U.S. Department of Education

OSEP Update: New Significant Disproportionality Q&A and Resources!

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Improving Results for Youth and Children with Disabilities

OSEP
Office of Special Education Programs

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TOP NEWS: Equity in IDEA Q-&-A document issued

This month, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) has released *Significant Disproportionality (Equity in IDEA) Essential Questions and Answers* ([Q&A](#)), and the *[Model State Timeline](#)*. These resources were released as follow-up to the ***Equity in IDEA [final regulation](#)***, which was published in the *Federal Register* on Dec. 19, 2016, and became effective on Jan. 18, 2017. As states implement the new rule, OSERS is committed to providing them support in addressing disproportionality.

The Q&A is a **guidance document,** which includes questions and answers on the rule, including the standard methodology; remedies; effective and compliance dates; and a glossary of terms. It is intended to be used as a resource for states as they begin engaging with stakeholders around the implementation of the final rule. The *Model State Timeline* outlines different **streams of work** and the **timelines** that states should consider as they implement the new rule.

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INSIDE OSEP: Ruth's Report

Message from Acting Director Ruth Ryder

Hello Leaders!

We've been connecting with our stakeholders and partners in the field quite a bit this year, and we're excited about it! This month, the Center for IDEA Fiscal Reporting (**CIFR**) joined OSEP for a two-day meeting, and demonstrated three of **their most widely used technical assistance tools**, the (1) Maintenance of State Financial Support Toolkit, (2) Local Educational Agency Maintenance of Effort (LEA MOE) Calculator, and (3) Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS) Resources Step-by-Step . Each of these tools can be found on CIFR's website, along with additional resources and more information about the center.

Also in March, OSEP held the second event in our Virtual Symposia Series, the symposium "Creating Safe, Supportive Learning Environments for Children with Disabilities."

This symposium highlighted core principles related to creating and maintaining safe and supportive learning environments, and why and how States, districts, programs, and schools should consider integrating this work into their improvement plans. Check out the symposium recording and accompanying materials on the symposia archive, housed on the OSEP Meetings page.

Finally, I'd like to send thanks to all who have provided comments on the *OSERS Blog* post regarding our new *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (**IDEA**) **resource website**. If you have yet to comment, please provide us with your input so that we can develop a site that is relevant and easy-to-use for our stakeholders.

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RDA FOR STATES: OSEP publishes Information Collection Requests for IDEA Part C and Part B SPP/APR

On March 8, Information Collection Requests (ICRs) for the IDEA Part C and Part B state performance plans/annual performance reports (SPP/APR) were published in the Federal Register. You can view and submit comments for these ICRs on the Regulations.gov website. The **comment period** is open for 60 days, **until May 8, 2017**. Changes proposed by the ICRs will go into effect with states' FFY 2016 SPP/APR, to be submitted in February 2018. The proposed revisions to the SPP/APR are focused on further clarifying existing reporting within the parameters of the current IDEA statutory and regulatory requirements.

Comments in response to this notice should be submitted electronically through Regulations.gov by searching for and selecting the Docket ID number (Part B is accessible here, and Part C is accessible here) or via postal mail, commercial delivery, or hand delivery. Please note that comments submitted by fax or email and those submitted after the comment period will not be accepted.

On March 16, OSEP held its monthly technical assistance call with Part B directors and Part C coordinators to walk through the ICRs, highlighting key changes from the current information collections. The slides are posted here, and additional information can be found on OSEP's SPP/APR Resources webpage.

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EARLY CHILDHOOD CHECK-IN: Promoting early childhood inclusion!

Released in September 2015, the Policy Statement on Inclusion in Early Childhood Programs sets forth *IDEA* requirements and preferences for serving young children with disabilities in inclusive settings. OSEP is committed to engaging stakeholders around inclusion, and to promoting high quality early learning for all children.

Check out what we're doing to promote inclusive early learning!

- OSEP attended the Illinois Early Childhood Inclusion Policy Summit, where leaders from across Illinois' early childhood systems came together to develop

priorities for improving policies to support the inclusion of young children with disabilities across all early childhood programs and services.

- We also participated in the **Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium** (CCEEPRC) **annual meeting**, which provided a forum for researchers, policymakers, and program administrators to discuss how research can help inform child care and early education policy and practice. You can find more information on the CCEEPRC here.

- The OSEP-funded Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center and the Administration for Children and Families-funded National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning are collaborating on a **webinar series**, "Partnerships for Inclusion" which is highlighting access, participation, and supports for high-quality inclusive early childhood programs.

- The **2017 National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute** will be May 9-11th in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The meeting gives participants an opportunity to learn about the latest research findings to guide inclusive policy, professional development, and practice; to develop collaborative relationships across early childhood systems to support inclusion; and to meet, learn from, and problem solve with peers. OSEP participants will share resources with the group, which have been developed to support high-quality inclusion.

RESOURCES FOR YOU: Policy letters, funding notice, and technical assistance

Policy:

- Feb. 27, 2017: **Letter to Anonymous** addresses the **required time period** for which State educational agencies must *retain* and *make available* to the general public, **findings and decisions issued in due process hearings**. The letter also addresses **state-level reviews** conducted in states with two-tier due process systems and provides an example to illustrate the time period required under the uniform guidance, which is also applicable to *IDEA* Part C programs.

- Feb. 27, 2017: **Letter to Zacchini** clarifies when and how parents must be notified before records containing personally identifiable information are destroyed under Part B of *IDEA*.

- Feb. 27, 2017: OSEP issued a second **Letter to Anonymous** that provides guidance on (1) the actions needed to meet the *IDEA* Part B requirement that a **transition-aged student's** postsecondary goals and transition services are "updated" annually, and (2) whether an IEP team must always revise those goals to meet the requirement in 34 CFR §300.320(b).

Be sure to visit OSEP's policy page to find additional *policy letters*, along with *FAQs* and other written *guidance*.

In the *Federal Register*: State Personnel Development Grants

OSEP has announced the following:

On Feb. 13, 2017: Notice inviting applications for the **State Personnel Development Grant** program (**CFDA 84.323A**).

*Deadline for transmittal of applications is **April 14, 2017**.*

Technical assistance for Equity in *IDEA* implementation

- **Significant Disproportionality (Equity in *IDEA*) 201: Implementing the Final Rule.** In February, OSERS developed the Equity in *IDEA* 101: Contents of the Final Rule webinar. With the release of *Equity in IDEA Essential Questions and*

Answers ([Q&A](#)) and the [*Model State Timeline*](#), OSERS has created a second webinar to supplement the first. The second webinar, Equity in *IDEA* 201, briefly reviews the contents of the final rule, and dives into the specifics of the Q&A. The presentation also highlights a few questions that we think will be of particular importance as states begin engaging with stakeholders. Stay tuned while this presentation becomes available on the [OSEP "What's New" page](#). It will be posted early in April 2017.

- **Additional Significant Disproportionality Resources**: OSERS encourage states to use the Q&A, *Model State Timeline*, and [Equity in *IDEA* 101](#) and 201 webinars as resources in the coming months. Additional resources can be found on the OSEP IDEAs That Work "**Disproportionality and Equity**" [resource webpage](#).

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ED UPDATE: ESSA update and collaboration!

U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced the release of a revised *Every Student Succeeds Act* (*ESSA*) consolidated state plan template in a [press statement](#) on March 13th. DeVos affirmed the Department's commitment to ensuring all students have access to excellent teachers and positive, safe learning environments with necessary supports to prepare them for success in college, a career and life.

On the same date, the following resources were made available:

- [Letter to Chief State School Officers](#)
- [Fact Sheet](#)
- [ESSA Consolidated State Plan Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [ESSA Consolidated State Plan Template](#)
- [Consolidated State Plan Template](#) [Crosswalk](#)

OSEP and Office of Elementary and Secondary Education collaborate at the National Title I Conference

"Engagement Revolution" was the theme for the **2017 National Title I Conference**, held in Long Beach, California. OSEP staff presented alongside staff from the Department's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education on the importance of collaboration between public agencies and their stakeholders, as well as between special education and general education staff at the *national*, *state*, and *local* levels. Staff highlighted key provisions in the new *Every Student Succeeds Act* (*ESSA*) that impact students with disabilities, demonstrating the need for continued cross-systems thinking as staff work to implement *ESSA* and *IDEA*.

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FROM THE FIELD: OSERS Blog features high quality early learning in Michigan

Kelly Bentley, a project director for the Early Learning Challenge grant in Michigan, leads cross-agency efforts to provide high-quality early learning and development opportunities for children from birth through age 5. Bentley shares with us, in an interview available on the *OSERS Blog*, that family engagement is a key part of the early learning culture at Michigan's education department. Bentley commends her state's commitment to promoting meaningful and intentional family engagement in both early learning programs and the state's work in this area.

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Tune in to the *OSERS Blog*!

Visit our blog for powerful stories and useful information from parents, families, educators, and practitioners in the field. Be sure to bookmark sites.ed.gov/osers for future posts!

Send us Your Feedback and Comments

We want to hear from you! Do you have suggestions for technical assistance opportunities? Parent resources? Webinar topics? Ideas for things to include in future newsletters? Send them to Charlotte Stein at charlotte.stein@ed.gov.

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