



SECTION 12

Miscellaneous and Helpful Information

The Minnesota Department of Education Work Load Task Force Report 1999-2000 “Workload Considerations for Effective Special Education” offers the following considerations. The entire report can be found on the MDE website.

Workload versus Caseload:

It is true that Minnesota school districts are not required to maintain certain caseload levels when students receive special education services outside of the mainstream less than 50% of the day (Federal Setting 1 and some Federal Setting 2 students) given current Minnesota Rule.

***Caseload* refers to the number of students with IEPs for whom the special education teacher is the IEP manager and each student is counted as “one” no matter the needs or severity.**

***Workload* refers to all of the responsibilities required of the special education teacher and is based on the severity of student needs.**

Some Minnesota districts have set caseload targets of 12 to 16 for elementary age students and 17 to 21 for secondary age students receiving special education services outside of the general education classroom for less than 50% of the school day (students in Federal Setting 1 and some Setting 2 placements).

Special education teachers’ caseloads have typically been determined by counting the total number of IEPs and then dividing by the number of special education teachers in a school or district. In some cases, districts have used their own weighted formulas. While these practices may result in reasonable workloads, more often they provide limited information about what affects the workload of individual special education teachers. Basing workload decisions on the number of students for whom a teacher is the IEP manager does not account for the variability and/or severity of student needs, the responsibilities required of a special education teacher, or what can reasonably be accomplished within the time constraints of the instructional day. Finally, the model of counting students only does not provide a systematic means for analyzing workload if conditions change during the school year.

In order to move away from the concept of caseload, the language of the field needs to change. There needs to be a recognition by special educators and administrators that caseload refers to the number of students with IEPs for whom the teacher is the IEP manager. Workload refers to all activities required of the special education position, and it more accurately reflects the relatively reasonable or unreasonable nature of an individual special educator’s position.

Components of the Workload Analysis Model

The basic model is:

Contact Minutes + IEPs Managed = Workload

Rather than recommend a maximum caseload based on the student's disability, number of IEPs managed, or levels of service, the *workload analysis model* is based on the severity of student need or the time required to meet the identified needs of the students related to his or her disability. This kind of analysis will allow a district to plan properly. Because excessive workload is not a universal problem in Minnesota, it is essential that any method for determining workload be responsive to the circumstances of individual special education teachers and the students with IEPs for whom the teacher is responsible. In so doing, this model is responsive to the needs of school districts and to individual special education teachers.

An effective *workload analysis model* identifies excessive workload when it occurs.

The workload analysis model, including worksheets and samples, can be located in the task force report on the Minnesota Department of Education website.