

State of the State Report

With Chris Kane
Vermont's Interim State Director of Special Education
March 13, 2023

Vermont Agency of Education

Roles and Responsibilities

- State Director of Special Education: Vacant
- Interim/Assistant State Director of Special Education: [Chris Kane](#)
- Coordinator for Behavioral Supports: [Tracy Harris](#)
- Early Childhood Special Ed/IDEA 619 Coordinator: [Katie McCarthy](#)
- Federal and Special Education Data Director: [Cassidy Canzani](#)
- IDEA Data Analyst: [Brandon Dall](#)
- Inclusion and Accessibility and SPP/APR Coordinator: [Ana Kolbach](#)
- Inclusive Systems Coordinator: [Betty Roy](#)
- Part B Special Ed Program Monitoring Manager: [Tristan McNamara](#)
- Post-Secondary Transition Coordinator: [John Spinney](#)
- Special Education Technical Assistance Provider/Ed Surrogate: [Ernie Wheeler](#)
- Special Education Monitoring Specialist: [Simona Kragh](#)
- Assessment Coordinator for Special Populations: Vacant
- Inclusive Practices Coordinator: [Cassie Santo](#)
- Mentoring Project Coordinator: [Sienna Tuinei](#)
- Early Childhood Inclusion Coordinator: [Amy Murphy](#)
- Education Programs Manager, Interagency Coordinator: [Alicia Hanrahan](#)
- Special Education Finance [Jennifer Perry](#)

Roles and Responsibilities (cont.)

- The State Director of Special Education is responsible, in support and in collaboration with the Special Education Team, for ensuring the successful implementation of federal and state statutes and regulations governing the education of students with disabilities, 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
 - Qualified workforce at state and local levels
 - Sustain Vermont's General Supervision System for Special Education

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 outcomes for students with disabilities.

Federal Updates

Office of Special Education Programs (1)

- To SEAs: Thank you for your timely submissions of the FFY 2020 SPP/APRs on February 1, 2023.
- [February OSEP Newsletter](#) with resources related to: Assistive Technology and IDEA, Technical Assistance Opportunities, Visual Impairments in Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities, Resources and More.
- [Discipline Discussions: Informal Removals Matter | Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services Blog](#): Information and reminders of informal removals for students on IEPs.
 - Reminder: In July 2022, OSEP released the most [comprehensive IDEA discipline requirements guidance package](#) since the law was passed in 2004. Notably, this guidance:
 - [Defines informal removals](#);
 - Describes situations in which informal removals could indicate that a child's IEP does not appropriately address their behavioral needs ([Question C-3](#));
 - Describes how informal removals could constitute a disciplinary removal ([Question C-6](#));
 - [Highlights evidence-based practices that address behavior using proactive and preventative strategies.](#)

Office of Special Education Programs (2)

- MEMORANDUM: OSEP 22-01 — Personnel Qualifications under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). (Oct. 4, 2022)** IDEA WEBSITE: [PDF and HTML](#) .
- PDF Link: [Memorandum: OSEP 22-01 -- Personnel Qualifications under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\). Oct. 4, 2022](#) .
- [Memo to states regarding requirements for waiver of 1.0 percent cap on alternate assessments for 2022-2023](#) published on 09/21/2022.
From: Yu, Diana Sent: Tuesday, September 20, 2022, 2:39 PM
Subject: Memo to states regarding requirements for waiver of 1.0 percent cap on alternate assessments for 2022-2023.

Office of Special Education Programs (3)

- The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) announced a resolution agreement with Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia [U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights Announces Resolution of Investigation into Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia, Related to the Needs of Students with Disabilities During the COVID-19 Pandemic | U.S. Department of Education](#).
- The links provided below are to the FFY 2020 Indicator Analysis for Part B and Part C published annual by OSEP in conjunction with their national TA partners.
 - [2022 Part B FFY 2020 SPP/APR Indicator Analysis](#)
 - [2022 Part C FFY 2020 SPP/APR Indicator Analysis](#)
- Please note OSEP has published the Indicator Analysis on the [IDEA site](#).

Office of Special Education Programs (4)

•[Equity Special Collection](#) published on 08/11/2022

[Using Data to Advance Racial Equity](#) – Special Collection As part of DaSy’s commitment to advancing racial equity, we have assembled this special collection.

•[Final Determination Letter - Part B](#) published on 08/09/2022

From: Corr, Gregg Subject: Final Determination Letter Greetings, We are writing to advise you of the U. S. Department of Education's (Department) 2022 determination for your State under sections 616 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act(IDEA).

•[Final Determination Letter - Part C](#) published on 08/09/2022

From: Corr, Gregg Sent: Thursday, June 23, 2022, 7:46 AM Subject: Final Determination Letter Greetings, We are writing to advise you of the U. S. Department of Education's (Department) 2022 determination for your State under sections 616 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

•[Assignment: Investigate a Technical Assistance \(TA\) Center or Project](#) published on 06/23/2022

Purpose OSEP’s TA Network includes dozens of projects across the United States focused on different aspects of special education and early intervention. Check out the OSEP Placemat to learn more. To help you and your fellow interns discover more about some of these centers and projects.

State Activities

Some Highlights (1)

General Technical Assistance

- Maintained Directors' Check In.
- Daily TA calls and emails.
- Collaboration with Early MTSS and VTmtss on intersectionality with special education.
- Preparing for future OSEP site visit and taking inventory of Vermont evidence alignment with federal requirements.
- Data Quarterly meetings.
- Consultation and project planning with National TA Providers: NCSI, IDC, NTAC, ECTA, CIFR and CEEDAR.
- Participation in national technical assistance (TA) calls with TA providers and OSEP – representing VT.
- Monthly Check-Ins with OSEP.
- Frequent engagement with Special Education Advisory Panel.

Some Highlights (2)

SPP/APR

- On time submission for State SPP/APR 2023.
- Clarification period in April, final submission in June.
- Data review and improvement activity planning.
- TA support for Indicators and Integrated Monitoring Work:
 - Specific session series related to Indicator 13 and 11
 - Individualized support as requested
 - Revisions to forms and surveys
- SSIP math supports updated and SSIP expanded to ten districts.
- Three districts actively engaged in the introspective work of addressing significant disproportionality. This work is complex but goes far in effecting change regarding inequities in special education.

Some Highlights (3)

Upcoming Post Secondary Transition

- Recorded versions of recent trainings to be made available along side other [transition resources](#) .
- New Comprehensive Transition Planning resource.
- Any LEAs in the Chittenden County region, Rutland region or White River Valley region - please consider Project Search as a viable option for students with developmental disabilities to access specialized employment training based in the hospital setting. Please reach out to me if you have questions on Project Search.
- Staff are available to support any LEAs prior to entering next cyclic monitoring cycle.

Some Highlights (4)

Rule Change Work

- Rule Change [website](#), collaboration with ECSE, Finance, VTmtss, and Act 173 work group (internal).
- Release of Special Education Evaluations Manual.
- Increase of SSIP system coaching in support of rule changes.
- Revised forms.
- Weekly newsletter highlighting resources and responding to FAQs.
- Case Studies walking through the evaluation and eligibility process.

Upcoming

- Office hour series with topics related to CEIS, Adverse Effect, SLD, Functional Skills, and Priorities for General Education.
- Additional materials including; resource documents, webinars.

Some Highlights (5)

Critical Shortage Areas

- Mentoring Model, ensuring sustainability.
- Engagement with CEEDAR State Task Force.
- Informal listening tour for feedback and future improvements.
- Ongoing conversations with OSEP State Lead.

Some Highlights (6)

Monitoring

- Published the Targeted Monitoring Guide, providing LEAs with specific information related to this intensive level of monitoring.
- Updated submissions process.
- Implemented calendar request system for individualized sessions.
- Implemented weekly office hours with rotating topics.
- Congratulations to all districts who recently made their Cyclic Monitoring submissions in time for the due date on Wednesday.
- We applaud the efforts underway by districts in Targeted Monitoring, as they continue to work on continuous improvement action items and develop new ways to monitor their alignment with IDEA and SBE rules.

Some Highlights (7)

Statewide Consultants

- Completed granting process to support students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Blind and Visually Impaired, and have multiple or low incidence disabilities.
- Interagency collaboration related to support for students who are D/HH.
- Updated RFP and new vendor selection for D/HH work.

Rule 4500

- Updated the list of recommended training programs for the use of restraints and seclusions in August 2022.
- As a reminder LEAs may only use programs on the recommended list and must also ensure that any outside agencies under contract are also using programs from the published list, which is published [online](#).

Some Highlights (8)

Early Childhood

- Drop in Office Hours for C to B Transition and Indicator 12 monthly through the fall and will return in February.
- Access the [ECSE padlet](#) which contains curated resources on early childhood special education topics and frequently asked questions.
- ECSE newsletter containing information on hot topics, frequently asked questions, state and national resources, and current issues in early child special education. Contacting [Katie McCarthy](#) Archived newsletters can be found on the [ECSE padlet](#) page.
- AOE Early Education Team has partnered with Pyramid Model Consortium, University of Vermont and Pyramid 802 Plus to provide professional development trainings, specifically the Early MTSS Preschool Modules in addition to others, as well as practice-based coaching and system coaching to implementation sites
- Awarded the SPDG (State Personnel Development Grant) and in the fall will be working and providing Pyramid Model professional development trainings and coaching to IDEA Part C and PBIS to IDEA Part B.

Some Highlights (9)

Independent Schools

- Congratulations to the many independent schools who have and are currently preparing for the process of gaining approval or re-approval to operate as approved independent schools in Vermont. Many such schools have engaged in this process as we're making our way through the backlog of site visits that resulted from the pandemic.
- For independent school initial approvals, program renewals and State Board of Education information please email [Patricia Pallas Gray](#).
- For independent school tuition rate setting and education quality please email [J. Deborah Ormsbee](#).
- Anticipate guidance related to the revision of the Independent School and Special Education Rules.

Some Highlights (10)

Data/DMAD

- IDEA PART B (DEC 1) Child Count Collection:
 - All SU/SDs have completed submissions.

Upcoming

- Local APRs, and Data Quality checks.
- June 30, 2023, Exiting Child Count: to open late June with a due date of July 17, 2023.

Some Highlights (11)

Finance

- FY2022 IDEA-B Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Calculators will be deployed, mid-December. The calculators are prefilled with prior year/test data, trainings and assistance working through exceptions/failed compliance tests began in January 2023.
- FY22 CEIS and CCEIS collection completed
- FY24 Act 173 Service Plan collection complete
- December payments and projections complete

Some Highlights (12)

Assessment

- The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) has finalized procurement of a vendor to develop and implement statewide summative alternate assessments of English Language Arts (ELA), math and science with Cognia using Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) site.
- Up to date information can be found on the [Alternate Assessment Website](#).
- Held Alternate Assessment Office hours to provide access to resources and answer questions.

Upcoming

- 3/13: MSAA Administration Window Opens.
- Ongoing support through assessment office hours combined general and alternate assessment.

Some Highlights (13)

Assessment

Medical Exemptions

- Medical Exemptions will follow federal Guidelines. If you have a student that meets the criteria, please use the online Medical Exemption form to apply.
- Please DO NOT fax or mail Medical Exemptions to the National Life location.

Please reach out to [Mabika Goma](#) with questions.

Available Resources

Supports and How To (1)

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- 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.
 - [Monitoring Appointments](#)

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.**