

The Bureau Bulletin



From the Bureau of Special Education

Brief from the Chief



Spring is a time ripe with change and rebirth. New growth surrounds us and warmer weather has overtaken what was one of the most severe Connecticut winters on record. Just as our environment is undergoing this renewal, so too are our Web-site and the Bureau Bulletin.

From the [Connecticut State Department of Education \(CSDE\) Web site](#) home page, a simple click on “Special Education” under Quicklinks will allow you to review the reorganized [Bureau of Special Education \(BSE\) Resources Web page](#).

Over time, several areas of specialization, once needing only small portions of the Web page, have grown significantly. Focused monitoring, secondary transition, the PPT process and IEP forms have each received their own designated Web pages, making the information more accessible and easier to reference.

Resources have been organized into two categories: those related to program improvement and those related to compliance and monitoring. Using these two strands, readers can quickly scan through related topics to find the information they seek. In addition to these topical strands, several links have been added, now making information routinely accessed by special education professionals and parents accessible directly from our Web page. The National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY), Special Education Data Application and Collection (SEDAC), and professional development opportunities through the State Education Resource Center (SERC) are the newest of these added links.

Those who were familiar with our Web page will quickly note that items contained formerly in the “Publications” section have been redistributed or have received their own designations. “Special Education Publications” now contain best practice and parent/family resources. Also within this section, documents that were once referred to as Guidelines are now delineated as eligibility documents or guidance documents and topic briefs. All information related to the state performance plan (SPP) has been consolidated under its Web page as has secondary transition. A new look and feel to this information reminds us of how dynamic our world of special education can be. Click [here](#) for more of this article.

Mark Your Calendars...

- ED166 - Discipline – Timely Due Date: **July 20, 2011**
- ED166 - Discipline – Accurate Due Date: **August 20, 2011**
- Due Process Resolution Meetings – Timely/Accurate Due Date: **August 9, 2011**
- Evaluation Timelines – Timely Due Date: **August 15, 2011**
- Evaluation Timelines – Accurate Due Date: **August 31, 2011**
- Exiters PSIS/SEDAC – Timely Due Date: **September 15, 2011**
- Exiters PSIS/SEDAC – Accurate Due Date: **September 30, 2011**
- PSIS Summer Roll up – Timely Due Date: **September 15, 2011**
- PSIS Summer Roll up – Accurate Due Date: **September 30, 2011**
- Click [here](#) for the updated 2011-2012 Timely and Accurate calendar!

Spring 2011



QUICK LINKS:

The Procedural Safeguards Document has been extensively revised. Please see [p. 4](#) for the full article.

2011 Transition Services [Survey](#) Your Assistance is Requested!

NEW Email [Dissemination Database](#) for School Psychologists.



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Focused Monitoring and Academic Achievement: Notes from the Field



The Bureau of Special Education has been working with districts with a focus on improving the academic achievement of students with disabilities (SWDs). As noted in the Winter 2010-11 Bureau Bulletin, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) conducted follow-up meetings with a number of districts demonstrating such improvement to better understand the strategies, trends and challenges that supported the increase of SWDs meeting proficiency. The Bureau has reported some of this information to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) under Indicator 3 of the state’s Annual Performance Report (APR) submitted on February 1, 2011.

Common Trends

All districts were at different points in the implementation of their Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) framework, developing and implementing district and school improvement plans and looking at student achievement. It is critical to note that no district was able to point out anything that was done differently for SWDs; that the strategies and improvement in the data were systemic and affected all students. Therefore, special education benefitted as well. Six common trends were shared among most of the districts, in no specific order:

- A number of districts aligned their curriculum with state standards and subsequently scrutinized individualized education programs (IEPs) to ensure goals and objectives were also aligned with state standards. Staff were held accountable for fidelity of implementing the curriculum via classroom walkthroughs and ensuring curriculum revision committees included a broad representation of staff. Districts were intent on providing a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all students. No matter which district schools they attended, students would have the same experiences as other grade-level peers district wide.
- Progress monitoring was noted as a component of their school improvement process that created a change in culture for the staff and accountability for individual students. Districts noted that examining the data of individual students as opposed to looking at the data in groups, classes, grades or school, made a great difference. As a practice, progress monitoring data allowed staff to know how to adjust instruction or re-teach immediately and provide targeted interventions or strategies to students not demonstrating progress or understanding. Also, staff believed that progress monitoring was something occurring in special education for many years, and now everyone, including general education staff, is speaking the same language and understanding data and accountability in the same ways.
- The use of common formative assessments allowed staff consistent ways of comparing student strengths and weaknesses, speaking the same language classroom to classroom and sharing instructional strategies that had become universal for all students among colleagues. Also, common formative assessments were aligned with the Connecticut Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) and state standards, to which the statewide assessments are aligned. Some districts noted they are looking at the national Common Core State Standards (CCSS), recently adopted by the CSDE, to continue the work in revising curriculum and aligning all components of their instruction. Districts were intent on noting that, when paired with progress monitoring, a culture of trust and buy-in was produced, thus allowing the entire staff to become united and collaborate in a much more meaningful manner.



Click [here](#) for more of this article.

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Four “T”s Equal Positive Transitions

Talk. Time. Teach. Together. There is a lot to be said of the transition when children move from the state’s early intervention system, Birth to Three, to special education. The Connecticut State Department of Education often receives telephone calls from parents, Birth to Three providers, school district personnel and advocates who wish to better understand this transition process. In some cases the calls are related to something that went awry and the call received is intended to initiate a complaint.



Over the years, many professionals have had the opportunity to become more expert in the expected transition process, the federally required timelines and the use of various forms to document activities between Birth to Three System and special education. Timelines, what forms a district uses, and when those forms are used are often related to federal and/or state legislation governing special education. What lies at the crux of most challenging issues cannot be measured by meeting a timeline or filling out a form; it has to do with relationships.

There are four “T”s that are central to making sure that transitions are positive and that positive relationships with parents and the school districts begin as early as possible in that transition process. Those “T”s of positive transitions include:

Click [here](#) for more of this article.

Birth to Three Referrals of Children Receiving Services “At No Cost”

School districts should be aware that families with an pay a fee for the Birth to Three services provided to their eligible infant or toddler with a disability.

There are Birth to Three services that must be offered at “no cost” to families. No-cost services in the Birth to Three System include: evaluation, development of an individualized family service plan (IFSP) for eligible infants and toddlers and service coordination.

Service coordination includes the referral of a toddler with a disability to the child’s school district for an evaluation to determine if that child is eligible for special education and related services. The service coordinator is responsible for convening a transition conference with the appropriate participants, developing a transition plan, assisting the family to carry out this plan, and attending, with parent consent, the child’s planning and placement team (PPT) meetings. Service coordination activities are the same for a family who is receiving Birth to Three services as it is for a family who is opting to only accept those services that can be provided at no cost to them.

Currently there are a number of families who have a child with a disability who is nearing the age of three and who have accepted only those services that are provided at no cost to the family by the Birth to Three System. These children have been evaluated by Birth to Three and have been determined to be an eligible toddler with a disability. The families of these children have not accepted the offer of direct early intervention services but have accepted those services which the Birth to Three System is obligated to provide at no cost, including service coordination and support through the transition process.

Click [here](#) for more of this article.

Early Childhood Special Education Reminders:

The IEP Page 12: Placement/Settings for Students ages 3 through 5

The State Department of Education released an updated page 12 of the individualized education program (IEP) document in October, 2010. Page 12 of the IEP document is often referred to as the *data collection page*. The major change on the data collection page is related to the information collected and reported on the *placement/settings* (e.g., *educational environments*) for children ages 3 through 5 with an IEP. The state data collection, based upon the new page 12, will take place on October 1st, 2011. The Department is reminding school districts that all IEPs for children ages 3 through 5 must include the ‘new’ page 12 in order to ensure that valid and reliable data on the placement/settings is in place for the October 1st data collection through SEDAC.

Student: _____	DOB: _____	District: _____	Meeting Date: _____
Required Data Collection (Collect and/or update at every PPT)			
For Children 3 years of age			
Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) by age 3: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
If the Oct 1 st reported Annual Review/PPT Meeting Date and child's DOB indicate that the child did not receive FAPE by their 3 rd birthday, why?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Late referral (less than 90 days before 3 rd birthday)	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved into district late	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Child initially found not eligible at age 3 (re-referred to district at a later date)	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent Choice	<input type="checkbox"/> FAPE met via earlier PPT. Date of initial PPT was _____	
Placement/Settings for students 3 or younger OR grade is preschool:			
1. Provide the hours per week the child participates in an early childhood program which is not provided as a part of the IEP (hours from pg 2): _____			
2. Identify the placement/setting where the child spends the majority of their week which is a combination of programming from both pages 2 AND 11:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Preschool or Kindergarten Program – includes 50% or more non-disabled children	<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Special Education Program in Separate Class – includes less than 50% non-disabled children	<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Special Education Program in Residential Facility – includes less than 50% non-disabled children	
<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Special Education Program in Separate School – includes less than 50% non-disabled children	<input type="checkbox"/> Home	<input type="checkbox"/> Service Provider Location (Itinerant Services) – applies only when a child does not spend time in any environment with non-disabled peers	
Education Placement 3 to 21 years of age			
1. Early Intervention Participant (EIP) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
2. Primary reason for Educational Location			
<input type="checkbox"/> PPT	<input type="checkbox"/> Open Choice (Parent Placement)	<input type="checkbox"/> Interim Alternative Education Setting (IAES)	<input type="checkbox"/> Court Order
<input type="checkbox"/> Charter School (Parental Choice)	<input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary School (Parental Choice)	<input type="checkbox"/> Expulsion	<input type="checkbox"/> District transition/vocational program or age appropriate community based program
<input type="checkbox"/> CHSS (Parental Choice)	<input type="checkbox"/> Service plan only (Parent Placement in Private School)	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/BOE Settlement Agreement	<input type="checkbox"/> Mediation Agreement (reached with participation of an SDE mediator)
<input type="checkbox"/> Inter-district Magnet (Parental Choice)	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical (Hospital or Homebound)	<input type="checkbox"/> Due Process Hearing	<input type="checkbox"/> Resolution Agreement (reached through a resolution session held in relation to a parent's due process hearing request)
<input type="checkbox"/> Residential Facility (District 339 only)	<input type="checkbox"/> Municipal Detention Center (Imprisoned, Harried, New Haven)	<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Home	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Educational Restriction / Treatment Boundary (must answer 3a - who initiated non-educational restriction/treatment boundary)
<input type="checkbox"/> District Facility	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Detention Center	<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent Family Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Supportive housing/housing subsidized by _____
		<input type="checkbox"/> Safe Home	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residential Treatment Center
			<input type="checkbox"/> Homeless appropriate community based program
			<input type="checkbox"/> None (Awaiting Placement)

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Early Childhood Outcome (ECO) Requirement

Spring and the days until summer break are soon to be upon us. This is a reminder to all school districts that school staff should now be planning for and administering the Brigance IED-II (2004) in order to collect **post-test information** to meet the Early Childhood Outcome (ECO) requirement for those children exiting the preschool grade and moving on to kindergarten in the fall. For questions related to Early Childhood Special Education please contact Maria Synodi at maria.synodi@ct.org or (860) 713-6941.



CHANGE to the Notice of Planning and Placement Team Meeting Invite form (ED 623)

In addition, the Department has revised the Notice of Planning and Placement Team Meeting Invite form (ED 623) to support districts in their efforts to be in compliance with the transition student and outside agency invitation regulations. The new form requires staff to indicate if students and outside agencies have been invited. Not only will these minor changes to the invite form remind staff to invite the appropriate individuals to the transition planning PPT, but it will also serve as your documentation that the invitation occurred. At this time, this revised form is being provided as a tool to be used at the district's discretion to help to ensure compliance in secondary transition. Districts will be required to use the new Invite form (ED 623) as of July 1, 2011. To view a copy of the revised form click [here](#).



Procedural Safeguard Revisions effective July 1, 2011

The Procedural Safeguards document has been extensively revised. You will notice immediately the format has changed which has resulted in a longer document that is easier to read. The Bureau utilized the model form made available by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), US Department of Education and adapted the model form for use in Connecticut with the inclusion of Connecticut specific requirements. The revision was reviewed with OSEP to ensure compliance with the IDEA procedural safeguards. The Bureau also received input and responded to concerns raised by the State Advisory Council, as required by IDEA, concerning the current procedural safeguards document, the request being to make the document readable and easier to understand. Further revision may be necessary as a result of final votes taken on proposed legislation currently awaiting action by the state legislature.

At this time, the Bureau is having the document translated into Spanish for posting to the Bureau Website. The revised Procedural Safeguards document is effective July 1, 2011. Each district is encouraged to make the Procedural Safeguards document available through electronic mail as is permitted by 34 CFR 300.505 which states: "A parent of a child with a disability may elect to receive notices required by Sections 300.503, 300.504 and 300.508 by an electronic mail communication, if the public agency makes that option available." Click [here](#) to view a copy of the revised Procedural Safeguards document.

New Secondary Transition Topic Briefs

The Bureau of [Special Education Web page/Secondary Transition Resources](#) is home to two new secondary transition topic briefs. The first, [Post-School Outcome Goal Statements - Guidelines for Writing](#) details guidance related to the creation of Post School Outcome Goals Statements (PSOGS) as well as annual transition goals for student with disabilities. Attendees and evaluations from CSDE transition-related workshops have indicated how extremely valuable this information has been. It has now been reformatted and re-released as a topic brief to assist those who were not in attendance.

[Post-School Outcome Goal Statements - Sample Statements](#), the second new topic brief, presents an extensive sampling of PSOGS that address each of the three secondary transition areas in which PSOGS may be written: postsecondary education or training, employment, and independent living skills. Combination goal statements are included as well as PSOGS designed to meet the needs of students new to transition planning, or who have not yet developed a clear sense of their postsecondary life. Again, having found that workshop participants realized this information extremely valuable, it has been formatted into a topic brief and made available on the Bureau's Web page. For more information related to these two new topic briefs please contact Patricia Anderson at patricia.anderson@ct.gov, (860) 713-6923 or Jay Brown at jay.brown@ct.gov, (860) 713-6918.

SPP Indicator #13: Ensuring Compliance in Secondary Transition

2010-11 SEDAC data have been finalized and district compliance with Secondary Transition continues to be a statewide issue. There are three ways to be in noncompliance with Secondary Transition:

- Failure to write transition goals and objectives for students age 16 and older;
- Failure to invite the student to the Transition Planning PPT; and/or
- Failure to invite/consider inviting an outside agency to the Transition Planning PPT.

In order to ensure compliance for October 2011, districts should review the IEP of every student who will be 16 years old on 10/1/11 (i.e., all such IEPs that have been written since October 1, 2010).

- Was the student invited?
- Was the appropriateness of inviting outside agencies to the transition planning PPT considered?
- Were transition goals and objectives written for the student?

Below are some frequently asked questions and answers you can use to guide your review of each of these student's IEPs.

Student Invited to PPT? (IEP Pg. 6, #2a)

Q-What if we already held the Annual Review and planned transition services, but the student was not invited and did not attend the transition planning PPT?

If the student was not invited, the district must send out another invitation that includes the student, and hold a new transition planning PPT. All instructional AND support staff should be trained to make sure that ALL students are invited to the PPT where transition is being discussed.

Click [here](#) for more of this article.

IDEA Fiscal Year 12 grant application

Effective March 31, 2011 the federal IDEA grant for the period of July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2013 will be available on the Special Education section of the Connecticut State Department of Education's website ([RFA:118 Special Education Grant Programs FY 2012](#)). This grant is the yearly entitlement grant for all local education agencies (LEA). Applications will only be accepted from Connecticut public school districts. Grants must be submitted in hard copy by May 13, 2011 to Brian Cunnane at the Bureau of Special Education. Questions may be directed to Brian at brian.cunnane@ct.gov or 860-713-6919.

IDEA Program/Fiscal Compliance Review

For the past few months school districts in the catchment areas of two of Connecticut's Regional Educational Service Centers (RESC), CREC and EASTCONN, have been completing their IDEA Program/Fiscal Compliance Review for submission to the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education. This process is part of the Bureau's efforts to comply with the federal government's fiscal accountability of federal funds that are distributed yearly to local school districts. School districts in the other four RESC regions will complete their IDEA Program/Fiscal Compliance Review during the next two years. School districts in the ACES and Ed Connection regions are scheduled for review in 2011-12 while those in the CES and LEARN regions are scheduled in 2012-13.

Each school district must submit a desk audit, with additional, extensive documentation, addressing various program and fiscal compliance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA). This documentation includes school board policies, district procedures, district budgets, specific purchase orders using federal funds to buy equipment, internal tracking systems and other requirements of the IDEA. A copy of the desk audit form may be viewed by clicking [here](#). This oversight of fiscal accountability and transparency, especially of the federal funds provided under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), has become a major focus of the federal Office of Special Education Programs. More information related to this review will be presented by Brian Cunnane at a New Special Education Administrator's Forum in December 2011. However, in the interim, questions may be directed to Brian Cunnane at brian.cunnane@ct.org or 860-713-6919.



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Transition/Vocational Service Providers – NEW Searchable Database

The long-awaited Web-based database of providers of transition/vocational services (Community Rehabilitation Providers - CRPs) is finally available on the Connect-Ability Web site: (<http://www.ctbrs.org/crp/>). The Connecticut Community Rehabilitation Provider (CT CRP) Searchable Database is a resource to assist youth and young adults with disabilities, their families, school districts, agencies and other professionals find independent living and workforce supports and related services.

This database was developed as a partnership of state agencies, families and young adults with disabilities through Connect-Ability. Included in the CT CRP database are providers used by the following state agencies: local school districts affiliated with the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS), Department of Developmental Services (DDS), Board of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB), and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). This database will be updated with new providers on a regular basis via Connect-Ability and the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services.

Use this site to learn about community rehabilitation programs and other transition service providers that can help with job development and training, transition assessment, job coaching, independent living, and other assistance necessary to help youth with disabilities enter the workforce.

Find out about the school-to-work transition services and options offered by Connecticut Community Rehabilitation Providers. Search for a specific program/provider or search by area served, type of service, groups served, or funding agency with whom the provider works. For more information, please contact Pat Anderson at patricia.anderson@ct.gov or (860) 713-6923.

Make Sure You Get Proper Credit for All of Your Special Education Graduates!



A review of the 2009-10 exit data for students with disabilities resulted in questions as to the validity of the exit data reported in the Public School Information System (PSIS). There were several items that rose to the top as requiring clarification to the field.

One such item involved PSIS exit dates that appear to be reported incorrectly. For example, a spring PPT determines that the student will exit special education by graduating with a standard high school diploma in June. PSIS exit data reports *Nexus District Exit Date* of the spring PPT (indicating exit from special education services) and *Nexus District Exit Date* of June 2010 with an *Exit Reason* of graduation. In this scenario, the exit is recorded as a special education student returning to general education and then that general education student (formerly recorded as a special education student) graduating with a standard diploma.

While there may be legitimate scenarios where students with disabilities are exited from special education just prior to graduation with a standard diploma, the number of these situations in the current PSIS data seems to be too large to be reflective of the true circumstances.

It is important to distinguish between the date the *decision* was made that the student would exit upon graduation and the date the student *actually exits* special education. In order to ensure that graduation data is being correctly reported in the PSIS, data entered must reflect the actual exit date. In most cases, it is anticipated that the *District Exit Date* for a graduating special education student would be the same as the *Nexus District Exit Date* from special education.

Another recurring item involved exit dates recorded as occurring during July and August. It is critical that the exit date for students who graduate in the spring be a date no later than June 30th. Exit dates for graduates in July and August should only be used for summer school graduates and will count in the next school year (Federal Fiscal Year is defined as July 1 – June 30 for OSEP reporting purposes).

A final item which requires clarification centers around students who exit because they have “reached the maximum age for services”. In these cases, students must be 20 (because the student will turn 21 during the reporting year) or 21 on the exit date in order to report this exit reason. There is a new edit check in PSIS to ensure the proper reporting of these students.

For questions related to this article, please contact Laura Guerrero at laura.guerrera@ct.gov or Diane Murphy at diane.murphy@ct.gov. PSIS Contacts can contact Kendra Shakir at kendra.shakir@ct.gov.

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Fall Hiring Report: Designation of Teacher Shortage Areas, 2010-11

The Fall Hiring Survey is an annual collection of employment data, principally for certified educational positions, designed to track employment trends and identify teacher shortage areas. Results from the 2010 Fall Hiring Survey were used to determine the shortage areas for the 2011-12 school year. Employment data related to special education and related services is included in this report. School districts may utilize the shortage area designations to rehire retired teachers and administrators who are not subject to earnings limits. The Fall Hiring Survey Report is now available by clicking *Data Bulletins* at: <http://sdeportal.ct.gov/Cedar/WEB/ResearchandReports/DataBulletins.aspx>.

New Directors' Forum

The CSDE, Bureau of Special Education hosts regular training and technical assistance for Administrators of Special Services new to Connecticut or simply new to the position. We are currently reviewing the needs of the field to inform future offerings and are seeking your input. While Special Education administrators certainly need to have a thorough understanding related to all areas of special education, there may be topics that have risen to the top as needing more attention; topics on which you feel there is a need for more guidance, technical assistance or clarification. If you have suggestions regarding areas on which to focus when we are planning future New Special Education Administrator's Forums, please email Jay Brown at jay.brown@ct.org. Please place "New Special Education Administrator's Forum" in the subject line.



Stepping Stones for Children to host Disability Awareness Exhibit



This summer, Stepping Stones for Children, a children's museum in Norwalk, will be hosting the Access/Ability exhibit. Produced by the Boston Children's Museum, Access/Ability is an interactive, yet sensitive disability awareness exhibit that delivers the message to children, parents and educators that as human beings, we are more alike than different. This unique experience presents people living with disabilities as participants in the world and features fun and engaging activities that show the similarities and differences in how each of us, with or without disabilities, go places, communicate, have fun, and learn. Visitors will have a chance to learn phrases in American Sign Language, type their name in Braille, try a hand-pedaled bike and take part in a multisensory City Walk.

Access/Ability is designed as a disability awareness exhibit showing that all persons are participants in the world regardless of ability. The goals of the exhibit are targeted to change attitudes, dispel myths, fears and stereotypes, and increase participants' awareness of people living with disabilities by acknowledging differences, while highlighting similarities and commonalities.

The main messages of the exhibit focus on developing inclusive thinking and practices. Themes revolve around activity-embedded learning in which it becomes clear that we are all participants in the world, but may need to accomplish things in different ways; all of us at some point in our lives will experience some form of disability, whether acquired through an accident or through the mere process of aging; and the way in which we design our physical environment has an impact on peoples'

abilities to participate. All of these messages serve to help redirect the "us" versus "them" mentality; a more inclusive and holistic way of thinking.

Check the Web site for further information at www.stepsingstonesmuseum.org. For more information related to this article please contact Rhonda Kempton at rhonda.kempton@ct.gov or (860) 713-6924.

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Unified Theater™ and Unified Sports®



Looking for ways to increase student participation in school and community activities and develop leadership skills at the same time? Two organizations that consistently have provided avenues for participation by students with disabilities with their nondisabled peers in extracurricular activities while simultaneously letting students of all abilities develop leadership skills are Unified Theater and Unified Sports.

In Unified Theater™, students take the lead in each and every element of a production. Directors, writers, lighting chiefs, choreographers, fundraisers, musicians, producers, stage managers, and actors - you name it, students do it; supported and guided by knowledgeable staff members.

By working within districts, Unified Theater™ pushes schools to become more inclusive and creative.

Participants develop a positive identity outside of their disability or social status. Students transform into leaders, activists, storytellers, educators, and artists who radically change their schools and communities. In Unified Theater™, there are no partners, helpers, buddies, or any other classification of participants based on ability. Each member participates as an absolute equal who's capable of unique contributions throughout the process. Visit the Web site located at <http://www.unifiedtheater.org> to learn more.

Unified Sports® is active in communities around the world, from the United States to Southeast Asia. Special Olympics® athletes and their non-disabled peers practice and play together on Unified Sports® teams. By having fun together in a variety of sports ranging from basketball to golf to figure skating, Unified Sports® athletes and partners improve their physical fitness, sharpen their skills, challenge the competition and help to overcome prejudices about intellectual disability.

The Unified Sports® School Based model in Connecticut allows for students with and without intellectual disabilities to participate in school sponsored sports activities including soccer, basketball, volleyball, bowling, and track and field. In addition to these valuable activities, student leaders are participants in a statewide leadership summit at Wesleyan University and are recognized at an awards banquet in the spring. A new leadership council is now in operation spreading the word about Unified Sports® and encouraging other school leaders to make their schools more tolerant, caring and inclusive.

Special Olympics Unified Sports® is fun for all ages – but is particularly powerful as an educational tool in schools. Teachers have reported the program to be extremely effective at integrating youth, promoting physical activity and inspiring leadership. Dignity, acceptance, and a chance to reach one's potential, human rights worth promoting for everyone, are embedded within the framework of the activities. Visit the Connecticut Association of Schools Web site located at <http://www.casciac.org/ciacunifiedsports> for more information.

The Bureau of Special Education supports each of these organizations so they may better provide services to students and schools. To reach the author of this article please contact Rhonda Kempton at rhonda.kempton@ct.gov or (860) 713-6924.

Federal Focus

Guidance on the Use of SRBI as Related to Child Find Obligations

In May 2011, Acting Commissioner of Education George Coleman issued a memo to Superintendents of Schools based on a January 2010 communication from the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The purpose of Dr. Coleman's memo was to ensure that all Local Education Agencies (LEAs) were aware of OSEP's guidance to states regarding the Response to Intervention (RTI) process and evaluation for eligibility under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
Click [here](#) for more of this article.

New ADA Rules Expanding Accessibility Standards Take Effect

The U.S. Department of Justice announced that revised regulations governing the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA) took effect March 15, 2011. These new rules are the department's first major revision of its guidance on accessibility in 20 years. They include requirements on making swimming pools, parks, golf courses and other recreation facilities accessible for individuals with disabilities, and apply to more than 80,000 units of state and local government and more than seven million places of public accommodation. The amended regulations also contain many new or expanded provisions on general nondiscrimination policies, include selling tickets for wheelchair-accessible seating at entertainment venues and guaranteeing accessible rooms at hotels. For more information related to the revisions click [here](#).

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PD Available on Implementing LD Guidelines

Are you looking for professional development options during the summer, or planning ahead for professional development next year? Connecticut school districts are invited to pre-register professionals for an ongoing online course that will train them to facilitate teams that make learning disability determinations. Pre-registration will be available [here](#) beginning May 23. The course will be available on July 1.

The three-part course is free and can accommodate unlimited staff per district. Participants will self-pace their learning, respond to prompts through a SERC online message board supported by CSDE consultants, and answer content-based questions. Upon completion, facilitators will receive access to instructional materials needed to implement team-based professional development regarding LD eligibility determination in their respective schools.

A summary of the course is below. If you have any questions, please e-mail them to ldguidelines@ctserc.org.

Title: Building District Capacity to Implement Connecticut's 2010 Guidelines for Identifying Children with Learning Disabilities: An Online Course for Facilitators

Audience: general and special education administrators and supervisors, literacy coordinators/teachers, general education teachers, special education teachers, and student support services professionals

Prerequisites:

1. a well-grounded understanding of the essential constructs of *Using Scientific Research-Based Interventions: Improving Education for All Students* (2008) and *Connecticut's 2010 Guidelines for Identifying Children with Learning Disabilities (LD)*;
2. an understanding of data derived from literacy assessments administered in general and special education; and
3. the facilitation skills needed to guide group dialogue.

Outcomes:

Participants in this professional development will acquire the knowledge and skills needed to:

- facilitate the learning of school teams engaged in improving academic outcomes for students experiencing difficulty learning to read; and
- guide fidelity of implementation of *Connecticut's 2010 Guidelines for the Identifying Children with Learning Disabilities* for eligibility determination.

Fee: None

CEUs: 3.0



Start/End Dates: ongoing registration

Clarifying the Roles of Speech-Language Pathology Assistants/Aides in Your Schools

The State Education Resource Center (SERC) has prepared a Web-based tutorial for administrators and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) interested in clarifying the roles of speech-language pathology assistants/aides (SLPAs) in schools. This self-guided professional development can be completed in one to two hours and describes the types of work in which SLPAs may engage as well as the supervision they require. Several original tools are included to explore readiness for using SLPAs, supervision strategies, and a format for reciprocal reflection between SLPs and SLPAs. Financial considerations are also addressed via a cost comparison. This is a free tutorial – no registration required. Please click [here](#) to access this tutorial.

Supporting Students' Communication Needs in CT Schools with SLP Assistants and Aides (SLPAs)

A Self-Guided Tutorial

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Thompson Public Schools



Click [here](#) for Bulletin Web Site References

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Web-based Resources from the CSDE

As you conduct the important work that you do, keep in mind that the CSDE Web site has many resources to assist you! Click on any of the following links to view just a few or find them at: www.sde.ct.gov

[Agency Circular Letters](#)

(communications from the Commissioners of Education 1999-2011)

[Approved Private Programs](#)

[Bureau Bulletin Archives](#)

[CMT/CAPT information, forms, etc.](#)

[Connecticut Education Data and Research portal \(CEDaR\)](#)

[Focused Monitoring](#)

[Guidelines](#)

(for varied services as well as the identification of specific disability areas)

[IEP Manual and Forms](#)

[Legal/Due Process](#)

[Model Special Education Policies and Procedures Manual](#)

[Secondary Transition](#)

Building a Bridge: Transition Manual for Students [[English](#)] [[Spanish](#)]

[Post-school Outcome Goal Statements FAQs](#)

[Summary of Performance FAQs](#)

[Writing Transition Goals and Objectives](#)

[Settlement Agreement](#)

[Staff Directory \(Bureau of Special Education\)](#)

[State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report Web site](#)

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