

Series: 2005-2006

CIRCULAR LETTER: C-15

To: Superintendents of Schools

From: Dr. Betty J. Sternberg
Commissioner of Education

Date: May 30, 2006

Subject: State Performance Plan (SPP)

On December 2, 2005, the State Department of Education submitted a State Performance Plan (SPP) to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in the U.S. Department of Education on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA). In accordance with IDEA, each state must have in place a performance plan that evaluates the state's efforts to meet the requirements and purposes of the IDEA and how the state will implement this law. Enclosed please find a copy of the SPP. It is also available on the Department's web site (<http://www.state.ct.us/sde/>) under the link for Special Education. Please share the information in the SPP with administrators and staff in your district.

The SPP is a six-year plan which describes Connecticut's performance on 20 indicators (see enclosure). The Connecticut SPP was developed by a broad stakeholder group consisting of parents, school district personnel, early intervention providers and state department representatives. Indicators for special education are grouped around three priorities: free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE), disproportionate identification of students for special education and effective general supervision. Targets for each year and improvement activities to help attain those targets are contained in the SPP. An Annual Performance Report (APR) of the SPP activities and progress towards the stated targets is due to the U.S. Department of Education February 1, 2007. Additionally, OSEP requires that the state report annually to the public on the performance of each local educational agency (LEA) on each of the 20 indicators.

While the state and each LEA has an obligation to demonstrate progress in every one of the indicators, the following indicators require some special attention, as they contain new data submission requirements:

- Indicator #7 – Percent of preschool children with IEPs who demonstrate improved positive social-emotional skills, acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, and use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs;
- Indicator #11 – Percent of children with parental consent to evaluate who were evaluated and eligibility determined within 60 days (or State established timelines);
- Indicator #13 – Percent of youth, age 16 and above, with an IEP that includes coordinated, measurable, annual IEP goals and transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet post-secondary goals; and
- Indicator #18 – Percent of hearing requests that went to resolution sessions that were resolved through resolution session settlement agreements.

Indicator #7:

As you may be aware, the SPP calls for the use of the Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Early Development II© (Brigance), a criterion-referenced assessment to collect and report the data to the federal government to determine the performance and progress of preschool children for the elements included in this indicator. This tool was chosen by the stakeholder group, since it would allow the comparison of performance with nondisabled peers (a stated requirement) without actually assessing nondisabled peers. In addition, it is a tool that contains specific items that can address all of the components of indicator #7. Additionally, the Brigance's domain areas can be crosswalked with the Connecticut Preschool Curriculum Framework (1999) and the Connecticut Preschool Assessment Framework (2004). The Brigance will be used to collect Point 1 and Point 2 data, at entry and exit, from preschool special education. Other states selected multiple instruments for this indicator; the stakeholder group felt strongly that it would be simpler if one instrument was utilized.

Recognizing that this is a new requirement that increases responsibilities for all of you at the local level, the Bureau of Special Education is trying to alleviate some of the financial burden of the test purchase. The Bureau has purchased at least one of the necessary test kits for each district, as well as a small number of test booklets. The test kits were sent directly from the publisher to each district in April, and the Bureau of Special Education sent test booklets in May to assist in getting started with the Point 1 data collection. We know that Districts may desire more than one kit; additional kits and booklets, if needed, will need to be purchased by the local district.

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and the State Education Resource Center (SERC) also conducted 5 workshops in April to address data collection and reporting procedures within this indicator. Districts with preschool students were invited, as well as representatives from CSDE, SERC, and Curriculum Associates, publishers of the Brigance. Staff from a large majority of districts were able to attend. Feedback indicated that districts understood the requirement and its scope. It is important that districts understand this is a requirement going forward, and that districts are not required to collect data for preschoolers identified and receiving special education services prior to May 1. For those students identified from May 1 on, there is a 4 week window from the time the preschooler begins services to gather Point 1 data using the Brigance.

A comprehensive Question and Answer document, as well as additional information regarding indicator #7, will be posted on the Department's website under the link for special education.

Indicator #11:

The CSDE will require electronic data submission of referral and evaluation data by each LEA for the previous fiscal year. Data will be collected July 1, 2006 through August 15, 2006, for the 2005-06 school year (July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006), and annually thereafter. Data will be collected electronically for all children for whom parental consent to evaluate was received, including children placed by their parents in private/religiously affiliated schools. **A mock version of this data collection and the information that districts will have to report to the Department is available at the following web site:**

<https://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/idea/evaluation.htm>

Indicator #13:

This indicator requires the CSDE to collect data on the number of youth with disabilities age 16 and above whose IEP includes coordinated, measurable, annual IEP goals and transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet post-secondary goals. This data element was added to the 2005-2006 state data system and will be collected on an annual basis.

Indicator #18:

This indicator requires data submission by each LEA for the previous fiscal year on the number of hearing requests by parents that went through a resolution session, and the outcome of each resolution session. Data for the 2005-06 school year will be collected from July 1, 2006 through August 15, 2006, and annually thereafter.

State Performance Plan
May 30, 2006
Page 4

The Department will be posting information regarding the SPP, including the official response from OSEP to the December 2005 report, on its website. The Bureau of Special Education, along with the State Education Resource Center (SERC), is beginning its planning for the necessary activities to support progress towards the targets of the twenty indicators. As appropriate, we will seek your involvement in these activities.

I appreciate all of your efforts in support of the SPP, and on behalf of students with disabilities and their families in Connecticut.

BJS:dc:c

Enclosures

Summary of Indicators for the State Performance Plan (SPP)	
1	Percent of youth with IEPs graduating from high school with a regular diploma compared to percent of all youth in the state graduating with a regular diploma.
2	Percent of youth with IEPs dropping out of high school compared to the percent of all youth in the State dropping out of high school.
3	Participation and performance of children with disabilities on statewide assessments.
4	Rates of suspension and expulsion.
5	Percent of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21: A) Removed from regular class less than 21% of the day; B) Removed from regular class greater than 60% of the day or served in public or private separate schools, residential placements, or homebound or hospital placements.
6	Percent of preschool children with IEPs who received special education and related services in settings with typically developing peers.
7	Percent of preschool children with IEPs who demonstrate improved positive social-emotional skills, acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, and use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.
8	Percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities.
9	Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services that is the result of inappropriate identification.
10	Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories that is the result of inappropriate identification.
11	Percent of children with parental consent to evaluate, who were evaluated and eligibility determined within 60 days (or State established timelines).
12	Percent of children referred by Part C prior to age 3, who are found eligible for Part B, and who have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthdays.
13	Percent of youth age 16 and above with an IEP that includes coordinated, measurable, annual IEP goals and transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet the post-secondary goals.
14	Percent of youth who had IEPs, are no longer in secondary school and who have been competitively employed, enrolled in some type of postsecondary school or both, within one year of leaving high school.
15	General supervision system (including monitoring, complaints, hearings, etc.) identifies and corrects noncompliance as soon as possible, but in no case later than one year from identification.
16	Percent of signed written complaints with reports issued that were resolved within 60-day timeline or a timeline extended for exceptional circumstances with respect to a particular complaint.
17	Percent of fully adjudicated due process hearing request that were fully adjudicated within the 45-day timeline or a timeline that is properly extended by the hearing officer at the request of either party.
18	Percent of hearing requests that went to resolution sessions that were resolved through resolution session settlement agreements.
19	Percent of mediations held that resulted in mediation agreements.
20	State reported data (618 and State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Reports) are timely and accurate.