

State of the State Report

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

Vermont Agency of Education

Vision Statement

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.

Staff Updates

Post-Secondary Transition Coordinator: [John Spinney](#)

Educational Consultant/Ed Surrogate: [Ernie Wheeler](#)

Special Education Monitoring Specialist: [Simona Kragh](#)

Assessment Coordinator for Special Populations: [Emma Rose McCadden](#)

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](#)

Staff Updates (2)

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: Vacant

Part B Special Ed Program Monitoring Manager: [Tristan McNamara](#)

Federal Updates

[OSEP Newsletter:](#)

[May 2023](#) — Post-Secondary Data for Youths With Disabilities, OSEP Fast Facts on Students With Traumatic Brain Injury, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Global Accessibility Awareness and More

[April 2023](#) — Month of the Military Child, Engaging Families in the Digital Process, IDEA Data Center, and More

[March 2023](#) — OSEP Director Participates in White House Roundtable, Young Dual Language Learners, Webinars, Resources and More

Federal Updates (2)

[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.](#)

Federal Updates (3)

1. [OSEP Memorandum 11-07](#)--A Response to Intervention (RTI) Process Cannot Be Used to Delay-Deny an Evaluation for Eligibility under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (January 21, 2011); and
2. [OSEP Memorandum 16-07](#)--A Response to Intervention Process Cannot be Used to Delay-Deny an Evaluation for Preschool Education Services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (April 29, 2016).

General State Activities

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

SPP/APR

On time final submission for State SPP/APR 2023

Anticipating determination in June

Data review and improvement activity planning

TA support for Indicators and Integrated Monitoring Work

- Specific session series related to Indicators 13 and 11
- Individualized support as requested particularly in anticipation of the June 1st Targeted Monitoring submission
- Additional support documents in process

Monitoring

- Continued weekly office hours with rotating topics
- Congratulations to all districts who recently made their Targeted Monitoring submissions in time for the due date on Wednesday

Cyclic Monitoring Report Arrives June 15:

Supervisory Unions and School Districts in the current Cyclic Monitoring cohort will receive Monitoring Reports on June 15. This report includes a comparison of the data submitted by LEAs with compliance thresholds specified by the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act and/or Vermont Special Education Rules. We encourage all LEAs in Cyclic Monitoring to pay close attention to this report, as it will provide a roadmap and deadlines for correcting any findings of non-compliance. Contact AOE.SpecialEdMonitoringGroup@vermont.gov for answers to your questions.

Special Education Monitoring

Collected and reviewed submissions for Cyclic, Selective, and Targeted monitoring

- Updated submissions process

Published the Targeted Monitoring Guide, providing LEAs with specific information related to this intensive level of monitoring.

Data analysis and collaboration on the design and implementation of targeted technical assistance and resource creation.

Provided technical assistance on submission materials as well as general supervision requirements;

- Implemented calendar request system for individualized sessions
- Implemented weekly office hours with rotating topics

Early Childhood

- 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@vermont.gov. 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.

Early Childhood (2)

OSEP reminds State educational agencies and LEAs that the Part B regulations at **34 C.F.R. §300.301(b)** allow a parent to request an initial evaluation *at any time* to determine if a child is a child with a disability under IDEA. As **OSEP Memorandum 11-07** states, MTSS/RTI may not be used to delay or deny a full and individual evaluation under **34 C.F.R. §§300.304-300.311** for a child suspected of having a disability. *With respect to preschool children, IDEA does not require or encourage a local or preschool program to use a MTSS approach prior to referral for evaluation or as part of determining whether a 3-, 4-, or 5-year-old is eligible for special education and related services. Once an LEA receives a referral from a preschool program, the LEA must initiate an evaluation process to determine if the child is a child with a disability. See: 34 C.F.R. §300.301(b).*

Special Education Rule Changes

Rule Change [website](#), collaboration with ECSE, Finance, VTmtss, and Act 173 work group (internal)

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

Recent support sessions include;

- Office hour series with topics related to CEIS, Adverse Effect, SLD, Functional Skills, and Priorities for General Education
- Three-part town hall series in partnership with VFN

Special Education Rule Changes (2)

Resources have been uploaded to [Special Education Rule Changes Website](#) under March 2023. These resources include: recording of the March 18th office hour, a webinar to support general educators with special education rule changes, a webinar to support CEIS funds, and a presentation on the rule changes and adverse effect. We are expecting additional items to be uploaded soon and we will announce those as they are posted.

In addition to those resources, a [Levels of Evidence and Research-Based Practices](#) guidance document has been posted on our [Special Education Resources for Special Educators and Administrators](#) webpage. This guidance document can be utilized to support teams in considering the strength of evidence for particular practices being used in instruction and intervention, and to clarify the expectations related to research-based practices and special education eligibility.

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.

Finance

- The FY24 IDEA Part B application is available in GMS
1. FY23 IDEA Part B Carry over amounts will not appear in GMS until your final FY23 close out report is submitted, approved and you submit your first FY24 IDEA amendment (September-October)
 2. The LEAP form to be uploaded in your application is here; [LEA Plan Assurances for IDEA Part B FY 24 Print Version \(vermont.gov\)](#)
 3. Form 10b is on page 10 here; [Parentally-Placed Students in Non-public Schools \(including Home Study\) and Proportionate Share Requirements \(vermont.gov\)](#)
 4. All equipment purchases with unit price(s) \$5,000 and above, must have prior approval by submitting an equipment approval application in the central data collections section in GMS

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

Critical Shortage Areas: Mentoring Project

Consultation and project planning with National TA Providers: NCSI, CEEDAR

Monthly Check-Ins with OSEP

Informal listening tour for feedback and future improvements

Updates to Mentoring Model to ensure sustainability after August 2023 include;

- Summer training and kick-off session
- Ongoing support for Mentees with monthly technical assistance opportunities
- Topic area alignment based on areas of need in conjunction with higher education

Critical Shortage Areas: Mentoring Project (2)

AOE VSMEE Summer Institute:

The AOE VSMEE Summer Institute, hosted by Vermont Family Network Executive Director Jacqui Kelleher, will be held virtually on August 8th, 2023, from 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM. This training is mandatory for Special Education Mentors who work with Provisionally Licensed Special Educators. The Summer Institute will cover the fundamentals of Mentoring, Communication, Collaboration, and the VMSEE requirements for the year. It promises to be an informative and engaging experience, providing valuable insights for attendees to enhance their skills and knowledge in their respective fields.

Data/DMAD

Child Count Exiting Collection Opening This Month:

The School Year 2022-2023 Child Count Exiting Collection will open in late June and remain open until July 17, 2023. Submitted data must be accurate as of June 30, 2023. District and Supervisory Union personnel in charge of special education data can find Child Count Reporting instructions by logging into the [secure AOE file transfer website](#). The [Child Count Reporting Instructions](#) are also available online.

If you have any questions, please contact the [AOE Child Count Team](#).

Assessment

End-of-Testing Reminders and Updates:

As a reminder, schools have until Friday, June 9 (8:00 p.m. ET) to complete all tests. **All started tests will be automatically submitted after Friday, June 9.** Please note this is a change from what was previously communicated during the office hours. Further, students who complete five or more items on a test will receive a score for that test.

We ask that all requests for participation exemptions due to medical emergencies also be submitted by Friday, June 9. Please use this form to request a medical emergency exemption, [VTCAP Medical Emergency Exemption Form](#).

After a school has completed all testing, please ask the principal to complete the Certification of Proper Test Administration, which can be found here: [Principal's Certification of Proper Test Administration](#). Please submit all forms by Tuesday, June 13.

Assessment (2)

Post-Administration Feedback:

The AOE is very interested in feedback from all of you, proctors and other staff involved in the test administration process. We plan to send out a survey soliciting feedback on Friday, June 9. Please feel free to share this survey with your colleagues. The survey will include opportunities to participate in stakeholder debriefing sessions. You can also submit feedback directly by emailing it to aoe.statewideassessment@vermont.gov.

Assessment (3)

Reporting Timeline:

For the general summative assessment, the expected dates for individual student reports, data and dynamic reporting to be available in ADAM is Thursday, August 17, for grades 3-8 and 11, and Tuesday, September 19, for grade 9. These dates apply to all content areas.

For the alternate summative assessment, individual student reports will be available in the MSAA system, and data and dynamic reporting in LENS, from Monday, July 17, to Friday, September 8, for English language arts and mathematics, and from Monday, October 16, to Friday, October 27, for science. These dates apply to all grade levels.

Additional information on reporting to come.

Support Forms

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](#)

Data Requests

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.**