



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



**TO: Directors of Special Education and Pupil Services
Directors of Private Approved Special Education Facilities
Directors of Charter Schools**

**FROM: George P. Dowaliby, Chief 
Bureau of Special Education and Pupil Services**

DATE: December 6, 2000

SUBJECT: Update #23

SECONDARY TRANSITION PLANNING

Contracting with Adult Service Providers for Vocational/Transition Services

Over the past several years there has been an increase in the number of school districts contracting with rehabilitation facilities and adult service providers for the provision of vocational/transition services for high school students with disabilities. These services have included situational assessments, job coach support, job placement and life skills assessment and training. The Bureau has also seen an increase in the number of calls related to our policies regarding the use of these programs to fulfill IEP goals and objectives.

The use of these programs and services is allowed under Connecticut General Statute Section 1-76d 11 (d):

“Any local or regional board of education may enter into a contract with the owners or operators of any sheltered workshop or rehabilitation center for provision of an education occupational training program for children requiring special education who are at least sixteen years of age, provided such workshop or institution shall have been approved by an appropriate state agency”.

The Bureau interprets “approved by an appropriate state agency” as any rehabilitation center or adult services provider that holds a “current a valid contract” with agencies such as the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS), the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) and/or the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS).

Enclosed please find a list of all agencies that have a current and valid contract with the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services. This list also contains the fee (Rate) BRS pays for each specified service. If you are using a provider that does not appear on this list, please contact Karen Halliday at (860) 807-2020. She will assist you in determining if this provider holds a contract with DMR or DMHAS.

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Secondary Transition Contact Personnel

Enclosed is a form requesting the name, address and telephone number of the staff member in your district, **most directly responsible** for transition planning at the secondary level. This may be your Transition Coordinator, Work-Study Coordinator, classroom teacher, or guidance counselor. Please **do not** include your name, as Special Education Directors will always receive copies of any announcements or materials that are disseminated.

WORKSHOPS FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS AND SCHOOL COUNSELOR SUPERVISORS

Workshops will be offered in March, 2001 to introduce two major documents developed through a collaborative effort by the Connecticut School Counselor Association (CSCA), the Connecticut Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (CACES) and the Connecticut State Department of Education. The first document, the "Connecticut Comprehensive School Counseling Program" will be reviewed in a half-day program on March 14, 2001. Its companion document, "Best Practices for School Counseling in Connecticut", focuses on counselor competencies, evaluation guidelines, and a model job description for school counselors. This second workshop, scheduled for March 15, 2001, is designed for supervisors of school counselors, including directors of guidance, guidance chairpersons, and administrators who supervise school counselors. Please pass on the enclosed flyers/applications to your district's supervisor or coordinator for school counseling.

ADVISORY OPINION: Selection of the hearing officer

As you are aware, the state regulations concerning special education due process proceedings were revised effective July 1, 2000. Included in these regulations is a new proceeding, the advisory opinion process. In appointing a hearing officer to preside over an advisory opinion, the Due Process Unit will select the hearing officer on an availability and rotation basis, unless the parties, upon submission of their signed agreement to seek an advisory opinion, identify an agreed-upon hearing officer to conduct the advisory opinion. Of course, such appointment will be contingent upon the selected hearing officer's availability. If you have any questions concerning this procedure, please contact either Theresa C. DeFrancis (860-807-2018) or Thomas G. Badway (860-807-2017).

P.A. 00-48 - An Act Concerning Special Education

Charter Schools

Effective July 1, 2000, the LEA in which a student eligible for special education resides (nexus community) is required to reimburse the state charter school on a quarterly basis for the cost of educating the student enrolled in the charter school. (PA 00-48 An Act Concerning Special Education). It is essential that LEAs and charter schools determine the costs of those services early in the process to ensure that the charter school is being reimbursed accurately and appropriately on a quarterly basis. On-going communication with charter schools and special education personnel in LEAs will not only help to ensure that students are receiving the services outlined in their IEPs, but will also assist in the determination of costs. Enclosed you will find a current listing of all approved charter schools in Connecticut.

Interdistrict magnet schools

Public Act 00-48 also added language concerning the provision of special education services for those students with disabilities attending an interdistrict magnet school. This language mirrors the charter school language in that the LEA in which the student resides must hold a PPT for students with disabilities and invite representatives from the magnet school to attend the PPT. LEAs are responsible for payment to the interdistrict magnet school the difference between the reasonable costs of educating the student and the sum of the amount received from state, federal, local or private sources calculated on a per pupil basis.

A copy of P.A. 00-48 is enclosed.

LEAs must report students with disabilities enrolled in charter or interdistrict magnet schools on their December 1 child count. If you have any questions about the charter schools or interdistrict magnet schools and students with disabilities, you may contact Dr. Nancy Cappello at (860) 807-2035.

SHAKLEE TEACHER AWARD

The following is being passed on to you "for your information". It was received as part of an unsolicited e-mail in the Bureau and is not endorsed nor promoted by the Bureau or Department.

The Call for nominations for the Shaklee Teacher Award is a prestigious award to recognize ten of the country's most outstanding teachers of children with disabilities. Applications are due by February 1, 2001.

For complete information and application materials: www.shakleeinstitute.org

316-634-8735 or 800-835-1043

ksoule@heartspring.org

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

A. Vacancies: The information below is for your consideration if you are having trouble filling a position for a Speech and Language Pathologist. The companies have staff who travel around the country for short or long-term contracts. Carolyn Isakson indicates that the Bethel Public Schools have used the first company on the chart (call Beth Muller, Speech and Language Coordinator, at 203.794.8721 or Linda Pica, Special Education Director, at 203.794.8617). The New Haven Public Schools have used the second two companies (call Glynis Harrell, Speech and Hearing Supervisor, at 203-946-8986, or Eleanor Boyd, Pupil Services Director, at (203.946.8990). Some of the companies also contract for Occupational and Physical Therapists.

COMPANY	HQ	CONTACT	TELEPHONE	EMAIL
Sunbelt Therapy Services of America, Inc.	Clearwater, FL	Michael McBurnie, President	(800) 892-0640	www.sunbelttherapyservices.com
Bilingual Therapies, Inc.	Chicago, IL	John Consalvi, President	(773) 784-9393	www.bilingualtherapies.com
Health Tour	Lowell, MA	Lisa Paulauskas	(800) 523-9353	None Available

B. Feeding/Swallowing Therapy: The Bureau is trying to gather information about the provision of feeding and swallowing therapy in Connecticut schools. Your input is critical in developing a better understanding of your needs in the areas of training, role clarifications and possible policies/procedures/guidelines. Please complete the attached questionnaire and return to Carolyn Isakson by January 16, 2001 (fax number: 860.807.2047).

REGISTERING AND LICENSING OF INTERPRETERS FOR THE DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED ADVISORY

Since October 1, 1998, and each year thereafter, interpreters for individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing have been required to register with the Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired prior to providing compensated interpreting services to individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Effective July 1, 2001, all persons who are being compensated for providing interpreting services to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing in the State of Connecticut must not only be registered with but also be licensed by the Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired prior to providing said services.

Current requirements for individuals seeking licensure as interpreters for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing are as follows:

- Passed the Registry of Interpreters for The Deaf (RID) written generalist exam and graduated from an accredited Interpreter Training Program; or
- Passed the RID written generalist exam and holds a level III National Association of The Deaf (NAD) Certification; or
- Holds a level IV NAD Certification or higher; or
- Hold an RID Certification; or
- For Cued Speech Interpreters, holds Certification from the National Training Evaluation and Certification Unit.

If you should have any questions about the pending licensure requirements, please contact Ms. Stacie Mawson, Executive Director, Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired, at (860) 566-7414 or (800) 708-6796.

SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICIES AND PRACTICES CONCERNING REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

This is a brief review of school district's legal responsibilities regarding the reporting by school employees of suspected child abuse. Information is also provided about the current status of school district practices, and the potential for schools to assume a more proactive role in addressing the issue of child abuse.

As a reminder, mandated reporters of suspected child abuse include school teachers and other school professionals, principals, guidance counselors, and paraprofessionals, as well as "...nurses, psychologists, social workers, physical therapists, or any other person paid to care for a student in any school program, while acting in their professional capacity" (Sec. 17a-101(b)).

State law required each local and regional board of education, on or before February 1, 1997, to adopt a written policy regarding the reporting by school employees of suspected child abuse (Sec. 17a-101i(e)). Additionally, schools shall inform staff of their responsibility to report suspected abuse or neglect of persons with mental retardation and shall establish appropriate policies and procedures to facilitate such reporting (Sec. 46a-11b(c)).

In developing, reviewing, and revising policies, it is recommended that school district personnel refer to *Guidelines for Developing Policies and Procedures for Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect* (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2000). This document was produced in collaboration with DCF, the Office of Protection and Advocacy, and the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents. The document can be found on the SDE web page (www.ct.us/sde) in the "Special Education" section.

As per these guidelines, it is recommended that a school district policy include major components:

1. education (i.e., in-service training concerning recognition and reporting of suspected abuse and neglect);
2. intervention (i.e., specific protocols for assessment, reporting, documentation and follow-up of case, and procedures for cooperation with DCF and other agencies); and
3. evaluation (i.e., of the policy itself).

Of course, there is no point in *having* a policy if it is not effectively implemented. A recent survey (Margolies, 2000a) signaled a pressing need to make state mandates and district policies known to school staff. Of the 464 Connecticut teachers surveyed, well over half indicated that they have never had training in the area of child abuse/neglect, and nearly half were unaware of the identification and reporting policies of their district.

The survey also revealed that school-based child safety or child abuse prevention programs are the exception, not the rule. Notably, over 90 percent of the teachers surveyed were in favor of "implementing strong policy focused on child abuse prevention." Programmatic approaches to school-based child abuse prevention include (1) teaching current and future parents about child care, child development, and parenting responsibilities, (2) establishing school-based child protection teams, and (3) teaching children to avoid victimization (see Margolies, 2000b).

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Margolies, R. (2000a). Child abuse prevention: Survey data on school policy and procedure, and teacher knowledge and training in Connecticut. *Connecticut School Psychologist*, 7 (2), 11-17.

Margolies, R. (2000b). The role of the school psychologist in promoting child safety and child abuse prevention. *Connecticut School Psychologist*, 7 (3), 9-13.

For further information about school district policies and reporting requirements, or to obtain a copy of the Margolies articles, please contact Bob Lichtenstein at (860) 807-2042 or bob.lichtenstein@po.state.ct.us.

GPD:m
Enclosures

cc: Theodore S. Sergi, Commissioner of Education
George A. Coleman, Associate Commissioner
Edward Preneta, Council on Developmental Disabilities
Bonnie Moran, Special Education Advisory Council
Nancy Prescott, CT Parent Advocacy Center
Superintendents of Schools
Special Education Hearing Officers
SDE Staff