



## May 2026 NTDSE UPDATE

### 1. SPECIAL EDUCATION DMG OPPORTUNITY

- Guiding Coalition Meeting - May 18
- DMG shared data and will ask districts to provide additional data
- Opportunity reviews will be completed during the Fall 2026
- Districts will schedule directly with DMG
- Two reports will be provided to each participating district: (1) District-specific report and (1) Group report

### 2. NEGOTIATIONS

- The Governing Board and Union approved the contract
- [Summary of the CBA](#)
- [Base salaries](#) for the duration of the contract
- [Snapshot of Insurance](#)- assumed 10% increase in years 2 and 3.

### 3. STATE APPROVED DIRECTOR DESIGNATION

- ISBE recently communicated regarding the State Approved Director designation. Per the School Code, each district must have one state-approved director of special education. If you are a member of a cooperative, the state-approved director is the cooperative Superintendent/Executive Director.
- For the past year, there has been discussion about districts being able to choose who they would like to designate as their state-approved director. I am in full support of this. I think it would be a discussion I would have with each of you about my role and whether you'd prefer me to maintain my state-approved director status or shift it to your district director. Regardless of the option, I would continue to support your district.
- The communication that was sent out was not clear about who would have which duties. Therefore, I reached out to Dr. Douglas, and this is what was shared:
  - *In summary, beginning July 1, 2026, school districts that are members of a special education cooperative will have the option to request ISBE approval for their local Director of Special Education to serve as the district's State-Approved Director of Special Education, provided that the individual holds a valid Professional Educator License endorsed for Director of Special Education.*

*Dr. Nakia Douglas clarified the intent of this designation and its impact on districts that are members of a special education cooperative. Dr. Douglas indicated that this change is intended primarily to help close or improve communication gaps by ensuring that local Directors of Special Education are included in communications from the ISBE Special Education Department.*

*She further clarified that if a member district chooses this option, it does not preclude the Superintendent/Executive Director of the cooperative from continuing to receive relevant information. **In addition, the Superintendent/Executive Director of the cooperative will continue to be the required signature authority for fiscal matters, including student placements and related approvals.***

- Based on the bolded information above, this has confused many of us in the field. Due to all of the questions from the field, Dr. Douglas shared this today: “ **ISBE plans to pause and further review the nuances and implications of the designation process.**”
- If you have not acted on last week's email, there is no rush to do so. I think we should wait to see everyone's roles and make a decision once we have clear information.
- And again, I think many of you have directors who are able to assume the role of State Approved Director (signing materials and receiving information). However, let's be sure we are clear.
- Please reach out with any questions or concerns.