



BERLIN BROTHERSVALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT
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"HOME OF THE MOUNTAINEERS"

Dr. David F. Reeder
Superintendent

"Educational Excellence, Community Engagement, Lifelong Success"

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SPECIAL EDUCATION

SURROGATE PARENT INFORMATION AND PROCEDURES

Berlin Brothersvalley School District will ensure that a trained individual is assigned to act as the surrogate parent of an exceptional or thought to be exceptional student enrolled in Berlin Brothersvalley School District who meets one of the following criteria:

- ✓ After reasonable efforts, Berlin Brothersvalley School District cannot locate the parent(s) or
- ✓ The student is a ward of the state, or
- ✓ The student's parent or guardian cannot be found or identified or
- ✓ The student is an unaccompanied homeless youth as defined by the McKinney – Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Identification of students in need of a surrogate parent can often be determined at the time of enrollment; unaccompanied homeless students are identified and followed via Berlin Brothersvalley School District's Liaison who meets with students and/or makes contact with the reported residence via phone or visit. Berlin Brothersvalley School District is alerted to the possibility of homelessness when a student:

- ✓ Is living in a household with no biological parent or legal guardian
- ✓ Is not being provided for financially
- ✓ Has a sudden change in busing arrangements
- ✓ Self-reports that h/she is homeless

Qualifications of a Surrogate Parent:

- ✓ Be at least 18 years of age
- ✓ Be a person of good character
- ✓ Possess reasonable abilities to make decisions regarding a student's educational needs,
- ✓ Be willing to acquaint themselves with the special education system in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- ✓ Is not an employee of the State Education Agency, the Local Education Agency or any other agency that is involved in the education or care of the child
- ✓ Has no personal or professional interest that conflicts with the interest of the child the surrogate parent represents
- ✓ Have Act 33 and Act 34 clearances from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Responsibilities of the Surrogate Parent:

The surrogate parent may represent the student in all matters relating to the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the child and the provision of FAPE to the child. This involves:

- ✓ Becoming familiar with the unique educational needs of the assigned student.
- ✓ Receiving and responding to requests and notices concerning the evaluation and/or educational placement of the assigned student
- ✓ Attending meetings to develop an individual educational program
- ✓ Being familiar with appropriate procedures for due process and confidentiality of school records
- ✓ Be willing to complete a training program conducted by the IU; Berlin Brothersvalley School District works in conjunction with the IU to select, train, and assign surrogate parent volunteers.

Referral Procedures:

To make reasonable efforts to ensure the assignment of a surrogate parent is not more than thirty (30) days after Berlin Brothersvalley School District determines that a student needs a surrogate parent, the following procedure has been developed:

- ✓ The Superintendent or his/her designee completes the appropriate referral form to request a surrogate parent.
- ✓ The referral form is forwarded to the IU Surrogate Parent Coordinator.
- ✓ This form identifies the legal status of the student in need of a surrogate parent as well as other basic demographic and personal information.
- ✓ The IU provided support in locating a trained and qualified Surrogate parent to the student, if available. If no such qualified surrogate parent is available, the Surrogate Parent Coordinator will work with Berlin Brothersvalley School District to recruit qualified persons. Berlin Brothersvalley School District will:
 - Suggest or recommend an individual who might serve as a surrogate parent
 - Advertise via Berlin Brothersvalley School District's website and newsletter
 - Work through local, civic and community groups.
- ✓ The Surrogate Parent Coordinator arranges a training program for qualified surrogate parent volunteers prior to the assignment of the surrogate parent to a specific student.
- ✓ Information regarding surrogate parents and applications to become a surrogate parent are on file in Berlin Brothersvalley School District's Special Education Administration Office.

Berlin Brothersvalley School District Staff will be trained each school year regarding Surrogate Parents and procedures to follow at a beginning In-service session regarding Surrogate Parents and procedures to follow.

REGULATORY BASE:

Surrogate parents - 34 CFR 300.519(a)(1)(2)(3)(4)(b)(1)(2)(h)

(a) General. Each public agency must ensure that the rights of a child are protected when—(1) No parent (as defined in § 300.30) can be identified; (2) The public agency, after reasonable efforts, cannot locate a parent; (3) The child is a ward of the State under the laws of that State; or (4) The child is an unaccompanied homeless youth as defined in section 725(6) of the McKinney-Vento

Homeless Assistance Act(42 U.S.C. 11434a(6)). (b) Duties of public agency. The duties of a public agency under paragraph (a) of this section include the assignment of an individual to act as a surrogate for the parents. This must include a method—(1) For determining whether a child needs a surrogate parent; and (2) For assigning a surrogate parent to the child. (h) SEA responsibility. The SEA must make reasonable efforts to ensure the assignment of a surrogate parent not more than 30 days after a public agency determines that the child needs a surrogate parent.