CLINTON COUNTY RESA

Clinton County Regional Educational Service Agency

VISIONS

DATA IMPROVES OUR PRACTICE

Spring 2015 Newsletter

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VISIONS

A publication of Clinton County Regional Educational Service Agency published three times yearly.

The newsletter is a vehicle to communicate to our partners current information and activities as they relate to the support of our Mission Statement.

CCRESA constituents include: Bath, DeWitt, Fowler, Ovid-Elsie, Pewamo-Westphalia, St. Johns, charter and non-public schools.

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CCRESA is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

CCRESA Vision

It is the vision of CCRESA to create an environment where everyone is continually learning.

In pursuit of this vision, CCRESA will:
- Deliver high quality educational programming and support
- Lead the pursuit of educational opportunities for learners of all ages
- Model and encourage lifelong learning
- Continually challenge the status quo

Mission Statement

It is the mission of CCRESA to lead and support learning.

In pursuit of this mission, CCRESA will:
- Prepare learners to be successful in a competitive, global economy
- Continually enhance student achievement
- Employ a competent, enthusiastic staff that provides exemplary customer service
- Collaborate with schools and other agencies
- Continually assess the effectiveness and efficiency of CCRESA programs and services

It is the policy of the Clinton County Regional Educational Service Agency (CCRESA) that no discriminatory practices based on gender, race, religion, color, age, national origin, disability, height, weight, marital status, sexual orientation, political affiliations and beliefs, or any other status covered by federal, state or local law be allowed in providing instructional opportunities, programs, services, job placement assistance, employment or in policies governing student conduct and attendance. Any person suspecting a discriminatory practice should contact the Special Education Director, 1013 South US-27, St. Johns, MI 48879, or call 989.224.6831.

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SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

CCRESA Local District Survey Data

Wayne Petroelje

As part of Clinton County Regional Educational Service Agency's (CCRESA) Continuous Improvement Process a survey about our programs and services was disseminated to Clinton County local school district personnel in November, 2014. We thank the 189 people who took the time to respond to our survey! Your participation really helps us decide where to focus our energies on improvement. The local school district staff members were asked to provide feedback/satisfaction on the following CCRESA departments and services: Administration, Business Services, Career Education, Early Childhood Programs, Great Start Readiness Program, Illuminate Regular Education DnA, Illuminate Special Education ISE, Instructional/Curriculum, Professional Development, Secretarial Staff, Special Education Classrooms, Special Education Itinerant Staff, Technical Services: Technical Support, and Technical Services: Data Support. District personnel were asked to rate satisfaction, professionalism, clarity, relevance, and accuracy of communication, experience regarding cooperation and timely response to needs.

We were very happy to receive feedback that respondents were very pleased with our Secretarial Staff and Special Education Itinerant Staff and the majority of respondents gave excellent ratings to our Administration. We also appreciated all of the special personal comments regarding our staff members that have gone above and beyond their position descriptions when working with districts, students and families. We have been carefully reflecting on some of our newer services such as Illuminate (for General and Special Education) which is still in early stages of implementation and how we can better facilitate implementation of new services to various stakeholders. We are discussing how future roll-outs of new information can be executed in the most helpful and efficient manner. The survey also informed us that when we embark upon collaborative services with other entities that sometimes individuals do not understand CCRESA is actually supporting those services provided by the other entities to enhance our ability to provide resources for Clinton County district personnel. We plan to survey districts again in the future to verify we have made improvements in identified areas and department directors are prioritizing how to best serve the needs of our local Clinton County districts and their students and families while meeting the requirements of the law.

Data will continue to inform our practice in all programs and services and this Spring 2015 Edition of the CCRESA *Visions* Newsletter will highlight how "Data Improves Our Practice" in many areas of the organization.

TECHNOLOGY

Continuous Improvement in Data Reporting

Our Data Support team at CCRESA works hard throughout the year to focus on continuous improvement opportunities. These efforts have come to fruition in the form of information being where it needs to be as quickly and accurately as possible. Examples include a reduced amount of "double entry" and mass manipulation of data for data correction.

Double entry means entering the same data multiple times in multiple locations. This creates a major inefficiency in staff time and leaves room for human error and inconsistency in data. Our team has improved our system over the last 12-18 months so we no longer have to manage double entry between our Student Information System (SIS) and our Special Education Administration systems. We are scripting routines to automatically push Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs), and both *Early On*® and Early Childhood Assessments (COSFs) for nightly updates in our reporting data. This also allows us to audit and validate reported data before the official start of count cycles each year.

Mass manipulation of data for data correction is another useful improvement includes some 'backend' scripting that has enabled the replacement of manual record-by-record checking to instant mass variable manipulation. As an example, this allows us to quickly find exceptions from things as simple as replacing misspellings (like St. Johns or StJohns with their legal spelling of Saint Johns) or mismatched zip codes, to finding fields that have out-of-compliance values.

Data Supports our Technology Systems

Organizational operations have become more complex over the last couple of decades and schools are no exception. In school districts, we have multiple systems including communications (voice/phone, email, calendar, instant messaging, etc.), facility and safety (HVAC, video/cameras, door lock systems, etc.) and other infrastructure including wired and wireless networks, food service systems and library service systems.

The challenge associated with having so many systems is the efficient and effective use of the tools to help the organization achieve its mission. At CCRESA, we have been automating the process of pushing and pulling data between them instead of manually creating multiple records. One example of this is using our network accounts (Active Directory) to automatically populate the Staff Directory on the CCRESA website. Another example is pushing data from the Student Information System (SIS) to the notification system for notifying staff and students about weather delays or closures. This keeps the contact information in the notification system up-to-date by data being updated in one place from the SIS.

BUSINESS OFFICE

How Data Has Changed Business Office Operations

A glimpse into CCRESA historical accounting journals and ledgers provides a good perspective on how data and computerized financial systems have changed business operations. For example, the 1974 CCRESA General Fund records total expenses of $82,612. The expenses are classified in eight categories: Administration, Attendance, Operations, Maintenance, Fixed Charges, Capital Outlay, Instructional Material Center, or Federal Funds. All numbers are hand written on columnar ledger paper and manually totaled. Specific items of interest, such as salaries and wages, are not readily available.

In contrast, CCRESA's current general ledger system allows for financial data to be retrieved, compiled and presented in many ways. To align to state standards for public school accounting, six indicators (fund, function, object, program, grant and building) are captured in an account code for every expenditure transaction. This coding matrix provides the building blocks necessary to define criteria to extract data and answer specific questions. Do you want to know how much is spent on basic instruction at the elementary level? Total all expenses coded to function code 111. How much money is spent on salaries? Pull expenses associated with object codes in the range from 1000 to 1999. What did we spend on the federal Title 1, Part A grant? Query grant code 601. Data is available to support the measurement and interpretation of many parts that make up the whole of the CCRESA financial picture.

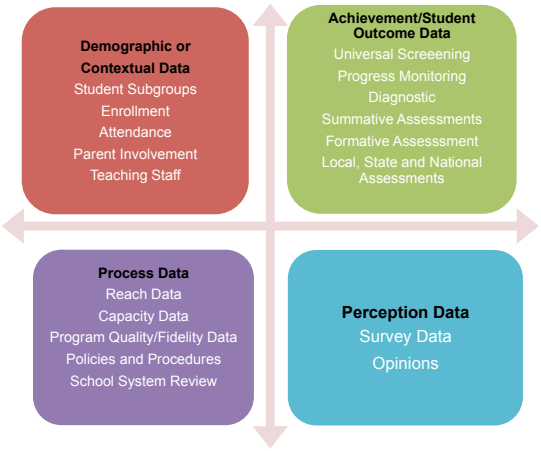
Consistency and standardization of the data and coding elements are important for the analysis of CCRESA's finances and those same factors are also vital for state and federal reporting. All public school districts are required to submit financial data to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) using the standard chart of accounts. In turn, MDE compiles all financial data from all public school districts and reports to the National Center for Education Statistics. The data is used to support policy and funding decisions at the local, state, and federal levels.

INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) as defined by CCRESA

MTSS is a framework to provide all students (from preschool to secondary level) with the best opportunities to succeed academically and behaviorally in school. MTSS focuses on providing high quality instruction and evidence based interventions matched to student need. Data is collected and used at all levels (District, Building, Classroom and Student) to monitor progress and align resources to improve student learning. Data is also used to support school staff throughout the implementation of effective instructional practices.

As more data becomes available to schools, it is important to have a MTSS system and data review process set up to select, analyze and use the data effectively. Within this framework, teams at each level use the data to celebrate successes and to problem solve. Different types of data are used to allow a systemic view of the district, building, classroom and individual students. Data is collected and used to continuously evaluate and improve the supports for students. The following types of data are used at each level to drive decision-making:



Clinton Post-Secondary Success Network

The *Clinton County Local College Access Network* voted this month to change their name to the *Clinton Post-Secondary Success Network*, to better reflect their Mission Statement: To increase the percentage of Clinton County students who pursue and obtain a Post-Secondary credential following high school, to build a workforce equipped to compete in a global community.

The *Clinton Post-Secondary Success Network* is a collaborative effort of leadership from K-12 (including all the Superintendents in Clinton County), Higher Education, local businesses, Clinton County Offices, Economic Development, Philanthropy and Community Development. They have been meeting monthly since October, 2014, retrieving information and pouring over large amounts of data to determine the current status of Post-Secondary success in Clinton County. Data analysis has been a main focus of the Network to determine where the county is currently at using several different measurements.

Here is a sampling of the data points gathered:

- Number of high school students who complete a two year versus four year degree.
- Number of students enrolled in Career Connections and what their path is afterwards.
- High School College Readiness scores as measured by the ACT in the aggregate and by subject.
- Post-Secondary completion trends for the county. The team looked at the graduating class of 2009 over a five year period and tracked the number of students each year who were still enrolled, never enrolled, graduated, dropped or left higher education and enrolled at a later date.
- The percentage of students in Clinton County who are Economically Disadvantaged, and the number of those students who go on to Post-Secondary Education, versus those who are not Economically Disadvantaged.
- The persistence rate of Economically Disadvantaged versus not Economically Disadvantaged students after entering Higher Education.
- Percentage of students required to take remedial classes upon enrollment in Higher Education.
- Percentage of students who completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each year.

The Network has been in the Planning Stage since its inception, and is getting ready to move to the Implementation Phase. The Implementation Phase will involve more analysis and digging deeper into the data to determine the areas of highest priority, then developing action teams to plan and carry out those initiatives. The Clinton Post-Secondary Success Network is committed to making sure the students in Clinton County are equipped with the knowledge, education and training they need to be successful in whatever path they choose after high school graduation.

CAREER EDUCATION

2014-2015 Career Connections Recruiting Schedule

Career Connections program recruiting trips are annual events. Each year, the Career Connections instructional staff visits all six of the local districts to provide face-to-face information/data to potential students on all programs. In recent years, we have expanded the event to include 9th graders so that freshman can hear first-hand how important it is for them to plan their high school years to most optimize their opportunities/options in their junior and senior years. Student feedback data as well as ongoing input from the high school counselors, principals and administrators provides the data that determines the county-wide programming provided. **The list to the right identifies the student data regarding participation in the recruiting visits this year.**

SCHOOL DISTRICT	10/11 GRADE	9 GRADE
Bath High School	Thursday, January 8 Total: 156 Students	Thursday, January 8 Total: 73 Students
DeWitt High School	Thursday, January 29 Total: 463 Students	Wednesday, March 4th Total: 284 Students
Fowler High School	Wednesday, January 28 Total: Approximately 90	Wednesday, January 28 Total: Approximately 45
Ovid-Elsie High School	Thursday, January 15 Total: 225 Students	Thursday, January 15 Total: 112 Students
Pewamo-Westphalia	Tuesday, February 3 Total: 151 Students	Tuesday, February 3 Total: 67 Students
St. Johns High School	Tuesday, January 27 Total: 547 Students	Thursday, January 15 Total: 254 Students

Career Connections Lansing Community College Credit Data

Lansing Community College (LCC) partners with the Career Connections program to provide area high school students with opportunities to take specialized courses receiving high school and college credit with no cost to the student. During the 2013-14 school year, Career Connections students earned **1,163** Lansing Community College credits. **The following grid lists the data on students and credits earned by program.**

CLASS	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	NUMBER OF LCC CREDITS EARNED
Allied Health	35	246
Auto Service	22	6*
Business Management and Entrepreneurship	14	84*
Construction Trades	42	284*
Criminal Justice	32	213
Digital Media Arts	19	99*
Education - Early Childhood	21	63
Education – Primary and Secondary	3	8
Emergency Services/ Fire Science	10	40
Sports Medicine	15	120
TOTAL ENROLLMENT	213	1,163

**Articulated Credit*

INNOVATIVE PROJECTS

Supporting Competence in *Early On®*

The *Early On®* (EO) Center for Higher Education, an Innovative Project of CCRESA, is funded by the Michigan Department of Education to support faculty in the development of students in diverse disciplines whose future work will be with infants and toddlers, birth to age three, with disabilities or special needs and their families.

Each year, the EO Center invites faculty from Michigan's two and four year colleges and universities to compete for $7,000 in mini-grants to support research in the field of early childhood intervention and its practical application in the State of Michigan. On April 13th, CCRESA Board of Education approved the proposal submitted by Claire Vallotton, Ph.D., Assistant Professor Human Development & Family Studies, Michigan State University, *Knowledge, Dispositions, and Skills for Working with Infants and Toddlers with Special Needs (KiDS-WIT): Creating a Tool to Assess Student Competencies.* With the support of the *Early On®* Center, Dr. Vallotton will develop an assessment tool to assist faculty in supporting family-centered competencies in future *Early On®* service providers.

Dissemination Counts!

Early On® Public Awareness, an Innovative Project of CCRESA, disseminates more than 220,000 products annually, through approximately 900 orders across the state each year. That's a lot of packaging tape, boxes and bubble wrap! Our most recent project included the mass distribution of the NEW *Early On®* Family Guidebook! More than 10,000 guidebooks have been delivered to the 56 intermediate school districts/regional educational service areas and contracted early intervention programs.

The new *Early On®* Family Guidebook is one comprehensive guide to help in understanding the *Early On®* process. It replaces the four of previous four guidebooks with updated regulatory information and recommended practices. Instead of having to print 12 guidebooks (1-4 in English, 1-4 in Spanish, and 1-4 in Arabic), we are now offering one document for service coordinators to use with families. The Guidebook was modeled after the Part C early intervention program in New Mexico. The goal was to conserve the cost of printing the books while offering a meaningful resource for working with families.

The new guidebook is the result of collaborative work with service providers, family members, the Michigan Department of Education, and other stakeholders. It is family friendly, 8.5" x 11", in four colors, has 32 pages, and has been translated into Arabic and Spanish. Special features include note pages, places for parents to reflect about the development of their child and an identified location on the back cover of the guidebook for districts to place their contact information.

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

Great Start Readiness Program Evaluation

The Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) evaluation requirements come from three sources: the Michigan Legislature in the law that establishes and funds GSRP, the Michigan State Board of Education in the criteria established for GSRP and Michigan Department of Education (MDE) reporting guidelines.

GSRP utilizes information from screenings, ongoing observations, program quality evaluations, and insight from staff and parents to determine if the systems in place are working, whether there is an efficient use of resources and how the program can best respond to the needs of enrolled children. The focus of a systematic approach to local data collection and data use is to provide continuous improvement feedback to staff and enrolled families.

The GSRP is required to provide for active and continuous participation of parents of enrolled children. Parents partner in child-development goals as active decision-makers. Parents discuss data with their children's teachers and understand what the data means for their children, both inside and outside of the classroom. Programs are required to conduct developmental screening and comprehensive child assessment. Data are reviewed to guide parent-teacher decisions about specific child interventions, the teaching staff's lesson planning and administrative decisions about classroom- and program-wide improvement.

Programs utilize the *Program Quality Assessment®* (PQA) throughout the year to assess local classroom structure, processes, and outcomes to document program effectiveness; and to provide information for program improvement and accountability. Data are used to guide program improvement, monitor and support change elements, and share program quality information with parents, the ISD and the community. A data analysis team led by the GSRP Early Childhood Specialist includes parents, the program supervisor, representation from teaching teams and other specialists or stakeholders, as appropriate. A systematic approach brings the team together three times each program year. Program quality data from the PQA and child outcome data from child screening and assessment are aggregated and provided to the data analysis team. During the meeting, the team:

- Identifies the current level of performance across relevant indicators, evident strengths and extraordinary accommodations for children/families (e.g., attendance rates, program settings and/or options, language groups, child, family or community risk factors);
- Uses data to establish professional development priorities;
- Sets measurable goals and objectives to address classroom quality, agency quality and child outcomes;
- Agrees to eliminate what is not effective;
- Addresses whether policies and procedures require revision and inventories available program resources such as time, money, personnel, technology, curriculum resources and local training opportunities.

CCRESA uses aggregated child outcome and program quality data to share success in meeting goals and to address needs. Data collected are being used in ways that drive continuous improvement efforts. CCRESA evaluates the degree to which data are being used to differentiate supports to programs, staff and children.

Data Informs Special Education Curriculum Planning

It is a common belief among educators that Special Education (SE) is a place to send children that aren't progressing. The thinking goes that there must be something wrong with a student when they aren't benefitting from instruction other students receive. Figuring out how to help these children involves appealing to experts to sort them out for SE so they can receive a form of instruction that only SE people really understand in a program away from the general classroom, or have specially trained therapists pull eligible students out of the classroom for more therapy while life goes on within the General Education (GE) classroom. With this traditional approach, the problem is believed to be within the learner and not in the design/delivery of instruction. When we believe "we have just done everything possible and nothing works", we are powerless to do anything constructive or stay involved in the instruction any longer. One of the main problems with this approach is that it addresses only one of the two aspects of eligibility, and that is the one over which we have the least influence. If we are simply diagnosing a disability with students whose only criterion is that they happen to be attending school, we could identify about 20% (the number of U.S. citizens in the 2010 census with a disability) of all students on disability alone because an argument could be made that their learning could be influenced in some manner by having a disability.

The other aspect of eligibility less addressed is that a student must "need" SE. So simply having a disability is insufficient to become eligible for receiving services. According to the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, SE is specially designed instruction. This means instruction that adapts... "as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child... the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability; and to ensure access of the child to the General Education Curriculum (GEC), so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children." To need SE then means the reason for providing it is to make progress in learning for students who cannot accomplish this in any other way and to continue to make progress in the GEC. Education of any type is all about effectiveness of instruction. To determine effectiveness/progress, we are entering an area of measurement requiring data to know how we are doing and what we should be doing. This requires a scientific frame of reference. We don't want opinions and feelings. We want facts/problem solving that uses data to make decisions.

When we understand that needing SE has a lot to do with whether instruction is effective/successful without it, then it points to the importance of making good decisions in choices about how to provide instruction to students who are more difficult to teach. Some students hardly need us. They will learn essential material even if not provided a great education. Others challenged by limiting factors, only one of which may include having a disability, will need instruction designed/delivered in a way that has shown good results with more challenged learners. By carrying out research we learn which practices, if faithfully carried out in the manner designed, are effective. That points to a number of responsibilities within our control before saying that the problem lies within the child when instruction isn't getting results. These include knowing which practices are evidence based rather than simply feeling good to do, knowing how the child is doing in comparison to the rest of the group, knowing how consistently we carried out instructional practices in the way they were designed and knowing the results quickly enough to make adjustments. This all requires data based decision making.

Before we ever get to the point of saying the student needs SE, that is, cannot make progress in the regular curriculum without it, we have a lot to prove in our own actions. Have we really provided the best educational opportunity/supports consistently, and how do we know that? What does our data tell us? We need to use data to make good decisions about what we do for all, what we provide in a supplementary way for some who don't profit from what we do with all, and what we additionally provide of more intensified instruction for those who don't benefit from supplementary instruction. When we have the information, we are ready to make decisions about what might work for a student who may additionally require specially designed instruction. Notice the use of the word "additionally." Helping underachievers make the rate of progress they need to make to no longer need extra support requires that they continue to receive educational opportunities at lower levels of instruction as well, and are not simply restricted to what little time can be provided at the most intense level. This is understood in the SE law, as SE has always been intended to be a service that supplements but does not supplant GE. Also, the law makes it clear that students with disabilities are GE students first. Any specially designed instruction offered by SE professionals can certainly inform the practices of the GE teachers.

Finally, it is important to ask the question, "What is so special about SE?" If we use data based decision making processes faithfully leading up to the provision of specially designed instruction, we need to continue these ways of doing business when SE is provided. We need to continue to know what is being done, how it is done and whether it is accomplishing the results it needs to. It must be an intentional expectation. One expectation is set in some places, but not in many is the promise that we will do all we can to close the underachievement gap between the student with a disability and their non-disabled peers to the point that we can successfully return most students to all GE. Even having this expectation may be enough to accomplish it more often by sharpening our practices. So, carrying out evidence based best practices using data based decision making is something that needs integration into the entire system. If we do this, we will more effectively work together to obtain better results. With this in mind, the federal government has begun to hold states accountable for gaining results with SE students. We already know from this that there are states that do better than Michigan. These have done a better job of embedding the above practices into their systems. Whether it is at a national or state level, there will be competition for resources based on how well we deliver on results in student growth. We cannot afford tradition. If anyone thinks so, a follow up question might be "How do you know?" or more simply, show me your data.

Dr. Robert A. Fall, CCRESA Special Education Director

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BOOKS FOR YOUR READING PLEASURE

The Data-Driven Classroom: How do I use student data to improve my instruction? (ASCD Arias) by Craig Mertler, published by Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2014. This book shares a systemic, universal process that shows teachers how to examine student assessment results to identify a curricular or skill area to target for instruction or revision.

The Use of Data in School Counseling: Hatching Results for Students, Programs and the Profession by Patricia (Trish) A. Hatch, published by SAGE Publications, November, 2013. The book provides Counselor templates for data collection, action-planning and reporting. It focuses on well-timed interventions based on data and student need.

Using Data to Improve Student Learning in School Districts by Victoria Bernhardt, published by Taylor & Francis, October, 2013. This book helps make sense of the data your school district collects, including student achievement results and qualitative and quantitative data. Includes an accompanying CD-ROM.

Data-Driven Instructional Leadership by Rebecca Blink, published by Taylor & Francis, January, 2014. The book outlines how to accomplish a culture of continuous improvement, high expectations and meeting the requirements of *No Child Left Behind*.

Student Achievement Goal Setting: Using Data to Improve Teaching and Learning by James Strong and Leslie Grant, published by Taylor & Francis, October, 2013. The book focuses on improving student achievement through goal setting. It offers tools and plans to use performance data and to improve instructional practices for improving student achievement.