

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN 2016 – 2017

Medicaid Schools Program (MSP)

November 2015, CMS sent letter to Ohio Department of Medicaid
Late January, ODE distributed that letter: requires ORP process for reimbursement
Order, Referral or Prescription by physician, P.A., or nurse practitioner
Many issues and concerns over the past months
Effective date was August 1st – still not clear what will be happening
Requests made for extension to allow compliance with ORP – no response from CMS
One option would be an extension until end of calendar year or end of school year
Another option would be for new related services to have ORP and phase in existing per IEP cycle
MSB left Ohio citing legislative and regulatory climate; referring clients to HBS
Wide variation of responses by districts; some getting out, others hiring nurse practitioners, etc.
Some Medicaid billing services are offering prescriptions written for a fee
For some districts, this presents ethical and logistical issues (e.g., prescription w/o seeing child)

State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)

Phase 2 of SSIP concluded this spring (end of second year)
Process will be rolled out to school districts over the next three years
This year, pilot introduction involving selected SSTs and school districts
Main focus now is LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling)
Based on brain research and the appropriate sequences in which to teach reading skills
Does not replace the curriculum used by a district
Rather, it provides guidance, professional development and other resources for the district to use
LETRS training will help ensure fidelity in teaching language and reading skills
Next year, more SSTs and schools will be added
Process will continue through 2020

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Every Student Succeeds Act contains mostly just the changes to prior law
Signed December 10, 2015; makes significant changes to NCLB / ESEA
Ohio's NCLB waiver continues through September 30th
Rather than prescribed federal mandates, states set their own goals and interim progress measures
Allows innovative assessments that are high quality, worth taking, and time limited
Regulations do not specify any percentages for indicators or a range for weighting
Additional considerations for English Learners as determined by states
Each subgroup must be considered separately (no combining)
All public charter / community schools must be included in accountability measures
Provides suggestions for “consistently underperforming” but allows flexibility in definitions
Looks at inequities such as ineffective, out-of-field and inexperienced teachers
Parent engagement through clear, robust and ongoing information about results (report cards)
HQT no longer required by NCLB but it is embedded in Ohio Revised Code (legislation)
Webinars and regional meetings on selected topics are being held.
Study guides and past webinars available on ODE website in ESSA pages

OEC Determinations

Second year in a row, Ohio received “needs assistance” rating
Primarily because of high rates of alternate assessment and graduating by modified requirements
Participation rates of SWDs have dropped in each of last three years
“Needs Assistance” triggers additional requirements including OSEP technical assistance
OEC must submit report in 2017 including actions taken resulting from TA
OEC will release district-level “Special Education Ratings” this month

Parent Notice / Universal forms / IEP corrections

Parent Notice of Procedural Safeguards (Whose IDEA Is This?) lengthy and outdated
OEC is working on a new version (different title) that should be available in the fall
Districts have started school year with “Whose IDEA...” and are waiting for new version
Ongoing concern about the inconsistencies of the various software programs for IEPs, ETRs, etc.
Creates major problems when students move from one district to another
Last spring, OEC awarded a contract to have recommendations for “universal forms”
Report expected this fall; unclear what next steps will be
IEP has not been updated for several years although changes have occurred
For example, age for transition changed from 16 to 14
Without updated forms, districts individually are dealing with making correct entries
OEC has made arrangements for corrections to be made to existing IEP form
Unclear when this updated form will be available
There are many other changes that ultimately need to be made, but not with these corrections

Ohio Coalition (OCECD)

Long-standing annual grant from OEC held up; reasons why and status are unclear
Delayed for entire 2015-16 school year; new RFP issued mid-September with due date of 10/14/16
Parent Mentors in districts throughout Ohio not supported; spotty communication from OEC
OCECD has taken various steps to reduce their costs because of grant hold-up
Examples include reducing rented space, supplies, telephone expenses, and reassigning staff
Because activities of Parent Mentor support not funded, some staff time reduced also
Launched a Mentoring 4 Reading Achievement (M4RA) program
IDEA grant for Parent, Community, and Educator Collaboration continues
Parent Training and Information Center grant also continues from USDoe

Gender issues / Title IX

Departments of Justice and Education released “guidance” in June re: transgender students
Based on and clarifies 1972’s Title IX; model policies are available
Involves using bathrooms corresponding to gender identity and preferred pronouns and names
Great variations in districts in Ohio; challenges will continue
This is an issue at national level with states taking different positions and some challenging mandates

Shortages of school psychs and other related services providers

Shortages last year based on STRS changes and also impact of corrective actions by some districts

For school psychs, shortages affected by limitation of 100 school psych interns in state budget

Both the dollar amount per internship and the number of internships unchanged for many years

Limitations on number of universities offering school psych grad programs (only nine, mostly full time)

There are also shortages in the areas of OT and PT

Degrees of shortages vary in different parts of the state (e.g., major in S.E. Ohio, less in N.E. Ohio)

Caseloads and Ratios uncertainty and long delays have had an impact on all related services

Ohio Association of Pupil Services Administrators (OAPSA)

Numerous and wide variety of membership benefits (see flyer)

Conference schedule for 2016 – 17:

September 30th, December 9th, February 9th & 10th, and May 5th

Meetings held at Quest Business Center, Polaris (Columbus)

OEC updates at every meeting

Ongoing communication with members; frequent email updates; “requests for input”

Ashland U graduate credit available

For further information, please contact:

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