# *Penn Cambria School District*
# *Cyber Academy*

*Student/ Family Handbook 2026-2027*

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## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Penn Cambria Cyber Academy is an educational learning environment designed to meet the needs of students who desire to pursue their education in a non-traditional setting.

The PC Cyber Academy offers benefits beyond that of other cyber charter schools. Students who successfully fulfill all credit requirements for graduation within the PCSD Cyber Academy will earn a Penn Cambria School District diploma and the right to walk at graduation with their senior class. In addition, PC Cyber Academy students have access to our full range of extracurricular activities including sports and drama. PC Cyber Academy students have access to additional resources including guidance services, student assistance programs, and on-site tutoring as offered.

***A laptop will be provided for students to use. However, students must have access to reliable high-speed Internet to be successful.***

## CURRICULUM AND TEACHERS

Our program will provide a curriculum for students that is aligned with the PA Academic Standards and the graduation requirements of the Penn Cambria School District. Coursework and certified teachers for students in grades K-5 will be provided through Appalachia IU8 World of Learning Extended Campus or Imagine Learning. Coursework and certified teachers for students in grades 6-12 will be provided through Imagine Learning/Edgenuity Instructional Services and/or Appalachia IU8 World of Learning Extended Campus.

## PENN CAMBRIA MENTOR

Each Penn Cambria Cyber Academy student will be assigned a mentor. This mentor is a member of the Penn Cambria faculty and will monitor the progress of your child in the PC Cyber program and communicate that progress with parents on a regular basis. The mentor can help your child navigate in the courseware, act as a tutor for lessons, support communication with Imagine Edgenuity or IU8 Extended Campus teachers and help arrange additional supports on-site as needed. We strongly believe that this level of personal support and communication helps our students be successful in the cyber environment.

## ADDITIONAL ON-SITE ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Edgenuity and IU8 Extended Campus teachers and content tutors provide support and assistance. However, we know that sometimes an individual tutoring session is needed, or a student needs some one-to-one assistance to work through a lesson. In those cases, the PC mentors will also help students take advantage of on-site academic tutoring or

assistance provided by our Penn Cambria teachers before or after school. Students experiencing continued academic difficulty may be removed from the PC Cyber program so it is important that students take advantage of this opportunity when they are struggling.

## REGISTRATION/ORIENTATION

To register with the PC Cyber Academy, the student and his/her family must attend a mandatory orientation meeting each year at Penn Cambria to be hosted by the principal, guidance counselor, and/or mentor. The orientation will include a review of the Cyber Academy student handbook, expectations for coursework, attendance policies, grading procedures, testing procedures, and a tutorial on the use of the software platform that will be used with the program. Students will also be provided with a laptop at that time. **Each student, accompanied by a parent/guardian, MUST complete the mandatory orientation session each year prior to being considered a PC Cyber Academy student.** Arrangements will be made for virtual sessions as needed.

## STUDENT PARTICIPATION and EXPECTATIONS

Student participation in the PC Cyber Academy requires him/her to be organized, motivated, and willing to assume responsibility for his/her education. **Failure to adhere to the requirements and expectations may contribute to removal from the PC Cyber Academy.**

- Student will be required to maintain acceptable attendance. This includes signing in every school day.
- Student will complete assigned on-line work every school day. ***Students should expect to work at least one hour per day/per course to meet due dates. Another good rule of thumb is to realize that a student is expected to complete a full day of schoolwork each day (approximately 4.5 hours for elementary students and 5.5 hours for secondary students).*** The PC Cyber Academy will follow the school district calendar and schedule of marking periods for completion of coursework unless otherwise noted.
- Student will contact his/her on-line instructor(s), the mentor, or the guidance counselor if experiencing academic difficulty.
- Student will be required to participate in all state mandated testing and must meet all graduation requirements for receipt of a Penn Cambria High School diploma.
- Student participation in district sponsored athletic activities is subject to the team's qualifying rules and academic eligibility.
- A High School cyber student in good academic standing and meeting attendance guidelines will be permitted to attend prom.
- Student is required to turn in class assignments according to due dates which are set by the course instructors.
- Cyber student will have access to school resources such as the library and guidance counseling by making arrangements in advance.

- Any confirmed cases of cyber bullying, cyber stalking or cyber harassment or other violation of the PCSD *Acceptable Use Policy* may result in immediate dismissal from the PC Cyber Academy.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

The PC Cyber Academy is required to monitor student attendance in accordance with state law. Responsibility for compliance with state school attendance laws belongs to the parents, but the Penn Cambria School District is obligated to keep an accurate record of daily attendance.

- **Students must log-in to the course platform and engage in at least <u>60 minutes</u> of work every school day based on the school calendar in order to be marked in attendance.**
- Time spent working off-line, as well as time dedicated to schoolwork during weekends or holidays, may be necessary to complete courses just as homework is necessary in face-to-face instruction, however, ***time spent working offline will not count towards meeting the 60 minute per day attendance requirement***.
- This daily attendance is necessary if students plan to participate in extra-curricular activities, prom, etc. A student's absence in cyber school for that day will have the same impact on the ability to participate in extra-curricular activities as absence from our school building.

Failure to comply with the conditions stated above will result in the student being marked absent for that day. Students who are absent from on-line school work must submit a written excuse (can be submitted via the FOCUS parent portal, emailed or delivered) by the parent/guardian to the building principal within three (3) days of the absence. In the case of extended illness, the student should make arrangements with the building principal to complete all work missed in a reasonable length of time. If an educational trip is planned which will prevent the student from completing his/her work, an Educational Trip Form must be completed and submitted to the principal a week in advance (form available on the district website).

Failure to follow this policy and/or all District attendance policies may result in dismissal from the PC Cyber Academy program. Please refer to PCSD Policies #204 and 204-AR for more information.

## STUDENT WELLNESS CHECKS

At least once each week, ***<u>a school staff member must visibly see and communicate in real time with each student.</u>*** Our PC Cyber Mentors will offer various opportunities for quick Zoom/Teams check-ins each week. Mentors can help answer questions, celebrate progress, identify resources for support, and share any timely school announcements such as picture days, career speakers, extra-curricular events, and more. In addition to Cyber Mentor check-ins, some other examples of ways this requirement can be met include:

- Vo-Tech student attends homeroom at PCHS.

- Zoom/Teams or in-person support services or meetings with a PC staff member (ex: school counselor, school nurse, special education teacher, school psychologist, principal).

As per PDE requirements, immediate follow-up is required if a student fails to complete a required wellness check. Our school police officer or other school staff will conduct a home visit to check in with the student and family if a student misses a weekly wellness check. **Consistent failure to comply with this wellness check requirement will result in your child's dismissal from the PC Cyber Academy**.

## GRADING POLICY

Parents of students enrolled in the PC Cyber Academy will receive progress reports and updates from on-line instructors and the PC mentor regularly. Cyber Academy students will also receive a report card at the conclusion of each nine-week grading period. It is imperative that students complete course material assigned before the end of the course. The final grade at the end of the course will be used to determine credits earned and will appear on the student's permanent transcript.

**Imagine Edgenuity Grade Information**

Imagine Edgenuity provides THREE different grades for students. Please see below.

GRADE OVERALL VALUE – This is just the grade based on only those activities that have been completed (no penalty for missing assignments/activities). This grade WILL NOT BE USED and is provided for informational purposes only!

GRADE ACTUAL VALUE – This is an adjusted grade that does show a penalty for falling behind pacing. This shows a better measure of current progress than the overall grade but remember that this grade still doesn't take into total account work that is not complete but should be. *Use caution if a student is behind pace with this! This score will likely be much higher than their final course grade if work is not complete.*

**GRADE RELATIVE VALUE** – This is the **final course grade that will be used for report cards**. It is the grade that the student would receive if he/she stopped working in the course and received a zero for all incomplete activities.

## ACADEMIC DISHONESTY/PLAGIARISM/ AI

Plagiarism is defined as taking or imitating the ideas, thoughts or language of another to represent them as one's original work. It is imperative that all work submitted by a student be representative of his/her own ideas, thoughts, and especially language capability. Therefore, plagiarism is strictly prohibited in all work pertaining to school. A grade of zero will be awarded for any submitted work which is found to be the work of another (student, author, encyclopedia, internet, AI, bot, etc.) and subsequent offenses will be dealt with accordingly. If the ideas, thoughts, or language from another source must be used in the work being done, it is the student's responsibility to cite the information appropriately. You are required to complete and submit work done by you and only you. Participation in a cyber program requires honesty and integrity.

***Penn Cambria reserves the right to require a student interview to verbally check for understanding of course work completed and submitted to ensure academic honesty.***

## GUIDANCE SERVICES

All PC Cyber Academy students have access to the school's guidance counselor as needed throughout the school year. It is the responsibility of the student and/or parent to contact the guidance counselor to schedule classes within our buildings for the following school year. Your PC mentor can help facilitate this communication. Also, please check with the guidance office as well for information regarding PSSA, PSAT, SAT, ACT test dates as well as for any college application and/or scholarship information.

## PARENT/GUARDIAN ROLE

PC Cyber Academy is pleased to partner with you to provide your child with a quality education. While we supply the computer, curriculum and professional support, you provide the supervision, management and encouragement. Your child's success truly depends upon your consistent involvement. A PC Cyber Academy parent/guardian is expected to:

- supervise your child's work
- provide support and encouragement
- maintain communication with your PC mentor
- monitor progress through the on-line grade book
- hold your child responsible for completing coursework
- oversee the care of school materials
- make sure your child attends on-line or face-to-face tutoring sessions when needed
- communicate any concerns or problems with the principal or your PC mentor in a timely fashion

## ACADEMIC STANDING IN PC CYBER ACADEMY

At the conclusion of each marking period, PC Cyber Academy student performance will be evaluated. If necessary, a mandatory at-risk meeting will be held with the principal, guidance counselor, mentor, family and student. All policies and procedures contained in the PC Cyber Academy Student Handbook will be reviewed. **If a student continues to be unsuccessful in the PC Cyber Academy, he/she may be removed from the program.**

## TECHNOLOGY

Penn Cambria School District will provide technology equipment and support for our cyber students. Families must pick up laptops from the district. Any instructional materials, textbooks, equipment and/or technology (i.e. computers, etc.) are at all times the property of Penn Cambria School District, even when in physical possession of the student/guardian. The student and parent/guardian will sign an ***Equipment Loan Agreement*** which will outline the specific regulations with regard to this equipment. The school district will not

provide “technology consumables” to the students for home use (i.e. printer paper, ink, etc.).
Students are personally responsible for the computer and other school property issued to them. If these items are lost or damaged, students will be required to pay the prorated replacement fees.

## TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

Penn Cambria School District will provide technology support for PC Cyber Academy students throughout the school year. Please use the contact information provided during your orientation meeting should you need technical support.

## HEALTH RECORDS/SCREENINGS

Students enrolled in the PC Cyber Academy are required to obtain health screenings and maintain a school health record in accordance with regulations set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Health and Education. **Students in all grades must receive a height, weight, and vision screening each year of school.** These screenings will take place in the nurse’s suite at the appropriate district school and may be arranged through the building principal. The school nurse will then maintain these records. Additional health services may be required as determined by the child’s grade level. These examinations can be conducted by school health officials when offered to traditional students in those grade levels for no cost, or parents may elect to have their own private family physician/dentist perform these examinations at the cost to the families. If the latter is the case, parents must provide proof to the school district of these exams. Forms for this purpose may be obtained from the building office or from the school nurse.
The school district is also obligated to ensure that students have the proper immunizations and can request these records from parents at any time. If you have any questions about required immunizations, please contact your family physician or the school nurse.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Penn Cambria School District provides a special education program in accordance with federal and state regulations/guidelines to ensure the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to all school-age children in need of such services.
Students with disabilities will continue to work with Penn Cambria special education teachers who will provide services as per the IEP either on-site or virtually. IEP meetings will be conducted with the Penn Cambria Special Education department. The Penn Cambria School District’s Special Education Department can offer further clarification/assistance in this area.

## ATHLETICS/EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

PCSD Cyber Academy students who are in good standing may participate in extra-curricular clubs, activities, or athletics offered by Penn Cambria School District as per PCSD Board Policy 140.1. It is the responsibility of the student and/or parent to communicate with the principal or athletic director regarding the activity or sport that he/she is interested in. Daily attendance requirements and academic eligibility requirements continue to apply for PC Cyber Academy students. Transportation will not be provided by the school district to/from extra-curricular activities.

## PSSA/KEYSTONE EXAMS

All PC Cyber Academy students must participate in all local and/or state mandated assessments. All local and state mandated tests are administered during the school day at each building. PC Cyber Academy students must be brought to the appropriate school on days of testing. Students will be notified by the principal or guidance counselor when the tests are offered.

## THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM

According to PA Public School Code, Article XIII-E, Threat Assessment refers to a fact-based process for the assessment of and intervention with students whose behaviors may indicate a threat to the safety of the student, other students, school employees, school facilities, the community, or others.
The established PCSD Threat Assessment Team is immediately notified and subsequently follows the Threat Assessment procedures to assess and intervene with the student(s) to determine the level of threat. The goal of this process is to ensure the safety of the school community, and also to ensure that the student presenting the threat receives assistance through a range of strategies established in the school and in the community.
If there is a legitimate threat made within the district, the superintendent will make a School Connects call District wide to every parent and will explain the threat and what the response will be.

If there is a rumored threat that is investigated at the building level and found to be false, the building principal will do a School Connects call to the parents of students in that building and explain that a threat was investigated and found to be rumor and false. The building principal will also do an announcement or multiple announcements to the students with that same information if appropriate for student age levels.

## BUILDING HANDBOOKS

In addition to the specific guidance found within this PC Cyber Academy Handbook, Cyber students must comply and are bound by all district rules, regulations, and policies documented in the district's Student Handbooks by building. The student Handbooks can

be viewed on the district website. Hard copies are available in the main office of each school building or can be obtained by calling the building principal.

## BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING

Penn Cambria School District is committed to providing a safe and positive learning experience for students and staff. Bullying, including cyber bullying, creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation that detracts from the safe environment necessary for learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, all forms of bullying by district students are prohibited in the school setting, including the online school setting.

Students should promptly report bullying incidents to the building principal, guidance counselor or adult supervisor. The principal's office will investigate the report upon receipt from student, guidance counselor or adult supervisor, and when the report is verified, take appropriate corrective action according to Board policy and statement and student Code of Conduct.

**Penn Cambria SD: Faculty and Staff Bullying Procedures**

All faculty and staff are always expected to supervise students in the classroom
Students should never be left unsupervised
All faculty are expected to be outside their doors between classes to monitor students in the hallways
Any teacher who observes a negative interaction between students should intervene immediately, stop the behavior on the spot
Find out what happened
Support the students involved
Report to Administrator immediately
ALWAYS follow up with the building administrator to know and understand outcomes

## STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SAP)

Student Assistance Program (SAP) is designed to help school personnel to identify issues which pose a barrier to a student's learning and school success. At times, those issues may be related to mental health and behavioral concerns, depression, suicide or alcohol and other drug use. The SAP utilizes a systematic process, along with a specially trained team of school personnel, to intervene and refer these students to appropriate school and/or community services. Contact your child's teacher, the school principal, or guidance counselor for questions about special student services and the Student Assistance Program.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION/GIFTED/EL/MIGRANT/HOMELESS EDUCATION

The Penn Cambria School District will provide all programs necessary for the academic proficiency of students identified as a special education student (having an IEP), as a gifted student (having a GIEP), as a limited English Proficient (LEP) student, as a Homeless student, or as a Migrant student. Students or families that have questions regarding this topic may contact the school office or guidance counselors. For additional information regarding special services, contact the Special Education Director at 886-4785.

## CHILD FIND

The Penn Cambria School District, in accordance with federal and state mandates, provides individualized programming for students in need of special services. Specially trained staff teaches students who have learning, emotional, or multiple disabilities. Gifted and talented students also receive programming to foster their intellectual and creative abilities.
Any parent who believes his or her child is in need of special programming or services should contact the building administrator for assistance and pertinent information.

## 2026-2027 Annual Public Notice of Special Education Services and Programs Services for Gifted Students and Services for Protected Handicapped Students

It is the responsibility of the Pennsylvania Department of Education to ensure that all children with disabilities residing in the Commonwealth, including children with disabilities attending private schools, regardless of the severity of their disabilities, and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated. This responsibility is required by a federal law called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 2004 (IDEA '04).

The IDEA '04 requires each state educational agency to publish a notice to parents, in newspapers or other media, before any major identification, location, or evaluation activity. The IDEA '04 requires this notice to contain certain information. Another federal law, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), which protects confidentiality, requires educational agencies to notify parents annually of the confidentiality rights (FERPA regulations have been amended 9 times). Pennsylvania special education regulations require each school district to fulfill the IDEA '04 notice requirement by providing an annual public notice. To comply with the above requirements, following is the annual public notice for the Penn Cambria School District.

School districts are required by the IDEA ‘04 to provide a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities who need special education and related services. (Note: The duty to identify, locate, evaluate and provide special education services to school-age individuals incarcerated in local correctional institutions rests with the school district within whose boundaries such an institution is located.) School age children who need special education and related services are identified as children with disabilities. These students have been identified as being in need of specially designed instruction and have one or more of the following physical or intellectual disabilities:

- **Autism**
- **Emotional disturbance**
- **Deafness**
- **Hearing impairment**
- **Specific learning disability**

- **Intellectual disability**
- **Multiple Disabilities**
- **Other health impairment**
- **Orthopedic Impairment due to chronic or acute health problems**
- **Speech and language impairment**
- **Visual impairment including blindness**
- **Deaf-blindness**
- **Traumatic Brain Injury**
- **Developmental Delay**

**Early Intervention**

The IDEA '04 requires the provision of a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities between 3 years of age and the school district's age of beginners. In Pennsylvania, a child between 3 years of age and the school district's age of beginners who has a developmental delay or one or more of the physical or intellectual disabilities listed above may be identified as an "eligible young child."
Eligible young children are afforded the rights of school age children with disabilities, including screening, evaluation, individualized education program planning, and provision of appropriate programs and services.

Potential signs of developmental delay and other risk factors that could indicate disabilities and the possibility that a child is an eligible young child could include: **By the age of 3**: not saying many words; not using 2 or 3 word phrases and sentences; not walking; awkward gait (walking); drooling; not able to answer "who" or "what" questions; not using utensil to feed self; **By the age of 4 (all of the above included)**: not toilet trained; difficulty with directional words (in, on, under, out); not playing with other children; not able to draw a circle, cross or imitate a vertical line; not able to understand the child's speech most of the time; difficulty following simple two-step directions (pick up the paper and put it in the garbage); **By the age of 5 (all of the above included)**: unable to answer "where" questions; unable to recall details from a story; not drawing a person with at least 6 parts; immature speech patterns (me instead of I); not able to hop forward with one foot without support; **Other warning signs-at any age**: Little or no eye contact; over/under sensitivities to pain, light, noise; hand flapping; no awareness of space-always bumping into other people or things; awkward hand or foot positioning; won't touch or eat certain textures; child no longer can do things he/she used to do; developed normally, then stopped; echoes what is said; plays with toys inappropriately (watches wheels spin on the car but doesn't play with the car).

The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing programs and services to eligible young children under Act 212 of 1990, the Early Intervention Services System Act. The Intermediate Unit 8 provides programs and services to eligible young children on behalf of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. For more information, contact the IU8 Preschool Office at (800) 228-7900.

**Screening**
Intermediate Unit 8 and Penn Cambria School District has established and implemented procedures to locate, identify, and evaluate students and young children suspected of being exceptional. These procedures include screening activities which include but are not limited to: review of group-based data (cumulative records, enrollment records, health records, and report cards); hearing screening (at a minimum of kindergarten, special ungraded classes, first, second, third, seventh, and eleventh grades); vision screening (every grade level); motor screening; and speech and language screening. In schools which have a Pre-Referral, Child-Study, Early Intervening or Instructional Support Team, the above screening activities may lead to consideration by the teams to move the next level of screening activities.

Intermediate Unit 8 and each school district has an established annual schedule to conduct screening activities. The screenings are conducted at specific times during the school year in designated school buildings and community sites. Screening may also be conducted in the student's home school unless other arrangements are necessary. **Parents, guardians or surrogate parents may contact their local school district or Intermediate Unit 8 contact person if they wish to learn more, have questions, believe their child may need to be identified or to obtain specific information about the times and locations of screening activities**. The contact person is listed at the end of this notice.

Except as indicated above or otherwise announced publicly, screening activities take place in an ongoing fashion throughout the school year. Each educational agency has a system for annually evaluating the effectiveness of its screening process.

**Evaluation**
When screening indicates that a student may be a child with a disability, the school district will seek parental consent to conduct an evaluation. Evaluation means procedures used in the determination of whether a child has a disability and the

nature and extent of the special education and related services that the child needs. The term means procedures used selectively with an individual child and do not mean basic tests administered to or procedures used with all children.

This evaluation is conducted by a multidisciplinary team (MDT) that includes the parent and a group of qualified professionals. The process must be conducted in accordance with specific timelines and must include protection-in-evaluation procedures. For example, tests and procedures used as part of the evaluation may not be racially or culturally biased.

The evaluation process results in a written evaluation report. This report specifies a student's eligibility for special education based on the presence of a disability and the need for specially designed instruction. The evaluation report also makes recommendations for educational programming. Once parental consent for evaluation is obtained, the school district has timelines and procedures specified by law which it must follow.

Parents who think their child is exceptional may request that the school district conduct an evaluation. This request should be made in writing to the contact person in the accompanying listing. If a parent makes an oral request for an evaluation, the school district shall provide the parent with a form for that purpose. Pre-Referral, Child-Study, Early Intervening, or Instructional Support Team activities do not serve as a bar to the right of a parent to request, (at any time, including prior to or during the conduct of instructional support activities, an evaluation.)

Parents also have the right to obtain an independent educational evaluation. The school district must provide to parents, on request, information about where an independent educational evaluation may be obtained. Under certain circumstances, such an independent educational evaluation may be obtained at public expense.

**Educational Placement**

The IEP team develops a written education plan called an IEP. The IEP is based on the results of the evaluation. Required members include at least one regular education teacher of the child (if the child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment), at least one special education teacher, or where appropriate, at least one special education provider, a local educational agency, the child, whenever appropriate, or beginning at age 14. Parents may agree, in writing, to excuse a team member or members.

An IEP describes a student's current educational levels, goals, objectives (when required), and the individualized programs and services that the student will receive. IEP's are reviewed on an annual basis. The IEP team will make decisions about the type of services, the level of intervention, and the location of intervention. Types of services include:

1. Autistic Support
2. Blind and Visually Impaired Support
3. Deaf and Hard of Hearing Support
4. Emotional Support
5. Learning Support
6. Life Skills Support
7. Multiple Disabilities Support
8. Physical Support
9. Speech and Language Support

Level of support options include:

* Itinerant – Special Education supports and services provided by special education personnel for 20% or less of the school day.
* Supplemental – Special Education supports and services provided by Special Education personnel for more than 20% but less than 80% of the school day.
Full-time - Special Education supports and services provided by Special Education personnel for 80% or more of the school day.

Placement must be made in the least restrictive environment in which the student's needs can be met with special education and related services. All students with disabilities must be educated to the maximum extent appropriate with children who are not disabled.

## 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 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 intellectual disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program.

These services 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 Special Education Contact listed at the end of this notice.

## Services for Mentally Gifted Students

While Mentally Gifted is not included under the IDEA 2004, the Pennsylvania State Board of Education’s regulations as set forth in Chapter 16, Special Education for Gifted Students, provide that gifted students are considered to be children with exceptionalities and are in need of specially designed instruction. Penn Cambria School District will conduct public awareness activities to inform the public of gifted education services and programs and the manner by which to request these services and programs throughout the school year. These awareness activities shall be designed to reach all parents of students living within the Penn Cambria School District via the local newspapers, student handbooks, and on the school district website.

### Screening

Penn Cambria School District conducts an annual search for students that may potentially be gifted. This search is conducted yearly, however at any time teachers from grades K through 12 may make a request to have a student screened or evaluated for gifted eligibility. At any time throughout the school year, a parent may also request in writing to the special education director for a child to be evaluated to determine eligibility as a mentally gifted student. A parent may only request to have the child evaluated one time per school term. The school district shall determine the student’s needs through a screening and evaluation process which meets the requirements of Chapter 16.

### Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation

For students who are potentially mentally gifted students, the district will take the following steps:

1. Conduct the Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation
2. Compile a Gifted Written Report
3. Convene a Gifted Individualized Education team meeting to determine whether the student is gifted; and,
4. Develop a Gifted Individualized Education program if the student is determined to be a mentally gifted student.

### Program Model

Penn Cambria School District implements an inclusive model for Gifted Education across all grade levels. Please contact the special education director if you need additional information about evaluation and programming for mentally gifted students.

## Confidentiality

Each school district protects the confidentiality of personally identifiable information in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and other applicable federal and state laws, policies, and regulations.
Education records means those records that are directly related to the student, including computer media and videotape, which are maintained by an educational agency or by a party acting for the agency. Educational agency, for purposes of this notice, means the local school district and/or the Intermediate Unit 8. For all students, the educational agency maintains education records that include but are not limited to:
· Personally identifiable information - confidential information that includes, but is not limited to, the student's name, name of parents and other family members, the address of the student or student's family, and personal information or personal characteristics which would make the student's identity easily traceable.
· Directory information - information contained in an education record of a student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. It includes, but is **not limited** to, the student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended.

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

1. Parents have the right to inspect and review a child's education record. The educational agency will comply with a request to inspect and review education records without unnecessary delay and before any meeting regarding an IEP or any due process hearing, but in no case more than 45 days after the request has been made. Requests should be submitted in writing, indicating the records the parents wish to inspect, to the school principal or other appropriate school official. Parents have the right to a response from the educational agency to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of the records. Parents have the right to request copies of the records. While the educational agency cannot charge a fee to search for or to retrieve information, it may charge a copying fee as long as it does not effectively prevent the parents from exercising their right to inspect and review the records. Parents have the right to appoint a representative to inspect and review their child's records. If any education record contains information on more than one child, parents have the right only to inspect and review the information relating to their child.

2. If parents think information in an education record is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the privacy or other rights of their child, they may request amendment of the record. Requests should be in writing and clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. The educational agency will decide whether or not to amend the record and will notify the parents in writing of its decision. If the educational agency refuses to amend a record, it will notify the parents of their right to a hearing to challenge the disputed information. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parents or student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. “Destruction” of information means physical destruction or removal of personal identifiers so the information is no longer personally identifiable.

Whenever information is no longer needed to provide educational services to a child or six (6) years after graduation, the information in their education record will be destroyed by the educational agency, if there is not a current request to inspect and review or a request for copies. However, a permanent record of a former student’s name, telephone number, grades, achievement, attendance, classes attended, grade level completed, year completed, Evaluation/Re-evaluation Reports, last three (3) IEP’s, and last Notice of Recommended Educational Placement may be maintained in an electronic form without time limitation.

Information no longer needed to provide educational services must be destroyed if requested by a parent. However, a permanent record of a student’s name, address, phone number, grades, attendance, classes attended, grade level completed, year completed may be maintained in an electronic form without time limitation.

4. The educational agency will provide, upon request, a listing of the types and locations of education records maintained, the school officials responsible for these records, and the school personnel authorized to see personally identifiable information. Such personnel receive training and instruction regarding confidentiality. The educational agency keeps a record of parties obtaining access to education records, including the name of the party, the date access was given, and the purpose for which the party is authorized to use the records.

5. Parents have 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. "Consent" means: the parent(s) have been fully informed regarding the activity requiring consent, in their native language or other mode of communication; they understand and agree in writing to the activity; and they understand that consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time. Information may be disclosed without consent to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the District as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); person or company with whom the educational agency has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); 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.

Directory information may be released without parent consent unless the parent has exercised their right to opt out of disclosure of directory information. Parents have the right to refuse to let an agency designate any or all of the above information as directory information.
Upon request, the educational agency discloses education records (including disciplinary records) without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

6. Parents have a right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by an educational agency to comply with the requirements of FERPA. Complaints may be filed with the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202-4605.

7. NDAA of 2002 also requires districts to give military recruiters the same access to secondary school students as provided to postsecondary institutions or to prospective employers; and provide students' names, addresses, and telephone listings to military recruiters, when requested, unless a parent has opted out of providing such information.

## Mode of Communication

The content of this notice has been written in straightforward, simple language. If a person does not understand any of this notice, he or she should contact the school district or Intermediate Unit 8 and request an explanation.

The educational agency will arrange for an interpreter for parents with limited English proficiency. If a parent is deaf or blind or has no written language, the educational agency will arrange for communication of this notice in the mode normally used by the parent (e.g., sign language, Braille, or oral communication).

## Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

PPRA affords parents certain rights regarding the 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 ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)—

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
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 parents; or
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 required as a 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 or 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.

These rights transfer from the parents to a student who has graduated from high school, or is 18 years old, or an emancipated minor under State law, or has reached the age of majority in Pennsylvania.
The educational agency will develop and adopt policies regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The educational agency will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The educational agency will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation in the specific activity or survey. The educational agency will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the educational

agency has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

A parent may file a written complaint alleging that the rights described in this notice were not provided:

Pennsylvania Department of Education Bureau of Special Education Division of Compliance
333 Market Street Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

**SPECIAL EDUCATION CONTACT:**
**Mrs. Carrie Conrad, Special Ed Director**
**Penn Cambria School District**
**205 6th Street**
**Cresson, PA 16630**
**814-886-4785**

## EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH WHO ARE HOMELESS

**Public Notice**

Our school district actively enrolls and provides services for children and youth that are homeless. This notice provides information about the rights of children, youths, and unaccompanied youth that are homeless to attend a public school. An unaccompanied youth is a youth that does not live with a parent or guardian. This notice includes information to help you know if you or someone you know is considered homeless and is eligible for services from our school district. Children or youths that are homeless have rights that include the right to attend public schools. If you need assistance understanding this letter or need an interpreter, please tell us and we will assist you.

- *Who is "homeless"?* Children or youth (including children of migrant workers) who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence are homeless. Fixed means the home is connected to the ground and is not easy to move. Regular means a place where the child sleeps every night. Adequate means the home meets modern standards of living. Children who are sharing someone else's housing because they lost theirs or because they cannot afford their own housing are homeless.

  Children and youths who are homeless may be living in: motels, hotels, trailer parks (this does not refer to a mobile home (trailer) park, this refers to a type of camping ground for fifth wheel camper trailers or other types of movable campers), camping grounds because they do not have an adequate home, emergency or transitional shelters, or are abandoned in hospitals.

  Children and youth who are homeless may have a place they usually sleep that is public or private place not meant to be a regular place for people to sleep. They may also be living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing (housing that does not meet modern standards of living), bus or train stations, or other similar settings.

  If you are not sure, please contact the person listed on this notice.

- *What are the education rights of children and youth that are homeless*? Our schools provide the same educational services to all students without regard to their living situation. Children and youth who are homeless also have rights that include:
  - Based on what is best for the child or youth, the child or youth can continue to attend the "school of origin" or be immediately enrolled in any public school where the student now lives. This includes any school that students who are not homeless attend that is in the area where the child or youth now lives.
  - Being given services without delay, such as transportation and meal programs
  - Other appropriate services and programs, such as programs for: gifted children, children with disabilities, English learners, career and technical education, and preschool.
  - Help in school through the district's federally funded Title I program. A student that is homeless can receive Title I services even if the student is not attending a Title I funded school.
  - School activities for parents or guardians.
  - Participation in athletics, fine arts, or other extra-curricular activities.
  - Being treated the same as students who are not homeless by school personnel.

- *What if there is a disagreement about school placement?* If the district places a student in a school that is not the school of origin or a school requested by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, then the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth may appeal (ask to change) the placement decision. The student will be immediately enrolled in the school that the student or parent asked for while an appeal is being considered. The district homeless liaison listed on this notice will provide information and assistance to appeal a placement decision.

  *No Child or Youth Should Be Denied Access to a Free and Appropriate Public Education*

If you are homeless or know of a child, youth, or unaccompanied youth that may be homeless, please contact the person listed here for help.

**Penn Cambria School District Homeless Liaison:** Mrs. Jeanette Black 814-886-8121 x1183
**District Address:** 201 6th Street Cresson, PA 16630
**Email Address:** BLACKJL@pcam.org

## SAFE SCHOOLS NOTIFICATION

Dear Parent/Guardian:
As part of our safe schools and emergency preparedness planning, you are receiving this annual notification that in the event of a building or district wide crisis or disaster that requires students to be evacuated to an off-site location away from school property, you will be notified via our Global calling system of the location to which your child has been transported, along with arrangements for student pick-up or transportation home.
It is the policy of the school district that the addresses of off-site evacuation locations are not released publicly in advance, to further safeguard our students.
Please be sure to keep the school updated on any changes to your emergency contact information.

Sincerely,
***Jaime Hartline***
Superintendent