

ALTOONA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

PARENT HANDBOOK



Division of Elementary Education

2015-2016

www.aasdcad.com

946-TIPS

**ANONYMOUS
AND
CONFIDENTIAL**

**REPORT
CRIMINAL AND
DRUG ACTIVITY**

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Superintendent's Message

Dear Families,

I hope this summer afforded you the luxury of some time to relax and enjoy the reverie of reflection. It is a great time of year to spend with family and friends and to reflect upon our sense of perspective. It can be difficult, as parents, to maintain a balanced sense of perspective as we deal with all that our children bring to our lives. As a parent myself, I recognize how difficult finding that balance can be. As we proceed into the new school year with high hopes and expectations, I hope we can work together as students, parents, teachers and administrators to help each other find and maintain that balance.

As I venture into my first year at the Altoona Area School District, I assure you that I will continue to remain committed to providing your children with the best possible educational experience, just as I would my own children. Let me assure you that I understand the challenges that confront us in today's world and hope you recognize that I can be a resource as we continue through the 2015-2016 school year. I would like to convey to you that I am a sympathetic ear to the extraordinary efforts it takes to be a parent and will approach situations with this in mind. Thank you for your sacrifice, concern and dedication, which support the talented student of the Altoona Area School District.

I would like to reassure you that anything and everything that is involved with our school district will be driven by the consideration of what is best for our kids! Please accept my best wishes for a happy and successful school year as we look forward to a better tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Mr. John J. Kopicki
Superintendent of Schools

ALTOONA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

VISION STATEMENT

We will continuously improve the Altoona Area School District so that all are an integral part of our learning community. We strive to cultivate a safe environment where all learn and grow through positive and respectful interactions.

MISSION STATEMENT

We seek to continuously improve the climate, culture, and student achievement within a safe environment by fostering trust, collaboration, and progressive communication.

MOTTO

AASD: Aspire, Achieve, Succeed, Dream

Achieving Excellence Is Everyone's Job

The establishment of cooperative partnerships with parents and the community is vital to improving our schools. Parents, as their child's first teachers, have the greatest impact on their child's attitude toward school. If parents view education as important, the child's opportunity for success will be greatly increased. That is why a strong home-school partnership is important.

The Altoona Area School District has developed numerous programs to engage parents positively in their children's education. Parents and community members serve as collaborators, problem-solvers, volunteers, supporters and co-decision makers in our schools. Lasting school improvement will prevail only if educators, parents, and community work together.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Maryann Joyce Bistline, President

Timothy A. Lucas, Vice-President

Ron Johnston

Judy Berryman

John Klingeman

Sharon Bream

Richard L. Lockard

John Donley

Cheryl Rupp

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. John Kopicki	Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Luke Lansberry	Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Betsy Baker	Director of Education
Mrs. Margaret M. McMinn	Director of Human Resources
Mrs. Camilla Houy	Business Manager, Board Secretary/ District Attendance
Ms. Kathy Hazenstab	Asst. to the Superintendent- Business/Transportation
Mrs. Paula R. Foreman	Community Relations Director
Mr. Jack Reilly	Director of Security
Mr. Bryce Cossitor	Director of Technology
Mrs. Patricia Sauka	District Attendance Director

CURRICULUM

Dr. Betsy Baker	Music, Coordinator
Mr. Erik Dambeck	Science/Health, Principal Coordinator
Mrs. Catherine Keefe	Library Science, Principal Coordinator
Mrs. Jill Daloisio	Physical Education, Principal Coord.
Mr. Richard Adams	Elementary Guidance Counselors, Principal Coordinator
Mrs. Melissa Peppetti	Art, Principal Coordinator
Ms. Susan Richardella	Early Childhood, Principal Coordinator
Dr. Donna Messner	Special Education Director
Mrs. Michele Sanders	Special Education Supervisor
Mrs. Carol Beard	Special Education Supervisor

Please feel free to call your Elementary Principal or the Elementary Office if you have additional questions.

School	Address	Principal	Telephone
Baker	108 W. Ward Ave.	Mrs. Haley Fleegle	946-8388
Ebner	910 Poland Ave.	Mrs. Melissa Peppetti	946-8400
Irving	110 Cherry Ave.	Mr. Jonathan Klingeman	946-8392
Juniata	418 8 th Ave., Jun.	Mr. Erik Dambeck	946-8394
Jun. Gap	3365 Juniata Gap Rd.	Mr. Richard Adams	946-8401
Logan	301 Sycamore St.	Mrs. Jill Daloisio	946-8370
Penn-Lincoln	411 12 th St.	Mrs. Catherine Keefe	946-8396
Pleasant Valley	310 Cayuga Ave.	Miss Susan Richardella	946-8397

ANNUAL NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS AS REQUIRED BY THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

Right to Request Teacher Qualifications

As a parent of a student in the Altoona Area School District, you have the right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers who instruct your child. No Child Left Behind federal law allows you to ask for certain information about your child's classroom teachers, and requires us to give you this information in a timely manner if you ask for it. Specifically, you have the right to ask for the following information about each of your child's classroom teachers:

- a. Whether the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has licensed or qualified the teacher for the grades and subjects he or she teaches.
- b. Whether the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has decided that the teacher can teach in a classroom without being licensed or qualified under state regulations because of special circumstances.
- c. The teacher's college major; whether the teacher has any advanced degrees and, if so, the subject of the degrees.
- d. Whether any instructional aides or similar paraprofessionals provide services to your child and, if they do, their qualifications.

If you would like to receive additional information about any teachers or paraprofessional aides who work with your child, please contact the building principal.

Our district is fully committed to the success of your child. We appreciate your partnership in our efforts.

Notice of Homeless Education Programs

Each year, more than 800,000 school-age children in the United States experience homelessness. The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 includes a provision to make sure that homelessness does not cause these children to be left behind in school. Homeless children should have access to the education and other services that they need to meet the same challenging state academic achievement standards to which all students are held.

The Altoona Area School District is required to provide activities for and services to homeless children enabling them to enroll in, attend, and succeed in school.

The law requires all school districts to inform parents or guardians of their rights under this provision of the No Child Left Behind Law. Specifically, it states that, pending resolution of a dispute about school placement, a school district must immediately enroll a homeless student in the student's school of origin or other school selected on the basis of the child's best interest and provides a written explanation of the rights of appeal to the parent or guardian of the student.

If you have any questions about this provision of the No Child Left Behind Law, please contact the Assistant Superintendent at 946-8218.

Notice to Parents: Student Health Exams, Privacy, and Surveys

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) affords parents and students who are 18 years old or emancipated minors (i.e., "eligible students") certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection, and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (i.e., "protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (USDoE)--

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parents;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parents;
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of--

1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening as a required condition of attendance, administered by the school or

its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law; and

3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

Inspect, upon request and before administration and use--

1. Protected information surveys of students;
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

The Altoona Area School District has developed and adopted policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. **The Altoona Area School District will directly notify parents and eligible students of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes.** The school district will also directly notify parents and eligible students, such as through U.S. mail or email, at least annually at the start of each school year of the specific or approximate dates of the following activities and provide an opportunity to opt a student out of participating in:

1. Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution.
2. Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by the USDoe.
3. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening described above.

Parents and/or eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with the:

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

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact the Assistant Superintendent at 946-8218.

TITLE IX – Notice of Nondiscrimination/Harassment

The Altoona Area School District strives to provide a safe, positive learning environment for students and employees. The District does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the educational programs or activities that it operates and the District works to ensure its operations are in compliance with Title IX.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex in all education programs and activities operated by recipients of federal funds. It states: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

Title IX’s protection applies at all elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities – public or private – that receive federal financial assistance, and at certain other educational institutions. The protection extends to all aspects of these institutions’ education programs and activities. Title IX prohibits all forms of sex discrimination, including gender-based harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual violence.

The Altoona Area School District will strive to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. Failure to promptly and equitably investigate alleged sexual harassment or sex discrimination is a violation of the Title IX (34 C.F.R. Part 106). The District will act positively to promptly investigate alleged sexual discrimination or sexual harassment claims and to take appropriate corrective action when an allegation is determined to be valid. Not retaliation may be taken against any person for making a report of discrimination or filing a complaint in good faith.

Complaints of sexual discrimination or harassment are to be directed to:

Patricia L. Burlingame
Title IX Coordinator
Altoona Area High School
1415 Sixth Avenue
Altoona, PA 16602
(814) 946-8305

Title IX Complaints involving the Title IX Coordinator shall be referred to:

Margaret M. McMinn, Director of Human Resources
Office of Human Resources
1415 Sixth Avenue
Altoona, PA 16602
(814) 946-8325

QUALITY POLICY

We will educate our students to attain the skills to reach their full potential by providing superior service, constant innovation, and active participation.

The Altoona Area School District recognizes the importance of quality and the impact it has on the education of our students. It is through our continual improvement efforts that we effectively and efficiently affect student achievement.

At the school level, Q-SITE (Quality Schools Involving Teams for Excellence) Councils comprised of faculty members, staff members, community members and parents meet on a monthly basis. It is through this collaborative effort that school-wide goals and initiatives are identified to positively impact student achievement and improve the climate and culture of the individual school. These councils have been active since 1985.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

The Tax Reform Act of 1986 requires taxpayers to show the social security number for each dependent age 5 or older on tax returns. It is the recommendation of the Altoona Area School District that all students obtain a social security number as soon as possible. Please contact the Social Security Office.

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

This is to inform you that the PA Supreme Court has upheld the Commonwealth Court's decision which ruled that once a parent enrolls his or her child in kindergarten, the child is now of compulsory school age. This makes it a requirement that kindergarten students must be included in a school's truancy data submitted in the school safety report.

Registration for children entering kindergarten is held each spring for all elementary buildings. Special registrations are also held at several other locations throughout the city. In addition, parents may download the kindergarten registration packet by logging onto the district web site at www.aasdcad.com in early March.

Special dates and times of registration are made public to all residents through the local newspaper, Public Access Channel 11, the district web site, or by calling your child's home school.

To register a child for kindergarten, the child must be five (5) years of age on or before September 30. Parents must bring, to any registration site, the following:

- an official birth certificate, hospital/baptismal record certifying proof of age
- the child's social security card (optional)
- immunization or shot record verifying proof of immunizations
- custody papers, if applicable
- proof of residency – most recent utility bill; proof of address
- parent or guardian's photo ID

FULL DAY KINDERGARTEN SESSIONS

The district offers full day kindergarten sessions at all eight elementary buildings. Enrollment in full day programs is done carefully with consideration given to mixed abilities, equal number of pupils and an even boy/girl balance.

The philosophy of the Altoona Area School District Kindergarten program is to provide each child with a curriculum that is both challenging and adjusted to meet the needs of the individual child. The kindergarten program provides the opportunity to maximize the potential of all children cognitively, socially, emotionally and physically.

SCHOOL VISITORS

All visitors upon entering the school must first report to the Office.

Parents must request in writing to the building principal, permission to visit or audit a class at least one instructional day prior to the date of the requested visitation (Board Policy 907 [formerly 6004R]). A parent/guardian request to audit/observe a class form must be secured from the Principal’s Office.

Visitations to Special Education classrooms must be coordinated with the Special Education Supervisor and the building Principal.

HOMEBOUND

A student need not be absent from school for any specified period of time prior to parents applying for homebound instruction. Parents may apply the first day of absence, but the family physician must diagnose the illness to be of six weeks’ duration or longer before homebound instruction may be approved.

If you are in need of homebound instruction, please call your school office or the Assistant Superintendent’s Office at 946-8218.

CAFETERIA

The Altoona Area School District provides breakfast and lunch for all students. Meals may be pre-paid on the student’s meal account or parents may opt to have their child pay cash for his/her meals. Students are also permitted to carry in a lunch from home. Students who carry in a lunch from home may purchase milk for \$0.50 per carton. Kindergarten students may also purchase milk at this price.

Paid Breakfast	\$0.75
Paid Lunch	\$1.80
Reduced Breakfast	\$0.30
Reduced Lunch	\$0.40

Free and reduced meal applications will be sent home with students on the first day of school. Please return these applications to your school as soon as possible. Forms returned after October 15th, could cause your child's free or reduced meal benefits to be temporarily interrupted. Please return all completed forms before this date. If you have any questions, please call the cafeteria office at 814-946-8270.

Students qualifying for free or reduced meals not only receive meals benefits, but also help the school district in receiving state and federal aid. A child's free or reduced status is kept confidential. We urge you to apply for either free or reduced meals. Help us keep your taxes low. You will be notified as to the status of your application by mail.

PARTIES

Two parties are permitted during the course of the school year. The type and date of a party are solely at the discretion of the teaching staff. Please contact the office or classroom teacher for a list of recommended party treats as per the Altoona Area School District Wellness Policy (See pg. 45). Individual birthday parties and special occasions are not to be celebrated at school.

INVITATIONS FOR PARTIES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

Invitations for students to attend a birthday or other party outside of school should not be given to students in school unless all children in the class are invited to attend the party. Parents will be asked at the beginning of the school year to give written permission for their child's name, address and phone number to be placed on a class list that will be given to a parent who is planning a party outside of school and wishes to contact children at their home. A parent may opt to not include all or any of this information about their child on this list and it **will not** be included.

SCHOOL HANDOUTS

As per School Board Policy, the only material that will be distributed to students will pertain to School District and/or School District sponsored activities or events.

STUDENT INSURANCE

The Political Sub-Division Tort Claims Act of 1980 provides immunity for School Districts against liability for student accidents. Medical coverage for student accidents must therefore be provided by the parents' insurance or through the purchase of a voluntary student accident policy offered through the District.

Student Accident Insurance can be purchased through A-G Administrators/United States Fire Insurance Company. Information concerning the premium and plan coverage will be sent home with each student. Following are the current rates:

School Time Rate:	\$ 28.00
24-Hour Rate:	\$ 124.00

Dental is now included with medical:

Dental (including x-rays): For treatment, repair or replacement of each injured tooth which was sound and natural at the time of injury \$300 per tooth.

In the event a parent purchases insurance, his/her contract will be with the insurance company, not with the Altoona Area School District.

REPORT CARDS

This is a report of the child's achievement in school subjects and an evaluation of his/her skills, habits, traits, and attitudes.

Each child is graded according to performance at his/her level. In order to inform the parents of how well the student is performing in terms of achievement, the following codes are utilized:

<u>Instructional Level:</u>	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th , 5 th , 6 th
<u>Achievement Code:</u>	93 - 100 Excellent
	86 - 92 Above Average
	77 - 85 Average
	70 - 76 Below Average
	0 - 69 Failing
<u>Skills and Growth Code:</u>	C - Commendable
	S - Satisfactory
	N - Needs Improvement
	U - Unsatisfactory

ELECTRONIC REPORT CARDS

All parents of students in grades one through six will receive access to ProgressBook, our web-based attendance and grading system. Teachers utilize ProgressBook to input grades, record attendance data, and make comments. This process allows teachers to communicate grades and other information quickly and accurately to parents.

Review of a child's work can be done anytime via the Internet. Although daily access to student achievement progress is available through ProgressBook, a printed report card will continue to be sent to parents at the end of each marking period.

A password for access to a child's work is given only to authorized parents and/or guardians. Confidentiality of student records is maintained as required by law and District Policy.

RETENTIONS

A pupil may be retained once in kindergarten and once in grades one through three.

Consideration for non-promotion in grades one through three is based upon:

1. Individual student's progress in the reading/language arts subject areas as indicated on the Altoona Area School District Progress Report.
2. Teacher observation and anecdotal records of the individual student's progress.

Non-promotion in grades 4-6 is based upon serious and extenuating circumstances.

Promotion is an individual matter in which academic progress, age, size, health, mental ability and other relevance factors are considered. The final decision is made by the school administration in consultation with teachers.

Letters concerning the possibility of retention are sent to parents with the report card in January.

Letters will be sent to parents in May notifying them of definite retentions and parents may request a conference at that time.

Consideration for non-promotion in kindergarten is based upon teacher and principal recommendations supported by:

1. Insufficient progress as indicated by data from the Altoona Area School District Progress Report.
2. Teacher observation and anecdotal records of the individual student's progress.

HOMEWORK

One of the aims of homework is to help pupils develop effective work habits and self-discipline. Assignments are provided as a means for students to have independent practice and as a means for teachers to be sure that the pupil understands the assignment. Sometimes homework is assigned in order that students can complete unfinished work without time restraints. Some homework assignments engage students in projects that can be done more effectively at home than at school. Such assignments include projects, tasks that require students to utilize resources that are found outside of the schoolroom and reading for enrichment in literature, history or science. Homework sustains the acquisition of home-study techniques that enhance the student's ability to work independently.

School Board Policy (130 [formerly #6003R1]) states that elementary homework should not exceed twenty (20) minutes for primary grades (1-3) or forty-five (45) minutes for intermediate grades (4-6).

STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICY

All Elementary Buildings follow the Altoona Area School District Board Policy 218 (formerly #5010B). Each school has copies of this policy. See your Building Principal for a copy if you have not received one in previous years as well as specific policies for individual buildings. All teachers thoroughly discuss this policy the first week of school. Students and parents are asked to sign a Behavior Contract.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Corporal punishment is not administered in the Altoona Area School District.

STUDENT UNLAWFUL HARASSMENT

It is the policy of the Altoona Area School District to maintain a safe learning and working environment which is free from sexual and other forms of unlawful harassment. All forms of unlawful harassment are hereby prohibited. Any student in the District who engages in conduct, which constitutes unlawful harassment, shall be subjected to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. Any student in the District who is subjected to unlawful harassment by other students, district employees, non-district employees (vendors, contractors, volunteers, etc.) in the course of his or her attendance at school, shall have the right to file a complaint under Section IV, as described below, as well as the right to have that complaint promptly, thoroughly, and confidentially investigated.

Unlawful harassment is a form of discrimination prohibited by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act, 43 P.S. Sections 951-963; the Code of Conduct for Educators, 22 PA Code Section 235.10; and 22 PA Code Section 12.4. The following behaviors represent, but are not all inclusive of what constitutes unlawful harassment:

1. The term unlawful harassment includes, but is not limited to, slurs, jokes, or other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, religion, ancestry, sex, national origin, or disability.
2. Special attention is called to the prohibition of sexual harassment. Examples of sexual harassment include but are not limited to:
 - a. submission to such conduct is explicitly or implicitly required of the recipient; or
 - b. submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis of school or work related decisions affecting the recipient; or
 - c. such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the recipient's school performance or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning and working environment.
3. Specific examples of sexual harassment include but are not limited to:
 - a. Sexual flirtations, advances, touching or propositions;
 - b. Verbal abuse of a sexual nature;
 - c. Graphic or suggestive comments about an individual's dress or body;

- d. Sexually degrading words to describe an individual; and/or
- e. Jokes, pin-ups, calendars, objects, graffiti, innuendoes, references to sexual activities, the effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's ability to work or learn or which creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning or working environment.

4. Consequences

Any student in the Altoona Area School District who is found to have engaged in conduct constituting sexual or other forms of unlawful harassment may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. In addition, any student found to have violated this policy may be required to participate in educational activities and/or counseling services related to sexual or other forms of unlawful harassment as part of any discipline imposed. Determination of the appropriate disciplinary sanctions or educational requirements shall be based upon the circumstances of the individual case, considering the following factors among others: severity of the misconduct; pervasiveness or persistence of the misconduct; effect on the victim or victims; intent of the perpetrator.

5. Complaint Procedure

The building principal shall be the person to receive sexual and other forms of unlawful harassment complaints from students. Forms are available in each school office for individuals who prefer to file their complaint in writing. Complaints involving student-to-student unlawful harassment, which is lodged at the classroom or building level, may be resolved, informally if this is satisfactory to the complainant's parents. If the problem cannot be informally resolved, it will be referred to the District Security Office for investigation. The privacy of the persons involved in the complaint will be kept as confidential as possible, consistent with the District's legal obligations and the necessity to investigate allegations and to take disciplinary actions where the unlawful harassment has occurred.

BULLYING POLICY (249 [formerly 5044R1]) Please See Your Building Principal For Specific Details Of This Policy

Creating and maintaining a safe and welcoming learning climate for all students is a high priority in all District schools. Therefore, it shall be the policy of the Altoona Area School District in which bullying in any form is not tolerated.

ACT 26 SAFE SCHOOLS

The Pennsylvania State Legislature has passed a new “Safe Schools” law know as Act 26 as of September 22, 1995. The new statue’s purpose is to provide a safe educational environment in Pennsylvania Schools. To comply with this new statue, the Altoona Area School District has made revisions in the “Weapons and Violence” section of its Student Code of Conduct. Complete policy statements are available in Altoona Area School District Administrative Offices and in individual school buildings for public review.

Weapons (Board Policy 218.1)

The Board recognizes the importance of a safe school environment relative to the educational process. Possession of weapons in the school setting is a threat to the safety of students and staff and is prohibited by law.

Weapon – the term shall include but not be limited to any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle, bow and /or arrow, replica of a weapon, and/or any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.

Possession – a student is in possession of a weapon when the weapon is found on the person of the student; in the student’s locker, under the student’s control while on school property, on property being used by the school, at any school function or activity, at any school event held away from the school, or while the student is coming to or from school.

The Board prohibits students from possessing and bringing weapons and replicas of weapons into any school district buildings, onto school property, to any school-sponsored activity, and onto any public vehicle providing transportation to school or a school-sponsored activity.

The school district may expel any student who violates this weapons policy. Such expulsion shall be a minimum of one (1) year and shall be given in conformance with formal due process proceedings required by law. The Superintendent may recommend modifications of such expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis.

In the case of a student with a disability, including a student for whom an evaluation is pending, the district shall take all steps required to comply with state and federal laws and regulations, the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement and Board Policies.

The Superintendent or designee shall react promptly to information and knowledge concerning possession of a weapon. Such action shall be in compliance with state law and regulations and with the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement officials and the district's emergency preparedness plan.

The Superintendent or designee shall report all incidents relating to expulsion for possession of a weapon to the Department of Education.

The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible to develop a memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement officials that sets forth procedures to be followed when an incident occurs involving an act of violence or possession of a weapon by any person on school property.

Acts of violence or possession of a weapon in violation of this policy shall be reported to the Office for Safe Schools on the required form at least once each year.

The Superintendent or designee shall annually notify students, parents/guardians and staff about the district's tobacco use by publishing such policy in the student handbook, parent newsletters, posted notices, other efficient methods, and the Student code of conduct.

The Superintendent or designee shall immediately report incidents involving weapons on school property, at any school-sponsored activity or on a conveyance providing transportation to or from a school or school-sponsored activity to the local police department that has jurisdiction over the school's property, in accordance with state law and regulations, the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement and Board Policies.

The Superintendent or designee shall notify the parent/guardian of any student directly involved in an incident involving weapons as a victim or suspect immediately, as soon as practicable. The Superintendent or designee shall inform the parent/guardian whether or not the local police department that has jurisdiction over the school property has been or may be notified of the incident. The Superintendent or designee shall document attempts made to reach the parent/guardian.

An exception to this policy may be made by the Superintendent, who shall prescribe special conditions or procedures to be followed.

Weapons under the control of law enforcement personnel are permitted.

In accordance with federal law, possession or discharge of a firearm in, on, or within 1,000 feet of school grounds is prohibited. Violations shall be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Transfer Students: When the school district receives a student who transfers from a public or private school during an expulsion period for an offense involving a weapon, the district may assign that student to an alternative assignment or may provide alternative education, provided the assignment does not exceed the expulsion period.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Fire drills are conducted regularly, or at least once a month, so that every child may know the signal and obey it with a minimum of confusion or delay. Blocked entrance drills are also periodically conducted.

Severe weather, bomb and various evacuation drills are also reviewed on a regular basis by staff and students.

DRESS GUIDELINES

(THERE IS A SPECIAL DRESS GUIDELINE FOR IRVING SCHOOL)

Consult with the Building Principal for the policy.

- A. **Hair** – must be clean, neat, and cared for. Color and style must not create a distraction to student learning as determined by the principal.
- B. **Clothing** - clean and neat. Halters, tank, muscle, and midriff shirts may not be worn in school. No clothing with patches or printed phrases depicting vulgarity may be worn in school. Shorts that extend down to the knee may be worn only during the months of April, May, June, August, September and October.

Styles shall be modest and in good taste. NO SHORT SHORTS, CUT-OFFS OR SPANDEX/LYCRA SHORTS, FRAYED OR RIPPED JEANS WILL BE PERMITTED.

Principal discretion will be final on issues of appropriate clothing.

- C. **Footwear** – Flip-flops, clogs, sandals, shoes with wheels, and shoes with holes or other such footwear that does not cover the entire foot will not be permitted in school for safety reasons.
- D. **Make-Up** – Excessive make-up is discouraged as it may create a distraction to student learning as determined by the Building Principal.

SAFETY OF WALKING PUPILS

With the increased traffic situation, it is important that pupils who walk to school follow certain safety rules.

Parents should make every effort to teach and enforce the following:

- A. Teach your child to obey school guards and patrols.
- B. Train your children to follow school guard schedules and to gauge the time it takes to walk to school so that they will arrive on time, but not earlier than five minutes before the bell rings.
- C. For safety reasons, children are not permitted to ride bicycles to school. (No Skateboards)
- D. Children are to take the same route to and from school. They should go straight home from school.
- E. Use sidewalks whenever possible when walking to school or bus stop. Walk on LEFT facing traffic - if you must walk on the road.
- F. Always stop at the curb or roadside before crossing. Look left, then right, then left again for oncoming traffic.
- G. Always cross at the corner.
- H. Cross only on a “green” or “walk” light.
- I. Watch out for vehicles backing out of driveways and parking spaces.
- J. Don’t play in or near the street.
- K. Beware of icy, slippery streets and sidewalks. It takes a longer distance for vehicles to stop.
- L. Dress to be seen.

In the event an emergency should arise, parents should discuss with their youngster a procedure to follow in case the parent is not home. Some suggestions such as: go to a specific neighbor’s house, grandmother’s house, etc. Please make certain the child has several alternatives and understands them.

BUS TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

Safety and the proper social attitude in bus transportation, as well as in all phases of the school program, are of prime concern to the administration and the Board of School Directors. Students need to familiarize themselves with the obligations and courtesies of school district transportation.

A pupil who cannot maintain self-discipline while utilizing transportation facilities forfeits this privilege and must rely on other means of transportation. The school bus driver is authorized to enforce safety and social standards on his bus, and, in accordance with the Pennsylvania School Code, has the same authority as a teacher. The relationship of the operator and the student must be one of cooperation.

No student that regularly walks to school will be permitted to ride the bus for any reason (going to friend's home, visiting a relative, etc.).

All Altoona Area School District school buses will be equipped with a school bus video system aimed at maintaining good management and discipline. Student behavior and the driver's management of that behavior are the two key elements to safe school bus transportation.

The Altoona Area School District utilizes this video system in its school buses to record the behavior of students and the bus driver's method of student management.

VAN TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

Follow rules and regulations issued by the van driver. The school van drivers are authorized to enforce safety and social standards on their van; and in accordance with Pennsylvania School Code, they have the same authority as a teacher.

Van drivers must remain with the van while students are in the vehicle. Parents are responsible to get the students to and from the van. Booster seats are provided when needed and parents are responsible to buckle their child in the booster seat. Safety belts must be worn at all times.

Exceptions to this must be approved by the Director of Special Education and the Supervisor of Transportation.

Parents should have the student at the pick-up point five minutes before the scheduled departure time. Three minutes is the absolute maximum wait time for a student who is not at his scheduled stop when the van arrives.

If your child will not be attending school due to illness or for some other reason, please call the Transportation Office at 946-8220.

Pre-approved routes and time schedules will be followed exactly and pupils will be picked up and discharged from the van only at designated stops.

When the child is delivered to his home and parent/guardian is not home, the child is to be taken back to the school. Efforts will be made to contact parent/guardian. However, if the parent/guardian cannot be contacted, Blair County Children Services will be contacted.

For safety purposes it is recommended that parents be at the van stop to accept their child. Vans are not equipped with flashing yellow and red lights and other drivers may not be aware that this is a school vehicle. Students should always cross in front of the van and maintain eye contact with the driver.

I. Bus Stops

Appropriate behavior is required at school bus stops. Infractions such as fighting, throwing objects, and harassment of neighbors will not be tolerated. After three minor violations or one major violation, at the discretion of the individual principal, the student will be suspended from riding the School District bus for five (5) days or until such time as the parents have a consultation with school officials, and a pass is presented by the student to the bus driver from that school official. Subsequent offenses will follow the same procedure, except that the suspension shall be for one month. If this does not solve a particular behavior problem, it will be possible for that student to be suspended from riding the school bus for the entire school year.

No pupil will be permitted to get on or off at any stop other than his/her own established stop, unless written consent is obtained from the parent and approved by the school office. No bus change will be permitted once a child's assignment has been made unless an extreme emergency arises. This then must be approved through the Principal's Office and the Transportation Department. District policy maintains that parents with special building requests are responsible for transporting their child to and from school. Therefore, District transportation is not provided for students in this category.

II. Bus Regulations

The most important bus passenger regulations affecting safety which all pupils, parents, bus operators, and school officials should be aware of are:

a. Minor Violations

Trying to distract the bus driver's attention
Being discourteous to and not obeying the bus driver.
Refusing to sit in assigned seat.
Standing or changing seats while the bus is in motion.
Being discourteous to other children
Crowding to the door before the bus stops
Pushing and jostling when getting on bus.
Throwing articles out of the bus

b. Minor Violation Consequences

First Offense: Warning only by Bus Driver.
Second Offense: Warning and written report by Bus Driver to the school office with a copy to Transportation Office. This may result in school disciplinary action.
Third Offense: The same as that for a major violation of conduct.

c. Major Violations

Smoking or using tobacco in any form
Destroying bus property
Throwing objects in the bus
Fighting on the bus
Striking matches
Swearing on the bus

d. Major Violation Consequences

First Offense: Suspend offender from bus for five (5) school days or until such time as the parents have a consultation with the school officials and a pass is presented by the student to the bus driver from the school official.
Second Offense: One (1) month suspension from bus
Third Offense and Subsequent Offenses: Loss of riding privileges

CLOSING OF SCHOOL BECAUSE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER

When the Altoona Area Schools are to be closed because of weather conditions, it will be announced on Educational Access Channel 13, as well as TV Channels 3, 6, 8, and 10 (5 on the Atlantic Broadband Cable System), along with WRTA, WFBG, FROGGY, WALY AND ROCKY radio stations beginning approximately at 6 a.m. A decision will be reached to have a two-hour delay and/or to close school. In most cases, the District will start as a two-hour delay and upgrade to a closing if said closing is warranted.

EARLY DISMISSAL

The Altoona Area School District does not have an early dismissal policy. If in the judgment of the parent, the conditions are such that there is a concern about the child getting home from school due to weather conditions, the parent may go to the school and take their child home; however, this dismissal will not be considered legal. We will not release the child to individuals other than the parent or guardian. There may be incidents where there will be an early dismissal (for example, at the end of the school year) where parents will be given an advance notice about students being dismissed early from school.

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

Altoona Area School District now has an Emergency Notification System that can be activated when severe emergencies occur. Parents/guardians will be notified by telephone if the school their child/children attend is affected by the emergency.

FIELD TRIPS

The area surrounding Altoona affords itself excellent possibilities for educational field trips. When such trips are planned, notices are sent home with pupils to inform the parent or guardian of the specifics of the trip. All educational field trips are adequately supervised by the classroom teacher.

Elementary field trips may require more than five (5) chaperones, but is not to exceed ten (10) for any field trip. Elementary requests for more than five chaperones must have the approval of the Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education.

There will be no overnight field trips approved as well as no trips approved during the final ten (10) days of school.

MEDICATION USE ON FIELD TRIPS

An elementary field trip can be planned only if there is a school nurse, licensed medical professional or student's parent/guardian available to administer medication on the field trip.

PUPIL ATTITUDES TOWARD LEARNING

A child shows good attitudes when he/she:

1. Takes pride in own work.
2. Cooperates with others.
3. Makes optimum use of own abilities.
4. Shows wise use of leisure time.
5. Assumes responsibility for his/her actions.
6. Works diligently and completes work on time

SCHOOL POLICIES

ATTENDANCE

Pennsylvania State Board of Education (PSBOE); Public School Code 1949, Section 13-1327:

- A. An illegal or unexcused day of absence from school is any day of absence for reasons other than illness, health care, death in the immediate family, approved field trips, approved temporary absences, approved religious holiday, and any emergency approved by the principal. A student will not be permitted to make up work missed as a result of an unexcused absence. (Reference: Board Policy 5008R4 Make-up Policy.)
- B. All absences require a written acceptable excuse by the parents/guardians/physician regardless of student's age or the absence is considered illegal or unexcused. The written excuse must be presented to the school when determined by the Attendance Director or the Principal's designee, but no later than three school days after the return from absence.
- C. Parents/guardians are to be kept informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance record/patterns. This will be done by letter, telephone, report card and/or conference.
- D. On the fifth day of absence, a letter of concern is to be sent to the parents/guardians regarding the reason(s) for the absence. Documented **(by an excuse from a physician or hospital)** extended medical absences will be counted as one absence for the purpose of this clause. If a reason does exist, the parents/guardians should return the letter to the school with a written explanation.

This letter of concern will include a section, which indicates that upon total absences of thirty-five (35) school days, **excused or unexcused**, the student **may be considered for retention** in his/her current grade the following year. (Legal Reference: School Laws of Pennsylvania 1327, 1329, 1338)

- E. On the tenth day of absence, a letter will be sent from the school to parents/guardians requiring a medical excuse for each absence thereafter. Documented medical absences of three or more consecutive days will be counted as one absence for the purpose of this clause. **In the case of a chronic or ongoing medical condition, a letter from a physician stating the condition will cause the student to miss an excessive number of days will negate the requirement for a medical excuse.** These absences still require a written excuse from the parents/guardians. A doctor's letter could and may be required at any time, based on the history of the student, or attendance pattern set by the student.

This letter of concern will include a section, which indicates that upon total absences of thirty-five (35) school days, **excused or unexcused**, the student **may be considered for retention** in his/her current grade the following year. (Legal Reference: School Laws of Pennsylvania 1327, 1329, 1338)

- F. 20 Absences – Hearing Letter – This hearing will include the parent, student, Attendance Office and Class Principal. This meeting is to inform the student and parent of possible failure.

The Attendance Committee will recommend extracurricular activity probation if absences are not legitimate medical excuses.

Documented extended medical absences will be counted as one absence for the purpose of this clause. The Attendance Committee should be comprised of the following: Building Principal or his designee, Attendance Director, Guidance Counselor, an At-Risk representative or any other person(s) whose presence is deemed necessary by Building Principal.

This letter of concern will include a section, which indicates that upon total absences of thirty-five (35) school days, **excused or unexcused**, the student **may be considered for retention** in his/her current grade the following year. (Legal Reference: School Laws of Pennsylvania 1327, 1329, 1338)

- G. On the thirty-fifth day of total absence, a letter will be sent from the school to the parents/guardians informing them that the student **may be considered for retention** in his/her current grade the following school year and that the parents/guardians may request an appeal. **Note: For the purpose of calculation of thirty-five days of absence: 420 minutes will equal one day of absence. This includes all tardy minutes and all early dismissals due to illness.**

Appeal Procedure/Process: A student or parent may request, within 10 days of the receipt of the 35 day letter, an appeal of the preceding provision by informing the Building Principal or his designee or the Attendance Director in writing, of their desire to appeal the attendance violation.

- H. Discipline for unexcused/illegal absences is as follows:
- 3 illegal/unexcused – 1 demerit
 - 6 illegal/unexcused – 1 demerit
 - 9 illegal/unexcused – 1 demerit
 - 12 illegal/unexcused – 1 demerit
 - Suspension of parking/driving privilege
 - 15 illegal/unexcused – 1 demerit
- I. Notices will be served on parents/guardians while the student is in attendance at the Altoona Area School District in grades 1 through 6; and an additional notice will be served in grades 7 through 12, by the District Attendance Office, after the student has accumulated three illegal absences. The notice will state that on the fourth and any subsequent illegal absence or series of illegal absences, not to exceed three days of illegal absences in a series, prosecutions will be served by District Attendance after proper notification from the home school. (Reference: PS-BOE Section 13-3333)

Before any proceedings are instituted against any parent, guardian, or person in parental relation for failure to comply with provisions of this act, the school Attendance Director or the school Principal's designee, shall give the offending person three days' written notice of such violation. If compulsory attendance violations continue, the student/parent shall be liable under the provisions of school policy and/or laws of the Commonwealth.

1. Students who are of compulsory and non-compulsory attendance age who are at anytime absent from school for ten consecutive school days may, thereafter, be removed from the school's active membership by a written request from the Building Principal, unless one of the following occurs:

- a. The District has been provided with evidence that the absence may be legally excused.
- b. Attendance regulations required by Pennsylvania School Code have been or are being pursued.

The building Principal must inform the student's parents or guardians by registered or certified letter that the student is no longer enrolled in the Altoona Area School District. (Authority: Section 11.25, Chapter 11)

J. Suspension/Withdrawal of Special Education Students

1. Special Education Supervisors will be contacted prior to any suspension occurring. The Principal and Supervisor will discuss:
 - a. Exceptionality
 - b. Information which will help to determine if an IEP adjustment is necessary.
 - c. Length of suspension in accordance with due process procedures. (NOTE: The length of suspension shall not be determined prior to communication with Supervisor.)
 - d. Previous suspensions and their impact upon students.
 - e. How parents will be notified and if a NOREP is warranted.
 - f. The need for a parent/student meeting and necessity of the Special Education Supervisor's presence.
2. The following shall apply to all special education students who are 17 years of age or older, who are not attending school:
 - a. No special education student should be dropped from rosters without due process being followed.
 - b. The Special Education Department will be contacted if student is not attending school and will proceed by initiating due process action to determine whether a special education student should remain on high school roster.
 - c. Parents have the legal authority, until the age of 21/graduation with respect to the due process rights of the student.

- K. All students will be considered tardy if they arrive after the opening bell. The first ten tardies will be excused if a note from parent/guardian is presented **AND** the excuse is deemed acceptable by the Building Principal or his designee; or a doctor's excuse is presented. Upon the eleventh and subsequent tardies, a doctor's excuse will be required for any student to be excused.

Unexcused tardiness will result in two forms of disciplinary action:

1. Classes missed as a result of unexcused tardies will be graded a zero in accordance with District Grading Policy 9-12.
2. Unexcused tardies will lead to disciplinary action (warning, suspension) in the following manner (7-12):
 - a. 4 unexcused tardies – parent conference and 1 demerit issued.
 - b. 8 unexcused tardies – 1 additional demerit is issued.
 - c. 12 unexcused tardies – 1 additional demerit is issued.
 - d. 16 unexcused tardies – 3 day in-school suspension.
 - e. 20 unexcused tardies – 5 day in-school suspension/loss of parking and driving privilege
 - f. 24 unexcused tardies – 5 day in school suspension

Note: For the purpose of calculation of thirty-five days of absence: 420 minutes will equal one day of absence.

L. Early Dismissals for Medical/Dental Appointments

If a student requires an early dismissal due to a medical/dental appointment, parent/guardian must provide a doctor excuse upon returning to school the following day. If a student arrives at school tardy due to a medical/dental appointment, they must provide a doctor excuse to the school office upon arrival to school.

M. Attendance issues will be handled by the principal at the elementary level.

If attendance is an issue, it is the parent or guardian's responsibility to provide the school with a doctor letter stating the student will have frequent absences, tardiness and/or early dismissals related to a chronic condition. If a doctor letter is on file and the student is absent, the parent must write an excuse stating the absence is related to the chronic condition and the excuse must make reference to the doctor letter that is on file for the student. Students must provide a doctor excuse if absence is **NOT** related to the chronic condition and the student has exceeded the permitted number of absences.

N. Attendance for Students on Boundary Letters

Students on Boundary Letters have different attendance requirements that must be followed for a child to remain on boundary.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

A pupil may be excused from school for observance of bonafide religious holidays. The pupil's absence would be recorded as an excused absence. A letter requesting the absence is required to be turned in to the school prior to the absence.

A pupil may be excused from portions of science and health courses which conflict with the religious beliefs of the pupil. A written request from the pupil's parents should be made to the building principal at the beginning of each school year.

PARENTS/LEGAL GUARDIANS RIGHTS TO CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

- A. Parents/legal guardians have the right to review Altoona Area School District curriculum, academic standards to be achieved, instructional materials and assessment techniques.
- B. Planned instruction materials are not to be removed from the school building and are not to be copied and distributed to non-school district professional personnel.
- C. The principal or an appropriate faculty representative will be available (upon request) to answer questions regarding planned instruction. Those reviewing planned instructional materials are asked to sign a 'Signature Form' that identifies the date of the review, the name of individual(s) reviewing the curriculum, his/her address, his/her child's name/grade and planned instructional materials reviewed.
- D. Parents/legal guardians have the right to review the State assessments two weeks prior to their administration. The security requirements of the State must not be violated by parents/legal guardians who review the PSSA.
- E. Parents/legal guardians have the right to have their children excused from specific instruction which conflicts with their religious, moral or ethical beliefs. Written requests to the Principal are required.
- F. Parents/legal guardians have the right to have their children excused from State assessments under Policy 5.231 (relating to State Assessment System) upon receipt by the school of a written request from the parents/legal guardians.

STUDENT USE OF THE INTERNET

INTERNET USAGE POLICY

All students and their parents/guardians are annually required to sign the Altoona Area School District Student Internet/Intranet Acceptable Use Policy before they are granted access to the Internet via the School District computer networks. This agreement outlines acceptable student use of the Internet/Intranet and defines many activities that would be considered illegal or inappropriate. Any violation of the Policy will result in loss of Internet and Network access privileges. Parents must realize that although the Altoona Area School District will make every effort to prevent inappropriate or illegal use of the Internet by the students, the Internet is not controlled by the Altoona Area School District nor are we responsible for its content.

INTERNET PUBLISHING OF STUDENT PICTURES/ MATERIALS

The Internet is an “electronic highway” connecting millions of computers all over the world with millions of individual users. Access to the Internet is coordinated through a complex association of government agencies and regional and state networks. The Altoona Area School District has developed a web site on the internet for the district that includes pages for each of its elementary buildings in order to take advantage of this dynamic method of informing the public of what our students and staff are accomplishing and what our school district has to offer.

As a part of our on-going web development, your child’s work, picture and/or opinions may be chosen to represent the school district on our web site or a school district sponsored internet project. Before your child’s work, picture or opinion can appear on the web, we must first have your permission as well as your child’s. Student pictures will only be identified by first name. If you and your child agree to have pictures and/or student work published on the internet, simply sign and return the Internet Publishing Release Form that will be distributed to all students. If the form is not returned, we will assume that you and/or your child are not interested in granting permission at this time.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

If there is a change in your phone number, address or a change in the guardian, immediately notify the Principal’s Office.

TEMPORARY ABSENCES

Pupils may be excused from school attendance to participate in an educational trip or tour at parent's expense with the following provisions:

1. That a temporary absence form be procured at the school office, filled out and returned to school. This form should be completed and turned in to the building principal ten (10) days prior to the trip. No absence will be approved for over ten school days unless approved by the Superintendent or his designee.
2. That the itinerary, anticipated objectives of the trip, and expected outcomes for the child be listed.
3. That children be supervised by an adult acceptable to the Superintendent and parents.
4. That the Superintendent or his designee approves the trip.

A TEMPORARY ABSENCE FORM SHOULD BE SUBMITTED FOR CHILDREN WHO NEED TO BE RELEASED FOR PART OF THE SCHOOL DAY FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RELIGIOUS EVENT.

TARDINESS

All students will be considered tardy if they arrive after the opening bell. The first ten tardies will be excused if a note from parent/guardian is presented **AND** the excuse is deemed acceptable by the Building Principal or his designee; or a doctor's excuse is presented. Upon the eleventh and subsequent tardies, a doctor's excuse will be required for any student to be excused.

STUDENT TRANSFERS

When you find it necessary to move from one school to another within the district, call the current school and ask that a transfer be prepared. It will be necessary for the school to know your new address and the last day of attendance. Proof of residency is required such as: credit card bill, utility bill, deed, lease, rent receipt, DOT identification card, property tax, vehicle registration, driver license. Transfers and student records will be sent directly to the new school.

If you move out of the Altoona Area School District, it will be necessary for you to go to the new school office and sign a "Release of Records" form to permit the child's records to be sent to the new school.

FUND RAISING ACTIVITIES

The school may participate in two fund-raising events each school year. Additional fund-raising events may occur for special purposes providing they are approved by the Assistant Superintendent. All events shall be in conjunction with the school PTO/PTA with the approval of the building Principal.

Because of safety factors, students are not encouraged to solicit from door to door unless they are under the supervision of an adult.

SCHOOL SERVICES

In order to provide the best possible education and to meet each child's individual needs, a variety of special services are available within the school district. A brief summary of each of these services is included on the following pages.

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Altoona Area School District, Department of Special Education, is responsible for providing a Free and Appropriate Public Education to those students who are considered eligible under state and federal regulations. The District will provide eligible students with the appropriate programs and related services necessary to make meaningful progress within the curriculum.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS/EVALUATION PROCESS

Special Education programs and services are available free of cost to any child ages three through twenty-one, within the Altoona Area School District who exhibits one or more of the following disabilities:

- Autism
- Deaf/Blindness
- Deafness
- Emotional Disturbance
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech or Language Impairment
- Visual Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Developmental delays for children ages three-five

Many students are referred for special education by a Child Study Team or a screening process.

Parents are encouraged to work with his/her child's building principal and school staff members to determine if eligibility for special education services appears necessary. However, a parent always maintains the right to request an evaluation. The student must be determined to be eligible for services by an evaluation. A certified school psychologist will be involved in the evaluation to determine whether the child is disabled due to autism, emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, other health impairment, specific learning disability, or traumatic brain injury, and other disability.

GIFTED SERVICES

Services for mentally gifted students are not driven by federal mandates; however, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires gifted support services under Chapter 16. The District provides a process for screening and determination of eligibility for gifted services. A parent may send a letter of request to the Director of Special Education if an evaluation for gifted support is needed.

If you feel your child requires special services (special education), the following procedures should be applied:

1. You may contact the Special Education Department at 946-8252 or your child's building principal with questions regarding the assessment process (or)
2. Send a letter requesting an evaluation to:
 - a. The principal of your child's school (or)
 - b. Director of Special Education
AASD Special Education Office
1221 Sixth Avenue
Altoona, PA 16602

NOTE: If you would like a prepared form letter sent to you that requests an evaluation, please contact the Director of Special Education at 946-8252.

An evaluation report will be developed as part of the legal requirements of the assessment process. Parents and/or guardians are included throughout the assessment process.

Documents entitled, "Procedural Safeguards Notice" or Pennsylvania Parent Guide to Special Education for School Age Children" may be obtained by contacting the Special Education Department at 946-8252.

SERVICES FOR PROTECTED HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

Students who are not eligible to receive special education programs and services may qualify as protected handicapped students and therefore be protected by other federal and state laws intended to prevent discrimination. The school district must ensure that protected handicapped students have equal opportunity to participate in the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate for each individual student. In compliance with state and federal law, 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 the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities. In order to qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program.

These service and protections for "protected handicapped students" may be distinct from those applicable to exceptional or thought-to-be exceptional students. The school district or the parent may initiate an evaluation if they believe a student is a protected handicapped student.

For further information on the evaluation procedures and provision of services to protected handicapped students, parents should contact the Assistant Superintendent, 1415 Sixth Avenue, Altoona, PA 16602, or call 946-8218.

PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL PERFORMANCE PROFILE

The School Performance Profile provides the public with a comprehensive overview of student academic performance in every Pennsylvania public school building, including traditional public schools, charter schools, cyber charter schools and career and technology centers.

Designed to serve three purposes, the School Performance Profile will be used for federal accountability for Title I schools under the state's approved federal No Child Left Behind waiver, the new teacher and principal evaluation system that was signed into law in 2012 and to provide the public with information on how public schools across Pennsylvania are academically performing.

The PA School Performance Profile serves several purposes:

- Provide a building level score for educators as part of the Educator Effectiveness System
- Provide parents with comparative measures for schools, neighboring schools, and schools across the state
- Inform the public of the academic performance measures of each school, comprehensive career and technical center, cyber charter and charter schools in Pennsylvania
- Offer a resource for LEAs to communicate and compare performance, analyze performance indicators as related to achievement, and encourage best practice

To learn more about the School Performance Profile, visit the Pennsylvania Department of Education website at www.pde.state.pa.us.

TESTING PROGRAM

The following tests comprise the elementary program of standardized testing for all students: PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment)

<u>GRADE/S</u>	<u>DATES</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>
3-6	April 11-15, 2016	English Language Arts
3-6	April 18-22, 2016	Mathematics
4	April 25-29, 2016	Science

In addition to the general testing program, a variety of individual screening tests are utilized by various school personnel such as guidance counselors, remedial reading specialist, and speech therapist. Individual consent by parents will be requested when necessary.

SCHOOL NURSE

Certified school nurses are employed by the District to assist in implementing the school health program that includes:

1. **Annual vision screening** for all students.
2. **Annual heights and weights** for all students that includes the Body Mass Index (BMI). The Pennsylvania Department of Health MANDATED BMI SCREENING for students. The Body Mass Index is a screening based on a child's height and weight. The results are used as a guideline to evaluate if a student is underweight, at normal weight or overweight. **THIS IS ONLY A SCREENING AS MANY FACTORS INFLUENCE RESULTS.**

3. **Annual hearing screening** for all students K-3, 7, 11, and all special education students.
4. **Medical examinations** by school or family physicians for all students newly enrolled in kindergarten or first grade, sixth grade, and eleventh grade. A private physical exam completed within one year prior to a student's entry into the grade where an exam is required is acceptable. If a private physician report is not submitted to the nurse's office by the designated date, the student will be scheduled for a school physical.
5. **Dental examinations** by school or family dentist for all students newly enrolled in kindergarten or first grade, third grade, and seventh grade. A private dental exam completed within one year prior to a student's entry into the grade where an exam is required is acceptable.
6. **Scoliosis examinations** by school or family physicians, or school nurses, for all students in grades six and seven.
7. **Referral to physicians, dentists, and appropriate agencies** for follow-up care.
8. **Immunization Program** – Children in ALL GRADES (K-12) need the following immunization for attendance:
 - 4 doses of tetanus – (1 dose on or after 4th birthday)*
 - 4 doses of diphtheria – (1 dose on or after 4th birthday)*
 - 3 doses of polio
 - 2 doses of measles**
 - 2 doses of mumps**
 - 1 doses of rubella (German measles)**
 - 3 doses of hepatitis B
 - 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) or evidence of immunity

* Usually given as DTaP, DT or TD

** Usually given as MMR- 1st dose of MMR must be given at twelve (12) months or older.

The only exemption to the school laws for immunization is: medical reasons or religious beliefs. Parent/guardian must sign the back of the immunization card indicating one of the above reasons.

If your child is exempt from immunization, he/she may be removed from school during an outbreak.

Pennsylvania's school immunization requirements can be found in 28 PA Code Ch 23 (School Immunization).

9. **Providing for First Aid**
10. **Routine inspection of children** to lessen the spread of communicable conditions, such as, pediculosis. (Should you discover head lice or nits in your child's hair, please notify the school nurse in your child's school).
11. **Communication with parents** regarding anything affecting the health of the child, and regarding re-entry to school following significant illnesses and/or injuries.
12. **Promotion of good health habits** through health education.
13. **Maintaining health records** on all students.

HEAD LICE

Guidelines for a School Based Program for the Control of Lice Infestation.

Introduction:

The history of pediculosis dates back to the earliest of biblical times. While head lice infection is not a public health problem in terms of transmission of disease, it is certainly a nuisance problem for schools and families. Few conditions seem to cause as much concern and anxiety in schools and homes as an infestation of lice in the hair of children. Head lice are considered almost analogous with filth, but in reality these insects do not discriminate according to social class or level of personal hygiene. Of course, the risk of infestation increases with any factor that brings a person into direct contact with an infested individual and his or her personal belongings.

Epidemiological studies support the following:

1. Head lice are not a health hazard and are not responsible for the spread of any disease.
2. Head lice are the causes of much embarrassment and misunderstanding.
3. Many unnecessary days of school are lost. Absenteeism is directly related to poor academic achievement.

4. According to No Child Left Behind, schools are required to maintain a 95% attendance rate. In an attempt to help attain this goal of improved attendance, the Altoona Area School District nurses have reviewed and revised the pediculosis policy, as absenteeism is directly related to poor achievement, and exclusion due to pediculosis may lead to excessive absenteeism.

Morphology of the Head Louse:

Lice are parasites of the human host. There are three types of lice which infest humans: *Pediculus Humanus Capitis* (head lice), *Pediculus Humanus Corporis* (body lice), and *Phthirus Pubis* (crab or pubic lice). Head lice are the ones we are most concerned about in the school setting.

Lice are not physically able to hop, leap, or fly from victim to victim. Adult lice and newly hatched nymphs swing from hair shaft rapidly as long as they have a rough surface on which to travel. Lice live their lives as external human parasites. They do not survive for more than a few days away from the source of food. A temperature of 125 degrees Fahrenheit for five minutes is lethal to adult lice and eggs.

The life span of an adult louse is approximately one month. Adult female lice can lay eggs at a rate of 8-10 per day, producing large populations of lice within three to four months. Eggs hatch in 7-10 days and require another week or two to mature. The louse hatches and the nit (empty shell) is left behind.

Legal Basis for Control of Head Lice:

Title 28, Health and Safety, Chapter 27. Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases, Sections 27.71 (11), 27.72, 27.73 are the legal basis for excluding and readmitting children to school in relation to pediculosis. 27.71 (11) specifically relates to head lice and provides for exclusion of students from school (public, private, parochial, Sunday, or other school or college or preschool) who have been diagnosed by a physician or are suspected of having pediculosis by the school nurse. As per Pennsylvania school code 27.71 (11) the student shall be allowed to return to the school, childcare or other group setting immediately after first treatment. Readmission to class shall be contingent upon reexamination by the school nurse.

*Please note the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Association of School Nurses discourages "No Nit policies" because no child should miss unnecessary school time due to head lice.

Screening Criteria:

1. The need for head lice screening will be determined and performed by the health personnel only.
2. Based on the nurse's discretion individual head lice checks will be performed either in the classroom or in the health room. A student found to have head lice must be treated in a professional and confidential manner as not to embarrass or exclude them.
3. In the event that five or more cases in the same classroom are found within a 48-hour period to have head lice, the nurse will then perform a classroom head check.
4. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, school wide head lice screening programs have not been proven to have a significant effect on the incidence of head lice in the school setting over time, and are not cost effective. Therefore school wide screenings will be substituted with individual head checks of suspected and reported cases of head lice.

Exclusion:

If a child is assessed as having active head lice, all attempts will be made to notify the parents or guardians and the child will be sent home. This will be done within a reasonable amount of time as determined by the health professional. If the parent or guardian is unable to be reached, the child will remain in the classroom until contact is made by the health professional.

BED BUGS**Introduction:**

Bed bugs have become a reemerging problem in the United States due to increased international travel and resistance to commonly used pesticides. They do not transmit disease, but individuals who live in infested homes suffer from lack of sleep, anxiety and secondary skin infections resulting from the itching bites. Bed bugs are more likely to feed during the night-time hours and reside in places where people sleep. Therefore, infestations of school buildings are uncommon, although bed bugs may "hitch-hike" on a student's clothing, books or backpack from an infested home.

School Responsibility: Providing a healthy, pest-free environment in which students can excel.

Criteria:

Bed bug found in/on child's clothing/belongings:

- Discreetly remove child from classroom. Qualified individual should examine clothes and belongings for presence of bed bugs. Attempt to collect specimen for confirmatory identification.
- Notify child's parents by phone. Educational materials should be sent home with student. Parents should inspect or have pest management professional inspect the home.
- No evidence of bed bug infestation:
 - o Investigate other potential sources of bed bugs
- Evidence of bed bug infestation:
 - o Promote rapid response by parents to treat the infestation at home and provide educational materials and guidance.
 - o Keep school items sealed in a plastic bag or plastic storage box with lid.
- Notify building administration of bed bug finding.
 - o Building principal to notify and inform custodial staff of proper cleaning protocol.

Exclusion:

If a child is assessed as having active bed bugs, all attempts will be made to notify the parents or guardians and the child will be sent home. This will be done within a reasonable amount of time as determined by the health professional. If the parent or guardian is unable to be reached, the child will remain in the classroom until contact is made by the health professional.

References:

PA Dept of Health – www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid/vol1no04/04-1126.htm

CDC – www.cdc.gov/parasites/bedbugs/faqs.html

Michigan Bed Bug Working Group (May 2010)

MEDICATION

The Board recognizes that parent/guardians are responsible for the health of their children. Therefore, the Board strongly recommends that medication be given at home, but also recognizes that the health of some students required that they receive medication while in school. Parent/Guardians should confer with the child's physicians to arrange medication time intervals to avoid school hours wherever possible. When medications absolutely must be given during school hours, certain procedure must be followed.

Nurses may clarify a medication order with the prescribing physician without parental consent.

Authority SC510 Title 22 Sec 12.41:

Before any prescription medication may be administered to or by any student during school hours, the Board requires the written request of the parent/guardian, giving permission for such administration and relieving the Board and its employees of liability for administration of medication, and the written order of the prescribing physician, which shall include the purpose of the medication, dosage, time at which or special circumstances under which the medication shall be administered, length of period of which medication is prescribed and possible side effects of medication.

All medication shall be administered by the school nurse or licensed medical professional.

Guidelines:

A. Delivery and storage of Medication

1. Delivery of medication to the school should be made by the parent or a person designated by the parent or guardian.
2. A responsible child may bring the medication to school, personally if the parent deems it safe.
3. At the discretion of the nurse, medication may be counted and logged for security purposes.
4. Medication will be stored in a locked area, usually in the nurse's office. Medication requiring refrigeration will be stored accordingly.
5. *Prescription medications in plastic bags or container other than their original pharmacy container are not acceptable.*

B. Standing Orders

Standing orders are medical directives written by the student's physician. These orders may authorize administration of specific over-the-counter medication such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen and antacids and/or emergency medication such as epinephrine or Benadryl to students according to defined protocol. Although parent/guardian consent is not needed for the administration of medication during a life threatening emergency, consent is required for the administration of over-the counter medication. The nurse's office in each school building must have a signed copy of the signed standing orders on file.

C. Over-the-Counter Medication (OTC)

School nurse can administer Acetaminophen, Ibuprofen, Anti-acid tablets or liquid, with verbal or written parental permission. Medication will be administered according to manufactured recommendations. Other over-the-counter medication may be administered with written parental consent, medication must be provided by the parent/guardian.

With the exception of medication administered via standing order during a life threatening emergency, all medications given in the school setting must have a written authorization from a parent/guardian. The written authorization must be renewed at the start of each school year.

Elementary nurses may not be summoned back to their schools to administer over-the-counter medicine. Medication must be administered while the nurse is at his/her designated school. Parent/guardians are permitted to administer medicine to their child **in the absences of a nurse. STUDENTS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO CARRY OR SELF-ADMINISTER OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATION.**

The school district does not assume responsibility for any reaction that may occur following administration of medication sent from home. Parent/Guardians are assuming the responsibility for adverse reactions from OTC medicine. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to check with the pharmacy and/or physician regarding contraindication of OTC with other prescription medicine or over-the-counter medication.

No medication will be administered from an unmarked container.

NOTIFY THE SCHOOL NURSE IF YOUR CHILD HAS A MAJOR ILLNESS OR ACCIDENT OR IS ON MEDICATION FOR A CHRONIC DISEASE.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS IN REGARD TO MEDICATIONS

A. Prescribed Inhalers (Asthma) in accordance with Act 187
Elementary students who desire to possess and self-administer may do so providing the following guidelines are adhered.

1. A written statement from the child's physician stating the name and dosage of medication, reason for the medication and must state capability of self-administration.

2. Written parental consent. The parent's note shall include a statement relieving the school entity or any school employee of any responsibility for the benefits or consequences of the prescribed medication when it is parent-authorized and acknowledging that the school entity bears no responsibility to ensure that the medication is taken.
3. The Prescription medication form should be completed which will encompass guidelines 1 and 2.
4. Inhaler use is considered an everyday life activity for asthmatic children. Therefore, asthmatic children will not be viewed as ill student and only need to report to the nurse if the inhaler is not effective and shortness of breath continues or the child has forgotten their inhaler.
5. When a student uses an inhaler and the symptoms disappear, this will be considered normal activity and the student need not report to the nurse's office.
6. If a student is found to be abusing the inhaler privilege, the parent/guardian, principal, and teacher will be notified and alternative arrangements will be made.
7. If a student is found to be "sharing" his/her inhaler, which is violation of district policy, discipline will be issued in accordance to school district policy.

MEDICATION USE ON FIELD TRIPS

An elementary field trip can be planned only if there is a school nurse, licensed medical professional or student's parent/guardian available to administer medication on the field trip.

MEDICATION USE DURING AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

A licensed medical professional will not be available for afterschool activities to administer medication. Parents/Guardians are responsible to make arrangements for their child's medication.

YOUR CHILD AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Contact your school nurse with questions or concerns.

CARE AND RELEASE OF SICK OR INJURED CHILDREN

Minor first aid and treatment for illness is provided as needed. Parents will be consulted if anything more than minor treatment is necessary.

If a child needs to be sent home or requires further treatment, the parent of the child will be notified. The child will be retained in school under supervision until transportation arrangements can be made. The responsibility of transportation rests with the parents. **NO CHILD WILL BE RELEASED WITHOUT PROPER IDENTIFICATION PRESENTED TO SCHOOL AUTHORITIES.** Parents must provide the names and phone numbers of relatives or friends who may be called when the parent(s) cannot be reached.

If a true emergency arises, the child will be taken to the hospital by ambulance and efforts to contact the family will be continued.

CONCUSSIONS

Definition of a Concussion:

A Concussion is a brain injury that is caused by any force to the head or body which interferes with normal neurological function of the brain. Even what seems to be a mild bump to the head can be serious.

Initial Notification

- Coaches should follow the protocol in the Coaches Handbook. They should notify the trainer and the Athletic Director. The Athletic Director should notify the nurse immediately.
- All teachers/staff and especially physical education teachers should notify the school nurse of the incident resulting in the concussion. The nurse will notify the parent and give the **Heads Up to Schools: Know Your Concussion ABCs** and highlight areas of concern.
- Parents are encouraged to notify the school nurse of incidents resulting in a concussion outside of the school day.

STUDENT WELLNESS

The Altoona Area School Board established a Student Wellness Policy #246 that encompasses Nutrition Education, Physical Activity, Physical Education, and Nutrition Guidelines. The goal of nutrition education is to teach, encourage and support healthy eating by students in order to equip them to lead healthy lives. Every student is required to take physical activity class during the school year. All foods available in district schools during the school day shall be of-

ferred to students with consideration for promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity. Foods provided with the school breakfast programs and school lunch programs will comply with federal nutrition standards. This also includes a la carte foods, snacks and beverages, fundraisers held during the school day, classroom parties, and school stores. This policy is established to ensure the health and well being of all students.

EARLY DISMISSAL

When possible, doctor and dentist appointments should be made after school or on Saturdays. If this is impossible and it is necessary to have a child dismissed early, the following procedure should be followed:

1. Write a note stating the time of early dismissal. This should be received the day of the appointment.
2. Come to the school office for your child at the time you designated. No child will be released to keep an appointment unless the parent comes to the school for him/her.
3. In case of an emergency appointment, the child will be released to the parent when the request is made to the Principal.
4. No child will be released to an adult other than his/her parent unless a note is sent by the parent stating specifically the name of the person to whom the child is to be released.
5. An excuse from the doctor should be returned the following day.

DENTAL PROGRAM

To maximize his potential for learning, a child must be healthy. A child with diseased teeth or gums is not a healthy child. Dental examinations will be administered to children in kindergarten and grade three. Examinations from the child’s private dentist are acceptable.

NOTICE TO PARENTS AND ELIGIBLE STUDENTS OF SCHOOL DISTRICT CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. These rights are:

- a. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the School principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

- b. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate. Parents or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate. They should write the School principal clearly identifying the part of the record they want changed, and specifying why it is inaccurate. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
- c. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. Exceptions include: a) disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests; b) disclosure of records during an emergency situation; and c) school police records. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff members (including health or medical staff and school district police services); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, technology support vendors); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. (NOTE: FERPA requires a school

district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.)

- d. Information which is labeled “directory information” by a school district is excluded from FERPA’s protection from release and can be released without parental or student consent. In addition, two Federal Laws require schools to provide the names, addresses and phone number to military recruiters upon request. In this District, the directory information that is released to the public consists of student names, addresses, phone numbers, major fields of study, grade levels, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weights and heights of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student, pictures of students, names and pictures of participants in various extracurricular activities, or recipients of awards or other similar information. If you do not want some or all of this information about your child released, you may prevent its disclosure by contacting the school district within twenty days after publishing of notice (beginning of school year). Please address these requests to the Principal.
- e. Investigative reports and records of students including images captured on videotapes maintained by the district’s Police Services are not considered educational records and can be released to anyone, including outside law enforcement authorities without parent consent.
- f. A more detailed explanation of your rights, the procedures to follow if you want to take advantage of them and the limitations on the release of records is represented in the School District’s FERPA policy statement. You may obtain a copy of this policy by contacting the SUPERINTENDENT’S OFFICE IN THE ADMINISTRATION ANNEX.
- g. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

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

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELOR

As an integral part of the elementary school experience, the elementary school counselor provides counseling related services within each elementary school in our district. The school counselor is available to work with students in dealing with problems and situations that may arise during their school day and beyond. The elementary school counselor is able to meet the needs of students by looking at all aspects of a situation and coordinating services accordingly. To accomplish this, elementary counselors work with children individually, in groups, in the classroom and through consultation with others involved with the child, such as, parents, teachers, and other school personnel and outside agencies. To speak to your child's counselor, parents should contact their child's elementary school office.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

School psychologists provide service to all elementary/secondary buildings, including pre-school. They are members of the Child Study Teams in each building. School psychologists assist in the facilitation of the initial Multidisciplinary Evaluation Process and coordinate the development of the Evaluation Report for students referred to determine eligibility for special education services.

Psychologists may be utilized as consultants regarding any student who has learning or emotional issues. It is their role to ensure that every child has the opportunity to remain in regular education prior to referral to special education. For more information regarding special education programs and the evaluation process, please refer to page 34.

SPEECH CLINICIANS

Much learning takes place in each classroom through talking and listening. Each child will do his share of both. The speech and language of school-age children, including beginners, is normally well developed and highly understandable. Eligible children are given special help by the speech clinician, who communicates with parents and teachers about the child's progress and suggests ways of helping the child.

Every child enrolled in kindergarten is screened for speech impairments. Students are monitored closely by speech staff to ensure that services are provided to those who are eligible.

TITLE I READING SERVICES

Supportive reading instruction is provided to children in the primary elementary grades. Eligibility is based on multiple assessment criteria. Instructional Support Teachers work with students providing intensified instruction in accordance with the child's identified need. This program is supported through Title I, Part A funds. For schools to receive these services and for the elementary school to be designed a Title I School, the building must meet federal eligibility requirements.

Inquiries concerning these programs should be directed to Dr. Betsy Baker, 946-8365.

READING PROGRAM

The Altoona Area School District's total language arts program is a research-based program that incorporates reading, spelling, and language arts. The framework for this total language arts program begins in kindergarten and continues through grade six. At all grade levels, skills, fluency and comprehension are enhanced through reading materials and guided reading strategies that meet individual learning needs.

The District's comprehensive literacy program focuses on helping students become strategic readers who comprehend various types of reading materials. The District's program connects reading with writing and provides students with learning opportunities that will enhance these skills.

SCHOOL LIBRARY SERVICES

Each elementary school maintains its own library that is staffed by a library media specialist (librarian), parent volunteers and a library teacher aide. Any parent who could volunteer time in the library is asked to contact the school.

A professional librarian is assigned to service and instruct students regarding library science practices.

The library is accessible to learners every day of the school week.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Your participation in your child's educational program is important to the Altoona Area School District. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 is a Federal Law that requires our district to develop a parent involvement policy. This policy is available to all parents during the school term. Schools utilize parent volunteers in many ways. Section 1118 of Title I, Part A requires opportunities for parents to be partners and decision makers in various aspects of their child's education.

Parent Volunteers may obtain a copy of the AASD Volunteer Manual by going to <http://www.aasdcat.com/aasd/district/humanresources/VolunteerIndex.html> or your Building Principal.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAM

In compliance with Title 22 Sec. 4.26, the Altoona Area School District provides an instructional program for English Language Learners (ELLs). The purpose of the district's ESL program is to improve the English proficiency (listening, speaking, reading and writing) of eligible students; the program enables ELLs to access the curriculum and participate in their instructional program.

The English as a Second Language (ESL) program meets state and national standards of compliance (Castaneda v. Pickard, 1981):

1. The program is based on sound research-based education theory.
2. The program provides appropriate resources and is staffed by trained/certified personnel.
3. The program undergoes regular evaluation in order to implement current "best practices" in daily instruction and program administration.

The Home Language Survey, a document completed by the family for every child enrolled in public schools, informs the district of the need for ESL instruction. In the case of students whose families speak languages other than English, the administration of a language proficiency test determines the need for ESL instruction. Building principals implement and supervise ESL instruction within their schools to ensure that the program complies with state and federal laws.

Following is a summary of the Altoona Area School district's ESL program:

1. Upon receipt of local address and proof of immunizations, all students, regardless of city or country of origin, are eligible to enroll in the Altoona Area School District.
2. The instructional needs of ELLs, in areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing, will be determined by the administration of a language proficiency placement test.
4. Pleasant Valley Elementary School is the designated home school for the District's English Language Learners in grades K
5. For students residing in areas served by other elementary schools, transportation to and from Pleasant Valley Elementary School will be provided by the District at no cost.
6. Appropriately certified teachers of English as a Second Language provide instruction to ELLs.
7. Instructional resources are comparable to those provided to other classes in the language arts content area.
8. The ESL program is monitored and evaluated for effectiveness in meeting the academic needs of the ELLs.
9. ELLs are required to meet established academic standards and graduation requirements with accommodations as adopted by the School Board.
10. ELLs are guaranteed access to, and encouraged to participate in, all academic and extracurricular activities offered by the school district.
11. Communication with parents is provided in a comprehensible language or format for the purpose of including them in the education of their children.

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS (Board Policy 906)

The Board welcomes inquiries, suggestions, and constructive criticism regarding the district's programs, personnel, operations and facilities. Any parent/guardian, student, resident or community group shall have the right to present a request, suggestion or complaint. The Board intends to provide a fair and impartial method for seeking appropriate resolution.

Attempts to resolve public concerns and complaints of district residents shall begin with informal, direct discussions among the affected parties, following the established guidelines and district organizational structure. Only when informal meetings fail to resolve the issue shall more formal procedures be utilized.

In accordance with law, the Board shall adopt a written procedure that provides parents/guardians, public agencies, other individuals, and organizations a means to submit and resolve complaints alleging violations in the administration of educational programs under the No Child Left Behind Act. The complaint procedure shall be available to the public, a copy maintained in each school, and be distributed annually to parents/guardians and staff.

Any requests, suggestions or complaints directed to individual Board members and/or the Board shall be referred to the Superintendent or appropriate administrator for consideration and action. If further action is warranted, based on the initial investigation, such action shall proceed in accordance with the established guidelines.

General Complaint Procedure

General complaints about Board policy and district procedures, programs, operations, facilities and personnel shall be processed in accordance with the following procedure.

First Level – Complaints and requests shall be addressed initially to the concerned employee, who shall discuss it with the complainant and attempt to provide a reasonable explanation or take appropriate action within the employee’s authority. As appropriate, the staff member shall report the matter and the resolution to the building principal or immediate supervisor.

The complainant may direct the complaint directly to the employee’s immediate supervisor (Second Level) if the nature of the complaint warrants such action.

Second Level – If the issue cannot be resolved satisfactorily at the first level, it shall be discussed by the complainant with the building principal or the employee’s immediate supervisor.

Third Level – If a satisfactory solution is not achieved by discussion with the building principal or immediate supervisor, communication shall be initiated with the Assistant Superintendent. The principal or supervisor shall provide to the Assistant Superintendent a report that includes the specific nature of the complaint, brief statement of relevant facts, how the complainant has been affected adversely, the action requested, and the reasons why such action should be taken or not taken.

Fourth Level – Should a satisfactory solution not be achieved by the Assistant Superintendent, communication shall be initiated with the Superintendent for review and final resolve.

Final Level – After reviewing all information relative to the complaint, the Board shall provide the complainant with its written decision and may grant a hearing before the Board or a committee of the Board. The complainant shall be advised of the Board’s decision in writing, no more than ten (10) days following the hearing.

NCLB Complaint Procedure

Complaints alleging violations of law in the district’s administration of NCLB education programs shall be processed in accordance with the following procedure.

The complaint must be filed with the district as a written, signed statement that identifies:

1. Alleged NCLB violation.
2. Facts supporting the alleged violation.
3. Supporting documentation, such as information on discussions, correspondence or meetings with the district regarding the complaint.

Complaints shall be referred to the Federal Programs Director, who will notify the Superintendent or designee.

The Federal Programs Director will conduct an independent investigation, which could include but not be limited to:

1. On-site visit to the building that is the subject of the complaint.
2. Opportunity to present evidence by all individuals and/or organizations involved.
3. Opportunity for each side to question parties of other side and witnesses.

When the investigation is completed, the Federal Programs Director will prepare a report with a recommendation for resolving the complaint. The report will include:

1. Name of the individual or organization filing the complaint.
2. Nature of the complaint.
3. Summary of the investigation.
4. Recommended resolution.
5. Reasons for the recommended resolution.

The Federal Programs Director will submit the report to the Superintendent or designee, who will determine whether further investigation is required and/or the district's final response.

All parties involved in the complaint will be notified of the resolution of the complaint by the Superintendent or designee.

The Federal Programs Director will ensure that the resolution of the complaint is implemented.

The time period between receipt and resolution of a complaint will not exceed sixty (60) calendar days, unless circumstances require additional time.

Either party may appeal the final resolution to the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Division of Federal Programs
PA Department of Education
333 Market Street
Harrisburg PA 17126-0333

References:

No Child Left Behind Act – 20 U.S.C. Sec. 7844

TOBACCO USE (Policy #222)

The Board recognizes that tobacco use by students presents a health and safety hazard that can have serious consequences for both users and nonusers and the safety and environment of the schools.

For purposes of this policy, tobacco use shall be defined as use and/or possession of a lighted or unlighted cigarette, vapor pen, electronic cigarette, cigar and pipe; other lighted smoking product; and smokeless tobacco in any form.

For purposes of this policy, electronic cigarette means any oral device that is designed or intended to provide a vapor of nicotine and/or other substance(s). The term shall include any such devices, whether they are manufactured, distributed, marketed or sold as e-cigarettes, e-cigars, e-pipes, or under any other product name or descriptor.

The Board prohibits possession, use or sale of tobacco by students at any time in a school building and on any property, buses, vans and vehicles that are owned, leased or controlled by the school district.

The Board prohibits possession, use or sale of tobacco by students at school-sponsored activities that are held off school property.

In the case of a student with a disability, including a student for whom an evaluation is pending, the district shall take all steps required to comply with state and federal laws and regulations, the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement and Board policies.

The school district may initiate prosecution of a student who possesses or uses tobacco in violation of this policy.

The Superintendent or designee shall annually notify students, parents/guardians and staff about the district's tobacco use policy by publishing such policy in the student handbooks, parent newsletters, posted notices, other efficient methods, and the School Code of conduct.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations to implement this policy.

The Superintendent or designee may report incidents of possession, use or sale of tobacco by students on school property, at any school-sponsored activity or on a conveyance providing transportation to or from a school or school-sponsored activity to the local police department that has jurisdiction over the school's property, in accordance with state law and regulations, the procedures set for in the memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement and Board policies.

The Superintendent or designee shall notify the parent/guardian of any student directly involved in an incident involving possession, use or sale of tobacco immediately, as soon as practicable. The Superintendent or designee shall inform the parent/guardian whether or not the local police department that has jurisdiction over the school property has been or may be notified of the incident. The Superintendent or designee shall document attempts made to reach the parent/guardian.

In accordance with state law, the Superintendent shall annually, by July 31, report all incidents of possession, use or sale of tobacco by students to the Office for Safe Schools on the required form.

A student convicted of possessing or using tobacco in violation of this policy may be fined up to \$50 plus court costs or admitted to alternative adjudication in lieu of imposition of a fine.

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CALENDAR
2015-2016**

Wednesday, August 26, 2015 Opening of School

Wednesday, August 26 and Thursday, August 27, 2015
..... Kindergarten Conference at School

Tuesday, October 28, 2015 End of First Marking Period

Wednesday, November 11, 2015 No School
..... Veteran's Day

Tuesday, November 24, 2015 No School
..... Kindergarten and Elementary Conferences

Wednesday, November 25, 2015 No School

Thursday, November 26 thru Thanksgiving Vacation

Monday, November 30, 2015 inclusive

Thursday, December 24, 2015 thru No School

Friday, January 1, 2016 Winter Vacation

Monday, January 18, 2016 No School
..... Martin Luther King Day

Tuesday, January 19, 2016 End of Second Marking Period

Friday, February 15, 2016 No School
..... Presidents' Birthday

Friday, March 30, 2016 End of Third Marking Period

Thursday, March 24 thru No School

Monday, March 28, 2016 Spring Vacation

Monday, May 30, 2016 No School
..... Memorial Day

Thursday, June 2, 2016 Last Day of School

ELEMENTARY IN-SERVICE SCHEDULE
No School for Students

August 24, 2015 (Not Act 80)

August 25, 2015

September 28, 2015

October 30, 2015

December 23, 2015 (Not Act 80)

February 12, 2016 (Not Act 80)

February 19, 2016 (Not Act 80)

IMPORTANT TO NOTE: School days which are canceled because of inclement weather will be made up in this order: February 12, 2016; March 24, 2016; March 28, 2016; and June 3, 2016.

