

## State releases 2006 special education child count

by Bend\_Weekly\_News\_Sources

SALEM, Oregon — State Schools Superintendent Susan Castillo has released preliminary numbers for Oregon's Special Education Child Count. The report shows that the total number of Oregon children, aged 0-21, in special education programs has increased to 80,314 -- an increase from last year's 79,780. The number of students in special education (aged K-21) is 71,834 -- an increase from last year's 71,517. This represents about 13% of the school-age population in the state.

Since 1975, the federal government has required that all children receive a free and appropriate public education and special services to meet their education needs. Today, IDEA governs special education and related services, provided at no cost to parents. Under Oregon law, IDEA applies to all eligible children with disabilities aged 0-21. A child is eligible for special education and related services if a team of professionals and the parent determines that the child has a disability (defined in the law) and needs special education services because of that disability.

"The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is vital to special education programs in Oregon. Special education students rely on these services to attain a quality education. IDEA guarantees students with disabilities access to a free and appropriate public education. Prior to IDEA, schools educated only about one in five students with disabilities. Today, the vast majority of special education students attend regular public schools for at least part of their school day. We also track their academic achievement along with the rest of the student population," said Castillo.

Special education instruction can be provided in a number of settings: regular classrooms, special classrooms, regional programs through an Education Service District, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions.

The performance of students with disabilities is part of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, and the Oregon

Department of Education is in its second year of two statewide initiatives to improve performance for students with disabilities. Response to Intervention (RTI) is intended to identify students with learning disabilities through an instructional model of assessment rather than the traditional model of ability/achievement testing. The process includes instruction and subsequent performance documentation on how the student progresses when different strategies of intervention are used.

Fourteen school districts participate in the Oregon RTI project (Or-RTI). These Districts demonstrate commitment to the RTI process, long-term goals for their district, and the resources needed to carry through a major systems change. The fourteen Districts participating in the Or-RTI Initiative are: Bethel, Canby, Corvallis, Crow-Applegate-Lorane, Hood River, LaGrande, Lowell, North Clackamas, Nyssa, Ontario, Pendleton, Roseburg, Sheridan, and the Umatilla-Morrow Consortium.

Under a contract with the Department, Tigard-Tualatin School District is leading this effort and provides training and support to the participating districts. Tigard-Tualatin has implemented the key components of the RTI approach for close to eight years and has valuable experience that supports statewide capacity building for the Department.

The second statewide initiative is Positive Behavior Supports (PBS). The goal of the initiative is to provide skills and knowledge districts need to support all students socially and behaviorally. Six ESDs are participating in the PBS initiative: Malheur ESD, Southern Oregon ESD, Clackamas ESD, Douglas ESD, High Desert ESD and Multnomah ESD. All of these Districts demonstrated a commitment to goals and the resources necessary to carry out the program. Under a contract with the Department, Linn Benton Lincoln ESD is leading this effort.

A third initiative is currently underway. The Oregon Department of Education, in collaboration with Portland State University is developing a statewide network of Regional Autism Training Sites (RPATS). These autism model classrooms, for pre-school, elementary, middle school and high school sectors have proven to be quality service options for students with autism and their families. Along with being a placement option for some students, these models provide consultation to schools and training and support to parents. These

classrooms are located across Oregon and continue to grow in number. The intent is to have local access to quality service and support beyond metro areas for these students, their families and the staff who teach them.

Every child in Oregon identified as special education has at least one of the disabilities defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), shown below:

| Disability | 2006 | 2005 | 2004 | Autism | 6,374 | 5,634 | 5,070 | Deaf/Blindness | 15 | 28 | 13 | Emotional Disturbance | 4,695 | 4,703 | 4,711 | Hearing Impairment/Deaf | 1,045 | 1,011 | 996 | Mental Retardation | 4,275 | 4,294 | 4,393 | Other Health Impairment | 8,304 | 7,683 | 7,207 | Orthopedic Impairment | 1,019 | 1,025 | 1,028 | Specific Learning Disability | 28,997 | 30,072 | 31,111 | Speech/Language Impairment | 20,583 | 20,398 | 20,010 | Traumatic Brain Injury (0-4 years) | 278 | 279 | 291 | Visual Impairment | 436 | 415 | 419 | Developmental Delay | 4,293 | 4,238 | 3,922 | TOTAL | 80,314 | 79,780 | 79,171 |
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Special education instruction can be provided in a number of settings: regular classrooms, special classrooms, regional programs through an Education Service District, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions. For Oregon, the placement of students in special education is shown below:

| Placement | 2006 | 2005 | 2004 | Regular Class 80% or more of the day | 50,410 | 50,487 | 51,404 | Regular Class 40-79% of the day | 12,131 | 11,352 | 10,904 | Regular Class less than 40% of the day | 7,948 | 8,103 | 7,337 | Public Separate School | 790 | 748 | 798 | Private Separate School | 162 | 278 | 359 | Public Residential Facility | 196 | 262 | 335 | Private Residential Facility | 31 | 113 | 66 | Hospital | 16 | 33 | 34 | Homebound | 150 | 141 | 161 | Total | 71,834 | 71,517 | 71,398 |
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