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Bureau of Special Education FY'12 Memo #10

Date: December 12, 2011

To: Superintendents of Schools
Special Education Director

From: Office of the Commissioner of Education

Division of Instruction
Bureau of Special Education

Re: Change in New Hampshire Special Education Preschool Outcome Measurement System

The New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE), Bureau of Special Education, is no longer able to accept the Brigance IED II assessment published by Curriculum Associates for Preschool Outcome Measurement System (POMS) federal reporting on child outcomes. Despite our best efforts, we are unable to resolve the longstanding concerns. This may result in some data loss but will ultimately improve the validity and accuracy of New Hampshire data. This decision is supported by the federally-funded Early Childhood Outcome Center who worked with the NHDOE in trying to resolve the ongoing issues. Details of the concerns with the Brigance system are attached.

All New Hampshire districts must now use the AEPSi from Brookes Publishing or Teaching Strategies GOLD for federal reporting on child outcomes for preschool special education. We are confident these two NHDOE approved tools meet the federal mandate requirements. Children who are new to preschool special education must be assessed using either AEPSi or Gold. This includes children who have a Brigance IED II assessment started but not completed.

For children already assessed at entry using the Brigance IED II, the NHDOE offers the following guidance:

1) For children who will exit preschool special education this school year (2011-2012):

- Districts must **complete the exit assessment** using the Brigance IED II system. Exit assessments must be completed and entered into the online data system prior to June 15, 2012. The NHDOE will require districts to provide information on the number of children expected to be included in this report.

2) For children who will not be exiting preschool special education this school year (2011 – 2012):

- If they entered the program **on or after September 1, 2011** districts must reassess these children using either AEPSi or Gold in order to establish an entry score. If districts choose not to do this, data on these children may be lost.
- If they entered the program **before September 1, 2011** districts must use either the AEPSi or GOLD to complete the exit assessment. These children may not be re-assessed for an entry score. Districts are encouraged, but not required, to manually generate an entry score for these children based on the results of the entry assessment on the Brigance IED II. This can be done through a team process, with a review of the child's status at entry (evaluation information, initial assessment results, etc) based on the ECO Child Outcome Summary Form. Technical assistance is available for districts that choose to do this.

For districts that have not yet decided which tool to use, please refer to the PTAN website <http://ptan.seresc.net/> for more information on the tools as well as which districts are using which tool. Brookes and Teaching Strategies have provided incentives and information on their products. PTAN and the POMS Coordinator, Mary Beth LaSalle, will continue to assist districts as they consider the assessment options that are best suited to their district. The NHDOE has worked with Brookes Publishing and Teaching Strategies to maximize opportunities for webinars, trainings and technical support. **Districts should decide which tool or tools they'll use as soon as possible as trainings will be scheduled in the near future.**

Districts may use IDEA or IDEA Preschool entitlement funds already allocated for this year to assist with this transition. In addition, **the NHDOE, Bureau of Special Education is making funds available** to support districts with this move from Brigance to another assessment system. Districts currently subscribing to Brigance will be eligible to receive a *POMS transition mini-grant*. The POMS transition grant will be managed through the myNHDOE On-line System. The start date for applications cannot be prior to the submission of the application in the online system. Allocations are based on the December 1, 2009 child count for children ages 3-5 in your district. Districts may use these funds for:

- 1) Subscription fees for Child Portfolio or Child Record for reporting POMS for this transition period.
- 2) Support for personnel to learn about the systems, complete assessments or enter data.
- 3) Purchase other (related) resources from Teaching Strategies or Brookes Publishing.
- 4) Pay for set-up fees or other materials for either system.
- 5) Pay for substitutes so personnel can attend trainings or work with the assessment system.
- 6) Other related expenses for POMS administration, as approved by the NHDOE Preschool Special Education Coordinator.

The NHDOE, with local school districts, has given thoughtful consideration to this decision. The NHDOE appreciates the efforts of districts to comply with federal reporting and to improve results for preschool children with disabilities. National leaders in the federal child outcomes have participated in this process to guide us through the most efficient and expedient transition possible. We believe the financial support; supplemental training, PTAN assistance and professional NHDOE staff availability will create a positive process and increase our authentic reporting. The remaining tools, AEPSi and GOLD have been thoroughly investigated and vetted. We believe both of these options will serve your district needs and our State and Federal mandates.

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Mary Beth Lasalle, the POMS TA Coordinator, will be contacting districts that currently subscribe to Brigance IED II by e-mail with a brief survey to inform the NHDOE about tool decisions and other key information in this process. Districts will need to respond to that e-mail by January 4, 2012.

Should you need further information or clarification, please contact Ruth Littlefield at 603- 271-2178 or ruth.littlefield@doe.nh.gov

RL:BJR
Attachment
Brigance IED II Reporting Concerns

Districts using the Brigance IED II for federal reporting and the New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) have identified the following concerns with this system for measuring child outcomes for special education.

Since 2007, the NHDOE has been working with Curriculum Associates (CA) to obtain entry and exit scores for children based on the Outcome areas. New Hampshire does not have, has never had and continues to be unable to get these scores. As a result:

- Data are not portable so when a child moves into or out of a district that uses Brigance IED II the federally required data are lost.
- Data cannot be validated; there is no way to determine if the score a child receives is consistent with the child's status.
- The NHDOE, working in conjunction with the statistician from the Early Childhood Outcome Center, has tried repeatedly to determine if the data are valid. Curriculum Associates (CA) cannot explain the algorithms used to calculate the Outcome results.
- The Brigance IED II was revised in 2010, based on current research and new data:
 - CA did not bring along the New Hampshire OSEP online reporting system so New Hampshire districts are forced to use the outdated Brigance IED II tool;
 - Districts must acquire the older version of the Brigance IED II student record booklets for assessment purposes. These booklets are no longer being printed so quantities are limited. When districts order the booklets they are often sent the newer version which does not align with the tool.
- Districts do not report a high level of support and technical assistance from the publisher, unlike the other 2 assessment systems.
- District and child level reports do not provide necessary information for local program improvement or IEP development;
- The Brigance IED II does not readily support sharing information about the child's progress with families; and,
- The Brigance IED II is not purported to be an authentic assessment - which is one of the underlying fundamentals of POMS.