

# State of the State Report

**With Dr. Jacqui Kelleher  
Vermont's State Director of  
Special Education**

**June 11, 2021**

# Introduction

# Roles and Responsibilities

- State Director of Special Education: [Jacqueline Kelleher, MA, Ph.D.](#)
- Assistant State Director of Special Education: [Chris Kane](#)
- Coordinator for Behavioral Supports: [Tracy Harris](#)
- Early Childhood Special Ed/IDEA 619 Coordinator: [Katie McCarthy](#)
- IDEA Part B Data Manager: [Cassidy Canzani](#)
- Special Education Data Specialist: [Brandon Dall](#)
- Inclusion and Accessibility Coordinator: [Ana Kolbach](#)
- Inclusive Systems Coordinator: [Betty Roy](#)
- Part B Special Ed Program Monitoring Manager: TBA
- Post-Secondary Transition Coordinator: [John Spinney](#)
- Educational Consultant/Ed Surrogate: [Ernie Wheeler](#)
- Special Education Monitoring Specialist: [Simona Kragh](#)
- Inclusive Practices Coordinator: [Alex Langevin](#)
- Special Education Monitoring Technician: [Rebecca Gile](#)
- Early Childhood Inclusion Coordinator: [Amy Murphy](#)
- Education Programs Manager, Interagency Coordinator: [Alicia Hanrahan](#)
- Assessment Coordinator for Special Populations: [Linda Moreno](#)
- For questions on Legal, please contact: [Clare O'Shaughnessy](#)
- For Finance questions: [Brad James](#) or [Jennifer Perry](#)

# State Director - Roles and Responsibilities

- The State Director of Special Education is responsible for ensuring the successful implementation of federal and state statutes and regulations governing the education of students with disabilities, to ensure they meet their post-secondary goals to live, learn, work, and participate in their communities.
- Primary objectives:
  - Increased graduation rates
  - Closing achievement gap
  - Decreased disproportionality
  - **Qualified workforce at state and local levels**
  - **Sustain Vermont's General Supervision System for Special Education**

# Vision Statement

# Our Purpose

- **Agency of Education Purpose Statement**

The Agency of Education implements state and federal laws, policies, and regulations to ensure all Vermont learners have equitable access to high-quality learning opportunities. The Agency accomplishes this mission through the provision of its leadership, support, and oversight of Vermont's public education system.

- **Special Education Vision**

Our team, together with all stakeholders, ensures access, opportunity, and equity by providing solution-based oversight, leadership and support to build capacity and improve student outcomes.

# Federal Updates

# Office of Special Education Programs (1)

- David Cantrell is Acting Director
- Vermont's State Lead from OSEP is Susan Murray.
- OSEP released the IDEA Part B Supplemental ARP funds on June 4, 2021 – AOE guidance will follow.
- OSEP, in collaboration with offices across the U.S. Department of Education (ED), has been working on [COVID-19 Resources for Schools, and Families](#). Topics include the [American Rescue Plan \(ARP\) funds](#), creating safe and healthy learning environments, addressing lost instructional time, and supporting educator and staff well-being, to name a few.

# Office of Special Education Programs (2)

- OSEP received a call to action in support of the Department's Safer Schools and Campuses [Best Practice Clearinghouse](#). The Clearinghouse provides resources for communities, schools, educators, and families as we work together to continue to reopen our schools for in-person learning and support the needs of all students, particularly historically underserved students and those who have been impacted greatest by the pandemic. The Department is seeking additional resources and exemplars on returning to school for children with disabilities. If you have resources or exemplars to share, please send your resource or exemplar to the [Bestpracticesclearinghouse@ed.gov](mailto:Bestpracticesclearinghouse@ed.gov).

# Office of Special Education Programs (3)

On May 26, 2021, the Department released a document to answer [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about how funding under the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, including the American Rescue Plan ESSER (ARP ESSER) program, and the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund may be used in response to the impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic on students in pre-K–12 education.

# Office of Special Education Programs (4)

- A new resource is available from OCR and the Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division: [Confronting COVID-19-Related Harassment in Schools.](#)

# Office of Special Education Programs (5)

- OSEP recommends the IRIS Center handy tip sheets for parents with practical ideas and strategies to support their children with challenges learning remotely:
- [My child says she doesn't like online learning. How can I help?](#)
- [How can I help my elementary child stay focused during online learning?](#)
- [How can I support my teen while he learns online?](#)
- [How can I keep my teen engaged while she learns online?](#)

## Office of Special Education Programs (6)

On Friday, April 9, 2021, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) released the [COVID-19 Handbook, Volume 2: Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting All Students' Needs](#). The handbook provides additional strategies for safely reopening all of America's schools and promotes educational equity by addressing opportunity gaps that have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

# Office of Special Education Programs (7)

OSEP is currently reviewing all States SPP/APR submissions – our OSEP SEA Determination is anticipated on or around June 24, 2021.

OSEP is in receipt of Vermont's IDEA Part B SEA grant application for FY 22 – thank you to those who provided feedback and commentary during the public comment period!

# State Activities

# Some Highlights (1)

- [COVID 19 Preventions Strategies for End of School Year](#)
- [ESSER Funds and ESSER State Plan](#)

# Some Highlights (2)

Rule Changes Workflow

Special Education Advisory Panel

Unmet Needs report

Parent Engagement Survey

Target Setting

Seeking members

# Some Highlights (3)

## Recovery planning and implementation

- Common calendar
- Model Policies and Procedures
- Forms revision over next six months
- Applied for ESSR funds for Statewide IEP system
- Survey to go out on critical shortage area
- Reached out to districts with Recovery Needs Assessments
- Weekly Office Hours
- ESY and Summer Enrichment [memo](#)

# Some Highlights (4)

Significant Disproportionality

TA/PD Focus: Educational Benefit Training  
available to LEAs

State Systemic Improvement Plan

Updated forms for Proportionate Share

# Some Highlights (5)

Critical Shortage Area – Special Education Staff: Survey coming your way!

Monitoring Activities: Close Outs and Preparation for Next Cycle followed by the Local Special Education Determinations.

Impact from COVID – will be reaching out.

# Some Highlights (7)

- For Calendar Year 2021 – SPP/APR focus is on target setting for the 2020-2025 SPP/APR as well as identifying support and resources for improvement activities with current work at hand.
- FFY19 Local APR Reports Posted on the [AOE website](#).
- AOE staff from multiple divisions participating in biweekly data meetings and quarterly program data meetings.
- For Calendar Year 2021 – SPP/APR focus is on target setting for the 2020-2025 SPP/APR as well as identifying support and resources for improvement activities with current work at hand.
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# Some Highlights (8)

- Consultation and project planning with National TA Providers: NCSI, IDC, NTAC, ECTA, CIFR. New partnership with CEEDAR.
- Participation in national TA calls with TA providers and OSEP – representing VT.
- Paraprofessional virtual trainings in progress.
- 1% Waiver letter for the Alt Assessment went to the federal government and was approved.
- CADRE Action Plan in progress.

# Some Highlights (9)

- First ever Co-Teaching Networking meeting.
- Ongoing SSIP coaching/professional development opportunities
- Educational Benefit training -now under the purview of AOE
- New parent Survey

# Some Highlights (10)

Special Education Finance Workflow/processes and deadlines coming in the next three months

- FY22 IDEA-B grant application in process, reviewing
- FY21 Special Education Expense Reports (SEERs) July thru April submitted
- Update for the Act 173 census block grant
- FY21 MOE Excess Cost templates collected, compiled, reviewing
- FY22 MOE Eligibility Standard to be performed

# Some Highlights (11)

## Dispute Resolution

- Held focus groups with parents and Special Education directors regarding unmet dispute resolution needs and proposed changes
- Developed a user-friendly administrative complaint form (printable and virtual)
  - Submittable virtually with a button
- Developed internal task-management salesforce platform to increase organization and efficiency

# Some Highlights (12)

## Dispute Resolution (Upcoming)

- Translating user-friendly admin complaint form to 5 most common languages
- Improving readability of website language and providing more information
- Developing a parent-friendly dispute resolution manual

# SPP APR Target Setting & Stakeholder Engagement

Highlight of the Quarter

# OSEP Changes to Stakeholder Process

- The mechanisms for soliciting broad stakeholder input on the state's targets in the SPP/APR and any subsequent revisions the state has made to those targets, and the development and implementation of Indicator 17, the State's Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP). This must include:
  - The number of parent members and a description of how the parent members of the State Advisory Panel, parent center staff, parents from local and statewide advocacy and advisory committees, and individual parents were engaged in target setting, analyzing data, developing improvement strategies, and evaluating progress.
  - Description of the activities conducted to increase the capacity of diverse groups of parents to support the development of implementation of activities designed to improve outcomes for children with disabilities.
  - The mechanisms and timelines for soliciting public input for target setting, analyzing data, developing improvement strategies, and evaluating progress.
  - The mechanisms and timelines for making the results of the target setting, data analysis, development of the improvement strategies, and evaluation available to the public.

# Indicator Target Setting

1	2	3				4		5			6		
		A	B	C	D	A	B	A	B	C	A	B	C
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

7			8	9	10	11	12	13	14			15	16
A	B	C							A	B	C		
Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

- Y= Target Needed
- N= Target Not Needed, Compliance indicators are preset by OSEP at 0% or 100%

# SPP APR Target Setting Process

- Public Input for Target Setting Proposals will be open from May 15th until November 15th, 2021.
- Targets proposals may be submitted as a specific number or as a range.
- Target proposals may be submitted for all indicators, some or just one.
- Input Forms and supplemental resources are available on [SPP APR Webpage](#)

# Upcoming Due Dates

# Due Dates (1)

Data Team:

- **IDEA Part B Child Count Exiting:** children with disabilities receiving special education and related services ([More Info Here](#))
  - Collection Window dates set to 6/21 to 7/15
  - Reference date of 6/30

# Available Resources

# Supports and How To (1)

- AOE Special Education Team [website](#):
  - Acronym/Initialism [list](#).
- Requesting Professional Development [form](#).
- Special Education Technical Assistance is available through the general email and voicemail system. Communications are monitored regularly during business hours and a response is generally provided within 24-48 hours. Please contact our team at (802) 828-1256 or at [AOE.SpecialEd@vermont.gov](mailto:AOE.SpecialEd@vermont.gov).
- Regional Representatives – reach out.

# Supports and How To (2)

## • Requests for Data

Periodically, members of the public may find that they have additional needs for state education data that are not met by the existing reports (see above). We have provided two mechanisms by which the public may apply for accessing such data.

- [Data Request Form](#) should be used to make simple, non-research data requests. (Examples: media story, simple fact-checking.).
- [Research Request Application](#) should be used to make research data requests. The completed application is necessary in order for AOE to review the purpose of the research, specific data involved, and level of AOE staff time and effort needed to complete the request. It is also necessary to determine whether the research request is in line with the AOE's analytic priorities. **All research requests require pending or received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval before they can be reviewed.**