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## Special Education Newsletter from the Indiana Department of Education



Indiana Department of Education sent this bulletin at 11/25/2024 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.

### Monitoring

#### I AM Assurances: Requesting Assurances of All Local Education Agencies

One piece of the monitoring procedures for monitoring the participation rates of Indiana's Alternate Measure, I AM, is to require local education agencies (LEAs) to complete an assurance survey. The assurance survey is a tool for LEAs to acknowledge understanding of the *participation criteria* and indicate if this LEA may exceed the 1.0% participation cap in the coming assessment administration; this is an opportunity to review the *participation criteria* to ensure only the students with the most significant cognitive disability are participating in this important assessment. The requirement is that all LEAs complete this [brief survey](#) by Sunday, December 1. Please email IDOE's [Office of Special Education](#) with questions.

#### Results-Driven Accountability (RDA) Special Education Data Update

The Office of Accountability is now conducting its annual audit of accountability data for the 2023-2024 school year. Special education staff are encouraged to provide any assistance needed by local data submission and review staff to ensure the quality of the data.

This audit includes assessment and graduation data used in the annual RDA data matrices for annual determinations and levels of support. The data will not be finalized until after Friday, December 13. To facilitate meaningful discussion and answer any questions posed at the state conference on Tuesday, December 3, and Wednesday, December 4, preliminary data will be loaded into ED-DATA for examination by school system staff before the beginning of the conference on Tuesday, December 3. However, school staff are notified that this data, and the determinations based on it, are not final and are subject to change after the initial availability. Determinations will not be publicly posted until full finalization has occurred.

#### 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

#### Upcoming: Behavior Grant Office Hours

The Office of Special Education is offering a grant focused on behavior support for students with disabilities. Grant funds may be awarded to school corporations, charter schools, and state schools to ensure safe learning environments that support academic achievement for students with IEPs. The grant

application will close on Tuesday, December 31. Office hours to support the application process will be held [Thursday, December 12, from 9 to 10 a.m. ET](#). Please refer to upcoming announcements in Moodle and weekly newsletters for more information regarding applications and office hours. Contact [osebehaviorgrant@doe.in.gov](mailto:osebehaviorgrant@doe.in.gov) with any questions.

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### **Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 IDEA Part B 611 & 619 Reimbursements**

The deadline to submit the final reimbursement requests for the FY23 IDEA Part B 611 & 619 grants is Friday, December 13. Reimbursement requests should be submitted by email to [specialedpartb@doe.in.gov](mailto:specialedpartb@doe.in.gov). Requests submitted after Friday, December 13, will not be accepted. Contact the IDOE [Office of Special Education](#) with additional questions.

## Dispute Resolution

### **What Must a Case Conference Committee (CCC) Consider When Developing an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?**

Article 7, Indiana's Special Education Law, requires the CCC to develop an IEP that meets the unique needs of the student regardless of the student's identified disability. 511 IAC 7-42-6(d). Similarly, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as amended, the Federal Special Education Law, requires public schools to provide special education that meets the unique needs of a child with a disability. 34 CFR § 300.39(a). There is no bright-line rule on how to develop an IEP to meet the unique needs of the student, and deference is given to school authorities based on the school's expertise and exercise of judgment. *Endrew F. ex rel. Joseph F. v. Douglas County School Dist. RE-1*, 580 U.S. 386, 388 (2017). A school is expected to have procedures in place that would result in individualized consideration of and instruction for each child. IDEA (and Article 7) requires students to receive an educational program that is reasonably calculated to enable a student to make appropriate progress in light of the child's circumstances. *Id.* at 403. See 511 IAC 7-42-6 for more information on what the school must consider when developing the IEP.

## Technical Assistance and Professional Development

### **Elevating Education 2024: "Improving Outcomes for All" Statewide Conference**

In collaboration with IDOE, the IEP TA Center invites you to join our statewide conference, Elevating Education: Improving Outcomes for All. The goal of this conference is for participants to gain knowledge, build capacity, and network with colleagues in order to deliver the most effective educational programming for all students. The conference, intended for general educators, special educators, and administrators, will take place at the Hyatt Regency Indianapolis and the Indiana Convention Center on Tuesday, December 3, and Wednesday, December 4. For more information and registration information, visit the [conference website](#). Contact [Marcee Wilburn](#) from the IEP TA Center with additional questions.

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### **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 will be to 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. Office hours will be held on Thursday, December 5, and will focus on supporting students with transition IEPs. 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**

The Directors Symposium supports special education directors and administrators in learning about special education policies and resources available to Indiana LEAs, providing timely and relevant information that guides them toward increased confidence in their roles and increased compliance in their corporation's reporting. Please complete the [interest form](#) to receive updates regarding the symposium, which will meet virtually each month. The next session will be on Monday, December 9, focusing on Good Cause Exemptions and child count finalizations. 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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### **Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Training and Technical Assistance Community of Practice**

The Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services (DDRS) with the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) has contracted with PCG to strengthen Pre-ETS across Indiana. One part of this multifaceted project is to implement Communities of Practice (CoP) meetings where various Pre-ETS stakeholders share challenges and successes and learn best practices and effective strategies. This CoP is titled "Training and Technical Assistance" and focuses on topics that stakeholders identified during a Pre-ETS Needs Assessment that PCG conducted in the fall of 2023. The community of practice will consist of four quarterly topics with six meetings for each topic. The introductory session will take place today, Monday, November 25, from 3 to 4 p.m. ET. [Follow this link](#) for more information or to register for the sessions.

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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.

## Special Educator Licensure, Recruitment, and Recognition

### Recommendations Open for Distinguished Educators Recognition

IDOE is looking for confidential recommendations from teachers representing the very best educators in Indiana. These emerging leaders must have between five and 15 years of experience, demonstrate leadership beyond the classroom, and positively impact school culture and student achievement. Superintendents and principals may submit recommendations [here](#). Recommendations must be submitted by Saturday, November 30. Contact IDOE's [Office of Educator Talent](#) with any questions.

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### Additional Opportunities to Recognize Indiana Educators

Throughout the year, numerous opportunities arise nationwide to acknowledge the incredible work of Indiana educators. IDOE's Office of Educator Talent has developed [this document](#), which will be updated periodically with external opportunities to recognize educators. To submit an educator recognition opportunity not listed, contact IDOE's [Office of Educator Talent](#).

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

### Special Education Teacher Shortage Report Accepting Public Comment

[The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights](#) held a briefing on November 15 to hear from government officials, current and former educators, and researchers in order to investigate how teacher shortages are impacting the growing number of students with disabilities nationwide. The commission is looking into the challenges that schools are experiencing in filling openings for special education professionals and what the government is doing to address these issues. The investigation comes as special education enrollment has risen in recent years to a [record](#) high of 7.5 million students, 15% of all students. [Data](#) from the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics shows that 74% of elementary and middle schools and 66% of high schools report difficulty finding fully certified teachers to fill special education vacancies at the start of this academic year. The commission is accepting written public comment as they prepare their report. To submit a public comment, email [teachershortage@usccr.gov](mailto:teachershortage@usccr.gov) by Monday, December 16.

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### The Center on Inclusive Technology & Education Systems (CITES) Framework for AT and AEM

CITES aims to empower school districts to build and maintain technology systems that include every student, particularly children and youth with disabilities who require assistive technology and accessible materials. The [CITES framework](#) is a helpful guide that offers districts a step-by-step process for identifying and removing systemic barriers to the implementation of inclusive technology. It works alongside technology and instructional efforts already in place, bringing together experts and coaches at various levels to assist local teams in making and maintaining inclusive technology systems. The CITES framework aligns with the [National Education Technology Plan](#) (NETP) by fostering inclusive, accessible, and technology-rich learning environments. For more information, contact [CAST](#).

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### New PROGRESS Center Professional Learning Videos

[The PROGRESS Center](#) released two new videos. [Fostering Belonging for Students with Disabilities](#) provides considerations for how to create an environment where every student is not just included but is an indispensable member of the school community. [What Do a Bike and an IEP Have in Common?](#) [Ensuring the Parts Work Together to Promote Progress](#) uses a bicycle analogy to explain how a well-designed IEP provides free, appropriate public education to promote progress for students with disabilities.

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### National Center on Deafblindness: Key Topics for Families, now in Spanish

Key Topics for Families are now available in Spanish on the National Center on Deafblindness website: [Temas Clave Para Las Familias](#). This resource includes information on strategies and supports that families can use to help navigate their child's services and everyday life. Resources are organized by topic, including early intervention, educational services, learning at home, transition, caring for the family, and more.

## Additional Updates, Resources, and Opportunities

## Praxis 5205 Test At-Home Guidance

Educators using test vouchers (or any payment method) who want to use a school-owned computer to take at-home Praxis exams should review and confirm that the computer equipment and environment meet the test-at-home requirements and that network security settings will not block the test platform software. Please review the [At-Home Testing Requirements](#) to ensure the testing session will not be invalidated, thus requiring payment for another exam session. For support with Praxis, contact [ETS Praxis Customer Support](#) or 1-800-772-9476.

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## IREAD Guidance - 2024-2025 School Year

Beginning this school year, all second grade students will participate in the spring administration of IREAD. New Indiana legislation updated guidance schools must use when making decisions about grade-level promotion, instructional plans, and Good Cause Exemption (GCE) eligibility. The purpose of a GCE has significantly changed from past years. Beginning with the 2024-2025 IREAD test administration, a GCE now serves to exempt an eligible student from retention if the student does not pass IREAD in third grade. New resources for IREAD can be found here and on IDOE's [IREAD webpage](#).

- [Process & Considerations for Issuing a Good Cause Exemption](#)
- [IREAD Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Communication Guidance for Incoming Kindergarten Students: IREAD Assessment Outcomes](#)
- GCE Parent Letter Template ([English](#) | [Spanish](#))
- [After the GCE: Students with Disabilities](#)
- [After the GCE: English Learners](#)

Contact [IDOE's Office of Student Assessment](#) with any questions.

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## ILEARN Checkpoint Summits

IDOE and regional Education Service Centers of Indiana (ESCI) are partnering to provide two more ILEARN Checkpoint professional development opportunities for educators and instructional leaders on Tuesday, December 10, and Thursday, December 12. Registration, location, and agenda information can be found [here](#). Contact IDOE's [Office of Student Assessment](#) with any questions.

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## From Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation (VR): Statewide VR Survey

Indiana VR completes a statewide needs assessment every three years to better understand the needs of students and job seekers with disabilities. This helps VR identify priorities and strategies to better address those needs. One of the ways VR gathers information is through surveys. Youth and adults with disabilities are encouraged to share feedback through this [survey link](#). Vocational Rehabilitation would love to receive responses to the survey by Friday, December 6. If you have questions about this survey, need accommodations, or need help completing this survey, please contact [dcolemon@pcgus.com](mailto:dcolemon@pcgus.com).

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## Students Invited to Hoosier Holiday Event

First Lady Janet Holcomb invites students to the Hoosier Holiday program at the Statehouse on Monday, December 9. More information on this opportunity can be found in [this letter](#). Reserve your spot at the Statehouse Tour Office by calling 317-233-5293.

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## HANDS in Autism® Trainings and Resources

### ***HANDS Developmental Disabilities and Autism ECHO Webinar Series and Recordings***

The Developmental Disabilities and Autism ECHO is based on the Project ECHO™ model that aims to share best practices and amplify training impact. The model serves as a means for specialists to deliver curriculum topics while peers and panelists offer insights on the corresponding cases presented. Live sessions and recordings are available. The live sessions occur on Fridays, from noon to 1:30 p.m. ET. To register for the live sessions or to learn more about dates and topics click [here](#). To view previously recorded sessions, create an account with Indiana University's Expand, a portal for professional development, [here](#); for additional directions on accessing recordings click [here](#).

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

Join the HANDS in Autism® Team in the upcoming no-cost Next Steps™ Workshop to learn more about characteristics of ASD and related disabilities, considerations for all family members, statewide and local supports, rights and regulations, financial considerations, best practices and practical strategies available to support individuals on the spectrum and their families or caregivers, as well as collaboration pointers for working with your school and other providers.

Next Steps™ is primarily designed for primary caregivers who have a child who has recently been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). However, this workshop is also beneficial for other caregivers, educational or therapy professionals, medical providers, and other adult family members. The 2-day sessions allow you to apply and practice what you have learned and develop tools and strategies applicable to your setting. The next dates are Tuesday, December 10, and Thursday, December 12. There will also be 2025 dates starting with January 14 and 15, 2025. All sessions are from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. ET. Register [here](#).

**Make-It Take-It Series(MIT)**

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 (home, school, community), as well as to discuss and plan various materials tailored for the individual(s) you know. These interactive workshops provide an opportunity to learn about and create tools used to support individuals with ASD. Each session will focus on a different area of interest. Sessions are on Wednesdays from noon to 2 p.m. ET. It is not necessary to complete all of the sessions in the workshop series, so register [here](#) for all or some of the sessions. The next session is on Wednesday, December 4.

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

The HANDS in Autism® Team will host an intensive workshop for paraprofessionals, assistants, and support personnel that focuses on providing hands-on experience and coaching in a simulated setting. 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 on Friday, December 6. In most cases, accommodations for an alternate date can be made upon request for both the virtual and in-person training. 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 February 16 and 17, 2025, 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**

Join the HANDS in Autism® Team for an intensive training focused on innovative, interactive experiences and coaching in vocational rehabilitation settings (VR, transition-age resource classroom, employer setting). Training days consist of a combination of independent and group learning opportunities enhanced by the simulated and live practice of skills and strategies with youth with ASD, allowing for ongoing modeling, coaching, feedback, and mentoring from HANDS trainers. The next training is Wednesday, December 11, through Friday, December 13. The cost of the event is \$750. Register [here](#).

**HANDS in Autism® Resources**

Free and/or low-cost supports can be found here, including visual supports, informational materials, toolkits, manuals, and items in Español. Examples of free resources include best practices for school safety tips and sample data collection forms.

**Upcoming Dates**



<b>Monday, November 25, from 3 to 4 p.m. ET</b>	<a href="#">Pre-ETS training and technical assistance community of practice introductory session</a>
<b>Sunday, December 1</b>	Deadline to complete required <a href="#">IAM assurance survey</a> .
<b>Tuesday, December 3, and Wednesday, December 4</b>	Elevating Education 2024: Improving Outcomes for All Statewide Conference
<b>Thursday, December 5, from 4 to 5 p.m. ET</b>	<a href="#">New special education teacher office hours</a>
<b>Monday, December 9</b>	Special Education Directors Symposium: Good Cause Exemptions and child count finalizations
<b>Tuesday, December 10</b>	<a href="#">ILEARN Checkpoints PD opportunity</a> .
<b>Thursday, December 12</b>	<a href="#">ILEARN Checkpoints PD opportunity</a> .
<b>Thursday, December 12, from 9 to 10 a.m. ET</b>	<a href="#">Monthly office hours: Behavior Grant</a>

Friday, December 13	Deadline to submit final reimbursement requests for FY23 IDEA Part B 611 and 619 grants
Wednesday, December 18	December IIEP virtual office hours. <a href="#">Register here.</a>
Tuesday, December 31, at 11:59 p.m. ET	Deadline to complete the <a href="#">early childhood inclusion survey</a> .

### Additional Resources

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



## Department News

- 11/12/24 Intentional Investments in Summer Math and Reading Support Show Return on Investment for Students
- 11/08/24 Indiana Schools Recognized for Commitment to Service Members, Veterans and Families

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