

March 26, 2015

SAPEC Panel members

Dear Fellow Panel Members,

Students with disabilities in foster care appear to be highly transient. This is of concern to SAPEC's Ad-Hoc Committee on Students with Disabilities in Foster Care. As we discussed the issues raised, we formulated the following list of needs as it pertains to Ohio's foster children with disabilities.

- Agencies involved in the care and support of foster children need to establish continued cross-agency collaboration similar to that of "Kids in School Rule!" developed by Cincinnati Public Schools.
- There is a need for a Guidance Document specific to students in foster care. An example of a similar document can be found at:  
<http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/idea.pdf>
- Often, a student's cum file doesn't contain required paperwork upon transfer to another district. We suggest a checklist for schools to use that would be kept in the students file. ODE could post a blank document on its website as a tool to offer districts.
- It is suggested that clarification and guidance be provided on the IEP document as to the "Ward of the State" box, which when checked, displays the Surrogate Parents information.
- State Support Teams could provide training for case workers, foster parents, and surrogate parents regarding Special Education law and processes. There is currently a lot of confusion about who is allowed to perform various functions for foster students.
- The creation of a Statewide IEP system would facilitate digital records sharing. This would alleviate unnecessary repeated Evaluation Team Reports and duplicative IEPs allowing for an almost seem-less transition between school districts.
- It is necessary to increase compliance and monitoring specific to foster care situations.

The topic of students with disabilities in foster care is very large and complicated. Numerous committees could be developed to study the complexities of these situations. It is advisable to continue to investigate the unique variables presented by transitional students who are a part of the foster care system.

Sincerely,

The Subcommittee on Students with Disabilities in Foster Care