

Interlocal#637 Practices

2018-19

(Reviewed July 2018)

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OPERATIONAL PRACTICES:

2018-19

The practices are cited as operational decisions determined in conjunction with the Superintendents' Advisory Committee, Interlocal Board of Directors, and/or "rolled over" from the previous governance structure and devolved over time. These items are FYI for the board and superintendents. The practices are listed on separate pages titled Current Interlocal Practices. Recurring operational questions come to superintendents and the board when members of those groups change. Recurring questions also become a part of discussion when significant time lapses between the discussing of the items. In addition, items are sometimes discussed and left without clear direction to retain, amend or delete the practice. The written statement of current practices provides a frame-of-reference to the board and superintendents regarding continuation or change of these practices.

CLASSROOMS AND PROGRAM DECISIONS

STUDENT SERVICES

Classroom Decisions: classrooms or programs are added as the need arises. Student numbers and prevalence figures are studied for each disability in each district to anticipate need. Local providers are consulted regarding impending or growing needs.

Free Appropriate Public Education in the least restrictive environment to the maximum extent possible is the requirement. In most instances, this is mandated for inclusion services in the general education classroom with supports.

However, the Interlocal is also required to provide a "full-continuum" of services for students with disabilities.

Homebound Instruction: If a district IEP team determines a student must be served through a homebound arrangement, special educators working in the district will assist in devising the plan for homebound instruction. Services will be provided by a licensed teacher at the rate of \$20/hour. Paras will be paid at the appropriate paraeducator rate. Either way, if instruction is scripted and supervised by a special education teacher and delivered by a para, the IEP team must ensure the documentation items, i.e., IEP, lessons, progress reports, time logoff services, etc., is provided to the Interlocal for audit purposes. Only services tied to an IEP are reimbursable.

Students receiving services at home or at an alternative site commensurate with homebound instruction because the student is on a long-term suspension will be treated the same as homebound services.

Facility Fee:

Districts providing special education program space serving students from other districts receive a per student reimbursement from the sending district for services provided in centralized programs, such as; low incidence programs/early childhood/autism. The per student reimbursement is \$500/yr. The Interlocal provides a list of students and their home districts to districts providing services.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CHILD FIND

Selected Interlocal special education professional staff conducts monthly child find activities throughout the school year to locate preschool age children in need of special education services.

SCHOOL READINESS SCREENING

Districts are responsible for conducting school readiness screenings designed to determine a child's readiness for kindergarten.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM RATIO

For categorical aid reimbursement purposes, the state has two EC count dates, December 1 and May 1. As long as the EC classroom has 50% or more average of students with IEPs for the year there is a 100% reimbursement for categorical aid. Anything below the 50% ratio and the categorical aid is prorated. Guidance/Communication has been provided to building principals regarding this topic. Per board approval (January 14, 2015), the early childhood ratio should be 60% IEP students and 40% model students.

The current practice is for early childhood students to attend 4-- ½ day sessions per week.

DIFFERENCES IN SERVICES

Interlocal superintendents' committee guidance regarding level of services in the Interlocal has been addressed frequently. Superintendents have expressed that the legal requirement for special education services of providing "a basic floor of opportunity" is not sufficient in SEK Interlocal #637.

Within the parameters of special education law and regulations, districts have assumed flexibility in the use of special educators and the services they provide. Job descriptions are available for all professional staff which provides the strand of continuity in practice. However, districts may adopt specific assessments, instructional programs, intervention methods, behavioral approaches, priorities of instruction etc. There are not standard ways of using Interlocal staff in buildings across participating districts. Special education services may not match in participating districts. Examples: gifted services are not of the same type or intensity in all districts, special education involvement in the Problem-Solving Process (SIT) or MTSS (tiered system of intervention) does not look the same in all districts, service minutes for students with comparable needs are different from one district to the next. Availability of specific types of services are more readily accessed in some locations than others. Examples: preschools, autism services, related services, community based services, life and career services, transition services, social work services, alternative school services, etc. Superintendents and Board have recognized during the meetings of each body that districts have some unique needs and the district should determine how the needs will be addressed.

The superintendents' committee and board discussions over the past years have often focused on equity among districts participating in the Interlocal. There is consistent effort to provide the same or equivalent services and support to all districts and avoid any special arrangements.

The practice of conducting comprehensive evaluation and determining special needs of exceptional children is outlined in federal and state law and regulation.

Disability most recent eligibility guidance is provided by KSDE in the Eligibility Indicators. All school psychologists adhere to these indicators and the convergence of evidence from assessment and data collection in making recommendations to evaluation teams regarding student eligibility for special needs.

There are no state or federally prescribed cut or qualification scores which act as single indicators of eligibility. In fact, no one source of information can be used as a sole criterion for determining eligibility of services.

Related services staff, OT, PT, Speech, Adaptive PE have guidance documents or frequently asked questions they use in addition to assessment information in making recommendations to assessment teams regarding student eligibility for services.

Following these general guidelines, differences exist from one district to the next in the extent of pre-referral intervention and the length of time to conduct an eligibility evaluation.

Once a referral is made for comprehensive evaluation, there is a sixty (60) school day time frame to complete the evaluation and initiate services if the child is found eligible.

IEP teams differ in how they process assessment data and determine eligibility

Only an assessment team can determine the child is eligible for services. Only an IEP team can prescribe services and supports that will be legally required for each special learner. Individual professionals do not determine eligibility or types and extent of services. The child's IEP team performs that function based on the data provided from evaluation and in consultation with the child's parents or guardian.

FUNDING SERVICES

District Contributions:

The local contribution is based on each district's percentage of the total enrollment of the combined 13 districts. The numbers are based on the Audited FTE from the State Legal Max Report. The district pays the percentage of cost left after all other revenue sources, Federal, State, Medicaid, other are applied. The amount is divided into 3 payments (August, November, and February). The FTE enrollment runs a year behind to have audited enrollment figures. Districts are informed of changes in the percentage once the Interlocal has the audited figures.

The Interlocal will communicate district local contributions once revenue has been determined and audited enrollment has been obtained. Generally, revenue is not known until June 30th.

Interlocal cash carry over:

- Interlocal cash carryover beginning balance will be kept between \$1.8 million and \$2.5 million;
- District local contribution adjustments will be made at the beginning of each new fiscal year;
- Unforeseen Catastrophic financial expenditures that would disrupt services would be addressed in real time.

Staff Support:

The district provides the equipment and materials for special education staff and special education programs serving only district students.

The Interlocal provides the equipment and materials for special education staff and special education programs serving students from multiple districts, i.e., "shared programs."

The Interlocal provides the equipment and materials for related services providers.

Student Support:

The Interlocal provides IEP based items for students served in “shared programs”.

KPERS -Working After Retirement:

It is the practice of the SEK Interlocal#637 to hire and maintain employment of the most qualified individuals for each position following Equal Employment Opportunity laws. In the event that an employee is subject to KPERS penalties or rules for working after retirement as determined annually by KPERS, the SEK Interlocal#637 will follow those employment rules and require retired employee to be responsible for payment of any statutory contribution rate as mandated by KPERS assessed to SEK Interlocal#637

In the event of a hard to fill position where a qualified applicant is not available, the SEK Interlocal Board may waive the employee’s requirement to pay the KPERS statutory contribution to SEK Interlocal#637.

Paraeducator Employment

In general, paraeducators work days students are present. They do not work other days. However, the Interlocal may contract paras for additional time for a specific purpose that cannot be accomplished during the school daytime., attend special training needed to work effectively with a student or group of students, examples, Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) training, Autism training (visual schedules, Picture Exchange System (PECS)).

Districts engaging paraeducators for additional time beyond contracted time are responsible to compensate the paras for the additional time, i.e., the district desires paras to attend monthly district inservice meetings or district trainings.

The Interlocal does employ some paraeducators on a case-by-case basis when the para is needed to supervise students who are not able to self-regulate. Generally, this type of supervision is accomplished by staggering arrival and departure times of paras when multiple paras are employed to serve a given building. However, if para resources are not sufficient to accomplish supervision by staggering assignments, a para or paras may be contracted for time beyond the standard contracted day.

The purpose of the special educator paraeducator is student support for specially designed instruction.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professionals:

If the district initiates the training, the district is responsible for those expenses. If the Interlocal initiates the training, the Interlocal is responsible for those expenses. If the staff member initiates the training, the staff member may ask for unduplicated support from the district, Interlocal or both.

STAFFING ALLOCATIONS

Staffing decisions: Rules of Thumb for considering additional staff

Teachers: Consideration will be given when the student load approaches 30, 0.5 time staff addition student load approaches 40, 1.0 staff addition

Additional factors, type and intensity of student needs, experience of teacher, number of para educators. Is travel involved? How many additional special education teachers serve the district in the same discipline in the building or district? How many paras are assigned to the district as a whole? Does there appear to be excess capacity that can be reallocated. Exceptions to rule of thumb, i.e., related services, gifted education; special education teacher is effectively managing students without adding teaching staff.

Paraeducators:

As the number of students and service locations increase, there is a need for additional paraeducators to cover IEP service time. Current practice has evolved to a request made by a special education teacher, approved by the building administrator, and superintendent signs awareness of the request. Finally, this request is reviewed by 637 administration for consideration.

Staff additions:

Before new special education professional or paraeducator staff is added to programs or specific buildings due to an increase in student numbers, Interlocal administration will explore efficient options regarding the filling of the position.

SUBSTITUTES

Substitutes:

As of July 1, 2008, districts bill the Interlocal for all special education substitute costs. Substitutes will be reimbursed at the rate paid by the billing district.

As a matter of practicality, the district is responsible to get the substitutes for special educators who will be absent from teaching assignments in a given building. This includes substitutes for para-educators if needed. Prevailing practice for short-term subs has often been to re-configure staff present at school for the time the para will be absent rather than hiring a sub. Long-term para subs are hired by the district and billed to the Interlocal. If problematic, the Interlocal may hire another para to cover the para if absence evolves to long-term leave. Paras hired by the district are reimbursed at the appropriate base rate for Interlocal paras. Districts bill the Interlocal for the cost of the para subs.

The Interlocal will reimburse participating districts the cost of substitutes for Interlocal employees who are hired by the district for supplemental duties, i.e., class sponsors, coaches, debate, scholars bowl, etc. Example, Interlocal employee is an assistant football coach and must be absent from special education duties to perform afternoon coaching duties.

Transportation:

Generally, districts assume responsibility for transporting students to Interlocal special education programs. This includes vehicles, drivers, paraeducators, or another support personal needed. The Interlocal may assist with transportation arrangements in special situations, i.e., School for the Blind, School for the Deaf, etc.

Contract Nursing Service Process (revised July 2018)

IEP Team in consultation with SEK#637 nurse will determine student-nursing services required during the school day.

1. Prior to the IEP team meeting, the SEK Interlocal Nurse will inform the Interlocal Coordinator for the district when made aware that contract nursing may be considered. If contracted student-nursing services are deemed required within the IEP, the SEK#637 nurse in coordination with the building administrator will notify SEK Interlocal administrative office (Kathy Davidson or Judy Smardo). SEK Interlocal#637 administrative office will contact the contracted nursing service agency to initiate service requested.
2. The Interlocal school nurse in collaboration with the IEP team will describe services required in the health care plan and/or IEP. The scope and duration of the activities provided by CHC Personnel should be clearly described and include any training or orientation related to duties.

Upon receipt of the IEP team decision (as described in the health care plan) for contracted nursing service, the following Interlocal#637 staff will be notified:

MIS department
Medicaid clerk
Business office
District coordinator
Interlocal#637 nurse
Special Education teacher
Building administrator

Cancellation Policy for The Learning Center (added July 2018)

1. In the event that USD#248, Girard Schools, closes on a scheduled school day that impacts safety or service to students at The Learning Center, TLC may also close.
2. In the event that participating districts' closure would interrupt attendance by 50% or more, TLC may close.
3. Closure may be considered in any event where safety or service to students may be impacted at the TLC location.

The TLC principal in collaboration with Interlocal administration will determine cancellation when events occur. The TLC principal will contact all district points of contact and the SEK Interlocal Office manager. To alert the public, the SEK office Manager will contact local media.