



SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Knute T. Brayford, Director of Special Education

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SURROGATE PARENT PROCEDURES

Purpose

The North Schuylkill School District shall appoint a surrogate parent in accordance with IDEA when: (1) no parent can be identified; (2) after reasonable efforts the parent cannot be located; (3) the student is a ward of the Commonwealth; or (4) the student is an unaccompanied homeless youth under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Qualifications

- Not be an employee of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, North Schuylkill School District, or any agency involved in the education or care of the student.
- Have no personal or professional interest that conflicts with the interests of the student.
- Possess the knowledge and skills necessary to adequately represent the student in special education matters.

The surrogate parent may represent the student in all matters relating to the identification, evaluation, educational placement, educational decision-making, and the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) until the appointment is no longer required.

Procedures

- 1. Identification of Need.** School personnel identify that a student may require a surrogate parent and notify the Director or Supervisor of Special Education.
- 2. Documentation of Reasonable Efforts.** When applicable, North Schuylkill documents reasonable efforts to identify or locate the parent. Reasonable efforts may include telephone calls, written correspondence, certified mail when appropriate, review of emergency contact information, and other available educational or public records.
- 3. Administrative Review.** The Director or Supervisor of Special Education reviews the available information and determines whether the appointment of a surrogate parent is required under IDEA.
- 4. Referral to Schuylkill Intermediate Unit #29.** Upon determining that a surrogate parent is required, the North Schuylkill submits a referral to Schuylkill Intermediate Unit #29 to initiate the surrogate parent appointment process.
- 5. Appointment Timeline.** Schuylkill Intermediate Unit #29 coordinates the recruitment, training, and appointment of a qualified surrogate parent, when necessary. The North Schuylkill SD ensures that the appointment occurs as soon as possible and no later than thirty (30) days after determining that a surrogate parent is required.
- 6. Documentation.** The North Schuylkill SD maintains documentation of the determination that a surrogate parent is required; reasonable efforts to identify or locate the parent, when applicable; the referral to Schuylkill Intermediate Unit #29; the appointment of the surrogate parent; and communications related to the appointment. Documentation shall be maintained in the student's special education record.
- 7. Duration of Appointment.** The surrogate parent serves as the student's educational representative until the student no longer requires a surrogate parent or a parent, as defined by IDEA, is available to assume educational decision-making responsibilities.

Legal Authority

IDEA (20 U.S.C. §1415(b)(2)); 34 CFR §300.519; 22 Pa. Code Chapter 14. - Revised Date: 7/1/26