



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING


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MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 25, 2015

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Norma Jean Sass 
Deputy Superintendent, Education Services

SUBJECT: Education Department Announces New Guidance to Help Students with Disabilities as Part of 40th Anniversary of IDEA Law

To commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the U.S. Education Department is releasing [guidance](#) aimed at ensuring that America's 6 million children and youth with disabilities have the same opportunity for a quality education as their nondisabled peers.

The guidance clarifies that students with disabilities should not only have access to a free appropriate public education, but also they should have individualized education programs (IEPs) that are aligned with state academic content standards for the grade in which a child is enrolled. This will help to ensure that all students receive high-quality instruction that prepares them for success in college and careers.

In addition to the guidance, the Department also is sharing resources for parents and educators aimed at helping students with disabilities succeed in school, careers, and life:

- **Website Featuring Best Practices from the Field** - The Department created a [new website](#) to house resources developed by its grantees on effective IEPs, instructional practices, assessments, student engagement, school climate, home and school partnerships, and post-school transition.

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- **Classroom Strategies for Teachers** - The Department compiled [tips for teachers](#) with evidence-based, positive, proactive, and responsive classroom behavior intervention and support strategies. The techniques are aimed at helping capitalize on instructional time and decreasing disruptions.
- **Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) Implementation Blueprint for Educators** - The National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports prepared a [new two-part blueprint](#) on teaching behavioral expectations throughout schools.
- **Tip Sheets for Parent** - The [tip sheets](#) developed by the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition in collaboration with the Center for Parent Information and Resources are meant to help children with disabilities successfully reach adulthood. The tip sheets include information on financial management, healthcare, and independent living.

President Gerald Ford signed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) into law on November 29, 1975. At the time, an estimated one million children with disabilities were excluded from public schools and were thus separated from their nondisabled peers. Four decades later, most students with disabilities are educated alongside nondisabled students in regular classrooms.

For more information about IDEA and the work of the Department's Office of Special Education Programs, [click here](#).

Cc: Michigan Education Alliance