



# Connections from Jerr

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## *From Jerry's Computer: Improving Communication in Our Department*

Over the last two years I've established a goal of improving communication within our department. To that end, we've worked to establish our Online Special Education Handbook, located on our website at: <http://www.asdk12.org/depts/sped/policy/index.asp>. This handbook is designed for use by district staff and parents to locate special education state regulations and district policy and procedures.

Another means of improving communication systems in our department is this newsletter. This online newsletter assists me as the Executive Director to directly communicate on a bimonthly basis with special education staff throughout the district. This newsletter focuses on departmental changes, information about new policy at local, state and national levels.

A third project is the new professional training section of the Special Education website, located at: <http://www.asdk12.org/depts/sped/training/>. Designed to complement the MLP system, this websection offers a complete calendar of trainings designed for our department staff.

I am hopeful that each of these efforts will assist our department to streamline communication as well as assist each department member in locating needed information in a timely manner.

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Special Education



### ***In This Issue...***

From Jerry's Computer:  
Improving Communication in  
Our Department  
Keep in Step -  
Extended School Year Services  
Policy Updates - Have You Heard?  
Upcoming Mandatory IEP  
Monitoring Trainings

## ***Keep in Step - Extended School Year Services***

Children qualify for ESY services in three general areas: emerging skill, regression/recoupment, or self-sufficiency. ESY services must be provided only if a child's IEP Team determines, on an individual basis, that the services are necessary for the provision of FAPE to the child. Provision of ESY services for one year does not mean that the child needs such services each year. A district may not limit ESY services to particular disability categories or unilaterally limit the type, amount, or duration of those services.

ESY services can be based on one or more of three general areas using the following guidelines. A "yes" response to all questions within one area provides a strong indication that ESY services are warranted.

### **1. Emerging Skill**

When few, if any, gains are made during the regular school year and a critical skill is in the process of emerging, and it is believed that with ESY services the child could make reasonable gains, then ESY services must be considered. Collect documentation to assist the IEP Team in determining the following:

- a. Does progress toward the goals and objectives or benchmarks over an extended period show few, if any, gains?
- b. Is a skill emerging?
- c. Does documentation support that ESY services are needed to avoid irreparable loss of the learning opportunity?

### **2. Regression/Recoupment**

When the child would regress to such an extent and the amount of time required to re-learn skills or behaviors becomes so significant that he or she would be unable to benefit from his or her special education program, then ESY services must be considered. Collect documentation to assist the IEP Team in determining the following:

- a. Do progress reports and data show that the child demonstrates periodic regression, which is related to breaks in instruction throughout the school year?
- b. Do progress reports and data show that the child regresses and cannot re-learn the skills in a reasonable amount of time following the breaks?
- c. Does documentation support that without ESY services the child would regress to such an extent and have such limited recoupment ability that he or she would be unable to benefit from his/her special education program?

### **3. Self-sufficiency**

When the acquisition of critical life skills that aid in the child's ability to function as independently as possible, thereby reducing the child's reliance on caretakers or other institutionalized care, would be threatened by an interruption in services, ESY services must be considered. The IEP Team should collect documentation to assist in determining the following:

- a. Does documentation identify critical life skills that are needed for independence?
- b. Will failure to maintain acquired critical life skills cause major or permanent loss of the skills and create a dependence on caregivers?
- c. Without ESY services, would the child fail to maintain these critical life skills?

## ***Policy Updates - Have You Heard?***

### **Participation Guidelines Memo**

In compliance with a state department request, I issued a memo in February to all special education personnel to notify them of the newest version of the Participation Guidelines for Alaska Students Taking State Assessments. This memo can be found at: [http://www.asdk12.org/depts/sped/policy/part4/Memo\\_ParticipationGuideli.pdf](http://www.asdk12.org/depts/sped/policy/part4/Memo_ParticipationGuideli.pdf).

### **New Release of Information**

The Special Education Department now has a new Release of Information form that is drafted in compliance with the Family Education Rights Privacy Act as well as HIPPA. Please review this form, located on our website at: <http://www.asdk12.org/depts/sped/policy/part7/ConsentforRelinfo.pdf> and begin using it when seeking information from sources outside our school district.

### **Alternate Assessment Clarifications**

The Online handbook now includes a copy of the Alternate Assessment Reminders and Clarifications memo issued in February of this year. This memo includes information about the completion and submission of portfolios. The memo can be found at: [http://www.asdk12.org/depts/sped/policy/part4/AA\\_memo.pdf](http://www.asdk12.org/depts/sped/policy/part4/AA_memo.pdf).

### **Intensive Funding Memo**

In late December, I wrote a memorandum to all special education, related service providers, administrators, teachers and staff regarding Intensive Funding. This memorandum is designed in a question and answer format. It provides assistance to building level teams who determine whether a special education student qualifies for intensive funding. It specifically outlines the 7 criteria that a student must meet in order to qualify for special education funding. Additionally, the memo includes information about the limited exceptions. This new policy is located online at: <http://www.asdk12.org/depts/sped/policy/part1.asp>. Questions about this new policy can be directed to special education administrators and department chairs at secondary level.

## **Upcoming Mandatory IEP Monitoring Trainings**

Special education teachers and related services providers in all schools within the Bartlett attendance area are required to attend IEP training scheduled in their individual buildings by April 30, 2005. This training is mandated by the AK DOEED. Training for your building will be scheduled through your department chairperson (secondary) or your teacher consultant (elementary). Staff who are unable to attend the scheduled trainings may attend a make-up session (TBA) or complete the online training at <http://www.asdk12.org/depts/sped/training> (available on April 1) by selecting the link for "Monitoring Training" under "Training for ASD Staff." All other special educators and related services providers will complete training by September 15, 2005.