

State of the State Report

**With Dr. Jacqui Kelleher
Vermont's State Director of
Special Education
October 22, 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](#)
- Federal and Special Education Data Director: [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: [Tristan McNamara](#)
- 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](#)
- Mentoring Project Coordinator: [Sienna Tuinei](#)
- 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](#)

Roles and Responsibilities (cont.)

- 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 outcomes for students with disabilities.

Federal Updates

Office of Special Education Programs (1)

- OSEP Resources since June 2021
 - [Long COVID Under the Section 504 and IDEA](#)
 - Return to School Roadmap: [Child Find](#)
 - Return to School Roadmap: [Development and Implementation of the IEP in the LRE](#)
 - New [Q & A](#) on NIMAS/NIMAC requirements
 - IDEA Part B ARP [Fact Sheet](#)

Office of Special Education Programs (2)

The State Implementation and Scaling-Up of Evidence-Based Practices (SISEP) Center at the UNC Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute has been hard at work creating new multimedia resources for educators and implementation practitioners.

- One of these new resources is the “Voices from the Field” [video series](#), hosted on the SISEP Center’s YouTube channel. These videos share the perspectives of active implementers in the field.
- The SISEP Center has also launched a new podcast that shares tips for educators every week. The podcast is called “[Implementation Science for Educators](#)” and can be found on multiple streaming platforms. The podcast aims to provide educators with five-minute episodes that they can easily listen to during a break in their busy schedules.

Office of Special Education Programs (3)

- The National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII) in partnership with the PROGRESS Center has launched a [learning module library](#) that houses self-paced learning modules intended to build knowledge around intensive intervention. NCII has released and revised three modules that provide an [introduction to intensive intervention](#), define the [five steps of the DBI process](#), and provide an [overview of the Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity](#). In addition to the module, users can find related resources and earn a course completion certificate.

Office of Special Education Programs (4)

Choosing and Creating Accessible Grade-Level Texts for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities in Inclusive Classrooms

- [The TIES Center](#) has published two new TIPs to assist general and special educators in choosing and creating accessible grade-level texts for use in inclusive classrooms. The two TIPs include:
- TIP #18: [Choosing Accessible Grade-Level Texts for Use in Inclusive Classrooms](#) outlines considerations for choosing appropriate accessible grade-level texts for students with significant cognitive disabilities in inclusive classrooms.
- TIP #19: [Creating Accessible Grade-level Texts for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities in Inclusive Classrooms](#) explains ways teachers can adapt text and provide scaffolding to ensure each and every student is provided access and opportunity to meet grade-level learning expectations.

Office of Special Education Programs (5)

Preparing the Learning Environment: NCDB Practice Guide

- As children return to school, it's important to know how to optimize learning environments for students with sensory disabilities. The National Center on Deaf-Blindness has a new practice guide, *Preparing the Learning Environment*, that can help. It outlines essential components of environments that are accessible, motivating, and build on a child's strengths and interests. This and previous guides can be found on [NCDB's Practice Guides page](#).

A Collaborative Effort to Support School Leaders

- In this [video](#), staff from the Lead for Literacy Center are joined by staff from three other OSEP-funded Centers—the National Center on Improving Literacy (NCIL), [National Center on Intensive Intervention \(NCII\)](#), and [National Center on Systemic Improvement \(NCSI\)](#)—to discuss the Lead for Literacy five element framework and its application to their work during the [Council for Exceptional Children \(CEC\) 2021 Virtual Conference](#).

Office of Special Education Programs (6)

Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE): Lessons Learned to Support Transition Services and Programs

- The PROMISE projects continue to research and disseminate how they improved education and employment outcomes of youth receiving SSI and their families. [Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals, Volume 44 Issue 2, May 2021](#) is an open resource issue of articles written by the OSEP project office and their funded PROMISE projects. It includes 7 articles.
- [Improving the Adult Outcomes for SSI Youth Recipients: Introduction to a Special Series on PROMISE](#)
- [Overview of PROMISE](#)
- [SSI Youth and Family Case Management: A Taxonomy of Critical Factors, Competencies, and Translation to Practice](#)
- [Staff Capacity Building and Accountability in Transition Services](#)
- [Demographic and Transition Service Predictors of Employment Outcomes for Youth Receiving Supplemental Security Income](#)
- [Pursuing Graduation: Differences in Work Experience Supports for Young SSI Recipients Pursuing Diplomas or Certificates](#)
- [Case Management Strategies to Promote Employment for Transition-Age Youth With Disabilities](#)

Office of Special Education Programs (7)

Speech-to-Text Services

- A new, redesigned [speech-to-text services resource page](https://www.nationaldeafcenter.org/STTS) from the National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes (NDC) will help you understand different types of Speech to Text Services (STTS), learn when and why certain STTS should be used, and where to find qualified service providers. <https://www.nationaldeafcenter.org/STTS>
- You will find:
- Answers to [frequently asked questions](#).
- Tips for [hiring STTS providers](#).
- A list of [NDC resources](#).
- The [difference between automatic speech recognition and STTS](#).
- Information about [STTS transcripts](#).
- In-depth information about [confidentiality and ethics requirements](#) for professional STTS.

Office of Special Education Programs (8)

OSEP Releases New Fast Facts on School Aged Children with Disabilities and a Hand In Hand Supplemental Tool to Accompany Fast Facts

- OSEP released a new [Fast Fact on School aged children 5 \(in kindergarten\) through 21 Served under Part B, Section 618 of the IDEA](#) along with a new supplemental tool, [Hand In Hand](#), which is intended to be used alongside the new OSEP Fast Fact.
- The [Hand In Hand](#) supplemental tool presents critical questions for each display in the [Fast Fact on School aged children 5 \(in kindergarten\) through 21 Served under Part B, Section 618 of the IDEA](#) to allow parents and other stakeholders to engage with the materials. Throughout the [Hand In Hand](#) resource, look for hands highlighting further reading on the topics.

State Activities

Vermont Virtual Guidance (1)

Online and Blended Learning Opportunities for Students SY 21-22:

- Statutory Framework
- Student Attendance
- Remote Learning/Online Blended Learning
- Flexible pathways
- FAQs
- https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-overview-online-blended-learning-2021-22_0.pdf

NASDSE Policy Position (2)

NASDSE represents the concerns of the state directors of special education in the states and territories to the three branches of the federal government, federal agencies and in pertinent nationwide coalitions.

Virtual Schools/Online Learning

IDEA applies to virtual and online learning. NASDSE works to address issues regarding students with disabilities and online learning, including but not limited to lack of services, licensure of instructors, physical access, accountability, rigorous instruction, and LRE. Additionally, NASDSE has concerns with the overreliance in rural areas on virtual services, which is symptomatic of shortages.

Some Highlights (3)

Program

- OSEP June 2021 Determination – Vermont in Needs Assistance
- Rule Changes TA/PD Development, national review, identification of resources, feedback from stakeholders, launch of new [website](#), collaboration with ECSE, Finance, VTmtss, and Act 173 work group (internal)
- Model Procedures in development

Some Highlights (4)

Program

- General Supervision System manual in development
- Seeking ways to reduce paperwork burden
- Impact from COVID – will be reaching out.
- Bi-weekly Directors' Check In
- Case Study Lunch Club
- IDEA Regular and ARP TA and Approvals

Some Highlights (5)

Program

- Common calendar launch this fall
- Forms revision over next six months
- TA support for Indicators and Integrated Monitoring Work
- Significant Disproportionality Manual near completion – revising timeline for identification and TA
- Collaboration with Early MTSS and VTmtss on intersectionality with special education
- Daily TA calls and emails
- Alignment of OSEP Guidance to AOE priorities

Some Highlights (6)

Program

Critical Shortage Area – Special Education Staff Survey results analyzed and in use

Mentoring Model – Project One and Project Two

Engagement with CEEDAR State Task Force

Some Highlights (7)

Program

- Monitoring Activities: Close Outs and Preparation for Next Cycle
- Local Special Education Determinations – issued and anticipating corrective action plans from those in Needs Intervention
- Closed out CTE violations
- Plans for future on site visits in a virtual world
- Data Quarterly meetings

Some Highlights (8)

Program

- 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.
- Monthly meetings with State Lead, Susan Murray
- Paraprofessional virtual trainings in progress –using EDMODO platform
- Preparing for future OSEP site visit and taking inventory of Vermont evidence alignment with federal requirements
- Frequent engagement with Special Education Advisory Panel
- Special Ed Team representation on Independent School Approvals

Some Highlights (9)

Program

- SPP/APR Improvement Activities
 - Transition/Indicator 13 Trainings
 - LRE Work group
- provided Educational Benefit Review Training (one district, 24 attendees); going to provide another for the I-Team
- launched SSIP October 6 - First networking session is set for October 27.
- preliminary indicator 8 survey results say that more than 70% of parents are responding positively about their involvement in their student's education!
 - the lowest scoring questions were about transition resources, and prior knowledge that the survey was coming to them.

Some Highlights (10)

- **Data/DMAD**

The biggest development in DMAD is from June to Oct is the implementation of data quality checks on districts who reported low levels of HS exits. DMAD checked the percentage of high school students that were exited over the course of school year 2021 (compared to the number of students reported in the December Child Count), and reached out to SU/SDs who reported a low percentage of high schoolers exited. DMAD provided a list of 12th graders and AW students and obtained information on 133 previously unreported exits including 123 graduates.

Some Highlights (11)

Finance

- Special Education Finance work being completed now and in the previous three months:
 - Final reconciliation of the FY21 Special Education Expense Reports (SEERs).
- – FY21 CEIS/CCEIS Collection deployed.
- – FY22 Special Education Expense Reports (SEERs) deployed, info sheet collected.
- – FY23 Act 173 Special Education Plans deployed.

Some Highlights (12)

Finance

- Special Education Finance Workflow/processes and deadlines coming in the next three months:
 - –Compile, review and follow up as needed FY21 CEIS/CCEIS Collection.
 - --Review and follow up as needed FY23 Act 173 Special Education Plan.
 - – FY22 Special Education Expense Reports (SEERs) July-October due.
 - – Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Compliance Calculation.
 - – Fiscal Monitoring Risk Assessment.
 - – December payments and projections.

Some Highlights (13)

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 (14)

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

Some Highlights (15)

Assessment

ADA – Alternate Assessment DA. – Cannot edit student demographic information. Please work together to make sure all are trained and ready to administer the assessments in the spring.

- a. New publication outlining communication needs before, during and after testing. This would be communication between the districts, schools and independent schools and programs.
 - i. <https://vt.portal.cambiumast.com/resources/lea-independent-school-checklist>
 - ii. School – District Required Communication Guidance:
<https://vt.portal.cambiumast.com/resources/tools-and-documents-for-school-leaders/school-and-district-communication-guidance>

New Assessment email: AOE.statewideassessment@vermont.gov .

Smarter Balanced, Alternate Assessments (VTAA), Science Assessment (VTSA) and the English Language Proficiency (ELP) Testing will return to pre-covid status. Testing will go on “as normal” for 2022. No Covid codes to report in 2022.

- a. VTPEA - Vermont PE Assessment (VTPEA) will not be administered for safety and close contact reasons. Instruction should go on as normal. Please contact your PE or Adaptive PE educators on site for more information.

Some Highlights (16)

Assessment

Medical Exemptions will be managed by Linda Moreno this year. Submission link remains the same.

As part of the Peer Review Process and required documentation, the page of the IEP that contains testing accommodations may need to be submitted to the AOE for review. This request will come in the spring as we begin to go into the field to observe testing. Collection is limited, so not everyone will be required to submit.

Please register to receive the assessment newsletter to stay up to date on changes in policy and procedures throughout the year. ANYONE, regardless of job title, can sign up to receive the newsletter directly. It is not a controlled listserv, but rather an opt-in means of communication.

<https://www.cognitofrms.com/VermontAgencyOfEducation/SignUpFormForStateWideAssessmentCommunications>

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)

Target setting input for the SPP/APR due November 15th –
Ana.Kolbach@vermont.gov

Data: Child Count Training at 1 pm on Nov 16th.
Cassidy.Canzani@vermont.gov

Peer learning session for I-13 and a statewide I-13 training) are in the AOE calendar-

- <https://education.vermont.gov/calendar/peer-learning-session>
- <https://education.vermont.gov/calendar/statewide-training-all-elements-in-indicator-13>

Due Dates (2)

- Rule Changes site and all upcoming office hours and resources are found here – see you in November!
 - <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/rule-changes>
- LCIs due Friday, Oct. 22nd and LEA Notification of 1% survey due Friday, 11/5.
- Monitoring: the spreadsheets for the Annual Dates Review are now available and we will have Q&A sessions on December 15 (for the January 15 submission) and February 15 (for the March 15 submissions).
- Send Accolades to the Nuggets!
Sabine.Perry@vermont.gov

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.
- 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.**