

FOCUS on Special Education

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Education a Hot Topic in KS Legislature

As we start the wind-down period of the school year, it's easy to get overwhelmed by all of the things we need to do to make sure our kids are ready for the fall. Sometimes it seems thankless, but rest assured, it is extremely critical work that doesn't go unnoticed.

This season in particular, education issues are making the news. The Kansas legislature has been working overtime to address all of the bills that contain changes to the educational landscape, including voting on bills to create educational savings accounts and vouchers



Members of our Life Skills Programs across all three districts participated and medaled in Job Olympics, held on March 30 in Spring Hill.

for private education, adding Dyslexia as a disability label, trying to reduce the BASE aid received for all students, and more. One of the hottest debates over the next few weeks will be how to increase special

education funding proposed by the governor to come closer to meeting the state's statutory obligation of funding excess costs at 92%, which hasn't happened since 2009. All of these (cont. pg.3)

DON'T FORGET PROGRESS REPORTS DEADLINES

Final progress reports are due to be sent out at the same time final grades are sent, so make certain your data is complete and ready to aggregate by the final

workday in May. While our IEP review showed great work in a lot of areas, we still need to make certain that we are in compliance with our progress reports, as several were not sent

out in a timely fashion when we reviewed the files. Please remember that this is a legal requirement, and that your attention to this reporting must be a focus.

Often in Special Education, questions arise which you may need the answer to and others may benefit from that answer as well. Each month we will include a few of these questions, so please don't hesitate to ask.

FREQUENTLY (RECENTLY) ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: We have a student who does not require specialized transportation who has now qualified for ESY. Do we need to include transportation as a related service on their ESY paperwork?

A: Yes, all students who qualify for ESY should automatically have transportation available

as there are no regular bus routes available during the summer months for them to access. That doesn't mean that they will necessarily need it or want it, so you will have to have the discussion with the parents about how each of your ESY students will be getting to their summer services, but because ESY is a part of their FAPE, we must offer it in case the student does not have any other options to get there. Do not change the eligibility on the transportation box on the IEP, just on the ESY paperwork.

Q: We have a student who is doing really well and doesn't regress academically, but parents are advocating for ESY due to their anxiety and need for the school routine. They shouldn't qualify, right?

A: Actually, there are 11 different eligibility considerations that are listed for ESY, any one of which may qualify a student for services. The majority of them are tied to regression and recoupment, but not all. For example, our students in life skills programming may not have regression that can be easily measured because their rate of progress is often much slower than typical, but

the amount of time that they are off in the summer is detrimental to the point that they will need weeks of recovery time in the fall just to reacquaint them with their routine. That's why one of the eligibility considerations is the need for continuous programming. For a student with significant anxiety, the need to be a familiar, predictable environment, even though it will not be identical to the one they experience during the school year, is essential to keeping them on track when they return in the fall. Now, since academic regression is not the key focus, what do you need to do to program for these

students for their summer program, especially if you are not the one teaching it? It will vary for each of the students, but our recommendation would be to assemble familiar materials to work on during the ESY sessions that will keep them in the routine of task completion. While ESY is not designed to introduce new skills or to progress in the curriculum, the goal of maintaining the same work habits and productivity of the school year should always be the focus of a successful ESY experience. If you have specific questions, please contact our office and we'll help.

BILLS FOCUS ON EDUCATION TOPICS (CONT. FROM PG. 1)

topics have impact on how we do our work, but perhaps more importantly it keeps the emphasis on how critical public education is for our students and how valuable the educators who provide it truly are. I know that it can be discouraging when all of the work you do seems

to go unnoticed, but the more these topics stay in the headlines, the more attention will be given to how well we do it. Certainly, there will always be critics, but I just want to take a minute to encourage each of you in the work that you do. It is vital to the outcomes of the

students we serve and will continue to be the most important pursuit you can participate in professionally. Don't ever forget the reason that you became an educator in the first place, and while it may take some headlines to put the focus back on education, you all experience the importance of the art every single day.

Thank you to all of our service providers for helping make this year a great success as we wrap up the school year. Your efforts are greatly appreciated and do not go unnoticed!!!

Extended School Year Notifications Sent Out April 20

Notifications and work agreements for ESY programming will be sent out April 20 this year, as we have been gathering all of the appropriate paperwork for participating students. ESY sessions will be held the weeks of June 5 and 12, and July 10 1nd 17, M-Th

from 8:00 to 12:00 for most locations, with students attending from 8:30-11:30. For student in Eudora, the programs will run slightly earlier to coincide with their summer academy. Locations vary by district but will be specified on those work

agreements. If you have qualified students for ESY, don't forget to start assembling materials for your students and let us know if you need someone to deliver them to their locations. If you forgot to apply, we will try to find you a position if we can.

In-Service Dates Proposed for 2023-24 School Year

While we are still in the throes of April, it's never too early to start making plans for next year. We have scheduled our Certified beginning of the year In-service for

Tuesday, August 8, from 8-3, location TBD. Our Paraprofessional In-Service will be on Wednesday, August 9 from 8-3 at the PAC in Baldwin. For our new

certified employees, we will have a two-day training on August 3-4, location TBD. The final calendar will be approved at our May 9 board meeting. If there are any questions, please call.

Deadlines for Lump Sum, Salary Movement Due Now



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Teachers wanting to be paid for their 3 summer months in one lump sum must submit the appropriate paperwork for that to our office no later than April 21. We have extended the April 15 deadline, FYI.

Also, if you are planning on moving over on the salary schedule next year due to classes or PD points that you have accrued,

PARAPROFESSIONAL NEWS AND NOTES

We are now past due for wrapping up the required in-service hours that are a part of paraprofessional job duties. If you have not turned them in, please do so. I have been coming around to let you know how many hours you still need, but it is a busy time of the year. Also, please remember that your evaluations are due at the end of this month, so if your supervisor has not

you must fill out the form on our website no later than April 21, even if your classes are not yet complete. You can turn in the proof of that movement to us by September 8, but only if you have filled out the form this April. Employees wishing to receive a payout for their discretionary leave, subject to meeting the criteria for such payout,

must submit that request no later than April 1. And last, but certainly not least, your evaluations of your paraprofessionals are overdue. This means you need to have them completed and met with them for their input and signature before you turn them in.

We hope you all have a tremendous last month of school! Let us know how we can help!

reached out to you yet you may want to remind them.

Also, our incentive program for attendance saw about half of our employees achieve perfect attendance in March, and we're hoping that we get even better results in April. We will decide in May whether or not the program will continue in the fall, but remember that the whole reason for the incentive is to stress

how important it is for your students to be able to count on you.

Lastly, please remember to clock in and out consistently so that we are paying you accurately. We value each of you and appreciate all that you do for our students. Stay tuned for changes coming for next year that will demonstrate how important you all are to our students!