

# THE BUREAU BULLETIN

Connecticut State Department of Education

## *From the Bureau of Special Education*



**Anne Louise Thompson**  
Bureau Chief

### **Brief from the Chief**

Spring is well under way, with its sense of renewal that invigorates, motivates, and moves us to revitalized energy and purpose. I am particularly motivated to strengthen my collaborative activities in support of student success within and outside of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE).

As we head into the final few weeks of the school year, educators across the state continue to assess the strengths and needs of all students in order to inform instructional and other decisions that reflect the high expectations they hold for every child. Among the decisions to be made are those that concern the plans for next year's educational programs for students with special needs.

In order for decision making in the development of the individualized education program to meet the unique needs of individual students, intentional and constructive collaboration among special and general education teachers and student support services personnel is certainly essential, but it is absolutely not sufficient. If each and every child with a disability is to receive an appropriate education that meets Connecticut's standards, and if we as a state are to eliminate the predictability of the achievement gaps here, then working closely with parents throughout the process becomes a primary goal. All parents, as all teachers, want the children they share to succeed in school and in life. The parents of children with disabilities are, by the spirit and the letter of the law, contributing members of the IEP team. With the encouragement, service, and support of the school and district, they can be active, informed participants and partners in decision making as well as effective implementers of activities in the home that enhance and expand the collaboratively created plan. As educators, we cannot do the job alone; together with families, there is nothing we cannot do for our students.

### *A Message from Charlene Russell-Tucker,*

Associate Commissioner, Division of Family & Student Support Services

As some of you may already know, Anne Louise Thompson, Chief, Bureau of Special Education (BSE), is on leave. In the interim, with the help of Cheryl Resha, Education Manager, and Lisa Spooner, Administrative Assistant, I will be overseeing the operations of the bureau. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Anne Louise's office at 860-713-6912 or e-mail [lisa.spooner@ct.gov](mailto:lisa.spooner@ct.gov).

### ***Bureau Bulletin Announcement:*** **BSE Submits the Annual SPP and APR**

The revised Connecticut Part B State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) were successfully submitted to the Office of Special Education Programs on February 1, 2010. Please refer to the [SPP/APR section](#) on the Connecticut State Department of Education Web site to view the SPP and APR.



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The 7th Annual **Bureau of Special Education Back-To-School Meeting** will be held on **Monday, September 20, 2010**, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Cromwell.

*More information to follow.*

**Thank you again for your support and ongoing dedication to the field! We enjoy serving you and look forward to future collaboration. - Anne Louise Thompson**



## Disproportionate Representation and Disproportionality

State Performance Plan (SPP) Indicators 9 and 10 district data are available. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has released its 2009-10 document on disproportionality, and all districts should be reviewing the data to see where they stand.

The data show if districts have over- or underrepresentation by race in special education, or by a specific disability category. The document is available through the SPP/APR Web site at [http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/SSP/Disproportionality\\_Data10.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/SSP/Disproportionality_Data10.pdf).

Districts are asked to review the column under each race/ethnicity category titled "Relative Risk." If the district's relative risk is 2.0 or above, the bureau will be conducting monitoring activities to determine if there are inappropriate identification policies, procedures or practices. Letters and communication will be going out through the end of the school year, with district responses due over the summer and into the early fall. This will allow districts time to review policies, procedures and practices in the event there needs to be revisions and allow time to address areas of noncompliance.

Findings of noncompliance must be reported to the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in the state's Annual Performance Report (APR) submitted to OSEP every year on February 1. Findings of noncompliance also affect a district's determination category of Meets Requirements, Needs Assistance, Needs Intervention or Needs Substantial Intervention. For more information on these indicators, or the SPP/APR, see the bureau's SPP/APR Web site or contact Mike Tavernier at 860-713-6929 or [michael.tavernier@ct.gov](mailto:michael.tavernier@ct.gov).

### What is Disproportionate Representation?

"Disproportionate representation" occurs when students from a particular racial/ethnic background who receive special education services are over- or underrepresented compared to the overall student population. Improper identification policies, procedures and practices result in racial/ethnic subgroups being more likely or less likely to be determined eligible for special education services or eligible under a specific disability category. Students may also be at higher risk for lack of access to the general education classroom and a higher rate of discipline due to improper identification policies. Through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004), Congress requires states and local school districts to address over- and underrepresentation (20 U.S.C. section 1400 et seq.).

The IDEA outlines two separate sets of requirements for state education agencies (SEAs) regarding over- and underrepresentation. One set is known as "disproportionate representation" and the other is known as "significant disproportionality." The mathematical formulas used to determine both disproportionate representation and significant disproportionality are the same. They both analyze data through the 2009-10 school year on the same five race categories: American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, black or African American (not Hispanic), white (not Hispanic), and Hispanic or Latino. They both analyze data on the same specific disability categories, which are learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, emotional disturbance, speech or language impairments, other health impairments, and autism. These are federal requirements and cannot be altered.

Though both sets of requirements are concerned with representation of the same racial/ethnic subgroups, as well as the same disability categories, they have significant differences relating to the areas of special education that are examined and the actions required of districts. In addition, while the mathematical formulas used to determine disproportionate representation and significant disproportionality are the same, the criteria for identifying districts under each requirement are different. Those criteria are discussed in detail in this article.

In response to the 2004 reauthorization of the IDEA, each SEA created a six-year SPP in 2005 that established goals and strategies for 20 indicators. The two indicators that highlight disproportionate representation, as required under 34 C.F.R. 300.173, 300.600 and 300.646, are:

- Indicator 9 (disproportionate representation in special education and related services due to inappropriate identification); and
- Indicator 10 (disproportionate representation in a specific disability category due to inappropriate identification).

The U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) sets an expectation that no district shall have disproportionate representation due to inappropriate identification and monitors this requirement through Indicators 9 and 10 of the SPP. The phrase "due to inappropriate identification" is included in these indicators to make sure that districts are in compliance with the appropriate identification of students, as set forth by the IDEA and state regulations. States are required to monitor both over- and underrepresentation in their districts and report findings to the OSEP for both Indicator 9 and Indicator 10 in the APR. States have the discretion to set the criteria by which to identify districts for monitoring and to establish monitoring activities for those districts.

### Disproportionate Representation Criteria

Connecticut has determined that districts will be contacted if their data demonstrate a relative risk ratio of 2.0 or greater, or 0.25 and below in any race category for special education overall or a specific disability category. This is the first step in investigating inappropriate policies, procedures and practices under Indicators 9 and 10 of the SPP. Then, these districts are asked to complete a self-assessment that is returned to the Bureau of Special Education (BSE) for review.

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For specific information on how the relative risk index is calculated, see Connecticut's SPP Indicators 9 and/or 10.

## Disproportionate Representation Determination

The second step in investigating inappropriate policies, procedures and practices may take different forms. In some instances, districts submit evidence of policies, procedures and practices to determine if they are appropriate. Districts may also be required to review a sample of student files to determine whether students have been inappropriately identified.

If these activities determine that a district has inappropriate identification policies, procedures or practices, then a letter is sent to the district in which noncompliance is cited and corrective actions are issued. This information is included in Connecticut's APR, submitted February 1 of each year and on the district's APR issued each spring. This also has an impact on the district's determination in meeting the targets set in the SPP, indicating if the district meets requirements, needs assistance or needs intervention. This is monitored, by the BSE, until verification of the correction of noncompliance occurs and this is subsequently reported in Connecticut's APR the following year. These criteria and activities were accepted by the OSEP in Connecticut's SPP submitted February 1, 2007.

Data for every district and for Connecticut are posted to the Bureau of Special Education's (BSE) SPP/APR Web site in the spring of each year. Data for the 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years can be found at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=322094> by scrolling down to Indicators 9/10. Districts have historically been contacted in the fall to complete monitoring activities. However, the BSE will now be contacting districts prior to the close of school, allowing districts to have adequate time to complete monitoring activities.

## How Is Significant Disproportionality Determined?

As a separate obligation, the IDEA 2004 requires states to collect and examine data on an annual basis to determine whether "significant disproportionality" based on race or ethnicity is occurring in a district with respect to four different areas as required under 34 C.F.R. 300.646. This is not reported or monitored under Indicators 9 or 10 of the SPP.

### *The four areas required for review are:*

1. **Identification for Eligibility:** States determine if significant disproportionality exists among students with disabilities (SWDs). This analysis does not consider if the identification is appropriate or inappropriate.
2. **Identification for a Particular Category:** States determine if significant disproportionality exists among students in particular eligibility categories. This analysis does not consider if the identification is appropriate or inappropriate.

3. **Educational Settings:** States determine if there is significant disproportionality among SWDs in particular educational settings, such as the general education classroom.
4. **Discipline:** States determine if there is significant disproportionality among SWDs receiving discipline, including the number of incidences, duration and type of disciplinary actions, such as suspensions and expulsions.

Unlike Indicators 9 and 10 of the SPP, significant disproportionality is based solely on data analysis. The district's policies, procedures and practices are not factored into the determination.

States have the discretion to set the criteria used to determine those districts that demonstrate significant disproportionality.

## Significant Disproportionality Criteria

In Connecticut, districts are considered to have significant disproportionality if they demonstrate a relative risk index of 4.0 or above, for two consecutive years in the same race and disability category, in special education overall, by educational settings or by suspensions and expulsions. District data are found in the same documents as the data for Indicators 9 and 10. The same mathematical calculations are used for Indicators 9 and 10, but the criteria are different under significant disproportionality.

## Significant Disproportionality "Required Action"

When a district has significant disproportionality, the IDEA requires three courses of action as outlined in 34 C.F.R. 300.646:

1. **State Review**—The state must review (and, if appropriate, revise) the policies, procedures and practices used in some or all four areas monitored for significant disproportionality.
2. **Public Reporting**—The IDEA requires districts to publicly report on the results of its revision of policies, practices and procedures used in identification, placement or discipline of SWDs. This can typically be accomplished by posting changes to the district's Web site, disseminating a notice home to parents, publishing changes in the district newsletter or local newspaper, or discussing changes at the local board of education meeting and including changes in the minutes. These reporting suggestions are examples and are not an exhaustive list.
3. **Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS) Funding**—The district is obligated to reserve 15 percent of the flow-through funds received under the IDEA for CEIS. It is important to note that CEIS is a redirection of funds, not a reduction of funds. Districts maintain their funding as originally calculated but must redirect a mandatory 15 percent for CEIS. To reserve the funds means the funds may be used only for approved CEIS.

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This is in contrast to districts without significant disproportionality that may, but are not required to, use up to 15 percent of the flow-through funds for CEIS. In fact, many districts choose to use part of the IDEA funds for CEIS as part of a proactive strategy. It is important to note that even if further analysis indicates all identification is appropriate, 15 percent of the funding must still be reserved for CEIS.

Districts demonstrate this redirection of funds in their IDEA grant application, which is due to the CSDE in the spring of each year and in which the activities outlined are reviewed for BSE approval. The redirection is for the duration of the IDEA funding years in which the funds were applied for through the IDEA grant application. The district must maintain a database of the students who benefit from CEIS for three years, beginning with the first year of redirection. The district must also report to the CSDE any students subsequently identified as eligible for special education services.



Early intervening services address the needs of all students before they are identified as needing special education services and, in some cases, may preclude the need for special education services. Appropriate CEIS, combined with proper identification procedures, helps ensure an appropriate possible placement for students. The CEIS includes students in significantly overrepresented groups as well as students from all racial/ethnic groups, but is not limited to these groups. The IDEA outlines that CEIS activities are limited to professional development for teachers and other school staff in building capacity to deliver scientifically based academic and behavioral interventions and the instruction on the use of adaptive and instructional software. Activities are also permitted to provide educational and behavioral evaluations, services and supports, including scientifically based literacy instruction. These requirements are outlined in 34 C.F.R. 300.226 of the IDEA regulations.

In Connecticut, much focus has been placed on the overrepresentation of African American/black and Hispanic students in special education. Since 2003, there has been an annual summit held with districts to address this issue, in addition to the provision of a large

amount of technical assistance at both the state and district levels. However, more attention has recently been given to white students in the disability category of autism, as districts are being identified for overrepresentation in this population. It is clear that, nationwide, there is a significant increase in the number of people identified as having autism, which is reflected in our classrooms.

The CSDE is making efforts to investigate and research all areas of overrepresentation to ensure that all students in special education are receiving a free appropriate public education (FAPE), regardless of race or disability, and that districts are in compliance with the IDEA and state regulations. Under 34 C.F.R. 300.646, states currently do not have flexibility to exempt or waive districts from these requirements, as there is also no appeal process.

### ***For more information:***

- OSEP memo 07-09, which includes a side-by-side comparison of these requirements:  
[http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/SSP/OSEP\\_Memo09\\_Disproportionality.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/SSP/OSEP_Memo09_Disproportionality.pdf)
- OSEP memo 08-09, Coordinated Early Intervening Services:  
[http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/SSP/OSEP\\_Memo09\\_CEIS.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/SSP/OSEP_Memo09_CEIS.pdf)
- OSEP Questions and Answers on Disproportionality, June 2009:  
[http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/SSP/OSEP\\_Q&A.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/SSP/OSEP_Q&A.pdf)
- OSEP Topic Brief Disproportionality and Overidentification, February 2007:  
[http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/SSP/OSEP\\_TopicBrief\\_Disproportionality.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/SSP/OSEP_TopicBrief_Disproportionality.pdf)

### ***Resources:***

- Building the Legacy IDEA 2004: Disproportionality  
<http://idea.ed.gov> (Click on “Part B,” then “Disproportionality” from the list on the left.)
- The National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems (NCCRESt), Practitioner Briefs,  
<http://www.nccrest.org/publications/briefs.html>
- National Center on Response to Intervention: RTI and Disproportionate Representation  
<http://www.rti4success.org> (On the right side of the page, under “What’s New in RTI,” click on “RTI and Disproportionate Representation: An Annotated Bibliography.”)
- National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY), A Training Curriculum on IDEA, Module 5 Disproportionality and Overrepresentation  
<http://www.nichcy.org/Laws/IDEA/Pages/BuildingTheLegacy.aspx>

*Portions of this article adapted from the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services*



## Updates on Data Collection

### Summary

Districts visited in the 2007-08 school year for suspension/expulsion have submitted their final progress reports to demonstrate improvement in a number of areas. Some areas of improvement these districts focused on were around streamlining communication and office referral forms among multiple buildings, submitting ED 166 data four times a year to the CSDE instead of a one-batch submission in the summer, monitoring and sharing of discipline data at administrative and staff meetings to make informed decisions, revisions of discipline policies to be consistent and proactive, training staff in the Educational Benefit Review Process, implementing positive behavioral supports, improving cultural awareness among staff and students, and revisions of in-school suspension policies. The bureau will continue to monitor discipline data through the SPP Indicator 4 for all districts in the state.

In 2008-09, four districts were visited for concerns around the academic achievement of students with disabilities. These districts are submitting their first progress reports in areas such as: improving Tier 1, 2, and 3 interventions; developing an effective continuum of supports academically and socially/emotionally; implementing a written plan for data-driven special education services to ensure continuity of services from building to building; focusing on measurable IEP goals and objectives that are aligned with the CSDE curriculum standards; improved progress monitoring at the student, classroom, and building levels; and parent training. The bureau will monitor and support implementation of improvement plans for these districts through the 2010-11 school year.

### Focus: Suspension/Expulsion, Academic Achievement

Six districts were visited in the 2007-08 school year based on suspension/expulsion data of students with disabilities. These districts implemented an 18-month improvement plan to address weaknesses and concerns discovered during the visits. All districts have demonstrated an improvement in their suspension/expulsion rates for students with disabilities, based on a review of the districts' ED 166 Discipline Data Collection. Additionally, through strategies and efforts outlined in their improvement plans, systemic and individual student gains have been made throughout the district. Examples of objectives that districts set out to achieve were to:

- improve cultural awareness among staff, administrators and teachers; and to increase positive behavioral supports within the school community;
- identify and monitor a uniform system of data collection for office discipline referrals, and develop a K-12 philosophy of discipline, behavior and related beliefs; and
- increase the effectiveness of faculty in meeting students' academic and social needs through differentiated instructional practices and consistent behavioral expectations.

While the districts have completed the work of their improvement plan thus far, they continue to strive for improved outcomes.

Four districts were visited in the 2008-09 school year based on data around the academic achievement of students with disabilities. Every district cited the Educational Benefit Review Process, conducted through the State Education Resource Center (SERC), as highly valuable and instrumental in examining the weaknesses of IEPs and learning to write IEPs that were meaningful. These districts are in the process of submitting their first progress reports to identify the work completed and the scope of future efforts with their improvement plans. Examples of objectives that these districts set out to achieve were:

- developing a well-articulated plan for implementing data-driven special education services that ensures the continuity of services from building to building; and
- assuring that all IEPs contain student present levels of performance (multiple measures) in the area of reading, with goals and objectives that are measurable and aligned with the CSDE grade level curriculum standards, as measured by a random examination of these components in 10 IEPs from each grade level on a bimonthly basis.

These districts continue to implement their improvement plans and monitor their progress to improve the academic achievement of students with disabilities for the remainder of this year and into next year.

## Assistive Technology

### CTTAP/RESC Alliance AT Newsletter

The Connecticut Tech Act Project (CTTAP) has announced a recent change to its quarterly newsletter. The CTTAP is now partnering with the Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs) Alliance to provide articles on new or innovative assistive technology (AT) devices, local AT related events, free AT resources, and more. The newsletter is available online at <http://www.cttechact.com/news>. If you need a printed copy of the newsletter for accessibility reasons, including large print or another accommodation, please contact the CTTAP at 860-424-4881 or by e-mail through its Web site, <http://www.CTtechact.com/contact>.

### CTTAP Demonstration Centers

The CTTAP has opened a new AT Demonstration Center in Willimantic, CT. The Eastern Connecticut Assistive Technology Center is open two days a week for individuals with disabilities, family members, employers and educators to view a variety of AT devices and make informed decisions about AT devices appropriate for school and work environments. Call 860-423-8400, ext. 319 for more information on hours of operation or to schedule an appointment.

Other CTTAP AT demonstration centers across the state include: the New England Assistive Technology (NEAT) Center; Vision Dynamics; and the Disability Resource Center of Fairfield County.

## Indicator 3

### Academic Achievement in Special Education: Focus on State Literacy Standards and Curriculum Development

#### Literacy Standards

It is critical that all students, including students with disabilities, have access to a guaranteed and viable curriculum, regardless of where they are receiving services or their amount of time with nondisabled peers. It is expected that the goals and objectives of IEPs are written in measurable terms and reflect the standard curriculum for the student's current grade. However, many IEPs do not contain this information, or educators are unsure of how to develop these goals and objectives. This often leads to ambiguous goals set for the student and inadequate IEPs, as well as poor data collection to determine if the student is making progress in the general education curriculum as outlined in 34 C.F.R. 300.320 and 300.324. Consequently, it is imperative that educators are familiar with the state frameworks and the district's curriculum.

As you know, the state has curriculum frameworks and tools for each subject area in the arts, math, career and technical education, physical education, health, science, information and communication technologies, social studies, literacy/language arts, and world languages. Some of these frameworks now include grade level expectations (GLEs), or what students are expected to know at each grade level. GLEs are cumulative, and by the end of a particular grade level, students should know and be able to accomplish the required skills up to and including that grade level (e.g., at the end of grade four, GLEs include skills and strategies from pre-K through grade four). This includes students with disabilities, for whom IEP goals and objectives are used to guide specialized instruction to meet these expectations.

In the area of literacy/language arts, the standards were revised in February 2010 and include the original broad framework, aligned to more specific grade-level expectations, and correlated to assessment expectations. Additionally, the CSDE Web site has links to aligned lesson plans and pacing guides to be used after reading comprehension formative assessments.

This document is not to be used as a comprehensive curriculum. Districts develop their own curriculum, which is aligned to the state frameworks. In cases where there is insufficient district curriculum, the next best resources are the state frameworks.

The literacy/language arts standards and grade-level equivalents can be found here: [www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/word\\_docs/curriculum/language\\_arts/csde\\_pk\\_8\\_elacurriculumstandards.doc](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/word_docs/curriculum/language_arts/csde_pk_8_elacurriculumstandards.doc)  
A pacing guide, sample lesson plans, and assessments can be found on the Bureau of Teaching and Learning's Web site:  
<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&Q=320954>.



It is recommended that special education teachers have a complete copy of the district's curriculum to refer to when developing IEP goals and objectives, as well as familiarity with the state standards in order to know what is expected of their students at a variety of grade levels, including what is covered in previous grade levels. It is especially important that special education teachers use this information to inform IEP development.

The Bureau of Student Assessment's Web site has a "Seven Step Process to Creating Standards-Based IEPs" which can be found at <http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/mas/resources/SevenStepProcess.pdf>. Through this process, IEPs are aligned with state academic grade-level content standards. Each step is followed by guiding questions for the IEP team to consider in making data-based decisions.

Finally, SERC has a free multimedia training module on developing standards-based IEPs. The **module, available by clicking here**, can be viewed by an individual on a single computer, or used in a large-group training format on multiple computers or projected on a screen. Other resources to assist educators in this area will continue to be developed and announced in the Bureau Bulletin and on SERC's Web site.

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#### Curriculum Development

In some cases, districts do not have their own curriculum or are in the ever-evolving process of revising their curriculum. The CSDE Tools for Curriculum and Instruction include a guide for district curriculum development to help identify next steps in the process and a walkthrough protocol guide that can be customized for your building or district initiatives. Both documents are intended to be adapted for district use depending on the district's mission and goals for its students.

The Connecticut Curriculum Development Guide (CCDG) is an instrument designed to lead the planning, review and development of the PK-12 curriculum. The CCDG should not be used as an evaluation tool. Rather, it should be part of the process of determining curriculum development priorities and distinguishing among immediate, short-term and long-term next steps. Many special educators are involved in the development or revision of their district's curriculum, and thus it is important to understand how that work connects to students with disabilities. The CCDG can be found at: [http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/Curriculum/Curriculum\\_Development\\_Guide\\_2009.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/Curriculum/Curriculum_Development_Guide_2009.pdf).

The Connecticut Walkthrough Protocol Guide, which aligns to the CCDG, is a tool to support district and school personnel with school and classroom walkthroughs. Walkthroughs should not be viewed as an evaluative exercise. The Walkthrough Protocol Guide can be found at: [http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/Curriculum/Walkthrough\\_Protocol\\_Guide\\_2008.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/Curriculum/Walkthrough_Protocol_Guide_2008.pdf).

## SRBI and Referrals to Special Education

The CSDE continues its collaborative work to strengthen and refine the guidance around Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI), Connecticut's framework for Response to Intervention (RTI). The department has developed the following guidance for district and school use, as it applies to the special education referral process and SRBI.

A child may be referred to a planning and placement team (PPT) for an evaluation whenever presenting concerns lead professionals to suspect that the child might need special education. The Connecticut State Regulations, Section 10-76d-7, state that *"Each board of education shall accept and process referrals from appropriate school personnel, as well as from a child's parents; or from a physician, clinic or social worker, provided the parent so permits, in order to determine a child's eligibility for special education and related services."* Any referral of a child for a special education evaluation would obligate the district to convene a PPT to discuss the referral and: (a) review existing information and determine that an evaluation is required and proceed accordingly; or (b) review existing information and determine that an evaluation is not required; and/or (c) determine that more information is needed before proceeding to evaluation, including information obtained through the implementation of SRBI to collect additional data, as appropriate.

The same regulation also states, *"Before a child is referred to a planning and placement team, alternative procedures and programs in regular education shall be explored and, where appropriate, implemented."* Special and general educators should have shared responsibility for the design and implementation of effective learning strategies for all students, particularly those with learning and behavioral challenges. Inappropriate implementation of SRBI could and in many cases will delay a child's right to special education.

Final note: SRBI is a tiered approach from prevention to increasing levels of intervention intensity as a means of resolving learning or behavioral challenges or delays. Prevention, intervention, implementation of universal screening, and appropriate common assessments (e.g., checklists, observations, work samples) can improve educational outcomes for all children. SRBI is embedded instruction and is not an action performed when a student is referred for a special education evaluation. SRBI begins as Tier 1 general education high-quality instruction for all children, including those with and without an IEP. Interventions are implemented with increased frequency, duration and intensity for those children demonstrating learning or behavioral challenges. Again, SRBI does not start at the point of a special education referral. In fact, SRBI tiered instructional interventions can occur simultaneous to an evaluation to determine if the student requires special education.

Questions can be directed to: **Perri Murdica** at 860-713-6942 or at [perri.murdica@ct.gov](mailto:perri.murdica@ct.gov); or to **Gail Mangs** at 860-713-6938 or at [gail.mangs@ct.gov](mailto:gail.mangs@ct.gov).



## Public School Information System (PSIS) Collection of Membership and Attendance Data

At the end of the school year, the CSDE will be collecting membership and attendance data for all students who are served by public schools, including those who: 1) are out-placed to approved private special education facilities; 2) are out-placed at Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs); and/or 3) are receiving services at or through a transition/vocational program that has a facility code of "82." These students receive education or transition services in a location other than in a district school and are not counted within the district for attendance purposes.

Districts do not typically maintain membership and attendance data within their local systems for out-placed students or students receiving transition/vocational services in the community, but are responsible to obtain this information from the contracted organization for reporting purposes. Approved Private Special Education Programs (APSEPs), RESCs, and transition/vocational programs with an "82" facility code are requested to provide this information for each student to the nexus district no later than June 30, 2010, so that the district may report these data within the Public School Information System (PSIS) end-of-year collection.

For additional information about this data collection, please see the attached **Membership and Attendance Data Memo for Transition/Vocational Programs** or the **Memo for Approved Private Special Education Programs and Regional Education Service Centers**. For further information about transition/vocational programs, contact **Dr. Patricia Anderson** at 860-713-6923 or at [patricia.anderson@ct.gov](mailto:patricia.anderson@ct.gov). For further information about APSEPs, contact **Colleen Hayles** at 860-713-6922 or [colleen.hayles@ct.gov](mailto:colleen.hayles@ct.gov).

## Changes in DDS

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) has made some changes to the levels and types of support being provided to its clients. DDS has issued a letter to all school district directors of special education regarding the significant changes in their service delivery. Changes have most notably occurred in the agency's case management services and graduation and age-out funding. Transition coordination and educational liaisons and support will continue to be offered to DDS clients. The **attached letter** outlines the changes in greater detail.

The DDS **"Helpline Brochure"** is attached and provides a description of available services and supports. Additional information can be obtained through the DDS Helpline at [www.ct.gov/dds](http://www.ct.gov/dds).

**Click on the logo for Frequently Asked Questions about Special Education in an SRBI Framework**

## Transition

### Updated Guidelines for Annual Reviews, Transition Planning and Writing PSOGs

Spring is a busy time for holding annual reviews. Just a reminder that if you are having an annual review for a student who will turn 16 years old when the IEP you are developing is to be in effect, transition goals and objectives **MUST** be developed and the “Transition Planning” box under “Reason for Meeting” on Page 1 of the IEP **MUST** also be checked. This is to inform the parents, student and all PPT participants that the key reason for the PPT is secondary transition planning as well as the annual review. In addition, the student **MUST** be invited to the PPT meeting to assist in planning his/her future **AND**, whenever feasible, make sure that the student attends at least part of the PPT meeting to participate in his/her transition planning.

Secondly, remember that **EVERY** student whose IEP will be in effect when the student turns 16 years old **MUST** have one Post-School Outcome Goal Statement (PSOGs) in postsecondary education/training (IEP page 6 - #5a) and one PSOGs in the area of employment (#5b), and if appropriate, a PSOGs in Independent Living (#5c). PSOGs is Connecticut’s term for the “appropriate measurable postsecondary goals” required by IDEA 2004 for transition-age students that must be based on “age-appropriate transition assessments.” Each IEP for a transition-age student must include a minimum of two PSOGs (or one PSOGs that addresses the two required areas or three areas if Independent Living Skills are included) and at least one annual goal and objective (written on page 7 of the IEP with the appropriate box checked at the top of the page).

At the request of the field, CSDE and SERC held a workshop on Tuesday, April 6, 2010, on Post-School Outcome Goal Writing related to students with disabilities in special populations (e.g., medically fragile, at-risk/drop-out potential students, students involved in juvenile justice, homebound). Approximately 25 people attended the workshop and feedback was so encouraging that we will be holding two additional sessions next fall. The resulting PSOGs examples from that workshop are being compiled and will be shared and posted on the CSDE’s Web site.

In the meantime, the CSDE developed the two attached documents that might be of assistance as districts are developing IEPs for transition-age students: 1) **Guidelines for Writing Post-School Outcome Goal Statements for Specific Populations of Students with Disabilities** – includes instructions about how to write the PSOGs and other information relevant to a variety of issues raised by the field, and 2) **Sample Post-School Outcome Goal Statements** – lists both nonexamples and PSOGs examples by category (e.g., Postsecondary Education/Training, Employment, Independent Living Skills and combination statements). For additional information about secondary transition, contact **Dr. Patricia Anderson** at [patricia.anderson@ct.gov](mailto:patricia.anderson@ct.gov) or at **860-713-6923**.

### Indicator #13

#### Ensuring Compliance in Secondary Transition

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) establishes a state’s authority to conduct district monitoring to assure compliance with the IDEA and state statutes regarding special education. As part of this monitoring responsibility, the state reviews districts’ submission of annual data that informs the 20 indicators constituting the SPP and resulting in the district’s APR and determination. Indicator 13, regarding secondary transition, is one of the indicators that requires a district to be at 100% compliance. Anything other than 100% on this indicator results in corrective action at a district and/or individual student level. For districts achieving 95 – 99.9% compliance with a 100% compliance indicator, their APR determination status may indicate “Substantial Compliance.” However, since the district has not fully met the target, the Bureau of Special Education is obligated to investigate.

Connecticut has reported being at a 99.1% compliance rate on Indicator 13 as submitted to OSEP in the last two APRs. Preliminary data for 2009-10 that include the new data points for secondary transition indicate that approximately 60% of Connecticut districts are currently in full compliance with Indicator 13. The CSDE will review district and student-level Indicator #13 data this spring and will submit letters of findings to all districts that are found to be out of compliance, along with required corrective actions. In the meantime, in preparation for determining the reasons why your district might be out of compliance on Indicator #13 and for writing IEPs for student annual reviews for 2010-11 that include transition goals and objectives, please examine and address the items in the attached article on **Ensuring Compliance on Indicator #13 – Secondary Transition**. For further information about secondary transition, contact **Dr. Patricia Anderson** at [patricia.anderson@ct.gov](mailto:patricia.anderson@ct.gov).

## SPDG

The State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) is beginning to plan for its final year of activity. Projects under this grant are carried out by the State Education Resource Center, Southern Connecticut State University, Birth to Three, and the CT Parent Advocacy Center. One activity has been around scaling up evidence-based practices in which positive behavior support (PBS) has been the focus. A number of schools have been identified to be model sites for implementation of PBS and are now focusing on scaling up their work both within district and with partner districts. Please contact **Julia Case** at **860-632-1485, ext. 388**, or [case@ctserc.org](mailto:case@ctserc.org) for more information.

## Birth to Three DVD

Birth to Three has completed a DVD and training manual for child care providers and families around best practices. Contact **Deb Resnick** at **860-418-6151** or [deb.resnick@ct.gov](mailto:deb.resnick@ct.gov) for more information.



*Required\**  
**CMT/CAPT Skills Checklist Training**  
**2010-11 School Year**

\*Special Education teachers who will be administering the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) or Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) Skills Checklist during the 2010-11 school year who have not received CSDE training during the 2007-08, 2008-09, or 2009-10 school years, or the CSDE Certified Rater Training, must attend one of the half-day sessions of this REQUIRED training prior to test administration in March 2011.

Please note these are the **only** Skills Checklist training sessions offered for the 2010-11 school year. Participants will attend either an AM session or a PM session. Training session dates are as follows:

Tues., August 17	SERC Classroom, Middletown (AM session only)
Wed., August 18	SERC Classroom, Middletown (AM session only)
Thurs., Sept. 30	ACES, Hamden
Fri., Oct. 1	CES, 25 Oakview Drive, Trumbull
Tues., Oct. 5	CREC, Coltsville Building, Hartford
Thurs., Oct. 7	LEARN, Old Lyme
Wed., Oct. 13	EASTCONN, Hampton
Thurs., Oct. 14	EdConnection, Litchfield

AM sessions run from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

PM sessions run from 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

District test coordinators will also receive registration information. SERC will be processing the online registration and CEUs.

**CMT or CAPT Skills Checklist Certified Rater Training**

This required second-level training is now provided as professional development through an online training format.

\* Special Education teachers who will be administering the CMT or CAPT Skills Checklist during the 2010-11 school year who received initial training in the 2006-07 school year (and need training in 2009-10) or received training in the 2007-08 school year (and need training in 2010-2011) are required to complete and pass the online Certified Rater Training that is available as of May 1, 2010. Please refer to the "Teachers Trained Skills Checklist" list provided at:

<http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/common/ChecklistTrainingParticipants10-2009.pdf>.

**These teachers must pass the Certified Rater Training by March 1, 2011.** District test coordinators will be receiving specific information about accessing this training.

**Participants must register for the training online at <http://www.ctserc.org>.**

If you have questions or concerns, please contact:

**Janet Stuck**  
 Education Consultant  
 Special Populations  
 Bureau of Student Assessment  
**860-713-6837**  
[janet.stuck@ct.gov](mailto:janet.stuck@ct.gov)

**Joe Amenta**  
 Education Consultant  
 Special Populations  
 Bureau of Student Assessment  
**860-713-6855**  
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## More Information on SRBI

The CSDE continues its collaborative work to strengthen and refine the guidance around SRBI, Connecticut's framework for RTI. The department has developed the following publications for use by districts and schools, as they build upon and improve their system of SRBI in Connecticut public schools.

### Certification of SRBI Coordinators and Interventionists

A one-page guidance document specific to certification requirements of individuals coordinating SRBI within a district and those serving in the role of interventionist is available on the CSDE Web site at the following link under School/District Resources:

<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&q=322020>.

### Paraprofessional Publications

The CSDE has developed two documents to provide guidance and support to schools and districts in the implementation of the SRBI framework. The first document, "A Paraprofessionals Guide to SRBI," is designed to provide paraprofessionals with a brief overview of the framework. The second, "Questions and Answers from the SERC Paraprofessional Conference SRBI Panel," answers common questions regarding paraprofessional training and supervision. Many districts are incorporating both documents into their professional development programs for both teachers and paraprofessionals. These documents are available on the CSDE Web site at [www.ct.gov/sde/SRBI](http://www.ct.gov/sde/SRBI).

Questions can be directed to: **Perri Murdica**, 860-713-6942 or at [perri.murdica@ct.gov](mailto:perri.murdica@ct.gov), **Mary Anne Butler**, 860-713- 6737 or at [maryanne.butler@ct.gov](mailto:maryanne.butler@ct.gov), or **Iris White**, 860-713-6794 or at [iris.white@ct.gov](mailto:iris.white@ct.gov).

### School Counselors/Social Workers: E-Mail Dissemination Lists

Through a collaborative grant with the Department of Public Health and the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services regarding transition and health care, the CSDE is developing two e-mail dissemination lists and databases, one for school counselors in the middle and high schools in each district and one for all district social workers. As the department, and indeed the entire state, moves to providing all information electronically, it has become clear that school counselors and social workers as a whole have no means of directly receiving electronic communications.

The CSDE will maintain these databases and will disseminate information specifically related only to the roles of school counselors and school social workers such as professional development opportunities, resources, scholarship applications, information for parents/families, and leadership sessions for students. Commensurate with state policy, the CSDE does not distribute advertisements for products or services and does not recommend, endorse or promote specific products and services.

Since these are state databases, they will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act and thus could be requested for use by others. The University of Connecticut is collecting contact information through electronic communication with special education directors.

For further information about these e-mail dissemination lists, contact **Dr. Patricia Anderson** at 860-713-6923 or at [patricia.anderson@ct.gov](mailto:patricia.anderson@ct.gov).

### Secondary Transition: Post-School Outcomes Survey Report

The "Connecticut Post-School Outcomes Survey: 2007 Exiters of Special Education Services" and its corresponding Executive Summary are now available online on the Bureau's home page under Publications, Secondary Transition. The full report may be found at

<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/OUTCOMESsurvey08.pdf>.

The report's Executive Summary may be found at

<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/special/ExSumOUTCOMESsurvey08.pdf>.

### Nondiscrimination Statement

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## Who Is Your Parent Liaison?

In order to build bridges between home and school, many districts and schools are employing parent liaisons, also known by titles such as family-school coordinator or parent resource director.

These staff conduct outreach programs and activities designed to help teachers and families enhance communication and develop strong partnerships to support student learning. The CSDE recently requested that superintendents and principals identify staff in their districts and schools who are serving as parent liaisons.

Identified parent liaisons will receive information about resources and training opportunities offered through the statewide School-Family-Community Partnership (SFCP) Project. This project helps educators, parents and community members develop partnerships by providing training, workshops, a newsletter and a collection of books, curricula and other resources. The CSDE, in collaboration with the CT Parent Information and Resource Center (CT PIRC), will maintain the network of parent liaisons in Connecticut.

### Networking Session for District Parent Liaisons

The first networking activity for district-level parent liaisons was scheduled for **Thursday, May 20, 2010**, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Water's Edge Conference Center in Westbrook. For more information, please contact **Judy Carson** at **860-807-2122** or [judy.carson@ct.gov](mailto:judy.carson@ct.gov).

### LRE Information Update

The CSDE, Bureau of Special Education held a facilitated dialogue about Students with Disabilities in the Least Restrictive Environment on Tuesday, May 4, 2010, at CREC in Hartford.

The conversation at this, and all LRE information sessions, is driven by the audience and focuses not on individual situations but on more general concerns and questions. After the sessions, there is always an opportunity for participants to submit their individual concerns specific to their children/students for follow-up from a CSDE consultant.

SERC and CSDE advertise the forums in both **English** and **Spanish**.

