

Evidence-Based Strategies to Address Workload Challenges in Schools

Carlynn Higbie, OTR
Education Consultant

Dawn Merth-Johnson, MA, CCC-SLP
Education Consultant

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Conference on Special Education and Pupil Services
9/20/23 10:35-11:35 a.m.*



Learning Objectives

Discuss

- Discuss how caseload is different from workload.

Explain

- Explain the impact a workload approach has on the success of students.

Implement

- Implement 3 evidence-based strategies to address workload challenges.



New * Workload Information Document



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
Public Instruction

DPI Special Education Team: Considerations for Determining Special Education Workloads



Workload Model for Service Delivery

Best Practice

- Evidence-based
- Increased team collaboration
- Improved student outcomes
- Teacher, Parent, and Student satisfaction

Staff Retention

- Adoption of a workload model supports practitioner job satisfaction



AOTA et al., 2014; American
Speech-Language-Hearing Association
[ASHA], 2016; Endsley, 2017



Caseload vs. Workload

What is the difference and why does it matter?



Caseload vs. Workload

Caseload:



WORKLOAD:

- Accommodations
- Curriculum modifications
- Classroom-based techniques to support learning
- Evaluation Report
- IEPs
- Training staff



“Space” in Special Education

- Available “space” in special education cannot accurately be determined by a set number of available “special education seats”
- Decision-makers are urged to incorporate consideration of:
 - amount of time available for educators to provide particular types of service
 - number of students who can receive the service at the same time
 - other responsibilities outside of direct services to students



Why Workload?



The Purpose of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)



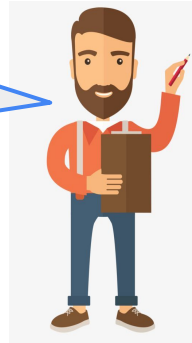
“to ensure all students with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living” ([IDEA](#), 2004)



Can we break from 30-Minute Group Sessions in Schools?

Harker, 2022

“Little evidence suggests that two half-hour sessions weekly promote students’ ability to acquire and generalize speech or language skills, yet this option is typically chosen by teams that develop the Individualized Education Program (IEP).” Flynn, 2010



A student should not be in the same service delivery model from admission through dismissal from services.

And this...

[Surprise! Science says more therapy isn't always better...](#) SLP Nerdcast



Should NOT be Used to Calculate Workloads

- ❖ Type or label of disability category or IDEA environmental codes
- ❖ Transportation needs of students
- ❖ Availability of staff to provide an IEP service



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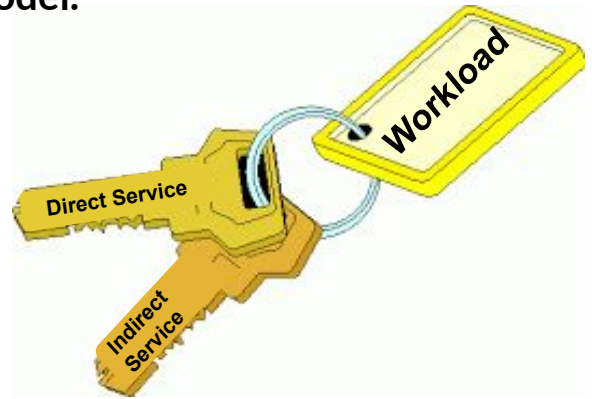


Workload Approach

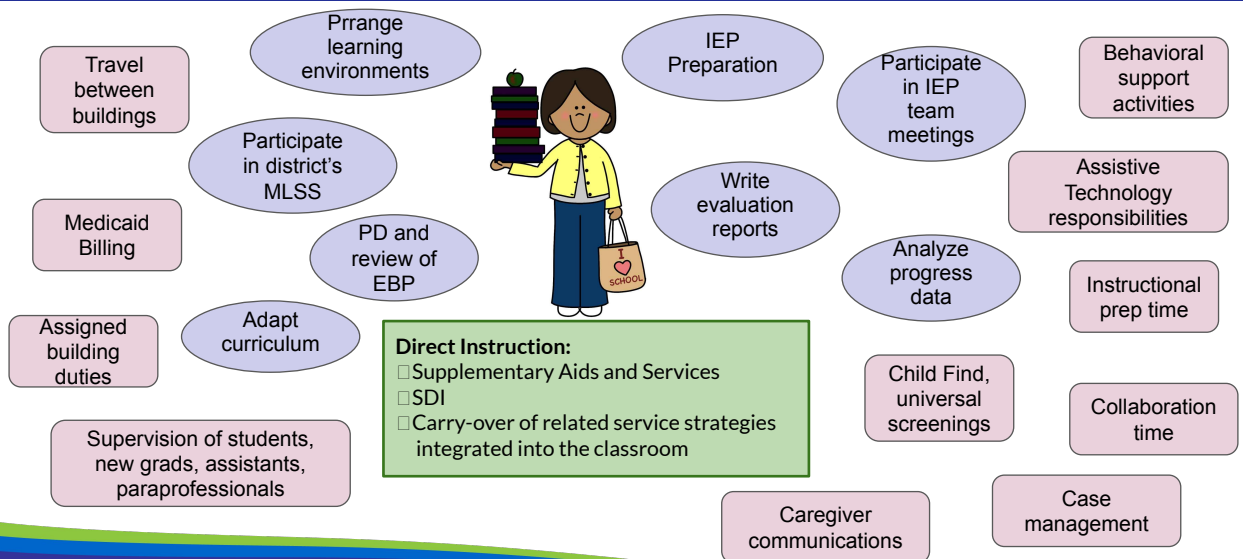


So much more than a 3:1 model.

A student's unique, individual needs must be what determines the content of the IEP and the IEP determines the special education services required to provide FAPE.

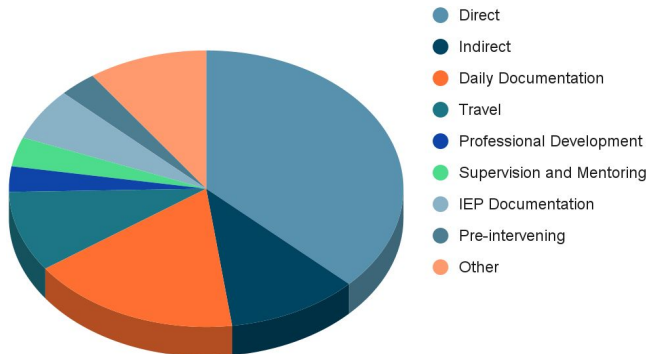


Workload Responsibilities



Statistics from the OT and PT Workload Study

Overall percentages of time spent in each category:



- Direct: 40%
- Indirect: 11.63%
- Meetings: 2.1%
- Program documentation (daily notes): 18.63%
- Travel: 10.18%
- Professional development: 3.2%
- Supervision and mentoring: 3.7%
- IEP documentation: 6.6%
- Pre-intervening: 3.3%
- Other: 10.55%

The time pattern was spent on an average of 21.95 students by RSPs with 11.62 years of experience.

Williams, J., & Cecere, S. 2013



Additional Factors to Consider when Calculating Special Education and Related Services

Type of Special Education Service Delivery

- Scheduling considerations such as student to educator ratios that allow for each student's IEP services to effectively be provided
 - Self-contained
 - Resource room
 - Push-in vs. pull-out services
 - Small/large group - grouping students with similar disability-related needs
- Co-teaching student to educator ratios



Workload Analysis: Factors for Consideration

Identify the total amount of time (e.g. days or hours) in the school year educators need to complete the following:

- Provide direct services provided through specially designed instruction and related services.
 - Identify the degree to which students are effectively grouped together to receive specially designed instruction and related services.
- Provide supplementary aids and services.
 - Identify the degree to which students are effectively grouped together to receive supplementary aids and services



Workload Analysis: Factors for Consideration

- Time conducting initial evaluations and reevaluations (including IEP team meetings).
- Time for services on behalf of the student
- Time needed to support individual educators' providing or receiving mentoring, coaching, and other types of professional learning
- Time for additional considerations and responsibilities of educators



Are There Barriers in Your District?

- Related-services planning, implementation, and evaluation unrelated to the educational program.
- Pull-out approaches that do not match the intended educational functions of related services are used.
- Groups of individuals serving the same student do not always function as a team.



Roles of Related Services Personnel in Inclusive Schools;
Michael F. Giangreco, Patricia A. Prelock, Richard R. Reid,
Ruth E. Dennis, and Susan W. Edelman, 2000
Nicholas Martin, [The Secrets to Collaborative IEP Meetings](#)



Additional Factors to Consider when Calculating Special Education and Related Services

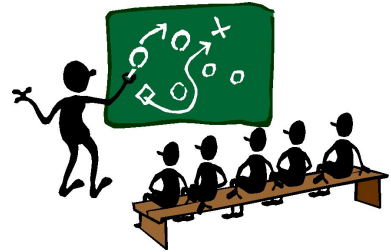
- Individual Student Circumstances
- Frequency, duration, and amount of supervision to ensure student safety and health
- What supports this student's performance?
- What limits this student's performance?
- What does this child need to access the classroom and campus? Think goal development.
- What is the least restrictive way of providing support within the general education program?



Workload Analysis Process

Evidence-Based Strategies

- Time Study
- Gather Data
- Determine Formula or Method
- Understand the benefits and options of a variety of service delivery models



Where to Start?

Many districts begin developing a Workload Model with a data gathering process.

Timelog
2023-2024

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
730					
800					
815					
830					
845					
900					
915					
930					
945					
1000					

Using a Time Log to Categorize Provider Time Allocation

- Evaluation/IEP Development (average = 15.2% of total time)
- Direct Treatment (average = 27.4% of total time)
- Travel (average = 2.6% of total time)
- Student-Specific Consultation (average = 25.2% of total time)
- Other (average = 29.7% of total time)



Service Delivery Models: One Size Does Not Fit All

- Traditional Weekly Schedule
- Receding Schedule
- Cyclical Schedule
 - 3:1 model
- Block Schedule
- Blast or Burst
 - 5 Minute Kids
- Group Size
- Indirect or Consultative Services



[School-Based Service Delivery in Speech-Language Pathology](#)



Term	Definition	Example
Receding Schedule	Direct service in intense frequent intervention then fade to more indirect service delivery	ASHA Caseload and Workload 90 min/week for 4 months, then 30 min direct/30 min indirect per week for 4 months, then 15 min indirect per week for 4 months
Cyclical Schedule (example 3:1)	Direct service for a period of time then indirect service for a period of time	Direct Service: 20 min/3X per week/3 out of 4 weeks per month; Indirect Service: 20 min/1X per week/1 out of 4 weeks per month
Block Schedule	Direct service for longer but less frequent periods of time (often matches MS/HS schedules)	Direct Service 45 min/1X per week
Blast or Burst (example 5 Minute kids)	High dosage for short periods to address a specific need (e.g. 5 minute kids)	Daily for 5-10 minutes
Consultative: Program Modifications or Supports	SLP works with staff, parents, IEP team members	Consultation between SLP/OT/Classroom Teacher/Para for 20 min weekly

Sample of Block Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30-9:00	Mr. Mustard (5 min artic-JC, VG, AH)	High School	Ms. Ruby (AD, TC artic/RTI artic) (KS - lang pull-out)	High School	Ms. Ruby (AD, TC artic/RTI artic)
8:15					
9:00-9:30	(testing)				(testing)
9:15					
9:30-10:30	Mrs. Peacock (AA, HK, DH, BS, AW artic/lang) in class &/or pull-out		Mrs. Peacock (AA, DH, BS artic or make-up)		Miss. Plum (KR- lang, CC RTI- artic)
9:45					
10:00					
10:15					
10:30			Ms. Citrine self-contained (JD, MS, TV, SW, AW - in class, small group)		Miss Scarlet (LB, KB, DJ, TS, DS lang, in-class or pull-out)
10:45					
10:50-11:20	Mrs. White (JG- artic)			Ms. Buttercup (NK- land pull-out, HH artic, TA RTI- artic)	Mrs. White (JG- artic)
Cwing interv block	Ms. Buttercup (JG- artic)				Ms. Buttercup (JG- artic)

Harker, 2022



Least Restrictive Environment

School-based intervention is most effective when it is contextually based and integrated within the student's natural settings.

Providing services within the environment where a student is expected to perform also increases the likelihood that learned skills will be generalized.



CCR-IEP
Belief #5
Collective
Responsibility

Handley-More et al., 2013; Polichino & Jackson, 2014



Why Consider a Workload Model?

- Allows for opportunities to implement best practices of inclusive and integrated service delivery
- Better defines what is really needed to properly serve students in a district
- Accountability to contracted districts for time billed to them
- Information needed when bidding new contracts or making staff assignments
- Improved staff resource allocation when making staffing decisions



Joint Statement on Workload



American
Occupational Therapy
Association



APTA
American
Physical Therapy
Association



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE
HEARING
ASSOCIATION

- Promotes increased access to services and positive outcomes for students.
- Critical to a school district's recruitment and retention efforts for OTs, PTs, and SLPs.

[Joint Statement from APTA, ASHA, AOTA
Workload Approach](#)



Workload Works in Many States

Reported significant benefits including :

- decreased SLP vacancies
- reduced litigation
- cost savings due to elimination of the need for contract practitioners
- improved quality of services
- increased opportunities for collaboration
- improved ability to identify students needing services
- more appropriate service recommendations.

[Joint Statement from APTA, ASHA, AOTA
Workload Approach](#)



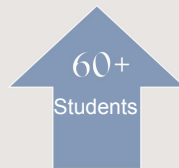
Burden of a Caseload Approach

- ❖ Caseload is a medical approach within an educational system
- ❖ Assigning professionals in this way does not account for the significantly expanding roles and responsibilities
- ❖ High caseloads:
 - compromise quality of service,
 - limit available service delivery options,
 - Interfere with other professional responsibilities,
 - Impact attrition

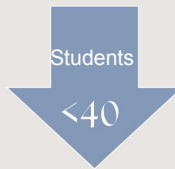


Impact of High Caseloads

Negative Impacts on Student Outcomes



63% made measurable progress on IEP goals



87% made measurable progress on IEP goals

ASHA, 2000b & 2001

From Courtney Seidel: Used with permission.



The Value of a Workload Approach

Use of a workload model is foundational to:



- providing high-quality services that promote positive student outcomes in the child's least restrictive environment;
- engaging in collaborative, interprofessional practices;
- delivering services with a full service delivery continuum;
- providing FAPE and maintaining compliance with state and federal regulations;
- ensuring that the student has access to—and benefits from—accommodations and modifications;
- increasing recruitment and retention



Benefits of Workload

Research from Oregon Schools

Significant reductions in SLPs taking work home.

Significant increase in 3rd party billing.

Fewer direct service cancellations.

Increase in consultation activities with teachers and parents.

Better morale among SLPs.

Increased ability to integrate IEP goals with classroom curriculum.

From Courtney Seidel: Used with permission.



Impacts for Administrators

100% thought flexible service delivery made a difference

62% felt better able to meet compliance timelines

72% saw less cancellation of services

83% felt a decrease in level of stress

59% saw a decrease in work at home

79% more likely to stay in current job

*Adapted from Courtney Seidel
Used with permission.*



Final Thoughts

[WI DPI Providing FAPE During Special Educator Shortages](#)



[WI DPI Leveraging IDEA Funds to Attract/Prepare/Retain Special Educators & Related Services Providers: Allowable Costs](#)



Strategies to Support a Workload Approach

Include Workload Language in Job Postings

Administrative Strategies

- Early Release Day
- Program Support Teachers
- Diagnosticians
- Diversified Roles
- Flexible Monthly or Weekly Scheduling

Contract Strategies

Workload Week
Weighted Formula
Compensation Language



[Strategies for Implementing Workload](#)



Thanks for joining us!

Any questions?



and

*That was fun,
let's do it again
sometime 😊*



Dawn
Dawn.Merth-Johnson@dpi.wi.gov

Carlynn
carlynn.higbie@dpi.wi.gov

