

Current News in Special Education

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Rosa Law

President Obama signed legislation that will make government agencies transition from calling individuals with “mental retardation” to individuals with “intellectual disabilities.” We have already seen movement in many publications with the change-over in language but now this will require government agencies and regulations to align their documents and policies using this term. We see this as being most helpful at the early intervention stage when parents are given a diagnosis of their child’s disability.

Debunked

The flawed study by Dr. Andrew Wakefield was officially retracted by the British medical journal, “The Lancet,” which had linked vaccines to autism. The investigation has ruled that the doctor and his associates acted dishonestly and irresponsibly and showed “callous disregard” for the 12 children in the study. Other failings included the fact that the doctor failed to disclose that he was a paid advisor in legal cases involving families suing vaccine manufacturers for harm to their children before this study was printed. Numerous studies have found no link between vaccines and autism since the publication of Dr. Wakefield’s study.

OSEP is Coming to Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Department of Education announced that the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs is coming to Pennsylvania to do a cycle of monitoring.

Pennsylvania News

Pennsylvania State Board Gives Districts Test Options

The State Board will let local school districts determine how they use state-mandated high school graduation tests (Keystones). The policy allows districts to use the Keystone Exams as final exams for courses and for including those scores as a third of a student's grade in a course. School districts can use the option of locally developed exams that are shown to be as rigorous as the Keystone Exams. Districts that use the state-developed tests can disaggregate those results from overall grades as long as students score as being proficient on the tests.

National News

United States Senators Propose Revised Restraint and Seclusion Bill

The U.S. Senate is looking at modifying the Bill sent to them from Rep. George Miller and the House of Representatives. The modifications to the Bill would allow schools to include restraint and seclusion in IEPs for some students if they have a two-year history of behaviors that create an "imminent danger of serious bodily injury in school." Currently the House version prohibits restraints and seclusion from being included in the IEP. Congress is in recess until mid-November and no one knows if this legislation will reach the docket for consideration by the full Senate by the end of the year.

Transition Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID)

The U.S. Department of Education has awarded \$10.9 million in grants to 28 institutions to create opportunities for students with



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Go to www.psea.org
Teaching and Learning > Special & Gifted Education



If you use Twitter, you can receive updates on special education when new information becomes available. Information will be sent as it is received rather than on a daily or weekly schedule. You can sign on to follow at www.twitter.com/berniemiller



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intellectual disabilities to attend and be successful in higher education. TPSID grantees in our area include the following: University of Delaware, DE, University of Rochester, NY, Bergen Community College, NJ, and Ohio State University, OH. The goal is to create or expand programs that focus on academic and instruction, social activities, employment experiences through work-based learning and internships, and independent living. Aspects of the programs include individualized supports for students and opportunities to be involved in college experiences with their peers without disabilities. Grants are to be funded for five years.

Preparation of Leadership Personnel

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is expanding the current program with more than \$6 million to support doctoral, post-doctoral and special education administration degree programs in 78 universities. Closest schools receiving the funds include: Lehigh University, PA, Johns Hopkins University, MD, Alfred University, NY, and Ohio State University, OH.

Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities

USDOE awarded \$13.5 million to improve the quality and increase the number of people who are fully credentialed to serve children with disabilities. Some of the money will also support the preparation of special education paraprofessionals in related services such as physical therapists assistants, occupational therapist assistants or educational interpreters. The schools closest to us to receive these funds are the following: University of Maryland, MD, Fordham University, NY, Nazareth College of Rochester, NY, Salus University, PA, and University of Pittsburgh, PA.

Resources

“That Darn Tic”

Free newsletter is available for children and teens from TS National. Mailing list requires an adult e-mail which is sent to tracy.flynn@tsa-usa.org. The other approach is to contact Tourette Syndrome Association, Inc. 42-40 Bell Blvd, Bayside, NY 11361-2820

Think College Website

www.thinkcollege.net is a new website with a focus on transitioning students to post secondary education who have intellectual disabilities. Might be a worthwhile site to check out if you work with Life Skills Students and Learning Support Students with more significant disabilities who would, in the past, not have been on a traditional path to higher education.

People First

A free pamphlet published by Philadelphia Office of Housing- “...intended to increase awareness of appropriate ways to address and refer to individuals with disabilities.” www.newsontap.org

Disability Etiquette

A free booklet published by United Spinal Association- “for anyone- with or without a disability who wants to interact more effectively with people with disabilities. www.unitedspinal.org

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