

New Mexico Public Education Department
Office of Special Education

2024-2027
Comprehensive Professional Development Plan

February 2025

Acknowledgment

The formation of this professional development plan would not have been possible without the collective effort, input, and collaboration of numerous stakeholders dedicated to advancing special education. The Office of Special Education (OSE) extends its deepest gratitude to all who contributed valuable insights, experiences, and recommendations.

Special thanks go to the Regional Education Cooperatives (RECs), educators, and leaders who took the time to complete the surveys and share their perspectives. The feedback received was invaluable in identifying priorities and shaping the objectives of this plan. The expertise and commitment of New Mexico educators and leaders have been instrumental in ensuring that this plan addresses the evolving needs of students with disabilities and the professionals who support them.

OSE also recognizes the important role of families and community members. Diverse perspectives and advocacy continue to guide OSE's efforts to create equitable, inclusive, and meaningful educational opportunities.

This plan aligns with OSE's mission and reflects its aim to work closely with education agencies and regional organizations to establish and implement professional development opportunities. Through this collaboration, OSE strives to better align training initiatives with educational priorities, ensuring consistency and meaningful impact.

This plan is a testament to the collective commitment of all contributors to empower educators, improve student outcomes, and uphold the values of access, equity, and excellence in special education.

Contents

Rationale for the Professional Development Plan (PDP)	4
Justification and Support for the PDP	4
Strategic Goals and Priorities	6
Refining Professional Development Approaches.....	6
Delivery Models	6
Planned Professional Development Offerings	7
Professional Development Topics.....	8
Communication Channels	11
Calendar of Events	11
Progress Monitoring and Evaluation	11
References	12

Rationale for the Professional Development Plan (PDP)

In response to Executive Order 2023-062 by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) Office of Special Education (OSE) has developed this comprehensive Professional Development Plan (PDP) to support the educational needs of students with disabilities (Executive Order 2023-062, 2023). This multi-year plan is designed to build competencies in both educators and leaders across New Mexico, ensuring that all students receive equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive education. By aligning with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504, and state-specific mandates, this PDP seeks to foster sustainable growth, continuous improvement, and systemic change across the state's special education programs (IDEA, 2004).

The PDP is grounded in implementation science, recognizing that sustainable change requires ongoing professional development (PD) and support for all roles. Implementation science emphasizes the need for targeted, sequential learning that is continually monitored, adapted, and reinforced to ensure high fidelity in applying new skills and knowledge in the field (Fixsen et al., 2005; Metz and Bartley, 2012).

1. **Educators** (i.e., special education and general education teachers, related service providers, paraprofessionals) need foundational and advanced competencies in areas such as Individualized Education Program (IEP) development, behavior management, and differentiated instruction. As front-line implementers, educators benefit from structured learning sequences that build their confidence and capacity to support students with disabilities.
2. **Leaders** (i.e., special education directors, school principals or administrators, district leaders) require a deeper understanding of compliance, data-driven decision-making, and the systems necessary to support effective special education programming. Leaders play a crucial role in creating environments where educators feel supported and have access to resources and guidance for continuous improvement.

Both groups require structured learning experiences that address their specific roles, followed by consistent progress monitoring and opportunities for feedback and reinforcement to ensure lasting change.

Justification and Support for the PDP

The following resources provide the justification and support for the PD initiatives undertaken by the OSE, outlining essential guidelines, legal requirements, and data-driven priorities to ensure effective and compliant special education practices across the state.

1. [Executive Order](#): This executive order, issued by New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, established the OSE and outlined directives that included the need for PD and technical support (Executive Order 2023-062, 2023).
2. [IDEA B Law](#): The IDEA is a statute that authorizes grant programs that support special education for students with disabilities. These conditions aim to provide certain educational and procedural guarantees for students with disabilities and their families (IDEA, 2004).

3. State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR): The data in SPP/APR reflects upward and downward movement with each indicator (NMPED, 2024).
4. Legislative Education Study Committee 2023 (LESC) Report: This report updates the committee on the progress of a special education working group, how special education revenues and expenditures are currently being used to meet student needs, and the next steps for future work. The stakeholder engagement process revealed the need for LESC staff to continue researching special education and presenting policy considerations over a longer period than the 2023 legislative interim (LESC, 2023).
5. Office of the Special Education Ombud (OSEO) Report: The OSEO provides information and support to public school students with disabilities and their families. The report covers data from December 1, 2021, to November 20, 2023. It addresses two main questions: Which students deserve a high-quality education, and what is New Mexico willing to invest to provide such an education for every public school student? The OSEO's focused purpose provides a concentrated perspective to policymakers, highlighting the challenges faced by New Mexican students and families within the special education system. The report's recommendations reflect the areas where the system is failing, and the support needed for improvement (OSEO, 2023).
6. State Corrective Action Plans (CAPs): CAPs are outlined in the OSE's Complaint Resolution Report, which is based on the complaint investigator's findings. These complaints, typically related to improper implementation of IEPs, originate from parents filing against local education agencies (LEAs). Once the general counsel and OSE resolve the investigations, CAPs are closed (NMPED, 2023). Weekly CAP status summaries are provided to OSE staff to update them on the completion status of CAPs.
7. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Indicators: The OSEP outlines key compliance indicators as part of the SPP/APR, including graduation rates (Indicator 1), dropout rates (Indicator 2), and IEP compliance measures (Indicators 11-13). These indicators ensure New Mexico's PD efforts are targeted toward measurable outcomes and compliance with federal guidelines.
8. Working Sessions: OSE conducted ten working sessions with special education directors and superintendents to discuss the four strategic priorities of OSE. These sessions acted as a collaborative opportunity for OSE and LEAs to discuss current challenges, best practices, and make recommendations for the implementation of future programming.
9. Statewide Needs Assessment: In January 2025, OSE conducted two statewide surveys to gather data on educator and administrator needs and PD activities. The first survey evaluated skills and needs in areas such as IEP development, behavioral support, differentiated instruction, and Multi-Layered System of Supports (MLSS) to identify training gaps. The second survey focused on PD activities provided in 2024 and planned offerings for 2025, examining scope, frequency,

delivery methods, attendance, and funding. Findings from both surveys were considered when developing OSE's PDP.

Strategic Goals and Priorities

1. **Enhance IEP development and implementation:** Develop educator skills in crafting IEPs and implementing programs that meet students' unique needs.
2. **Create inclusive and accessible teams:** Build cohesive teams at the school, district, and community levels that support special education needs.
3. **Align behavior and disciplinary practices:** Ensure consistent behavior and disciplinary practices across the state that align with IEP requirements.
4. **Empower parent and family engagement:** Enable families to participate actively in the IEP process and support student learning at home.
5. **Increase knowledge of special education laws and regulations:** Improve understanding of IDEA, Section 504, and state regulations among educators and leaders (IDEA, 2004).
6. **Improve student outcomes:** Strengthen academic and social-emotional outcomes for students with disabilities through effective support systems (Fixsen et al., 2005).

Refining Professional Development Approaches

This plan outlines PD initiatives led by OSE. It reflects current priorities and strategies designed to address the needs of educators, leaders, and families supporting students with disabilities. This plan is subject to refinement based on the following:

1. **Survey Results:** Insights gathered from internal and external stakeholders through a comprehensive survey will help identify existing gaps, areas of strength, and emerging needs.
2. **Input from OSE:** Feedback from the department will ensure alignment with statewide goals and compliance requirements.
3. **Responsiveness to Identified Needs:** Adjustments will be made to ensure the plan remains relevant, targeted, and effective for the diverse contexts across New Mexico.
4. **Data:** Insights derived from the analysis of multiple sources, including but not limited to annual determination reports, LESC annual reports, Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) reports, student outcome data, and other relevant datasets.

This plan, grounded in implementation science, provides an approach to building capacity and fostering sustainable change across New Mexico's special education programs. Each year progresses through key implementation stages—Exploration and Needs Assessment, Installation/Planning, Initial Implementation, and Sustainability and Continuous Improvement—to support educators, leaders, and families in meeting the diverse needs of students with disabilities (Fixsen et al., 2005).

Delivery Models

OSE will utilize a range of delivery models to provide accessible, flexible, and impactful professional learning experiences that accommodate educators, administrators, and families in diverse locations. The

models are grounded in implementation science, which ensures high fidelity and sustained application (Fixsen et al., 2005; Metz and Bartley, 2012).

1. **Virtual Sessions:** Live video-conference training that covers key topics, such as IEP development, compliance, and behavior management.
2. **Communities of Practice (CoPs):** Collaborative groups for peer knowledge-sharing, problem-solving, and innovation tailored to both educators and leaders.
3. **Office Hours:** One-on-one consultations with subject matter experts for targeted support.
4. **On-Demand Resources:** A library of self-paced resources, including recorded webinars, articles, and guides.
5. **In-Person Workshops:** Regional, hands-on training focused on practical skill-building in areas like behavior intervention, IEP writing, and family engagement.
6. **Redelivery Options for LEAs:** To maximize the utility and reach of PD offerings, redelivery options will be created for topics such as IEPs and behavior management. These options will include pre-recorded webinars, slide decks, facilitator guides, and supplemental materials designed for LEAs to adapt to meet local training needs easily. LEAs will be empowered to use these resources to conduct their own sessions, ensuring consistent access to high-quality PD across New Mexico.

Planned Professional Development Offerings

1. **Regional PD Tour**
New Mexico Regional Education Cooperatives ([Region 1](#), [Region 2](#), [Region 3](#), [Region 4](#), [Region 5](#), [Region 6](#), [Region 7](#), [Region 8](#), [Region 9](#), and [Region 10](#))
 - a. **Description:** In-person workshops delivered across all regions to provide accessible, hands-on training.
 - b. **Goal:** Bring PD directly to educators, addressing foundational skills and ensuring consistent training across the state.
2. **Special Education Directors' Academy**
 - a. **Description:** A structured program focused on developing leadership skills in special education.
 - b. **Goal:** Equip district leaders with the knowledge and skills to oversee compliant, effective special education programs.
3. **OSE Mentorship Academy**
 - a. **Description:** A mentorship initiative pairing experienced leaders with emerging administrators.
 - b. **Goal:** Develop a pipeline of skilled leaders prepared to sustain and advance special education initiatives.
4. **Parent University**
 - a. **Description:** Workshops designed to help families navigate the IEP process and support their child's education. These sessions will be offered virtually multiple times throughout the year and in person at the annual Parent University Conference.
 - b. **Goal:** Strengthen family-school partnerships and enhance parents' capacity to support their children's learning.

5. Micro-Credentials

- a. **Description:** Pre-determined competency-based learning sequences that provide formal recognition for skill mastery.
- b. **Goal:** Validate skills in critical areas, such as behavior management, IEP implementation, and culturally responsive instruction.

Professional Development Topics

Professional development topics are carefully aligned with [OSEP Indicators](#) to ensure compliance with IDEA requirements and to drive meaningful improvement in outcomes for students with disabilities (IDEA Data Center, 2024). Each training session, resource, and initiative is designed to address specific indicators, such as improving graduation rates (Indicator 1), reducing dropout rates (Indicator 2), increasing inclusion through Least Restrictive Environment practices (Indicator 5), and fostering family engagement (Indicator 8). **OSE offers the tools educators and leaders need to be compliant with OSEP indicators**, empowering educators, leaders, and families with the skills, strategies, and resources necessary to improve educational access, equity, and outcomes for all students with disabilities. This alignment ensures PD not only meets compliance standards but also supports systemic change and sustainable improvement across schools and districts.

The following PD topics present opportunities to strengthen special education practices and enhance outcomes for students and educators:

IEP Development and Implementation (Indicators 11, 13, 14)

1. Writing specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound (SMART) goals
2. Understanding IEP compliance and legal requirements
3. Strategies for effective IEP implementation in the classroom
4. Leading and participating in Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings
5. Ensuring IEP fidelity and monitoring student progress

Behavior Management and Positive Behavior Interventions (PBIS) (Indicators 4, 13, 17)

1. Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs)
2. De-escalation techniques and crisis management
3. Collecting and analyzing behavioral data for intervention
4. Implementing PBIS
5. Addressing chronic absenteeism and student engagement strategies

Differentiated Instruction (Indicators 3, 8, 17)

1. Understanding accommodations vs. modifications
2. Implementing instructional strategies for diverse learning needs
3. Using data to inform instruction and adjust lesson plans
4. Strategies for inclusive classrooms and co-teaching
5. Adapting instruction for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other disabilities

Multi-Layered System of Supports (MLSS) (Indicators 3, 5, 17)

1. Understanding and implementing MLSS framework
2. Tiered intervention strategies for academic and behavioral support
3. Collecting and utilizing MLSS data to drive decision-making
4. Integrating MLSS with IEPs and other intervention plans
5. Consistency and fidelity in MLSS implementation across districts

Assistive Technology and Accessibility Tools (Indicators 5, 6, 8)

1. Using technology to support special education students
2. Training on available assistive tools and their classroom applications
3. Ensuring digital accessibility for students with disabilities

Inclusion Practices and Co-Teaching (Indicators 5, 3, 6)

1. Best practices for co-teaching models
2. Promoting collaboration between general and special education teachers
3. Ensuring meaningful inclusion in the general education classroom

Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities (Indicators 13, 14, 17)

1. Supporting students with disabilities in transitioning to postsecondary education or employment
2. Developing transition-focused IEPs
3. Collaboration with community services and vocational programs

Crisis Prevention and Intervention (CPI) (Indicators 4, 13, 17)

1. Handling crises and supporting staff during behavioral incidents
2. CPI training for special education teachers, general education teachers, and administrators
3. Creating school-wide response plans for behavioral crises

Data Collection and Progress Monitoring (Indicators 3, 8, 17)

1. Best practices in tracking student progress
2. Using data to guide interventions and instructional decisions
3. Developing effective progress monitoring tools and strategies

Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education (Indicators 6, 7, 8)

1. Strategies for working with young children with disabilities
2. Integrating early intervention services into preschool programs
3. Engaging families in early childhood special education

Culturally Responsive Teaching for Students with Disabilities (Indicators 3, 5, 8)

1. Addressing cultural and linguistic diversity in special education
2. Ensuring equity in special education services
3. Developing inclusive instructional materials and strategies

Special Education Leadership and Collaboration (Indicators 8, 14, 17)

1. Strengthening collaboration between special education and general education staff

2. Building leadership capacity among special education directors and coordinators
3. Establishing clear communication channels between educators, families, and district leaders

Alternate Assessments (Indicators 3, 5, 17)

1. Understanding and administering New Mexico's alternate assessment (Dynamic Learning Maps - DLM) for students with significant cognitive disabilities
2. Aligning alternate assessments with New Mexico Adopted Content Standards
3. Analyzing data from DLM assessments to inform instruction and improve student outcomes
4. Ensuring compliance with state and federal requirements for alternate assessments
5. Supporting educators in integrating alternate assessment results into IEPs

Family and Community Engagement (Indicators 8, 13, 14)

1. Training families to support children with disabilities at home
2. Enhancing parental involvement in IEP meetings and transition planning
3. Building stronger partnerships with community organizations
4. Working with educators to better engage and support families in their roles as key partners in the educational process

In addition to its core focus on special education topics, OSE provides a variety of targeted learning opportunities to empower educators, administrators, and stakeholders in supporting students with disabilities.

1. These include law conferences that provide essential training on **Procedural Safeguards and Compliance (Indicators 9, 10, 11, 15, 16)**, focusing on legal requirements under IDEA and Section 504, best practices for documentation, parental rights, and effective strategies for addressing non-compliance.
2. Educators also benefit from **Literacy and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Grab-and-Go Resources (Indicators 3, 5, 6, 8, 17)**, which offer practical tools and strategies for enhancing instruction for students with disabilities and integrating culturally and linguistically relevant practices.
3. The **New Mexico Autism Project (Indicators 7, 8, 11, 14, 17)** provides additional support through professional development resources focused on conducting comprehensive evaluations of autism eligibility. These include training videos, evaluation checklists, and guidance documents to assist in developing effective IEPs for students with autism.
4. Furthermore, the **State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) (Indicator 17)** initiative helps improve graduation rates and reduce dropout rates by fostering collaboration, implementing evidence-based practices, and building capacity among stakeholders.
5. Complementing these efforts, **Data and Finance Team Presentations (Indicators 3, 8, 17)** deliver guidance on leveraging data to drive systemic improvements and aligning financial decisions with goals to enhance outcomes for students with disabilities.

These initiatives collectively reflect the OSE's commitment to providing robust support for educators and improving student success.

Note: Topics may be subject to changes based on LEAs' evolving needs, funding availability, and other considerations.

Communication Channels

The OSE will utilize the following communication platforms to share PD opportunities:

1. OSE Newsletter
2. Parent Newsletter
3. IDEA Part B Panel
4. Office Hours

Calendar of Events

The PED events calendar can be found [here](#), and the OSE calendar can be found [here](#). Both calendars are updated regularly, so please check often for the latest events, deadlines, and professional development opportunities.

Progress Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure fidelity and sustainability, OSE will engage in robust progress monitoring throughout the implementation:

1. **Participant Feedback and Surveys:** Gather post-session feedback to assess knowledge gained and identify areas for improvement (Proctor et al., 2011).
2. **Student Outcome Metrics:** Track improvements in literacy, math, and social-emotional development for students with disabilities (NMPED, 2024).
3. **Quarterly Progress Reviews:** Analyze data from CoP discussions, surveys, and student performance to evaluate implementation progress and adjust.
4. **Annual Reviews and Adjustments:** Conduct a comprehensive review at the end of each year, using findings to refine PD content and delivery (LESC, 2023).
5. **Micro-Credentialing Completion:** Track micro-credential completion to recognize expertise and identify areas requiring additional support (Proctor et al., 2011).

This 3-year plan, grounded in implementation science, combines diverse delivery methods, targeted content, and systematic monitoring to ensure sustainable PD. By focusing on adaptive support, the OSE is well-positioned to build a highly skilled workforce dedicated to improving outcomes for students with disabilities across New Mexico.

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