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## Special Education Newsletter from the Indiana Department of Education



Indiana Department of Education sent this bulletin at 12/18/2024 08:00 AM EST



Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

## Special Education Newsletter

This monthly newsletter from the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) Office of Special Education (OSE) includes resources, guidance, and support for special education directors, educators, and administrators who provide essential services that Indiana's students with disabilities need to learn and thrive.

### Important Announcement

#### New Email Newsletter Provider Beginning in 2025

The state of Indiana will be transitioning its newsletters from GovDelivery to Salesforce Marketing Cloud effective January 1, 2025. Current subscribers to IDOE newsletters, including the Special Education Newsletter, do not need to take any action, as subscribers will carry over to the new platform. For new users or future sign-ups, a new subscription page will be available once the transition is complete. We look forward to continuing to share important updates and information in the future via Marketing Cloud. Contact IDOE's [Office of Communications](#) with additional questions.

### Monitoring

#### Early Childhood Special Education Collaborative

The Office of Special Education hosts quarterly Early Childhood Special Education Collaborative meetings to give state updates subcommittee updates focused on inclusion, transition, child outcomes, field transformation, and its State Systemic Improvement Plan. Attendees are invited to provide feedback and suggestions in both full group and subcommittee meetings, with more in-depth work being completed within subcommittees. To sign up for emails and meeting invitations, please complete this short [form](#).

#### New Resources: Spread the Word - Early Childhood

IDOE has released updated documentation for [Part C to Part B Transition](#) (First Steps) and [Preschool Environments](#). While the information is not new, it is presented in an easy-to-read format, addresses common misconceptions, and answers frequently asked questions. LEAs should review each document, disseminate it to staff involved with First Steps transitions, evaluate and place children aged three to five in preschool settings, and ensure that local policies, practices, and procedures comply with all regulations. Contact IDOE's [Office of Special Education](#) with any questions.

#### Monitoring: Indicator 12 Part C to Part B Transitions

All Local Education Agencies (LEAs) that received letters of continued and longstanding non-compliance from the Office of Special Education should have completed their initial meeting regarding their Corrective Action Plans and Root Cause Analysis. If your LEA has not completed this meeting, please book as soon as possible via this [link](#). LEAs awaiting responses to appeals should receive a response no later than early January 2025.

#### December 1 Child Count

The December 1 Child count, required by IDEA and IC 20-43-4-4 will be completed on Wednesday, December 18, and finalized by Tuesday, February 4. State APC/Preschool tuition support adjustments for fiscal year (FY) 2025 will take place in the February disbursement. This count will additionally be used for federal reporting and monitoring including the SPP-APR and Results Driven Accountability (RDA) next school year, as well as calculation of the FY26 Part B grants and proportionate share. Local special education administrators are strongly encouraged to review their data at the time of certification. An additional child count will take place in April. This count is for state reporting only, and does not affect any funding.

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## Early Childhood Inclusion Survey

IDOE welcomes LEAs with early childhood programs to complete an anonymous survey of their inclusion practices. Data collected will be used to inform state resources, initiatives, and technical assistance. Complete the survey [here](#). The survey closes on Tuesday, December 31, at 11:59 p.m. ET. Contact IDOE's [Office of Special Education](#) with any questions.

## Fiscal

### Behavior Grant Due Date Reminder

The Office of Special Education is offering a grant focused on behavior support for students with disabilities. Grant funds may be awarded to corporations, charter schools, and state schools to ensure safe learning environments supporting academic achievement for students with IEPs. The grant application is now open and will close on Tuesday, December 31. Please refer to upcoming announcements in Moodle and weekly newsletters for more application information. Contact [osebehaviorgrant@doe.in.gov](mailto:osebehaviorgrant@doe.in.gov) with any questions.

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### Save the Date: Required Part B Proportionate Share Office Hours

The Office of Special Education's Part B fiscal team will be hosting office hours to assist LEAs with completing the FY24 and FY25 611 and 619 IDEA Part B grants Semi-Annual Proportionate Share Monitoring Reports. This is also a forum for helping with questions or issues regarding Proportionate Share. Each session is structured as a time for individual questions, there will be no formal presentation.

Join at any time during the 60-minute sessions to get answers to Part B questions or help with the completion and submission process. The following dates and times are scheduled for Part B office hours:

- [Wednesday, January 15, at 11 a.m. ET](#)
- [Friday, January 24, at 1 p.m. ET](#)

## Dispute Resolution

### Present Levels

Present Levels: 511 IAC 7-42-6(f)(1); 34 CFR § 300.320(a)(1)

In the November update, we shared information regarding what the case conference committee (CCC) must consider when developing an individualized education program (IEP). This newsletter will address the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP). Article 7 requires an IEP to contain a statement of the student's PLAAFP. 511 IAC 7-42-6(f)(1). PLAAFP is a crucial component of an IEP and describes the student's current abilities, strengths, weaknesses, and needs. It serves as the foundation for developing appropriate goals and services for the student. The information in this section typically comes from educational evaluation and reevaluation summary/results, district assessments, grades, progress monitoring data on goals, classroom tests, and assignments, discipline/behavior records, and observations by parents, teachers, or school staff. Present levels should be revised appropriately with new data gathered through progress monitoring and other sources in order to reflect current strengths and challenges. 511 IAC 7-42-5(a)(2). The PLAAFP section should include information regarding how the student's disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum and for preschool children, as appropriate, how the disability affects the child's participation in appropriate activities. This information can come from any adult who works with the student.

**Compliance consideration:** Ensure the CCC uses up-to-date information. When present levels are copied and pasted from the previous IEP into the new IEP, concerns may be raised as to whether the information is accurate and based on the student's current PLAAFP.

## Technical Assistance and Professional Development

### New Special Education Teacher Office Hours

IDOE's Office of Special Education, Technical Assistance (TA) Team will hold office hours for new special education teachers from 4 to 5 p.m. ET on Thursdays once a month. These meetings support teachers new to special education in navigating a variety of pertinent topics. The first part of the office hour will be a formal presentation on a relevant topic, and the last part will be an open Q&A with an opportunity for teachers of record (TORs) to ask questions. The next will be on Thursday, January 9, and will focus on behavior intervention plans and functional behavior assessments. Dates and topics for the rest of the year

can be found [here](#). Registration is not required; find the link to join [here](#). Contact IDOE's [Office of Special Education](#) with any questions.

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### Special Education Directors Symposium

Special Education Directors and administrators are invited to the Office of Special Education's Directors Symposium. The Directors Symposium will continue to share about special education policies and resources available to Indiana LEAs. The symposium supports directors by providing timely and relevant information that guides them toward increased confidence in their roles and increased compliance with their corporation's reporting. If you haven't already, complete the [interest form](#) to be added to the list for updates regarding the symposium, which will meet virtually each month. The next sessions will be on Tuesday, January 14, from 3 to 4:40 p.m. ET focusing on manifestation determinations and the RDA dashboard and on Wednesday, January 22, from 3 to 4:40 p.m. ET focusing on Dispute Procedures and Medicaid information. Recordings of sessions will be uploaded to the OSE Moodle community in the "Technical Assistance Resource" folder. A list of all upcoming symposium topics and dates can be found [here](#). Contact IDOE's [Office of Special Education](#) with any questions.

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### Assistive Technology Library and Services (ATLAS) Support

Available to all K-12 public schools in Indiana, [ATLAS](#) offers assistive technology devices, software, and resource materials for students to trial at no cost. Read these [frequently asked questions](#) to learn more from ATLAS or submit a [technical assistance request](#) to connect with a team member.

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### Updated High Leverage Practices (HLPs)

This HLP guidance document was collaboratively developed by the CEEDAR Center and the Council for Exceptional Children. Along with the document itself, supplemental resources have been created to assist the implementation of the HLPs. The revised and updated [High Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities](#) is available for download at no cost.

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### A Message from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Director, Valerie C. Williams

On December 3, over 600 of Indiana's special educators attended the first day of the Elevating Education 2024 Conference. OSEP Director Valerie C. Williams delivered the keynote message with information and insights on recent guidance issued by OSEP, along with how to engage with OSEP's wide range of resources. [View Director Williams' slides](#) to find QR codes that connect you to useful OSEP resources.

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### December Indiana IEP (IIEP) Virtual Office Hours

Join IIEP virtual office hours sessions hosted by Public Consulting Group (PCG) on the third Wednesday of each month from 11 a.m. to noon ET via Microsoft Teams. Sessions will also be recorded and available in IIEP under the *Training* tab. [Register for the Wednesday, December 18, session](#) to learn more about recent system updates and upcoming changes, followed by a question and answer session. Contact [PCG](#) with questions regarding these office hours.

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## Special Educator Licensure, Recruitment, and Recognition

### Early Literacy Endorsement Professional Development (PD) & Praxis Voucher Request

Educators who hold an Indiana professional educator license can register [here](#) for the flexible [Keys to Literacy options](#). Educators planning to earn Indiana's Early Literacy Endorsement can follow the process outlined [here](#) to submit a request to verify completion of the approved 80 hours and request a Praxis voucher if needed. Contact IDOE's [Literacy Center](#) with questions.

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## Updates from the U.S. Department of Education (ED)

### Using Functional Behavioral Assessments to Create Supportive Learning Environments

The U.S. Department of Education released guidance on the development of Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) and the role of an FBA in informing instructional strategies to support the behavioral needs of students. The [Using Functional Behavioral Assessments to Create Supportive Learning Environments guidance](#) provides educators with the tools needed to anticipate and prevent behaviors that interfere with learning through the development of Behavior Intervention/Support Plans (BIPs/BSPs). The desired outcomes of this guidance include improved academic performance, improved social and emotional competence, reduced exclusionary discipline, and improved school organizational health and school climate." Contact IDOE's [Office of Special Education](#) with any questions.

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## Additional Updates, Resources, and Opportunities

### 2024-2025 School Year Graduation Pathways Webinars

The December Graduation Pathways webinar will take place on Thursday, December 19, from 1 to 2 p.m. ET and will focus on work-based learning with guest presenter, Anna Meer, from the Indiana Chamber's Institute for Workforce Excellence. Please access [this](#) document for all 2024-2025 school year webinar dates, times, and links. Contact IDOE's [Office of Student Pathways and Opportunities](#) with any questions.

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### **Apply for the 2025-2026 Dyslexia Assessment Program Approval Committee**

IDOE seeks qualified committee members to evaluate dyslexia screener and diagnostic assessment programs for potential approval for the 2025-2026 school year. Interested educators must complete the [2025-2026 Dyslexia Assessment Program Approval Committee Interest Survey](#) by Friday, December 20. The completion of the interest survey is not binding. Contact IDOE's [Office of Student Assessment](#) with any questions.

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### **Apply for the 2025-2026 Formative (Interim) Assessment Grant Program Approval Committee**

IDOE seeks qualified candidates to evaluate formative (interim) assessment programs for potential approval for the 2025-2026 school year. Interested educators must complete the [2025-2026 Formative \(Interim\) Assessment Program Approval Committee Interest Survey](#) by Friday, December 20. Completion of the interest survey is not binding. Contact IDOE's [Office of Student Assessment](#) with any questions.

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### **Save the Date for TitleCon 2025**

TitleCon 2025 will bring together hundreds of Indiana educators, including superintendents, principals, program administrators, teachers, and fiscal representatives from local education agencies (LEA), charter schools, and non-public schools across the state. This two-day conference on Wednesday, April 16, and Thursday, April 17, will feature keynote speakers and several breakout sessions designed to provide schools with programmatic and fiscal guidance to advance federal education programs in their respective communities. This year will also feature a pre-conference on Tuesday, April 15, to provide additional learning opportunities regarding student groups and additional specialty programs. More information regarding registration, hotel block information, and specific conference details will be provided soon.

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### **FROM THE READING LEAGUE INDIANA: Science of Reading Experts Explain Series**

In the next live Expert Explain series on Thursday, January 16, Dr. Stephanie Stollar will present *Progress Monitoring Reading: Shifting From Documenting Failure to Accelerating Growth*. Progress monitoring (PM) with curriculum-based measures is a powerful tool for using data to change reading outcomes. However common misconceptions about progress monitoring can get in the way. This session will revisit and clarify the value of progress monitoring by illustrating examples of using PM data to improve instruction at all tiers of the MTSS framework for school improvement. All sessions will be recorded and shared in the Indiana Learning Lab. See registration details [here](#). Contact IDOE's [Literacy Center](#) with any questions.

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### **HANDS in Autism® Trainings and Resources**

#### ***Next Steps Workshop***

Next Steps™ is primarily designed for primary caregivers who have a child who has recently been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). However, this free workshop is also beneficial for other caregivers, educational or therapy professionals, medical providers, and other adult family members.

There will be 2025 dates starting with Tuesday, January 14, and Thursday, January 16. All sessions are from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. ET. Register [here](#).

#### ***Make-It Take-It Series (MITI)***

This free virtual workshop series is designed to educate participants about evidence-based strategies and learn how to use these strategies with individuals with ASD across settings. Sessions are on Wednesdays from noon to 2 p.m. ET. Register [here](#) for all or some of the upcoming sessions.

- Wednesday, December 18: Data-Driven Decision-Making: Practical tools to make data work for you and your team
- Wednesday, January 8: Generalization: Skills in Action: Planning for and supporting skills from teaching to daily living
- Wednesday, January 22: Physical & Visual Structure: Creating a Perfect Environment Physical and Visual Structure that Works
- Wednesday, January 29: Schedules & Work Systems: Staying on time and on task: Visual schedules and work systems for any setting

***One-Day Intensive Workshop for Paraprofessionals, Direct Support Providers, Assistants, and Support Personnel***

This is an intensive workshop for paraprofessionals, assistants, and support personnel that focuses on providing hands-on experience and coaching. While the program includes traditional instructional methods such as lectures and discussion, the emphasis of the workshop is building increased knowledge and skill of the process to support students with varying levels of disability and need in achieving maximum success. Trainings are available either in-person or virtually, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET. The next session is Friday, January 24. The cost is \$150. Register [here](#).

**Two-Day Intensive Admin Training (Virtual, In-Person)**

HANDS in Autism® Team will host a two-day administrator training. This training is designed for administrators and teams. It will focus on essential components of programming for students with ASD and related disabilities. A special emphasis will be on administrative and evaluation tools to track the outcomes of classrooms and programming. The next training is on Thursday, February 6, and Friday, February 7, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET. Trainings are available either in person or virtually. The cost of the event is \$350. Register [here](#).

**Three-Day Transition & Vocational Programming Training**

This training consists of a combination of independent and group learning opportunities enhanced by simulated and live practice of skills and strategies with students with ASD, allowing for ongoing modeling, coaching, feedback, and mentoring from HANDS trainers. With an emphasis on building increased knowledge and skill in the process of making appropriate programming decisions for each student, classroom, and/or intervention team, training topics build successively across each day. The next dates are Wednesday, February 12, through Friday, February 14, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET. The cost of the event is \$750. Register [here](#).

Upcoming Dates



Wednesday, December 18	December IIEP virtual office hours. <a href="#">Register here</a> .
Thursday, December 19, from 1 to 2 p.m. ET	Graduation Pathways webinar
Tuesday, December 31	Behavior Grant due
Tuesday, December 31, at 11:59 p.m. ET	Deadline to complete the <a href="#">early childhood inclusion survey</a> .
Thursday, January 9, from 4 to 5 p.m. ET	<a href="#">New Special Education Teacher office hours</a>
Tuesday, January 14, from 3 to 4:40 p.m. ET	Special Education Directors Symposium: RDA Dashboard and Manifestation Determinations
Wednesday, January 15, at 11 a.m. ET	<a href="#">Required Part B Proportionate Share office hours</a>
Wednesday, January 22, from 3 to 4:40 p.m. ET	Special Education Directors Symposium: Dispute Procedures and Medicaid Information
Friday, January 24, at 1 p.m. ET	<a href="#">Required Part B Proportionate Share office hours</a>
Wednesday, April 16, and Thursday, April 17	TitleCon 2025 in Plainfield

Additional Resources

- [Office of Special Education](#)
- [Office of Special Education Moodle Community](#)



## Department News

- 12/12/2024 Ripley County Teacher Surprised with \$25,000 Milken Educator Award
- 12/11/2024 New Indiana Diploma Requirements Approved with Unanimous Support

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