

FOCUS on Special Education

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Welcome Back ECKCE, New and Seasoned!

What happened to summer?!?

Every year I am amazed at how quickly our time of renewal and spending time with family goes, but here we are again. And we are more than ready.

It's a time of growth and a time for refocusing our purpose in serving the students of our communities. We have the pandemic behind us for the most part and can recenter our focus on being centerpieces in the greatest profession in our society. But we can't just go back to doing the status quo and expecting it to be as fulfilling as it once was. Things have changed over the past five years and we need to adapt with them. We



have a much clearer understanding that the social emotional needs of children are equally important to them making sufficient progress in the academic world as their instruction in basic academics. And that means we have to shift our paradigm to make certain we are considering all of the

needs of our students every single day.

To that end, our focus in staff development this year, as aligned with our strategic plan, will be to equip all of our staff to address the emotional needs of our kids at the same level as we track their academic progress. **(continued on page 3)**



Dr. Jim Persinger, Asst. Dir.

MEET YOUR NEW INTERLOCAL WIDE SUPPORT STAFF

With every new school year, we have new additions to our ECKCE family. This year we are fortunate to welcome a new assistant director to replace Lorelea Hubert,

who left to pursue her goal in early childhood leadership. Dr. Jim Persinger, who has spent the last 23 years at Emporia State University as head of the School Psychology program, Chair of

Psychology, Chair of Counselor Education and Interim Dean. His passion for SEL, trauma-informed education and crisis response protocols make him an invaluable addition **(continued on page 3)**

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've always been told that we need to link our goals to standards, but sometimes the link isn't that obvious. How important is it?

A: Both federal and state regulations allude to a standards-based alignment of goals to be best practice, primarily because standards are the basis of what our systems is based upon, in terms of desired outcomes for all students. So writing goals that can be aligned is always preferred. But there are difficulties when attempting to align things like motor needs and communication needs to grade level standards.

Add to that the problem with making them align with the matching grade level and it becomes even more challenging. Our guidance is to do the best job you can with alignment at the student's grade level, knowing that you may have to settle for an alternative sometimes.

Q: Can a student on an IEP get both tiered interventions and specialized instruction? We have been told it isn't allowed.

A: The short answer is a very strong yes, but as with most things in special education, it's never that simple. In some buildings where MTSS is being addressed consistently, intervention time may be scheduled daily during a specified period, and if our students are needing that intervention time, it limits when we can pull them for specialized instruction. Additionally, because the student needs to be exposed to the core instruction first, there is even less of an opportunity to find time for them to be pulled out of class to receive it. And unless the student is so far behind the core instruction that they may need an alternative curriculum, they most certainly need to have that exposure to the core instruction. This is the true conundrum of MTSS in most cases. And it has always been the purpose of special education to supplement the general education curricula, not to supplant it. So what is the answer?

The most frustrating answer is the one we give most often in special education. It depends. Each student's involvement in general education, special education, and tiered intervention, in THAT order, must be considered. Because remember that special education only exists to provide students with disabilities a fair access to general education curricula, but special education services as determined by the IEP team MUST be given by law. The team must consider when those services can most effectively be delivered, while simultaneously not ignoring the other resources that each of them might need. Make sure to have that thoughtful conversation both at the IEP meeting and with your general education teams too.

WELCOME BACK ECKCE! (CONT. FROM PG. 1)

Our focus has always been on outcomes for students, and we know that those are ultimately vital for students’ post-school success. But we also know that students can only achieve those academic milestones when they feel safe, healthy, and establish a healthy sense of

belonging in the school community. The bonds that you make with your students are the building blocks for that belonging and ultimately for their success. So our focus on professional development this year will center less on the scores our students

receive on state assessments and more on how we can help them recognize their own worth in the school community.

As you welcome your students back this fall, please remember why you are a part of their lives and make sure that each of them knows that they are important to you.

New ECKCE Additions Bring Wealth of Experience (cont)

to not only our team, but also to the achievement of our strategic plan.

Also joining us this year as our new WEBS administrator is Todd Schroeder, who comes to us with years of experience as both SED teacher and program developer for the past

two decades. Todd will also use his experience to serve as our new CPI instructor beginning in September.

Also new to us is our Transition coordinator, Josh Reynolds. Josh has most recently served as a member of the Tiny-K team in 497

as an SLP, but brings new vision to his role in serving older students.

Also new to her role is our Integration Specialist in Bonnie Allen. She will be the primary support for our new group of teachers, having served in this capacity unofficially in her previous district. Welcome!

New Webkidss Walk-through Tool a Great Resource

You asked and we listened. We know that Webkidss can sometimes be very detail heavy and user unfriendly and that everyone can use a

little support getting through the IEP draft now and then. To that end we have created an IEP walkthrough tool that will help you not to overlook any critical

information as you are writing your IEPs. This tool will be available later this week on our website.

Please let us know if it is helpful or how we can improve it to make it better.r

Thank you to all of our teachers and service providers for getting us off to a great start this year at our back-to-school in-service. It promises to be a great school year. Your efforts in getting your classrooms ready to go are greatly appreciated!!!



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Don't Forget to Access our New Guardian EAP

Often times we have questions about things that may or may not be job related, but are heavy on our minds. Whether it is a question about legal advice, financial guidance, family or life planning, or things that might be weighing you down, our Employee Assistance Program is here to help. The Guardian EAP is available to all ECKCE

employees. All you need to do is go to worklife.uprisehealth.com and login as an ECKCE employee using the access code worklife.

Once you have logged in, you have access to a myriad of services, including mental health counseling. You can have up to three visits per family member per issue, all free of charge

to you. Because you are our employees and your well being is important to us. We need you to be all you can be for the students we serve and for the teams you support.

The Guardian EAP is only one of the ways we hope you know we are here for you. We hope you all have a tremendous first month of school! Let us know how we can help!

PARAPROFESSIONAL NEWS AND NOTES

Welcome back to school! We hope that the raises we were able to get help you to understand how much we appreciate and value the work that each of you do for our kids. It's going to be a great year!

We've made many changes to the clock-in/clock-out system as well as the leave request system and all things personnel. Kim and Shelly are here to help you navigate the

new system, Weblink. This is also where you will sign your work agreements and at some point you will be turning in your hours for inservice in the system, but for now you will watch the required videos in Weblink and submitting the inservice logs to Shelly just like you did last year. Lastly, please make sure you do the workstyle inventories with your supervising

teacher before the school rush makes it too difficult to get these done. Your teachers received these when this was sent out.

We really appreciate all the work you do for each of our kids and can't wait to see their smiling faces as they return to school. Please know that we couldn't do it without each and every one of you. Have a great back to school!!