



A newsletter from the New Mexico Parent Training and Information Center (PTI)



Special Education News to Use

## NM PTI Back to School Issue



Can you believe the summer went by so quickly? Here we are back in the school routine already. As the PTI prepares to start another school year helping families navigate the educational system, we want to take this opportunity to give you some information about what is happening in education on the national and state levels. Also, on a much more personal level we want to let you know about some staff changes.

Please remember that we are here to help you with questions you may have about your child's special education program. We can help you navigate the educational

system, prepare for school meetings, and assist with dispute resolution. We also offer workshops throughout the year on Advocacy and the IEP, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Transition. We invite you to visit our [website calendar](#) to see the latest offerings.

For individual help or questions, give us a call at Parents Reaching Out, home of the NM PTI, 505-247-0192 or 1-800-524-5176.

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Expectations + Access = Achievement

James Shelton, Asst. Deputy Secretary  
Office of Innovation and Improvement, US Dept. of Ed.

## Goodbyes

Larry Fuller, the Director of Education and Policy, resigned from Parents Reaching Out in July. Larry began his career as a volunteer at PRO some 20 years ago when he wanted to help parents learn how to advocate for their children. In the years that followed, Larry helped to empower countless families – demystifying the educational system and helping them realize the power of their dreams for their children. Larry also worked tirelessly to develop successful partnerships between schools and parents. Larry’s work was known and celebrated not only in our state, but also on the national level. He had a very close working relationship with Sen. Jeff Bingaman’s office and his influence on national legislation, such as the reauthorization of NCLB, was substantial. We will miss Larry’s passion for helping families and, of course, his famous sayings – most notably, “You don’t know what you don’t know.” We wish him all the best in his future pursuits and encourage him, as he encouraged so many others, to, “Let your dreams take flight!”

Two staff members of the Parent Training and Information Center are also leaving. Our best wishes go with Tatianna Dickens, our Family Liaison in the southern part of the state, and Shannon Van de Riet, a Family Liaison in Albuquerque. Thank you, Shannon and Tatianna, for your service to the families of New Mexico.

We would like to welcome April Gonzales-Moeller, who will be working as a Family Liaison in the Las Cruces area.

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## PTI Staff

Kendra Morrison, Project Coordinator

Erica Candelaria, Family Liaison

Jacquelynn Gipson, Family Liaison

April Gonzales-Moeller, Family Liaison – southern region



## Reauthorization of NCLB

Greater collaboration between general education policy makers and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is a primary goal as lawmakers work to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (commonly known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB)).

Several PRO staff members attended the 2011 Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Leadership Mega Conference in Washington, D.C. in August. Kendra Morrison, the PTI Coordinator, observed that at the federal level, there is a push for greater inclusion of children with disabilities within the general education framework. Participants at the conference stressed the importance of building a strong educational foundation for **all** students. The general education foundation needs to be strengthened so all children will benefit – those with disabilities, those who are English Language Learners, and those who are typically disenfranchised. “Without a good foundation, special education services won’t be able to supplement as they need to,” Morrison noted.

In a move away from NCLB, the focus of the reauthorization will likely change from a compliance model to a results-based model. Growth in student performance will be acknowledged and the system will not use a punitive approach. The development of fair alternate assessments for students with disabilities is a priority. The federal focus will be on everyday outcomes for schools across the board. In other words, “What is happening in the classroom each day?” Specific areas of focus will be on: closing the achievement gap; providing appropriate supports and services; providing interventions that help all students make progress; and incorporating elements of universal design in all classrooms. Universal design means creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that are flexible enough to work for every student in the classroom. There will be an increased emphasis on highly qualified teachers, and on co-teaching and collaboration between general and special education.

PRO hopes that parental involvement and engagement will be an important piece of the new legislation. The expectation is that parents will be involved and schools need to collaborate with parents. The federal government acknowledges that education is local and it is relying on states/districts to meet the needs of the students. Each state needs to design its educational programs to meet the needs of the children in the state. Student outcomes affect the entire nation, though, observed Dr. Jim Johnson, Director of the Urban Investment Strategy Center in North Carolina. He cautioned that, “If students are graduating without a skill set, this affects the economic productivity of our country.”

*“A school is a building with four walls and tomorrow inside.”*

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# Changes for Special Education

The New Mexico Administrative code, the “rules” for special education, was updated in July 2011. There are several changes which will impact you and your child. We will highlight a few of the most significant changes. However, to view the complete document, you can follow this link: [NMAC](#)

## Reading

Section 6.31.2.9(B)(8)(b)

This is a new section. School administrators and teachers who teach reading will be trained in appropriate research-based reading interventions prior to referring students for special education evaluations. Also, special education teachers will be trained to provide appropriate specialized reading instruction for students with dyslexia.



## Medications

Section 6.31.2.9(J)

Schools may not require parents to obtain a prescription for medication for a student in order for that student to attend school, receive an evaluation for special education services, or receive special education services

## Autism

Section 6.31.2.11(B)(5)

For students with autism spectrum disorders, 11 different strategies need to be considered by the IEP team when developing the student’s educational program. Some examples of the strategies are: daily schedules that demonstrate minimal unstructured time and active engagement in learning activities; behavioral intervention plans that focus on positive behavior support strategies; parent or family training and support; and communication interventions that enhance effective communication across all settings.

## Transition

Section 6.31.2.11(A)(3)

When a child is transitioning from an early intervention program (Part C) to a special education preschool (Part B), a full evaluation must be completed before special education and related services are provided.

Section 6.31.2.13(K)(2)

Each IEP for children 14 and older must include a statement about the transfer of rights at majority (when a student reaches age 18).

# Help Improve Special Education!

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The federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) will be coming to New Mexico in October for a verification visit. The purpose of the visit is to review the compliance and results of the New Mexico Public Education Department. OSEP will be determining if New Mexico is meeting both the financial and educational needs of children/students that have disabilities. Your feedback is extremely important and will be used by the Office of Special Education to determine the supports for improvement that our Public Education Department may need.

Please provide your input by completing one of the following surveys.

If your child is birth to three years of age and has an IFSP, please fill out the **Part C** survey.

[Part C - English](#)

[Part C - Spanish](#)

If your child is four to 21 and has an IEP, please fill out the **Part B** survey.

[Part B - English](#)

[Part B - Spanish](#)

Parents Reaching Out will be reporting the results of the survey to the Office of Special Education prior to their visit. They will use this data to guide their compliance and results review when they are in New Mexico.

We appreciate all of you taking the time to fill this out. Thank you for supporting the children of New Mexico. If you need assistance with this survey, please call us at 505-247-0192 or 1-800-524-5176 and we will assist you.

**Please complete the survey by September 9, 2011.**



WOW!

Parent Training and Information (PTI) Centers across the U.S. had 21 million individual contacts, and presented 280,000 workshops last year.

# ¡ Ayudar a Mejorar los Servicios de Educación Especial!

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La Oficina Federal de Programas de Educación Especial (OSEP) va a venir a Nuevo México en octubre para una visita de verificación. El propósito de la visita es revisar el cumplimiento y los resultados del Departamento de Educación Pública de Nuevo México. OSEP va a determinar si Nuevo México está satisfaciendo las necesidades financieras y educativas de los niños/estudiantes que tienen discapacidades. Su opinión es muy importante y será utilizada por la Oficina de Educación Especial para determinar el apoyo necesario para mejorar nuestro Departamento de Educación Pública.

Por favor dénos su opinión al completar una de las siguientes encuestas.

Si su hijo tiene menos de 3 años y tiene un IFSP (Plan de Servicios de Individuo y Familia), por favor llene la encuesta de la Parte C.

## Parte C - Español

Si su hijo tiene de 4 a 21 años de edad y tiene un IEP (Plan de Educación Individual), por favor, llene la encuesta de la Parte B.

## Parte B – Español

Parents Reaching Out le informara los resultados de la encuesta a la Oficina de Educación Especial antes de su visita. Ellos utilizarán esta información para guiar el cumplimiento y revisión de los resultados cuando se encuentren en Nuevo México.

Agradecemos a todos ustedes por tomarse el tiempo de completar esto. Gracias por apoyar a los niños de Nuevo México. Si necesita ayuda con esta encuesta, por favor llámenos al 505-247-0192 o 1-800-524-5176 y nosotros le ayudaremos.

Por favor, complete la encuesta antes del 9 de septiembre, 2011.

# Bullying Prevention

October 2011 is the PACER National Bullying Prevention Month. The purpose is to unite communities nationwide to raise awareness of bullying prevention. This event includes activities, education, and awareness building for the entire month. PACER is the Minnesota Parent Training and Information Center. You may want to visit their website to find more information on bullying prevention - [PACER](#)

Bullying continues to be a significant problem nationwide. According to Ricardo Soto, Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), OCR receives approximately 7,000 complaints per year regarding bullying. There has been a 9% increase in complaints over the past two years. Of particular concern is the fact that 50% of the complaints are disability related. OCR is working with the Office of Special Education Programs at the federal level to ensure that schools take action to stop bullying and to make sure that children feel safe at school.

Implementation of Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) has been shown to reduce bullying in schools. The federal government has money for states that want to adopt PBIS programs, and 13,300 schools across the country have already adopted these programs. Parents Reaching Out is trying to raise the issue with our state legislators. As the school year progresses, we will have more information about ways for you to get involved with bringing this important program to our schools.

## Check It Out!



Parents Reaching Out has recently completed a *What's the Big IDEA?* fact sheet on Disability Harassment. You can find this fact sheet and many others on our [website](#).

Other *What's the Big IDEA* fact sheet topics include: The Six Principles of IDEA, Evaluations, Educational Placement, and Manifestation Determination, to name just a few of the available titles.