



20 October 2020

ECE - Immediate Recommendations

1. Provide an on ramp for occupational, speech, ABA therapists, ADHD coaches, and subject matter tutors to be EPSB certified to provide and/or supplement special ed staff, potentially as a new category of “paraprofessional.
2. Use undergrad students as paraprofessionals and guarantee them teaching positions post graduation; potentially offer to help defray costs of obtaining ed degree in exchange for minimum commitment of 3(?) years.
3. Develop an autism endorsement for special ed. The lack of explicit training is detrimental for all concerned and a significant cause of complaints.
4. Implement Employment First Policy recommendations:
 - a. Develop a standards based alternate diploma that is aligned with the requirements for a regular high school diploma (pp. 4-5).
 - b. Increase and enhance expectations and training for LEAs and families regarding transition planning, options, and resources (p. 7).
 - c. Provide guidance for families upon students reaching age of majority (page 8). Make clear that families are permitted to continue to participate in their student’s ARC process even after the age of majority.
 - d. Establish a supported decision-making statute/regulation for the families to continue to be involved in educational and transition planning for students who have reached the age of majority but who are not in need of or do not desire guardianship.¹

¹ 20 USC 1415(m)(2) requires that states provide an explicit process for exceptions to the transfer of a student’s rights under the IDEA. KY does not have such an exception. Numerous SEAs (SC, VA, WI, CA) have developed “educational assignment” documents for parents and students to use in these situations. The states generally provide model forms. For a student who is competent in some domains, but not yet ready to take on the complexities of educational decision-making, a POA would provide a less costly and easier to reverse path to gaining the support they need. As it now stands, families are told by some LEAs that in order to continue to participate, they must file for guardianship; clearly this is false and ought to be corrected. Some students, however, enter into guardianship agreements because they do not feel competent to face and make significant life decisions without their closest allies. Families are not told that there is an alternative!

5. Report on Section 504 students! We are missing important data for a significant number of our gap students (approx. 5-10% of total student population). This data is critical to inform program development and decision-making; privacy concerns can be managed by grouping small districts and/or reporting on trends. Not reporting because of privacy concerns is unacceptable and unnecessary.
6. Redesign and reteach IEP development to ALL educators and administrators.
7. There remain inconsistencies and erroneous instructions in KDE documents on which educators and families rely. An audit of these documents is needed. The audit should be done as a collaborative project including all stakeholders.
8. Develop a rigorous “soundbite” and “just-in-time” training program for special AND general educators. Educators report simply being overwhelmed (see #10) and having shorter, frequent, “as needed” PD and resource opportunities is a proven instructional design and retention strategy.