



**BEST PRACTICES
CLEARINGHOUSE**

- Lessons from the Field -

Providing Required Compensatory Services That Help Students with Disabilities in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Wednesday, July 27, 2022 | 3:00 – 4:15 PM ET
SPEAKER BIOS

Ruth Ryder

Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Policy and Programs, U.S. Department of Education



Ms. Ruth Ryder is the Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Policy and Programs – Formula Grants in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) at the U.S. Department of Education. In this role, Ms. Ryder oversees a broad range of management, policy, and program functions related to formula and discretionary grant programs under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESEA).

Ms. Ryder was previously the deputy director of the Office of Special Education Programs in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, which she joined in 1988. Prior to joining the Department, Ms. Ryder was a program administrator in a Washington state school district. There she had responsibility for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title I and Title II programs, state-remediation, gifted education, outcome-based education, and state- and district-wide testing programs. Ms. Ryder has a bachelor's degree in Psychology and Elementary Education and a master's degree in Special Education.

Valerie C. Williams

Director, Office of Special Education Programs, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education



Ms. Valerie C. Williams serves as the director in the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) within the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services at the U.S. Department of Education. In this role, she is responsible for overseeing administration of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which authorizes formula grants to states under IDEA Part B and to lead agencies for the infants and families program under IDEA Part C. IDEA also authorizes discretionary grants under IDEA Part D to institutions of higher education and other non-profit organizations to support grants for state personnel development, technical assistance and dissemination, technology, and parent training and information centers.

Ms. Williams most recently served for six years as senior director of Government Relations and External Affairs at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education. She has decades of experience, which include supporting state-level special education leaders by overseeing federal government public policy activities, federal regulatory affairs, public relations, and key initiatives to promote equity and guide positive systemic change, thereby improving outcomes for students with disabilities. She also served as the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Public Policy Fellow, on the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee advancing disability policy and civil rights. Prior to that, she managed the budgeting and finances for numerous multi-million-dollar programs within the Departments of the Navy and the Air Force, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Ms. Williams holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Economy of Industrial Societies from the University of California at Berkeley and a Master of Arts in Public Management from Johns Hopkins University. She has a unique perspective, having worked with members of Congress and staff on Capitol Hill, with advocacy organizations, supporting state special education leaders, and most importantly, being the parent of a son with Down syndrome.

Jasmine Bolton

Senior Counsel, Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education



Prior to joining the Biden-Harris Administration, Ms. Bolton was a senior staff attorney at The Bail Project, where she helped coordinate the expansion into new jurisdictions in the South. Before that, Ms. Bolton was a policy analyst for the Warren for President campaign and worked as a Legal Fellow at the Southern Poverty Law Center, where she focused on educational equity, combatting the School-to-Prison Pipeline, and improving youth access to mental health services. She clerked for the Honorable Bernice B. Donald on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit and previously worked as a securities litigation associate in the New York office of Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP. Ms. Bolton received her J.D. from Columbia University in 2014, and her BA from Harvard College in 2011.

Wendy Tucker

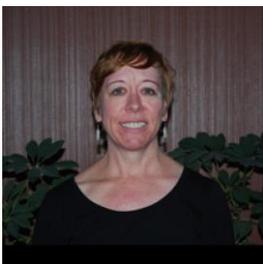
Senior Director of Policy, Center for Learner Equity



Ms. Wendy Tucker is the Senior Director of Policy at the Center for Learner Equity (CLE). She is an attorney, disability advocate and education policy expert. At the Center, Ms. Tucker works at the federal, state, and local levels to support policies that ensure students with disabilities have the quality educational opportunities and choices they need to thrive and learn. Ms. Tucker's recent projects have focused on policies that address the needs of students with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, including preserving IDEA protections and encouraging the use of COVID relief funding to support students with disabilities. Ms. Tucker comes to this work out of a passion for the rights of students with disabilities, fueled by her experience with her own daughter and her prior work representing students in special education matters.

Candace Hawkins, Esq.

Director, General Supervision and Monitoring, Exceptional Student Services



Ms. Candace Hawkins has been working in the field of disability rights for over thirty years, first as a social worker and then as an attorney representing students and families. Currently, Ms. Hawkins serves as the Director of General Supervision and Monitoring for Colorado Department of Education's Office of Special Education where she oversees the dispute resolution system; alternative dispute resolution (facilitated IEP program); special education data collection, analysis, and reporting; results driven accountability; and parent engagement.

Trinell Bowman

Associate Superintendent for Special Education, Prince George's County Public Schools, MD



Ms. Trinell Bowman has served many roles in her 26-year career including school social worker, special education teacher, Secondary Transition Coordinator, and Principal. Ms. Bowman worked at the Maryland State Department of Education where she managed assessments for students with disabilities and accommodation policies. Ms. Bowman served as the Chair of the Accessibility, Accommodations, and Fairness Workgroup for Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment consortia. Ms. Bowman has served on various State taskforce committees, including the Universal Design for Learning. Ms. Bowman serves on the following national advisory boards: National Center for Educational Outcomes, Council for Chief State School Officers Special Education Advisory Committee, and the TIES Center, which is a national technical assistance center supporting inclusive practices and policies for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Ms. Bowman currently serves as the Associate Superintendent for Special Education in Prince George's County Public Schools, which services over 17,000 students with disabilities at 206 schools. Ms. Bowman lives by Shirley Chisholm's quote, "Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth."

Cheryl Young-Parran

Parent



Ms. Cheryl Young-Parran is a native of Washington, DC. She received her higher education in Prince George's County Maryland. She has worked as a civil servant with over 29 years of service. Her youngest son suffered a traumatic brain injury (TBI) when he was three and a half years old. The doctors had given him a 30% chance of survival. While he was not born with any disabilities, her youngest son acquired a seizure disorder (five different types of seizures), cognitive, intellectual, physical, and behavioral disabilities as a result of his TBI. He functions from ten months to a four-year-old and is currently a young adult. Prior to the TBI, her son was thriving in many areas far advanced from his peers. Ms. Young-Parran continues to provide care for her son through virtual learning and daily living skills. She enjoys writing poetry, reading books, interior design, and shopping for major bargains. Ms. Young-Parran has often stated to others, "Reach down to push up." This simply means to her to never forget those that come after you by assisting them towards advancement.