

October 31, 2019

I am pleased to provide you with this report and recommendations that summarizes the work of the Related Services Personnel Workgroup convened in accordance with Section 733.65 of House Bill 49 of the 132nd General Assembly. The law specified the following:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall establish a workgroup on related services personnel. The purpose of the workgroup shall be to improve the coordination of state, school, and provider efforts to address the related services needs of students with disabilities.

Related services personnel help support children with disabilities by creating the conditions for students to succeed by addressing specific physical, mental and other conditions a student may face that are barriers to learning. They are a critical and valuable part of the education team supporting each individual child. For that reason, the workgroup sought to ensure the recommendations align to and are consistent with Ohio's strategic plan for education, [Each Child, Our Future](#).

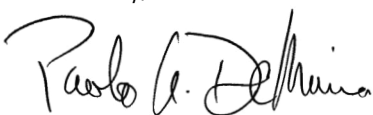
The workgroup members included state and local Ohio educators who have a role in addressing the related services needs of students with disabilities. Their yearlong work addressed related services personnel shortages in the professions of educational audiologists, speech-language pathologists, school psychologists, school nurses, occupational therapists and physical therapists.

The workgroup proposes five recommendations:

- *Recommendation 1:* Ensure special education services are adequately funded as part of the state funding formula (requires legislative action).
- *Recommendation 2:* Adopt and implement methods to improve the recruitment and retention of individuals in all related services professions.
- *Recommendation 3:* Create a full-time position at the Ohio Department of Education to oversee related services.
- *Recommendation 4:* Conduct a review of the related services personnel licensure structure currently used by the Department of Education.
- *Recommendation 5:* Support a cultural shift with the goal that related services are viewed as part of a collaborative, student-driven, team-based approach to meeting the needs of the whole child.

I appreciate the workgroup's thoughtful and comprehensive collaboration to identify solutions to address the coordination of state, school and provider efforts to better meet the related services needs of students with disabilities. The Department is committed to closely examining the recommendations to identify those for which action can be taken in the short term and those that may require longer-term work and/or legislative change. Implementing these recommendations can have a positive impact on creating the conditions for every child to be fully prepared for future success.

Sincerely,



Paolo DeMaria
Superintendent of Public Instruction