

SACSE Constituent Report

Report Submitted By: Caitlin Shockley/FACT Oregon

Representation Type (Agency, Parent, etc): Agency

Reporting On (SICC, DRC, etc): Shortened school days

From Date: January 20, 2017

Summary:

Since September 1, 2016, through January 20, 2017, FACT's helpline has delivered 1:1 special education-related support to 486 unduplicated family members of Oregon students with disabilities. Of these 486 family members, 68, or 12.5%, have called or emailed because their child was placed on a shortened/reduced school day related to behaviors. Because the support required to help families navigate this issue is often intensive, this makes up over 30% of our individual contacts with families.

Of these 68 families, 27% represent children seven years old and younger, approximately in kindergarten through second grade.

It has been nearly two years since ODE released Executive Numbered Memorandum 009-2015-16 regarding the use of shortened school days, stating that "a decrease in instructional time likely constitutes a significant change to the Individualized Education Program (IEP)" and that shortened days "should be reserved only for students with the most severe behaviors, and implemented when a continuum of alternative placements that are less restrictive have failed". This school year, for parents calling into the FACT helpline for assistance with this issue, alternative placements are often not trialed, and that the definition of "most severe behaviors" varies significantly. FACT support specialists report that often no changes in placement or instructional hours are noted on students' IEPs, and that notice of reduced days were delivered to parents via phone call, email, or suspension notice.

We are concerned that this issue is not captured by the Department or noted as one requiring targeted assistance and attention.

Council members representing agencies, institutions, or any organization of interest to SACSE are requested to submit written reports 1 week prior to each meeting. Submitting reports prior to meetings allows information to be disseminated to Council members in advance of the meeting, increasing available agenda time to address specific questions and concerns.

Please submit reports to Amanda Hiaasen by e-mail at amanda.hiaasen@ode.state.or.us or by FAX at 503-378-5156 no later than three days prior to the scheduled meeting date. If you have any questions about this process, please contact Jeremy Wells at 503-947-5782 or by e-mail at Jeremy.Wells@state.or.us.

We are concerned that our helpline data is indicative that shortened school days for behavior, and the inappropriate use of shortened school days in particular, remains a widespread problem for Oregon students with disabilities.

We are also concerned that because, in our experience on the FACT helpline, shortened school days are either not referenced in a student's IEP, or referenced in inconsistent places, there is not a more accurate way to determine the prevalence of this practice across Oregon.

Requests of the council:

1. We request that SACSE ask the Department to re-release Executive Numbered Memorandum 009-2015-16 to all Oregon LEAs.
2. We request that SACSE ask the Department to identify and implement data collection strategies on shortened school days, to get an accurate picture of prevalence.
3. We request that SACSE ask the Department to offer training and technical assistance for LEAs clarifying Memorandum 009-2015-16.
4. We request that SACSE ask the Department to offer LEAs additional training and technical assistance on completing functional behavior assessments (FBAs) and writing positive behavior support plans (BSPs/BIPs).

Council Feedback: