



Office of the
State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)



**Division of Specialized Education
Parent and Family Summit
Saturday, September 22, 2012**



Today's Goal...

Share information regarding OSSE, the
Division of Specialized Education (DSE) and
allow an
opportunity for you to ask a few questions of
the DSE team.



About OSSE

OSSE is the State Education Agency (SEA) for the District of Columbia.

Vision

- All District residents receive an excellent education

Mission

- The Office of the State Superintendent of Education sets high expectations, provides resources and support, and exercises accountability to ensure that all residents receive an excellent education.

For example:

- OSSE is responsible for determining what students should know and be able to do in math upon completing the third grade. (policy)
- OSSE distributes federal grant funds relating to closing the achievement gap under No Child Left Behind, including supporting the teaching of third grade math. (resources/support)
- OSSE develops and administers the DC CAS assessment to monitor the achievement of third graders in math. (accountability)



OSSE Agency Overview

- **Adult Education**
- **Assessment and Accountability**
- **Division of Specialized Education**
- **Division of Early Learning**
- **Educator Licensure**
- **Elementary and Secondary Education**
- **Higher Education Financial Services**
- **Race to the Top**
- **Special Education Transportation**
- **Student Hearing Office**
- **Wellness and Nutrition**



What is Special/Specialized Education?

Myth:

Special Education is somewhere students go because they have a disability or special healthcare needs.

Fact:

Special Education is **not** a place. It is a **system** of services of supports. *What this means is that children do not go to “Special Ed” and are not “Special Ed Kids”, they receive special education and related services.*



About DSE

(OSSE), as the State Education Agency (SEA) for the District of Columbia, is responsible for ensuring Local Educational Agency (LEA) compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, at 20 U.S.C. § 1400, et seq.).

OSSE's Division of Specialized Education (DSE) is responsible for overseeing the development and promulgation of state policy governing special education; monitoring LEAs for compliance with IDEA as well as other federal and local regulations and court-ordered consent decrees; allocation and administration of IDEA grant funds to LEAs and other public agencies; provision of training and technical assistance to LEAs; and investigation and resolution of state complaints relating to special education. OSSE also administers the District's due process hearing system, through the Student Hearing Office (SHO), separately from the DSE.

Division of Specialized Education

DSE – Overview

Programs:

- DC Early Intervention Program
- Data Verification
- Educational Surrogate Parent Program
- Fiscal Policy and Grants Management (FPGM)
- Medicaid Recovery Unit
- Monitoring and Compliance
- Nonpublic Invoice Verification
- Placement Oversight
- Policies and Regulations [Special Education]
- Section 504
- Training and Technical Assistance



Current DSE Projects

- Special Education Quality Review
- DC Early Intervention Program – Strong Start for Infants and Toddlers
- DC Parent Center at Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc.
- State Advisory Panel*
- Interagency Coordinating Council*
- Training and Technical Assistance



DSE for Parents

- **Parents have Rights in Special Education** – aka *“Procedural Safeguards”*
- **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act** – aka *my son/daughter has a disability but isn’t eligible for Special Education services.*
- **How do I make my voice heard or get involved?** – *Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) or the State Advisory Panel (SAP) on Special Education.*



What do I do if things are not working out?

Dispute Resolution

- Mediation
- State Complaints
- Due Process

Parent Training on the OSSE website:

http://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/service_content/attachments/Dispute%20Resolution%20Parent%20Training%20v.9.2012.pdf



Tips I can use...

You acquire knowledge...

- **Get familiar with** the law and understand your rights & responsibilities – you don't have to become an expert but it helps to understand things a little better.
- **Know the people.** Connect with the Special Education Coordinator at your child's school. Know who the key players are at the school (Principal, Vice Principal etc.)
- **Communicate.** If you have questions or concerns... Don't wait and worry. Speak up! If you don't know what the terms are that people are using during team meetings etc., ASK what they mean. Never go through a meeting not really understanding what the people in the room are talking about. They may be the experts in their field but you are the expert for your child!
- **Participate, Participate, Participate...** In the development of the Individual Education Program (IEP), parent/teacher conferences, parent group meetings, in school functions or in training opportunities.



Information Sharing and/or Questions???



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