

# Special Education Report

June 21, 2023



## Accomplishments and Successes

- My first school year is in the books! It has been a wonderful experience serving the school districts of SAU 50. I welcome feedback from each school board on what I can improve upon. Please reach out to me to set up a time to meet or let me know if you would like me to create a survey.
- We met our LEA Determinations in all four districts. Determinations are one way the State monitors each LEAs implementation of IDEA, including Federal requirements to focus on improving education results with specific State Performance Plan (SPP) indicators as well as additional areas identified by each State. District determinations are made using the same four categories used by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) when making the determination for the States.
- Indicator 11 - Initial Evaluation Timelines - ensures that a percent of children were evaluated within sixty days of receiving parental consent for their initial evaluation. All four districts are 100% compliant.
- Indicator 12 - Early Transitions - ensures that a percent of children referred by early intervention services prior to age three who were found eligible for special education services have an IEP developed and implemented prior to their third birthday. All four districts are 100% compliant.
- Indicator 13 - Secondary Transition - ensures that a percent of youth with IEPs aged sixteen and above have measurable, annually updated IEP goals and appropriate transition assessment, services, and courses. All four districts are 100% compliant.
- Parents have been excited with the addition of the full day PreK program for students entering kindergarten the following year. Families continue to reach out about signing up for the full day or half day options for the 2023-2024 school year.
- SAU 52 has invited me to participate in the search process for the high school coordinator and in the Director search. I feel this is a great opportunity for us to build strong working relationships.

## Challenges

- We continue to look for Paraeducators and hope to find some with behavior training.

## Work Related to School, School Board, and SAU Goals

- The last update regarding the LEA Determination Action plan has been submitted and we no longer need a plan.
- Each school district is working on strengthening their Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).

## Major Initiatives (Possible Future Budget Implications)

- Currently the preschool contracts with a Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP). Contractors actually end up acting like employees so we should try to employ staff that we need with the SAU. Rye just hired a 50% SLP. The preschool plans to use grant funds to make this new SLP 100% instead of contracting with an outside provider. At this time the grant can support this, however, we may need to look at funding this through the local budgets beginning in the fall FY 2025.

## Other

- There are currently 157 identified students, preschool to grade twelve, in SAU 50. Sixty of these students are from Rye.
- Special Education Terminology Used - Local Education Agency (LEA), Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP)

**Local Educational Agency (LEA)** - (a) Local educational agency or LEA means a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a State, or for a combination of school districts or counties as are recognized in a State as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools. (b) Educational service agencies and other public institutions or agencies.

The short answer is: The LEA is the person who is there to represent the school district. This person should *know what resources are available to the district and have the authority to allocate such resources.*

**Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)** - The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is dedicated to improving results for infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities ages birth through 21 by providing leadership and financial support to assist states and local districts. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/index.html>

**Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP)** - Speech and Language Pathologists, also called SLPs, are experts in communication. SLPs work with people of all ages, from babies to adults. SLPs treat many types of communication and swallowing problems. These include problems with:

- Speech sounds - how we say sounds and put sounds together into words. Other words for these problems are articulation or phonological disorders, apraxia of speech, or dysarthria.
- Language - how well we understand what we hear or read and how we use words to tell others what we are thinking. In adults this problem may be called aphasia.
- Literacy - how well we read and write. People with speech and language disorders may also have trouble reading, spelling, and writing.
- Social communication - how well we follow rules, like taking turns, how to talk to different people, or how close to stand to someone when talking. This is also called *pragmatics*.
- Voice - how our voices sound. We may sound hoarse, lose our voices easily, talk too loudly or through our noses, or be unable to make sounds.
- Fluency - also called *stuttering*, is how well speech flows. Someone who stutters may repeat sounds, like t-t-t-table, use "um" or "uh," or pause a lot when talking. Many young children will go through a time when they stutter, but most outgrow it.

- Cognitive Communication - how well our minds work. Problems may involve memory, attention, problem solving, organization, and other thinking skills.
- Feeding and swallowing - how well we suck, chew, and swallow food and liquid. A swallowing disorder may lead to poor nutrition, weight loss, and other health problems. This is also called *dysphagia*.