




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: September 21, 1998

SUBJECT: Update #14

It is with great pleasure that I send to you the current *Update* as one means to communicate useful and necessary information to you. As Leslie Avena mentioned in her last *Update*, please feel free to let me know if you have any suggestions to help improve this process.

I hope that you had a chance to get away this summer and that your school year has started smoothly and successfully. It has been a busy three months at the Bureau since I arrived in June. I am looking forward to working with you throughout the year and hope to see many of you at the CONNCASE Leadership Forum on October 7th.

Special Education Profiles

The Bureau of Research, Evaluation and Student Assessment has revised and expanded the Special Education Profiles. The new format will provide useful information for all of us. The Profiles for the 96-97 and the 97-98 school years will be distributed with the Strategic School Profiles this Fall. For further information regarding the Special Education Profiles, please contact Les Horvath at (860) 566-4377.

Bureau of Special Education and Pupil Services Staff Changes

There have been a number of staff changes within the Bureau in the last few months. Among them are:

Susan Kennedy has moved to the Bureau of Research, Evaluation and Student Assessment. Susan has been working on guidelines for student assessment, including alternative assessment.

Paul Flinter has moved to the Bureau of Early Childhood Education and Social Services as the Interim Bureau Chief.

Nancy Stark joined the staff in June from the Bloomfield Public School System.

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Nancy Aleman will be starting with the Bureau next month from the Meriden Public School System.

To those who have moved on, we wish them well. I know that we will continue to work closely on common projects. I am confident that the new staff will "hit the ground running" (Nancy Stark already has!) and will be great assets to our efforts.

Guidelines for Mental Retardation

Norma Sproul is leading a task force in the development of guidelines for the diagnosis and identification of students with Mental Retardation. A primary goal is to give guidance for a consistent and valid identification of this population. I will keep you informed regarding a potential publication date in future *Updates*.

Complaint Process

After several years as the assigned Complaint Officer, Roger Frant has taken on new and exciting responsibilities within the Bureau. Tasks previously handled by Roger will now be assigned to various Consultants in the Bureau. Consultants will be available daily to assist parents who have concerns, questions, and/or need information. The established Complaint Resolution Process will continue to be followed by assigned consultants when written complaints are filed with the Bureau.

Private Schools

Nancy Cappello will no longer coordinate the private school approval process as she will be leading the Bureau's efforts in the Hartford School District in the area of Special Education. Art Carey will assume responsibility for all activities related to private facilities.

Corrections to recent IEP and Forms Mailing

Recently we forwarded to you the new IEP form and commentary. Unfortunately, page 6 of the IEP was inadvertently left out of the mailing. Attached is a copy of the missing page 6 of the IEP. We apologize for any inconvenience this has created.

Additionally, in the "forms" section of the mailing, a copy of the previously used version of the Learning Disabilities Multidisciplinary Team Report was included. Please be aware that this is being revised and a NEW version will be distributed with the revised LD Guidelines. You may anticipate the revised LD Guidelines and the Report form within the coming weeks.

UCONN Contract - Private Schools

The State Department of Education has entered into a one year pilot project with the University of Connecticut to assist the Bureau in its work with approved private special education facilities in Connecticut. While the Department will still maintain the general oversight of the private facilities, UCONN will take over many related day-to-day activities, including overseeing the monitoring of the private facilities. We are hopeful that this project will be in place by mid-October.

Charter Schools

This year there are four new charter schools that are opening in Connecticut. Charter schools are public, nonsectarian, independent schools which operate independently of a local or regional board of education pursuant to a state or local charter. Enclosed is information that will be of assistance to you as you plan for students with disabilities attending the charter schools. If you have any questions, you may contact Dr. Nancy M. Cappello at (860) 638-4234.

IDEA Final Regulations

I have no new information regarding when final IDEA regulations will be published. In the meantime, the following, quoted from Judith Heumann at the U.S. Department of Education, applies:

“States are bound by the statute (IDEA ‘97) and existing regulations that are not inconsistent with IDEA ‘97. States would also be expected to conduct monitoring of local school districts based on the statute and existing regulations that are not inconsistent with IDEA ‘97, pending publication of the final regulations.”

Assessment Guidelines

Enclosed is the Fifth Edition of the Assessment Guidelines for Administering the Connecticut Mastery Test and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test. This document is updated every few years primarily to increase clarity based on feedback received from district personnel. However, this edition also spells out the new statewide assessment and reporting requirements called for in the reauthorization of IDEA ‘97. With the new requirements of IDEA in mind, the wording, but not the intent, of the exemption criteria has been strengthened. Please review these changes beginning on page 4 of the guidelines. Throughout the 1998-99 school year, Department staff will be available to provide guidance and direction regarding these new federal requirements. If you have specific questions about the information contained in the Assessment Guidelines, please call Susan Kennedy at (860) 566-5240.

Transition Planning

Enclosed is a copy of "The Connecticut Transition Training and Technical Assistance Directory" recently completed as part of our federal transition grant. The purpose of this directory is to inform you of a variety of trainers, organizations and school personnel that are available to assist you in enhancing transition programs for students with disabilities. With the completion of our federal transition grant, you are encouraged to continue to provide your staff with training and information to implement many of the transition components required under IDEA '97.

Also enclosed is a form requesting the name, address and telephone number of the staff member in your district who is **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. Special Education Directors will always receive copies of any announcements or materials that are disseminated. If you have any questions, please contact Karen Halliday at (860) 638-4242.

Procedural Safeguards in Special Education

Enclosed is a revised copy (Rev. 9/4/98) of the *Procedural Safeguards in Special Education*. This revision, which replaces the 1/22/98 version, is expected to be the last revision prior to the issuance of the IDEA amended regulations. The State Department will be issuing in the near future a version printed on a folded sheet and a version in the Spanish language. Additionally, the Department is looking into other language translations. Please advise of such translation needs.

National Child Health Day 1998

National Child Health Day, a tradition since 1928, is a day set aside for our nation to focus on the health and well-being of children. This year Child Health Day is Monday, October 5, and October is Child Health Month. The Maternal Child Health Bureau (MCHB) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), in collaboration with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), developed an educational kit on this year's topic: alcohol abuse. You can visit DHHS's MCHB Internet page to obtain some of the kit materials and for links to the AAP's Child Health Month and National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information web sites: www.hhs.gov/hrsa/mchb/.

LD Guidelines

The revision of the LD Guidelines continues to move forward. The preliminary draft has recently been mailed to over 40 readers throughout Connecticut for review and comment. These readers represent special education and regular education administrators, special education and regular education teachers, related service professionals, reading and language arts consultants, parents and higher education faculty members. The Bureau will be reviewing the readers' input during October to finalize the draft which will be distributed to the field soon thereafter.

Highlights include a strong emphasis on the provision of appropriate instruction in reading and math prior to eligibility determination, and determining if a student, meeting the criteria for having a learning disability, requires special education and related services. We anticipate that the Bureau will provide statewide training and be available to speak at other forums during this year to disseminate information and to dialogue about the Guidelines' content. This draft will be piloted throughout the entire state and the Bureau will be accepting feedback during the course of this year.

Sliver Grants

With the reauthorization of IDEA, a new state responsibility was defined by Section 611(4)(A). That section requires state departments of education to distribute a mathematically defined portion of the state's total IDEA grants to "LEAs" for the purpose of "capacity building and improvement." This funding has become known as "Sliver Grant" funding.

"Sliver Grant" funding must (1) be distributed to "LEAs", (2) serve identified (special education) children, (3) provide direct services to those children and (4) be utilized for one or more of the following identified purposes:

- "Direct services, including alternative programming for children who have been expelled from school, and services for children in correctional facilities, children enrolled in state-operated or state-supported schools, and children in charter schools;
- Addressing needs or carrying out improvement strategies identified in the State's Improvement Plan under subpart 1 of Part D;
- Adopting promising practices, materials, and technology, based on knowledge derived from education research and other sources;
- Establishing, expanding, or implementing interagency agreements and arrangements between local educational agencies and other agencies or organizations concerning the provision of services to children with disabilities and their families; and

- Increasing cooperative problem-solving between parents and school personnel and promoting the use of alternative dispute resolution.”

It is the Department's intent to distribute FY 1998-99 "Sliver Grant" funds to all districts and agencies eligible for receipt of an IDEA-Part B, Section 611 entitlement grant. "Sliver Grant" funding will be distributed based upon each eligible district's/agency's PC-ISSIS child count. It is anticipated that each child in the PC-ISSIS child count will generate \$22.67 of "Sliver Grant" funding. A separate "Sliver Grant" award will be issued to each eligible district and agency.

The Department will contact each district and agency eligible for receipt of a "Sliver Grant" in FY 1998-99. Each district or agency will be required to complete a very brief application, including a budget document. Subsequent to the receipt of those applications and budgets, the Department will issue a discretionary "Sliver Grant" to each eligible district and agency. If you have any questions, please contact Patrick Shaughnessy at (860) 638-4240.

Monitoring the Status of Your Speech-Language Pathologists' (SLPs) Department of Health (DPH) License

It has come to our attention that there have been a few recent cases where SLPs have failed to submit the documents for their annual renewal of the DPH license within DPH's timelines and then continued to provide services to children. In one situation, the DPH levied a substantial fine on the SLP. Another situation is under review and sanctions have not yet been determined. These cases not only have caused personal embarrassment to the SLPs involved, but have also disrupted services to children on their caseloads. You might find it useful to keep a list of the expiration dates of your SLPs' licenses and request that they submit the employer's copy that they receive from DPH for your personnel files. Please remember that continuing to practice the profession without a DPH license could put an SLP's State Department of Education certification in jeopardy.

Listing Your Position Vacancies for Speech and Language Pathologists

The Bureau of Special Education and Pupil Services, through Carolyn Isakson, Consultant for Speech and Language Services, is continuing its collaboration with the Connecticut Speech-Language-Hearing Association (CSHA) to assist school districts in securing qualified staff for speech and language programs.

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CSHA will be holding its Fall conference on October 23, 1998, at the Trumbull Marriott Hotel. If you have a vacancy for a speech and language pathologist and would like CSHA's assistance in advertising it at the conference, please complete the attached form and return it **to the CSHA office by October 15th**. CSHA's Career Information Committee maintains a booth in the exhibit area during the conference and provides candidates seeking employment with a current list of job vacancies.

The CSHA office maintains an ongoing listing of position vacancies and candidates seeking employment. The office also has a "JOB HOTLINE", which is updated on a daily basis. Feel free to copy the CSHA form and use it whenever you have a vacancy that you would like to have listed. You may also request CSHA's candidate list as necessary. Please notify the CSHA office as soon as your position is filled, so that the job listings can be kept current. For further assistance, you may call Maria Parker at the CSHA office at (860) 666-6900.

cc: Theodore S. Sergi, Commissioner of Education
George A. Coleman, Division of Educational Programs and Services
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