

Educational Highlights for Leaders

Volume 1, Issue 5

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Supporting Erie, Huron and Lorain Counties

Special points of interest:

Special Education Administrators Meeting

February 11, 2014
@ BGSU Firelands
Campus—Cedar Point
Center

Topic: Building and District Administrators responsibilities when reporting Child Abuse

Presenter: Matt Markling of McGown & Markling Co., L.P.A.

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IEP No Longer Serves as Prior Written Notice to Families

Effective December 20, 2013, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) no longer serves as prior written notice to families even if the parent agrees with the content of the IEP. Please refer to the memo below from Dr. Sue Zake.

ODE-OEC MEMO #2013-1

To: Ohio Educational Agencies Serving Children with Disabilities

From: Sue Zake, Ph.D., Director of the Office for Exceptional Children

Date: December 20, 2013

Subject: Individualized Education Program (IEP) no longer serves as prior written notice to families

Parents or guardians of a child with a disability must receive a written notice when a change is proposed to the child's free and appropriate public education. This must occur even if the parents agree with the change. The IEP for that student no longer meets the definition of the written notice. This is an immediate change from current Operating Standards for Ohio Educational Agencies serving Children with Disabilities, section (H)(4)(c). The standards are currently under review as part of the five-year review process and once finalized will reflect this change.

The following federal regulation indicates when prior written notice is required, as well as what elements must be in the notice.

(a) Notice. Written notice that meets the requirements of paragraph (b) of this section must be given to the parents of a child with a disability a reasonable time before the public agency:

(1) Proposes to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child or the provision of FAPE to the child;

or

(2) Refuses to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child or the provision of FAPE to the child.

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IEP NO Longer Serves as Prior Written Notice to Families

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(b) Content of notice. The notice required under paragraph (a) of this section must include:

- (1) A description of the action proposed or refused by the agency;
- (2) An explanation of why the agency proposes or refuses to take the action;
- (3) A description of each evaluation procedure, assessment, record, or report the agency used as a basis for the proposed or refused action;
- (4) A statement that the parents of a child with a disability have protection under the procedural safeguards of this part and, if this notice is not an initial referral for evaluation, the means by which a copy of a description of the procedural safeguards can be obtained;
- (5) Sources for parents to contact to obtain assistance in understanding the provisions of this part;
- (6) A description of other options that the IEP Team considered and the reasons why those options were rejected; and
- (7) A description of other factors that are relevant to the agency's proposal or refusal.

(c) Notice in understandable language.

- (1) The notice required under paragraph (a) of this section must be—
 - (i) Written in language understandable to the general public; and
 - (ii) Provided in the native language of the parent or other mode of communication used by the parent, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.
- (2) If the native language or other mode of communication of the parent is not a written language, the public agency must take steps to ensure—
 - (i) That the notice is translated orally or by other means to the parent in his or her native language or other mode of communication;
 - (ii) That the parent understands the content of the notice; and
 - (iii) That there is written evidence that the requirements in paragraphs (c)(2)(i) and (ii) of this section have been met.

In addressing this issue, school districts must make sure that all procedures and policies are amended to reflect the above requirements. In addition, districts must require that staff members involved in the development and/or implementation of individualized education plans are notified and trained with respect to the revised requirement.

The Ohio Department of Education will review district compliance with this memorandum as part of the Office for Exceptional Children's monitoring and complaint processes.

Please communicate this information immediately with those who work with students with disabilities.

Visual Learning & Students with Autism

Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) learn in a variety of different ways, but research has shown that many demonstrate a strength in visual learning.

Research has proven that individuals with ASD typically use their visual system as their dominant information processing mode, and because of that strength they usually possess a heightened interest in visual materials (Furth, 1981). According to the National Research Council in 2001, visual supports include symbols, pictures, written words, gestures, objects within the environment, arrangement of the environment or visual boundaries, schedules, maps, labels, organization systems, timelines, and scripts. They are utilized across settings to support individuals with ASD and should be customized to meet the needs of the student.

The benefits of visual supports for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders are many which include:

- visually organizing a sequence of events
- enhancing the student's ability to understand, anticipate, and participate in events
- supplementing verbal instruction, clarify the information for the student and increasing comprehension.
- cueing communication; providing reminders of what they should do and say in a situation
- reducing anxiety and easing transitions by cueing the student what will happen next
- make auditory information 'permanent'. Many individuals with ASD have language processing and/or working memory difficulties. Verbal directions are often challenging to process and remember, often resulting in the adult assuming the student is being non-compliant. Putting the verbal direction into a visual form provides the student the ability to refer back to the direction as often as necessary to compensate for language and memory deficiencies.

Everyone relies on visual supports; maps, to do lists, calendars, recipes, etc. Where would we all be without our smart phones and iPads to keep us on track? Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders, even though very bright, may need to rely on visual supports more than their neurotypical counterparts to counterbalance for language and memory difficulties.

Preschool Special Education Transportation Requirements

The Ohio Department of Education's Office of Early Learning and School Readiness has provided clarification guidance on the existing rule on the requirement of transportation of Preschool Special Education students. Please see the guidance below.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact Jackie Plantner, Coordinator of Early Learning and School Readiness, at plantner@sstr2.org or at (440) 324-5777 Ext. 1157.

**Ohio Department of Education
Office of Early Learning and School Readiness
Preschool Special Education
Transportation Guidance
1/15/2014**

Transportation must be provided for children eligible for preschool special education when the following apply:

- Transportation provides access to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE)
- Transportation allows an eligible child to access, participate in and benefit from the general curriculum
- The IEP team, which includes the parent, decides transportation is required as a support or related service to meet the child's needs
- Transportation is listed as a related service on a child's Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Transportation means travel:

- 1) ...to and from school;
- 2) ...between schools; and
- 3) ...in and around school buildings.

For a complete list of transportation services that may be required, see OAC 3301-51-10(A) (3) (a)-(f).



3301-83-17 Authorized and unauthorized passengers.

(A) Authorized passengers:

(6) Resident pre-school special needs children are to be transported to school district pre-school special education programs within the district and outside the district if assigned by the school district of residence. If transportation is necessary for pre-school special needs children to receive a free and appropriate education it must be provided at no cost to the parent or guardian.

Don't Miss Nominating Your Outstanding Student for the R.A. Horn

It is the time of year when we ask for nominations of students for the R.A. Horn Outstanding Student Award for 2014. This award is designed to showcase students who have overcome obstacles through their perseverance! As Dr. Randy Pausch stated, "Roadblocks are there to see how badly you want something" and over the years we have seen so many wonderful accomplishments by students who have not let the roadblocks get in their way. We encourage educators to nominate a student who embodies this sentiment.

Guidelines:

- Nominees must be of age 3 through 21 and enrolled in a school program for the 2013-2014 school year.
- Each applicant must be nominated by **an educator**. Optional letters of support may be submitted with the application.
- The nominator must complete a nomination form and should provide specific information about the nominee in a typed description that includes achievements in the areas of academics, arts, athletics, community service, employment, extracurricular activity, or independent living skills.
- **A recent photo (jpg format)**, videos, news clippings, original works of art, etc. that help support the nomination are required and are to be submitted with the nomination via email to osko@sstr2.org. These will not be returned.
- Nominations must be received by the Selection Committee **no later than February 1, 2014**.
- Each nomination **MUST** be accompanied by a completed "Participation Release Form" signed by the nominee's parents or legal guardian/custodian.
- Nominators and nominees will be advised of further activities and timelines by April 2014.

One student will be chosen to represent Region 2 and their home district at the Awards Luncheon in Columbus in June. Details about this event will be forthcoming by Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities in late spring of 2014. The award recipient and their family will be invited to participate in this event.

All nominees will be recognized in front of their peers at their home districts' end of the year awards assemblies or as the district sees fit. Our past recipients were thrilled to be a part of these events!

If you have any questions please contact Nancy Osko at osko@sstr2.org.

Please Consider Nominating An Educator for the Franklin B. Walter Outstanding Teacher Teams Award

The nomination forms for the Franklin B Walter Outstanding Teacher Teams are now available. We know great things are happening in Region 2 school districts for students with disabilities and we want to share them with all of Ohio.

This year the Awards Committee has worked diligently to provide a rubric for the teacher teams criteria. Thanks to Kathy Hall and her research, we adopted a rubric utilized at the New York Department of Education. Here are the domains within the rubric and more detail as to what they address. The teams will be rated as to their current level of implementation in these areas.

Full Implementation	Progressing Implementation	Basic Implementation	No Implementation Noted
Planning			
Planning is collaborative and part of a team effort to meet all student needs for each co-taught lesson			
Staff have knowledge of students' IEP goals and plan accordingly and collaboratively			
Curriculum			
All students have access to, and participate in, the general education curriculum			
All students are using appropriate materials with adaptations and modifications as needed			
Educational concepts are being taught according to the Ohio Learning Standards			
Differentiated Instruction			
Staff are co-responsible for implementation of differentiated instruction			
The skills of the intervention specialist are used to help develop differentiate instructional strategies for all students			
Staff differentiate instruction based on content: what the teachers want the students to learn as determined by the students' readiness levels, interests, and learning profile			
Staff differentiate instruction based on process: the activities designed to ensure that students use key skills as determined by the students' readiness levels, interests, and learning profile			
Staff differentiate instruction based on product: culminating activity through which students demonstrate what they have learned as determined by students' readiness levels, interest, and learning profile			
Team Teaching Approaches			
One Teach, One Observe teaching approach is being used, gathering specific observational information for analyzing at a later time			
One Teach, One Assist teaching approach is being used, with one teacher keeping primary responsibility for teaching while the other staff circulates providing unobtrusive assistance as needed			
Parallel Teaching approach is being used, with teachers/staff teaching the same information to separate groups simultaneously			
Station Teaching approach is being used, with each staff teaching specific content/ skill/concept to revolving groups			
Alternative Teaching approach is being used with one teacher working with the large group of students, and the other staff working with a smaller group			
Team Teaching approach is being used, with both teachers delivering the same instruction at the same time			

Franklin B. Walter Awards (continued)

Cooperative Learning Groups
Students are assigned to groups on the basis of their interest and complexity of task
Cooperative learning groups are designed to strengthen students' academic and social skills
Assessment
Staff share and discuss summative, formal and informal assessments to plan instruction
Disaggregated test results are used for targeting instructional topics on an ongoing basis
Classroom Management
Students are flexibly grouped
There are classroom areas for station teaching and/or small groups
Classroom materials reflect supports for students with varying patterns of strengths and interests
Staff determine and implement behavior management systems
Students' work, process, and product are celebrated

We certainly hope that helps in your nomination process. As always please feel free to contact Nancy Osko at osko@sstr2.org if you have any questions about Teacher Team Nominations.



Winners of the 2012-2014 R.A. Horn Awards—Audrey Costilow (left).

Winner of the Franklin B. Walter Educator Award— Midview Local Schools



State Support
Team

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We are on Facebook!
Search State Support Team
Region 2



*Supporting Erie, Huron and
Lorain Counties*

“Pearls of Wisdom” Will Return Next Month

Ohio’s Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) Toolkit

can be found on ODE’s website at
<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/School-Improvement/No-Child-Left-Behind/Highly-Qualified-Teacher-HQT-Toolkit-2013-2014>

Below is an excerpt from the HQT Tool Kit

For the 2014-2015 school year, teachers will need to be highly qualified in 7th-12th grade core academic content areas of their teaching assignment as it applies for 7th-12th grade intervention specialist (Form E). The Ohio Academic Content Standards-Extended provides access to Ohio’s New Learning Standards in core academic content areas for grades K-12. Teachers should take the 2013-14 year to prepare for this requirement.

ODE and OCALI are working collaboratively very quickly to make online professional development available by February 2014.

As soon as we have information as to when the online content will be available, we will forward that to the region.

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