



## Update on Related Service Personnel Shortage Workgroup

September 28, 2018

The Related Service Personnel Shortage Workgroup has been in existence since January 2018 and has met 5 times at ODE with 2 of those times being in the month of August and we met again yesterday, September 27, 2018.

For review, the workgroup is charged by our legislators with

- Identifying and evaluating causes and solutions for the shortage of related service personnel in the school setting, including evaluating long term sustainability of potential solutions
  - Establishing short-term, medium-term and long-term goals to address the shortage of related services personnel in the state and monitor progress on those goals.
  - Report as needed on the work and findings of the workgroup
- For this group the related service personnel we are concentrating on include Educational Audiologists, SLP's, OT's, PT's, School Nurses, and School Psychologists.

In August we examined the work that three subgroups had worked on over summer months to address the short term goals we had established. Those short term goals focused on

- 1) Updating the related services funding mythology for the state of Ohio and completing a cost gap analysis with the OESCA and ODE working together with the help of work group team member, Matthew Ketcham, Treasurer at Madison-Champaign ESC;
- 2) Increase administrator understanding of related services practitioner's scope and practice by creating a booklet for each area of the related services. That booklet is in final stages of production and should be

- ready for distribution this fall. We anticipate that this booklet will be helpful to staff and families as well. A video will also be created this fall to have a representative from each related service area explain more about what their particular service area does in an attempt to not only recruit more into the field but also to educate all educators and parents on the roles each related service area plays in the educational setting; and
- 3) Develop a statewide survey to identify incentives that school districts (both regionally and statewide) would value and use to address related services shortages. We have reviewed that survey several times now and yesterday got valuable advice from Mike Fuller, Director of Data Team at Muskingham Valley ESC and Dr. Marsha Lewis. We are into final stages preparing to send it out and expect to have some preliminary data for analysis by end of December. In about a week I will be sending you an official notice of when that survey will be released and I ask that you encourage your related service staff to participate.

We asked those sub groups to make some revisions after each meeting and we reviewed their work and gave feedback again yesterday. We also explored the resources available on National Coalition on Personnel Shortages in Special Education and Related Services Website in depth on both August 1 and 21 and used that website again yesterday. Also, each member was charged in August with silent brainstorming to develop a list of potential solutions to shortage to turn into Kim.

We paid much attention during August to teachers on special assignment to provide support to School Psychologists as a short term fix to the School Psychologist shortage. There are districts using such personnel right now but they are called a variety of titles. We found out that one title you may not use is School Psychologist Assistant because the Psychological Board in Ohio has certain requirements connected to that title which most school districts can't possibly meet. We had presentations by Mercer County ESC explaining how they are employing students currently attending University of Dayton to become school psychologists as individuals assisting school psychologists. We also heard

presentation from Madison – Champaign ESC regarding their boot camp program and on-site intensive follow up to train individuals on how to assist school psychologists. That presentation will be repeated at OAPSA at our December conference. Yesterday we reviewed a draft memo from ODE that we expect will be released sometime in near future that offers specific information to districts on actions that school districts may implement to allow additional flexibility where there are shortages of school psychologists.

We have been having conversations with Higher Education to understand that the pipeline to produce School Psychologists is much smaller and more restrictive than the other areas. I'm happy to report that one of our members representing higher ed reached out to NASP to see if they would reexamine their 12 to 1 ratio for faculty teaching in school psychology programs and we found out that they are already reviewing those standards. Those revised standards will be ready for public comment at some point this fall. I'll alert you when that happens so you will be able to comment. No other related service area (except possibly speech) had a ratio in their standards. It's up to individual program to determine.

At our next meeting in October we will finalize our midterm goals which we have already started to draft and then finalize long term goals.

I want to reassure you that I leave each one of these workgroup meetings feeling so positive about the work we are doing and the passion and commitment of every single person on that workgroup. Dr. Monachino and her team do a remarkable amount of work behind the scenes before we even arrive to each meeting and our State Superintendent has stopped in to hear we are doing on several occasions including today and there always a huge presence of Senior ODE staff there. ODE and our team members have shown a passion and a dedication to making a different in the shortage problem and I'm very proud to be a part of the work that this group is doing.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Stelzer

OAPSA Executive Director

