


Connecticut State Department of Education

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

FROM: Leslie M. Avena, Associate Commissioner 
Division of Educational Programs and Services

DATE: April 21, 1998

SUBJECT: Update #11

This update bring great news, which I am pleased to share with you, in addition to reminder items and current information on items of interest. I have hired a Bureau Chief! His name is Geoge Dowaliby and he will begin working at the Department on June 19, 1998. George is currently the Director of Student Services and the Director of Instruction in the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District in Massachusetts. He also served as the Director of Special Education in the Granby Public Schools, as the Executive Director of the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative in East Longmeadow, Massachusetts, and as a school psychologist in both Connecticut and Massachusetts. He brings to us a wealth of experience in special education, curriculum and instruction, and pupil services. He supports the direction we will be taking in special education and welcomes the challenges of implementing the **Connecticut Agenda** and IDEA 97. We will be hosting a welcome reception for him soon after his arrival. I know you'll join me in wishing him well as he takes on the state leadership role in special education.

May 1, 1998: Deadline For Submission Of Revisions To FY 1997-99 Idea-Part B Grants (611 And 619)

Directors are reminded that **May 1, 1998** is the deadline for submission of amendments to their IDEA-Part B projects encoded: **962-826031101 (regular)** and **963-826091101 (preschool)**. Questions can be addressed to Maria Synodi (860) 638-4211 (preschool) and Patrick Shaughnessy (860) 638-4240 (regular).

FY 1998-99 Consolidated Grant Application Packet

Consolidated Grant Application Packets were mailed to superintendents the week of April 13-17, 1998. Completed applications (ESEA, Perkins and IDEA) are due in Dr. Sternberg's office by June 1, 1998. Preliminary grant award letters, budgets will be forwarded to districts/agencies by July 1, 1998.

Questions Re: FY 1998-99 Idea-Part B Grant Applications

For those of you not able to attend the IDEA-Part B workshop held on April 21st. and who have questions concerning its completion, call Patrick Shaughnessy at (860) 638-41240 (regular grant) or Maria Synodi at (860) 638-4211 (preschool grant).

Wrap-Up FY 1996-98 Idea-Part B Grant Activities

Directors are reminded that they have through June 30, 1998 to complete IDEA-Part B project activities, encoded: **962-726031101** (regular) and **963-726091101** (preschool), for grants funded for the period July 1, 1996 through June 30, 1998. All grant funding must be **expended** by June 30, 1998. Unused funding must be returned.

Career Exploration Camp for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth, Ages 14 through 17.

Career Exploration Camp is a week long program (August 9-15, 1998) held at Camp Sloan in Lakeville, CT for deaf or hard of hearing youth who live in the Northeast and who wish to explore possible career choices. The goal of the program is to provide each participant with a written assessment which will identify his/her: 1) top 3-5 potential career choices, 2) personality style and learning style, and 3) personal skills, teamwork strengths and areas for improvement.

Participants will attend a series of workshops led by deaf or hard of hearing professionals on how to make career choices and will visit deaf or hard of hearing professionals at their worksites. Career interest assessments will also be conducted. Participants will have time in which to socialize, relax and enjoy the many facilities of the camp including swimming, boating, kayaking, canoeing, volleyball and basketball.

For further information, please contact Elaine Taylor, CEDHH Program Liaison, Northwestern Connecticut Community-Technical College, Park Place East, Winsted, CT 06098. Phone: (860) 738-6380 (voice/TTY), E-mail: NW_TAYLOR@commnet.edu.

Spanish Translation Resources

The following resources are available through SERC should you want to review them:

- *Spanish for the School Nurse's Office*, and
- *School Letters in English and Spanish*.

Please share this information with your school nurse supervisor. These manuals and a catalogue of other Spanish resources are available from AMMIE Enterprises, P. O. Box 2132, Vista, California. The telephone number is 1-800-633-5544.

Hearing Testing Training

Connecticut regulations on hearing screening require that personnel conducting such hearings "shall have completed six (6) hours of training in this area including practice supervised by a properly trained school nurse, speech pathologist, or audiologist." To assist staff to meet this requirement, a continuing education program on *Hearing Testing* for school health personnel will be presented on Saturday, May 30, 1998, at the University of Hartford. Please share this information with appropriate district personnel. For additional information, call (860) 524-7739, ext. 16.

Model Policy and Procedure Manual

In the fall the Bureau of Special Education and Pupil Services presented training to LEAs on IDEA 97 and began the redesign of a Program Review Process which was sensitive to its many changes. It was our plan to develop a procedural safeguards document, an IEP form, and a model policy and procedures manual with the hope that all districts would voluntarily adopt them. These documents would be consistent with the IDEA 97 language and state regulations, provide consistency from district to district, and correct the continuing non-compliance status of many districts. To date the SDE has provided a procedural safeguards document and an IEP form for your adoption and use. Our goal was to develop the model policy and procedures manual by the spring.

Since the federal regulations have not been adopted, we decided not to send you the manual at this time, since it would have to be updated upon issuance of the regulations. Therefore, we will provide you with a copy of the manual sometime over the summer; it will include the language of the federal regulations and any newly-passed state statutes. Following the release of the model manual, districts will be given 15 days to indicate whether they will adopt the manual or revise the current manual. Districts who choose the latter option will have an additional 20 days in which to submit the manual to SDE for approval. A more detailed explanation of the process will accompany the model Manual and Checklist when distributed.

Districts undergoing program review this year (CES region) will need to submit documentation of the implementation of IEPs, notices and consents by May 15, 1998. Further information will be sent under a separate letter to these districts.

Please continue to provide feedback regarding the IEP form. A final version will be released with the model manual. Voluntary acceptance of the IEP, model policy and procedures manual and forms as they become available is strongly encouraged. Any changes which a district is proposing to make with regard to standard forms and policy and procedures need to be submitted to SDE for approval.

It is clear that, throughout the state, districts have exerted a "good faith effort" to implement the spirit and letter of IDEA 97. Many districts have already provided extensive training to staff and to families, as well. The draft state IEP form is in widespread use; consent for reevaluation is being requested; progress reporting systems tailored to district's procedures are being discussed; and the writing of measurable annual goals is being practiced. The immediacy of implementation of the amendments,

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which has been expected by the Congress, has been a challenge to everyone, and the commitment with which districts are tackling that challenge is evident. You are to be commended for your continued diligence in the implementation of IDEA 97 and your efforts to assure that children with disabilities and their families are well served.

Homebound and Hospitalized Instruction

We are convening a committee, with the assistance of CAPSEF, to prepare draft revisions to section 10-76d-15 of the Connecticut Special Education Regulations. Terri DeFrancis will co-chair this committee. The department also will be represented by Nancy Cappello and Art Carey. CAPSEF will be represented by Elaine Green and Rosemary Baggish, and CONNCASE will be represented by two LEAs. I will keep you posted of their progress.

cc: Theodore S. Sergi, Commissioner, Department of Education
Betty Sternberg, Division of Curriculum & Instruction
John Mattas, CAPSEF
Edward Prenata, Council on Developmental Disabilities
Bonnie Moran, Special Education Advisory Council
Superintendents of Schools
Bureau Staff