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## **Special Education Guidance**

### **Policy in Practice: Draft IEPs**

Special Programs now allows local education agencies (LEAs) to draft initial individualized education programs (IEPs) prior to the finalization of the eligibility process. This is to allow preparation for meetings that are combined or scheduled in quick succession, when doing so is in the best interests of the student *and is consented to* by parents. However, LEAs must be careful to avoid predetermination and ensure meaningful parent participation in the special education process. Following are some tips to support LEAs in navigating the challenges of draft IEPs:

- **Support Parent Understanding:** Draft documents should support a parent's preparation for and understanding of meetings in advance of those meetings taking place. LEAs

should carefully consider what drafts are appropriate for the meeting being held, where the student is in the special education process, and the parent's current understanding of the special education process and the student's status within it. LEAs may use prior written notices (PWNs) and meeting invitations to help the parent understand the purpose of each meeting and how documents will be used.

- **Preparation vs. Predetermination:** Draft IEPs should be treated and presented as proposed documents that are pending review by and discussion with parents. Parents must be given the opportunity to meaningfully participate in the development of the IEP.
- **Thorough Documentation:** Formally document parent input, concerns, and requests, whether or not they result in a change to the IEP. LEAs may develop parent input forms to help parents consider and document their thoughts about their child, and document parent input in meeting notes, communication logs, PWNs, and/or the student's IEP.

## Special Education Placement Activities

### LEA Age-Out Reminder

For each student with a disability placed in a nonpublic school who will exceed the maximum age or grade specified in their charter, LEAs are required to notify parents of children of their enrollment options by **Dec. 31 of the school year in which they will “age out.”**

Specifically, DC Municipal Regulation 3025.21 states:

*During the school year in which a child with a disability placed in a nonpublic school will exceed the maximum age or grade for children served by the LEA as specified in its charter, the LEA shall:*

1. *Provide written notification to the parent of their responsibility to enroll the child at another LEA; and*
2. *Provide such notification before Dec. 31 of the school year.*

Please make sure you are working with students and families regarding enrollment options with the upcoming [public-school lottery](#) windows in mind. Lottery applications opened on Monday, Dec. 15, 2025, and will close on Monday, Feb. 2, 2026, for grades 9–12 or Monday, March 2, 2026, for pre-K 3 through grade 8.

## Special Education Data Systems

### RSMR Standard Reports Now Active in Special Programs

We are pleased to announce that the [Related Service Management Reports \(RSMR\) | osse](#) are now active and available in [Special Programs](#). These reports provide real-time, actionable data to support monitoring, managing, and reporting the delivery of related services to students with disabilities.

To assist with navigation and usage, please refer to the [RSMR Technical Guide](#), which outlines report functionality, data elements, calculation rules, and use cases.

If you have additional questions specifically regarding business rules, please reach out to Clare Goebel at [Clare.Goebel@dc.gov](mailto:Clare.Goebel@dc.gov).

## Annual Monitoring Activities for the 2025-26 School Year

As the state education agency (SEA) for the District of Columbia, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) must annually monitor and issue findings of noncompliance to LEAs for special education indicators. OSSE reports these data to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the US Department of Education (USED) each year. In 2026, OSSE will monitor, report, and issue findings for the following compliance indicators:

Monitoring Activity	Reporting Requirement	Monitoring Begin Date	Timeframe for Data Reviewed
Secondary Transition	USED Specific Conditions	April 2026	Oct. 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026
Compliance and Continuous Improvement (CCI)*	The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) General Supervision	January 2026	January 2024 – May 2026
Reevaluation	USED Specific Conditions	April 2026	Oct. 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026
Initial Evaluation	USED Annual Performance Report (APR)	July 2026	July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026
C to B Transition	USED APR	July 2026	July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

\*LEAs for this year’s CCI cohort will be notified in December.

## Special Education Performance Report (SEPR)

### FFY24 SEPR Data Available Soon!

As part of its work to support LEAs in building educator and system capacity to serve students with disabilities, OSSE is committed to providing LEAs with the most up-to-date data available.

In January 2026, OSSE will provide all LEAs with their federal fiscal year 2024 (FFY24) data in the SEPR Quickbase application for all available Special Education Performance Report (SEPR) metrics ahead of the SEPR 2026 release in August 2026.

Please see the steps below for how to access and review your SEPR:

1. Open the [SEPR Quickbase application](#), where LEAs can review their LEA's SEPR, access additional resources, and appeal SEPR results.
2. Under the FFY 23 SEPR report, review your LEA's "SEPR FFY2024 [LEA Name] Preliminary Data" under the Underlying Data column.
3. Schedule [SEPR office hours](#) with an OSSE Office of Special Education staff member if you have any questions or would like additional information about your LEA's data.

## Statewide Assessments

Final determinations for alternate assessment eligibility will be available via the [Alternate Assessment Quickbase application](#) not determined eligible for alternate assessments will be expected to take the general statewide assessment (DC CAPE).

General process questions may be directed to [OSSE.Assessment@dc.gov](mailto:OSSE.Assessment@dc.gov). Questions regarding individual student cases should be submitted securely via the [OSSE Support Tool \(OST\)](#).

## Technical Assistance and Training

### **New! Secondary Transition Compliance Worksheet; Common Errors Guide**

Created in collaboration with WestED, [Secondary Transition Compliance Worksheet: Common Errors Guide](#) provides LEAs with a guide for internal auditing and reviewing secondary transition plans during the 2025-26 school year. This way, LEAs can identify and fix common errors before OSSE's annual reporting review in April 2026.

Required next steps for LEAs:

1. Log into Box.com;
2. Open your LEA's Compliance TA folder;
3. Locate your LEA's Secondary Transition sample file titled "[LEA] 20251009\_APR 13";
4. Complete the Secondary Transition Compliance Worksheet: Common Errors Guide for each student included in your LEA's secondary transition data, ensuring all items are compliant; and
5. Upload the document into Special Programs by no later than Tuesday, Mar. 31, 2026.

An OSSE monitor will contact you in the coming weeks about this activity. If you have any immediate questions or would like further information about this activity, please contact [Dana.Hodges@dc.gov](mailto:Dana.Hodges@dc.gov).

### **Reevaluation Timeliness**

To support LEAs in the timely completion of all reevaluations, OSSE is providing information about students whose eligibilities will come due this school year.

Required next steps for LEAs:

1. Log into Box.com;

2. Open your LEA's Compliance TA folder;
3. Locate your LEA's REV file, titled "[LEA NAME]\_REVComplianceMonitoring"; and
4. Plan with your internal multidisciplinary team for the timely completion of each student's triannual eligibility determination.

An OSSE monitor will contact you in the coming weeks about this activity. If you have any immediate questions or would like further information about this activity, please contact [Debra.Melville@dc.gov](mailto:Debra.Melville@dc.gov).

### **Spring 2026 Special Education Professional Development Interest Form**

Interested in strengthening your instructional practice for students with disabilities? This spring (January – April 2026), OSSE is hosting professional learning opportunities with high-leverage instructional strategies and hands-on experiences for serving students with disabilities. Sessions will be available in both in-person and virtual formats. More information to come.

Topics:

- Leveraging Technology to Make Lessons Accessible for All Learners
- Instructional Supports for Students with Autism
- Practical Implementation of Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) for Students with Disabilities

Fill the interest form [here](#). For more information, contact Byul Yim at [Byul.Yim@dc.gov](mailto:Byul.Yim@dc.gov).

### **Foundations of Special Education Spring 2026 Cohort Program**

Enhance your skills and better serve *all* students, especially those with disabilities, by joining the **Foundations of Special Education Spring 2026 Cohort Program**. Engage in meaningful coursework activities while leveraging the flexibility of technology.

- **School Cohort:** For DC public and public charter schools and Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Program (PKEEP) educators, with up to 10 participants per school including teachers, coaches, service providers, and leaders.
- **Special Education Endorsement Recovery Initiative (SEERI) Cohort:** Earn a special education endorsement with Praxis support, a voucher, and fee reimbursement.

[Visit OSSE's website](#) for more information and **apply [here](#) by Monday, Jan. 5, 2026**. Participants will be notified by Friday, Jan. 9. For questions, contact [Byul.Yim@dc.gov](mailto:Byul.Yim@dc.gov).

### **Special Education Training and Resources**

[The Special Education Training and Resources](#) document offers resources to build educator and system capacity to serve students with disabilities aligned to OSSE's SEPR measures. SEPR evaluates the performance of an LEA's special education program to provide LEAs and families with meaningful information about LEA progress toward improving outcomes for students with disabilities and implementing IDEA.

### **DL v. DC Technical Assistance**

OSSE will conduct focused monitoring, including data reviews, in key areas of practice related to Child Find, initial evaluation, and IDEA Part C to B Transition throughout the school year. Monitoring outcomes will inform the provision of tiered technical assistance to LEAs in areas of demonstrated need.

### Early Childhood Community of Practice (CoP)

The Early Childhood Special Education Community of Practice (CoP) is designed to create authentic opportunities for LEA pre-K special education points of contact and those who support this population to collaborate with others and improve learning outcomes for children ages 3–5 with disabilities who are enrolled in early childhood special education programs. Upcoming CoP sessions will focus on the topics below. All sessions will take place from 10–11 a.m.

- Session 2: Measuring Growth: Child Outcomes Summary Exit Ratings & Determining Student Progress (Wednesday, Jan. 21, 2026)
- Session 3: Strengthening Transitions: Referral, Transfer, and Interagency Collaboration in Early Childhood (Wednesday, March 18, 2026)
- Session 4: TBD (Wednesday, May 20, 2026)

Please register for one or more community practice sessions using the links above. For questions, contact Dawn Hilton, OSSE Supervisory Coordinator for Special Education (Part B-619), at [Dawn.Hilton1@dc.gov](mailto:Dawn.Hilton1@dc.gov).

### Additional Support

Are you in need of technical assistance or training in any other area? Reference the topics below! Book office hours with one of our OSSE points of contact within the Office of Special Education.

Topic	Point of Contact	Email/Phone	Book Office Hours
<b>Policy</b>			
<b>Policy &amp; Guidance</b>	Christie Weaver-Harris, Special Education Policy Team	<a href="mailto:OSSE.DSEpolicy@dc.gov">OSSE.DSEpolicy@dc.gov</a>	<a href="#">Special Education Policy Office Hours</a>
<b>Parent Support &amp; Engagement</b>	Jasmine Fleming, Special Education Policy Team	<a href="mailto:Jasmine.Fleming@dc.gov">Jasmine.Fleming@dc.gov</a>	N/A
<b>IDEA Monitoring and Compliance</b>			
<b>IDEA Monitoring &amp; Compliance</b>	Karen Morgan-Donaldson, IDEA Part B Monitoring and Compliance Team	<a href="mailto:Karen.Morgan-Donaldson@dc.gov">Karen.Morgan-Donaldson@dc.gov</a>	<a href="#">Special Education Monitoring &amp; Compliance Office Hours</a>

<b>Part B Correction of Noncompliance</b>	Debra Melville, IDEA Part B Monitoring and Compliance Team	<a href="mailto:Debra.Melville@dc.gov">Debra.Melville@dc.gov</a>	<a href="#">IDEA Compliance Office Hours</a>
<b>Part C Monitoring and Compliance</b>	Sarah Peisch, IDEA Part B Monitoring and Compliance Team	<a href="mailto:Sarah.Peisch1@dc.gov">Sarah.Peisch1@dc.gov</a>	<a href="#">Part C to B Monitoring Office Hours</a>
<b>Nonpublic Placement</b>			
<b>Nonpublic Placement</b>	Katie Reda, Placement Oversight Unit	<a href="mailto:Katie.Red@dc.gov">Katie.Red@dc.gov</a>	<a href="#">Special Education Placement Office Hours</a>
<b>Nonpublic Monitoring and Compliance</b>			
<b>Nonpublic Monitoring &amp; Compliance</b>	Sharon Powell, Nonpublic Monitoring and Compliance Team	<a href="mailto:Sharon.Powell@dc.gov">Sharon.Powell@dc.gov</a>	N/A
<b>State Complaints</b>			
<b>State Complaints</b>	Kirstin Hansen, State Complaints Team	<a href="mailto:Kirstin.Hansen@dc.gov">Kirstin.Hansen@dc.gov</a>	<a href="#">State Complaints Office Hours</a>



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