

On-Site Monitoring Purpose and Process

Vermont is a state with a demonstrated commitment to quality and equity in education and a legacy of public engagement; and as such is committed to improving learning outcomes for all students. The Agency envisions that each and every learner completes his or her public education with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in college, continuing education, careers, and citizenship. To accomplish its goals, the mission of the Agency, and the State Board of Education, is to provide leadership, support, and oversight to ensure that the Vermont public education system enables each and every student to be successful. To that end, Vermont's special education policies and procedures support federal, state and local implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ([IDEA](#)). Based on the monitoring authority granted below, the AOE is required to ensure that students with disabilities receive FAPE in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

Monitoring Authority: The Agency of Education, as the State Education Authority (SEA), is responsible for the overall provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to students with disabilities in the State of Vermont and does this through the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). At the center of this law is the state's obligation to ensure the delivery of FAPE to all students residing within the state, ages 3 through 21, as prescribed by 34 CFR § 300.101. In ensuring FAPE, the Agency of Education (AOE), is responsible for general supervision and monitoring to ensure that the requirements of IDEA are carried out so that each educational program for children with disabilities meets the educational standards of the SEA, in accordance with 34 CFR §300.149(a), §§300.600 through 300.602, §§300.606 through 300.608, and 20 USCS §1416. In Vermont, supervisory unions and supervisory districts are the local education agencies (LEAs) and are required to provide appropriate special education and related services; while the SEA is required to establish, monitor, and enforce regulations governing special education programs in the Vermont public schools and all institutions wholly or partly supported by the state. [16 VSA §§2941 and 2943]. All parties responsible for special education and related services must abide by state and local policies or procedures, as well as federal regulations for IDEA.

Special Education Program Monitoring – Purpose of On-site Visit: As a result of cyclic monitoring activities conducted during the previous school year, the special education monitoring team may determine that an on-site visit is necessary. On-site visits are conducted to obtain additional data not acquired through cyclic monitoring activities. Data collected through observations, interviews, surveys, and file reviews adhere to the AOE's [data privacy](#) policies for protecting personally identifiable information (PII). Interviews and observations are not intended to be evaluative, but to gather data regarding implementation of education activities necessary for students with disabilities to receive FAPE. Data gathered through monitoring activities are considered confidential and respondents will not be individually identified in any public reporting.

Special Education Program Monitoring – Process for On-site Visit:

On-site visits are facilitated by monitoring teams comprised of employees from multiple divisions within the Agency of Education, as well as special education administrators from other LEAs. On-site visits typically include 1-2 full days of staff interviews, followed by 1-2 days of classroom observations.

Interview teams will conduct 30-45 minute interviews with administrators, general education teachers, special educators, paraprofessionals, guidance counselors and discipline staff. Interview teams are comprised of two members – one to record responses and one to ask questions. Responses will be recorded and the interviewee will be asked to verify the accuracy of the recorded response prior to exiting the interview. There are approximately 20 interview questions, some are role specific and others are common for all interviewees. Input from staff is also requested through an email link to an online survey.

Observations take approximately 30 minutes and are completed for general education classrooms at all grade levels in each school building to evaluate inclusive practices for students with disabilities. Observation items include a review of educational climate and setting, instructional practices and practices to promote individualized instruction.

Parent and family stakeholder input is attained through an email link to an online survey, which also provides an options to request an interview with the monitoring team. When appropriate, focus groups or personal interviews may also occur.

Data from multiple sources are analyzed by the special education program monitoring team to produce a final report which is sent to the special education administrator and the superintendent. This final report identifies common themes and trends, findings of non-compliance [which must be corrected as soon as possible, but not later than one year from the date of the report] and any required improvement activities or sanctions. Final reports are included in an LEAs local special education determination and may be publicly posted on the Agency's website.

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