

Exceptional Times

Department of Exceptional Children

Rowan-Salisbury Schools

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Happy October!! I want to reinforce the legal obligation of progress monitoring and data collection of IEP goals. ***PROGRESS MONITORING IS ESSENTIAL TO EVALUATING THE APPROPRIATENESS OF A CHILD'S PROGRAM, YET THERE IS LESS COMPLIANCE WITH THIS REQUIRED COMPONENT OF THE IEP THAN ANY OTHER.***

Current progress monitoring practices often fail to produce vital and meaningful data (Pemberton, 2003). Both the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA) and the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) require that a student's individualized

education program (IEP) include: A statement of how the child's progress toward the annual goals will be measured (20 U.S.C. § 1414(d)(1)(A)). The progress monitoring provision also requires that the IEP specify how the child's parents will be regularly informed of the child's progress toward the goals, and the extent to which progress is considered sufficient (20 U.S.C. § 1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(III)). Progress monitoring helps IEP teams address any lack of expected progress toward the annual goals of the Code of Federal Regulations (1999) (34 C.F.R. § 300.324(b)(1)) and make decisions concerning the effectiveness of curriculum delivery. In reviewing case law

Cont. on page 4

WORDS TO LIVE BY.....

"I wish for a world that views disability, mental or physical, not as a hindrance but as unique attributes that can be seen as powerful assets if given the right opportunities."

--Oliver Slacks

Curriculum News

Have you noticed our different departmental structure? In addition to 2 General Curriculum Specialists, we now have an Adapted Curriculum/Autism Specialist available to help support you and your students. **Sara Kitchen** comes to RSSS with 19 years of experience as a Speech-Language Pathologist. She has been with RSSS since 2016. Mrs. Kitchen has worked in a variety of capacities over the years including, but not limited to, as an Augmentative and Alternative Communication Evaluator/Therapist for a non-profit agency and a Rehab coordinator. She has training in ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis), DTT (Discrete Trial Teaching), Verbal Behavior, Floortime, Social Skills training/Pragmatic skill development and support, TEACCH, the use of visual aids/strategies, emotional regulation strategies and support, Augmentative and Alternative Communication/Non-verbal communication strategies and support including sign language, PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System), Assistive Technology/speech generating devices. She has even worked in an ABA separate school at which she was responsible for designing the curriculum for students to include completing a detailed assessment of each student's skills and preferences; writing specific treatment goals based on the age and ability levels in the areas of: communication and language, social skills, self-care/self-help skills, play and leisure, learning and academic skills, and classroom readiness; breaking down each of these skills into small, concrete steps; and overseeing data collection, progress, and skill mastery.

Compliance Tip of the Month

Don't be too quick to make decisions with regard to the provision of extended school year services. ***In fact, making ESY determinations should be left until the spring of each school year even if this requires convening an additional IEP meeting.*** For teams convening in the fall and winter, it should be noted that ESY determinations cannot be made at this time but will be made on a date prior to the end of the year. This will allow the EC Case Manager time to acquire adequate data to present to the IEP team for review so that an informed decision can be made for each student. Teams should avoid relying on a previous year's data as the sole basis for determining ESY eligibility and should not assume that a child is automatically in need of such services just because he/she has been in need of them in the past. Keep in mind children's needs change routinely as does their growth, progress, and development. As such, their needs should be continuously assessed and reviewed in light of ongoing data collection and progress monitoring.

We value...
meeting the needs
of the whole child
including:
academic,
social-emotional,
behavioral,
vocational and
post-secondary.

Let's Talk About Related Services:

Transportation is one of many related services which students with disabilities may be entitled to. As you are aware, not all students with disabilities are in need of special transportation services. In fact, whenever possible, every effort should be made to ensure students with disabilities are able to ride the bus with their non-disabled peers. If a student is experiencing difficulties on the regular bus, various accommodations could be considered like preferential seating near the driver or with a peer buddy, wearing a seatbelt, and so forth. Some students may even benefit from the implementation of a behavior intervention plan which clearly outlines expected bus behavior, defines the target behavior, provides replacement behaviors, and allows for consequences/reinforcers. If a child continues to have difficulties on the regular bus despite the implementation of accommodations and/or interventions, then special transportation may need to be considered. ***The only students automatically entitled to special transportation services include those who are assigned to a school other than their home school in an effort to meet their unique needs.*** ***Keep in mind that to add or remove special transportation services to the IEP a re-evaluation determination meeting must be conducted.***

Don't forget to keep each child's address updated throughout the school year and to notify the data manager and EC Office of any changes in residence. If a child's address changes during the course of the school year, his/her school assignment may change as well.

IEP Meeting Red Flags: Phrases You Should Never Use

We don't do that here.	We don't have money for that.
We only serve children in the regular classroom.	We can't.....; We won't.....; We never....
You don't need copies of this paperwork.	We only have 30 minutes for this meeting.
You must come pick up your child from school when he/she misbehaves.	Your child can only come to school if he/she takes his medication.



A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR (CONT. FROM PAGE 1)

there are five major areas of concern related to progress monitoring which include:

- The IEP team fails to develop or implement progress monitoring plans;
- Responsibilities for progress monitoring are improperly delegated;
- The IEP team does not plan or implement progress monitoring for behavior intervention plans (BIPs);
- The team uses inappropriate measures to determine student progress towards graduation; or
- Progress monitoring is not frequent enough to meet the requirements of IDEA or to provide meaningful data to IEP teams.

IDEA 1997 clearly required that a student's IEP include a plan for progress monitoring, yet many IEPs have been deemed inadequate to the extent of denying students with disabilities an appropriate education because of a lack of such plans or a failure to implement them. At the time an IEP is developed, it must specify and document plans for progress monitoring, including what will be monitored, who will monitor, when and where the monitoring will be conducted, and how the data will be reported.

The 2004 reauthorization of IDEA ensured that progress monitoring remain a required component of an IEP; other provisions mandated greater accountability for student progress. The President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education highlighted the importance of adequate progress monitoring. "IDEA will only fulfill its intended purpose if it raises its expectations for students and becomes results-oriented . . . judged by the opportunities it provides and the outcomes achieved by each child" (President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002, p. 8).

In order to improve progress monitoring for students with disabilities in Rowan-Salisbury Schools, the Exceptional Children's Department has partnered with various companies such as Unique, Teachtown, and Edulync to facilitate data collection for IEP goals. IEP teams should

- Develop plans for progress monitoring that include multiple measures;
- Specify the who, where, and when of progress monitoring; and
- Monitor both academic and behavioral goals.

Progress monitoring data should be available upon parental and/or administrator request, available for review at IEP meetings, and reported within IEP progress reports.

Candace Lindstrom

The Rowan-Salisbury Exceptional Children's Department will work as a collaborative team to provide all students inspiring, engaging and innovative personalized educational experiences to promote positive student growth and post-school outcomes in a globally diverse society.

We value

- Actions and results for children that inspire community pride
- Meeting the needs of the whole child including: academic, social-emotional, behavioral, vocational, post-secondary
- The importance of community partnerships to promote equitable opportunities for children across the district (Pre K-12+)
- Each child's unique abilities and gifts



ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL SHOUT-OUT

This month we are recognizing an Assistant Principal at Carson High School who has been a strong collaborative partner!

Mr. Mark Weavil is an Assistant Principal at Carson High School who is responsible for overseeing special education services for exceptional learners. He works diligently each day to create a welcoming environment for students and families. He is caring and compassionate and seeks to understand and reassure, thereby alleviating both parental and student fears. Mr. Weavil takes an active role in ensuring staff are available for IEP meetings, rooms are secured, technology is operable, and so forth. Moreover, he is an active participant during IEP meetings themselves, offering meaningful input when appropriate and ensuring building level matters/obstacles are promptly addressed so that IEPs can be implemented effectively. As a department, we feel fortunate to be able to partner with Mr. Weavil as he understands the spirit of the law and always places the needs of children first!

*“There is no greater disability in society, than the inability to see a person as more.”
--Robert M. Hensel*

School Shout-Outs

So many wonderful things are happening in our schools! We are excited to highlight not only regular educators who make a difference for students with disabilities but also schools in our district that foster inclusive environments. This month we want to recognize East Rowan High School and South Rowan High School for creating environments which honor and respect individual differences. We love seeing all students with and without disabilities celebrated for the positive contributions they bring to their school communities! A special thanks to the staff and students in these buildings!

The Rowan-Salisbury Exceptional Children's Department will work as a collaborative team to provide all students inspiring, engaging and innovative personalized educational experiences to promote positive student growth and post-school outcomes in a globally diverse society.

*Rowan Salisbury Schools
Department of Exceptional Children
500 North Main Street
Salisbury, NC 28144
www.rssed.org/ec*