

**Ohio Valley Educational Service Center
IRN: 123281****Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children
2021 IDEA Monitoring Review Summary Report****Introduction**

The Ohio Department of Education's Office for Exceptional Children would like to extend appreciation to the Ohio Valley Educational Service Center and associated districts staff for their efforts, attention and time committed to the completion of the review process.

Definition of terms in this document:

Individual Corrections or Record Corrections refers to the correction of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), Evaluation Team Reports (ETRs) and other special education records that were reviewed by the Department and found to be non-compliant.

Systemic Corrections refers to non-compliance within the larger systems at work to implement IDEA within the associated districts. This includes but is not limited to Systemic Correction of records and special education procedures and practices to document ongoing compliance with IDEA requirements.

Overview

The following report is a summary of the onsite review conducted by the Department on March 2-5, 2021 as part of its general supervision requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Am. Sub. H.B.1.

During the onsite review, the Department monitors educational agencies' implementation of IDEA to ensure compliance and positive results for students with disabilities. The primary focus of the review is to:

- Improve educational results and functional outcomes for all students with disabilities; and
- Ensure that educational agencies meet program requirements under Part B of IDEA, particularly those requirements that are most closely related to improving educational results for students with disabilities.

Onsite reviews are targeted to include the following specific areas:

- Child Find;
- Delivery of Services;
- Least Restrictive Environment;
- IEP Verification of Delivery of Services;
- Parent Input; and
- Teacher, Special Education Service Providers and Administrator Interviews.

Data Sources

During the review, the Department considered information from the following sources:

1. Public Parent Meeting and Written Comments

Ohio Valley ESC mailed 13 Department-approved letters to all families with students with disabilities participating in the Blue Sky Virtual Academy. The Department provided the educational agency with a public meeting announcement to post on its website. Public parent meeting dates for all educational agencies selected for onsite reviews are also posted on the Department website.

On March 2, 2021, the Department consultants held a public meeting for parents and other interested parties. Two State Support Team (SST) Region 16 and one State Support Team (SST) Region 12 representatives attended. Attendees could speak to the Department representatives publicly in the meeting, speak to the Department representatives individually, provide written comments or both. No parents or family members attended the public meeting. Written comment forms were available before, during and after the meeting. The Department received no written comments.

2. Pre-Onsite Data Analysis

The Department conducted a comprehensive review which included district, building and grade level data; Special Education Performance Profile; Ohio School Report Cards; Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP) and/or OnePlan; and Education Management Information System (EMIS) data. The data analysis assisted the Department in determining potential growth areas for improvement and educational agency strengths.

3. Record Review/IEP Verification

Prior to the onsite visit, the Department consultants reviewed 13 records of school-age students with disabilities, of which three had preschool ETRs. The Department consultants selected records of students with disabilities participating in the Blue Sky Virtual Academy. Eleven (11) student records were selected for IEP verification in the classroom setting.

4. Staff/Administrative Interviews

On March 2, 2021, the Department consultants held seven sessions of interviews with 36 administrators, teachers, related services personnel and school psychologists. The Department interviews focused on the following review areas: Child Find; Delivery of Services; Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and IEP alignment and Discipline.

Strengths/Commendations:

Ohio Valley ESC and associate districts staff are passionate, caring and dedicated not only to students with disabilities, but the entire student body. This was evident throughout the interview process and IEP verifications.

Ohio Valley ESC helped associate districts manage the remote learning demands of their parents and students by connecting these districts/facilitating access to the Edgenuity/Blue Sky Virtual Academy platform.

Ohio Valley ESC leadership and staff were highly cooperative and thorough in responding to OEC requests for information.

Other Considerations/Opportunities for Improvement

Ohio Valley ESC and associate districts need to establish and follow a communication plan to ensure that their students with disabilities are offered a continuum of placements and services and do not experience lapses in instruction, services and resources. While the Ohio Valley ESC and associate districts have no control over how the programs are conducted by Edgenuity, they are responsible for verifying what the program offers and providing services the program may not provide. In several instances, as reflected in interviews with staff, there was no direct communication between the special education teachers or providers and the Blue Sky Virtual Academy/Edgenuity staff. It is the district of residence's responsibility to verify that services are provided and a continuum of placements and services is ensured. This task should be performed by district administration and not left to individual teachers to resolve. The development and implementation of this communication plan should be a collaborative effort involving the ESC and associate districts.

While Ohio Valley ESC helped associate districts manage the remote learning demands of parents and students, it has not always provided additional information or support to its districts involved in the Blue Sky Virtual Academy. As shared in the staff interviews, some district staff were not clear who would provide special education services to students with disabilities enrolled in the program.

The associate districts experienced challenges and concerns in the face of providing remote instruction to students with disabilities through the Blue Sky Virtual Academy program. The issues of special education staffing for remote and in-person instruction, delivery and tracking of specially designed instruction and related services minutes, and continuous progress monitoring of annual IEP goals have become problematic.

There is also an opportunity to strengthen the RTI/MTSS system across all associate districts. It is deployed well at some districts but not all. This issue should be addressed in the proposed communication plan.

Requirement to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education

After the monitoring review, Switzerland of Ohio Local School District was notified of a finding of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) violation in the area of delivery of services. Office for Exceptional Children (OEC) personnel explained required actions for the district to address the violation and timelines for correction. The delivery of services concern for Switzerland of Ohio School District has been addressed, and corrective action has been offered to provide compensatory time in the identified area of need, which will continue through the summer of 2021. OEC staff express their appreciation for the immediate and comprehensive efforts to provide compensatory services that Switzerland of Ohio has already initiated and agreed to.

Findings of Noncompliance/Required Actions

A finding is made when noncompliance is identified by the Department with IDEA and Ohio Operating Standards requirements. Findings are also made when noncompliance is identified in relation to the evaluation team report (ETR) and/or individualized education program (IEP) requirements. All noncompliance identified by the Department as part of the review must be corrected as indicated. The associate districts will receive additional information explaining their roles and responsibilities in correcting findings of noncompliance.

The Department provides separate written correspondence to the parent/guardian when action is required to correct findings of noncompliance for individual students. The associate districts will receive copies of this correspondence.

Corrective Action Plan (CAP)

Ohio Valley ESC will develop a CAP to address the development of a communication plan identified in this summary report, in collaboration with the associate districts. An approved form for the CAP will be provided by the Department or can be accessed on the Department's website by using the keyword search "Monitoring". The CAP developed by Ohio Valley ESC with SST assistance must include the following:

- Activities to address all areas identified in this summary report;
- Documentation/evidence of implementation of the activities;
- Individuals responsible for implementing the activities;
- Resources needed;
- Completion dates; and
- Continued Plan for Improvement and/or Compliance.

The Ohio Valley ESC must submit the CAP by email to John Magee within 30 school days from the date of this report. The Department will review the CAP submitted Ohio Valley ESC for approval. If the Department determines that a revision(s) is necessary, the ESC will be required to revise and resubmit. The ESC will be contacted by the Department and notified when the action plan has been approved.

CAP Due Date: October 12, 2021

Department Trainings

As part of the Department monitoring process, Ohio Valley ESC personnel, as identified by the Department, are required to complete the Special Education Essentials 2019-2020 training modules within the Learning Management System (LMS). The Department will provide specific instructions on completing these training modules during the Summary Report presentation. Participants must achieve a 75% or more on each quiz. Participants who do not achieve at least 75% will be contacted by the State Support Team (SST) for additional training.

Completion of LMS Training Modules Due Date: October 12, 2021

CAP Activities and Systemic Correction

The Ohio Valley ESC will provide the Department with documentation verifying the educational agency's completion of all CAP activities and all systemic corrections noted in this summary report.

Completion of CAP Activities and Systemic Correction Due Date: March 1, 2022

Once the Ohio Valley ESC has completed all action plan activities, it will use the Department's monitoring process, with the Department and SST assistance, to identify priority areas for continued improvement through the completion of a Self-Review Summary Report (SRSR).

For questions regarding the review, please contact: John Magee, the Department's IDEA Monitoring Contact, at (937) 430-9360, toll-free at (877) 644-6338, or by e-mail at John.Magee@education.ohio.gov.