




November 2006

To: Superintendents of Big Four School Districts  
District Superintendents  
SETRC Project Directors  
SETRC Professional Development Specialists

From: James P. DeLorenzo 

Subject: Special Education Training and Resource Centers (SETRC) Regional  
Training Policy and Procedures Update

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide updated guidance on the responsibilities of SETRC regional professional development specialists (PDS) and the procedures to be followed in the planning and provision of technical assistance under the SETRC regional training contracts. The Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) is initiating new technical assistance actions to focus its improvement strategies and assist school districts to improve results for students with disabilities. Each Special Education Quality Assurance (SEQA) regional office is directing technical assistance resources, including SETRC, to support school improvement activities in areas most directly relating to instruction such as literacy, behavioral supports and services and quality delivery of special education services. As a result, updated guidance is needed to ensure consistency of practices for regional SETRC in the following areas:

1. Adherence to contract requirements for staffing, preparation of the annual budget, attendance at statewide and regional meetings and submission of reports and other required materials;
2. Planning for deployment of regional SETRC PDS resources in partnership with SEQA through the VESID regional work plan;
3. The use of a steering committee to review, approve and direct the allocation of regional SETRC resources; and
4. Selection and prioritization of training and technical assistance topics.

VESID has contracted with 36 individual Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) and the Big Four cities (Yonkers, Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo) to operate local SETRC programs. Regional SETRC programs are funded through nine additional contracts. The current contracts for both the local and the regional SETRC



programs were awarded in 2004 through Request for Proposals (RFP) #03-021. Please note that the New York City SETRC program is funded through a separate contract that does not include any staff designated as SETRC regional PDS, therefore the information in this memorandum does not apply to New York City SETRC. A directory of the regional SETRC programs and staff is attached.

Regional SETRC programs were established in June 2001 to support the State Education Department (SED)/VESID initiatives and address the need for ongoing information dissemination and training on a regional basis. This need developed because the local SETRC programs that are operated by 36 BOCES and the Big Four cities had been directed to focus their efforts on those districts and schools most in need of improvement. Although the regional SETRC programs are housed in an individual BOCES, the regional SETRC programs provide technical assistance to all of the BOCES and any of the Big Four cities that are located in their BOCES Joint Management Team (JMT) area. In June 2001 a memorandum was issued that described the purpose of SETRC regional training, established minimum qualifications for the providers of regional training, listed required training topics, and described procedures for planning the work carried out by the SETRC PDS in the regional training position.

The following replaces the guidance of June 2001:

**1. Adherence to contract requirements for staffing, preparation of the annual budget, and submission of reports and other required materials:**

- A. The providers of regional training initiatives must meet the qualifications for a SETRC PDS included in the SETRC RFP #03-021, issued April 5, 2004: *All Professional Development Specialists, both full and part-time, must meet the minimum requirement for professional development specialist: A masters degree in special education or a related service, and five years direct teaching experience with students with disabilities either at the elementary or secondary level in a classroom setting.* It is recommended that the regional SETRC positions be full-time. If staffing of a regional SETRC position through partial full time equivalents (FTEs) is proposed, prior approval must be obtained from VESID.
- B. The regional SETRC PDS, under supervision of the local SETRC Project Director, is responsible for preparation of the budget and work plan for the regional SETRC contract and for timely submission of required contract materials to SED/VESID. The regional SETRC PDS must meet contract requirements for submission of reports, attend required training, and attend required statewide, regional and committee meetings.
- C. The regional SETRC PDS provides technical assistance to parents and school personnel in response to questions related to special education. They must also promote and support SED/VESID initiatives through the provision, upon request by VESID, of assistance in the coordination of regional training and public meetings and distribution of information to parents and school districts.

**2. Planning for deployment of regional SETRC PDS resources with SEQA through the VESID regional work plan:**

Previous guidance required the development of a “Regional Plan” to guide the work provided by the Regional SETRC PDS. A separate “Regional Plan,” as outlined in the memorandum of June 2001, is no longer required. Changes in policy and practice now require that the regional SETRC program participate in the annual regional planning process in collaboration with the VESID SEQA Regional Supervisor and Regional Associates, and local SETRC programs in the region. A plan for the provision of technical assistance to multiple districts by the regional SETRC PDS in their area of service must be included in the VESID regional work plan. The plan should include a description of how training on required topics will be provided, and a description of other technical assistance to be provided based on needs identified in the region.

**3. The use of a steering committee to review, approve and direct the allocation of regional SETRC resources:**

A. The first level of planning and allocation of resources should be the VESID regional work plan. There may be changes in the plan or adjustments that must be made throughout the year that require redirection of the regional SETRC program resources. To meet changing needs and to provide for ongoing review and approval of the utilization of the services of the regional SETRC program, a steering committee must be established.

B. The steering committee membership must include, at a minimum, the SEQA Regional Supervisor or designee and a representative of each of the SETRC programs in the regional SETRC program area of service. The steering committee, through collaboration of its members, identifies the training and professional development needs of the region. The services of the regional SETRC PDS are deployed equitably so all work is specifically prescribed by the VESID regional work plan and the steering committee. Regional SETRC program resources (e.g., staff time, funds) cannot be redirected for use by an individual BOCES, school district or school without full knowledge and approval of the steering committee.

C. The steering committee must develop a procedure for reviewing requests for regional SETRC services. Regional variations of the procedures may be acceptable, however, the process must ensure that the steering committee makes decisions about the use of resources to support activities of the regional SETRC program, and steering committee members and regional partners are kept informed of the regional training schedule.

**4. Selection and prioritization of training and technical assistance topics:**

A. Regional SETRC PDSs will develop, advertise and conduct regional trainings on the needs identified across the region as determined by the VESID regional planning process and steering committee. Multiple sessions may be scheduled

across the region depending on the needs identified. Recommended training topics include, but are not limited to:

- State Performance Plan (SPP) reporting requirements
- Annual performance results on the SPP, indicators # 1-14
- Committee on Special Education/Committee on Preschool Special Education (CSE/CPSE) process for chairpersons and members, including the parent member
- Individualized education program (IEP) development
- Federal and State laws and regulations governing special education
- Test access and accommodations
- Due process, resolution sessions and mediation
- Transition planning
- Disproportionality
- Literacy for students with disabilities
- Behavior intervention for students with disabilities
- Effective delivery of special education services
- Criteria for determining if a student has a learning disability

B. Regional SETRC PDSs can provide training and technical assistance on other training topics that are identified in the VESID Regional Work Plan or with approval of their steering committee. Regional training needs that are identified through needs assessment or review of data must be addressed through the provision of training and technical assistance to multiple districts with common needs.

C. Regional SETRC PDSs can provide training and technical assistance to groups of districts that have completed or will be engaging in a self-review monitoring process required by specific indicators of the SPP. Regional SETRC PDS may:

- work with groups of districts to prepare them for the self-review process; and
- provide technical assistance to groups of districts with common issues as determined by the self-review process.

D. Training events should be publicized throughout the region and made available to as many participants as possible.

Regional SETRC programs will continue to prepare and submit reports according to VESID requirements. The reporting format will be revised in order to reflect changes described in this memorandum. Questions regarding this memorandum may be directed to Laura Paris at (518) 486-7462.

Attachment

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