



Office of the State Superintendent of Education

## SY 25-26 SPECIAL EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

**September 30, 2025**



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### **Special Education Guidance**

#### **New 2025-26 School Year Special Education Process Handbook**

The [Special Education Process Handbook \(SY25-26\)](#) is now available! The handbook has been updated to include information on informal removals, dedicated aides, documenting student exits from special education, compliance reminders, and references to Special

Programs resources and user guides (available in the “Help” section of Special Programs under “Other Resources”).

### **Reminders for Students Aging Out of Developmental Delay**

Students may only be eligible for special education under the Developmental Delay eligibility category through age 7 and must be found eligible under a new category (or exited) no later than their eighth birthday. To ensure timely eligibility determinations, local education agencies (LEAs) should:

- **Plan ahead before they’re red:** Begin the reevaluation and eligibility process at least 90 days before the student’s eighth birthday. Although the student will not be flagged in the Unified Data Errors (UDE) application or in a finding of noncompliance until they turn 8, early planning for this multi-step process is essential to meet the deadline.
- **Don’t wait until they’re 8:** For students turning 8 over the summer or early in the next school year, initiate the process during the current school year to avoid delays.
- **More than three for SLD (specific learning disability):** If the individualized education plan (IEP) team may consider SLD as a potential eligibility category, begin the process more than three months in advance of the student’s eighth birthday to:
  - Ensure the student is engaged in research-based interventions;
  - Allow enough time for progress monitoring consistent with eligibility requirements; and
  - Factor in possible timeline exceptions so that eligibility is still determined by the eighth birthday.

### **Reminder for Child Find Poster Requirements**

All LEAs serving 3-to-5-year old students are required to have a Child Find poster displayed in each school.

OSSE provides a model poster for LEAs to use in school buildings as part of public awareness activities in support of Child Find obligations.

LEAs may download a printable version of the poster on OSSE’s Child Find and initial evaluation website, available at [osse.dc.gov/page/child-find-and-initial-evaluation-resources](https://osse.dc.gov/page/child-find-and-initial-evaluation-resources).



## **Special Education Placement Activities**

### **Training Reminder**

The least restrictive environment (LRE) [Student and LEA Considerations Training](#), found on the Office of the State Superintendent of Education’s (OSSE’s) Learning Management System (LMS), is a companion to the [LRE Toolkit](#). This training provides DC LEAs and educators with practical resources for considering individual student placement and an

overview of LEA self-assessment activities to support implementation of a continuum of alternative placements. It is a self-paced course that can be taken at any time.

## Resources

In August, OSSE released the [Change in Placement and Change in Location process guidance](#) to support LEAs in carrying out their obligations relating to special education placement and service location. It is available on [OSSE's Special Education Guidance page](#).

OSSE also released two family-centered documents that will be shared with parents as part of the change in placement and location process:

- [OSSE Service Location Process – Parent FAQ](#): This document answers common questions that may arise for parents during the service location process.
- [Map of OSSE-approved nonpublic day schools](#): This map shows the locations of nonpublic day schools approved by OSSE. For specific addresses, parents can refer to the [OSSE-Approved Nonpublic Schools and Programs List](#).

While these documents will be directly shared with parents, they can also be found on [OSSE's Special Education Nonpublic Placement: Information for Families Page](#).



## Special Education Data Systems

### Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Procedural Timeliness Reports in Special Programs

**The IDEA Part B Model Reports ~ IEP Compliance Report** provides student-level data based on annual IEP review status and serves two key functions: (1) to monitor the timely completion of annual IEPs and document reasons for any delays, and (2) to alert staff to the number of days remaining before a student's next IEP review is due. Using the Plan History profile, the system displays all students—active and inactive—with an IEP due date within the selected date range.

**The Related Services Management Report (RSMR) ~ Delivered Service Details** report provides comprehensive information about non-extended school year (ESY) special education services delivered to students and recorded using the Service Capture feature in Special Programs. The report includes all service logs that fall within the selected service delivery date range, including entries for make-up services.

**The Part B Federal Reporting ~ Annual Performance Report (APR) 11 – Part B Child Find** report provides a comprehensive list of students referred for Initial Evaluation or Part C to B Transition and those with out-of-state IEPs. This information supports federal APR reporting. It includes:

- Results of students' eligibility evaluations for special education services, indicating whether they were found eligible or not; and

- Data on the timeliness of these initial evaluations, based on the federal requirement to complete eligibility determinations within 60 days of receiving parental consent.

**The Part B Federal Reporting ~ APR 12 – Early Childhood Transition** report tracks the District's efforts to ensure a smooth and timely shift from Part C early intervention services to Part B preschool special education. These data support federal APR 12 reporting and informs OSSE's Special Education Performance Report (SEPR). The report includes:

- Data on children who turned 3 during the reporting period and were referred for special education due to Initial Evaluation, Out-of-State IEP, or Part C to B Transition;
- Whether referrals met federal requirements, including timelines tied to the child's third birthday; and
- Active and inactive student records.

**The Part B Federal Reporting ~ APR 13 – Secondary Transition** report highlights the District's efforts to support students with disabilities as they transition from school to post-school activities, including further education, employment, and independent living. It includes:

- Data on all students age 14 and older who received special education services during the reporting period and had an active IEP.

The following reports in Special Programs are designed to inform your LEA's practices and to build your LEA's capacity to identify, evaluate, and transition children smoothly and effectively from early intervention to school-based services. OSSE will use these same reports to review your LEA's compliance and to deliver targeted technical assistance and support to your LEA.

All LEA user roles have access to Standard and Advanced reports. User roles of School Data Administrator and School Special Education Coordinator have access to Standard reports.

**1) The Child Find (Part B Federal Reporting ~ Subclass I – Standard and Part B Federal Reporting ~ Subclass I – Advanced)** reports show the number and percent of eligible 3–5-year-olds who have received all prescribed related services and specialized instruction within a given month.

*Self-monitoring:* LEAs are required to evaluate the percentage of eligible students in relation to the *DL v. DC* compliance metric of 12 percent. Per *DL v. DC*, at least 12 percent of enrolled 3–5-year-old children must be eligible in special education and receive applicable related services.

*OSSE monitoring:* An LEA identification rate below 12 percent may result in targeted technical assistance and/or corrective action from OSSE.

**2) The Initial Evaluation and Reasonable Efforts to Obtain Parent Consent (Part B Federal Reporting ~ Subclass III – Standard and Part B Federal Reporting ~ Subclass III – Advanced)** reports show student-level data of students younger than the age of 6 on the date of referral:

- Who received an initial, out of state, or C-to-B special education referral; and
- Whose initial eligibility determination deadlines fall within July 1 – June 30 of the reporting year.

*Self-monitoring:* LEAs are required to monitor upcoming timelines and evaluate compliance with eligibility determination timeliness requirements. Per *DL v. DC*, at least 95 percent of 3–5-year-old children referred for Part B services must receive a timely eligibility determination.

*OSSE monitoring:* A timeliness rate below 95 percent may result in targeted technical assistance and/or corrective action by OSSE.

**3) The Part C to B Transition (Part B Federal Reporting ~ Subclass IV – Standard and Part B Federal Reporting à Subclass IV – Advanced)** reports show student-level data for students who were referred from Part C to Part B through a transition conference invitation and whose third birthday is during July 1 - June 30 of the reporting year.

*Self-monitoring:* LEAs are required to evaluate compliance with Part C to Part B transition requirements. Per *DL v. DC*, at least 95 percent of Part C participants that are referred to Part B must receive a smooth and effective transition as indicated by having an IEP by their third birthdays and timely provision of any prescribed related services and specialized instruction.

*OSSE monitoring:* A rate below 95 percent may result in targeted technical assistance and/or corrective action by OSSE.

For questions about reports in Special Programs, please contact Clare Goebel at [Clare.Goebel@dc.gov](mailto:Clare.Goebel@dc.gov).

### **Special Programs Trainings to Prepare for Enrollment Audit and Child Count**

Special Programs LEA users should attend the following training available in the OSSE LMS to be successful for the annual Enrollment Audit and Child Count.

1. **2025-26 Special Programs End User Experience** ([course #12191](#)) – This course provides in-depth training on accessing and navigating the platform and is the first in the series of courses to be taken.
2. **2025-26 Special Programs Documenting Referral and Eligibility** ([course #12192](#)) – This course focuses on documenting referrals and eligibility for students in Special Programs. Key topics covered:
  1. Referral process and documentation;
  2. Consent and documenting reasonable efforts to contact the parent/guardian; and
  3. Eligibility determination.
3. **2025-26 Special Programs IEP** ([course #12201](#)) – This course covers the creation and monitoring of student IEPs. This will be essential in ensuring students' services and transportation are updated for the annual Enrollment Audit and Child Count.



## Annual Monitoring Activities for the 2025-26

### School Year

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 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
Equity Requirements Under IDEA	USED Annual Performance Report (APR)	September 2025	July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025
Secondary Transition	USED Specific Conditions	April 2026	Oct. 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026
Compliance and Continuous Improvement (CCI)	IDEA General Supervision	January 2026	January 2024 – May 2026
Reevaluation	USED Specific Conditions	April 2026	Oct. 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026
Initial Evaluation	USED APR	July 2026	July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026
C to B Transition	USED APR	July 2026	July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026



### Special Education Performance Report (SEPR)

On Aug. 7, 2025, OSSE issued its 2025 [SEPR](#). This report is based on data from federal fiscal year 2023 (FFY 23) (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024) and is designed to evaluate the performance of an LEA's special education program. Please review next steps below:

	OSSE will:	LEAs will:
<b>September</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to offer <a href="#">SEPR Office Hours</a>.</li> <li>Consider LEA appeals as necessary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan for program improvements and identify staffing and training needs.</li> </ul>

October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publicly post final results on the <a href="#">SEPR website</a>.</li> <li>Provide family and staff engagement resources to LEAs via email.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate family and stakeholder engagement, communicating areas of strength and plans for improvement.</li> </ul>
November–December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze SEPR data and identify the 2025-26 school year cohort for CCI Monitoring.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>

For questions about SEPR, please contact Karen Morgan-Donaldson at [Karen.Morgan-Donaldson@dc.gov](mailto:Karen.Morgan-Donaldson@dc.gov).



## Statewide Assessments

### 2025-26 Alternate Assessment Eligibility Process

Alternate statewide assessments are available for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities as an alternative to the general statewide assessments. Annually, students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are determined eligible by OSSE for alternate assessment participation will take the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) in grades 3-8 and grade 11 and Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) science alternate assessment in grades 5, 8, and high school biology. English learners (ELs) with significant cognitive disabilities will take WIDA Alternate ACCESS in grades K–12.

For OSSE to review a student for alternate assessment eligibility for the 2025-26 school year, LEAs must ensure the following documentation is present in the Special Programs database:

1. An active IEP that indicates “Alternate Assessment” selected by the IEP team;
2. A current “DC Alternate Assessment Application,” fully completed and submitted via Special Programs; and
3. All sources of supporting evidence for the alternate assessment application form.

The initial application deadline for the 2025-26 school year is **Tuesday, Oct.14**.

LEA Special Education Points of Contact (POCs) should work closely with Assessment Managers to ensure student documentation is present in Special Programs by that date. For more information including the detailed eligibility process, timelines, and training on this topic, please visit the [Alternate Assessments](#) webpage.

## Technical Assistance and Training

**DL v. DC Technical Assistance** - OSSE will provide tiered technical assistance to LEAs in areas of demonstrated need based on monitoring outcomes. We will conduct focused

monitoring related to Child Find, initial evaluation, and IDEA Part C to B transition throughout the school year.

For more information, contact Sarah Peisch at [Sarah.Peisch1@dc.gov](mailto:Sarah.Peisch1@dc.gov).

**The Special Education Training and Resources** - This 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.

Please find the document using the link below: [SEPR Aligned Resources 08.22.2025.pdf](#)

Learn more about SEPR [here](#).

For more information, contact Karen Morgan-Donaldson at [Karen.Morgan-Donaldson@dc.gov](mailto:Karen.Morgan-Donaldson@dc.gov).

**Early Childhood Community of Practice (CoP)** - The Early Childhood Special Education Community of Practice 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 community of practice sessions will focus on the topics below. All sessions will take place from 10-11 a.m.

- Session 1: Navigating DL vs. District of Columbia: Understanding Requirements and OSSE's Targeted TA for Compliance (Wednesday, Nov. 19, 2025)
- 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 a community practice session(s) using the links above. For questions, contact Dawn Hilton, Supervisory Coordinator for Special Education (Part B-619), at [Dawn.Hilton1@dc.gov](mailto:Dawn.Hilton1@dc.gov).

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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