



Update on Related Service Shortage Workgroup

Report for OAPSA's February 8, 2019 Business Meeting

The Related Service Shortage Workgroup has been in existence since January 2018 and has met 7 times at ODE with the most recent meeting occurring on January 22, 2019. Our work is now focused on putting some meat on long term fixes for Ohio's future.

For review, this workgroup was 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

Our work aligns with Ohio's Strategic Plan for Education. Wendy Stoica has been assigned the task of writing our final report of our findings with recommendations to our legislators. The changes you will be seeing rolling out in Ohio regarding related service staff is a direct result of the work that this workgroup has done.

During our most recent meeting in January, we examined the updates that our three subgroups had worked on since spring of 2018 to address the short-term goals we had established.

- 1) **Scope and Practice Pages and Video for each Related Service Area** - Beth Arledge used the individual pages our group created for each related service area for a booklet and has now created a devoted web page at ODE's website to show our one-page flyers on each related service area. Those same documents will be put on university webpages. We saw the draft video that was created with the help of OCALI to have each related service area representative talk about their job and in some cases, we had video of that representative working with a child as his/her voice continued in the background. These tools will help increase administrator, staff, parents and students' understanding of related services practitioner's scope

and practice. It will also be a useful tool to recruit staff into the fields not only in post-secondary settings but also by districts using it to “grow their own” related service staff by using it for career fairs at the high school level. To summarize, that video along with individual related services pages will be used 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.

- 2) **Statewide Survey** - We have developed and implemented a statewide survey with the help of Mike Fuller, Director of Data Team at Muskingham Valley ESC and Dr. Marsha Lewis to identify incentives that school districts would value and could use to address related services shortages. The original survey was sent out randomly so that we could receive feedback from both school providers as well as medical providers in each area so that we had some idea of why some providers aren't choosing to work in schools. A second round of that same survey was sent out the week of January 28 to school based related service providers upon the recommendation of Mike and Marsha as well as our entire workgroup. We will keep the responses from the random sample and those from the purposive sample separate for analysis purposes so that this 2nd survey will give us more data but will not contaminate the results from the random sample. We will also use that data to inform our legislators of the need behind our recommendations.

- 3) **FISCAL Recommendations:** We again reviewed the updated work of our Fiscal Subcommittee for the Preliminary State Budget and Policy Considerations. This is the work that addresses our long term recommendations and funding needed for implementation. This latest version had incorporated the changes our group had suggested last fall. We have met the requirements the legislators have given us – now we need to assertively seek the funding to fully implement our medium- and long-term goals. If you want more details on those specific recommendations please see me today and I'll be happy to discuss that with you.

Licensure - In addition, we examined ODE's licensure requirements for all related service staff and then discussed in detail various barriers that we run across in trying to get ODE licenses for related service staff. Possible solutions to those barriers were discussed. Be aware that that included the new law HB 491 that was passed and allows substitute licenses for substitute OT's, OTA's, PT's, PTA's, SLP's, Social Workers and Registered Nurses who hold a license from the respective licensing boards. They must still have background checks but there's no duration period like we have for teachers. Those new substitute licenses become effective on March 20; we also explored possible emergency licenses (but that would take a while); Credential Review Board is another alternative available now for initial license (Note: a current barrier is it's not

being used for renewals that lapsed at present time). Another barrier we face is that NASP (Nationally Association of School Psychologists has a credential called NCSP (Nationally Certified School Psychologist) which is the only professional credential acknowledging school psychologist who meet rigorous nationally recognized standards. Currently 33 states acknowledge, recognizes or accepts those credentials but Ohio is not one of those states.

School Psychologist Shortage – While our fiscal plan offers long term solutions and two new university programs will be opening in Ohio within a few years to train more school psychologists, we need to be realistic and understand that even if those programs were to open next September, given that they are at least 3-year programs we need other short-term fixes to the school psychologist shortage. Therefore, our workgroup has approved a memorandum which will be coming out from ODE that will offer alternatives to address the shortage of school psychologists. One of those alternatives is to be able to train a Teacher on Special Assignment to assist with delegated school psychologist services. There's a great deal of information in that memo that you need to pay attention to if you are facing a shortage of school psychologists.

I want to reassure you that I leave each one of these workgroup meetings feeling so positive and encouraged about the work we are doing and the passion and commitment of every single person on that workgroup. Dr. Monachino and her team continue to 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 what we are doing on several occasions and there is always a huge presence of Senior ODE staff there. ODE and our team members have shown a passion and a dedication to making a difference in the shortage problem and I'm very proud to be a part of the work that this group is doing.

We have a strong plan with real solutions to this shortage problem. We are well on our way to finalizing the mission our legislators gave us. Now we prepare to roll out our work and seek the funding we need to put our plan into full action. As we do that, please watch for opportunities in case we need you to express your support or concerns about how our recommendations are being received by our legislators.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Stelzer

OAPSA Executive Director