

The Monthly Newsletter



Special Education Director's Welcome Message

Greetings from the BIE-DPA Special Education Program!

December is a special time of the year for many of our students, schools and Tribal communities. It is a time for storytelling, winter games, good food, spending time with family and friends and celebrating our student's accomplishments. The DPA special education staff sincerely thanks all the teachers and school staff for providing and supporting timely special education and related services to students with disabilities. Previous monthly newsletters can be found on the BIE website at <https://www.bie.edu/landing-page/special-education>.

We look forward to continued collaboration in 2024. Stay tuned for the many upcoming activities. For example, in February, the annual parent survey collection will begin. More details from the DPA are forthcoming.

The DPA special education team sends you winter greetings for good health and looks forward to seeing you in the new year.

Dr. Eugene Thompson (Diné),
Supervisory Education Specialist

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Featured Article:

Special Education Parent Survey

As part of each state's annual performance report submitted to Office of Special Education Programs, states are required to assess the percent of parents whose child is receiving special education services that report that a schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities. To complete this requirement, BIE-DPA requests schools share annually a 10-question survey with all parents of enrolled students with disabilities receiving special education services. BIE-DPA continues to offer a paper and online format of the survey so parents can provide their input. The data collected during the 2022-2023 school year will be reported to OSEP in February 2024, and a summary is provided below:

- For the data collection last school year, BIE's target was 93.87%.
- 3,135 out of 3,274 surveys (95.75%) indicated schools facilitated involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities.
- Because these data show 95.75%, which surpassed the BIE's target of 93.87%, the BIE met this target.

DPA thanks each school for working with your parents and families to complete this important data collection. To be responsive to schools' needs and requests, BIE-DPA will open the survey earlier this year than in years previous. Communication and support regarding this data collection will be forthcoming.

Submit a School Story for an Upcoming Newsletter Spotlight

We'd like to include celebrations, updates and success stories from schools funded by BIE. Take some time to consider sharing a story or photos, with permission, from your school that can be included in an upcoming newsletter. Click the **orange** button above and fill out a short questionnaire, and a member of the team will be in touch with you.

News & Updates:

From the Division of Performance & Accountability



Figure 1 -- Left to Right: Eleanor Jones, Laura Tsosie, Marie Silverhatband and Jennifer Davis

DPA, including IDEA and Supplemental Education Programs, routinely convene as an entire team to work together to holistically support BIE-funded schools. At the beginning of December, the DPA team, along with other BIE leaders, participated in three-day in-person training in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Collaboration occurred on the BIE One Plan Consolidated Application Grants, which include Title programs, IDEA and Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant. Staff also participated in professional learning together, enjoyed engaging with external presenters and national experts who were eager to answer questions, and joined one another in informal activities to get know each other.

Following the three-day training, the DPA-IDEA team met to prepare internal processes, planning, templates and resources to support DPA's differentiated framework for accountability and supports. Finally, the team started planning upcoming events for BIE-funded schools, which we will include in upcoming newsletters.



Figure 2 -- Left to Right: Jacqueline Wade, Eugene Thompson, Delphina Dayish and Melanie Star



Figure 3 -- The DPA Team and Technical Assistance Providers

Happy Holidays and thank you for all you do for our Native students with disabilities!

Update on Special Education Policies

The DPA Special Education Program staff are in the process of reviewing comments received during three Tribal consultations held in October. The next steps currently underway include the following:

- Identifying regulatory and non-regulatory issues
- Finalizing document (now through May 2024)
- Identifying timelines and tasks to support roll-out including training (e.g., summer 2024 training)
- Dissemination to BIE-funded schools
- Initial Implementation (SY 2024-2025)

BIE Advisory Board for Exceptional Children

The purpose of the BIE's Advisory Board for Exceptional Children is to improve special education and related services for children with disabilities within the BIE and to assist the Secretary of the Interior in performing their duties under the IDEA by advising on the needs of Indian children with disabilities. The board's annual report can be accessed [here](#). Each Advisory Board meeting includes a portion of time for public comment.

A call for nominations for advisory board members was recently published in the [Federal Register](#). There are three positions on the board available, and nominations include requests for individuals who fulfill the following roles: Indian persons with disabilities;

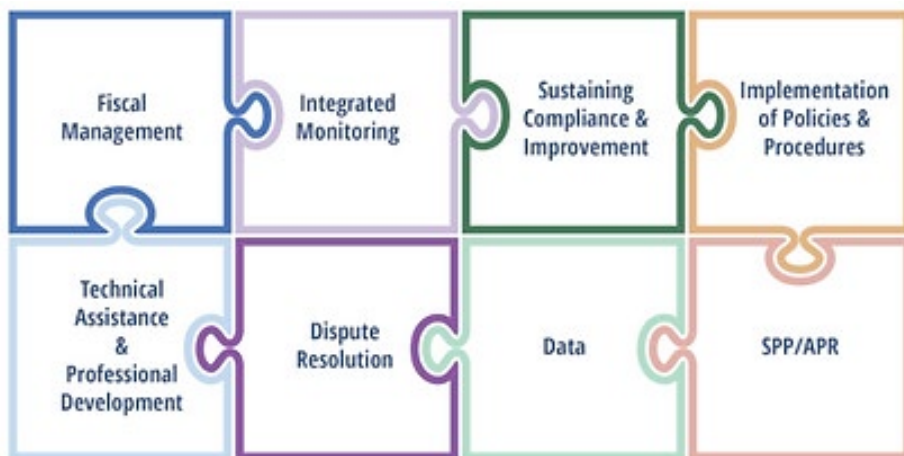
state education officials; and State Interagency Coordinating Councils under section 641 of the Act in States having Indian reservations. Please submit nominations to Ms. Jennifer Davis, Designated Federal Officer, Bureau of Indian Education, Division of Performance & Accountability, 2600 N Central Ave., Suite 800, Phoenix, AZ 85004; or email to Jennifer.davis@bie.edu; or fax to (602) 265-0293 by Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2024. To view the current advisory board members, click [here](#).



BIE's General Supervision Responsibility

BIE, like all state education agencies, must have a system of general supervision in place to monitor the implementation of IDEA. The BIE's General Supervision System is designed to support practices that improve academic achievement and functional outcomes for children with disabilities; to use multiple methods to identify and correct noncompliance; and to use a variety of mechanisms to encourage and support improvement; and to enforce compliance.

BIE’s General Supervision System consists of eight components related to the implementation of IDEA; the components inform one another as well as the system as a whole. The components (data, dispute resolution, fiscal management, implementation of policies and procedures, integrated monitoring activities, State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report, sustaining compliance and improvement, and Technical Assistance and Professional Development) are included in the visual below:



This month we look closely at one component, the SPP/APR. To review the BIE’s or any state’s SPP/APRs dating back to 2017, please go to <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/spp-apr-letters>. Throughout the year, BIE-DPA and BIE-funded schools are completing data collection activities, corrective actions, and improvement activities to support progress towards meeting targets set by BIE for IDEA Part B indicators identified by USED. BIE-DPA extracts data from the Native American Student Information System (NASIS) to support data collection and analysis to limit, as much as possible, any additional requests made of BIE-funded schools. There are times when BIE-DPA requests BIE-funded schools to submit additional data outside of NASIS. To provide more information on the required IDEA Part B indicators and how BIE fulfills this requirement, look at the table below:

Indicator	What is Measured	How BIE Collects Data
1. Graduation	The percentage of youth with Individualized Education Programs exiting special education due to graduating with a regular high school diploma.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collected annually from NASIS after June 30th. Data used for this indicator are “lag” data, which is data used from the prior reporting year (e.g., for the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, use data from SY 2020-2021).
2. Dropout	The percent of youth with IEPs who exited special education due to dropping out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collected annually from NASIS after June 30th. Data used for this indicator are “lag” data, which is data used from the prior

Indicator	What is Measured	How BIE Collects Data
		reporting year (e.g., for the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, use data from SY 2020-2021).
3. Assessment	<p>The participation and performance of children with IEPs on statewide assessments. Data are reported for Reading/Language Arts and Math in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Participation rate for children with IEPs. B. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade level academic achievement standards. C. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against alternate academic achievement standards. D. Gap in proficiency rates for children with IEPs and all students against grade level academic achievement standards. 	Collected annually from each school or testing publisher after June 30 th .
4. Suspension and Expulsion	Significant discrepancies in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 cumulative days in a school year for children with Individualized Education Programs compared to children without disabilities.	Collected annually from NASIS after June 30 th .
5. Education Environments (School Age)	<p>The percent of school age children with IEPs aged 5 who are enrolled in kindergarten and aged 6 through 21 served:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Inside the regular class 80% or more of day; B. Inside the regular class less than 40% of day; and C. In separate schools, residential facilities, or homebound/hospital placements. 	Collected annually from NASIS, during the annual BIE IDEA Child Count, on the last Friday each October.
6. Preschool Environments	<p>Percent of children with IEPs aged 3, 4, and aged 5 who are enrolled in a preschool program attending a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Regular early childhood program and receiving most of the special education and related services in the regular early childhood program; and B. Separate special education class, separate school, or residential facility. C. Receiving special education and related services in the home. 	Not applicable to BIE
7. Preschool Outcomes	<p>Percent of preschool children aged 3 through 5 with IEPs who demonstrate improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships); B. Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/ communication and early literacy); and C. Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs. 	Not applicable to BIE

Indicator	What is Measured	How BIE Collects Data
8. Parent Involvement	The percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collected annually after June 30th. DPA provides an online link and a paper survey form to each school for parents of students with disabilities to complete. The survey period begins February 1 and closes June 30 each year.
9. Disproportionate Representation	Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services that is the result of inappropriate identification.	Not applicable to BIE
10. Disproportionate Representation in Specific Disability Categories	Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories that is the result of inappropriate identification.	Not applicable to BIE
11. Child Find	Percent of children who were evaluated within 60 days of receiving parental consent for initial evaluation or, if the State establishes a timeframe within which the evaluation must be conducted, within that timeframe.	The DPA provides a link to the Smartsheet form, and the data is collected annually after June 30 th .
12. Early Childhood Transition	Percent of children referred by Part C prior to age 3, who are found eligible for Part B, and who have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthdays.	Not applicable to BIE
13. Secondary Transition	Percent of youth with IEPs aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based upon an age-appropriate transition assessment, transition services, including courses of study, that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals, and annual IEP goals related to the student's transition service needs. There also must be evidence that the student was invited to the IEP Team meeting where transition services are to be discussed and evidence that, if appropriate, a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services, including, if appropriate, pre-employment transition services, was invited to the IEP Team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority.	Annually DPA utilizes NASIS to conduct desk audits on a representative sample of students 16+ in each BIE-funded high school.
14. Post-School Outcomes	The percent of youth with IEPs no longer in school who are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Enrolled in higher education; or B. Enrolled in higher education or competitively employed; or 	BIE-funded schools complete surveys recording responses in NASIS' Post-School Outcomes Module.

Indicator	What is Measured	How BIE Collects Data
	C. Enrolled in higher education, other postsecondary education, or training program or competitively employed or in some other employment, within one year of leaving high school.	
15. Resolution Sessions	The percent of hearing requests that went to resolution sessions that were resolved through resolution session settlement agreements.	DPA Dispute Resolution Team
16. Mediation	The percent of mediations held resulting in mediation agreements.	DPA Dispute Resolution Team
17. State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)	The SPP/APR includes an SSIP that is a comprehensive, ambitious, yet achievable multi-year plan for improving results for children with disabilities.	The BIE’s SSIP focuses on youth engaged in post-secondary activities including education, training, and/or employment as measured by APR Indicator 14C (enrolled in higher education, competitively employed, enrolled in other post-secondary education or training, or some other employment).

Getting to Know Members of the DPA IDEA Team



Waqaa! My name is Ron Worst. I am a member of the Yup’ik Tribe [Asa'carsarmiut](#) located in the state of Alaska, 40 miles inland from mouth of the Yukon. I was born in Anchorage at the IHS Alaska Native Hospital. My family eventually moved to the Pacific Northwest, where I currently reside in Oregon. I am married to my beautiful wife, Alyssa, who is an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation, and we have four amazing children, Kaelyn, Madelyn, Brookelyn and TJ. The picture on the left is of my family celebrating our daughter’s high school graduation.

My career path in special education started in 2004 at Chemawa Indian School (est. 1880, oldest continuously operating Native American boarding school in the United States). I started with the minimum requirement to be a paraprofessional. With the support of Chemawa through “Grow Your Own” funds, I completed my undergraduate in 2009. I returned to school and completed my master’s in special education from the University of Oregon in 2014. My experience as a special education teacher stretches across all school

levels, from leading an elementary therapeutic program (supporting students with significant behavioral and social/emotional needs) to junior high and high school resource support.

My passion for the Native special education community is rooted in the fact that we are a family of a child with a disability; our youngest, TJ, has autism and epilepsy. I understand the struggles and hardships that families face daily. I love the work I do in the BIE with the DPA-IDEA team. Our leadership is always student-driven and focused on what we can we do to support the important work done across the BIE. Quyana!

Recorded Events

Click the hyperlinks below to access the recordings.

NASIS Micro Training Series

- Session 1 – [Secondary Transition Components](#); Passcode: +s6iAmpN
- Session 2 – [Secondary Transition Components Continued](#); Passcode: \$s*QCW9X
- Session 3 – [NASIS Module IEP Editors](#); Passcode: *205YAKq
- Session 4 – [New Look IEP module changes](#); Passcode: @zOb4sw&
- Session 5 – [NASIS Infinite Campus IEP review Micro Training](#); Passcode: 01tSbwY%
- Session 6 – [IEP Module Team Meeting Participants Page](#); Passcode: C4bK8m.h
- Session 7 – [IEP Module Problem Solving](#); Passcode: +!^V8HQ
- Session 8 – [IEP Module Open Discussion](#); Passcode: !bc2*2L&

Spotlight

Commemorating the 48th Anniversary of IDEA

BIE joins the nation in recognizing the 48th anniversary of the signing of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act which later became known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA.

To support the implementation of IDEA, OSEP has recently released the guidance below:

- [Guidance for Common Prior Approval Requests Under IDEA Parts B and C](#), which provided a summary of the approval process and requirements for three common categories of direct costs for which state agencies must obtain prior approval before using federal funds under the IDEA.



- [Guidance on State General Supervision Responsibilities Under Parts B and C of the IDEA](#), which addressed the responsibilities of state educational agencies and state-led agencies to implement a general supervision system.
- [Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs](#) was jointly released by the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services and states that all young children with disabilities should have access to high-quality inclusive early childhood programs that provide individualized and appropriate support so they can fully participate alongside their peers without disabilities, meet high expectations, and achieve their full potential.

Tips and Tricks

IEP Development

To support answering questions related to IEP services, the Progress Center, a federally funded technical assistance center, developed a new online course. If you or your team members have questions about specially designed instruction, related services, accommodations, and how services and aids are different, check out the course [The What and Why of Statement of Services and Aids](#).



DPA will continue to catalog and share resources for schools to access and to develop content knowledge of the required elements of an IEP. Some resources will serve as a reminder to seasoned special education teachers, while also providing an opportunity to learn and support developing teachers and staff across BIE-funded schools.

Local School Performance Plan



In [Native Star](#), all BIE-funded schools with special education programs submit a Local School Performance Plan that includes Improvement Activities. The first progress checkpoint was due by **December 30, 2023**, with a second and final progress checkpoint due March 30, 2024.

LRP

BIE-DPA provides free access to LRP publications for all BIE-funded schools. All staff including teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, education technicians, and food

service can self-register by going to: <https://dc-bie2020-ds.lrp.com>. Customized training is also available to all BIE-funded schools at request by reaching out to [Jennifer Davis](#) or by phone at (202) 860-7845.



Special Ed Connection provides resources and tools that school staff can use to gain a clear understanding of special education requirements and services. This resource provides legal, regulatory and practical guidance. Some topics included in this

offering are transition services, IEP best practices and behavior intervention plans. For more information, go to specialedconnection.com.

NASIS

The BIE in partnership with Infinite Campus, collaborates on the Native American Student Information System. NASIS is a centralized system for supporting school administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents or guardians, and BIE Central Office staff.

The Division of Performance and Accountability is interested in hearing from BIE-funded schools who use the NASIS special education modules to provide input on any issues your school teams are currently experiencing with NASIS. Please take a few minutes to share any glitches or issues you have recently experienced by using this [online form](#).

NASIS contacts are included below for your reference.

Name & Title	Contact	Assignments
Rebecca Izzo-Manymules Supervisory Education Specialist	Rebecca.izzo@bie.edu 703.282.0328 (Mobile) 505.563.5274 (Office)	Chief Academic Office
Cole Bowers NASIS Specialist	Cole.bowers@bie.edu 703.282.5646 (Mobile)	Tribally Controlled Schools ADD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bismarck ERC Schools • Kyle ERC Schools • Nashville ERC Schools
Valerie Jones NASIS Specialist	Valerie.jones@bie.edu 703.340.7417 (Mobile)	Navajo ADD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinle ERC Schools • Crownpoint ERC Schools • Window Rock ERC Schools • Albuquerque ERC Schools
Susan McCabe NASIS Specialist	Susan.mccabe@bie.edu 703.282.2043 (Mobile)	Bureau Operated Schools ADD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belcourt ERC Schools • Phoenix ERC Schools

Name & Title	Contact	Assignments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuba City ERC Schools • Chinle ERC School (Chilchinbeto) • Albuquerque ERC Schools
Sandra Poolaw NASIS Specialist	Sandra.poolaw@bie.edu 703.282.1936 (Mobile)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seattle ERC School (Lummi HS) • Shiprock ERC School (Navajo Preparatory School) • Flandreau ERC School (Sequoyah HS)
Katherine Renville NASIS Specialist	Katherine.renville@bie.edu 703.282.5270 (Mobile)	Tribally Controlled Schools ADD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minneapolis ERC Schools • Flandreau ERC Schools • Albuquerque ERC Schools • Pine Ridge ERC Schools
Cheryl Rodriguez NASIS Specialist	Cheryl.rodriguez@bie.edu 703.282.5932 (Mobile)	Tribally Controlled Schools ADD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seattle ERC School (Lummi HS) • Shiprock ERC Schools • Albuquerque ERC Schools

National Resource Center for Paraeducators (NRCP)

The 36th National NRCP Conference for Paraeducators, Related Service Providers & Interveners was held virtually on January 25-27, 2024. Topics included building state and local systems to supports paraeducators, para-to-teacher pathways, behavior, data collection, collaboration and communication. For more details, please [go here](#).

Supporting Secondary Transition

Did you know BIE-DPA and partners at WestEd developed two self-paced online courses for high school special education teachers and staff focused on secondary transition?

- *Writing a High-Quality Transition Plan* focuses on all aspects of developing a high-quality secondary transition plan for students with disabilities. Learners will gain an understanding of the foundation of writing high-quality secondary transition plans and the reason why they are so important. The course will address conducting and gathering data from age-appropriate transition assessments, writing a present level of performance, developing measurable postsecondary goals, determining transition services and a course of study, and writing annual IEP goals.



- *Centering Indigenous Students, Families and Communities: Ways to Honor, Respect and Relate* concentrates on understanding the importance of recognizing and incorporating student culture when creating a high-quality secondary transition plan.

To register for these professional development opportunities, please utilize [this online form](#).

Important Upcoming Due Dates

What	When	Where	For support or questions, reach out to
Parent Surveys	February – June 30, 2024	Parent surveys are completed either online at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BIEParentSurvey or returning a paper/pencil copy to the school.	Melanie Star