

Special Education Nuggets

September 2023

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Items from the Interim State Director of Special Education:

Future Director Check In meeting will be starting September 11 - June 10 from 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m., (every 2nd Monday of the month) contact [Sabine](#) if you do not have the meeting link.

Recent Special Education Director – list serv emails sent:

- Weekly Field Memo for August 18, 2023
- 8/22 training switched to all remote - IEP Transition Plan Improvement Training for Special Educators presented by the VT AOE – 8/15/23
- 2023-2024 Director Check In Meeting – 8/14/23
- New resources for Secondary Transition and upcoming training – 8/4/23
- August 22, 2023, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. - IEP Transition Plan Improvement Training for Special Educators – 7/24/23
- July Nuggets - in email format not a flyer this year – 7/5/23
- NIMAS/NIMAC Information Sessions- July 10, July 11, July 17 multiple opportunities for same information – 7/5/23
- District Updates for Special Education Director contact for AOE – 6/23/23

Parental Rights Translations:

The Agency of Education has recently had the 2023 version of the Parental Rights in Special Education document (based upon the new rule changes) translated into eight foreign languages. The current document has been translated into:

French, Maay-Maay, Nepali, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese

A copy of the document can be obtained by emailing AOESpecialEd@vermont.gov.

OSEP RESOURCES

RESOURCES:

Read more at [OSERS Blog](#) and in the [IDEA News/Updates](#).

[OSEP Newsletter](#):

August 2023 — General Supervision Guidance, OSEP Fast Facts on Data Collected during the COVID-19 Pandemic, Smart Beginnings, EDTech for All Webinars and More

July 2023 — Empowering Individuals With Disabilities, Tackling Special Education Shortages and More

June 2023 — Meet New OSERS Assistant Secretary Glenna Wright-Gallo, National Digital Equity Efforts, Child Outcomes Summary Knowledge Check, Register for Prepping for PROGRESS 2023 and More

New OSERS Blog Series Emphasizes the Need for More Cohesive Secondary Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities

OSERS released a [new blog series](#) as part of a continued effort to emphasize the need for more cohesive secondary transition planning for students with disabilities.

“We are dedicated to working alongside families, students, educators, advocacy groups and policymakers to rethink transition services,” wrote Office of Special Education Programs Director Valerie C. Williams and Rehabilitation Services Administration Deputy Commissioner Carol Dobak in the blog.

Additionally, OSERS kicked off its [Expect, Engage, Empower: Successful Transitions for All!](#) initiative earlier this year. This initiative focuses on effective transition planning to help young adults moving from school to postsecondary education, community living or competitive integrated employment.

To learn more about OSERS secondary transition efforts, visit the [OSERS' Successful Transitions for All blog series](#).

Professional Development Opportunities

More [Special Education Rules Change](#) Trainings to come this August!

[Registration](#) for an Indicator 11 and IEP Timelines Training for Special Education Teachers is now available. Please be certain that staff register for this event to ensure that they receive a link to the training. This training will be offered at three different times: November 2nd from 8:00 - 9:00, November 8th from 11:30 - 12:30, and November 13th from 2:00 - 3:00. Participants will increase their understanding of timeline requirements under IDEA, indicator 11, and forms used for initial evaluations and reevaluations. Please share this opportunity with your staff. If this indicator is an area of struggle for your district, please ensure that those involved with special education processes are able to attend.

General Monitoring and Supervision

The Special Education Program Monitoring Team would like to congratulate the following LEAs for their excellent work with Monitoring this year.

The following LEAs were found to be 100% compliant for Cyclic Monitoring:

- Kingdom East
- Slate Valley – In their first encounter with Monitoring since prior to SY2019-2020!

The following LEAs corrected all findings of non-compliance and exited Targeted Monitoring:

- Colchester
- Essex-Westford
- Kingdom East
- Maple Run
- Mount Mansfield
- Norwich
- White River Valley
- Windham Central
- Winooski

The following LEAs (in Targeted Monitoring) corrected all findings of non-compliance for Indicator 11:

- Addison Central
- Champlain Valley
- Essex-Westford
- Harwood
- Lamoille North
- Lamoille South
- Mill River
- Milton
- Montpelier-Roxbury
- Mount Abraham
- Mount Mansfield
- South Burlington
- Washington Central
- Windham Northeast
- Windsor Southeast
- Winooski

The following LEAs (in Targeted Monitoring) corrected all findings of non-compliance for Indicator 13:

- Essex-Westford
- Lamoille South
- Maple Run
- White River Valley
- Windham Central

Extended Special Education Team - Updates:

Interagency/Home Study:

Interagency:

Brattleboro Retreat Inpatient v. Residential Placement

The Brattleboro Retreat does not currently have a school attached to the inpatient or residential program. [LearnWell](#) is a company that provides tutoring for those placed in the hospital (inpatient) or residential (Abigail Rockwell Children's Center (ARCC)) through the Case Review Committee (CRC). Here is a brief summary of the differences in cost and programming.

Inpatient:

Students who are inpatient at the Retreat may be placed by crisis, a Designated Agency, Emergency Department, or private insurance. Students are screened and determined to be in need of inpatient supports and services. Often, LEAs will not be aware that a student has arrived at the Retreat for inpatient treatment. Students may spend a few days to a few weeks or months in the inpatient unit depending on a variety of factors.

LearnWell will contact the LEA to request entering into a contract for tutoring services. Each student will receive 2 hours per day of general education tutoring. Special Education and related services are not included and LEAs may need to push in services based on the student's IEP.

If the student was placed in an inpatient unit by another State Agency or Designated Agency, then the LEA may be reimbursed as the student is considered State Placed. If the student was placed by an Emergency Department or private insurance, the LEA will not be reimbursed using State Placed Student funding. When an LEA hears of a student placed in an inpatient unit, consider reaching out to DCF or your local DA to see who placed the student. LEAs can also contact [Alicia](#) for support with their inquiries.

Residential:

Students attending ARCC are placed there by the Case Review Committee by either the Department of Mental Health or DCF. As the Retreat does not operate a school, LearnWell offers tutoring to all students placed at ARCC. LearnWell will reach out to the LEA to contract for general education services for students. Each student receives 4 hours of tutoring daily. LearnWell does not offer special education or related services so the LEA will need to provide those services accordingly.

Since students at ARCC are placed by a State Agency, they are considered State Placed and LEAs are eligible for reimbursement. Any special education and/or related services provided by the LEA are reimbursed via Worksheet A. General Education services via tutoring can be reimbursed via the *General Education Tuition Reimbursement Request for a State Placed Student*. [Cathy Scott](#) can provide you with a copy of the form.

LEA Residential Placements

For LEAs considering placing students in residential facilities (not via CRC), fill out this [Cognito Form](#) to get started. Once the form has been received, I can review the documentation and recommend various schools for LEAs to contact (via rule, there is a 30 day timeline). Keep in mind that these residential schools will most likely have waiting lists, or the student may not fit in with the current student population. I can include the name of another special education administrator who may have some experience with that residential facility upon request.

For LEAs who have already placed students in residential facilities (again, not via CRC), please complete and submit this [form](#) (must be done annually).

Local Interagency Team (LIT) Extravaganza

The State Interagency Team (SIT) is hosting another LIT Extravaganza in both in person and virtual. The date is Wednesday, October 11, 2023, from 9:30-3 at the Waterbury State Office Complex. It's highly recommended that each LIT send a team consisting of (at the very least) DA and DCF staff, parent representatives and school staff.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)/Foster Care

Reminder that **every time** a student in the care of DCF (does not include those in conditional custody), moves to a new placement (or initially enters DCF custody) an Educational Stability or Best Interest Determination (BID) meeting/discussion must be held (there must ALWAYS be a school representative from both schools and the DCF social worker involved). The paperwork must always be completed and submitted as it directly affects State Placed Student reimbursement. Some additional pieces of importance:

- Student is ENTITLED to remain in their School of Origin. When that occurs, the team completes the [Educational Stability Form](#).
- If, for some reason, the student cannot remain in the School of Origin, then a BID meeting/discussion must be held. By completing the [BID form](#), the decision of where the student attends school should be clear. If there is not a clear decision, then AOE and DCF staff investigate and make a recommendation to the Commissioner of DCF for the final decision of where the student attends school.
- Decisions CANNOT be based on:
 - Reimbursement
 - Transportation
 - Convenience
 - Programming
- **Decisions must be made based on what is best for the student**
- The DCF district director and Superintendent or designee must sign Ed Stability or BID paperwork.
- Contact [Alicia](#) to determine LEA responsibilities for students experiencing frequent placement moves.
- See our [FAQ](#) for more information.

Home Study:

Home Study rules were changed as of July 1, 2023. Families no longer need to submit a Minimum Course of Study (MCOS), adaptations (for students with disabilities) or End of the Year Assessments (EOYA). As such, the Home Study Team is recommending the following for Home Study students returning public or independent school placements:

- Parents should keep their students enrolled in public/independent schools until they have received written acknowledgment of Home Study enrollment from AOE.
- Principals may request copies MCOS and/or EOYAs from families who re-enroll home study students in their schools to:
 - Determine grade placements
 - Use as part of any comprehensive assessment for disabilities
 - Use to determine credit or proficiencies toward graduation requirements
- School staff (and families) should contact aoe.homestudy@vermont.gov when home study students fully re-enroll in their schools
- It's important for principals to discuss the implications of home study rule changes with school staff (i.e. teachers, school resource officers, home school coordinators) and representatives from the local Department for Children and Families (DCF) office. The rule changes may alter how schools report truancy and educational neglect cases to DCF.

Superintendents (and other designees) will continue to receive weekly updates on their resident students enrolled in Home Study. To add or remove central office staff of the weekly updates, please contact [Marc Grimes](#).

Independent Schools

Attached document – FAQ Office Hours 5-18-23

Early Childhood

- **NEW!!!** [Family Resource - Moving On: Planning Your Child's Transition Children's Integrated Services \(CIS\)-Early Intervention \(EI\) to Early Childhood Special Education \(ECSE\)](#) This resource is for family members of young children with disabilities when planning their transition from Children's Integrated Services/Early Intervention (CIS-EI) to Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) at age three.
- **Save the Dates for Early Childhood Special Education Monthly Webinars!** As you prepare for the 2023-24 school year, save some Friday afternoons for ECSE learning! Monthly one-hour webinars will be hosted by Early Childhood Special Education on **Friday afternoons at 1 p.m.** These informational webinars are typically best for public school special educators, educators, special education directors, and staff with less than 5 years in their positions. However, anyone is welcome to join. No sign-up is needed and links to join will be published in the next few weeks.

Participants are invited to stay after each webinar to ask questions, dive a bit deeper, and/or explore helpful resources from **2-3 p.m.**

September 15 - Indicator 7: Early Child Outcomes: What are they and what do they mean to me?

September TBA - DEC Recommended Practices and Resources

October 20 - **Indicator 6**: Choosing the Least Restrictive Environment and Why it Matters.

November 17 - **Indicator 12**: Transition from EI to ECSE

November TBD - Office Hours for reporting Indicator 6 and Indicator 12

December 15 - Current updates from OSEP, DEC, and NASDSE for Early Childhood Special Education

January 12 - What is your Data telling you (indicators 6 and 7)?

February TBD - Inclusion and Creating an Inclusive Environment for Each and Every Child

March TBD - Data-based Decision-Making in Early Childhood Environments

May TBD - Writing IEPs and Transitioning with an IEP from PreK to K

- **New Early Childhood Special Education Community of Practice Inquiry.** If you are a new Special Ed Director with questions about early childhood special education or have staff new to ECSE, the Early Ed Team is collecting interest in a monthly virtual Community of Practice during the 2023-24 school year. This meeting hour-long would bring together those new to ECSE across the state and content would be driven based on the participants' needs. If you are interested, please email katie.mccarthy@vermont.gov by September 15.
- **OSEP Resources for Early Childhood Exclusionary Discipline**
 - The newly released [Early Childhood Resource Guide: Collection and Use of Data to Eliminate Exclusionary Discipline](#) (July 2023) includes resources to help professionals at the state and local early childhood program levels determine what factors are related to the use of exclusionary discipline practices in early care and education settings and develop strategies to prevent such practices. These resources focus on collecting, analyzing, and using high-quality data to inform practice and policy decisions, including the equitable implementation of evidence-based and inclusive practices. This resource is part of the U.S. Department of Education Discipline/Behavior Guidance and Resources collection.
 - [Positive Supports for Behavior and Discipline \(2023\)](#) OSEP's recently launched webpage contains an online database of over 200 resources related to reducing exclusionary discipline in **PreK through Grade 12**, which includes:
 - Customized access to resources based on role (e.g., educator, administrator, parent) and topic (e.g., reducing suspensions, positive behavioral supports and interventions);
 - [Fourteen resource guides](#) for quick access to key topics; and
 - Access to [OSEP's technical assistance centers](#), related policy documents, multi-media presentations, and more!
- **[National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations \(NCPMI\)](#)** - The goals of this OSEP national TA center are to assist states and programs in their implementation of sustainable systems for the implementation of the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children (Pyramid Model) within early intervention and early education programs with a focus on promoting the social, emotional, and behavioral

outcomes of young children birth to five, **reducing the use of inappropriate discipline practices**, promoting family engagement, using data for decision-making, integrating early childhood and infant mental health consultation and fostering inclusion. If you have questions or interest in Early MTSS, please contact Amy Murphy-amy.murphy@vermont.gov.

ECSE Questions? Contact [Katie McCarthy](#), IDEA Part B 619 Coordinator ECSE and [Amy Murphy](#), Early Education Inclusion Coordinator

Data News

Child Count SY2023 Update and Dates for School Year 2024

Welcome back to a new school year! We wish everyone a great year!

Here are some dates to keep in mind for Child Count this coming year:

- June 2023 Child Count processing was somewhat delayed by the flooding. The deadline for responding to any SY2023 Exiting Data Quality Checks is September 8, 2023.
- December 1, 2023, Child Count Data Collection: to open late November with a due date of December 15, 2023
- June 30, 2024, Exiting Child Count Data Collection: to open late June with a due date of July 15, 2024

As always, AOE is here to help support your data reporting; reach out at any time to the Special Education Data Team at AOE.ChildCountInfo@vermont.gov.

Special Education Finance

Special Education Finance:

- FY23 IDEA Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Compliance via the MOE calculator notification coming soon.
- Deploying soon-Act 173 Special Education Plan, Sections B and D for FY-2025.
- September 30, 2023 – Deadline for obligating ARP IDEA funds.

If you have questions, please contact [Jennifer Perry](#).

[Assessment](#)

Nothing at this time.