

THE BUREAU BULLETIN

THE BUREAU
BULLETIN

CONNECTICUT STATE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

From the Bureau of Special Education

BRIEF FROM THE CHIEF

Dear Readers-

Thank you for reading *The Bureau Bulletin* and supporting the Bureau of Special Education (BSE) through the pilot phase of this newsletter. We will continue to use this newsletter format based on feedback provided; however, we have made a few minor changes. We have modified the organizational headers (located in the right-hand column) for consistency and to reflect a more broad-based scope in our reporting. Our [Featured Story](#) section will continue to highlight current events relevant to the special education field. For the 2008-09 school year, the BSE will share in-depth information regarding several leadership organizations working to improve and enhance special education programs and services across Connecticut.

Our [State of the State](#) section will contain updates and clarification on State legislation, regulations, actions, and events pertinent to special education, which likely involve work with other bureaus, agencies, and organizations. Our [Bureau Happenings](#) section will focus specifically on BSE activities such as monitoring, compliance, guideline updates, due process information, the State Performance Plan (SPP) and other areas requiring regular BSE oversight. The [Federal Focus](#) area will provide information from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) regarding Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 and other federal initiatives affecting individuals with disabilities.

Finally, the [Resources & Opportunities](#) section will remain in its current location. We intend to expand this section over time with reader input and lessons learned through our work with communities across the State. Please keep checking the *Bulletin* for targeted resources, technical assistance and training available to our readers!



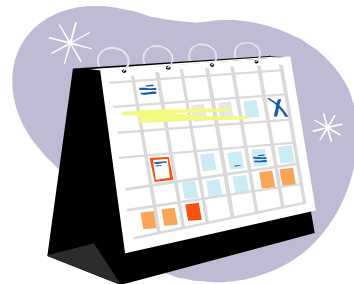
*Still Water Pond in Torrington, CT
Photo by Katherine Ryan*

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Mark Your Calendars...

- **Evaluation Timelines Resubmission Deadline: October 31, 2008**
- **Early Childhood Outcomes—Timely Deadline: November 1, 2008**
- **Early Childhood Outcomes—Accurate Deadline: November 15, 2008**
- **SEDAC—G December final certification statutory Deadline: December 1, 2008**
- **SEDAC – Oct. 1 Child Count Timely Deadline: December 15, 2008**
- **SEDAC – Oct. 1 Child Count Accurate Deadline: December 23, 2008**



Thank you again for your support and ongoing dedication to the field! We enjoy serving you and look forward to future collaboration - *Anne Louise Thompson*

Featured Story: State Organization Highlights

The BSE is pleased to introduce a series of articles which focus on state, regional, and national groups that provide leadership in the area of special education across Connecticut. The associations, councils, and agencies featured over the next few months frequently work in collaboration with the BSE and serve in many other capacities statewide to ensure that students with disabilities and those responsible for supporting their development have access to high quality educational opportunities and are receiving what is entitled under federal and state laws. While some of the groups featured are required to serve by legislation, all groups are dedicated to providing service and leadership that addresses the needs of children and youth with disabilities. For 2008-09, the BSE will highlight the integral work of the different organizations beginning with the **Connecticut Council of Administrators for Special Education (ConnCASE)**.



ConnCASE, an official division of the [Council for Exceptional Children](#) and a State affiliate of the Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE), is a professional organization dedicated to promoting professional leadership, exploring common issues concerning children with disabilities, and developing improved services for exceptional children. ConnCASE serves its membership (Connecticut administrators for special education and their constituencies) by providing forums for discussion. These forums provide a venue for exchanging information focused on improving outcomes for students with disabilities and training opportunities necessary in pursuit of that outcome. One example is the forum on statewide leadership, which bring together key stakeholders to discuss integral topics pertaining to students with disabilities. ConnCASE also has regional membership groups working together by geographic location in support of the same mission and vision.

Staff members from the BSE frequently work with ConnCASE to exchange information on current issues in special education. Additionally, members from ConnCASE are frequently asked to serve on Connecticut stakeholder groups, including those contributing to BSE efforts, because of their experience and knowledge of students, teachers, and educational trends in Connecticut. The BSE appreciates ConnCASE for ongoing collaboration with and regular input on numerous BSE activities and events. For more information about ConnCASE, upcoming leadership forums, and regional groups in your area, visit <http://www.conncase.org/default.asp>. Stay tuned for the next article in our leadership series when the State Advisory Council (SAC) for Special Education is featured.



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Stay tuned via *The Bureau Bulletin* and the CSDE website for multiple opportunities to engage statewide in strengthening partnerships! We appreciate your involvement.

State of the State

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LEA Excess Cost Grant



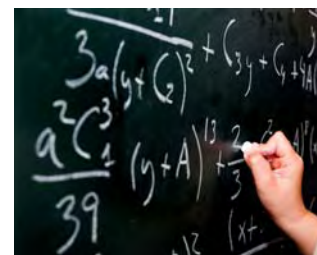
Over the past year, there has been an ongoing review of grant requests submitted by public school districts for local education agency (LEA) excess cost and State agency placement grants. The Bureaus of Special Education and Data Collection, Research and Evaluation have been reviewing grant submissions from districts concerning cases in which a child is receiving special education instruction in approved special education facilities or facilities not approved for special education. In order to clarify questions that have been raised and issues emerging from data concerning eligibility for the grants, the following [memo](#) was released on October 31, 2008.

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Results-based Accountability

Result-based Accountability (RBA) is a methodology for measuring outcomes and processes as a way of assessing the success of efforts, programs, services, interventions, and progress. RBA components include clear, expected results [goals]; measurable indicators; regular data collection efforts; and, results-based decision making in response to data trends. Another concept central to RBA is called "turning the curve" where working groups interpret data, discover issues as they review data trends, identify new ways to intervene, and track improvements upon implementation. Connecticut's Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) Sub-committee used a pilot process to implement RBA in 2006-07. The sub-committee selected specific programs comprising part of the *Ready by Five* and *Fine by Nine* initiatives. Programs represented include:

- Early Reading Success;
- Pre-K Special Education;
- Adult Education;
- Even Start;
- Family Resource Centers;
- School Readiness; and
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (nutrition program).



Work groups meet to build or revise templates, evaluate performance outcomes, develop a data collection agenda, and analyze improvement activities. At this time, the State Department of Education (SDE) is required by the legislature to deliver regular status reports, respond to ESE Sub-committee questions, and update templates annually. While the focus has been on Connecticut's Early Childhood Service System, the legislature and [Governor Rell](#) are strongly encouraging programs receiving state funds to "develop and implement a coordinated, uniform set of quality assurance and accountability methodologies." Currently the BSE works on the Pre-K Special Education and Family Resource Center initiatives. For more information on RBA, contact Dr. Jacqueline Kelleher by e-mailing jacqueline.kelleher@ct.gov or Maria Synodi by e-mailing maria.synodi@ct.gov.

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SRBI Family Guide

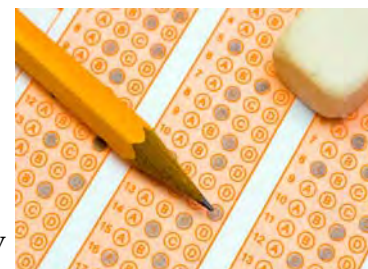
A companion [guide for families](#) to accompany the "Using Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI): Improving Education for All Students" [publication](#) is now available. A series of LEA forums are being offered again this year to assist school personnel and families in the implementation of SRBI. Please check the SERC website (<http://www.ctserc.org>) for registration information. Please note that trainings are extremely popular so register early. Contact Dr. Nancy Cappello for more information by e-mailing nancy.cappello@ct.gov.

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State of the State

Assessment

Development continues on the new Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT)/ Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) Modified Assessment System (MAS) which will be administered for the first time in March of 2009. Eligibility for the MAS in reading and/or math is determined for each individual student by the planning and placement team (PPT). This can be done in a formal PPT meeting or through consultation with the team and use of the *Agreement to Change an IEP Without Convening a PPT Meeting* (form ED634). The decision must be recorded on page 9A and page 3 of the student's individualized education program (IEP). The attached [memo](#) provides further information on this topic, the checklist, and the development of IEP goals based on content standards. Readers are encouraged to contact Michael Smith by e-mailing michael.s.smith@ct.gov with questions regarding state assessment.



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Special Act No. 08-5

The feasibility study group assigned to [Special Act No. 08-5 An Act Concerning the Teaching of Children with Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities](#) by the Commissioners of Higher Education, Department of Developmental Services, Education and the President of Southern Connecticut State University recently completed collecting information on school personnel training needs concerning the education of children who have autism and other developmental disabilities. Hundreds of professionals, families, and concerned citizens participated in the public meetings and through the on-line survey. The feasibility study group will work with this information to frame recommendations for a State plan addressing these needs in a report due to the Connecticut General Assembly on February 1, 2009. Readers may access meeting minute notes, the legislation, and feasibility group study members by clicking [here](#) or visiting our website at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&q=320720#085>.



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Suspension Guidelines

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has issued [guidance](#) to assist school districts in implementing Section 10-233c of the Connecticut General Statutes regarding suspension practices. This [information](#) will allow school boards and building administrators the time to prepare for and adjust to the changes required by the law and to reassess the effectiveness of their current suspension policies. Section 10-233c aims to lower the number of students who are suspended out-of-school by setting new standards for sending students home for violating school or district rules.



The Department will conduct workshops and technical assistance seminars that will be offered to school districts between November 2008 and March 2009. During this period, additional comments will be considered. CSDE staff will use these upcoming months to draw upon suggestions from educators and policy makers to ensure the guidance will be clear and supportive. For additional information please contact Nancy Aleman by e-mailing nancy.aleman@ct.gov.

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Bureau Happenings

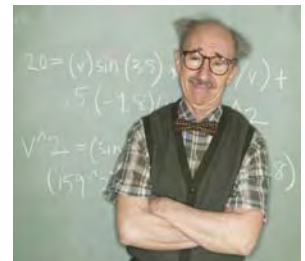
Focused Monitoring

Visits to school districts through Connecticut's Focused Monitoring system will take place January - April 2009. The Key Performance Indicator that districts will be reviewed upon is around academic achievement, relating to [Indicator 3](#) (*Participation and Performance on Statewide Assessments*) of the [State Performance Plan](#) which measures participation and performance of students with disabilities on statewide assessments. Initial letters to districts will be mailed by mid-November, in which a select number of districts will be asked to respond to the Department regarding current and planned practices for academic achievement and students with disabilities. The Department is using CMT and CAPT data to determine which districts will receive letters of inquiry; based on district responses back to the Department, four to five districts will be selected for a visit. It is important to note that through the focused monitoring process, the Department refers to students with disabilities as those having an IEP. Information was presented at September's Back to School meeting held by the Bureau of Special Education and recently during the New Administrator's training at ConnCASE Leadership Conference. The presentation from the Back to School meeting can be found on the Bureau of Special Education's website.

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New Special Education Administrator Session

New Administrators in Special Education training took place on October 16, 2008, in Mystic, Connecticut during ConnCASE's annual Leadership Conference. Topics discussed were data collection, Connecticut's State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report, District Annual Performance Reports, district determinations, and Connecticut's Focused Monitoring System. Training was conducted by Diane Murphy and Laura Guerrero of the Bureau of Data, Research and Evaluation and Dana Corriveau of the Bureau of Special Education. An overview of the State's progress in meeting special education targets outlined in IDEA was discussed as well as the impact of district level data on State level data when it is reported to the US Office of Special Education Programs, and implications for using data in program improvement. New administrators in attendance included new directors, supervisors/coordinators, school principals, and lead teachers. Discussions and questions were insightful and thought-provoking with much emphasis on the importance of general educators and special educators communicating and collaborating from the central office level to the classroom.



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Approved Private School Programs

Effective October 10, 2008, OPTIONS Educational Services was approved as a private special education program. This program is located at 645 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, CT 06105. OPTIONS Educational Services serves students ages 14 through 21. If you are interested in learning more about this program, please contact either Scott Wells or Susan Pinette at 860-523-5318. For more information regarding Connecticut's approved private school policies, practices, and procedures, contact Donna Cambria by e-mailing donna.cambria@ct.gov.



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Bureau Happenings

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Secondary Transition

IDEA 2004 requires that all students age 16 – 21 (or younger) have “**appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments**” - §300.320(b). State Education Resource Center (SERC), in conjunction with the BSE, is providing training that is designed to assist transition personnel to use the tools listed in the new *Transition Assessment Resource Manual* (2008) to write postsecondary goals (called “post-school outcome goal statements” in CT) as well as annual goals and objectives. See the attached [flyer](#) for registration details. This training will be the first time that participants will have guided practice in developing post-school outcome goal statements that will be required in the revised IEP forms (see [draft of secondary transition](#) pages), due to be finalized by the end of 2008. All new IEPs written after January 1, 2009, will be using these new forms. New training materials using the postsecondary goal examples designed by the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) (www.nsttac.org) and approved by OSEP are included in the attached *Writing Post-School Outcome Goal Statements* [powerpoint presentation](#). For further information about secondary transition, contact: Dr. Patricia Anderson at patricia.anderson@ct.gov.



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Editor Note: Dr. Patricia Anderson was inadvertently left off the list of names for readers to contact regarding the LD Guidelines in the September 2008 Bulletin. Please include Dr. Anderson in your list of contacts regarding this important document.

Service Plans

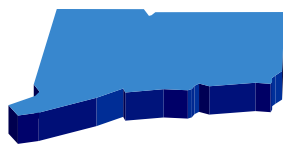
Frequently asked questions of consultants in the BSE often involve the school district’s responsibilities with regard to students who are parentally placed by their parents in non-public school facilities. Questions often include:

- When is a school district responsible for non-public school students?
- For what activities is the public school responsible when a child resides in their community?
- What activities is the public school responsible for when a child attends a non-public school within the boundaries of another school district?
- How and when do the IDEA non-public school provisions apply to preschool students?

This issue and the related questions and guidance were addressed in both the CSDE’s special education data application and collection (SEDAC) training and in the Back-to-School Meeting convened by the BSE on September 15, 2008. The two slides outlining the non-public school provisions as they relate to various situations were provided to attendees at both meetings. The slides are [attached](#). Additional information can found in a Topic Brief on the BSE’s web site at: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&Q=320730#Briefs>. Questions can be directed to consultants in the BSE at 860-713-6910.

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Legal/Due Process



Bureau Bulletin readers have made inquiries with regards to learning more about due process findings, trends, and procedures. Please refer to the BSE website for information on due process hearing cases and decisions rendered by accessing <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320712>. Cases are categorized by hearing decision number and are archived electronically on this site dating back to 1998. For more information, please contact Tom Badway at 860-713-6935.

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Federal Focus

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Public Comment on the State Performance Plan

The IDEA, signed on December 3, 2004, became PL 108-446. In accordance with 20 U.S.C. 1416(b)(1), not later than one year after the date of enactment of the IDEA 2004, each state must have in place a performance plan that evaluates the state's efforts to implement the requirements and purposes of Part B and describe how the state will conduct implementation. This plan is called the Part B [State Performance Plan](#) (Part B-SPP). In accordance with 20 U.S.C. 1416(b)(2)(C)(ii) the state shall report annually to the public on the performance of each LEA located in the state on the targets in the SPP. The state also shall report annually to the Secretary on the performance of the state under the SPP. This report is called the Part B Annual Performance Report (Part B-APR). Information Collection 1820-0624 corresponds to 34 CFR 300.600-300.602. OSEP has posted the indicators with a 30 day comment period ending November 21, 2008. The BSE encourages the public to comment to OSEP on the proposed rules by going to the comment site <http://edicsweb.ed.gov> and clicking on 'browse pending collections' and click on 3870. All questions concerning Connecticut's State Performance Plan and the Annual Performance Report may be directed to Dana Corriveau at by e-mailing dana.corriveau@ct.gov.



Center Springs Park in Manchester, CT — Photo by Lester Kritzer

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Building the Legacy Tools

Building the Legacy is a training curriculum produced by the [National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities](#) at the request of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the U.S. Department of Education and is available by accessing the following website: <http://www.nichcy.org/Laws/IDEA/Pages/BuildingTheLegacy.aspx>. These tools and other federal resources were recently highlighted at the National Accountability Conference and the National Association of State Directors of Special Education annual meetings. There are multiple modules that address components of the law and compliance practices. Modules come with handouts and other supplemental materials to guide activities for audiences seeking to further their understanding of IDEA 2004.

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OSEP Releases Memo on Timely Correction

The OSEP released a [memo](#) regarding Timely Correction and the steps a state must take in order to report that previously identified noncompliance has been corrected. It also describes how OSEP will factor evidence of correction into its analysis of whether a state has demonstrated substantial compliance for the purposes of determinations under sections 616 and 642 of the IDEA beginning with the department's 2010 determinations based on a review of the FFY 2008 APRs. Additionally, the memo addresses concerns OSEP identified in its review of states' FFY 2005 and FFY 2006 APRs about identification and correction of noncompliance and low performance in compliance areas. Districts and other IDEA funded agencies are monitored for compliance with federal and State requirements by the BSE through multiple monitoring activities including the Annual Performance Reports, Due Process, focused monitoring, dispute resolution as part of Connecticut's general supervision system. For questions regarding this memo or how Connecticut reports on correction of noncompliance through its monitoring activities, contact Dr. Jacqueline Kelleher at jacqueline.kelleher@ct.gov.

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Resources & Opportunities

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RESC

RESCs (Regional Educational Service Centers), public education agencies providing programs and services to Connecticut's public school districts, are located in [six](#) areas across the State.

There are numerous resources available through the RESCs that have been developed in response to the needs of students, families, school personnel and communities. The [RESC Alliance](#) was created by legislative mandate to help districts communicate and collaborate. Interested readers are encouraged to learn more about offerings in their regions by contacting their local RESC [directly](#). Each RESC will be featured in a future *Bulletin* edition.

SERC Offerings

SERC continues to maintain the Special Education Resource Center in addition to its broader responsibilities to Connecticut public schools. Readers are encouraged to review professional development opportunities and resources available at the SERC Library in Middletown by accessing the SERC [website](#). In an upcoming Bulletin edition, SERC will highlight important features of its library.

The BSE has been taking part in planning the **Connecticut Forum on Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities**, an event led by the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism. The forum is November 15, 2008, at Saint Joseph College from 9:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Click [here](#) for more information.

ADOS Availability

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The CSDE, in collaboration with the Connecticut Birth to Three System, Early Childhood Special Education and SERC, has been offering a variety of training and technical assistance opportunities involving educating children on the autism spectrum. Training and technical assistance opportunities are aligned with State guideline documents which include the **Guidelines for the Identification and Education of Children and Youth with Autism** (State Department of Education, July 2005) and **Autism Spectrum Disorders – Service Guidelines #1** (Connecticut Birth to Three System, January 2008). Please click [here](#) for a memo concerning opportunities to access and work with the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS), one of the instruments available in the field to help with making eligibility determinations, planning programs, and screening for early intervention.

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Nondiscrimination Statement

The State of Connecticut Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons and does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws. Inquiries regarding the Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to the Affirmative Action Administrator, State of Connecticut Department of Education, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457-1543, 860-807-2071.



Interesting idea for a featured story? Willing to write as a guest columnist? Comments or feedback on the format? Share your thoughts with the Bureau Bulletin coordinator by e-mailing jacqueline.kelleher@ct.gov.

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