

## Summary of the Decision to Eliminate the Education Specialist Position

The Education Specialist positions were created approximately 25 years ago to support youth in special education. Since that time, much has changed in both the education system and in the field of managed care and behavioral health. After review, it was determined that the services being delivered by the three Education Specialists are available through other partners and DHS/Office of Behavioral Health will work with partners on transition.

The three positions have been supported by County mental health (MH) dollars since the inception and despite a 10% decrease in County MH dollars a decade ago, these positions continued to be supported. Over this past decade, the County MH Base funds have continued to be flat funded. Over the past year, in response to increasing need and scarce funding, the County began an assessment of the MH base funds and how to best leverage the dollars available to us, including the use of Medicaid dollars.

Our analysis found that this program is small (supporting only about 5% of all children with behavioral health IEPs) and redundant with other services both paid for by DHS and not paid for by DHS and that there is community support for families advocating for their child's special education needs.

In our review of the Education Specialist responsibilities, it was discovered that much of the support they were providing are being supported through other resources. For example, time was spent addressing academic, discipline, 504 Service Agreements, and Title IX complaints, all of which are the responsibility of the Education system to address. Other services that the Education Specialists provided, such as, crisis and safety planning, linkages to behavioral health resources, and assistance with referrals to behavioral health services, can all be delivered by other means available to the schools through both our school based and community behavioral health support continuum. These include the DHS-supported Student Assistance Program, School-Based Liaison program (unique to Allegheny County), and administrative case management services, as well as the child's behavioral health treatment team. DHS also hopes that the \$100 million in state support to school districts to help meet children's mental health support needs will help those districts to fully implement IEPs.

DHS is committed to serving as many individuals as possible with the limited dollars that are provided and are responsible to be stewards of those dollars. With flat funding and increasing need, we cannot continue to fund services that are already serving so few children and that are already available. Transition planning and linkages will be made over

the summer months to ensure continuity of care for the current children served enter the 24/25 school year.

# Education Advocacy Organizations and Resources

## PA Department of Education

*Special Education Parent ConsultLine*

Voice: 1-800-879-2301

Email: [consultline@odr-pa.org](mailto:consultline@odr-pa.org)

## Pittsburgh Public Schools

*Parent Hotline*

Voice: 412-529-HELP (4357)

Email: [parenthotline@pghschools.org](mailto:parenthotline@pghschools.org)

Intermediate Unit #2

1305 Muriel St.

Pittsburgh, PA 15203

Voice: 412-224-4580

Fax: 412-224-4583

## Local Right to Education Task Force #3

\*For Allegheny County school districts **except**

**PPS**

Voice: 412-394-5930

## The Parent Education & Advocacy

### Leadership (PEAL) Center

2325 E Carson St., Ste 100A

Pittsburgh, PA 15203

Voice: 412-281-4404

### Achieva

711 Bingham St.

Pittsburgh, PA 15203

Voice: 412-995-5000

Phone: 1-888-272-7229

## Allegheny Family Network

1501 Reedsdale St., Suite 2007

Pittsburgh, PA 15233

Voice: 412-246-2030

Parent Support Line: 1-888-273-2361

## Disability Rights Pennsylvania

Online Intake Form

429 Fourth Ave.

Suite 1404

Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1505

Voice: 412-391-5225

Voice: 800-692-7443

Fax: 833-699-2110

## Education Law Center

429 Fourth Ave., Ste 1910

Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Voice: 412-258-2120

Toll Free: 800-411-3815

Fax: 412-535-8225

## PA Training and Technical Assistance

### Network (PaTTAN)

3190 William Pitt Way

Pittsburgh, PA 15238

Voice: 412-826-2336

Toll Free: 800-446-5607 (in PA only)

# Education Advocacy Organizations and Resources

## Additional Resources

### Autism Services, Education, Resources, and Training Collaborative (ASERT)

Voice: 877-231-4244  
Email: [info@paautism.org](mailto:info@paautism.org)

### HUNE

2215 N. American St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19133  
Voice: 215-425-6203

### Include Me

Nicole Turman, Program Director  
Voice: 717-234-2621, ext. 118  
Email: [nturman@includemepa.org](mailto:nturman@includemepa.org)

### Kids Together

P.O. Box 574  
Quakertown, PA 18954  
Email: [staff@kidstogether.org](mailto:staff@kidstogether.org)

### PA Developmental Disabilities Council

[Online Contact Form](#)  
2330 Vartan Way  
Suite 130  
Harrisburg, PA 17110  
Voice: 717-787-6057  
Toll Free: 1-877-685-4452  
Fax: 717-657-2924

### PA Education for All Coalition (PEAC)

718 Arch St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19106  
Voice: 267-232-0570  
Email: [info@paedforall.org](mailto:info@paedforall.org)

### PA Positive Behavior Support

*Western Region of PA Contacts*  
Kathryn Poggi, School Wide Coordinator  
Voice: 1-800-446-5607, ext. 6857  
Email: [kpoggi@pattan.net](mailto:kpoggi@pattan.net)

Lisa Gragg, Program Wide Coordinator  
Voice: 1-800-446-5607, ext. 6882  
Email: [lgragg@pattanpgh.net](mailto:lgragg@pattanpgh.net)

### Self Advocates United As 1 (SAU1)

984 Water St.  
PO Box 297  
Meadville, PA 16335  
Voice: 724-588-2378  
Email: [info@sau1.org](mailto:info@sau1.org)

### Vision for Equality—Advocacy

Maria Pacheco  
Voice: 267-765-0309  
Email: [mpacheco@visionforequality.org](mailto:mpacheco@visionforequality.org)