

Seed Study

Deep Roots Charter School Child Find
Guide



Deep Roots Charter School (DRCS) publishes the following Annual Notice in the school's Parent-Student Handbook and on the school's website: www.deeprootscs.org.

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DRCS Mission

Our mission is to teach disciplined learners and to empower them to grow and service in their community, in college and beyond.

Purpose of Seed Study

Each charter school, along with other public agencies in the Commonwealth, must establish and implement procedures to identify, locate and evaluate all children who need special education programs and services because of the child's disability. This notice is to help find these children, to offer assistance to parents, and to describe the parents' rights with regard to confidentiality of information that will be obtained during the process.

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 Deep Roots Charter School (see special education contacts) and request an explanation.

The Seed Study team is the first step Deep Roots Charter School takes to ensure students with disabilities can be identified, located, and evaluated. The purpose is to locate these children so that a free appropriate public education (FAPE) can be made available. Seed study is an identification activity that includes, review of group data, conducting hearing and vision screenings, assessment of student's academic functioning, observation of the student displaying difficulty in behavior, and determining the student's response to attempted remediation. Input from parents is also an informed source of identification. After a child is

identified as a suspected child with a disability, he or she is evaluated once the parent/guardian gives written permission for the child to be evaluated. Regardless of screening activities, parents who think their child is a child with a disability may request in writing at any time, that an evaluation be conducted to determine if the child is eligible to receive special education services. Written request should be sent to Deep Root Charter School's Director of Specialized Services.

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

CHILD FIND (§300.125)

It is the policy of Deep Roots Charter School that all students with disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disability, who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated. This responsibility is required by a Federal law called 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 of children applying to or already enrolled in Deep Roots 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 Deep Roots Charter School.

The purpose of this Annual Notice is to comply with the school's obligations under Chapter 711 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code. This Annual Notice is made available both in the school's Parent-Student Handbook and on the school's website: www.deerootscs.org.

Additionally, Deep Roots Charter School must prominently display a Child Find poster explaining the procedure for requesting evaluation.

Qualifying for Special Education and Related Services

Under the Federal IDEA 2004, there are two steps for a student to qualify for special education and related services.

The first step is a finding that the student has one or more of the following disabilities that interfere with his or her educational performance:

- (1) autism or pervasive developmental disorder,
- (2) deaf-blindness,
- (3) deafness,
- (4) emotional disturbance,
- (5) hearing impairment,
- (6) intellectual disability (formerly known as mental retardation),
- (7) multiple disabilities,
- (8) orthopedic impairment,
- (9) other health impairment (includes ADD, ADHD, epilepsy, etc.),
- (10) specific learning disability,
- (11) speech or language impairment,
- (12) traumatic brain injury, and/or
- (13) visual impairment including blindness.

IDEA 2004 provides legal definitions of the above-listed disabilities, which may differ from those terms used in medical or clinical practice or daily language. The second step in determining eligibility for special education and related services is a finding by the school's multi-disciplinary team (MDT) that the student with one or more of these disabilities is in need of specially-designed instruction.

What Parents Can Do If They Think Their Child May Qualify for Special Education

Parents who think their child is eligible for special education may request, at any time, that the school conduct a multi-disciplinary evaluation. Some potential signs of a student having a qualifying disability include experiencing years of difficulties in reading, writing or solving math problems, difficulties focusing and concentrating on schoolwork, difficulties sitting still in the classroom, and difficulties controlling emotions (such as anxiety and depression) and/or behaviors. Requests for a multidisciplinary evaluation must be made in writing to the school's Assistant Principal of Special Education. If a parent makes an oral request for

a multi-disciplinary evaluation, the school shall provide the parent with a form for that purpose. If the school denies the parents' request for an evaluation, the parents have the right to challenge the denial through an impartial hearing or through voluntary alternative dispute resolution such as mediation.

Deep Roots Charter School's Systematic Screening and Referral Processes

Through our systematic screening and referral processes, Deep Roots Charter School identifies and refers for evaluation students who are thought to be eligible for special education services. These screening and referral processes include the initial admissions academic placement tests, standardized reading and mathematics assessments, classroom performance, benchmark examinations, vision and hearing screenings, and the comprehensive Multi-tiered System of Support and Intervention.

The school regularly assesses the current achievement and performance of the child, designs school-based interventions, employs research based interventions and assesses the effectiveness of interventions. 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. If a concern can be addressed without special education services, or if the concern is the result of limited English proficiency or the lack of appropriate instruction, a recommendation may be made for interventions other than a multi-disciplinary team evaluation.

Parents have the right to request a multidisciplinary team evaluation at any time, regardless of the outcome of the screening process. Moreover, screening or pre-referral intervention activities may not serve as a bar to the right of a parent to request an evaluation, at any time, including prior to or during the conduct of screening or pre-referral intervention activities.

If parents need additional information regarding the purpose, time, and location of screening activities, they should call or write the school's Director of Specialized Services.

Evaluation

Whenever a student is referred for a multi-disciplinary team evaluation, Deep Roots Charter School must obtain written consent from a parent before the evaluation can be conducted. Parental consent for an evaluation shall not be construed as consent for their child to receive special education and/or related services. In certain circumstances, a surrogate parent may be appointed. A surrogate parent must be appointed when no parent can be identified; a public agency, after reasonable efforts, cannot locate a parent; the child is a ward of the State under the laws of Pennsylvania, or the child in an unaccompanied homeless youth. The surrogate parent may represent the child in all matters relating to the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the child. Reasonable efforts must be made to ensure the assignment of surrogate parent not more than 30 days after it is determined that the child needs a surrogate parent.

Under IDEA 2004, an evaluation involves the use of a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information about the child, including information provided by the parent that may assist in determining whether the child is a child with a disability and assist in determining the content of the child's IEP. This process is conducted by a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) which includes a teacher, other qualified professionals who work with the child, the parents and other members as required by law. The multi-disciplinary team evaluation process must be conducted in accordance with specific timelines and must include protection-in-evaluation procedures. Deep Roots Charter School does not use any single measure or assessment as a sole criterion for determining whether a child is a child with a disability and for determining an appropriate educational program for the child. Technically sound instruments are used to assess the relative contribution of cognitive and behavioral factors in addition to physical or developmental factors.

The results of the multi-disciplinary evaluation are written in a report called an Evaluation Report (ER). This report makes recommendations about a student's Eligibility for special education based on the presence of a disability and the need for specially designed instruction. If the student's Multi-Disciplinary Team determines that the student is eligible for special education and related services, then a detailed plan for supporting the student in his/her area(s) of need over the coming year is written. This plan is called an Individualized Education Plan or IEP and is written so that the child can be successful in school-and then later in life

Programs and Services for Children with Disabilities

Deep Roots Charter School, in conjunction with the parents, determines the type and intensity of special education and related services that a particular child needs based exclusively on the unique program of special education and related services that the school develops for that child.

This program is called an Individualized Education Plan—the IEP—and is different for each student. An IEP Team consists of educators, parents, and other persons with special expertise or familiarity with the child. The participants in the IEP Team are dictated by IDEA 2004.

The parents of the child have the right to be notified of and to be offered participation in all meetings of their child's IEP Team. The IEP is revised as often as circumstances warrant but reviewed at least annually. The law requires that the program and placement of the child, as described in the IEP, be reasonably calculated to ensure meaningful educational benefit to the student. In accordance with IDEA 2004, there may be situations in which the school may hold an IEP team meeting if the parents refuse or fail to attend the IEP team meeting.

IEPs generally contain:

- (1) a statement of present levels of academic achievement and functional performance;
- (2) a statement of measurable annual goals established for the child;
- (3) a statement of how the child's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured and when periodic reports will be provided;
- (4) a statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services and a statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided, if any;
- (5) an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with non-disabled children in the regular class and in activities;
- (6) a statement of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on State and school assessments; and
- (7) the projected date for the beginning of the services and modifications and the anticipated frequency, location and duration of those services or modifications.

Special education services are provided according to the educational needs of the child, not the category of disability. Types of service that may be available, depending upon the child's disability and needs include, but are not limited to:

- (1) learning support;
- (2) life skills support;
- (3) emotional support;
- (4) deaf or hearing impaired support;
- (5) blind or visually impaired support;
- (6) physical support;
- (7) autistic support; and
- (8) multiple disabilities support.

Related services are designed to enable the child to participate in or access his or her program of special education. Examples of related services that a child may require include but are not limited to: speech and language therapy, transportation, occupational therapy, physical therapy, school nursing services, audiologist services, counseling, or training. Related services, including psychological counseling, are provided at no cost to parents.

Deep Roots Charter School ensures that children with disabilities are educated to the maximum extent possible in the regular education environment or "least restrictive environment". To the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities are educated with students who are not disabled. Special classes, separate schooling or other removal of students with disabilities from the general educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in general education classes, even with the use of supplementary aids and services, cannot be achieved satisfactorily. Programs and services available to students with disabilities might include:

- (1) regular class placement with supplementary aides and services provided as needed in that environment;

(2) regular class placement for most of the school day with itinerant service by a special education teacher either in or out of the regular classroom;

(3) regular class placement for most of the school day with instruction provided by a special education teacher in a resource classroom;

(4) part-time special education class placement in a regular public school or alternative setting; and

(5) special education class placement or special education services provided outside the regular class for most or all of the school day, either in a regular public school or alternative setting, such as an approved private school or other private facility licensed to serve children with disabilities.

Some students may also be eligible for extended school year services if determined needed by their IEP teams in accordance with Chapter 711 regulations.

Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 14, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP Team, and updated annually thereafter, the IEP must include appropriate measurable postsecondary goals and transition services needed to assist in reaching those goals. Deep Roots Charter School must invite the child to the IEP team meeting at which the transition plan is developed.

Beginning not later than one year before the child reaches the age of 21, which is the age of majority for education purposes under Pennsylvania law, the IEP must include a statement that the student has been informed of the student's rights, if any, that will transfer to the student on reaching the age of 21.

Services for Students with Disabilities, Other Than Special Education Services

Under Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, some school age children with disabilities who do not meet the eligibility criteria outlined above might nevertheless be eligible for special protections and for adaptations and accommodations in instruction, facilities, and activities. Children are entitled to such protections, adaptations, and accommodations if they have a mental or physical disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or

access to an aspect of the school program and otherwise qualify under the applicable laws.

Deep Roots Charter School must ensure that qualified students with disabilities have equal opportunity to participate in the school program and activities to the maximum extent appropriate for each individual student. In compliance with applicable state and federal laws, Deep Roots Charter School provides to each qualifying protected 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 the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities and to the extent required by these laws.

These services and protections for students with disabilities may be distinct from those applicable to students eligible for special education services or thought-to-be eligible students. Deep Roots Charter School or the parent may initiate an evaluation if they believe a student is a protected student with a disability. For further information on the evaluation procedures and provision of services to protected students, parents should contact the school's Director of Specialized Services.

Confidentiality of Student Information

Every effort is made throughout the screening, referral and evaluation process to strictly maintain the confidentiality of student information and protect the students' privacy rights. The student SAP referral process is a strictly confidential process.

After a referral and evaluation is conducted, a written record of the evaluation results is generated. This is called an Evaluation Report. This report may include information regarding the student's physical, mental, emotional, and health functioning through testing and assessment, observation of the student, as well as a review of any records made available to Deep Roots through the student's physician and other providers of services, such as counselors. Moreover, the evaluation report contains "personally identifiable information" of the student. Personally identifiable information includes the child's name, the name of the child's parents or other family member, and a list of characteristics that would make the

child's identify traceable. Input from parents is also an information source for identification.

Deep Roots Charter School protects the confidentiality of personally identifiable information by one school official being responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of the records, training being provided to all persons using the information, and maintaining for public inspection a current list of employees' names and positions who have had access to the information. Deep Roots will inform parents when this information is no longer needed to provide educational services to a student and will destroy the information at the request of the parent. However, general information, such as the student's name, address, phone number, grades, attendance record, classes attended, and grade level completed may be maintained without time limitation.

In accordance with 34 CFR § 300.624, please be advised of the following retention/destruction schedule for the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA), Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), and Keystone Exam related materials:

- PSSA, Keystone Exam, and PASA test booklets will be destroyed one year after student reports are delivered for the administration associated with the test booklets.
- PSSA and Keystone Exam answer booklets and PASA media recordings will be destroyed three years after completion of the assessment.

Parents of students with disabilities have a number of rights regarding the confidentiality of their child's records including the right to inspect and review any educational records related to their child that are collected, maintained, or used by the school. Mastery will comply with a request from parents to review the records without unnecessary delay and before any meeting regarding planning for the child's special education program (called an IEP meeting), and before a hearing should the parents and Mastery Charter School disagree about how to educate the child who needs special education and, in no case, take more than 45 days to furnish parents with the opportunity to inspect and review the child's records.

Parents have the right to an explanation and interpretations of the records, to be provided copies of the records if failure to provide the copies would effectively prevent parents from exercising their right to inspect and review the records, and the right to have a representative inspect and review the records.

Upon request, Deep Roots Charter School will provide parents with a list of the types and the location of education records collected, maintained, or used by the school.

Parents have the right to request amendment on their child's education records that parents believe are inaccurate or misleading, or violate the privacy or other rights of the child. Deep Roots will decide whether to amend the records within a reasonable time of receipt of the parents' request. If school administrators refuse to amend the records, parents will be notified of the refusal and their right to a hearing. At that time parents will be given additional information regarding the hearing procedures and, upon request, Deep Roots will provide parents with a records hearing to challenge information in the child's educational files.

Parent consent is required before personally identifiable information contained in the child's education records is disclosed to anyone other than officials of Deep Roots collecting or using the information for purposes of identification of the child, locating the child and evaluating the child or for any other purpose of making available a free appropriate public education to the child. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility. Additionally, Deep Roots Charter School, upon request, discloses records without consent to officials of another school district or charter school in which the child seeks or intends to enroll.

When a child reaches age 18, the rights of the parent with regard to confidentiality of personally identifiable information are transferred to the student.

If parents need additional information regarding the Deep Roots Charter School's policy on educational records and confidentiality, they should call or write the school's Director of Operations.

A parent may file a written complaint alleging that the rights described in this notice were not provided. The complaint should be addressed to:

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Bureau of Special Education
Division of Compliance

333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

The Department of Education will investigate the matter and issue a report of findings and necessary corrective action within 60 days. The Department will take necessary action to ensure compliance is achieved.

Complaints alleging failures of Deep Roots Charter School with regard to confidentiality of personally identifiable information may also be filed with:

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

Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
AAC	Alternative Augmentative Communication Device
ABA	Applied Behavioral Analysis
ABC	Antecedent, Behavior, Consequence
ADA	American Disabilities Act
ADD/ADHD	Attention Deficit/Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
ASL	American Sign Language
AT	Assistive Technology
CEC	Council for Exceptional Children
CP	Cerebral Palsy
DD	Developmental Delay
DOE	U.S. Department of Education
ED	Emotional Disorder
EI	Early Intervention
ER	Initial Evaluation Report
ESY	Extended School Year
FBA	Functional Behavioral Assessment
GIEP	Gifted IEP
IA	Instructional Assistant (1:1)
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
LEA	Local Education Agency
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment

NCLB	No Child Left Behind
OHI	Other Health Impairment
OT	Occupational Therapy
PBSP	Positive Behavior Support Plan
PT	Physical Therapy
PTRE	Permission to evaluate
RS	Related Services
RTI	Response to Intervention
SDI	Specifically Designed Instruction
SLD	Specific Learning Disability
SLI	Speech/Language Impairment
SLP	Speech and Language Pathologist
SPED	Special Education
SST	Student Study Team

