school-aged child must have special needs, or be thought to have special needs, and be in need of special education services in the South Fayette Township School District or IU operated program or be enrolled in an approved private/private school.

Qualification for Surrogate Parents:

Surrogate parents must meet the following qualifications:

- Be of a person of good character,
- Be at least 18 years of age,
- Possess reasonable abilities to make decisions regarding a child's educational needs,
- Be willing to acquaint themselves with the child's educational needs and with the special education system in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,
- Have no vested interest that would conflict with the primary allegiance to the child they are representing. The surrogate parent should not be an employee of the agency responsible for the care of the child,
- Foster parents may be considered if they meet all other qualifications,
- Have Act 33 and Act 34 clearances from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,
- Be willing to complete a training program conducted by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit.

Responsibilities of the Surrogate Parent:

The surrogate parent is expected to act in place of a parent for the student concerning his or her educational program. This involves:

- Attending a planning conference to develop an individualized educational program,
- Being familiar with appropriate procedures for due process and confidentiality of school records,
- Receiving and responding to requests and notices concerning the evaluation and/or educational placement of the assigned student,
- Making self-familiar with the unique educational needs of the assigned student.

The surrogate parent takes on certain quasi-legal responsibilities in order to serve the best interests of the child. The primary function is to represent the student in those circumstances in which decisions need to be made concerning the student's educational program or placement.

It is necessary for the surrogate parent to receive considerable training to familiarize him or herself with all aspects of the surrogate parent role. The demands of the role may be extensive and require the volunteer to make a significant commitment of time and learning in order to serve the best interest of the child.

If you are interested in being a surrogate parent for a child/youth with disabilities, please contact the Director of Pupil Personnel at 412-221-4542, Ext. 429.

English as a Second Language Services (ESL)

In accordance with federal law and state regulations, the South Fayette School District must identify all students who have "limited English proficiency" (LEP). These students typically have a primary language other than English that is used in their homes. Students identified with a limited English proficiency are eligible for ESL instructional services to help them attain proficient skills in their use of the written and spoken English language.

All students must have a Home Language Survey completed by their parents prior to admission into the school district. This survey allows the South Fayette School District to identify possible LEP students. South Fayette Township School District ESL

teachers, will screen any student identified as possibly having a limited English proficiency and will provide direct services to students based on their level of need.

Parents or guardians who feel that their child may have a limited English proficiency should contact the ESL Coordinator at 412-221-4542, extension 415 for more information.

Title I Performance Report

South Fayette Elementary School receives Title I funds annually. The funding is used to provide the Title I Reading Services to first grade and second grade students who are below basic or basic in their reading skills.

A highly qualified teacher, according to the United States Department of Education, is fully certified, has a bachelor's degree, a content area major and has passed a content area test. In addition, fully certified teachers in Pennsylvania have completed pedagogical course work in education, including student teaching. We take pride in the tremendous skill and dedication of our faculty and staff.

Please note that, as parents, you have a right to request and receive timely information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's classroom teacher. If you have any questions about our Title I Program or about your child's teacher, please feel free to contact the Title I Coordinator at 412 221-4542, extension 612.

School Board Policy #918, Title I Parental Involvement, can be found in the back of the Handbook.

Department of Pupil Personnel: Pupil Support Services and Special Education Department: 412-221-4542

Mandi Davis Skerbetz, Ed. D.
Director of Pupil Personnel
Extension 429
mdskerbetz@southfayette.org

Gretchen Tucci, M.S. Ed.
School Psychologist/Assistant Director of Pupil Personnel
Extension 415
gitucci@southfayette.org

Conchetta Bell, Psy. D.
School Psychologist/Transition and 504 Plan Services Coordinator
Extension 404
cbell@southfayette.org

Celeste Whaley
Administrative Assistant
Department of Pupil Personnel
Extension 428
cgwhaley@southfayette.org

Tara Rao
ACCESS Coordinator/Administrative Assistant
Department of Pupil Personnel
Extension 403
ttrao@southfayette.org