



Winter 2001-2002

Update from the Director of Special Education

Happy New Year 2002!

2001 left us with some lasting memories and much sadness due to the September tragedy. I, along with all of you, am starting this new year filled with hope about our future as individuals and a country.

As always, we have a number of statewide initiatives in place for the year. Many of you have been involved in CSAP-Alternate training in preparation for the upcoming testing cycle. We are beginning to think seriously about the upcoming Reauthorization of IDEA. It is hard to believe that five years have passed and it is time again to review the federal law. In an upcoming issue, I will apprise you on the progress of the Reauthorization.

We welcome a new staff member. Judy Harrigan is our new State School Nurse Consultant. She brings a wealth of experience to the position, having held the same position in New York for a number of years. Also, Jennifer Jackson has returned to her Senior Consultant position working in secondary services, transition, autism, and other areas. She spent most of this past year working on a special contract with the military as an education consultant near Frankfurt, Germany. I am delighted to have both Judy and Jennifer on our staff at CDE.

You can look forward to seeing our newly revised State Improvement Plan in the next few weeks. Meanwhile, I hope that you find this edition of Inside Special Education informative and useful.

Sincerely,
Lorrie Harkness

State Director Special Education

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The purpose of the *Inside Special Education* newsletter is to serve as a medium for the dissemination of information pertaining to special education in the state of Colorado and the activities of the CDE Special Education Unit. This quarterly newsletter is designed to disseminate information on professional issues, procedural changes, and upcoming events to Colorado educators.

All views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Colorado Department of Education or the University of Colorado-Denver.

The *Inside Special Education* newsletter is made possible by a grant to UCD by the Colorado Department of Education.

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Special Education Instruction in Standards Based Educational Reform: The Special Education Teacher's Role

By Lorrie Harkness, State Director of Special Education

"All teachers are responsible for providing an appropriate education to students with disabilities." This premise is the belief underlying the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) subcommittee on Special Education. (INTASC's report on Model Standards for Licensing General and Special Education Teachers of Students with Disabilities: A Resource for State Dialogue, 2001, was supported by the U.S. Department of Education.) This belief is also consistent with the philosophy behind the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Most importantly, we all know that most students with disabilities spend the majority of their school day in the general education classroom. Additionally, we have the expectation that students will access the general curriculum. Therefore all teachers, both general educators and special educators, must have knowledge and skills about the subject matter and the principles of effective teaching and learning as well as specific knowledge and skills from the field of special education. INTASC states in its preamble to the Core Principles that:

Teaching and learning comprise a holistic process that connects ideas and disciplines to each other and to the personal experiences, environments, and communities of students. Consequently, the process of teaching must be dynamic and teaching demands that teachers integrate their knowledge of subjects, students, the community and curriculum to create a bridge between learning goals and learners' lives.

To accomplish this, a collaborative framework for teaching students with disabilities is proposed.

Collaborative teaching is not a new concept for special educators. I have been in discussions and training on the subject for over 20 years. I have observed collaboration as a form of team teaching of the general education content, as the special educator in the general classroom as an assistant to the teacher, and as the special education teacher working with a small group of students who are struggling with the content within the general education classroom. On some occasions, I have heard teachers describe a "collaboration" that truly works for them and, more importantly, for their students, but the success seems to be based on the personal relationship of the teachers more than on any specific ideas that can be generalized and transferred to others. So I am intrigued with the work INTASC has done in defining the roles played by the general educator and the special educator in successful collaboration for teaching students with disabilities.

(Continued on Page 5)

The Tangled Web of Causality: Driving Forces in Colorado's Special Education Data

by Jason E. Glass



You know that Quentin Tarantino flick “Pulp Fiction”? If you haven’t seen it let me re-cap the basic concept. It’s basically about a bunch of criminals and gangsters who are each seeking individual gains, but are forced to work together to get what they want. Sounds kind of like Special Education, huh?

Well, here is where the parallel gets really weird. The really original part of the film is that there are actually several plots and schemes going on at once - none of which have knowledge of or coordination with the other plots and schemes - but through a chain of causal events one scheme and plot effects another scheme and plot, which effects another scheme and plot (and so on) to culminate in a big exciting ending. If you haven’t seen it, its worth the \$3.50 at the video store (don’t watch it with your kids, however).

I know, you are thinking “this guy is whacked” - but stay with me here. Special Education in Colorado is like “Pulp Fiction” in two ways. First, we have lots of individuals, schools, organizations, and agencies that are pursuing individual goals, but we need to work together to get the state where we want it to be in terms of serving children and youth with disabilities. Second, there has been a string of causal events that involve OSEP (the Office of Special Education Programs), the SIP (State Improvement Plan), the CIMP (the Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process), and the DEP (Data Enhancement Project) that will definitely culminate in a big exciting ending. In this article I will attempt to explain each of these acronyms how they interrelate, with no more than one reference to Tarantino films in the following paragraphs.

In the Fall of 1999 and the Spring of 2000, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), an office of the federal government’s Department of Education monitored the state of Colorado for compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1997 (IDEA 97). In their report following this monitoring (which can be found at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/Monitoring&StImpPlan.htm>) OSEP identified several strengths, made suggestions, and identified several areas of non-compliance with IDEA 97.

Following this report, the staff at the Colorado Department of Education - along with the Colorado Special Education Advisory Council - was tasked with creating a new State Improvement Plan (SIP) for 2001-2002 that took each of the suggestions and areas of non-compliance identified by OSEP and doing three things with them. First, we identified existing (baseline) data that would inform us on where we currently stand on the suggested areas of improvement and areas of non-compliance. Second, we generated strategies for improving in these suggested and non-compliance areas. And third, we developed evidence of change (benchmarks) to show that progress was in fact being made and that our strategies of change were making an impact. The SIP is organized around seven “Key Outcomes” for special education. These Key Outcomes are shown in Table 1.

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Sharon Darling
President, National Center for Family Literacy
will provide
the keynote address at the
Colorado Family Literacy
Institute

SPECIFIC SESSIONS WILL FOCUS ON SUCH TOPICS AS:

- ❑ **Adult Education** (family literacy as a support for adults with learning disabilities)
- ❑ **Colorado Works/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families**
(improving work preparation services delivered through family literacy programs)
- ❑ **Early Literacy Development** (incorporating findings from current research within family literacy programming, and utilizing the *BUILDING BLOCKS to Colorado's Content Standards*)
- ❑ **Even Start** (showcasing exemplary family literacy practices in Colorado)
- ❑ **Fatherhood** (participation of fathers in family literacy programs)
- ❑ **Head Start** (incorporating family literacy programming to meet the Head Start Program Performance Measures)
- ❑ **Individual Literacy Plans** (family literacy as a resource in implementing ILPs required by the Colorado Basic Literacy Act)



for additional information contact fielden_f@cde.state.co.us



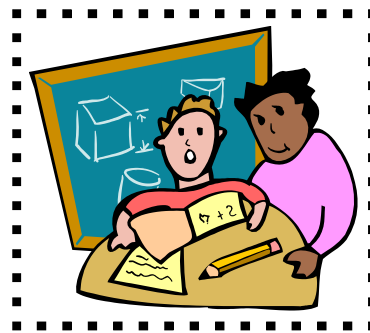
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While the INTASC Special Education Committee states that general education and special education teachers should possess much knowledge and skills in common, they also should have differing areas of expertise. The following four areas provide the structure from which to articulate these differences:

1. **Content:** Though both general and special education teachers should have command of the subject matter being taught, the special education teachers should be responsible for knowledge of the content of expanded curriculum in areas such as communicative, social and emotional development, communication skills and oral language development, social/behavior skills, motor skills, functional and independent living skills, employment-related skills, self-advocacy skills, orientation and mobility skills, and travel instruction. (Clearly, in some situations, the special educator may need to call on colleagues with specialized training that goes beyond their own level of training to meet some of these needs.)
2. **Pedagogy:** Both general and special education teachers should understand how, and be able to effectively teach, content to students with disabilities. In addition, special education teachers must know how to design and implement specialized accommodations, to access resources and assistive technologies to support student learning and to provide transition support.
3. **Students with Disabilities:** Both general and special education teachers know their students, including specific information about each student's abilities and disability(ies), learning strengths and needs, prior experiences, and cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In addition, special education teachers have specialized knowledge of specific disabilities and their implications for teaching and learning in order to address the unique needs of the individual.
4. **Contexts:** Both general and special education teachers have knowledge of the special education policies, procedures and legal requirements that provide the framework within which teaching of students with disabilities occurs.

In addition, special education teachers have a greater understanding of the larger contexts within which the teaching of students with disabilities takes place (family, classroom, school, community, district), advocate for appropriate education within these contexts, and work across these contexts to meet the needs of the student.

If this preliminary information that is the foundation for the Model Standards for Licensing General and Special Education Teachers of Students with Disabilities has caught your attention, there is much more detailed discussion of the roles of teachers in the full report that can be accessed at <http://www.ccsso.org/pdfs/SPEDStds>. The report has given me, for the first time in two decades, some clarity in the expectations for regular and general educator roles in meeting the needs of students with disabilities. This report dispels the myth that is being projected by some that we have lost the spirit of individualization for students with disabilities. It also supports the truth (and mandate) that these students should have access to the general curriculum.



Safe School Planning Assistance Available

The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) is currently offering technical assistance to schools and communities throughout the state of Colorado in the area of safe school planning.

CSPV is available to provide assistance with specific components of the Safe Communities ~ Safe Schools model, such as information sharing, crisis planning, prevention programming, and all aspects of creating a safe school plan. In addition, CSPV can assist schools in implementing the complete model, should they choose to do so.

CSPV has received \$1 million in funding from The Colorado Trust to provide these technical assistance services at no charge to schools and communities in Colorado. For more information, or if you are interested in receiving technical assistance from CSPV, please call (303) 492-1032.



Colorado Department of Education Framework for Differentiating Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Training teams from across the state will be available to provide professional development to school district personnel upon completion of six days of training being offered this Spring. Training teams are comprised of a general educator, a special educator, and a G/T specialist. Content of the training will focus on a framework for differentiating curriculum, instruction, and assessment. This train-the-trainers design was developed in response to a statewide needs assessment. It was determined that professional development is needed to assist teachers in using appropriate curriculum, instruction and assessment alternatives to meet the diverse needs of students in the general education classroom.

Did you know...



There are some changes to the accommodations available for CSAP now on the web site. To get the latest information, go the CDE website at cde.state.co.us. Click on the **Assessment** button on the left side and then on the **ACCOMMODATIONS** link under students with disabilities.

Janet Filbin
Colorado Department of Education

“Excellence in Education” Award

The National Center on Low-Incidence Disabilities at the University of Northern Colorado is pleased to announce the first annual Excellence in Education award. We are seeking nominations from across the state for outstanding special education teachers in each of the three low-incidence disability areas: severe disabilities, blindness/visual impairments, and deafness/hard of hearing. If you know teachers in your school and/or district that you think are deserving of state-wide and national recognition for their efforts, please consider nominating them. Self-nominations are also welcome.

Nominations are made by completing an application form, gathering three letters of nomination, and sending them to Sheryl Muir at NCLID via email attachment or the mailing address below, or by going to our website at www.NCLID.unco.edu and clicking on Excellence in Education Awards. The web pages have all of the pertinent information and forms you will need. You may also request the information and forms be mailed to you by contacting Sheryl.

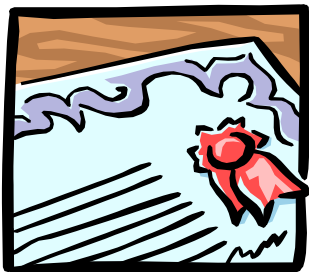
Winners will each receive a \$1,000 prize and have the opportunity to share their exemplary practices with others across the nation through a series of “best practices” videos created by NCLID.

Deadline for submission of nominations is February 28, 2002. Finalists will be selected by March 29, 2002 and the winners will be announced on April 19, 2002.

If you have any questions, please contact Sheryl Muir at sheryl.muir@unco.edu or at the contact addresses or phone numbers below.

Please help us honor excellent educators from Colorado. We look forward to finding out about the many good things happening in low-incidence education across the state.

Sincerely,
 Lewis B. Jackson, Ph.D., Director
 John L. Luckner, Ed.D., Director
 Kay Alicyn Ferrell, Ph.D., Director



National Center on Low-Incidence Disabilities
at the University of Northern Colorado
 McKee Hall, Campus box 146, Greeley, CO 80639
www.NCLID.unco.edu
 1-800-395-2693 (970) 351-1151

(Continued from page 3)

Table 1
Colorado State Improvement Plan for Exceptional Children

Key Outcome	Description
1. Appropriate Identification	Children with exceptional needs are appropriately identified for individualized programs and services.
2. Active Family Involvement	Families will receive the information and training they need to increase their participation in their child's education and services.
3. Meaningful Participation	All exceptional children will receive the services as identified in individual family service plans and individual education plans to allow them meaningful participation in their education and development.
4. Significant Achievement	Children with exceptional needs will make significant achievements in assessments, academics, and in their development.
5. Successful Transitions	All children with exceptional needs will be provided the resources and supports to make successful transitions from birth through primary education and from the secondary school to successful post-school outcomes.
6. Qualified Personnel	There will be an adequate supply of qualified personnel and effective training programs to meet the identified needs of children with exceptional needs and provide access to quality education.
7. Effective Monitoring	The Colorado Department of Education will effectively coordinate federal, state, and local agencies to ensure compliance with Colorado and Federal Regulations and will effectively monitor dispute proceedings and the delivery of services to exceptional children.

Note: The entire 2001-2002 SIP is available by contacting Jason Glass at 303-866-6701 and will also be available on the CDE website soon.

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Writing the SIP forced us to critically evaluate the data that we collect in Colorado on how well we provide services to children and youth with disabilities. We looked into what questions we could answer with the current data, what was the scientific quality of the data available, and how accessible and useable was the data that we had. What we found was that in many cases, there were questions that we could not make scientifically sound inferences on, because we lacked the quality information to do so. We needed a vehicle that could collect tailor made data for the State of Colorado, and we needed it fast.

That vehicle was Colorado's Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (CIMP). In the CIMP, ten Administrative Units (AU's) in the state are selected to participate in an in-depth monitoring process that involves such evaluation tools as focus groups, Individualized Education Plan reviews, parent surveys, and checklists for compliance with IDEA and best practices. The state selects two AU's from the Metro Region, one from each of the seven other regions, and one state facility to participate each year for a total of ten. We decided that we could use the data collection phase of the CIMP to gather information we needed to show progress in the SIP on the suggestions and areas of non-compliance identified by OSEP.

One major element of data collection that has been added to the CIMP and has generated some controversy and debate is a survey of teachers (both general and special education), administration, as well as related services personnel and paraprofessionals. This survey was added so that we might be able to get at those questions that we were previously unable to answer with the data elements that we had. In essence, the surveys are used to "fill in the cracks" of data that we need to inform the SIP, and through that address the OSEP report. The survey is being piloted to one district in Early January of 2002, and to the other AU's that are part of the CIMP in February. It will be an online survey, where participants login with a unique password, but a paper version is also available for those without internet access or expertise.

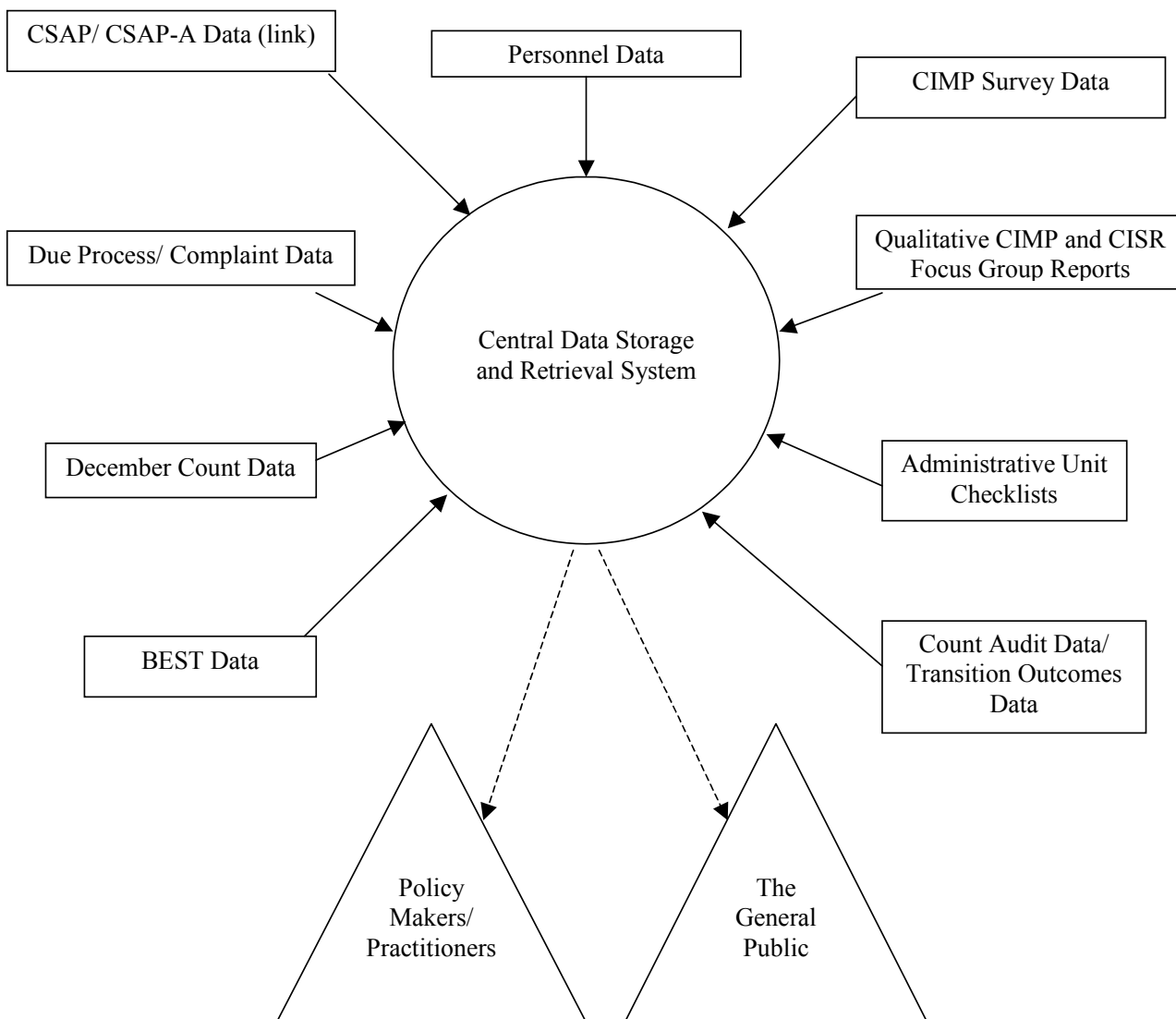
Taking the existing data that we had, and adding to it the data that we can gather through the CIMP process, gives us a fairly large and varied amount of information that we can use to make determinations about how well or poorly we serve children and youth with disabilities in Colorado. The next obstacle to tackle is making this vast array of data useable and accessible to the special education stakeholders.

In October of 2001, Colorado received a Federal Grant in the amount of \$317,000 to do just that. This grant (which I will now refer to as the Data Enhancement Project - or DEP) provides Colorado with the fiscal resources to create a data storage and retrieval system for special education data. The ultimate goal of this system is to have all the data used to evaluate the state in serving children and youth with disabilities in a central location that can be accessed and used by numerous stakeholders. The following figure (*see page 10*) represents the configuration and data elements of this system.

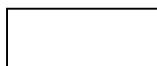
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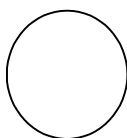
DATA ANALYSIS AND RETRIEVAL SYSTEM



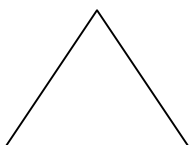
KEY:



Rectangles = data elements.
 These represent the various data resources that will be included into the overall system. The solid arrows indicate that this data collected and then uploaded to one central location. A description of each of these data elements will follow.



Circle = Data Analysis and Retrieval System.
 This is where all the data elements will be uploaded to and stored. This system will also allow for internet based retrieval of special education data as well as analysis and reports.



Triangles = Users.
 These represent the users of the system. The broken Arrows represent data going from the central system into the user's computer via an internet connection.

Table 2 describes each of the data elements that will be part of the DEP system.

Data Element	Description
Count Audit/ Transition Outcomes Data	Both are IEP reviews. The Count Audit checks a sample of student IEP's for compliance with state and federal laws as part of the CIMP. The Transition Outcomes Project reviews IEP's of high school and middle school students to determine if schools are adequately preparing for that students transition out of school.
Administrative Unit Checklists	An evaluation of administrative units looking for compliance with state and federal laws regarding children with disabilities. This is collected as part of the CIMP.
Qualitative CIMP and CISR Focus Group Reports	These are the narrative reports from the CIMP (Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process) of school administrative units, and the CISR (Community Infant Service Review) of Part C funded programs that document the strengths and areas of non-compliance with state and federal laws regarding programs for children with disabilities.
CIMP Survey Data	Surveys of various stakeholder groups involved in special education (teachers, parents, administration, etc.) that allow respondents to state their opinions on a variety of issues.
Personnel Data	Recruitment/ retention information on staff for special education and education in general. Information from school such as the number of vacancies and from universities such as the number of graduates. This is being developed from a partnership between the CDE, higher education, and public policy think-tanks.
CSAP/ CSAP-A Data (link)	Links to the results of the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) and the CSAP-A for students unable to take the CSAP.
Due Process/ Complaint Data	Information regarding the numbers and outcomes of due process and complaints cases in Colorado.
December Count Data	Information turned in from schools to the state on such things as demographics of students, placements, and personnel information
BEST Data	Behavior Evaluation and Support Data. Collected to assess how BEST teams in the state are serving children with emotional/behavioral disabilities.

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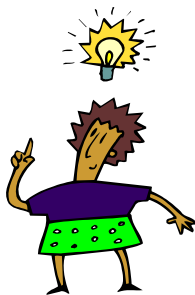
Currently, the Colorado Department of Education is working to make the idea of a central data system that will both store and allow for the retrieval and analysis of data on children and youth with disabilities a reality. This has not been an easy task so far. Though the financial support of the grant eases our burden, we are faced with problems and questions concerning confidentiality, ethics, measurement, and technical expertise that money cannot solve. In addition, each of these data elements that will be included provide a different angle and answer different questions on how well we serve the needs of children and youth with disabilities. Yet their uniqueness presents us with obstacles when we try and create one unified data system, capable of housing and allowing for the easy retrieval and analysis of this information. Finally, because of the scope of this project, we rely on bureaucracies and individuals who are not accustomed to collaboration to work together toward a common goal. The politics of bureaucratic turf and the fear of change hinder our progress. But rest assured, they do not stop it. This project, when complete, will be proof of the maxim "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts."

So, while we work on making this data system into a reality, go ahead and rent "Pulp Fiction" and think about this project while you watch it (WITHOUT your kids). I promise you will see some weird things happen and see the characters in some pretty strange situations. And like this project, you will also see people who have to work together that never thought they would or could so they can get what they want. And also like this project, it is going to have a big exciting ending.

For more information, contact Jason Glass at (303) 866-6701 or glass_j@cde.state.co.us.

Phun with Fonology Workshops

Phun with Fonology workshops, provided by Lynn Kuhn, have been overflowing with teachers interested in becoming familiar with phonological awareness instruction and assessment tools. The Colorado Department of Education Special Education Services Unit sponsored seventeen one-day workshops this year. The overwhelming response to these initial workshops indicates an ongoing need for additional training at the regional and local level.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Feb 8-9 **Courage To Risk** - 2002 Collaborative Conference on Special Education

Feb 21-23 – **Parents Encouraging Parents Conference (PEP)** – Estes Park, CO

Feb 26-March 2 – **National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)** – Chicago, IL

March 3-9 – **School Social Work Week**

March 17-19 – **14th Annual Colorado Child and Adolescent Mental Health Conference—Charting a Course for Change** – Pueblo, CO

March 20-21 – **School Social Work Association of America's Fifth Annual National School Social Work Conference** – Atlanta, GA



Regional Professional Development Councils Up and Running

About three years ago the Colorado Department of Education, recognizing a need to provide services to meet unique local needs in Colorado, reorganized into a regional model. The Special Education Services Unit capitalized on this structure by hiring Regional Coordinators, who live and work in each of the eight regions. We knew that in order to close the learning gap for all students, the quality and quantity of educators was the most critical variable. Thus, the Coordinators were charged with forming Professional Development Councils in each region to identify needs, develop plans, advise CDE, and provide leadership to train, coach, mentor and support families and educators in their region. The focus of this endeavor was to close the learning gap for students with special needs, including those with disabilities and those who are gifted. Membership on the councils includes parents, general educators, gifted-talented educators, persons with expertise on English Language Learners, special educators and administrators in order to provide the wide and diverse information needed to support the region.

Now, three years later, results of our regional efforts are heartening! Each of our regions has a Professional Development Council that meets at least three times a year. Each Council has a budget, a plan, an evaluation model, and a part time Coordinator to organize and facilitate activities. The Special Education site on the CDE Web provides more information about council membership and activities. The following brief summaries, written by the Regional Coordinators gives a snap shot of the Councils. Please become acquainted with the Councils, especially the delightful, resourceful, and skilled Coordinator in your region.



Metro Region

The metro region encompasses the diverse landscape and rich cultural tapestry of our state. Although the smallest in square miles, the region has the majority of students in Colorado.

The metro Regional Professional Development Council meets four times each year to assess the needs of the region and design activities to meet the needs. This year's staff development opportunities focus on literacy, schoolwide behavior management, and differentiating instruction. The Council usually meets at CU-Denver and we welcome visitors.

The Metro Regional Coordinator, Jane Keen brings a wealth of experience to her role. She has been a general education teacher, a special education teacher, a Special Education Director, a school administrator, a Title I Director – and worked in both elementary and secondary schools. Jane is also the coordinator of the highly successful Colorado Odyssey project. Metro is fortunate to have such knowledgeable and skilled leadership!

For more information contact Jane Keen at 303-556-3941 or Keen_j@cde.state.co.us.



North West Region

The Northwest Region encompasses majestic mountains, wild rivers, world-class ski areas and warm, friendly people. Educational opportunities abound in this breath-taking region of Colorado. The 19 school districts and three Boards of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) serve students from many cultural backgrounds.

Using data from a variety of sources, regional staff development activities focus on meeting the education needs of children. Activities are aimed at increasing educators' skills in literacy, math and

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differentiating instruction for all students.

Valinda Yarberry, the Regional Coordinator for North West is a perfect match for the region with its sprawling, rugged terrain. She is a networker par excellence! Bringing with her experience in the Community College system, Valinda has quickly established herself as a valuable and knowledgeable addition to the North West Region. For more information contact Valinda Yarberry at 970-926-3123 or yarberry@vail.net.



North Central Region

The North Central Region includes such towns and cities as Greeley, Fort Lupton, Estes Park, Fort Collins, Longmont, and Windsor. The University of Northern Colorado and Colorado State University are an integral part of our North Central Region. The region is in close proximity of the Rocky Mountain National Park, which represents the massive grandeur of the Rocky Mountains.

The Regional Council, consisting of more than thirty stakeholders, meets four times a year to address its main task of assessing the learning needs of the region and designing professional development activities. The ultimate goal is to assure that all children can and will succeed. This year's staff development opportunities focus on Multi-sensory Reading and Differentiating Instruction, and utilizing Modifications/Accommodations. The Regional Council usually meets at the Windsor School District administration office. Visitors are always welcome.

The Regional Coordinator in the North Central Region is Betty Moldenhauer. Recently retired as a Special Education and Title 1 Director, she brings hands on experience and knowledge to the area. Betty's personal touch has helped the Professional Development Council work together to develop some helpful support and training. For more information contact Betty at 970-226-3130 or moldenhauerb@hotmail.com.



North East Region

The North East Region includes 3 administrative units: RE-1 Valley School District, the Northeast CO BOCES, and East Central BOCES located in the "real wild west" of Colorado. The area is known for its South Platte River Trail Scenic & Historic Byway, the Beecher Island Battleground memorial, and Old Town Historic Burlington. Sterling's Living Tree sculptures, area wide small town museums, and antique/craft stores are cultural reminders of Colorado history.

The Northeast Regional Professional Development Council is promoting two major innovations. The innovations include professional development on school wide positive behavior supports and differentiating/accommodating instruction and assessments. Data will be collected to evaluate the effectiveness of the innovations in promoting student academic success and to determine future professional development interventions.

Ann Blackburn, North East's Regional Coordinator has just recently joined us as a coordinator. However, it hasn't taken her long to become a valued leader! She brings her extensive experience as a social worker, Special Education Coordinator, and knowledge of her region to the leadership role and has responded with her usual grace and humor to the joys and challenges of her new role. For more information, contact Ann at (970) 520-9745 or ablackburn@neboces.com.

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Pikes Peak Region

Encompassing the districts around Pikes Peak, the Pikes Peak Professional Development Council is focusing on two major undertakings this year. One is to develop and implement a professional development plan to meet students' instructional needs. The other is to support eleven buildings from ten districts in the region on school improvement efforts. Each school will receive grants to help achieve their goals.

Peter Matthews is the Regional Coordinator in Pikes Peak. His links with the University of Colorado – Colorado Springs have provided valuable resources and needed coordination in the area. For further information contact Peter at 719-262-4114 or matthews_p@cde.state.co.us.



South East Region

The Southeast Region encompasses over 20% of Colorado geographically. It reaches from Canon City and Fremont County in the west, to Kansas in the east, and New Mexico in the south. There are three BOCES – Southeast, South Central, and Santa Fe Trail. Nearly 43,000 students are enrolled in the public and private schools in the region, making the region the 4th most populous in the state. Local attractions include: Corazon de Trinidad Historic District, Bents Fort, Santa Fe Historical Museum, Historic Arkansas Riverwalk, beautiful Sangre de Cristo mountains, and the best cantaloupe country in the world!

The Southeast Regional Professional Council is committed to increasing student learning by providing professional development opportunities for educators, parents and community members. The areas of focus currently are multi-sensory reading, system-wide behavior intervention programs, parent education, recruitment/retention, and “growing our own” leadership cadre.

Susan Beeman is the most recent addition to the Regional Coordinators' ranks. She is a busy lady as she continues to be employed part time in Pueblo District 60. The South East Region Professional Development Council is thriving with her leadership and coordination. Her warm smile and cheerful hello go a long way to inspire and overcome frustrations. For more information contact Susan at 719-549-7679 or beeman_s@cde.state.co.us



SouthWest / Wolf Creek Region

The South West Region refers to itself as Wolf Creek Region because of the defining Wolf Creek Pass dividing the region. The region stretches out across nearly 16,000 square miles of rugged, mountainous, rural southwestern Colorado. It includes approximately 24,000 students in nearly 100 schools in 23 districts. There are three BOCS that serve the area:

San Juan, San Luis Valley and Southwest. Many small districts dominate the region with only eight that have enrollment exceeding 1,000 students and eleven with less than 500 students.

The Wolf Creek Region is committed to increasing student performance by providing high quality professional development opportunities for educators and parents. Currently regional activities include training in multi-sensory reading, math, positive behavior supports, and transition.

Wolf Creek is thriving under the leadership of Sandra Berman-LaFrance, their Regional Coordinator. Sandra has a wonderful vision for education and many strategies for how to fulfill it. For more information contact Sandra at 970-259-2744 or Berman-LaFrance-S@cde.state.co.us.

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West Central Region

The West Central Region encompasses a large portion of the western section of the state and is proud of its many geographic and demographic extremes. It is a land of high deserts, higher mountains, fertile valleys and scenic canyons.

The twelve school districts of this region also illustrate large variances in size. The total school age enrollment is approximately 33,677 students in over 90 school buildings region-wide with more than half of the students being within the Grand Junction area. Only three of the remaining districts have a student enrollment of more than 1,000 with eight of the districts averaging only 336 students and the smallest enrolling only 70 students.

The West Central Region continues to respond to the needs identified from a wide variety of sources. Topics targeted by the region include secondary transition, differentiating instruction and strategies for providing positive behavioral supports for all students.

West Central Region is fortunate that Dick Dowell moved to Grand Junction from Arizona. Building on his experience at the Arizona Department of Education, Dick is a quiet leader who fosters mutual respect among all of his contacts. Exciting things are happening with his support and guidance. For more information contact Dick at 970-523-6154 or dowell_d@cde.state.co.us.

Colorado is fortunate to have such a delightful, dedicated group of Regional Coordinators to coordinate and lead the Regional Professional Development Councils. Many of the good things happening regionally to help children is a result of the efforts of the Councils and their Coordinators. Stay tuned for future plans and activities. We will highlight a specific region in future issues of Inside Special Education.

If you have any questions, comments, or ideas about the Regional Professional Councils in Colorado, contact Lois Adams at 303-866-6704 or adams_1@cde.state.co.us.

News Flash! ELL/SPED trainer Acknowledged

Those of us who have participated in the ELL/SPED training sponsored by the SESU, know and love CLara Perez-Mendez. She is our inspiration and delight in the area of working with families and cultural mediators. The City of Boulder has recognized Clara as a 2002 Pacesetter in the area of Education. She was given the award in a ceremony in Boulder on January 22. In acknowledging Clara, the Boulder Camera quoted Ardie Dickson, director of New Horizons, "Clara has a spark that picks up up and makes you want to work as hard as she does!" Any one who knows CLara will heartily agree. We feel very privileged to have her skill, talent, enthusiasm, and humor as part of the ELL/SPED training. Congratulations, Clara!





King OSEP and his Alphabet soup

by Romie Tobin, Parent and Family Consultant – CDE

Once upon a time...King OSEP decided it was time to visit the SEA of Colorado and see if his good IDEA was afloat. He demanded that his subjects prepare to build a SIP.

"A ship?" they replied.

"No! A SIP is what you need, so we can see how your SEA sails over hills and valleys and BOCES!"

"Pray tell – how do we build a SIP?" His loyal subjects asked?

"It's simple! You gather together stakeholders (that is stakeholders, not steakholders), let them generate noble goals and indicators and then you put it all together and build it – the SIP that is. Then measure it, analyze it and strategize it – resize it when indicated and then for sure you'll be able to tell me how the great IDEA floats around the regions!"

"Cool!" said the loyal subjects. "Let's get with it!"

So the SESU gathered stakeholders from the CSEAC, CICC, IHEs, MPRRC, teachers and students and Sp.Ed. Dirs., and moms and dads and they even included General Ed himself! So they planned and surveyed the countryside, always holding the standards high so that when King OSEP arrived at DIA the subjects were ready to show their IEPs from the LEAs.

King OSEP came and went in a flurry and somewhat of a hurry. As he left he gave the SEA a snapshot that was not altogether clear.

"Never fear you will hear from me again on how to improve the clarity of this work of art. And in the meantime model a CIMP to watch out for the SIP and keep it on course!"

"Well now I see," said SEA to LEA, "self-assess and do your best for all in the kingdom with an IEP!"



Since the visit to Colorado by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in 1999-2000 the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) has been busy developing a state improvement plan (SIP). The SIP2000 was developed by a large group of stakeholders representing families, educators, administrators, and representatives from colleges and universities around the state. One of the six primary goals of the SIP is *"Families will receive the information and training that they need to increase their participation in their children's education and services."* CDE is in the process of assisting districts in measuring how well they are achieving this goal and in measuring how Colorado is doing statewide.

One piece of the puzzle toward answering the question about parent involvement is the parent interview project of the Colorado Department of Education. "So how does your IDEA float?" That's somewhat the question CDE parent interviewers have been asking a random sample of approximately 1000 families around the state each year since 1998. By the summer of 2001 the information from three years worth of interviews will be summarized and reflect the unfiltered voices of 2800 families as they describe their perceptions of special education supports and services in every region of the State of Colorado.

Each year as a part of the Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (CIMP) the CDE identifies one or more districts from each of the eight regions of the state to participate in the first phase of the monitoring process, self-assessment and data gathering. Confidential parent interviews are a part of the data-gathering phase. Each district sends the entire list of all the students in special education to the CDE (It may surprise you to know that CDE does not have the name of every student in the state in a database! We depend on the districts to provide the vital contact information). Parents of students in special education are recruited, hired and trained to do one-on-one telephone interviews with families. We strive for about 10% of the families

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on the lists (in very large districts the percentage is slightly less, more like 7%). We make sure some families in every school representing all the disabilities in the school get called. Calls are made during the day and in the evening as well. That's the process – so how are things going for students in special education in Colorado?

From the 1999-2000 data (questionnaires are composed of 49 questions) we know that moms attend IEP meetings more than twice as often as dads! (mothers attend at a rate of 90% and fathers 41%) Does that kind of information make you wonder why? We hope so! With this sort of information local stakeholder groups (parents, educators and administrators) can look at local practices for scheduling IEP meetings and seek out creative ways to involve dads in the educational decision making for their sons and daughters. They may even set goals for 100% participation of both parents!

Only 59% of the families reported that their sons or daughters participated in state-wide assessment (CSAP). Should this be a worry? Maybe, maybe not. We need to remember that CSAP is not available at every grade level yet. But a local team may want to look closely at participation trends and outcomes for students with disabilities across their district and see how they change from year to year or as compared to students with disabilities statewide.

When families were asked if their students were making adequate or reasonable progress, 63% rated their children's progress as above average, 21% rated progress as average and 16% as below average. Overall, not bad! But stakeholder groups will want to seek out what factors are present when families perceive services in a positive light and what is missing when families report concerns. How does their district compare to the state average and is being average satisfactory to the team?

This is just a sample of the information gathered from families. The information is meant to give CDE a "snapshot" of the perceptions of families from large and small districts and to target strengths and areas for improvement. Each district's information is summarized and recommendations are provided. Each year a summary report of all the districts is prepared with the statistical expertise and assistance of the Research and Development Center in Fort Collins. While still "under construction" CDE plans to have this summary information in the CDE special education website in the near future. This information also influences planning and budgeting for parent involvement/leadership activities supported by CDE.

Families all over the state are being asked to get involved with local stakeholder groups to advise the Local Education Agencies (LEA) in developing local improvement plans. These groups look at a variety of information sources such as parent interview reports, count audit reports and other data sources relevant to special education and student achievement. Families can also participate as members of a regional professional development council and assist in planning a variety of training opportunities. Contact your local Director of Special Education and volunteer to be part of the team that takes the lead in digging deeper and discovering how to make services meet the needs of all students in your district. And keep that good IDEA afloat!

For more information on parent involvement and training opportunities in special education visit the cde website at www.cde.state.co.us and go to the Special Education webpage.

“Most people see data as confusing or boring. It is like solving a mystery! I see data as pieces of information that can tell us if we are headed in the direction we intended or it can be information that can lead us to ask the next question, perhaps the one that will help us discover new possibilities or encourage us to change the directions of our sails.”

COLORADO TRANSITION OUTCOMES PROJECT

by Heather Hotchkiss

While much has occurred in states and local districts to improve transition services for youth with disabilities, there are many states and local districts that continue to find difficulty in meeting the transition services requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It is believed that much of this is due to a number of factors, including a lack of understanding of the requirements and a lack of knowledge of how to address both the mandate and intent of the legislation.

In Colorado, the need for support with transition services has been identified through the Senior Survey conducted by the School-to-Career initiative, the OSEP monitoring report, self-assessments as part of the CIMP process, and requests from Directors for assistance. This project is one way of addressing the identified needs related to the transition requirements of IDEA.

The Colorado Department of Education, Special Education Services Unit, seeks to involve a number of participants in the Transition Outcomes Project in order to:

- Increase the understanding about transition and the IEP process among stakeholders who can play an important role in transitioning youth to post-school outcomes;
- Promote a coordinated set of activities and strategies within the IEP process for transitioning youth.
- Help schools connect with representatives of other agencies who can provide transition services for their students.

Applications have been submitted to CDE, approximately 8-10 project sites will be identified to participate in the Transition Outcomes Project during this school year. Project sites may be a single district, a single school within a district, or multiple districts within a BOCES.

The Transition Outcomes Project is developed around a process, model and conceptual framework designed to identify specific strengths and issues in implementing the transition services requirements and then develop strategies to address and resolve areas of need. Other states that have implemented this project include Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Nebraska, Kansas, Arizona, New Mexico, South Dakota, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania. Wyoming is the only site that has completed follow-up data. For more information, please contact the Secondary Services Team at 303-866-6694.

Disney Award

by Barbara Straley

Colorado Department of Education



Ben Wentworth, science teacher at CSDB has been named the Disney American Teachers Awards Outstanding Teacher of the Year. CSDB is understandably proud and has asked that I share the information regarding this honor with all of you.

Over 100,000 teachers were nominated for the awards. 20,000 then elected to complete the application process. 35 were selected to attend a meeting in California as finalists. Ten outstanding teachers were selected then by a panel of professional judges from a pool of 35 teachers in 10 areas such as Science, history, special education, etc. Ben was named into the top ten group as the Outstanding Science Teacher of the year.

All 35 Disney finalists then voted from among the group of ten to select one person to represent them as Outstanding Teacher of the Year. Ben was the teacher selected.

Ben states that the week was incredibly full, with interviews, meetings and classes on collaborative interactions between teachers. The long days allowed time for the group to attend the play, "The Lion King", to be honored with a parade through Disneyland, and the awards banquet the final evening.

In the year ahead Ben anticipates being involved in public speaking engagements to promote education. He is anticipating (really!) a call from the Rosie O'Donnell Show, among others and is likely to be featured in Time magazine.

All 35-finalist teachers will attend a summer institute in Orlando Florida on Collaborative teaching. Disney goal is to increase collegiality among teachers.

Ben states that it was an honor to be selected Outstanding Science Teacher by the professional judges panel. But he says the greater honor was to be selected by his 35 peers to represent them and all teachers. "That is truly humbling... That is an absolute honor."

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