

The Bureau Bulletin

From the Bureau of Special Education

Brief from the Chief

Technology – No longer just an afterthought



As we cope with one winter storm after another, many of us find ourselves suddenly “tuned in” to the extent to which technology is embedded into our lives. A newly-gifted iPod continues to play my favorite holiday music, while my smart phone vibrates a greeting and chimes a calendar appointment reminder from where it lays on my counter. I can hardly imagine not being able to keep in touch with friends and family through my e-mail while also enjoying

some of their antics on a social networking site or two. Sales on the Wii and Guitar Hero, along with innumerable electronic games, new-and-improved WiFi plans, and, of course, the iPad, inundate both my HDTV and Satellite Radio. I can buy almost anything I can imagine online from anywhere in the world and have it shipped to my door in a matter of days. I can negotiate my way to any location in the United States by tapping in an address on my GPS. My car speaks reminders to get gas while some others actually parallel park.

I admit, by virtue of simply participating in life, I am irreversibly *connected*. But what might all this mean to our students with special needs? True, they can certainly enjoy the very same technology that I have mentioned. In fact, having grown up in an era ripe with budding technology, they are “pre-programmed,” if you will, with an understanding of technology that is more intuitive and natural than my own learned understanding. So that begs the question, “How can we capitalize on the wealth of technological opportunity available in order to assist in the education of students with disabilities?”

Education and technology are natural allies in ensuring that students of all learning styles, including students with disabilities, have equal opportunity to be engaged in classroom instruction, progress in their learning, and respond to classroom expectations. For students with disabilities, particular kinds of assistive technology (AT) may be especially helpful in meeting their unique needs. As the IDEA requires the availability of a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment, technology is an available route with a variety of avenues to help make meeting this requirement a reality for local education agencies (LEAs).

Click [here](#) for more of this article.

Mark Your Calendars...

March 1 - SEDAC-G March final certification statutory due date

Click [here](#) for the updated 2010-2011 Timely and Accurate calendar!



Winter 2010-11



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Birth to Three Notification Reports

The Connecticut State Departments of Education and Developmental Services are working together to meet the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004 and the Connecticut General Statutes regarding “*Child Find*.” Child Find activities are those that ensure that all children with disabilities are *identified, located* and *evaluated* to determine if they need special education and related services.



Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Section 17a-248d(e) and IDEA Part C 303.148(b)(1), specify that it is the responsibility of the Part C lead agency (e.g., the Birth to Three System) to notify local school districts of all children enrolled in the Birth to Three System who reside in their town or who may become the educational responsibility of a school district.

To support school districts in their *Child Find* efforts, the Connecticut State Department of Education is using the special education data application and collection (SEDAC) Web site to host Birth to Three Notification Reports. The Birth to Three Notification Reports are provided to the CSDE *three times per year* by the State Department of Developmental Services, Birth to Three System. The information in these reports is considered “*point-in-time data*,” meaning that the information is accurate and valid as of the date on which the report was provided to the CSDE. The information posted in the Birth to Three Notification Reports is **not** “*live data*.” These reports and the information contained in the reports are not a replacement for the obligation and responsibility of a school district for collecting, maintaining and tracking children who are referred to the school district for an evaluation so that eligible children have an individualized education program (IEP) no later than age 3.

The Department of Developmental Services, Birth to Three System is providing four different notification reports, three times per year. The reports and information include:

1. **Children who have been referred to the school district** – This information represents the number of children who are enrolled in and receiving Birth to Three services and whose parents have signed a written referral to the school district (Birth to Three Form 3-8) requesting that their child be evaluated to determine if the child will be eligible for special education and related services.

Click [here](#) for more of this article.

Medication Administration in Connecticut Schools Update

On December 13, 2010, former Commissioner of Education Mark McQuillan issued a memo to school superintendents, school nurse supervisors, and school medical advisors regarding medication administration. This document addressed major changes to the regulations for the *Administration of Medication by School Personnel and Administration of Medication During Before- and After-School Programs and School Readiness Programs*. A copy of this important memo may be viewed by clicking [here](#).

Workshops have been scheduled in order to provide guidance to school districts regarding the changes to these regulations. Click on this link for a [registration form](#) offering workshop dates, times, locations, and a description.

As indicated in the referenced memo, if you have any questions regarding these regulations, please contact Stephanie Knutson, School Health Consultant at stephanie.knutson@ct.gov or 860-807-2108.



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Focused Monitoring Update



Through the months of October and November 2010, the Bureau of Special Education (BSE) met with districts whose data demonstrated a significant improvement in the percent of students with disabilities meeting proficiency in the area of reading on the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) from the spring 2010 assessment. These were not formal visits, but rather an opportunity for the BSE to learn what strategies, interventions or changes took place within the district that fostered the improved outcomes reflected in their data, as well as the challenges that remain. The BSE would like to thank the districts of East Hampton, Orange, Plainville, Willington, Ledyard, Newington, Coventry, Derby, Enfield, Wethersfield and Region 16 for taking time out of their busy schedules to accommodate us. While many districts in Connecticut experienced a similar trend in their data, these particular districts were involved with the BSE's Focused Monitoring system.

In November, designated districts attended a data wall showcase conducted as a part of the Focused Monitoring system for the dual purposes of demonstrating student data as well as strategizing for improved outcomes. This session was well attended by staff from school districts, consultants from the BSE; Student Assessment; Data, Research and Evaluation; and Accountability and Improvement; as well as consultants from the State Education Resource Center (SERC) and staff from the Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC). Six districts will receive a site visit from the BSE in the spring to investigate the area of academic achievement for students with disabilities. These visits are intended to identify and develop strategies that will lead to improved achievement for students with disabilities in each district. Future *Bureau Bulletins* will provide further information regarding the achievement of students with disabilities, based on what we learn from our work with school districts during these visits and training sessions. Click [here](#) for more of this article.

For more information on this topic, contact Dana Corriveau at dana.corriveau@ct.gov or 860-713-6944.

CMT/CAPT Research and Training

(Portions of this article have been taken directly from a December 8, 2010 memo issued to District Test Coordinators from Associate Commissioner Barbara Beaudin regarding CMT/CAPT Skills Checklist Validity Research.)

For the past few years, Connecticut has participated in a consortium project to develop research evidence in support of alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Through this project, we have learned a great deal about how the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT)/Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) Skills Checklist operates in schools and classrooms. To review the December 8 memo regarding this research, please click [here](#). Findings of the study have led to the development of an additional research study designed to facilitate understanding regarding how teachers assign Skills Checklist ratings for students.

The CSDE continues to offer guidance and technical assistance around the CMT/CAPT Skills Checklist, Accommodations, and Validity Research. Several trainings have been scheduled in the very near future. Follow this link to review the [December 15, 2010 memo](#) regarding guidance or training information for CMT/CAPT Assessment Accommodations, Special Accommodations, Skills Checklist Certified Rater Training, and Skills Checklist Validity Research.

At the time of *Bureau Bulletin* publication, several workshop registration deadlines were quickly approaching. In cases where a deadline may now have passed, readers are encouraged to explore the registration processes listed on the memos to determine if the sessions have filled. To contact consultants regarding information related to specific memos, please see those individual documents for contact information. To reach the author of this article, please contact Jay Brown at jay.brown@ct.gov or 860-713-6918.

Update Regarding the Common Core State Standards

In the featured story of the November 2010 *Bureau Bulletin*, *Indicator 3 – Academic Achievement*, the newly adopted Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were referenced as national standards that did not eliminate Connecticut's own state standards. As a point of clarification, the CCSS, as adopted on July 7, 2010 by the State Board of Education, are, in fact, Connecticut's state standards in English language arts and mathematics for grades K-12. Follow this [link](#) to view the CSDE Web page on the CCSS. For questions on the CCSS, please contact Joanne White at joanne.white@ct.gov or 860-713-6751 for more information.

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State Performance Plan Indicators 4, 9, and 10 and Significant Disproportionality

The BSE has finished reviewing the self-assessments of those districts that had data of concern around the identification of students with disabilities by race/ethnicity. In June 2009, districts were first notified that beginning this year, 2010-11, race data would be analyzed according to the new federal race codes. [Circular letter C-14](#) from the 2008-09 series outlined these requirements.

Currently, OSEP requires states to analyze data for Indicators 9 and 10 by seven race/ethnicity categories:

1. **Hispanic/Latino of any race,**
2. **American Indian or Alaska Native,**
3. **Asian,**
4. **Black or African American,**
5. **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander,**
6. **White, and**
7. **Two or more races.**

States are required to investigate data of concern for the category of “two or more races,” where a district may have over- or underrepresentation. Districts with data of concern in this category will be required to complete a self-assessment on its policies, procedures and practices related to this area. Districts with overrepresentation in this category are also subject to the mandatory redirection of IDEA funds for coordinated early intervening services as required by 34 CFR Section 300.646. This data is anticipated to be publicly posted for all districts in late spring. Districts with data of concern will be contacted for follow-up actions.

For OSEP guidance pertaining to Indicators 4, 9, and 10 and Significant Disproportionality, please click [here](#). This document can also be found on the BSE [SPP/APR Web site](#).

For Connecticut’s guidance on disproportionality, see the Spring 2010 [Bureau Bulletin](#). To reach the author of this article, contact Dana Corriveau at dana.corriveau@ct.gov or 860-713-6944

Update: *Guidelines for Assistive Technology* Revision Project



In January 2010, a task force, led by the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) of the Connecticut Birth to Three System and SERC, convened to begin the process of drafting revisions to the [Guidelines for Assistive Technology](#).

During 2010, the task force, whose members represent the BSE, B-3, early childhood, K-12, higher education, regional educational service centers (RESCs) and community providers, divided into subcommittees to research and compile content materials for the revised guidelines. During 2011, representatives from the subcommittees, CSPD, SERC, B-3 and the Connecticut State Department of Education will convene a writing group to draft the revised *Guidelines for Assistive Technology*. Input from the task force as a whole will, of course, be part of this process. Completion of the revised *Guidelines for Assistive Technology* is projected for some time in 2011. Developments regarding this project will appear in future issues of the *Bureau Bulletin*. The BSE would like to extend a special thanks to the task force members, CSPD and SERC for their time and commitment to this ongoing project. For more information on the *Guidelines for Assistive Technology* revision project, please contact Sarah E. Harvey at sarah.harvey@ct.gov or 860-713-6936.

Suspension of Pupils Update

In recently issued [Circular Letter C-6 \(2010-11 Series\)](#), former Commissioner McQuillan discussed an update on Guidelines for In-School and Out-of-School Suspensions. Public Act 10-111, Suspension of Pupils, Revised Section 10-233c of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) modifies the requirements for the use of In-School Suspension for students. As of July 1, 2010, all suspensions from school shall be in-school suspensions unless school administration determines that:

“the pupil being suspended poses such a danger to persons or property or such a serious disruption to the educational process that the suspension should be out-of-school, or an out-of-school suspension is appropriate for such pupil based on evidence of: (A) previous disciplinary problems that have led to suspensions or expulsion of such pupil; and (B) efforts by the administration to address such disciplinary problems through means other than out-of-school suspension or expulsion, including positive behavioral support strategies.”

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You will find additional information regarding the legislated changes, along with new scenarios to help inform and guide the decision-making process, in the CSDE updated copy of “[Guidelines for In-School and Out-of-School Suspensions](#)” (December, 2010). Also included in the updated document is a new appendix (E) that provides positive behavioral support strategies to promote prosocial behavior development in students. The updated guidelines document is available on the [CSDE Web site](#).

The CSDE is presently planning several training sessions to address the updated guidelines that will commence by early spring 2011. Information regarding these sessions (i.e., dates and locations) will be forthcoming and shared via e-mail correspondence with superintendents and posted on the CSDE Web site.

For additional information about the updated guidelines for In-School and Out-of-School Suspensions or training opportunities, please contact Dr. Jocelyn Mackey at jocelyn.mackey@ct.gov or 860-807-2029.

Bureau Happenings

Assistive Technology Resource: The ConnSENSE Bulletin



The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) requires planning and placement teams (PPTs) to regularly consider if assistive technology (AT) devices and services are necessary to provide students with a free appropriate public education (FAPE). If AT devices and services are deemed appropriate, PPTs shall provide services that directly assist students in selecting, acquiring and using an AT device(s).

One valuable resource regarding AT is the Connecticut Special Education Network for Software Evaluation (ConnSENSE) Bulletin. The ConnSENSE Bulletin is a Web site that provides information to assist students, families and district personnel in learning more about various AT devices and services. The

ConnSENSE Bulletin is a collaborative partnership of the [University of Connecticut, Papanikou Center for Developmental Disabilities](#), [The Connecticut Tech Act Project](#) and the [New England Assistive Technology \(NEAT\) Center at Oak Hill](#). That bulletin can be found at www.connsensebulletin.com.

Article Highlight - Apps for Education: Update!

As the popularity of the iTouch, iPhone and iPad continues to grow, so does the variety of applications (apps) available for use with these devices. There are a number of apps for education that can help address the educational and AT needs of students. The October 2010 ConnSENSE Bulletin contains the article [Apps for Education: Update!](#), which details the variety of free apps available. This article is a follow-up to the May 2010 ConnSENSE Bulletin article, Apps for Education, which was an initial compilation of apps for education created as a handout resource. You may view either article by accessing the links above. As part of the PPTs' regular consideration of students' AT needs, it may prove beneficial for students, families and district personnel to investigate which apps for education, if any, are appropriate to meet students' needs.

For specifics regarding a particular app for education, PPTs may wish to contact district personnel that address information technology and/or AT. Community AT resources include the members of the ConnSENSE partnership (listed above), SERC, and the RESCs. For questions related to AT policy under IDEA, please contact Sarah E. Harvey at sarah.harvey@ct.gov or 860-713-6936.

State Performance Plan Extended for Two Years



OSEP has extended the current State Performance Plan (SPP) for two additional years. Originally developed in 2004-2005 as part of the last reauthorization of the IDEA, the SPP was set to expire at the end of the current school year. The extension will now keep the SPP in effect until the end of the 2012-2013 school year with the final state Annual Performance Report (APR) submitted to OSEP in February 2014. Also, as a result of the extension, the CSDE will be issuing district-level APRs for two additional years.

A revised SPP, with updated indicator targets and improvement activities, will be available on the CSDE's Web site in spring 2011. For questions regarding the SPP extension, please contact Mike Tavernier at michael.tavernier@ct.gov or 860-713-6929.

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Assistive Technology and the IDEA



Under the IDEA, one of the fundamental responsibilities for school districts is to ensure that students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Assistive technology (AT) provides a variety of avenues to make this responsibility a reality for students with disabilities in our schools. Under the IDEA, at every planning and placement team (PPT) meeting, the PPT is required to consider if AT devices and services are necessary to provide the student with a FAPE. The IDEA defines an AT device as “any item, piece of equipment or product system... used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of children with disabilities.” AT devices range from low technology (e.g., Velcro, pencil grips), mid technology (e.g., tape recorders, books on tape) to high technology (e.g., voice recognition software). When deemed appropriate, the PPT shall also provide the student AT services that directly assist the student in selecting, acquiring and using an AT device. AT services include: evaluation; AT device selection, design, adaptation, maintenance, and repair or replacement; and training and/or technical assistance on AT devices for the student, family and district personnel. AT devices and services shall be provided to the student at no cost to parent(s) or guardian(s). Furthermore, the PPT shall not refuse to include AT devices and services in the student’s individualized education program (IEP) because of their expense.

Many students with disabilities at the early childhood, elementary, middle and secondary levels utilize AT devices in order to access classroom instruction and enhance their learning. Examples of AT that provide students access to the general curriculum includes: text to speech software; voice recognition software; touch screens and alternative keyboards; portable computers, iTouchs and iPads; and SMART Boards and mimio devices. Examples of AT that address specific needs of students include: frequency modulated (FM) systems; augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices, such as non-electronic/electronic communication boards and communication enhancement software; mobility devices; visual aids, large print books and Braille materials; and positioning and/or sensory aids, such as specialized furniture, therapy balls and seat cushions. For more information on AT and the IDEA, please contact Sarah E. Harvey at sarah.harvey@ct.gov or 860-713-6936.



Click [here](#) for Bulletin Web Site References

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Web-based Resources from the CSDE

As you conduct the important work that you do, keep in mind that the CSDE Web site has many resources to assist you! Click on any of the following links to view just a few or find them at: www.sde.ct.gov

[Agency Circular Letters](#)

(communications from the Commissioners of Education 1999-2011)

[Approved Private Programs](#)

[Bureau Bulletin Archives](#)

[CMT/CAPT information, forms, etc.](#)

[Connecticut Education Data and Research portal \(CEDaR\)](#)

[Focused Monitoring](#)

[Guidelines](#)

(for varied services as well as the identification of specific disability areas)

[IEP Manual and Forms](#)

[Legal/Due Process](#)

[Model Special Education Policies and Procedures Manual](#)

[Secondary Transition](#)

[Post-school Outcome Goal Statements FAQs](#)

[Summary of Performance FAQs](#)

[Writing Transition Goals and Objectives](#)

Building a Bridge: Transition Manual for Students [[English](#)] [[Spanish](#)]

[Settlement Agreement](#)

[Staff Directory \(Bureau of Special Education\)](#)

[State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report Web site](#)



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