

The monthly Newsletter



Special Education Director's Welcome Message

Welcome to the BIE-DPA Special Education Program Monthly Newsletter!

As we open the doors to this digital space for SY 2023-2024, we invite you to join us in celebrating the launch of this newsletter and the diverse tapestry of American Indian education. From classrooms abuzz with curiosity to the broader landscape of educational initiatives, this newsletter is a platform dedicated to sharing stories of growth, innovation, and resilience.

Together, we embark on a journey that highlights the power of education to transform lives, uplift Tribal communities, and pave the way for a brighter future for American Indian/Alaska Native students with disabilities. Thank you for being a part of this collective effort to nurture knowledge and build bridges of opportunity.

Dr. Eugene Thompson, Supervisory Education Specialist

Featured Article:

We'd like to include celebrations, updates, and success stories from BIE-funded schools. Take some time to consider highlighting a story or photos, with permission, from your school that can be included in an upcoming newsletter. Click the button below and a member of the Division of Performance & Accountability will be in touch with you.

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[Submit a School Story for an Upcoming Newsletter Spotlight](#)

News & Updates:

From the Division of Performance & Accountability (DPA)

The DPA IDEA Team is here to provide a number of supports to all BIE-funded schools. The IDEA Education Program Specialists provide technical assistance to their assigned schools and are available to customize support to meet your school team's needs. We include below the list of contacts for this team:

Name & Title	Contact	Location	Assignments
Dr. Eugene Thompson, Supervisory, Education Specialist	Eugene.Thompson@bie.edu (202)860-5812	Albuquerque, NM	ALL Schools – IDEA Supervisor
Arlene Davis, Education Program Specialist	Arlene.Davis@bie.edu (505)288-0225	Belcourt, ND	19 Schools: 2 BOS – Belcourt ERC, 17 TCS – 6 Flandreau ERC, 10 Minneapolis ERC
Jennifer Davis, Education Program Specialist	Jennifer.Davis@bie.edu (202)860-7845	Phoenix, AZ	ALL Schools – DPA Data Manager
Delphina Dayish, Education Program Specialist	Delphina.Dayish@bie.edu (202)860-5808	Shiprock, NM	19 Schools: 7 ADD Navajo TCS, 12 ADD Navajo BOS
Kim Garcia, Budget Analyst – DPA	Kimberly.Garcia@bie.edu (505)288-5350	Albuquerque, NM	ALL Schools – Budget Analyst
Eleanor Jones, Education Program Specialist	Eleanor.Jones@bie.edu (202)860-7885	Crownpoint, NM	19 Schools: 11 ADD Navajo TCS, 8 ADD Navajo BOS
Narcy Ka'Won, Education Program Specialist	Narcy.Kawon@bie.edu (202)860-5617	Albuquerque, NM	19 Schools: 16 Nashville ERC, 3 ABQ ERC
Melanie Star Education Program Specialist	Melanie.Star@bie.edu (701)861-6205	Bismarck, ND	20 Schools: 9 Bismarck ERC, 11 Kyle ERC
Marcy Oliver Education Program Specialist	Marcy.Oliver@bie.edu (202)860-7586	Albuquerque, NM	20 Schools: 18 BOS, 2 ADD Navajo BOS
Zonnie Sombbrero, Education Program Specialist	Zonnie.Sombbrero@bie.edu (202)860-7883	Tuba City, AZ	20 Schools: 10 ADD Navajo TCS, 10 ADD Navajo BOS
Laura N. Tsosie, Education Program Specialist	Laura.Tsosie@bie.edu (202)860-5286	Albuquerque, NM	20 Schools: 20 ABQ ERC
Ronald Worst, Education Program Specialist	Ronald.Worst@bie.edu (202)860-4242	Seattle, WA	19 Schools: 1 BOS, 15 Seattle ERC, 3 Flandreau ERC
Alyssa Yeppa, Program Support Assistant	Alyssa.yeppa@bie.edu (505) 563-3637	Albuquerque, NM	ALL Schools - IDEA Assistant

A Reminder on FAPE

- Ensure certified special education teachers are available to provide timely special education services.
- Ensure related service providers are available to provide related services.
- Ensure students with disabilities have current and active IEPs.
- Ensure all services being provided are documented.
- Ensure missed services are documented and provided.

If there are issues with any of these items, contact your Education Specialist (Special Education), Education Program Administrator, Associate Deputy Director or Principal so corrective action can take place.

From Director Dearman's Office

Director Dearman provided a Dear School Leader Letter on September 15, 2023, related to missed IEP services. The contents of the letter can be found at this [link](#) and reiterates the importance of considering the impact of missed services and ensuing Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in order for students with disabilities to make progress and meet the annual goals developed by their IEP teams.

Upcoming Events

Tribal Consultation on BIE Special Education Policies and Procedures

October 13, 2023; October 18, 2023; October 25, 2023

The BIE is responsible for ensuring that its implementation of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is consistent with federal law. BIE is proposing to update its IDEA policies and procedures that apply to BIE-funded schools. Consider joining an upcoming Tribal Consultation or providing a written comment. More information available at: <https://www.bie.edu/landing-page/consultations-initiatives>.

BIE Strategic Direction Listening Session

October 18, 2023

During the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) Convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico, BIE will offer a listening session on the BIE's Strategic Direction. More information available at: <https://www.bie.edu/landing-page/consultations-initiatives>.

NASIS Special Education Training on IEP Changes

October 31-November 2, 2023; November 14-16, 2023

Join Infinite Campus and BIE NASIS staff to learn about changes that recently went into effect to support IEP team's development and revision to IEPs.

Spotlight

Interactive Data Workshop (IDW)

DPA in partnership with other BIE offices and outside partners offered two in-person conferences over the summer. The 2023 IDW brought close to 500 staff from BIE-funded schools together to build the capacity of administrators and school-based staff to use data to inform improvement efforts to increase compliance and results for students with disabilities.

BIE is planning to hold a national conference in June 2024, where we plan to have similar learning opportunities for all staff from BIE-funded schools. As the planning team works towards this event, additional information will be provided. Stay tuned!



Tips and Tricks

Circles of Reflection Toolkit

The Native Education Collaborative developed the Circles of Reflection (Circles) to engage state education agencies, Tribes and local schools in rich, reflective discussion. Circles were designed to help participants reflect on the needs of Native students and strategize systemic transformation. Read more about this resources at:

<https://www.westat.com/insights/circles-of-reflection-toolkit-improving-education-for-native-students/> or <https://compcenternetnetwork.org/resources/resource/8201/circles-reflection-toolkit-seas>.

LRP

BIE-DPA provides free access to LRP publications for all BIE-funded schools. DirectSTEP is one resource available. It is an online course that merges legal and regulatory expertise with real-world application strategies. Course topics include but are not limited to autism; behavior management and discipline; co-teaching; instruction; paraprofessional training; and universal design. For more information on how to access LRP, contact [Jennifer Davis](#).

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Each October, we celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). NDEAM acknowledges the role of people with disabilities in the workforce nationally and is an opportunity to reflect on ensuring full access to employment and opportunities to thrive at work. This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the first federal legislation to address access and equity for people with disabilities. Check out this brief video from the US Department of Labor:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=chWOIyUv9 E>.

Public Reporting

Each state is required to publicly report annually on the performance of each Local Education Agency (LEA); the BIE's LEAs are each BIE-funded school. The DPA-IDEA's data team leads this work that can be found at <https://www.bie.edu/topic-page/performance-data-statistics>. These data include performance for each BIE-funded school on required IDEA data collections within the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) that BIE submits to US Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs annually by February 1. BIE observes the suppression rules, meaning that BIE will not publicly report data on 10 or fewer students. For questions about public reporting or the SPP/APR, please reach out to [Jennifer Davis](#), IDEA Part B Data Manager.

Supporting Secondary Transition

Did you know BIE-DPA and partners at WestEd developed two asynchronous 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
Child Count	October 27, 2023	Child Count extracted from NASIS by NASIS & DPA's IDEA Part B data manager	Jennifer Davis
Post-School Outcomes	October 30, 2023	Completed surveys for students who left the BIE-funded high school during SY 2021-2022 due in NASIS' Post-School Outcomes module	Ronald Worst
Unmet Needs	November 17, 2023	Application due in Native Star	Your assigned DPA Education Specialist
Initial Evaluations	November 24, 2023	All initial evaluations completed during SY 2022-2023 due via Smartsheet form	Your assigned DPA Education Specialist