State releases 2006 special education child count

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

SALEM, Oregon â€“ State Schools Superintendent Susan Castillo has released preliminary numbers for Oregonâ€™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 yearâ€™s 79,780. The number of students in special education (aged K-21) is 71,834 -- an increase from last yearâ€™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.

â€œThe 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,â€• 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 278 279 291 Visual Impairment 436 415 419 Developmental Delay (0-4 years) 4,293 4,238 3,922 TOTAL 80,314 79,780 79,171 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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