



# PENews

"Respecting the Rights of Parents to Make Educational Decisions for Their Children"

Spring 2008

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## Louise M. Thieme Memorial Fund

On December 8, 2007, PEN lost its founder and Executive Director, Louise M. Thieme. Louise was a teacher, artist and mother of a child with disabilities. She strongly believed that children with disabilities and their parents deserved more from the special education community. When Louise faced education obstacles with her own child, she vowed to make the process easier for others.

Louise was a member of a small group of individuals who championed the rights of special education students long before the general public was aware of

this need.

Louise founded Parent Education Network, a federally funded Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) more than 23 years ago. She actively worked for many special education causes, through task forces and committees at the local, state and federal levels.

Louise touched the lives of many families who had children with disabilities. She understood the fears, hopes and dreams of parents, and diligently worked to be a strong voice for those who often went unheard.



PEN is very pleased to announce that a memorial fund has been established to honor Louise.

Contributions can be made to the Louise M. Thieme Memorial Fund:  
c/o PEN  
2107 Industrial Highway  
York, PA 17402

\*\*All donations will be used to support programs and services for children with disabilities and their families.

## Chapter 14 Update

The Chapter 14 regulations were adopted by the State Board of Education in November.

The regulations are currently proceeding through the regulatory process which includes the Attorney General, both the House and Senate Education Committees and the

Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC).

The Bureau of Special Education expects that the regulations will be promulgated in the PA Bulletin in May or June and will probably become effective on July 1, 2008.

### DID YOU KNOW?

PEN serves North-Central, Northeast, Southeast and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

## Introducing . . . Response to Intervention— RTI

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation and the reauthorization of IDEA focused national attention on Response to Intervention (RTI).

The 2004 reauthorization of IDEA has focused national attention on RTI or Response to Intervention (instruction).

What is RTI? It is a school-wide process to identify the most effective teaching practices for students at academic or behavioral risk. Parents know these students as struggling learners.

RTI's goal is to find the at-risk student, and provide the necessary academic and behavioral support to prevent academic failure, particularly in math and reading. RTI strives to improve achievement for all students.

The Pennsylvania model for RTI has 3 levels or tiers of in-

tervention, which are provided in the general education classroom.

All students are screened against grade-level standards to determine their academic and behavior needs. The student's test performance will determine the tier or level of individual instruction or academic support.

If the student is determined to be "at-risk", educators use individual, student-centered approaches to increase academic success.

With RTI, teachers use research-based practices (proven teaching tech-

niques) and continuous progress monitoring to measure individual progress toward grade-level goals.

The student's academic success or lack of response to regular education interventions will dictate the need for additional levels of educational instruction or support.

For additional RTI information contact PEN at 800. 522. 5827 or visit these websites:

1. National Center on Response to Intervention, [www.rti4success.org](http://www.rti4success.org)
2. National Research Center on Learning Disabilities, [www.nrcld.org/](http://www.nrcld.org/)

For more information contact PaTTAN at:

- 800. 360. 7282 (Harrisburg)
- 800-441-3215 (King of Prussia)
- 800-446-5607 (Pittsburgh)
- [www.pattan.net](http://www.pattan.net)

## Parent Consultants Join PaTTAN Staff by Jacqui DiDomenico

Under the direction of John Tommasini, Director of the PA Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education, each Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) office has added parent consultants to its staff.

As parents of children with differing abilities, these consultants are lending a parent's per-

spective to the education initiatives conducted by PaTTAN.

Judy Baker has joined the Pittsburgh office; Amiris Dipuglia has joined the Harrisburg office, and Linda Cartwright and Jacqui DiDomenico, the King of Prussia office.

As the newly-hired consultants are getting acquainted with the PaTTAN statewide system,

these parents are encouraged by the overwhelming support and exciting work being done to promote and improve the education in the Commonwealth on behalf of students with special needs.

## Parent Education Network—Training Schedule for Spring 2008

- **Workshop Series: “ The Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)—  
Parent-School Partnerships that Create Success”.**

In Partnership with: Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), Bureau of Special Education (BSE)  
Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Networks (PaTTAN)  
(Series Hosted by) Right to Education Task Forces and Intermediate Units 12, 19 and 26

1. April 16, 2008 York Learning Center (Old Central York High School), Auditorium  
300 East 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, York, PA Time: 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
2. April 22, 2008 Scranton School for the Deaf, Auditorium  
1800 North Washington Avenue, Dunmore, PA Time: 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
3. May 15, 2008 School District of Philadelphia, Auditorium  
440 N. Broad Street—Second Floor  
Philadelphia, PA Time: 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

### Workshop Agenda:

- Part I. What does the IDEA say about LRE and educating children with disabilities in a positive environment that includes children without disabilities?  
Presenter: Charles Jelley, Esq., Tremba, Jelley & Whelton, LLC, Greensburg, PA or designee  
Review of IDEA and law related to LRE; review of special education / regular education options, and the review of successful parent-school partnerships related to LRE
- Part II. What is the meaning of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)?  
Presenters: Debbie Brown, Educational Consultant, PaTTAN- King of Prussia  
Sharon Leonard, Educational Consultant, PaTTAN- Harrisburg  
Discuss how schools support LRE through academic, functional, non-academic and extra-curricular activities; review factors parents should consider during LRE determination, and discuss how schools facilitate the LRE process and work with parents.
- Part III. What can parents do to enhance parent and school partnerships in support of LRE?  
Presenter: Kay Lipsitz, Parent Coordinator, Parent Education Network (PEN)  
Provide summary of IDEA and LRE; discuss importance of IEP development and parent role in LRE placement, discuss parent-school partnerships to enhance academic and functional learning, and review LRE resources and tools available to parents.

- **Video Conference: “Life After High School: Ensuring Successful Outcomes for All Students”.**

In Partnership with: PA Department of Education (PDE), Bureau of Special Education (BSE) and  
Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Networks (PaTTAN)

Date/Time: April 30, 2008 — 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

- Locations:
1. PaTTAN Harrisburg: 6340 Flank Drive, Suite 600, Harrisburg, PA 17112
  2. PaTTAN King of Prussia, 200 Anderson Road, King of Prussia, PA 19406
  3. Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit 19, 1200 Line Street, Archibald, PA 18403

Presenters: Michael Stoehr, Lead Transition Consultant, PaTTAN Pittsburgh  
Linda Loar, PEN Transition Coordinator

Transition Workshop Goal: This workshop will help family members of transition age youth (ages 14 to 21) gain a general understanding of the secondary transition process. It will also assist families in developing effective strategies to assist their children in planning for life after high school. The workshop will include parent-oriented activities which will be monitored at each site by PEN staff.

Workshop Agenda: Define transition services; outline collaborative process for individual student planning, discuss community supports and identify the parts of the secondary transition process which include:

- Identifying the student’s desired goals or visions for life after high school
- Describing the student’s present levels of academic achievement/functional performance
- Designing the transition plan so that it includes courses of study and activities
- Determining annual goals that lead to the desired post-school outcomes
- Measuring the student’s progress toward his or her goals

## Parent Education Network—Training Schedule for Spring 2008

- “Special Education Series: IDEA, Advocacy, Self Determination and Self Advocacy”.

Presenter: Janelle Duttenhoffer, Parent Coordinator, Parent Education Network.

**Workshop Goal:** The workshop will present an in-depth review of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) regulations—the federal law governing special education. Workshop topics will include the evaluation and re-evaluation process, IEP development, student placement and effective communication. The “advocacy” portion of the workshop will address communication, negotiation and conflict resolution skills. Communication is an essential component of successful collaboration and IEP team participation. The development of self determination and self advocacy skills in transition-age students will also be discussed.

### Workshop Agenda:

1. IDEA Regulations— sufficiently comprehensive evaluations, IEP components and least restrictive environment
2. Advocacy—positive communication skills and obstacles to effective communication
3. Self Determination and Self Advocacy— definition and importance

April 26, 2008	Horsham Township Library, Rooms A and B 435 Babylon Road Horsham, PA (Montgomery County) Time: 10:30 a.m.—4:00 p.m.	Registration deadline: April 18, 2008
May 3, 2008	Chester County Library, Robert G. Struble Room 2nd Floor 450 Exton Square Parkway Exton, PA (Chester County) Time: 10:30 a.m.—4:00 p.m.	Registration deadline: April 25, 2008
May 10, 2008	Reading Public Library- Northeast Branch 1348 North 11th Street Reading, PA (Berks County) Time: 9:00 a.m. — 12:00 p.m.	Registration deadline: May 2, 2008
May 31, 2008	Taylor Community Library 710 South Main Street Taylor, PA (Lackawanna County)	Registration deadline: May 23, 2008

### Registration Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

School District: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Disability of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_ Age of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

### Please select from the following:

- LRE Workshops: \_\_\_\_\_ April 16, York \_\_\_\_\_ April 22, Dunmore/Scranton \_\_\_\_\_ May 15, Philadelphia
- Transition Video Conference: April 30, 2008, \_\_\_\_\_ PaTTAN-Harrisburg \_\_\_\_\_ PaTTAN King of Prussia  
\_\_\_\_\_ IU 19 Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit
- Special Education Series: IDEA, Advocacy, Self Determination and Self Advocacy Workshops:  
\_\_\_\_\_ April 26, Horsham \_\_\_\_\_ May 3, Exton \_\_\_\_\_ May 10, Reading \_\_\_\_\_ May 31, Taylor

To register by telephone call: 800-522-5827 V/TDD, Fax: 717-600-8101, Email: [pen@parentednet.org](mailto:pen@parentednet.org),  
or mail: PEN, 2107 Industrial Highway, York PA 17402.

All workshops and materials are available at no cost to participants. Light refreshments will be provided by PEN.  
Please let PEN know ahead of time if special accommodations are necessary.

## Chapter 4 — High School Graduation Requirements

The State Board of Education recently approved proposed changes to Chapter 4 which will establish state graduation requirements, starting with the graduating class of 2014.

The approved revisions will require that students demonstrate proficiency in the core academic areas of math, science, English and social studies. Students can demonstrate competency in these subjects by:

1. Passing the new Graduation Competency Assessments (GCA)
2. Passing the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment

1. Passing an Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate test
2. Passing a local assessment that independent evaluators certify is the equivalent to Graduation Competency Assessments (GCA).

The proposed regulations will maintain the existing Chapter 4 provisions related to students with disabilities. A student who satisfactorily completes a special education program developed by an IEP team under IDEA will be issued a regular high school diploma by the school district of residence.

The State Board approved Chapter 4 revisions will now move through the regulatory review process. The proposed regulations will be submitted to the House and Senate Education committees and the Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC) for review. A 30-day formal public comment period will begin once the proposal is published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin.

For more information on Chapter 4, contact PEN or go to the State Board of Education website:

[www.pde.state.pa.us/stateboard\\_ed](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/stateboard_ed)

## Does Your Organization Need A Speaker?

PEN is a Parent Center—Parent Training and Information Center (PTI). Parent Centers are funded under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

We are charged with helping families and schools understand the IDEA and how to use it to benefit children with all disabilities.

Parent Centers provide a variety of services including one-to-one support and assistance, workshops and publications.

Here are a few examples of possible PEN workshops:

1. Communication and Conflict Resolution
2. IDEA, Chapter 14, Section 504, and Chapter 15
3. Advocacy
4. Early Intervention and Preschool
5. Transition and Self-Determination
6. Parent-School Partnerships
7. No Child Left Behind (NCLB)
8. Progress Monitoring
9. IEP Clinics

Can we help you or your organization?

We can present programs and provide information on many different topics. PEN can design a presentation to meet your needs.

Call PEN at:

**800 . 522 . 5827.**

Remember... there is no charge for PEN services.

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# PEN

Parent Education Network  
2107 Industrial Highway  
York, PA 17402

Tel: 800 . 522 . 5827 V/TTY  
800 . 441 . 5028 Spanish

Fax: 717 . 600 . 8101

Email: [pen@parentednet.org](mailto:pen@parentednet.org)

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## Online Resources For Families

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### ATTENTION GRANDPARENTS!

Many children in the United States live in households headed by a grandparent. The Grandparents Information Center (sponsored by the American Association of Retired Persons) is a good resource for information, referrals and support. Their website address is [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org).

### STOP BULLYING

For online information on bullying:

- <http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov>  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Take A Stand, Lend A Hand, Stop Bullying Now!"
- [www.PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org](http://www.PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org)
- [www.neas.org/schoolsafetybullying.html](http://www.neas.org/schoolsafetybullying.html)

The National Education Association's National Bullying Awareness Campaign for America's public schools.