

State of the State Report

**With Dr. Jacqui Kelleher
Vermont's State Director of
Special Education
October 22, 2020**

INTRODUCTION

Roles and Responsibilities

- State Director of Special Education: [Jacqueline Kelleher, MA, Ph.D.](#)
- Coordinator for Behavioral Supports: [Tracy Harris](#)
- Early Childhood Special Ed/IDEA 619 Coordinator: [Katie McCarthy](#)
- IDEA Part B Data Managers: [Cassidy Canzani](#)
- [Special Education Data Specialist, Brandon Dall](#)
- Inclusion and Accessibility Coordinator: [Ana Kolbach](#)
- Inclusive Systems Coordinator: [Betty Roy](#)
- Part B Special Ed Program Monitoring Manager: [Tonya Rutkowski](#)
- Post-Secondary Transition Coordinator: [John Spinney](#)
- Special Education Programs Manager: [Chris Kane](#)
- Educational Consultant/Ed Surrogate: [Ernie Wheeler](#)
- Special Education Monitoring Specialist, [Simona Kragh](#)
- Inclusive Practices Coordinator, [Katy Langevin](#)
- Special Education Monitoring Technician: [Rebecca Gile](#)
- For questions on Legal, please contact [Clare O'Shaughnessy](#)
- For Finance questions, [Brad James](#) or [Jennifer Perry](#)
- [Amy Murphy](#), Early Childhood Inclusion Coordinator
- [Alicia Hanrahan](#), Education Programs Manager, Interagency Coordinator
- [Linda Moreno](#), Assessment Coordinator for Special Populations

Vision Statement

Our Purpose

- **Agency of Education Purpose Statement**

The Agency of Education implements state and federal laws, policies, and regulations to ensure all Vermont learners have equitable access to high-quality learning opportunities. The Agency accomplishes this mission through the provision of its leadership, support, and oversight of Vermont's public education system.

- **Special Education Vision**

Our team, together with all stakeholders, ensures access, opportunity, and equity by providing solution-based oversight, leadership and support to build capacity and improve student outcomes.

Federal Updates

Office of Special Education Programs (1)

- OSEP reviewing SEA guidance, policies, and procedures that went out during COVID-19 – inform their TA and to address any issues of noncompliance.

Office of Special Education Programs (2)

- [Flexibility on IDEA Part B Fiscal Requirements in the COVID-19 Environment Q&A Document](#) (June 26, 2020).
- Procedural Safeguards in the COVID-19 Environment Q&A Documents (June 30, 2020).
 - Documents address inquiries concerning the implementation of the IDEA procedural safeguards in the current COVID-19 environment:
 - [Part B](#)
 - [Part C](#)

Office of Special Education Programs (3)

- [Evaluation and Assessment Timelines for IDEA Part C in the COVID-19 Environment Q&A Document](#) (July 6, 2020).
- [Implementation of IDEA Part B Provision of Services in the Current COVID-19 Environment Q&A Document](#) (Sept. 28, 2020).
- Newsletters:
 - [September 2020](#) – Federal COVID-19 Resources | Dose of Data | Research You Can Use | Engage With Us.
 - [August 2020](#) – Responding to COVID-19: Back to School, OSEP Policy Letters.
 - [July 2020](#) – Responding to COVID-19: Comment on SPP/APR and Part C. Application, IDEA Q&As, Preparing Effective Personnel.

Office of Special Education Programs (4)

- **Message From Director Laurie VanderPloeg (OSEP Director) at the National State Directors of Special Education Virtual Conference – September 2020.**
- National Technical Assistance Provider [Infographic](#):
 - ECTA (Birth – 5 hub)
 - NCSI (K-12 hub)
- [IDEAS That Work](#):
 - “Highlighting Resources/Strategies/Evidence-Based Practices”
- Many OSEP Committees and Teams are working on COVID response and issues being faced across USDOE offices – looking across resources and sharing information.
- More Q&A documents on the immediate horizon.

Office of Special Education Programs (5)

- OSEP Major Focus for upcoming year:
 - Significant Disproportionality
 - Specialized Staffing Shortage
 - Parentally Placed Students with Disabilities
 - Early Childhood Collaboration
 - FFY 20 SPP/APR
 - Differentiated Monitoring 2.0 for States
 - New Grant Awards in the future: focus on personnel and leadership development
 - Also on Laurie's mind: Discipline, Evaluations, and Personnel Shortage areas

Office of Special Education Programs

- OSEP Ongoing Expectations of States:
 1. The provision on FAPE in the least restrictive environment.
 2. The state's general supervision system and effective monitoring of:
 - *Child find*
 - *Resolution meetings*
 - *Mediation*
 - *A system of transition services*
 3. Disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education, when representation is the result of inappropriate identification. (§300.600).

State Director Oversight

Role and Responsibilities (1)

The State Director of Special Education is responsible for ensuring the successful implementation of federal and state statutes and regulations governing the education of students with disabilities ages 3-21, to ensure they meet their post-secondary goals to live, learn, work, and participate in their communities. Primary objectives:

- Increased graduation rates
- Closing achievement gap
- Decreased disproportionality
- Increased capacity and a qualified workforce at state and local levels

Role and Responsibilities (2)

Accountabilities:

- Creates, maintains and leverages strong partnerships with authentic stakeholders and effectively communicates between political entities.
- Uses appropriate data to make decisions and evaluate results.
- Targets technical assistance & professional development to identified needs.
- Creates policies aimed at results, equity, and compliance.
- Ensures state-level integration with general education.
- Consults on fiscal processes and budget alignment with programs.
- Ensures effective results-driven monitoring.
- Ensures effective system of dispute resolution.
- Manages the State's General Supervision System (8 Characteristics).

State Activities

Some Highlights (1)

COVID-19 Guidance for Special Education

- [FAQ: Supporting Students with Disabilities in the VTVLC Collaborative School Option](#) (10/8).
- [Toileting and Diapering When Social Distancing is Difficult or Contraindicated for Students on IEPs](#) (9/18).
- [Assessing COVID-19 Impact for Eligible Students with Disabilities as a Requirement of FAPE](#) (9/9).
- [Disciplinary Considerations and the Use of Restraints and Seclusions During the 2020-2021 School Year](#) (8/28).
- [Hygienic and Social Distancing Considerations Regarding COVID-19 for Students with Disabilities Returning to In-Person Education](#) (8/27).
- [Considerations for IEPs for Fall 2020](#) (7/31).
- [IEP Template - Including Remote Learning Strategies](#) (7/31).
- [Continuing of Special Education Services: Provision for Students Turning 22](#) (7/31).
- [Considerations for Special Education Evaluations in a Remote or Hybrid Learning Environment](#) (7/28).

Some Highlights (2)

- Released Local APRs.
- Collected Child Count Exiting data.
- Wrapped up the Parent Involvement (Indicator 8) and Postsecondary Outcomes (Indicator 14) surveys.
- Training and TA on the use of restraints and seclusions during COVID-19.
- Vermont PBIS Annual Forum, including various workshops and networking sessions, including four workshops featuring national speakers.

Some Highlights (3)

- Significant Disproportionality:
 - Made identifications/warnings for Sig Dispro.
 - Training and supports
- CADRE WSC and revamping process.
- New monitoring forms for I13 and annual date reviews.
- SPP/APR Improvement Activities with universal TA opportunities on [Agency website](#).
- SPP/APR [webinar](#) sent through listservs.

Some Highlights (4)

- SSIP revamping:
 - Ed Camp/Ed Benefit/Annual Meetings reported out/Scaling Up
- Revised co-teaching application and process.
- Regional meeting attendance.
- Ongoing Technical Assistance by phone and email.
- IDEA Subgrant TA and Approval.

Some Highlights (5)

- Stakeholder engagement.
- Parent representation on the Special Education Advisory Panel – reinvigorated relationships and membership training with NCSI.
- Quarterly meetings with VFN and participation on panels/town halls.
- Interagency collaboration – VR, SB6, AHS, DAIL.
- Presentations and interviews.
- Consultation and project planning with National TA Providers: NCSI, IDC, NTAC, ECTA, CIFR.
- Participation in national TA calls with TA providers and OSEP – representing VT.

Some Highlights (6)

- Core Transition Team Sold Out Fall Transition Team Conference October 2020.
- Active engagement with national TA providers and regional leaders.
- Over the summer, the special education team hosted eight virtual sessions for paraprofessionals to best support our students. The topics included Vermont MTSS, Executive Functioning Strategies and many more. To further support paraprofessionals, the team will continue to provide a virtual session once a month on various topics for paraprofessionals. For those that are unable to attend in person, the session will be separately recorded and posted to our website after the session.

Some Highlights (7)

- LSED scoring and distribution.
- General Supervision and Monitoring Website.
- Monitoring Cycle in Grants Management.
- Links to website for data collection tools and instructions.
- Closed out 19-20 Monitoring Cycle.
- Work with NA/NI LEAs and LEAs with Corrective Actions (incl. CTE violations).
- Biweekly Data and Data Quarterly meetings.

Some Highlights (8)

- Finance work being completed now and in the previous three months:
 - Final reconciliation of the FY20 Special Education Expense Reports (SEERs).
 - FY20 CEIS Collection deployed and collected, currently in review.
 - FY21 Special Education Expense Reports (SEERs) deployed, info sheet currently being collected.
 - FY22 Special Education Service Plans deployed, finalizing collection.

Some Highlights (9)

- Finance Workflow/processes and deadlines coming in the next three months:
 - Continue to review and follow up as needed; FY20 CEIS Collection and FY22 Special Education Service Plan.
 - FY21 Special Education Expense Reports (SEERs) July-October submitted.
 - Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Compliance Calculation.
 - Fiscal Monitoring Risk Assessment.
 - December payments and projections.

Some Highlights (10)

Evaluation of the General Supervision System for Vermont, integrating efforts, and opportunities for documenting effectiveness:

- State Performance Plan.
- Policies, Procedures, and Effective Implementation.
- Integrated Monitoring Activities.
- Fiscal Management.
- Data on Processes and Results.
- Improvement Correction, Incentives, and Sanctions.
- Effective Dispute Resolution.
- Targeted Technical Assistance and Professional Development.

Some Highlights (11)

- The ECE team is in the process of drafting an Early MTSS practices and Procedures manual which will be in alignment with the broader K-12 MTSS.
- The [Vermont Early Learning Standards](#) modules are currently in development. The modules will support professional learning for school staff, private programs, and families. The VELs support all students ages birth through age 8. Our ECSE IEP is aligned with the VELs.
- Weekly representation, participation and collaboration with other 619 Coordinators across the country on current Early Childhood Special Education topics including equity, data, ECSE indicators, and support and guidance during COVID-19 has been ongoing since March.
- Collaboration with [Vermont PBS](#) on resources supporting educators and families, including creation of [incorporating](#) documents for all learners.

Some Highlights (12)

- Technical Assistance continues to be provided for school districts on Indicators 6, 7, and 12. In addition, we continue to have regular meetings with our OSEP national TA providers at [ECTA](#) and [DaSy](#).
- ECSE team members presented on inclusion in Vermont at the quarterly Inclusive Classroom Profiles Community of Practice Call. Vermont continues to trailblaze as one of the only states with a fully funded Inclusion Coordinator.

Some Highlights (14)

- Moving forward, the Assessment Team will be communicating with the field in a more formal manner through the established listservs. If you have been used to receiving Alternate Assessment Email Updates, please register to receive email notifications through the [email registration tool](#) on the VTCAP Portal.

Some Highlights (15)

- The Assessment Team will be conducting Cognitive Labs for VTAA items from January 18-March 16, 2021. Cognitive Labs are used to study student and educator interactions with test items types as well as provide validity evidence for the assessment. More information and an interest survey will go out next month. Please reach out to Linda Moreno at linda.moreno@vermont.gov or Ana Kolbach at ana.kolbach@vermont.gov for more information.

Upcoming Initiatives

Initiatives

- *Attract, Prepare, Retain – Critical Shortage Areas for Special Education Personnel.*
- *Closing the Success Gap for students with disabilities.*
- *SPP/APR statewide integration.*
- *Strategic Team planning on Eight Components of General Supervision System.*
- *Critical Review Elements Analysis Guide (CrEAG) workgroup – inventory and gap/frequency analysis.*
- *State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) revamp and implementation.*
- *Planning is underway for the 2021 BEST/MTSS Summer Institute.*
- *SEA Determination Status Work Group.****

Upcoming Due Dates

Due Dates

- Monitoring Training October 29th .
- Collaborative Improvement Plans for NI districts November 1st .
- Child Count (due Dec 15th but should be getting ready now). Resources (instructions) for that will be forthcoming.
- SPP/APR Annual Report February 1st .

Due Dates

- All Learner Characteristic Inventories (LCIs) should be complete by 10/31/20. A [guide](#) for completing the LCI can be found in the Vermont Common Assessment Program (VTCAP) Portal
- Survey coming in November asking Special Education Directors to report the total number of students who will be participating in the VTAA in 2021.

Available Resources

Supports and How To (1)

- AOE Special Education Team [website](#):
 - Acronym/Initialism [list](#)
- Requesting Professional Development [form](#).
- Special Education Technical Assistance is available through the general email and voicemail system. Communications are monitored regularly during business hours and a response is generally provided within 24-48 hours. Please contact our team at (802) 828-1256 or at AOE.SpecialEd@vermont.gov.
- Regional Representatives – reach out.

Supports and How To (2)

• Requests for Data

Periodically, members of the public may find that they have additional needs for state education data that are not met by the existing reports (see above). We have provided two mechanisms by which the public may apply for accessing such data.

- [Data Request Form](#) should be used to make simple, non-research data requests. (Examples: media story, simple fact-checking.).
- [Research Request Application](#) should be used to make research data requests. The completed application is necessary in order for AOE to review the purpose of the research, specific data involved, and level of AOE staff time and effort needed to complete the request. It is also necessary to determine whether the research request is in line with the AOE's analytic priorities. **All research requests require pending or received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval before they can be reviewed.**

Supports and How To (3)

- Vermont's Determination Letter

<https://education.vermont.gov/documents/edu-vt-determination-letter-2020>

- Vermont's Accountability Matrix from the OSEP:

<https://education.vermont.gov/documents/edu-vt-part-b-results-driven-accountability-matrix-2020>

- How OSEP Made Determinations:

<https://education.vermont.gov/documents/edu-how-the-department-made-determinations-2020>

- Timely and Accurate State Reported Data

<https://education.vermont.gov/documents/edu-timely-and-accurate-state-reported-data>

Please Remember

- Our obligations are to support and serve students 3-21 utilizing guidance.
- Guidance may change and we seek to update as often as necessary to make sure you are informed.
- We are moving through this unchartered territory together and the AOE seeks to support our educational partners and families.
- [AOE Recent COVID19 Guidance](#).

Future State of the State Sessions

Save the Date

- January 21, 2021
- March 24, 2021
- May 21, 2021

- All sessions are 3:00-4:00 PM