



# New Mexico Office of Special Education

## Parent and Guardian Guide

### Vision

Every person in New Mexico, regardless of their abilities, is valued, respected, and provided with resources and opportunities to succeed through cradle, career, and life.

### Mission

We achieve this vision through unwavering compassion, collaboration, and innovation by supporting school districts, charter schools, educators, families, and communities in fostering a supportive learning experience for all to thrive, learn, and achieve their full potential.

### Accelerate New Mexico

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham is committed to elevating special education. The newly developed Office of Special Education (OSE) will engage all state agencies that serve children and youth with disabilities and will collaborate with leaders from school districts, public charter schools, state-supported schools, classroom teachers, and special education directors to meet the requirements and intent of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004.

Executive Order 2023-062 was created to establish the OSE, within the Public Education Department (PED), as well as develop and annually update a state plan that establishes statewide special education standards and goals to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

To learn more about the Office of Special Education, please visit our website by scanning this QR code:



# Goals

**Maintain a diverse, inclusive, and highly skilled workforce**  
Diversity is a strength. Every individual brings talents to the table and contributes to a strong workforce of teachers, educational assistants, and other school-based staff.



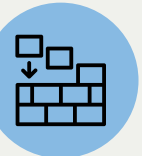
**Ensure student-centered options in every community**  
Students and their families have access to the resources needed to support their children with their individualized education program.



**Ensure standards-based teaching materials and transition support through profiles, pathways, and teaching**  
Clear criteria are used to review and approve standards-based teaching materials for students with disabilities based on their individual profiles.



**Ensure access to strong educational building blocks**  
Equity in education is reached by addressing systemic barriers that limit the academic, social, and emotional growth of students with disabilities, and empowering their families.



**Enhance and optimize system capacity for students with disabilities**  
Inclusive infrastructure, comprehensive and intentional support systems and resources, effective data collection processes and data use to drive change and improve outcomes for students with disabilities.



# Priorities

## **Culturally Responsive Education**

Create inclusive and supportive schools that value and respect all students, including those with disabilities, understanding that the school impacts social, emotional, and academic well-being.

## **Professional Development**

Support growth and learning for teachers to address the needs of students with disabilities.

## **Data-Driven Goals for Equitable Opportunities**

Use data for supports focused on continuous improvement and to inform decision-making at every level of the education system.

## **Profiles, Pathways, and Teaching**

Provide access to high-quality teaching that meets the diverse needs, interests, and goals of every student with a disability.

# Education of Students with Disabilities

OSE works closely with local education agencies (LEAs), public charter school teachers, families, and others in the community to create classrooms where every student can do their best and be part of school and community life. OSE pledges to nurture schools and classrooms where every student is successful academically, socially, and emotionally. This means ensuring that people ages birth to 21 are assessed for services in a timely manner. For those aged birth to 3, this is done through early intervention and for those aged 3 to 21, this is done through Child Find, as described on the next page. Early intervention means identifying and addressing delays in children's development or learning as soon as possible.

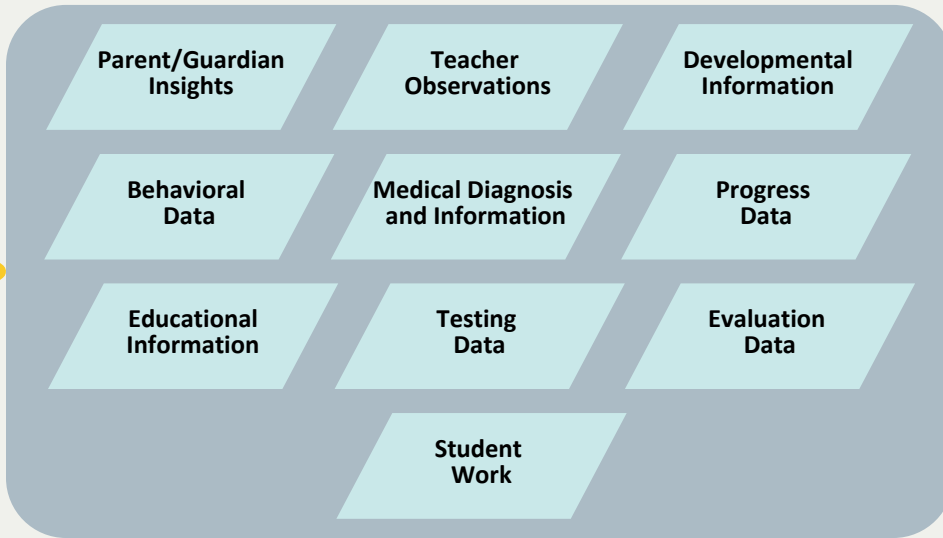
# Child Find Process



**Child Find** supports identifying students with special needs through evaluation and then identifying appropriate services and supports to meet the needs of the individual student through the development of an individualized education program (IEP) for students aged 3-21.



Within 60 days, Child Find conducts the evaluation considering **any** of the following:



Based on the results of the evaluation, the child will receive:



IEP Supports

OR



Non-IEP Supports



Once a child is found to be eligible for special education services, an IEP may be developed. An IEP is aimed at meeting the unique needs of students and includes:

- Specific goals
- Accommodations
- Interventions

There are a variety of settings in which students with disabilities can be served, ranging from regular classrooms to specialized pull-out programs, and separate facilities. Each setting presents unique opportunities and challenges, and OSE aims to support the highest quality of education for every student in any setting.

- **Resource rooms** give extra help in certain subjects or skills, with small groups and special accommodations based on individual students' needs. Students get personalized teaching, practice skills, and get extra help while still being in regular classes.
- **Specialized classrooms**, like self-contained or pull-out rooms, are for students who need more intense support. These classrooms are set up to fit students' unique needs, whether they have specific disabilities or need additional help in different areas.

# More to Explore

## Family Engagement

Families are important to each component of planning for a student, from initial evaluation to IEP development and updates, and finally during transition planning. Family engagement is a key piece in supporting students with disabilities, not only in the development of the IEP but also through regular conversations and sharing of progress, as well as areas of focus that families may be able to support. Parents/families are crucial partners with teachers to share information about students' talents and interests, life events that may affect educational progress, and feedback on academic and behavioral improvements or needs. Please scan these QR codes to learn more:



## Transition Planning

Ensuring IEPs and supports are in place in the right setting for students with disabilities is very important, and equally important is the process for transition planning. Transition planning is important for children with disabilities receiving early intervention services (IDEA Part C) to enter the public school system or access free and appropriate education (IDEA Part B), as well as those who are exiting and moving on to achieve personal goals and aspirations related to postsecondary education, vocational (job) training, or employment opportunities. Planning and goal setting help prepare students for education and long-term success. Parents should actively participate in transition planning meetings to ensure their child's needs, goals, and preferences are considered.

## Vocational (Job) Support

Vocational (job) support for individuals with disabilities is important for long-term personal and financial success. In New Mexico, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is committed to ensuring every New Mexican with a disability achieves their employment goals and thrives in their communities. Financial and vocational (job) support services for individuals with disabilities are essential, and providing this support is essential to meet the holistic needs of individuals with disabilities. DVR achieves this through a variety of programs and supports. Please scan this QR code to learn more:



## Social Support Systems

The Special Education Ombud Act was signed into law on April 4, 2021, and a special education state ombud was created to provide support for families. The role of the special education state ombud is to support families who have questions and needs related to special education and related services. The special education state ombud provides warm handoffs for families who need support beyond that the special education ombud can provide directly. Please scan this QR code to learn more:



## Community Inclusion

Community inclusion for students with disabilities and their families is an important consideration for schools when developing community partnerships. Providing access to a community of people creates a supportive environment where every student can thrive, contribute, and participate in society. Community inclusion allows for active participation and acceptance of individuals with disabilities within all aspects of community life. Schools should consider the following types of inclusion supports as they work towards creating an inclusive community:

- Supporting or promoting support groups for families
- Identifying community inclusion programs
- Promoting/participating in disability awareness campaigns

## Legal Protections

Legal protection for students with disabilities is crucial for ensuring equal access to education and schools where every student can reach their full potential and participate fully in society. These laws not only protect the rights of students with disabilities but also promote diversity, equity, and accessibility in education. Information on laws, rules, and guidance can be found on the OSE webpage. The NM special education procedural safeguards for students and their families document, which explains student and family rights, is an important resource available to the community as well. Please scan this QR code to learn more:

