

FOCUS on Special Education

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March Madness Isn't Just for Basketball

Every season in education has its challenges, but it seems like every time March rolls around, things get a little bit more tense. Spring break isn't quite here, and the holidays have long since worn off in terms of catching our breath and it can be a little daunting. Hang in there.

But in terms of getting the things done that we need to, remember that there is a lot on our March list. We have our Medicaid replacement fund window, closing on March 8, where all of our eligible students must have at least one service logged. We have third



quarter progress reports due by the time you leave for Spring break. And while it seems impossible to see from here, summer is just around the corner and ESY paperwork for kids who are eligible is due in our office no later than March 31, but should be determined by spring break and

applications for working in ESY are due now.

Also remember that any IEPs held between now and the end of the year which involve students transitioning from building to building should have (cont. pg.3)

ESY PLANNING IN FULL SWING—APPLICATIONS DUE

Extended School Year, for those students who qualify, is scheduled to be held June 5- June 15, M-Th from 8:00 to 12:00 in each of the districts, locations still TBD. If you

have students who meet the criteria, listed on the ECKCE website, paperwork needs to be in our office no later than March 31, but lists of students should be

compiled before Spring Break. If you are wanting to work ESY, please submit the application. All staff will be notified of employment around April 1, once we know the need.

Often in Special Education, questions arise which you may need the answer to and others may benefit from that answer as well. Each month we will include a few of these questions, so please don't hesitate to ask.

FREQUENTLY (RECENTLY) ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: In the transition section of the IEP, there is a place for us to write activities for post-school and who is responsible for carrying them out. Often it is the parents. If we can put those tasks on the parents there, why can't we do the same thing in other areas of the IEP to make the parents accountable?

A: Yes, it is true that the transition section has places for people other than the student to be responsible, but that is specifically for transition, where the student is moving out from underneath the public education umbrella. Obviously, some of the goals we set for students have the expectations that we will get help from parents on following through with homework completion, etc., but we have no real way of holding parents accountable for that part, nor should we. IEPs are written for the student, not the parent.

Q: We have a student who was pulled out of school to do home school. Now the parents are wanting them to access some of the services on their IEP, like speech and OT. We've always been told that home school students aren't eligible for services. What is the right answer?

A: There are no simple answers with regard to most things in special education, so again, it's going to depend on the circumstances. As a rule, when students are removed to home school, they are NOT eligible for services. However, the reasons for a student being removed in favor of home school are many and those may play a factor in whether or not an arrangement for services can be made. The parent must first of all agree to enroll their student for at least a dual enrollment, where the student may be home schooled part of the time but enrolled to access some of the school day. This depends of course on the district's practice on letting all students access a partial day, so that is a consideration as well. If the parent is willing to partially enroll, we can make some of the services available, as long as we can work out an amenable schedule. It is also important to consider the child's removal to home school, because often, the team can have a reasonable expectation that the child will return in the not-so-distant future. In these cases it is in the child's best interest to keep some kind of connection in place so that re-entry is made more successful and the student doesn't lose skills in the time of their removal.

We never try to contradict ourselves when it comes to making these decisions, but the facts of each situation are different, so there can't be a one size fits all answer. If you have questions about a specific student, give me a call.

MARCH MADNESS IS UPON US (CONT. FROM PG. 1)

representatives from both buildings present at the IEP to make certain the LRE is appropriately identified. Each building's schedule is different and the service minutes that are necessary at the sending school may be different than they are at the receiving school, due to service delivery

models or simple scheduling conflicts.

I want to thank those of you who have let our office know that you will be retiring or seeking other employment next year. It is a crazy time in our office as well, and the planning that goes into making sure

we find suitable candidates to serve the caseloads you will be vacating is a matter of timing as well, so as much notice as we can have the better our pool will be. As we head into the final stretch that begins right after Spring Break, don't forget that we think we have an awesome team of educators here and are truly grateful to you all.

Extended School Year IEPs Due in our Office Soon

As we begin to identify the students eligible for Extended School Year, a few questions always arise as to who is eligible. Remember that the key factor in ESY eligibility is regression and how long it takes students to recover from an extended break. You shouldn't be

qualifying students just because they qualified last year—please have data collected to justify their participation this summer. Some students may qualify due to the extensive nature of their disabilities and the need for continuous programming, so if that

is the case, make sure you document that in their ESY paperwork. All of the ESY paperwork is located on our website under certified staff IEP, and the qualifications should be clear as well. If you have any questions, please contact us here at the office.

IEP Progress Report Deadline Reminder

Just a reminder that your IEP goals MUST have corresponding progress reports submitted on a regular basis, as indicated in the IEP itself. Progress

reports are due at the end of each quarter and the deadlines for third quarter is prior to leaving for Spring Break. The requirement is that the progress

must be reported out at the same frequency as general education reports are given. Please do not overlook this requirement as it may deny your students demonstrated growth.

Thank you to all of our service providers for helping us get this year off to a great start. Your efforts are greatly appreciated and do not go unnoticed!!!



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Deadlines for Lump Sum, Salary Movement Due Soon

Teachers wanting to be paid for their 3 summer months in one lump sum must submit the appropriate paperwork for that to our office no later than April 15.

Also, if you are planning on moving over on the salary schedule next year due to classes or PD points that you have accrued, you must fill out the form on our website no

later than April 15, even if your classes are not yet complete. You can turn in the proof of that movement to us by September 8, but only if you have filled out the form this April.. Employees wishing to receive a payout for their discretionary leave, subject to meeting the criteria for such payout, must submit that request no later than

April 1. And last, but certainly not least, your evaluations of your paraprofessionals are due by March 31. This means you need to have them completed and met with them for their input and signature before you turn them in.

We hope you all have a well-deserved Spring Break and come back refreshed to finish the year strong!

PARAPROFESSIONAL NEWS AND NOTES

We are now past due for wrapping up the required in-service hours that are a part of paraprofessional job duties. If you have not turned them in, please do so. I have been coming around to let you know how many hours you still need, but it is a busy time of the year. Also, please remember that your evaluations are due at the end of this month, so if your supervisor has not

reached out to you yet you may want to remind them.

Lastly, we let you know last week that we were piloting an incentive program to give you each an additional attendance bonus for each of the months of March and April—if you do not miss any time during the month of March, you will receive a \$100 bonus. For one day or less, you will receive \$50. We will

do this again for the month of April. If it goes well, we will continue it next year. Remember, the students you serve need consistency, and that is only something that you can provide. If you have any questions, please contact Dan directly for details. We value you tremendously, but we can only do that if you are there to value. Thanks for all you do for each of our kids!