

An Introduction to the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) – A Presentation for Parents

Hello and welcome to an introduction to the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network or PaTTAN. This is the first in a series of webcast for parents. In these brief sessions, we hope to share some information and tips on navigating the world of special education in Pennsylvania with you, parents of children with disabilities. The sessions are videotaped so you can view them on your time in your space. We hope you enjoy them, share them, and refer to them if the need arises. My name is Linda Cartwright and I am a parent consultant with PaTTAN out of our King of Prussia office. Later on in the webcast, I will explain the PaTTAN system and the role parents play in it. [Silence] Here you see the mission statement of PaTTAN. Our charge is to support public, charter, cybercharter, school districts, intermediate units, and IEP teams including the parents, of course, to build capacity, to serve students receiving special education services. The Pennsylvania Department of Education or PDE is committed to abiding by and enforcing the federal and state regulations in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA and Chapter 14 of the Pennsylvania School Code regarding educating students with special needs in the least restrictive environment or LRE. PDE's goal is that IEP teams consider placement of every child in the general education setting with his peers without disabilities before any non-inclusive separate educational setting. Every attempt should be made to teach each child in his or her neighborhood school with proper supplementary aids and service supports to help the student achieve success.

To the maximum extent possible, the child should learn and socialize with other students of his age in classes he would normally attend had he not had a disability. Sometimes the IEP team decides the student will be best served in an alternative setting other than general education and that is perfectly fine. Each situation is different. Each child is different and that is why it is an IEP team decision. [Silence] Here is our agenda for the brief webcast. We will be addressing these topics. What is PaTTAN? Navigating the PaTTAN website. Our publications, resources and partners of PaTTAN, and learning opportunities. [Silence] So what is PaTTAN? PaTTAN is the training arm of the PDE through the Bureau of Special Education. Our main focus is building the capacity of IU [phonetic] staff, administrators, educators, related services personnel, and parents. PaTTAN employs four parent consultants across the state. This position was created several years ago by the current Director of the Bureau of Special Education, John Tommasini. He felt it was important that parents of children with disabilities help frame the education that is given to students in the commonwealth. As parent consultants, we impart the experiences, emotions, and feelings of a parent of a child receiving special education. In a way, we are consultants to the educational consultants who support the local educational agencies or LEAs. We do our best to represent all parents across the state knowing that each and every family and educational situation is different. As a resource to parents, we help you navigate the world of special education. We try to direct you to agencies, advocates, resources, organizations or even other parents who can help you and your child.

We welcome input from parents or questions on aspects of special education. If we do not have the answers, we will find them or lead you to where you can find them. Our website has many helpful resources and information and is always building and expanding. [Silence] Each consultant in the

PaTTAN system serves on a number of initiatives, committees if you will on an area of education. Here is just a partial list. On the PaTTAN website you will find pages on most of these initiatives populated with information, opportunities for learning through webinars, conferences, online sessions and more. Parents are always welcome to attend any general PaTTAN training or information session. The only exception to this would be events that specify invitation only which are special projects or team centered activities. [Silence] Throughout the year, PaTTAN, PDE, and other educational agencies host conferences on areas of education. These are posted on the PaTTAN website and if you have ever signed up for any PaTTAN training, you have an account and can receive announcements on training opportunities that you choose, all or just a few. Some of the conferences offer scholarships for parents or youth so it is important that you are informed of these opportunities. [Silence] Now we're going to take some time to go to the PaTTAN website. This will be a brief introduction on how to navigate this resource. I often recommend setting aside some time just to explore the website and see all that it has to offer here.

[Silence] So here we're on the PaTTAN website. As you can see we are www.pattan.net and this is our homepage. We are the Department of Education and this is a scrolling screen. It does change and it's based on what the current topics are, current conferences, and some recent information. Okay. Across the top, you have a bar with topics and each has a drop down menu so you can see the educational initiatives that was addressed earlier. They're all listed here and they each have a link and for the purpose of today's webcast, we will just be going into parent information. This will be your go to link for the most part. We also have parent engagement for educators. This is a project that LEAs participate in to help engage parents and work as partners with them in the educational process but the parent information is this link and as we take you to the website, this is the parent page of the website. Has some general information, tells you how many pages are in this section, here's some links for parent information, the consultants. Again, there are four parent consultants listed by region and then some featured resources. And the parent information section is always changing and being updated so visit it frequently and if you have any questions just give us a call. [Silence] Under resources, there are several resources here that you can investigate. Right now, just like to take you into the PaTTAN publications. [Silence]

The PaTTAN system offers a wealth of information via publications that can be downloaded to your computer. They can be requested in a hard copy through our office and you can also share them with other educators or friends. Okay. If you'd like to look for a parent publication, we are going to, right now, look for oh educational ABCs. [Silence] So you can see it brings up the publication that we searched for and you just click on the title of the publication. Click on this link and it brings up the actual publication so you can see what it looks like. [Silence] And here is where you could either add it to your card or you can download this item. And you can view it or you can save it and this will give you an idea of what the publication is. All right. So this is just one of many, many publications that are on the PaTTAN website. Some of them are color coded with parent information. Ones specifically for parents are usually green and blue. We're always working on new materials and revising older ones because we always say a parent must be able to understand what educators are telling them. Otherwise, you're really not an informed parent. [Silence]

You can also go in through the educational initiatives and find other information. Let's say you have a child on that's on the spectrum. You can go into autism and get information that way and then there is some featured resources and you can get to publications relating to autism through that as well. Also, across the top there is a legal section and in here, you will find all the federal as well as state regulations and the special education forms. So I'm just going to go into the forms just to show you how that can be accessed. One of the resources that helps parents, I find, are the annotated forms. Annotated information means that there is a box that explains the form, that section of the form and exactly what should be written or the information that the state or the government is looking for to complete that section. So let's say we go into the annotated IEP for school-aged children. [Silence] And it brings up several issues. We're going to go into the form here and again, you can download it. And this will help especially if you get a form from your school and you're not sure what they're asking for or who to call if you have questions about it. This will take you through the form and then again in the boxed out information, this is the annotation. So it tells you exactly in the section above what it is that they're looking for in that section. [Silence]

Again, information like questions for the IEP team to consider when you're completing the special considerations to communication and language that is above. So that is just a sample of an annotated form. [Silence] In the about section of the website, it gives you contact information, our offices, our consultants, our partners, and in here it gives you links to other educational organizations, legal organizations, Department of Public Welfare, HUNE, Office for Dispute Resolution, et cetera. [Silence] So there you just have a quick glimpse of the PaTTAN website, the information that can be retrieved or perused on the website, our trainings. If you would like to attend either in person or via your computer, a webinar, you can gain access in several ways. You can go into the training calendar and if you have not signed up for any other PaTTAN information or sessions, you will have to start an account. So you can either log in or register if you're new and that is a very easy process. And then you can view any of the sessions that are offered and check the timeframe. This, right now, we're looking at June of 2012. You can also filter it by topic. If you need credits or an event type if you just want to go to online courses, webinars, video conferences, et cetera. [Silence] Okay, so I hope that was helpful information for the PaTTAN website. Again, if you have any questions, feel free to contact any of the parent consultants in the PaTTAN system. Again, a little bit more about the publications that we saw on the website. The parent consultants are very involved. They have a direct impact on the parent friendliness of the information that the PaTTAN system puts out like our publications. Certain ones, again, generally they're in the blue and green color scheme but they have been written with parents in mind and here are just a few on this screen.

The Pennsylvania Parent Guide to Special Education and there's also one for parents of children with gifted IEPs, Enhancing Parent Involvement, Parents Rights, Understanding the Procedural Safeguards Notice and Educational ABCs that we looked at earlier. [Silence] And in addition to the parent publications, there are others that are specific to initiatives. Some that are deemed specifically for IEP teams and you'll see the red, white, and blue color scheme and also initiative based like the ones for autism that we looked at. This sample here for RtII. [Silence] As parents are members of the IEP team, we strive to make sure that these publications are all parent friendly. Okay. So here are some partners

listed on the slide. They are service providers in the field of special education and advocacy. They provide services across the commonwealth to families and individuals from early intervention through the end of school age. [Silence]

The PTIs or Parent Training and Information centers are funded through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA so they are federally funded organizations. They're designed to serve parents across the commonwealth and they offer workshops, literature, and support to help and train parents. [Silence] The Community Parent Resource Centers are also funded through IDEA. HUNE is a bilingual, non-profit organization serving students 0 to 21. Mentor Parent Program provide support and services to families and then our special education consult line provides assistance with school related concerns about regulations and the special education complaint process. [Silence] Okay. The Right to Education Task Force, the primary purpose of the state task force and 29 local task forces, one, to reach intermediate [inaudible] is to ensure that the intent and the spirit of the Right to Education Consent Agreement is carried out throughout the commonwealth. I've also attached a link to a useful guide for parents published by the Wisconsin State personnel development grant. This resource may help you to walk through how to prepare for, participate in, and understand tools and processes used by decision making groups such as the state and local task forces. This will also help you, perhaps, with your child's IEP and other meetings with his or her team. [Silence] So here is our parent consultant information, how to get in touch with the parent consultants in your area. We hope you've enjoyed this webcast and please feel free to contact us with information or ideas or topics for future webcasts. Thank you and have a great day.