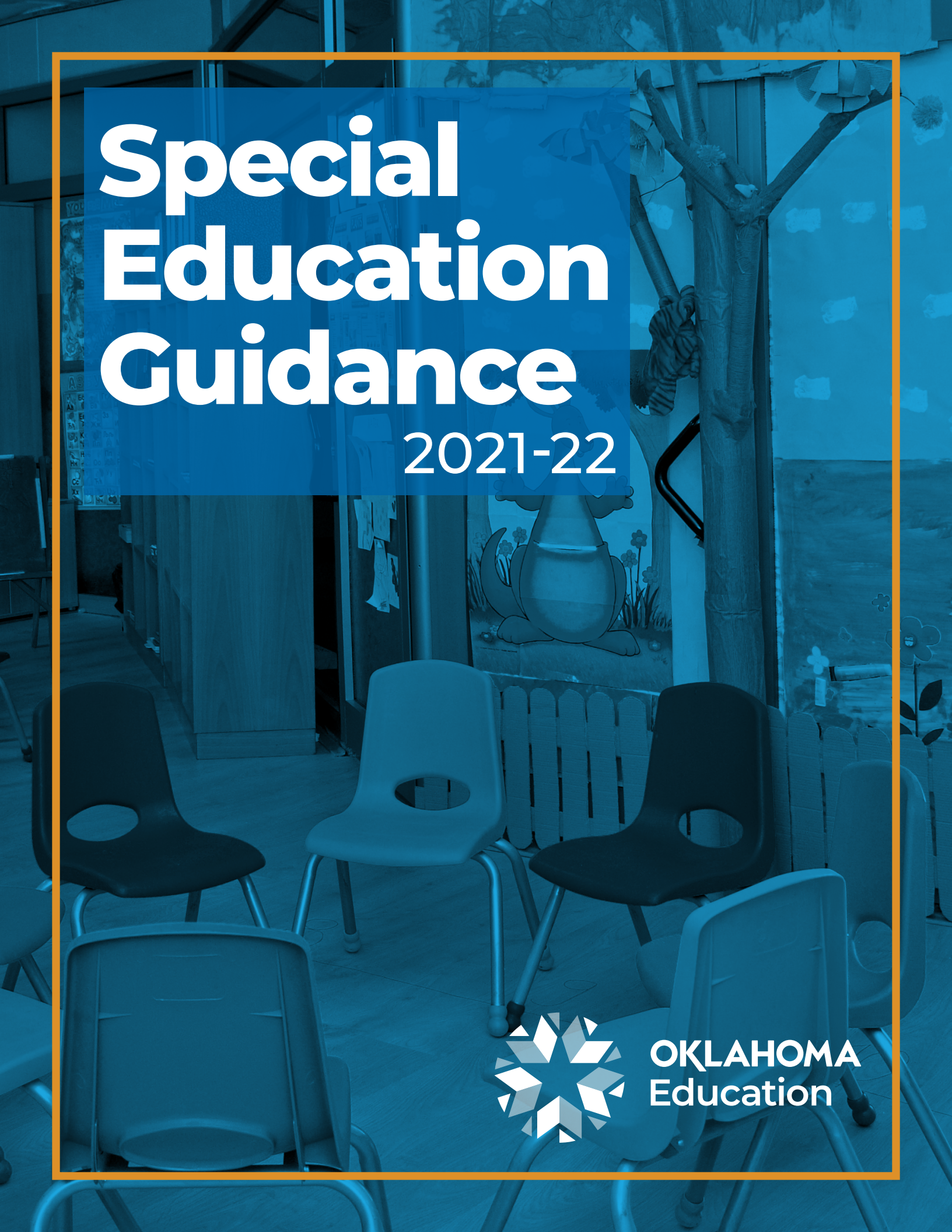

Special Education Guidance

2021-22

OKLAHOMA Education

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Upcoming Professional Development Opportunities

- The following Secondary Transition Professional Development opportunities are scheduled for the fall (full day trainings are approved for Project 613):
  - Transition Assessments for Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities Transition Planning for Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities
  - Transition Planning for Students with Severe/Profound Disabilities
  - Increasing Student Involvement in Transition Planning
  - *Oklahoma Transition Virtual Institute*, "Mapping the Future of Transition," October 26, 27, 28
  - Check the OSDE-SES listserv for more information, including dates and registration. To sign up for the listserv, email Abby Johnson, abby.johnson@sde.ok.gov

New Resources

- Elementary, Middle School and High School Transition Planning Folders with updated Resources
- Developing Instructionally Appropriate and Compliant IEPs Webinar Recording
- EDPlan Goals and Objectives Page Sneak Peek Recording
- How to Develop an Effective and Compliant Secondary Transition Plan Webinar Recording
- The OK Secondary Transition Handbook is currently being revised and is scheduled to be released this fall!

Current Staff Contact List

- Oklahoma State Department of Education – Special Education Services staff contact list

PROGRAMS

Contingency Plans

Under the current circumstances, it is advisable that districts continue the use of contingency plans. In the event of school closure or health/ medical emergency resulting in a disruption of services, LEAs must ensure students with disabilities maintain continuity and access to services that are provided to all students participating in the general education setting. LEAs may use contingency plans to clearly articulate the provision of special education and related services in light of these circumstances. The OSDE has integrated aspects of a contingency plan for use in the IEP that is optional for IEP teams. The contingency plan may be put into effect in the event of health/medical issues or site/ district building closure and/ or can be initiated by the IEP team (including the parents). The LEA must provide a written notice to parents at that time, noting the specific dates the contingency plan will be in effect.

IEP Reviews/Addendums

FAPE must begin with a well-developed IEP that takes into account the unique circumstances of each student. As students return this fall, it may be necessary to hold an IEP meeting to review the IEP and to update the service delivery type, frequency and duration, if it differs from the end of last school year.

It should be noted that due to updates in the EDPlan platform, any IEP addendum will require the re-entering of goals into the new format in order to finalize the addendum. For more information for using the new user interface to write IEP goals and objectives, click here.

Least Restrictive Environment

Even if the district does not have a virtual setting option for all students, IEP teams must consider the full continuum of services. Decisions must be made on an individual basis based on student's unique circumstances.

Home Based and Medically Fragile

Parents/guardians of students with high risk medical conditions should be encouraged to consult their child's healthcare provider to discuss the appropriateness of attending in-person instruction. This includes students who depend on mechanical ventilation and students with tracheostomies.

School health professionals should work with primary healthcare providers to identify alternatives to nebulizer treatments in the school setting and to inform decision-making relative to how the student can safely access instruction. The IEP team will determine the type, duration and frequency of services to meet the unique needs of individual students.

Appropriate Uses for Shortened Day and Home Based Services

- A shortened school day or home based services should only be used when necessary to address a student's unique disability-related needs. For example, if the student is physically unable to participate in a full school day because of the student's medical needs, a shortened day may be appropriate. Before deciding to shorten the student's day or provide home based services, the IEP team must consider other less restrictive ways to meet the student's needs.
- When the team determines it is appropriate to shorten a student's school day or provide home based services, the student's IEP must include:
  1. An explanation of why the student's disability-related needs require a shortened day or home based services, AND
  2. A plan for the student's return to a full school day, including a plan to meet more frequently to review student data, as appropriate for the individual circumstances of the student, and determine whether the student can return to school full-time.
  3. The student should return to a full school day as soon as she or he is able, and under most circumstances, a shortened school day or home based services should only be in place for only a limited amount of time.

Inappropriate Uses of a Shortened Day

If any student is currently on a shortened school day due to circumstances similar to those described below, the IEP team should meet as soon as possible to determine immediate steps to return the student to a full school day and prevent further denial of access to FAPE. It should be noted that use of a shortened day due to behavior must be preceded by a Functional Behavior Assessment and implementation of a Behavior Intervention Plan.

- **Behavior and Discipline**
  - Student has been removed from in-person learning to a virtual setting due to behavior.
  - Student's instructional time has been reduced as a disciplinary action in lieu of a suspension.
  - Student has not been afforded a Functional Behavior Assessment and a Behavioral Intervention Plan.
  - Student's IEP lacks appropriate positive behavioral supports.
  - For additional guidance, refer to the Oklahoma Special Education Handbook.
- **Accommodating Transportation Schedules**
  - Student's instructional time has been reduced due to starting the student's school day later or releasing the student earlier than non-disabled peers to accommodate a transportation schedule.

- **Administrative Convenience**
  - Student's school day has been shortened or moved to home based services for administrative convenience, including staff absences or shortages.
- **Accommodating Regularly Scheduled Outside Therapies**
  - Student's school day has been reduced based solely on a parent's request to accommodate regularly scheduled medical or therapeutic appointments. Points of consideration when students are absent due to therapies, etc.
    - Adjustments to attendance requirements may be considered.
    - Parents and schools should communicate regarding absences related to the student's disability.
    - When absences are frequent, the IEP team should meet to determine how to ensure the continued provision of FAPE for the child to continue to progress and meet the annual goals in the IEP.
    - Schools must refer to their district attendance and excusal policies to determine whether absences are excused.

Compensatory/Recovery Services

LEAs must consider Compensatory Services that may be required to remedy the loss of skills/regression as a result of extended school closures and disruptions to in-person instruction, circumstances caused by the pandemic that are beyond the control of schools. Schools should consider losses from the spring of 2020, as well as the 20/21 school year.

- Based on data, IEP teams may determine that compensatory/recovery services need to be considered. If determined necessary, the team must specify which special education services need to be provided.
- As part of the IEP team, parents may also request that compensatory/recovery services are considered.
- As with the provision of compensatory services for the loss of a FAPE under normal circumstances, an individualized decision must be made concerning the time in which the services will be provided.
- Minute-per-minute replacement of services is not required.
- This decision, like all decisions regarding a FAPE, should be based on the student's needs and not administrative convenience. For more guidance see Compensatory Services Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Secondary Transition and Work-Based Learning Opportunities

- As IEP teams are reviewing, amending, and developing IEPs to ensure FAPE for the 2021-22 school year, include the required components of the transition plan, including transition services, as a crucial part of the

process. Provide Transition Services via in-person, distance learning/ virtual, or hybrid based on individual needs. Preparing our students for life after high school has never been more critical!

- Collaborate with school counselors and other school staff to ensure that students with disabilities are included in the Individual Career Academic Planning (ICAP).
- Visit the OK Edge for ICAP information and resources.
  - ICAP Resources for Students with Disabilities.
  - Sample activities for service and work-based learning and information on student work permits.
  - ICAP professional development opportunities.
- Complete the Work-Based Learning and other College & Career Courses on the OSDE Connect to better prepare students to succeed in life after high school.
- Collaborate with your Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor/Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) Counselor, Pre-Employment Transition Services (PreETS) Specialist, and other Community Service Providers about School Work Study, Work Adjustment Training (WAT), Pre-ETS, and other transition services.
- For questions or more information about Secondary Transition services, email Lori Chesnut at lori.chesnut@sde.ok.gov. For questions or more information about School Work Study and other transition services provided by the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), email Renee Sansom at rsansom@okdrs.gov. For questions or more information about Pre-ETS, email Judi Goldston at jgoldston@ou.edu.

Oklahoma Alternate Assessment Program (OAAP)

- Instructionally Embedded Assessment window opens up September 13, 2021 through February 23, 2022.
- Spring Testing Window: To be announced
- Dynamic Learning Map (DLM) Resources
- New manuals:
  - Accessibility Manual for Oklahoma ADA Compliant 07/01/2021 *provides guidance on the selection and use of accessibility features*
  - Assessment Coordinator Manual for Oklahoma ADA Compliant 07/01/2021 *supports district and building staff to prepare for and monitor assessments*

STAFFING

Special Education Certification

- Pathways to special education certification
  - Complete a special education certification program (P. 219) from an accredited college/university.
  - A traditionally certified teacher can add special education to their certificate by passing the Mild/Moderate or Severe/Profound OSAT (P. 219)
  - Complete a Master of Special Education degree (P. 219) at an accredited university and pass the OGET, OPTE and Mild/Moderate or Severe/Profound OSAT.
  - Complete the Alternative Placement Program.
  - Complete the Career Development Program Path for Paraprofessionals to Attain Teacher Certification. View document here.
  - Complete the Non-traditional Route to Special Education Certification (Boot Camp).
  - Troops to Teachers Oklahoma.
- Providing instruction (P. 219-220) in a special education setting

Note There is **NO** emergency certification for special education, as it is prohibited under IDEA.*

Long-Term Substitute

- A long term substitute may provide instruction and assign grades in a special education setting, but **cannot** serve as the TOR, carry a caseload in EDPlan, write or sign an IEP.

Paraprofessionals

- Tier II Special Education Paraprofessional requirements:
  - Within 120 calendar days of employment
    - Meets Tier 1 Paraprofessional requirements,
    - OSDE special education paraprofessional training through Pepper, career technology centers, or other state-approved training providers,
    - Cardiovascular Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)/First Aid, maintaining current certification.
    - Universal Precautions/Bloodborne Pathogens yearly training, and
    - Six hours of professional development each year.

EDPLAN

EDPlan User Interface Update

- When an IEP is updated for move in students with IEPs and the team determines to accept the IEP from the prior school district, goals will have to be reinserted using the new format in order to finalize the IEP.
- When unable to click on student menu or IEP processes, Adjust the screen size of your browser by zooming out. Click on the ellipses in the upper right corner of your browser window. In Chrome, it is located at the top right (3 vertical dots). This will open options for viewing size. Reduce the zoom to 80%, this should allow you to click on any of the Student menu links.
- Tiles will turn from grey to green when a student's IEP is completed when appropriate or the annual IEP is due.
- EDPlan may not show fully when using a chrome book due to "tablet mode."
- In order for assessments to be included on the MEEGs Document, you must click "save" on the assessment table after entering the data.
- Goals and Objectives Page Sneak Peek Recording
- Additional training in EDPlan is available.

FINANCE

Allocation for Part B – Application is currently open

American Rescue Plan - Application is currently open

- The American Rescue Plan (ARP) was signed into law on March 11, 2021, offering the first COVID-19 related targeted IDEA resources to address the challenges faced in ensuring services for children with disabilities.
- All ARP IDEA funds must be obligated by September 30, 2023 and expended by January 28, 2024
- Maintenance of Effort requirements apply.

Projects 613, 615, 616 and 617- Applications are currently open

- Access these applications through your Single Sign On. Follow these steps:
  - Click on the Grants Management/Expenditure Reporting.
  - Once on the GMS Access, Select page, Change Fiscal Year to 2022.
  - Proceed to create each Project budget.
  - If assistance is needed please contact your finance specialist
- **Project 613** – State Sponsored Professional Development
  - A specific allocation is not given to districts. Districts can submit an application at any time, until funds are exhausted.
  - Does not have a deadline to submit an application.
  - Find Project 613 OSDE sponsored events.
- **Project 615** – District Selected Professional Development
  - See the allocation tab to determine the district allocation
  - Applications must be completed and submitted by **December 1, 2021**.
  - Districts **not** submitting a budget by December 1 will forfeit their allocation.
- **Project 616** – Reimbursement of Certification Test Costs
  - A specific allocation is not given to districts. Districts can submit an application at any time, until funds are exhausted
  - Does not have a deadline to submit an application.
  - Allows for teacher reimbursement of OSAT costs for additional certificates for use in special ed settings. It includes both special ed and content area OSATs.
  - To participate in this program, districts will need to ensure that their board policies allow for subject area certification reimbursements.
- **Project 617** - This was a one time project that was available for SY 19/20 and 20/21. It is **not** available for School Year 2021/2022.

DATA

Beginning of Year Enrollment Guidance

For the most current guidance on enrollment and exiting procedures, including what to do if students are not yet showing in your EDPlan system, please refer to the current integration guidance document, available here. A few highlights:

- Districts can no longer manually add students to EDPlan. Every student must be enrolled in the local student information system before a digital record can be created in EDPlan.
  - To enroll 3 and 4 year-old children, please follow the Full SIS-Wave-EDPlan Integration Guidance.
- Before a student record can be available in EDPlan, it must pass all checks and validations in the Wave. The most common delays are caused by STNs and ownership conflicts waiting to be resolved. Those must be done manually by your SIS administrators.
- If an enrollment has been deleted in the student information system because the student was a "no show" at the start of the year, the record will not automatically exit EDPlan. You can wait for the record to inactivate through a transfer to another district or you can manually exit the record. If the latter, understand that it may take a couple of days for the system to register the deletion, which could mean that the record will re-activate if you exit it too soon.
- If you have seniors who have not exited in EDPlan but should have last May, it is likely that the SIS did not send exit information to the Wave prior to the state rollover. In that case, they may never automatically exit EDPlan. You should now exit each senior graduate manually who remains active. Please be sure to match the exit date and reason in EDPlan to that reported in the SIS.
  - It is likely that if they are not exited in EDPlan, your graduation and dropout reports will not be correct when reported to you in October.

Child Count Guidance

Training seminars will be held at the start of September. Please monitor the listserv for the registration announcement. Here are a few early reminders:

- Students not enrolled in the Wave will not be counted in your special education child count. This includes 3 year old children receiving services.
- Students must have active and finalized eligibility and IEP documentation in EDPlan to be counted (finalized by or on October 1).

- An updated child count report will be available in “EDPlan Insights” (formerly known as Advanced Reporting) soon to help districts identify and correct record errors. A wide variety of errors can prevent a student from being counted because of mandatory federal and state reporting requirements. All of the following are required:
  - a valid STN
  - finalized eligibility and IEP events
  - an educational environment code
  - complete disability category information (primary, suspected, etc.) and related services
  - a valid grade code
  - race & ethnicity entries
  - English learner status entry
  - a date of birth
  - a gender
  - an accredited site code and o a valid enrollment status