Penn Cambria Elementary Handbook

2026-2027

Revised 7/1/2026

Table of Contents

Welcome ----------*1*
School District Mission/Vision Statement----------*2*
School District Shared Values----------*2*
School District Phone Numbers----------*3*

Annual Notifications----------19-30
Arrival----------6
Assessment and Progress Reports----------11
Attendance----------13
Body Mass Index----------11
Breakfast Program----------16
Bullying Policy----------14
Bus Riders----------8
Cafeteria (ala carte) ----------16
Counselor/Grading Scale/Promotion & Retention---------- 15
Child Find----------18
Dismissal Procedures----------7
Dress Code----------9
Educational Trip Request----------8
Elementary Discipline Procedure----------5
Emergency Cards----------4
Enrollment and Registration----------4
Guidance of Social Development/School Rules----------14
Items Not Permitted at School----------11
Locker and Backpack Inspection----------11
Lunch and Cafeteria----------16
Lunch Menus----------16
Monthly Calendar----------8
Nurse and Medication (School Health Services) ----------10
Outside Play, Recess, Exercise----------17
Parent Involvement----------12
Parent-Teacher Conferences----------11
PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) ----------12
School Police Officer ----------15
Special Education (Gifted/Migrant/Homeless Education) ----------17
Special Dietary Needs----------11
Special Student Services----------17
Student Records----------13
Tardiness----------6
Threat Assessment Team ----------12
Visiting the School----------6
Weekly Envelopes----------8
Wellness Policy----------16

Welcome to the
Penn Cambria
Elementary Schools

This handbook contains helpful information for our elementary school families. Please take time to read this and the information enclosed. The faculty and staff extend an invitation for you to get involved in our elementary schools by attending programs, becoming a parent volunteer, and an active member in our PTO.

We are pleased to have you and your child as a part of our Panther family. Our staff is looking forward to a positive social, emotional, and cognitive growing experience for your child. Never hesitate to contact any of us who can assist you during your child's elementary experience.

-Dr. Smorto
Elementary Principal

School District Mission Statement

The Penn Cambria School District will prepare productive citizens in a safe and positive environment that promotes excellence in academics, career skills, the arts, and athletics.

School District Shared Values

The Penn Cambria School District collectively values:

*The principle that all children can learn in a healthy and safe environment.
*A commitment to Honesty, Integrity, Respect, and Diversity.
*The educational support of family and community.
*Effective teaching that utilizes a rigorous relevant curriculum.
*Professional development.
*Quality leadership that will foster a culture of teaching and learning.
*The use of technology to enhance teaching and learning.
*Accountability for all.
*A continuous learning ethic.
*Artful use of infrastructure that requires the strategic alignment and utilization of faculty, staff, facilities, time, technology, and fiscal resources.

Penn Cambria School District
Telephone Numbers

Penn Cambria Pre-Primary (Pre K – 1st)	**814-886-8166**
Penn Cambria Intermediate (2 - 3)	**814-886-8532**
Penn Cambria Middle (4 - 6)	**814-886-4181**
Penn Cambria High School (7 – 12)	**814-886-8188**
Director of Special Education	**814-886-4785**
Food Service	**814-886-7753**
McIlwain School Bus Lines	**814-886-4600**

Enrollment and Registration

Students may register at Penn Cambria School District's Central Office located at 201 6th Street, Cresson.

Proof of immunization must be shown and copied for your child's health record. Previous school information should also be available (school name, address, phone and fax numbers are very helpful). Birth Certificate should be provided. Our school nurse can assist parents in informing them of the correct immunizations needed for school admittance.

Registering parents and/or legal guardians will be given a packet of forms to be filled out. Special student needs, IEP information, custody orders, legal documentation regarding student welfare, and copies of recent report cards and/or testing results should be submitted when registering a new student.

Emergency Cards

Each child must have an updated completed Emergency Card on file in the school office. Included must be persons to whom your child may be released. A work number where you can be contacted is essential in case of an emergency. If you cannot be reached, we will use the emergency information you provided.

It is best to list several people on the emergency card and take into consideration whether or not these people are available to care for your child if called. If you need to add updated emergency information during the school year, you may see the school nurse to make these changes.

Elementary Discipline Procedures

In order to promote a safe and healthy school environment, Penn Cambria Elementary developed disciplinary procedures to maintain consistency throughout the elementary schools. Students can earn monthly rewards for positive school behavior.

Level 1: PCSD Board Policy 218-AR states that misbehavior on the part of the student which impedes orderly classroom procedures or interferes with the orderly operation of the school is classified as a level I infraction. The teacher will fill out a disciplinary referral and send it home for parent review and signature. The form must be returned to school.
Consequence: Reprimand, parent phone call, and/or detention

Level 2: PCSD Board Policy 218-AR states that infractions that tend to disrupt the learning climate as a result of their seriousness are classified as level II infractions. The teacher will fill out a discipline referral and send it home for parent review and signature. The form must be returned to school. These infractions require the principal to intervene.
Consequence: Detention or suspension assigned, parent phone call

**Refer to PCSD Board Policy 218 and 218-AR for the entire Student Discipline policy.

- Pre-K through 3rd grade teachers use classroom management strategies and have consequences for minor infractions in the classroom. If negative behaviors continue and the student is not responding to the classroom management strategies, then the principal will be notified through a disciplinary referral.

The PAWS Behavior Management System: Students may track their own behavior in the classroom using the "PAWS" system. If an infraction occurs in the classroom, the student will be asked to track their behavior on their own "PAW" sign. Students who earn their PAWs are able to participate in the monthly PAWs reward. Students may lose the privilege of attending a portion of the monthly PAWs reward as determined by the principal and classroom teacher.

P: Pride **A**: Academics **W**: Work Ethic **S**: Self Respect

Visiting the School

Access to all elementary buildings is through the main front doors only. Whenever you need to visit the school, you must enter through the front door by pressing the door buzzer and announcing yourself. Visitors must then proceed to the office, show ID, and obtain a visitation pass which is to be worn at all times while in the building. Classroom volunteers must be approved by the principal prior to your visit. The Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) organizes parent volunteers, in which clearances are required to visit the schools.

Arrival

Students should arrive to school *no earlier than* 8:30 A.M. Adult supervision will begin at 8:30 A.M. Students should arrive no later than 9:00 A.M. If you drop your child off in the morning, remember to not block the lanes of traffic in front of the school.

Remain outside the areas marked for the school buses and vans. All students must use the front doors of the building for entrance.

Tardiness

If your child is dropped off after 9:00 A.M., he/she is considered tardy and you will have to come in to the school with your child to sign him/her in. After 6 tardies you will receive a letter of concern and your child will be considered for our Student Assistance Program and/or Children and Youth Services.

Dismissal Procedures

Parking in the bus lanes are not permitted at any school. Students who are being picked-up by a parent/guardian will be dismissed at 3:05 P.M. from the school. Students who are being picked up by parents/guardians must bring a written excuse and turn it in to their homeroom teacher, so the school is aware of the change.

Permanent Parent Pick-Up

In accordance with our safety plan and assessment, people entering the building must be kept to a minimum. All student pick-ups must now have a *Student Pick-Up Contract* filled out and signed by the principal. You will then receive a laminated *Accountability Student Pick-Up Sheet*. At the end of the day you must have your laminated *Accountability Student Pick-Up Sheet* either displayed on your dashboard/window for easy visibility or have it available to show to a staff member depending on what school you are picking up at.

Accountability pick-up will begin the first day of school. If you do not have a Student Pick-Up Contract, please fill one out in the office. Only individuals indicated on the emergency card will be authorized to obtain a laminated *Accountability Student Pick-Up Sheet.*

***Please see the separate hand-out in your child's beginning of the year folder for specific information on each elementary school.

Educational Trip

Educational Trip Request forms can be obtained in the school office. According to board policy #204, family trips will be considered excused absences if prior approval is requested and granted by the respective principal. Educational Trip policy is to be limited to no more than ten (10) days of approval.

Bus Riders

It is critical that all children observe the rules for bus safety and conduct. The bus rules are taught and reviewed throughout the school year. Students who do not follow the rules may lose riding privileges following parental notification. Each bus rider in grades 2-5 must have a signed bus behavior agreement on file in the main office and at McIlwain School Bus Lines.

If your child must ride another bus for emergency reasons, McIlwain School Bus Lines must be notified, and a note MUST be written to your child's teacher. Please do NOT ask to have your child change buses just to ride home with a friend. For more information call McIlwain's at 814-886-4600.

Weekly Envelopes

To ensure parent communication of their child's progress, all students will receive a Weekly Envelope that will be sent home every Friday.

Inside the envelope will be work your child has done throughout the week, parent newsletters, special announcements, individual notes to parents and various other items. We ask that you review the information inside the folder, sign the front of the folder, and return it to your child's teacher on the following day.

Monthly Calendar

Each month your child will bring home a school calendar showing upcoming events, dates, and times. This calendar also provides parents/guardians with school activity information. In addition, notification of school holidays, and dates on which the students do not have school are also noted. These calendars are designed to help families stay informed of school related events.

Dress Code

The specific list that follows should help you make appropriate dress choices for school. Clothing worn cannot be a distraction in the learning environment. Students are expected to make responsible choices regarding clothing and accessories. In general, clothing should fit appropriately, be modest and not suggestive. If a student violates these requests the school will call their parents to bring appropriate clothing to the school. If parents cannot be contacted, alternate clothing will be given to the student to wear throughout the day.

Students are encouraged to wear comfortable tennis shoes and clothing for inside and outside activities.

Appropriate dress for school is as follows (see full Board Policy 221 for more info):

*Shirts must cover the midriff at all times. Shirts must reach the waistband of pants at all times when you are sitting or standing.
*Halter, tube tops and spaghetti-strap shirts are not permitted. Tops can be worn if straps are two and one-half (2 1/2) inches wide.
*Pants for boys and girls must fit at the waist so that underwear does not show when sitting or standing. Logos on the back of pants or shorts are not permitted.
*Clothing articles will be considered unacceptable or disruptive if they are **too sheer, too short, or too revealing**. Any garment that exposes any undergarment or bare midriff is prohibited. Some examples of inappropriate clothing include halter tops, tube tops or tank tops, crop tops, mesh tops, bicycle shorts, mini-skirts, underwear and undershirts worn as outerwear, shirts with open sides.
*Safe flat shoes are to be worn at all times. Shoes having/needing laces must be tied.
*Jackets and coats worn in the building must be unbuttoned or unzipped at all times.
*Pocket chains and spiked jewelry are not permitted.
*Clothing displaying tobacco, alcohol or drug affiliation is not permitted.
*Clothing displaying sexually inappropriate material is not permitted.
*Certain jewelry and other adornments, and the manner in which they are worn or displayed, may not be appropriate under certain circumstances and may pose a danger to the safety or welfare of the student or other students or staff, and may pose a threat to, or interruption of, the educational process. For example: rings with sharp points or edges, chain belts, chains hanging from jackets or pants, collars, spiked jewelry or any other jewelry or ornament that could be used as a weapon. When deemed inappropriate the student will be asked to remove the item. The item will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day. This is not an exhaustive list and the interpretation of the dress code is at the discretion of the principal.

Pre-Primary School -

- Students need an extra change of clothing kept at school with their name marked on the clothing.

School Health Services

There are student health services provided in each elementary building and our school nurse is available in each school as scheduling permits. The school nurse and the health room assistants conduct mandated health screenings, assist with illness, treatments, physicals, dental screenings, and handle any medical emergency. Screenings are mandated by the Pennsylvania Department of Health and Department of Education. These are considered screenings and are not to be a substitute for regular checkups with your child's medical provider. During the required years for mandated physical exams and dental exams, parents are encouraged to obtain exams through their private family medical provider. Your medical provider must complete our school medical forms. A school physical examination will be completed by the school physician for those not retuning a completed private physician form. A school dental exam will be completed by the school dentist for those not returning a completed dental form. Written notices will be sent home to those students needing the school physicals and dentals. According to school policy, these private exam forms need to be provided to the nurse before September 15.

Medications at School

The nurse cannot diagnose or prescribe medication. Any student required to take medication during school hours must comply with school regulations. A **Medical Administration Consent & Licensed Prescriber Order** form may be obtained in each school office. The Medication Administration Consent form must be completed by the parent/guardian and the student's medical provider prior to the nurse giving your child medication.

Medication to be administered to your child during the school day **must** be brought to the school office by the parent or guardian during regular school hours. Only medication in an authorized prescription bottle and label with the student's name and dosage is permitted into the school. **Do not** send pills or any medication to school with your child.

Children may or may not be reliable in providing information regarding medications received in the morning at home. Therefore, the parent/guardian should notify the nurse verbally or in writing any time an over the counter medication is administered prior to school. ***Written authorization for the school nurse to administer Tylenol or Ibuprofen must be indicated on the emergency card and students in Pre-K, Grades 1, 2, 3 will not receive Tylenol or Ibuprofen at school without prior notification and verbal permission from parents.***

Special Dietary Needs

If your child has a medical dietary need a form must be filled out by you and your health care provider, which may be obtained from the school nurse's office.

Body Mass Index

Individually, each student will be measured for height and weight. The results are confidential. The BMI, Body Mass Index, for age percentile will be calculated and the results sent home during the school year.

Assessment and Progress Reports

Progress reports will be issued to students quarterly.
Assessment of your child's work will be meaningful to him/her and to you as parents. The information we gather will help us make decisions about our instruction and how to help your child.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

It is your child's teacher who is responsible for keeping you well informed regarding your child's progress throughout the entire year. Parents need to contact their child's teacher and schedule a conference in advance. Teachers are available daily from 8:00 A.M. to 8:40 A.M., and during their individual preparation period. Two conference days are scheduled throughout the school year. Information will be sent home regarding scheduled conferences.

Locker and Backpack Inspection

For the safety of our students, lockers are property of the school district. If a need arises and there is reasonable suspicion, Penn Cambria School District reserves the right to inspect student lockers and bookbags.

Items Not Advised to be at School

Any types of electronic devices or smart watches, trading cards, etc., are not advised to be at school. The items will be taken from the student if there is a disruption. Any accessories/items that cause a disruption or scare other students are not permitted in school. Parents will be informed and will need to pick the items up at the school. **Items that could be considered a weapon, or toys that look like weapons, are not permitted at school and will enact a Threat Assessment and disciplinary consequences.

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.

Parent Teacher Organization

All parents and staff members are invited to join the Penn Cambria Elementary PTO any time during the school year. The PTO sponsors special activities during and after school and finances assemblies, field day, and field trips. They also help purchase supplemental school supplies and equipment.

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is highly encouraged by our teachers and administrators. Parents can assist in a variety of ways throughout the school year.

- Talk to your child about school and what they are learning.
- Read to/with your child each night and ask them to tell you about what they read.
- Throughout the year, you may be invited to parent informational sessions offered on current topics related to your child's education.

- If your child's teacher needs assistance with a special project throughout the year, the PTO will organize parent volunteers. Updated clearances are required to volunteer in the school.

Student Records

- Parents may review their child's records in the school office by contacting the principal.

Attendance

All children are expected to be in attendance each day unless they are ill. When your child is absent, please call the school office to report the student off for the day. Students must bring a written excuse, **within three days** of their return to school. If a student is absent more than 3 consecutive days, a doctor's excuse is required.

	Elementary Schools Instructional time begins at 9:00 AM- Ends at 3:05 PM
Tardy	Arrives between 9:01 and 10:01 without medical excuse
Short Term Dismissal	Arrives before 10:01 with medical excuse or is excused for one hour or less at any time during day with medical excuse or principal emergency exception
AM Absent	Student is absent in excess of one hour at any time between 9:00 AM-12:00 PM
PM Absent	Student is absent in excess of one hour anytime between 12:00 -3:05 PM
Full Day Absent	Student present for any part of the day but for less than 90 total minutes.

The Penn Cambria School District Policy mandates the following guidelines for attendance:
-Policy No. 204-AR "School Attendance and Absences"

- After the tenth (10^{th}) day of absence, a letter of concern is to be sent to the parents/guardians regarding the reason (s) for the absence (s). If a reason does exist, the parents/guardians should return the letter to the school with a written explanation.

All absences beyond ten (10) cumulative days shall require an excuse from a licensed health care professional. Failure to produce a health care provider's excuse within three (3) school days of the student's return to school following the absence will result in the absence being marked as unlawful.

- After three unexcused absences parents/guardians will be sent first violation of Compulsory Attendance Requirements. The unexcused absences constitute a violation of compulsory attendance provision of the Public-School Code. As required by law, three unexcused absences constitute a summary offense under Public School Code for which penalties may be imposed against the parents/guardians.

- After six unexcused absences the school must either: (1) refer the child to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program or (2) the county children & youth agency (CYS) for services or possible disposition as a dependent child under the Juvenile Act. Additionally, the school may file a citation against the parent of a habitually truant child under fifteen (15) in a magisterial district court.

Guidance of Social Development & School Rules

Penn Cambria Elementary Schools incorporate the Second Step Social-Emotional Learning program into the classrooms to ensure our students are learning techniques to gain confidence, set goals, make better decisions, collaborate with others in work and play, and navigate the world more effectively.

Bullying Policy

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.

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 249 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

School Counselor

Our School Counselor is the counselor at all three elementary buildings. The School Counselor holds individual and small group counseling and teaches developmental guidance and career readiness lessons in the classrooms. Our counselor is available to consult with parents and teachers throughout the school day. Contact your child's school office to schedule a time to speak with the counselor.

School Police Officer

The Penn Cambria School District Police Officer helps keep our schools safe by coordinating and enforcing school security and law enforcement issues. Additionally, the School Police Officer will help to educate students throughout the year on a variety of age appropriate topics.

The School Police Officer will be present in all PCSD schools building positive relationships while ultimately keeping our students and staff safe.

Grading Scale

S= Consistently and independently meets or exceeds standards
P= Progress towards meeting standards
N= Limited or no progress towards meetings standards
X = Not presented/assessed at this time
.

Grade Scale:
A = 93%-100%
B = 85% - 92%
C = 78%-84%
D = 70%-77%
F = Below 70%

Promotion/Retention

If students in grades 1st through 3rd grade fail reading or math (average of a failing grade for the whole year) they may be retained. 1st -3rd grade parents can access assignments and grades via our student information system, Focus. Visit our website at www.pcam.org and click on the Focus Gradebook/Info System for more information on how to access your child's account.

Lunch and Cafeteria

You will receive cafeteria envelopes at the beginning of the school year. Cash or checks for your child's account may be sent in daily, weekly or monthly. You can also monitor and make payments to your child's account online by logging in to www.myschoolaccount.com. At any time during the school year, you may apply for free or reduced lunch. Call the Food Service office for an application.

Lunch Menu

Breakfast and Lunch Menus are found on the Penn Cambria School District website www.pcam.org. Click on the Food Services tab on the Right side, then again on the right side - Breakfast/Lunch Menus. Click on that and you will be on The Nutrition Group website. On this page you choose the school your child attends and then you can choose either the breakfast or the lunch menu. A hard copy of the menu will not be sent home with your child.

Breakfast Program

Breakfast is served from 8:30 to 8:50 A.M. daily. If there is an announced delay of one or two hours, breakfast will not be served. If a child's bus arrives late due to bad road conditions or emergency situations, breakfast will still be available.

Cafeteria and Ala Carte Foods

Cafeteria meals and ala carte foods offered during the school day will follow healthy standards. Ala carte foods sold during the school day will comply with Smart Snacks guidelines.

Wellness Policy

Penn Cambria School District recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to students' physical well-being, growth, development, and readiness to learn. We are committed to providing a school environment that promotes student wellness. Food items for holiday celebrations will not be permitted to be sent in. Parents will be notified to pick up the food item. The Wellness Policy and information about how to participate on the Wellness Committee can be found on the district website under the Wellness link.

Outside Play, Recess, Exercise

Outdoor activity will be planned (when weather permits) so children can develop gross motor skills, learn about outdoor environments, and practice appropriate social skills.

Students should dress appropriately for weather conditions.

Special Student Services

A variety of student services are provided at Penn Cambria. The Multi-Tiered System of Supports Team (MTSS), consisting of the elementary principal, guidance counselor, classroom teachers, and director of special education is available for all students experiencing difficulty in the classroom: academically, emotionally, or behaviorally.

Student Assistance Program

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. 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 who receive special education services (having an IEP), gifted services (having a GIEP), English Learner services, or services for students who are Migrant or experiencing homelessness. Students or families that have questions regarding any of these services may contact the school office or guidance counselors. For additional information regarding special services, you may also contact the Special Education Director at 814-886-4785.

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

Penn Cambria School District
Public Notice
Education Rights of Children and Youth that are Homeless

This public notice provides information about the rights of children, youths, and unaccompanied youth that are homeless to attend a public school or public charter 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.

Our school district actively enrolls and provides services for children and youth that are homeless. 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.

District Interim Liaison: _Mrs. Jeanette Black, Homeless Liaison____ Phone: (814)886-8121 _____

District Address: 205 6th Street Cresson, PA 16630 _____ _ Email: BlackJL@pcam.org_____

• • *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: o 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.

o Being given services without delay, such as transportation and meal programs

o Other appropriate services and programs, such as programs for: gifted children, children with disabilities, English learners, career and technical education, and preschool.

o 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.

o School activities for parents or guardians.

o Participation in athletics, fine arts, or other extra-curricular activities.

o Being treated the same as students who are not homeless by school personnel.

• • *What is the "school of origin?"* 'School of origin' means the school the child or youth attended before becoming homeless or the school the child or youth last attended, including a preschool. When the child or youth completes the final grade level of a school of origin, then 'school of origin' means the school the child or youth would attend at the next grade level. The district must consider what is best for the child or youth when deciding

about which school the student will attend. Placement at the school of origin must be a choice unless doing so is not what is best for the student or is against the wishes of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth.

• • *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

Penn Cambria School District

Annual 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

CC: Safe Schools file
Building Principals