

Special Education Update

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Combined with past cutbacks in both state and federal aid, the cost of educating special education students has soared for local school districts. Despite recent proposals of budget cuts, federal spending for students with disabilities will actually increase this year. Congress approved an additional \$100 million for special education as well as an extra \$5 million for programs supporting young children with disabilities as well as increases in funding for parent information centers and technical assistance. But that is no promise of anything additional in the future. New York State is continuing to look for areas to ease these costs. Each month there are new changes that parents, educators and all who are concerned about these students must be aware of.

The Board of Regents approved eliminating the current IEP Diploma in favor of a Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential. It is scheduled to be awarded beginning in the 2013-2014 school year. There was also discussion about creating another diploma option for students with disabilities who can complete some high school work but are not able to pass the state exams. The name of this diploma has not yet been determined.

New York State's *Annual State Application under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for Federal Fiscal Year 2012* has been posted for public review for 60 days. Written public comment will be accepted for 30 calendar days starting January 18, 2012. Additional information can be found at:

www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/idea/announce-partB-comment.html.

NYSED has released several memos and will be accepting public comment on changes to amend sections of the part 200s regulations. Be sure to visit the NYSED website for additional information: www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/.

There is a memo that will provide CSE/CPSE guidance in determining a student's need for a one-to-one aide. The memo contains specific considerations as well as the role and responsibilities of that aide. This memo can be found at:

www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/1-1aide-jan2012.htm.

NYSED will also be accepting public comment regarding changes to the part 200s (200.4 and 200.16) regarding individual evaluations for both preschool and school-age students. Written comments will be accepted for 45 days after its January 4, 2012 publication in the NYS Register. Additional information can be found at:

www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/idea/announce-partB-comment.html.

Also available on the NYSED website is the [application](#) that local educational agencies may use to request an exception from NYSED to exceed the 1.0 percent cap in counting as proficient and advanced for accountability purposes during the 2011-12 school year, the scores of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities based on alternate academic achievement standards. This information can be found at:

www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/applications/1percent-2012.htm.