The Prior Written Notice

January 2023

Present Levels & Annual Goals

Highlights from Recent ODE Monitoring

As you may recall from the November newsletter, the Oregon Department of Education has instituted a new method of reviewing district special education files to monitor compliance with the Oregon Administrative Rules. In this new Cyclical Monitoring process, 4J was required to review 80 files and, for each file, respond to 25 questions relating to the student's special education program.

Many areas were **consistently strong**, including elements of Least Restrictive Environment, many elements of the IEP, and clear opportunities for parent participation in IEP meetings. Conversely, **consistent challenges** were evident in the areas of Present Levels and Annual Goals:

Present Levels: Most IEP writers created descriptive student strengths and parental concerns. Less common were *thorough* Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance:

- **Specific skill levels.** PLAAFPs should include information about specific skills that the student is and is not performing successfully. Whether academic, behavioral, or functional, the information in the PLAAFP is meant to inform the creation of the Annual Goals.
    - Example: "Given calculation problems of multiplication with decimals and regrouping, and division with two digit divisors and decimals, Kendra was able to answer 37% of the items correctly. Given problems of division with two digit divisors and decimals, Kendra was able to answer 31% of the items correctly""
    - This example allows the IEP team to craft a specific, appropriate goal in math.

- **Results of recent evaluation data**. The results of the student's initial evaluation, recent reevaluation, or progress measures must be specifically described in the PLAAFP. This, too, is meant to provide the team with information to inform the creation of Annual Goals.
  - Many PLAAFPs included no evaluation data.
  - Some PLAAFPs simply stated "See evaluation report," or, more problematically, "No evaluation data is available."
  - The team must find evaluation or assessment data to include in the PLAAFP.

Annual Goals: IEP goals are expected to be SMART -- specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound.

- **Specific**. Several IEPs included goals that were not specific to the student's learning needs.
  - Example: "Jacob will pass his math class with a grade of C or higher."
  - Which math skills does Jacob need specially designed instruction in to pass this class? When to multiply versus divide? Place-value? Basic graph concepts? Include these specifics in the goal.

- **Measureable**. Many IEPs included measurable goals, but did not indicate *how* the goals would be measured.
  - Example: "Given the opportunity to learn and practice in a small group setting, Martin will be able to identify a range of emotions in himself and others, and share this information with the teacher with 80% success or higher."
  - *How* will this be measured? Observations, point cards? Include this in the goal itself.

- **Attainable**. A few IEPs contained goals that were not reasonably calculated to allow the student to make meaningful progress.
  - Example: The student's goal is identical to the previous IEP's goal…sometimes for multiple years in a row.
  - This suggests that the IEP team did not create a reasonable, attainable goal. The goal should be rewritten to allow for successful progress, given the student's specific needs and circumstances

- **Relevant.** Annual Goals should follow directly from information in the PLAAFP.
  - Many IEPs included goals for areas that were not mentioned in the PLAAFP at all.
  - This is problematic because the IEP team needs to understand *why* the student needs each goal, and the need for each goal should be evident in the present levels.

Need ideas for creating goals? Check out GoalBook resources linked [HERE](#).

Upcoming Events

Important dates on the SSD Calendar

January 4-13: Collect regression and recoupment data for ESY purposes

January 16: No School -- MLK Jr. Holiday

February 3: No school for students:

Secondary: Professional Development and Planning Day

Elementary: Grading Day. This means it's time to write Progress Reports!   ***Every special educator should be collecting *progress data* every few weeks for each student's goals. This data informs what you write in your progress reports at report card time.***

Frequently Asked Questions
Some of your colleagues have been asking…

➢ **What's the best way to get my questions answered about special education procedures or paperwork?**

For questions about special education procedures, especially questions regarding the processes and paperwork related to Evaluation/Eligibility, IEPs, Placement, Manifestation Determination, etc.:

- First, check the 4J Special Education Procedural Manual, linked [HERE](#).
- Second, check with other SpEd professionals in your building, including teachers, school psychologists, or consultants, to see if they can answer the question for you.
- Then, if you still cannot find the answer you need, feel free to contact SSD administrator Karen Apgar (apgar_k@4j.lane.edu). Her admin role focuses primarily on legal issues including special education procedures, regulatory compliance, and due process and state complaints.

If your question is about *Synergy* processes and paperwork, submit your questions to SynergySE@4j.lane.edu. Please do not email Justin Potts or Deanna Finn directly, if at all possible.

➢ **What's the best way to get my questions answered about meeting the needs of the students on my caseload?**

For questions about student schedules, teaching schedules, building space/material, and problem-solving challenging situations:
- First, contact your building administrator(s).
- Then, if working with your principal or assistant principal does not completely resolve your concern, contact the SpEd administrator assigned to your building/program.

For questions about specially designed instruction, related services, inclusion, and problem-solving *extremely* tricky situations:
- Contact the SpEd administrator assigned to your building/program.

➢ **Which SSD Administrator should I contact?**

Since Tom Horn has been (temporarily?) reassigned to the Instruction Department, here is the latest update to the 2022-23 SSD Organizational Chart.

SSD Administrators 2022-23

Kat Lange, Director x7828
IDEA and ADA Oversight
Health Services (RN/LPN/Health Assistants)
*Cal Young MS

Seth Pfaefflin x7889
Elementary (Churchill and South Regions)
Prof Development / New Teachers
Inclusion oversight
Motor Team
Early Childhood
SSD TOSA team
*Roosevelt & Spencer Butte MS

Joel Lavin x7868
High Schools
Transition Programs/ YTP
Alt Ed Programs, incl. EOA
Extended School Year
*Madison & Kelly MS

Karen Apgar x7820
Legal Cases & Procedural Compliance
Long-term Treatment/Residential
Private Schools
Prevention Services Liaison
School Psychs/ SpEd Consultants
*ATA & Kennedy MS

Angela Crum x7815
Elementary (North and Sheldon Regions)
Prof Development / New Teachers
Speech Language Pathologists
Early Childhood
SSD TOSA team
*Monroe MS

Leila Schuck x8282
Fox Hollow Campus
Home Instruction
SAFE/Jasper/Child Center
Teen Parenting Program
Lane School

KC Clark x7800
*Charter Schools

= formerly Tom Horn's

Breaking News

Mid-Year Retirements

Congratulations to SSD administrator KC Clark and physical therapist Kelly Schneiderhan for "graduating" from 4J. Both of these amazing educators officially retired on December 31st!

While we hope that they both enjoy the wonders of retirement life, we won't be surprised if we still see them at work from time to time…   Working during retirement seems to be a trend around here!

SSD Spotlight

School Psychologists

You may wonder who those people are, toting around black bags, sneaking in and out of the back of your classrooms, inviting you to meetings, and asking you to answer long questionnaires. Well, that's likely your friendly neighborhood school psychologist. You may think of us as paperwork pushers who log a lot of hours behind a keyboard, but we are far more than that. There is a long list of skills we are trained to do (https://www.nasponline.org/about-school-psychology/who-are-school-psychologists),

but instead of recreating that list, we created a list of things that we *love* to do, things others tell us they find helpful, and things we wish we could do more:

Other educators find it helpful that we:
- Answer a lot of questions (about student strengths and needs, special education rules, behavioral challenges, and progress expectations for typically-developing students and those with a variety of learning needs).

- Provide good suggestions (about measuring student progress, choosing appropriate curriculum, approaching tricky parent interactions, and wording things descriptively, positively, and legally).
- Advocate constantly (for students with diverse backgrounds and abilities to access their education, for teachers to have tools they need to support learners, and for school communities to embrace evidence-based and socially-just practices).

We really enjoy:
- Building deep relationships with students through conversations, testing sessions, problem-solving, or mental health interventions.
- Consulting with staff, teachers, parents and families to help them better understand a child's strengths and challenges.
- Helping adults understand new things about students and how they learn.
- Collaborating with our learning communities to build skills and resolve challenges.

We wish we had more time to:
- Analyze the effectiveness of building and district systems and collaborate to improve them.
- Collaborate with staff and teachers to support the most effective interventions.
- Provide learning and mental health interventions directly to students to address behavioral, social/emotional, and executive functioning skills.
- Be a more consistent presence in our buildings.

We hope everyone in a school gets to know their school psychologist -- we are here to help make sure students thrive at school, at home, and in life!

Have an idea or a topic for a future newsletter? Contact Karen Apgar at apgar_k@4j.lane.edu