

What Services are Available to Help My Child at Penn Hills Charter School?

Presented by the Special Education Department
February 2016

Services Available to Students

- ▶ There are many different services available to you child.
- ▶ Each child's needs are unique, and staff & faculty at Penn Hills Charter School (PHCS) want to ensure that each student is reaching their fullest potential.
- ▶ We support students academically and behaviorally in many ways.
- ▶ The following presentation will describe the types & ways students receive support in school.

Faculty & Staff at PHCS

Our faculty & staff is here to serve all students. Included in our staff are:

- ▶ Principal
- ▶ Vice Principal
- ▶ Curriculum Coordinator
- ▶ Special Education Coordinator/School Psychologist
- ▶ Social Worker
- ▶ Speech/Language Therapist
- ▶ Special Education Teachers
- ▶ Classroom Teachers
- ▶ Instructional Support Teachers

How Services Are Categorized at PHCS

- ▶ PHCS divides services into 3 tiers.
 - ▶ Tier 1 services are given to most or all students.
 - ▶ Tier 2 services are given to some students and are more intense than Tier 1 services.
 - ▶ Tier 3 services are given to the smallest number of children and are the most intense services that are provided into the regular education program.

Tier 1 Services

At PHCS, we have several services in place that help to promote a positive culture & learning environment. These researched - based programs help our students to be successful scholars. They include the following:

- ▶ Positive Behavior Instructional Support (PBIS) ~ This program is a state - wide program that allows the school to put positive rewards for behavior into place to create a positive school culture. This program has significantly increased the amount of positive behavior seen in school and decreased the amount of office referrals received on a yearly basis.
- ▶ Olweus Bully Prevention Program - This program is a researched-based program that educates our faculty and children on what bullying is and what individuals and the school system can do to prevent and stop it. Activities through the program include weekly classroom lessons, an annual anti-bully walk, and concerts with the group *Josh & Gab*.

Tier 1 Services Cont'd

- ▶ Daily behavioral clip chart for all students
- ▶ Earning of Feathers/Eagles Bucks that allows students to buy prizes & incentives
- ▶ Golden Spatula program in the cafeteria that allows the class that is best behaved to earn a special incentive on a weekly basis
- ▶ Weekly academic intervention or enrichment in small groups
- ▶ The STAR assessment is used to measure reading/math levels for all students and drives instruction in the classroom

What Happens If My Child Struggles in School Even with the Tier 1 Interventions?

- ▶ If your child is struggling, it is recommended that you contact your child's teacher. Teachers are generally available to meet with you before or after school. Teachers can be reached by calling the school or by emailing them. Emails are formatted firstname.lastname@phcharter.org.
- ▶ If after meeting with the teacher, your child continues to struggle, they may be referred to the Child Study Program.

Child Study Program

- ▶ The Child Study Program is PHCS's Response to Instruction & Intervention (RTII) as mandated by law.
- ▶ RTII is a program that assists students who are struggling within the regular education program with either academics or behavior and have not responded well to the Tier 1 interventions put into place.
- ▶ Children enter the Child Study program through teacher referral.

Child Study Program Cont'd

- ▶ The Child Study Program is a team of people that meets every other Monday morning. The people on the team include:
 - ▶ The child's parents/guardians
 - ▶ Social worker
 - ▶ Teacher(s)
 - ▶ Special education teachers
 - ▶ Special education coordinator/school psychologist
 - ▶ Speech/Language Therapist
 - ▶ Principal

Child Study Team Cont'd

- ▶ At the initial meeting, the team discusses
 - ▶ The child's strengths
 - ▶ The child's needs/areas of weakness
 - ▶ Whether the child is appropriate for the Child Study Team
 - ▶ If appropriate, the types of interventions to put into place & who is responsible for carrying those interventions out
- ▶ At subsequent meetings, the team discusses:
 - ▶ The child's strengths & needs
 - ▶ Progress being made in the program
 - ▶ Whether the child should continue in the program

Child Study Team Cont'd

- ▶ Interventions that are used in the Child Study Team are Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.
 - ▶ Some examples of Tier 2 interventions that have occurred include
 - ▶ Small group meetings of children to address behavioral struggles
 - ▶ Morning & afternoon check - ins with a trusted adult
 - ▶ Small group testing
 - ▶ After-School tutoring
 - ▶ Some examples of Tier 3 interventions that have occurred include:
 - ▶ Entrance into social skills group
 - ▶ Individualized behavior plans
 - ▶ Small group instruction by Instructional Support Teacher

What If My Child Still Has Difficulty?

- ▶ The Child Study Team will meet. If a child still has difficulty in an area and has not made any improvements, the team may refer the child for an evaluation to determine whether he/she may need special education services.
- ▶ In order for a child to be evaluated for special education, the parent must give their written permission on a Permission to Evaluate (PTE.) Thus, it is the parent's decision as to whether an evaluation occur.
- ▶ Once the school receives the PTE, an evaluation can begin.

Evaluation Report

- ▶ Once the PTE is received, the school has 60 days in order to complete the evaluation.
- ▶ The evaluation will determine your child's strengths, areas of need, and whether he/she qualifies for special education.
- ▶ It will consist of:
 - ▶ A record review
 - ▶ Interviews with the child, teachers, & parents
 - ▶ Classroom observations
 - ▶ Individualized testing

Evaluation Report Cont'd

- ▶ Once the report is written, the Special Education Coordinator will mail you the evaluation and call you to informally go over the results.
- ▶ She will also schedule a time for you to meet with your child's educational team.
- ▶ At the meeting, the following will happen:
 - ▶ The report will be reviewed. It will have recommendations on how to help your child at home & at school.
 - ▶ It will also recommend whether your child should be in special education.

How Sp. Education Status is Determined

- ▶ According to both federal & state law (PA Chapter 14,) a child must have a disability that falls under one of the categories of special education AND show a need for specially designed services.
- ▶ This means that a child must possess a disability and that that disability significantly and negatively affects his/her education or that of other students' education.
 - ▶ This means that if your child has a disability but is a successful student, he/she may most likely not qualify for special education.
 - ▶ This also means that if your child is having significant difficulty but cannot be diagnosed/identified under one the categories of special education, they cannot be enrolled in special education program.

How Sp. Education Status is Determined

- ▶ The Categories of Special Education Disability are:
 - ▶ Autism
 - ▶ Blindness
 - ▶ Deafness
 - ▶ Emotional Disturbance
 - ▶ Hearing Impairment
 - ▶ Intellectual Disability
 - ▶ Multiple Disabilities
 - ▶ Orthopedic Impairment
 - ▶ Other Health Impairment
 - ▶ Specific Learning Disability
 - ▶ Speech/Language Impairment
 - ▶ Traumatic Brain Injury
 - ▶ Visual Impairment

What Happens if My Child Qualifies for Special Education?

- ▶ If a child qualifies for special education, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed.
- ▶ An IEP summarizes your child's educational progress and develops goals that are individualized to your child.
- ▶ An IEP is the document that guides your child's education in special education.
 - ▶ It is reviewed at least yearly by the IEP team, which includes the parent and, if appropriate, your child.

What Happens if My Child Qualifies for Special Education? Cont'd

- ▶ Your child will work with a special education teacher in individual and small groups both in and out of the regular education classroom on specific skills to help him/her.
- ▶ Your child's progress is closely monitored and reported to you on a quarterly basis.

*PLEASE NOTE THAT A SPECIFIC TRAINING ON UNDERSTANDING THE IEP WILL BE HELD
IN THE SPRING OF 2016 AT PHCS. MORE INFORMATION TO COME!*

What Happens if My Child Has a Disability or a Medical Issue that May Affect Them In School But They Don't Have/Need an IEP?

- ▶ If your child has a medical issue that does not qualify him/her for special education but may affect him/her, your child may be eligible for a 504 plan.
- ▶ A 504 plan, according to state law, “protect[s] otherwise qualified handicapped students who have physical, mental or health impairments from discrimination because of those impairments” (PA Chapter 15 State Law.)

A 504 Plan

- ▶ A 504 plan is for students who have a disability that is not temporary (e.g. a broken foot does not qualify for a 504 plan.)
- ▶ The disability must substantially limit his/her ability to learn.
 - ▶ This can be physical or mental/emotional.
- ▶ It is a plan that is less restrictive and specific than IEPs. Therefore, children who may need some assistance but not need specially designed instruction may qualify for a 504 plan.
 - ▶ E.g. A child with an attention disorder may generally earn A's & B's but performs best when tested in small groups. Small - group testing could be a part of the 504 plan.

504 Plan Cont'd

- ▶ The 504 plan will highlight accommodations, supports, and services needed including:
 - ▶ Related services (Counseling, Occupational Therapy, etc.)
 - ▶ Medical crisis plan
 - ▶ Learning techniques/interventions occurring within the regular education classroom
 - ▶ Behavioral interventions/individualized behavior plan

Questions &/or Comments

- ▶ Please feel free to contact Ms. Heather Clark, School Psychologist & Coordinator of Special Education with any questions or comments you may have about the information provided.
- ▶ Ms. Clark can be reached at: 412 - 793 - 6471, ext. 209 or at heather.clark@imagineschools.org