



Office of the State Superintendent of Education

# SY 24-25 SPECIAL EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

November Issue | Nov. 22, 2024

## ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUR LEA SPECIAL EDUCATION POINT OF CONTACT (LEA SPED POC)

### Educational Surrogate Parent Referrals

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) empowers parents to act as an educational decision-maker to ensure their child has access to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). Local education agencies (LEAs) must ensure that parents have an opportunity to participate in these decisions before the LEA can take action related to the identification, evaluation, and placement of a child.

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education's (OSSE's) Educational Surrogate Parent (ESP) Program appoints trained volunteers to act as special education decision-makers for students who do not have a "parent" available as defined by [federal](#) and [local](#) special education laws. District of Columbia LEAs can make a [referral](#) to OSSE for the appointment of an ESP for any student who requires it.

OSSE ESP Program staff are available to provide additional information and answer questions about whether an ESP is



needed in specific situations. Please email [Surrogate.Parent@dc.gov](mailto:Surrogate.Parent@dc.gov).

## SPECIAL EDUCATION GUIDANCE

### **New Special Education Guidance**

[OSSE Special Education Policy Bulletin: Informal Removal of Students with Disabilities](#) (Released October 2024) shares US Department of Education (USED) guidance on the definition of informal removal, clarifies LEA obligations for “manifestation determinations” and disciplinary changes in placement resulting from informal removal from the educational environment, includes guidance on addressing student behavior needs in the individualized education program (IEP), and addresses local data reporting requirements consistent with OSSE’s student discipline collection.

[OSSE Special Education Policy Bulletin: Referral for Initial Evaluation](#) (Released October 2024) provides guidance on LEA child find responsibilities and the obligation to accept and respond to requests (referrals) for initial evaluation of a student suspected of having a disability.

### **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Toolkit**

The [Least Restrictive Environment \(LRE\) Toolkit](#) (Updated) is a resource for District of Columbia LEA special education administrators, educators, related service providers, and other school staff to support the implementation of special education services and best practices across the full continuum of alternative placements to effectively serve all District students.

## ACCESSING SPECIAL EDUCATION DATA SYSTEMS

### **PowerSchool Special Programs: First Provision of Specialized Instruction**

As a reminder, LEAs must document the first provision of specialized instruction to students with disabilities younger than age 6 whose IEP prescribes specialized instruction but for whom such instruction has not been previously documented. LEAs must complete a First Provision of Specialized Instruction document in Special Programs for each of these students. Special Programs was recently updated to allow users to generate the document for students younger than age 7, so LEAs can backfill missing student data from the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years for students who are currently enrolled in the LEA.

## District of Columbia Corrective Action Tracking System (DCCATS)

For the 2024-25 school year, OSSE will continue to issue and track special education findings of noncompliance in DCCATS. If you require access, please visit the to request an account.

### OSSE'S ANNUAL MONITORING ACTIVITIES

#### Annual Monitoring Activities for School Year 2024-25

As the state education agency (SEA), 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 USED each year. In 2025, 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	US Department of Education (USED) Specific Conditions	April 2025	Oct. 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025
Reevaluation	USED Specific Conditions	April 2025	Oct. 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025
Initial Evaluation	USED Annual Performance Report (APR)	July 2025	July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025
C to B Transition	USED Annual Performance Report (APR)	July 2025	July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

#### Compliance and Continuous Improvement (CCI) Monitoring

In the coming weeks, OSSE will select LEAs for participation in this year's CCI monitoring cohort (2024-25 school year) based on 2024 Special Education Progress Report (SEPR) results and the length of time since their last IDEA program monitoring activities. OSSE's monitoring team will complete CCI monitoring using desktop file reviews with possible onsite visits, including LEA staff interviews, self-assessments, application reviews, and data analysis. OSSE will notify selected LEAs via email in December. Notifications will include timelines and required next steps for LEAs.

Please note that SEPR incorporates annual monitoring and CCI results for selected LEAs in their annual SEPR scores. For information on how these monitoring activities are incorporated into SEPR results, please reference OSSE's [SEPR Scoring Guidance](#) and [Technical Guide](#) found on [OSSE's SEPR Website](#)

## SPECIAL EDUCATION PLACEMENT ACTIVITIES

### LEA Guidance for Serving Students Placed in Nonpublic Schools

LEAs remain responsible for ensuring students receive FAPE while attending nonpublic schools. LEAs do so by monitoring student progress and ensuring the delivery of FAPE through:

- Continuously reviewing student data to consider the appropriateness of the student's education environment balanced with the harmful effects of removal from general education on the student;
- Monitoring student's academic and social and emotional progress;
- Reviewing daily attendance data and special education service delivery logs and incident reports;
- Participating in and convening as needed all IEP team meetings;
- Facilitating staff access to relevant DC education information systems:
  - Special Education Attendance Tracking System (SEATS);
  - Special Programs, the District of Columbia's online system of educational records for students with disabilities;
  - Incident Reporting Module; and
- Reporting all cases of suspected and known child abuse and neglect to the appropriate authorities.

## UNPACKING YOUR LEA'S SPECIAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE REPORT (SEPR)

### SEPR Office Hours

OSSE encourages LEAs to book office hours using the SEPR Office Hours Scheduler if they have questions about their SEPR. During these hours, LEAs can learn more about their reports and corresponding data and ask other relevant questions.

To learn more about the OSSE SEPR, please visit [OSSE's SEPR Website](#).

### Special Education Technical Assistance and Training

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
Policy			

<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>Technical Assistance and Training</b> <b>LEA SPED POC Webinar</b>	LaShonda Wilson Carter, IDEA Part B Monitoring and Compliance Team	<a href="mailto:LaShonda.Wilson@dc.gov">LaShonda.Wilson@dc.gov</a>	<a href="#">Technical Assistance 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="#">Compliance Office Hours</a>
<b>Part C Monitoring and Compliance</b>	Sarah Peisch, IDEA Part B Monitoring and Compliance Team	<a href="mailto:Sarah.Peisch@dc.gov">Sarah.Peisch@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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