

CHILD FIND

In compliance with state and federal law, Notice is hereby given by the Ridgway Area School District that it conducts ongoing identification activities as part of its school program for the purpose of identifying students who may be in need of special education and related services (eligible students). The School District, prior to any referral of a student for evaluation, utilizes one or more of the following methods to identify possible exceptional school age persons.

1. Annual survey of exceptional children ages 3 to 21.
2. Participation in the intermediate unit Child Find system or hotline service.
3. Analysis of school district achievement test / state assessment results.
4. Parent or guardian initiated referral.
5. Referrals to and from other public and private agencies. This includes referrals from the warden of the Elk County Prison.
6. School district staff referral.

Screening methods may vary based upon need, and do not require parental approval. Parental involvement is encouraged.

If the district identifies your child as possibly in need of a formal evaluation, parents will be notified of applicable procedures. The procedures used by the district will be in compliance with state and federal law.

Child Find Procedures – Birth to School-Aged

Screening and evaluation processes are available at no cost to parents who believe their infant, toddler, or young child (age 3 to school-age) may be in need of early intervention services. Parents may request screening and evaluation at any time, whether or not their child is enrolled in the District's public school program. Requests for evaluation and screening are to be made in writing to any school administrator. Screening and evaluation procedures for infants and toddlers (birth to age 3) are provided by the Cameron/Elk County (CE) Early Intervention Services. CE Early Intervention services (814/772-8111) may be contacted for a schedule of screening dates and times as they occur throughout the year. The Seneca Highlands Intermediate Unit Nine handles screening and evaluation procedures for children of age three to school age. Developmental screenings are also held at the local family center(s). The Intermediate Unit's Early Intervention Office (814/887-9287) may be contacted for a schedule of screening dates, times, and locations as they occur throughout the year.

School – Aged Screening Procedures

If a parent believes that their school-age child may be in need of special education services and related programs, screening and evaluation processes designed to assess the needs of the child and his/her eligibility are available at no cost to the parent, upon written request.

At the Elementary and Middle School levels, all referrals begin with Child Study Team. This is a screening and data collection process. With the exception of referrals for giftedness, all referrals go to the Child Study Team. A parent or staff member may initiate this process by

submitting a written request to the school psychologist. Screening information will be used by the Child Study Team, which includes the parents, to generate a plan to meet the child's specific needs or to document the need for further evaluation.

At the High School level, referrals are usually processed through the R. E. A. C. H. (Ridgway Educators Assisting Children's Health) program. A parent or staff member may initiate this process by completing a referral form or contacting the high school guidance counselor, school nurse, or principal. Screening information is used by the R. E. A. C. H. team to generate a plan to meet the student's specific needs or refer the student for further evaluation.

The district provides for the development and continual analysis of student portfolios. Such portfolios may include: written work by students; other demonstrations or performances by students related to specific student performance standards; examinations developed by teachers to assess specific student performance standards; diagnostic assessments; other measures, as appropriate, which may include standardized tests. Portfolios are available to parents at conferences or by appointment.

At any grade level, referrals for gifted screening can be made directly to the School Psychologist. Screenings are conducted to determine if additional assessments are needed. Pennsylvania State Regulations (Chapter 16) define mental giftedness as "outstanding intellectual and creative ability the development of which requires specially designed programs or support services, or both, not ordinarily provided in the regular education program." The term mentally gifted includes a person who has an IQ of 130 or higher and other factors (above grade level achievement, high rates of acquisition and retention, higher level thinking skills, high level of accomplishment, performance, or expertise in one or more academic areas, documented evidence that intervening factors are masking gifted ability.) If a parent or teacher suspects that a student may demonstrate gifted characteristics, a referral for a gifted screening can be made. With parent permission, the School Psychologist will administer a brief measure of intellectual functioning. If a student earns a composite score of 125 or higher, a referral for a formal Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation (GMDE) will be made.

PLEASE NOTE: Screening activities do not serve as a bar to the right of a parent to request a formal evaluation, at any time, including prior to or during the conduct of screening activities.

ASSESSMENTS

The Ridgway Area School District provides a number of assessments to all students. These include the following:

Health Assessments:

Body Mass Index (BMI).....	Grades K, 1, 2, and 3
Comprehensive Health Exam.....	Grades 1, 6, and 11
Comprehensive Dental Exam.....	Grades 1, 3, and 7
Hearing and Vision Screenings.....	Pre-K through 12

Academic Related Assessments

Pre-School Screening/Readiness.....	Pre-Kindergarten
Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA).....	} Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11 and retest in 12, if needed
Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA).....	
Career Interest Inventories or Profiles.....	Grades 6, 8, 9, 10, and 11
*Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT).....	Grade 10
*American College Testing (ACT).....	Grade 10, 11, and 12
*Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT).....	Grade 10, 11, and 12
Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB).....	Grade 11
*Advanced Placement Tests.....	Grade 12
*National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT).....	Grade 11
*National Occupational Competency Testing Institute.....	Grade 12

**Assessments listed with an asterisk are available but not mandatory.*

Students with disabilities will participate in statewide and district-wide assessments in one of the three ways as determined by the IEP team:

- without accommodations
- with accommodations - accommodations provided must be allowable by the test given and be used by the students as part of his/her educational routine.
- alternate assessment - To participate in the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA), students must meet specific criteria established by Department of Education’s Bureau of Special Education.

The Board shall also grant parents whatever legal rights they have to excuse their child from formal district and statewide assessment tests upon receipt, by the school district, of written request from the parents.

The results of assessments shall be made available to the professional staff so that they may better understand the strengths and weaknesses of their particular students.

Additional educational/psychological testing is available through the school psychologist with parental permission. The assessments to be given are determined by a team of individuals familiar with the student. This team shall make reasonable efforts to include the student’s parents.

Additional remedial testing, on a need for referral basis, is available through the Title 1 Reading Specialist or Child Study Team at the elementary or middle school levels with parental permission. Curriculum-based assessment and other screening measures such as speech/language screenings conducted by the speech clinician do not require parental permission.

Additional Assessments – Related to Transition Planning

For students eligible for special education services under Chapter 14 or for students thought to eligible, the district may provide the following assessments for transition planning purposes at the particular grade level listed or as needed.

1. Grade 6 - C. I. T. E. Learning Styles Inventory
2. Grade 7 - The Quick Screen Student Worksheet
3. Grade 8 - Student Transition Survey; Guidance Input Form; Teacher Questionnaire; Parent Questionnaire
4. Grade 9 - Future Planning Inventory; Talent Assessment Program (TAP); System of Assessment & Group Evaluation (SAGE); Parent Questionnaire
5. Grade 10 - Transition Planning Inventory (TPI) – Student, Parent, and Teacher Questionnaires; Talent Assessment Program (TAP); System of Assessment & Group Evaluation (SAGE); The Quick Screen Student Worksheet
6. Grade 11 - Student Self-Assessment; Guidance Input Form; Teacher Questionnaire; Talent Assessment Program (TAP); System of Assessment & Group Evaluation (SAGE); Psycho-educational Assessment (intellectual assessment, academic assessment, visual-motor screening); Psycho-educational assessment (intellectual assessment, academic assessment, visual motor screening with parental approval); Parent Questionnaire
7. Grade 12 - Final Transition Review Meeting; Psycho-educational Assessment (intellectual assessment, academic assessment, visual-motor screening with parental approval)

Additional Assessments

For students eligible for special education services under Chapter 14 or for students thought to eligible, the district may provide the following assessments for transition planning purposes at the particular grade level listed or as needed.

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10. Grade 12 - Final Transition Review Meeting; Psycho-educational Assessment (intellectual assessment, academic assessment, visual-motor screening with parental approval).