

IDEA: CASELOAD/WORKLOAD

ACTION

Encourage your members of Congress to implement a study that would review provider caseloads, workloads, working environments, access to technology, and professional development in order to cultivate better service delivery models when reauthorizing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW?

Traditionally, administrators have viewed a school-based speech-language pathologist's workload as being almost exclusively synonymous with caseload. In reality, however, caseload is only one part of the picture. Adding a student to a caseload for direct services contributes a significant amount of time within the school day, week, or month must be allocated for additional important and required workload activities. School-based speech-language pathologists (SLPs) often have high caseloads. Extremely high caseloads often lead to less opportunity for planning and collaboration with other professionals, high levels of paperwork, greater attrition of practitioners, and difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified audiologists and SLPs to work in schools.

When establishing caseloads, administrators must consider the total number of workload activities required and performed by school-based audiologists and SLPs. ASHA does not recommend a maximum caseload number, but recommends taking a workload analysis approach to determine appropriate caseloads in order to ensure that students receive the individualized services they need to support their educational programs in accordance with IDEA.

WHAT YOU NEED TO SAY?

- The retention rates of special educators are abysmal in major part due to the challenging working conditions surrounding high caseloads/workloads.
- While there are various factors that contribute to personnel leaving the schools, there has been little research on the best practices for recruitment and retention of specialized support personnel.
- The federal government is the only entity large enough and with sufficient resources to support a study on caseload/workload.
- Identifying current innovative practices and promoting them will enable local governments to determine how to best serve their students.
- Currently, there are no defined approaches or strategies for states and local education agencies to implement and improve provider caseloads, workloads, and working conditions.

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