



# CURRENT NEWS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

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The Special Education Board's (SEB) work throughout the 2020-21 school year included a virtual Special Education Conference. The event attracted many attendees and focused on the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students. SEB will continue monitoring legislation and PDE's initiatives to support students with disabilities and high abilities during the new school year.

PSEA's Special Education Conference will tentatively be in person at the Penn Stater on March 4-5, 2022. Please save the date and look for more information forthcoming.

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## The Center for Professional Learning

PSEA's Education Services Department has expanded content offerings in a variety of ways to meet the professional learning needs of our members. PSEA's new learning management system, PEARL, will launch this fall to offer online professional learning opportunities to members. PEARL will feature courses on various elements of the newly revised Educator evaluation system.

PSEA will offer trainings on the local, region and state levels. Please look at our current course selections for members. [PSEA Your Profession.](#)

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## IDEA's Implementation

On June 30, Gov. Wolf signed Act 66 of 2021 into law. Act 66 permits students who were enrolled during the 2020-21 school year to repeat their grade level to make up for any lost educational opportunities because of COVID-19.

Therefore, COVID-19 compensatory services and PDE's roadmap for accelerated learning will begin for eligible students. IEP teams across the state will make plans for students individually. However, PSEA's initial data shows that few parents and/or IEP teams elected retention as a viable option to enhance learning.

## Special Education Advisory Panel and PDE Bureau of Special Education

The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) is planning the goals for students with special education needs through 2025. SEAP is reviewing the Office of Child Development and Early Learning's early childhood data and accessing other indicators and targets. A top priority is monitoring the effects of COVID-19 on the learning of students with disabilities.

PDE Director Carole Clancy shared the Bureau's priorities for the 2021-22 school year on accelerated learning and their focus on the social and emotional health of students. PDE is monitoring all guidance from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

Universal Design for Learning grants will be available for teachers and schools with a focus on training regular education teachers to work with students who have complex learning needs. Competitive integrated employment through transition remains a focus, while coordinating efforts with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR).

Inter-agency collaboration is another goal of the Bureau and will be a welcome addition to school teams who struggle to find support for students/and or families who need high levels of community support.

PDE is also working through a three-year process focused on "Attract-Prepare-Retain." Stakeholder groups will meet throughout the year to share information from the field.

## **State Board of Education**

The State Board of Education is working on the Master Plan for Higher Education with a July 2022 goal of completion. Dr. Jonathan Peri chairs the committee in collaboration with Dr. Tanya Garcia (PDE).

The State Board corrected the revisions to Chapter 49 based on public comments and information regarding ESSR funding.

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## Region Trainings

As the new school year approaches, in-person and virtual region trainings are being scheduled for the fall and winter. Please note that to protect members and staff, all in-person trainings will have a maximum capacity and there will be limits on the number of attendees to maintain health and safety protocols.

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## Looking Forward

While we all hoped that COVID-19 would be behind us now, variants continue to emerge that pose risk to our “new normal.” Please practice self-care as you enter the new school year. Best wishes for a productive and safe start!

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**This content is intended for PSEA members and their immediate families.**

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