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The Director

A publication of the Missouri Council of Administrators of Special Education

Volume 37 Number 2

the President's Message

Happy New Year! I'm hoping this newsletter finds each of you rested and energized as we enter the second semester of our school year. Those of you who know me well know that I'm still wishing for snow this winter, but not enough to interrupt the critical work that we do each day on behalf of our students.

I want to take this opportunity to introduce you to members of the MO-CASE Board serving our organization for 2018-2020. These individuals serve to fulfill the primary purpose of our organization:

- To promote professional leadership among special educators.
- To promote the study of issues common to its members.
- To communicate information that will assist in the development of improved services for exceptional children in the State of Missouri.
- To participate actively in the improvement of special education programs in the State of Missouri.

Please visit mo-case.org/about-us to see all board members and take a moment to thank them for the commitment of time and expertise they lend to MO-CASE.

It's important to stay connected to our national affiliation, so please sign up for the CASE Weekly Update by visiting: <http://multibriefs.com/optin.php?CASE>

Dr. Vicki McNamara
 MO-CASE President

Join us March 5-7, 2019 MO-CASE Law Conference-Distinguished Speaker's Series and the 3rd Annual Collaborative Conference

MO-CASE has partnered with Thomeczek & Brink Law Firm to host the MO-CASE Law Conference on Tuesday, March 5, 2019. The featured speaker, Julie Weatherly, Esq., specializes in legal issues relating to special education and Section 504. The Collaborative Conference follows on March 6-7, 2019.



The 3rd Annual Collaborative Conference is planned in collaboration with:



The Missouri Speech-Language and Hearing Association (MSHA) also contributes to the conference.

This year's keynote speaker, Amanda VanDerHeyden, Ph.D. is a private consultant and researcher who has worked as a national trainer and published more than 60 scholarly articles and chapters related to MTSS and RTI.

Don't miss the opportunity to learn with colleagues about evidence-based and high leverage practices within a multi-tier system of supports which increase the probability of positive educational outcomes for all students, particularly those with special needs. Teachers, special education teachers, related service providers, specialists, coordinators, principals, and district-level administrators who are involved in instruction and intervention from pre-K through grade 12 are all invited to attend.

The MO-CASE Law Conference and the Collaborative Conference will be held at the Holiday Inn Executive Center located in Columbia, MO.



Please visit <http://mo-case.org/Conferences-Events> to register.

INNOVATION AND LEARNING

The following groups work in conjunction with the MO-CASE Board of Directors in supporting targeted initiatives:

The **MO-CASE ADVISORY COUNCIL** was formed several years ago in conjunction with the initiation of our Reinvent Initiative. This group provides feedback regarding actions being considered by the MO-CASE Board and offers suggestions and ideas concerning a wide range of issues related to the Reinvent Initiative. This group has been instrumental in our focus on MTSS and the development of implementation resources, as well as efforts to focus preparation programs for the mild-moderate special education teacher certificate on practical application of evidence-based practices for basic academic and social behavior skill development. The Council is composed of principals, superintendents, university faculty, parents of students with disabilities, advocates, representatives from other organizations and agencies, special education and related service providers, school psychologists, and designated MO-CASE staff and board members.

New Missouri requirements for early childhood, elementary and mild-moderate teacher preparation programs to include course work specifically targeting the essential components of reading instruction were discussed at a meeting of the Advisory Council earlier this fall. It is anticipated that these requirements will become operational within the next year and half to two years. In the interim, MO-CASE will make recommendations to colleges and universities with teacher preparation programs in Missouri encouraging practical application in the instruction of these skills.

MTSS at the secondary level, particularly high school, has become an area of interest for the Advisory Council. Presently, much of the research and guidance regarding implementation of MTSS has been directed toward earlier grade levels. A sub group of secondary principals who have led MTSS efforts at their schools is taking the initiative to work on this project. Dr. Erica Lembke, at the University of Missouri, has offered to assist by guiding her graduate students in a review of available research and implementation literature on this topic. The intent is to develop a viable MTSS model targeted to secondary schools, with technical assistance resources.

Discussion was also held regarding an expanded role for Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) which includes early intervention specifically directed toward early literacy. Position documents from the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association (ASHA) which advocates SLP involvement with written, as well as oral language skills, were reviewed. Note: This topic will be specifically addressed in a keynote presentation and breakout session at our Collaborative Conference on March 6-7, 2019.

ADVOCACY



The **MO-CASE ADVOCACY NETWORK** serves to quickly respond to requests for information, disseminate timely information, and prompt advocacy action regarding legislative and policy issues impacting public education and the provision of special education for students with disabilities. It is composed of a designated representative from each LASE group in the state. Most communication with the network is electronic and an annual meeting is held to discuss what has transpired in Missouri over the past year, what is anticipated for the upcoming legislative session, and strategies for effective advocacy. Scott Kimble, Director of Advocacy for the Missouri Council of School Administrators, presented and facilitated the discussion for our recent meeting. Full funding of the Foundation Formula was approved by the Legislature in 2018, along with small increases for transportation reimbursement and for the Public Placement Fund. It is important to note that even with these increases, transportation and the Public Placement Fund are both substantially underfunded. DESE has submitted budget requests which are more in line with the actual need for these and other programs. This will be a focus for advocacy in the 2019 legislative session. Legislation which created increased options for students to select virtual instruction, requirements for considering Braille instruction for students with visual impairments, issues surrounding the PSRS position on Speech Language Pathologists who serve school districts after retirement, election results, and the State School Board were also discussed.

We also talked about the suggestion from Johnny Collett, Assistant Secretary of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services at the Federal level, of the need to rethink special education, and the connection to our on-going MO-CASE Reinvent Initiative. MO-CASE will continue to follow and engage in this discussion through our involvement with CASE. The meeting concluded with review of proposed dates to the MO-CASE Legislative and Policy Platform, which addresses positions on legislation targeting specific disability groups, direct transfers/open enrollment, vouchers, teacher evaluation, charter school accountability and IDEA compliance, disproportionality, mandatory retention, early childhood education, mental health services and supports, and reading instruction.

Advocacy for policies, laws and funding which improve access and outcomes for all students, especially those with disabilities and other special needs, is a primary function of educational leadership. Make a commitment to keep informed and to take action as requested. In particular, it is important that districts respond promptly and realistically to inquiries about the potential cost of proposed legislation regarding students, programs and schools. Most of these impact students with disabilities and special education is some way. Responses such as “minimal impact” or “it could be absorbed into what we already do” are rarely accurate and are not helpful. No response is also not helpful. Please contact your LASE President or Steven Beldin (steven.beldin@mo-case.org) if you are unsure who the Advocacy Network Representative is for your group.

The Council for Exceptional Children publishes a weekly update, *Policy Insider*, on federal issues. Please visit https://visitor.constantcontact.com/manage/optin?v=001peuSb9w_PdA0K6u_j6C7W3TW14J6aPkD to sign up for this weekly update and receive important information about issues affecting special education!

LASE SPOTLIGHT



Cheri Fortney & Christina Harbour

We all know that the first few years as a new director can be a bit overwhelming. It helps to have a great mentor who understands all the demands our jobs entail and the support from a group of peers through a regional LASE group. It was a great pleasure to sit down recently and talk with mentor, Cheri Fortney, from the Franklin County Special Education Cooperative LASE Group, and recent mentee, Christina Harbour, from the Sullivan School District, about their experiences.

CHERI, YOU PARTICIPATED IN THE MENTORING PROCESS THROUGH THE MO-CASE ADMINISTRATOR MENTORING PROGRAM (AMP) FOR NEW DIRECTORS. WHAT WAS THE VALUE OF THIS SERVICE OVER JUST FINDING SOMEONE IN YOUR DISTRICT TO PROVIDE THE TWO YEARS OF REQUIRED MENTORING?

Participation in a mentoring program is important because new directors don't know what they don't know. I worry about the new Special Education Directors with little experience in Special Education. There are so many different scenarios and unique situations that come about and it is not possible to cover all of that in a workshop. All directors benefit from collaboration with others in the field. We learn from each other. Luckily, Christina was not new to Special Education. She has been a special education teacher and process coordinator. Mentoring Christina was also beneficial for me. Helping her navigate compliance and legal issues broadened my knowledge.

CHRISTINA, IN WHAT WAYS DID YOUR REGIONAL LASE GROUP FURTHER SUPPORT YOU IN YOUR FIRST FEW YEARS AS A NEW SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATOR?

First and foremost, I would say support with compliance and legal questions, especially for the first few years, because staying in compliance (and out of due process) was something I worried about all of the time. I looked forward to our monthly meetings because it was a room full of other directors that I could lean on and get advice from. I still look forward to our monthly meetings. Cheri does a great job of scheduling guest speakers that guide us on topics that are important to best practices in special education. I learn something every time I go!

CHERI, AS A LEADER IN YOUR REGIONAL LASE GROUP, WHAT DID YOUR GROUP PUT IN PLACE TO MAKE SURE YOU WERE SUPPORTING NEW DIRECTORS IN YOUR AREA?

I developed a survey in Google Forms and sent it to the members of the LASE group. I asked for the name of the Director of Special Education, the years of experience, and whether they have a mentor, need a mentor, or are they currently a mentor. I also asked whether they had attended New Director Training with DESE/MO-CASE. After collecting this information, I contacted the directors needing mentors and training and provided the information regarding AMP and training at RPDC. We are fortunate to have a diverse LASE group. We have a wide range of experience and everyone is open to giving and receiving advice.

If you are interested in information on how to become a mentor or mentee, check out the New Directors tab on the MO-CASE website. For information on a regional LASE group in your area, please check out the LASE tab from the MO-CASE website or feel free to contact Liz Smith at esmith@wolves.k12.mo.us.



HOME SWEET HOME

Written by Shellie Guin

Whether due to short-term illness/injury or long-term educational need, students may require homebound instruction of services. Homebound may be at play in a variety of contexts, each of which carry their own set of issues. This article is designed to highlight some common issues and practical tips in three areas: medical homebound, 504 homebound placements, and IEP homebound placements.

Medical Homebound

Katie is a sophomore and her teachers have noticed that she has become increasingly withdrawn at school. Her absences have significantly increased and she frequently requests to go to the health room due to an upset stomach. Katie's mother brings in a form signed by her doctor requesting that she be excused from school for six (6) weeks to treat her for stress and gastrointestinal issues.

Medical homebound services are educational services that are available to all students as a regular education accommodation. Medical homebound is typically granted for six (6) to eight (8) weeks and applies to any student who is unable to attend school on a temporary basis due to illness or injury. Medical homebound usually provides for five (5) hours per week of homebound instruction, which allows the district to continue to count the student for attendance purposes.

COMMON ISSUES/PRACTICAL TIPS:

-Mental health issues have increasingly become the basis for medical homebound.

-Remember that the school district has the responsibility to refer the student for eligibility under Section 504 as soon as it suspects the student has a qualifying disability.

-Be cautious of repeated requests to extend medical homebound and of a series of medical homebound requests, even if not consecutive in nature, as this may signal the need to refer the student for eligibility under Section 504.

-Be cautious about allowing medical homebound to turn into a "black hole" for a student. The school district may need to probe further than a diagnosis to develop a full understanding of why a student is on medical homebound for an extended period of time.

-Ensure that the 504 coordinator is aware of any underlying diagnosis if a different staff person is responsible for processing medical homebound requests.

504 Homebound Placement

As Katie approaches the end of her second period of medical homebound, her mother brings in a letter from a psychiatrist notifying the school district that Katie has been diagnosed with anxiety and depression and indicating that she needs to stay on homebound until he can get her medications regulated. Katie is determined to have a qualifying disability under Section 504. Katie is also falling behind in school. Even though she is unable to attend school, Katie wants to come to the basketball game on Friday night.

A student is entitled to a free, appropriate public education ("FAPE") under Section 504 even when placed on homebound. A school district must ensure that the homebound services provided to students with disabilities are as effective as homebound services provided to non-disabled peers.

COMMON ISSUES/PRACTICAL TIPS:

-Keep in mind that the standard five (5) hours per week of instruction for medical homebound may not be sufficient to provide FAPE to a disabled student under Section 504, especially if the homebound placement is long-term.

-For a student who refuses to return to school for a long period of time, focus on the underlying reasons and develop accommodations to address them in order to facilitate transition back to the school setting.

-Students on homebound have a right to participate in extracurricular activities to the extent they are able, although their ability to participate may cause the team to consider whether the student is able to transition back to school.

-Ensure that students with disabilities on homebound receive the same notice of activities as other students.

IEP Homebound Placement

Katie is on an IEP for a specific learning disability. Her psychiatrist provides another letter to the school indicating that Katie needs to stay on homebound for the rest of the school year due to her severe anxiety and depression. Katie and her mother both agree that she should stay home through the end of the year. Staff has observed Katie at the movies with friends and participating in activities with her church youth group.

The decision of whether to place an IEP student on home instruction must be made by the IEP team, regardless of the underlying basis for the homebound request. Even if a doctor requests temporary homebound services due to a medical condition unrelated to the student's disability under IDEA, the school must convene an IEP meeting to change the student's placement and modify the IEP as appropriate.

COMMON ISSUES/PRACTICAL TIPS:

-Remember that least restrictive environment considerations still apply.

-Parent, student, and physician preference do not alleviate the school district's obligations to consider less restrictive options. In determining the justification for placement, be mindful that residential facilities and private separate school (day) facilities are less restrictive than home instruction.

-The amount and type of home instruction and services must be based on the student's unique needs, which may not require implementation of a full day IEP. Factors such as the anticipated length of homebound may impact the amount and type of services.

MO-CASE MEMBERSHIP! BE A MEMBER! JOIN TODAY!

TOP TEN REASONS TO JOIN MO-CASE/CASE:

10. Keep up-to-date on special education issues, significant research, practical help, and trends.
9. Network with colleagues near and far.
8. Weekly targeted electronic communications.
7. Increase your professional involvement; share, publish, volunteer - BE ACTIVE!
6. Add to your expertise - conferences, webinars, and hands-on.
5. Get the resources and CASE endorsed products you need at prices you can afford - CASE/CEC catalogs.
4. Develop your skills - leading edge information on how to be a better leader.
3. Make a difference with policy makers - local, state, and national levels.
2. Influence our education profession - Individuals gain influence when they join hands with like-minded individuals. "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful and committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever does." - Margaret Mead
1. Improve the educational success of all students.

Please visit:
<http://www.casecec.org/membership/>
to learn more and join!



UPCOMING EVENTS

2019 MO-CASE Law Conference/Distinguished
Speaker's Series
March 5, 2019
Holiday Inn Executive Conference Center
Columbia, MO

3rd Annual Collaborative Conference
MASP, MO-CASE, MO-CEC & Thompson Center
March 6-7, 2019
Holiday Inn Executive Conference Center
Columbia, MO

CASE 2019 Winter Hybrid Conference
March 7-8, 2019
Hotel Albuquerque
Albuquerque, NM

Annual CASE/CEC Legislative Summit
July 6-7, 2019
Marriott Gateway - Crystal City
Washington D.C.

42nd Annual Fall Special Education Administrators'
Conference
September 22-24, 2019
Tan-Tar-A Resort
Lake Ozark, MO