

Ohio's Caseload Ratio Project: The Results, The Implications, and Where Do We Go From Here?

Charles H. Carlin, The University of Akron
Bernadette Laughlin, Ohio Department of Education

May 2, 2014

Agenda

- ▶ History of Caseloads in Ohio
- ▶ Overview of Caseload Ratio Study and Results
- ▶ 3301-51-09: Two Prong Approach for Workload Determination
- ▶ Example Data Collection Process
- ▶ Activity: Use Data to Calculate Appropriate and Defensible Caseload Ratios



History of Caseloads in Ohio

- ▶ In 1982, teachers were located in special education classrooms
- ▶ Services were provided to students in those classrooms (units)
- ▶ Students were assigned by disability category
- ▶ Even students with mild needs were served using a “pull-out” model (LD tutors)
- ▶ Related services were provided using a “pull-out” model



History of Caseloads in Ohio

- ▶ In 2004, IDEA mandated that each school district must ensure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are nondisabled; and
- ▶ Special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily

20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(5)(A)



History of Caseloads in Ohio

- ▶ Following IDEA's 2004 mandate, service delivery has changed but caseload ratios in the Ohio Administrative Code have remained unchanged since 1982.
- ▶ In early 2008, when changes were made to the *Operating Standards for Ohio Agencies Servicing Children with Disabilities*, the stakeholders could not agree how to improve Ohio Administrative Code 3301-51-09 on caseload ratios for the delivery of services.

History of Caseloads in Ohio

- ▶ This impasse resulted in the formation of a Steering Committee
 - ▶ Educators;
 - ▶ Parents;
 - ▶ Special education and related service providers;
 - ▶ Children's advocates;
 - ▶ Staff representing state agencies;
 - ▶ Members of regulatory boards; and
 - ▶ Leaders of organizations.
- ▶ The Steering Committee was charged with:
 1. Gather information from research and stakeholders
 2. Analyze data
 3. Recommend rule changes to ODE



Caseload Ratio Study and Results

Steering Committee Recommendation #1

- ▶ ODE will incorporate a review of the service provider ratios into its existing monitoring process.

Status of Recommendation #1

- ▶ ODE tried to monitor ratios, but the reporting process needed to be refined.
- ▶ ODE postponed monitoring caseload ratios until the end of the Caseload Ratio Study.
- ▶ Monitoring has resumed.



Caseload Ratio Study and Results

Steering Committee Recommendation #2

Allow educational agencies to apply for the opportunity to participate in a study of alternative processes for calculating the FTE of service provider ratios within the ratios established by current rules.

- ▶ Office for Exceptional Children issued an RFP
- ▶ Selected educational agencies could receive up to \$35,000 to develop an alternative method to calculate service provider caseload ratios
- ▶ The RFP was issued with an October 2010 deadline, then again with a January 2011 deadline
- ▶ A second year of funding for implementation of the plan became available contingent upon:
 - Successful completion of year one
 - Review of the second year application



Caseload Ratio Study and Results

Status of Recommendation #2

- ▶ Awarded 21 LEAs from rural, suburban and urban areas
 - ▶ Traditional public schools, community schools and career centers.
- ▶ Studied the workloads and caseloads of ISs, SLPs, OT/OTAs, PT/PTAs, and School Psychologists.
- ▶ Developed various processes, standards, rubrics, weights, and formulas for calculating caseload ratios.
- ▶ Implemented a multitude of workload reducing strategies.



Results of the Caseload Ratio Study

Caseload Ratio Study- The Philosophy

- ▶ In order to ensure students received FAPE, the majority of LEAs developed their approaches based on one overarching workload philosophy:

**Time for
workload
duties +**

**Time for
services =**

**The total number
of hours in a
service provider's
work week.**



Caseload Ratio Study-The Approaches

- ▶ **Most LEAs used a hybrid approach**
 - ▶ **Productivity Approach**
 - ▶ A percentage of the service provider's time (60-90%) was devoted to direct and sometime indirect services.
 - ▶ A percentage of time was allocated for lunch and workload duties (e.g., documentation, assessment, planning, meetings).
 - ▶ Some LEAs used time ranges for direct IEP services (20-22 hours).
 - ▶ **Weighted Approach**
 - ▶ Students were weighted based on student characteristics, (e.g., grade, disability category), associated workload, and the level/frequency of services.
 - ▶ Students were equitably assigned to service providers by weights.
 - ▶ A predetermined number of weighted students was established as a fulltime equivalent.



Caseload Ratio Study

- ▶ Workload Approach
 - ▶ Workload duties were determined and quantified.
 - ▶ A predetermined and reasonable number of known duties were assigned to each provider.
 - ▶ “Non-essential” or overflow duties were reassigned in order to focus service providers on services.
 - ▶ Providers with “extra” time were given services or overflow duties.
 - ▶ Stipends given for some “overflow” duties (e.g., morning IEP meetings).



Caseload Ratio Study

- ▶ Homogeneous Student Grouping Approach
 - ▶ Students grouped by service delivery (e.g., general education with accommodations, co-taught classrooms, and resource rooms) or primary needs (e.g., intensively structured, technology based).
 - ▶ Obtained age range waivers.
- ▶ Other
 - ▶ Trained staff on referral, dismissal, and other special education procedures; RTI; co-teaching; roles and responsibilities of service providers; and accommodations/modifications.
 - ▶ Reduced the amount of unnecessary referrals, streamlined special education procedures and paperwork, and built capacity in the system.
 - ▶ Utilized co-planning with regular education staff or peers.
 - ▶ Professional development took the form of supervisors, mentors, trainings for regular education staff, on-going departmental meetings, and in-services.



Caseload Ratio Study: Desired Outcomes

Student Outcomes

- ▶ Students mastered or made adequate progress on IEP or intervention goals.
- ▶ Students passed core academic classes.
- ▶ On group standardized testing, majority of student test scores (75%) were at least proficient or clearly on track.

Provision of FAPE

- ▶ Students received specified IEP or intervention services including “make up” services.



Caseload Ratio Study: Desired Outcomes

Workload Indicators

- ▶ Worked a reasonable work week
 - ▶ Total hours worked each week were less than or equal to the total hours contracted to work plus 20% time.
 - ▶ No more than 7.5 hours in overtime for 37.5 hour week (FTE).
 - ▶ No more than 2 hours in overtime for a 10 hour week (part-time).
- ▶ Received full lunch and planning time



Caseload Ratio Study: Desired Outcomes

Stakeholder Perceptions

- ▶ Majority of service providers (90%) in the experimental group believed they could reasonably provide FAPE using the new approach.



Results

- ▶ **As a whole, the majority of approaches produced better outcomes than the traditional head count approach.**
 - ▶ Student outcomes
 - ▶ Provision of FAPE
 - ▶ Reasonable workweeks
- ▶ **The most promising approaches were developed by:**
 - ▶ Batavia, Crestview, Fredericktown, Wayne and Westerville Schools
 - ▶ Virtual School House
 - ▶ Montgomery Co. ESC
 - ▶ Tuscarawas County Board of DD



Caseload Ratio Study-Recommendations

- ▶ **Caveat: Methodological limitations and incomplete data prevented the research team from fully recommending one approach to ODE for universal adaption.**



Caseload Ratio Study-Recommendations

- ▶ Utilize a workload process approach that aligns with updated 3301-51-09.
- ▶ Use a team of stakeholders to collect data and calculate.
- ▶ Formulate caseload ratios using quantifiable data.
 - ▶ Number and type of workload duties
 - ▶ Data from IEP, intervention plans, and 504's on direct and indirect services
- ▶ Evaluate caseload ratios and workload duties on an ongoing basis.
- ▶ Implement workload reducing strategies to focus service providers' time on services.



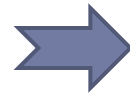
Caseload Ratio Study-Recommendations

▶ 29% (51/176) of service providers worked beyond a reasonable workweek.



▶ Need for professional development and guidance on 3301-51-09

▶ 72% (13/18) of LEAs consistently provided “extra services” to at least a quarter of the students



▶ Need for professional development and guidance on 3301-51-09



Changes to 3301-51-09



Changes to 3301-51-09

- ▶ Service provider ~~ratios~~ workload determination for delivery of services
- ▶ School districts, county boards of developmental disabilities and other educational agencies shall determine workload for an individual service provider based upon all of the factors set forth in subsections 1, 2, and 3 below.

Notice the focus on workload and not just caseload ratios!



Changes to 3301-51-09 (Subsection 1a)

- ▶ (I) Workload for an individual service provider shall be determined by following process, which incorporates the following components:
 - ▶ (a) All areas of service provided to children with and without disabilities, including ~~screening, assessment, consultation, counseling, training, and related duties in the school setting, intervention design, and educational interventions.~~ , but not limited to: school duties, staff meetings, professional development, supervisions, travel/transitions, screening, assessment, evaluation, progress documentation and reporting, secondary transition service planning, conference/consultation pertaining to individual students, documentation for individual students, and third party billing requirements.

Notice the expanded and more inclusive list of workload duties!



Changes to 3301-51-09 (Subsection 1b)

- ▶ (b) The severity of each eligible child's need, and the level and frequency of services necessary ~~for children to attain IEP goals and objectives~~ to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

Notice how much this subsection assumes all IEPs are written to reflect FAPE!



Changes to 3301-51-09 (Subsection 1c)

- ▶ (c) Time needed for planning in accordance with paragraph (A)(9) of rule 3301-35-05 of the Administrative Code, including statutory and/or contractual agreements applicable to the educational agency.

- ▶ **Paragraph (A)(9) of Ohio Admin. Code 3301-35-05 states the following:**

- ▶ Planning includes: designing work, evaluating student progress, conferencing and team planning, collaborative planning for the development of lesson plans, professional development and shared learning.
 - ▶ The schedule of a full- time equivalent service provider or intervention specialist with a teacher day of six hours or longer, excluding the lunch period, shall include two hundred minutes per week for the purposes of planning.
-



Changes to 3301-51-09 (Subsection 1c)

- ▶ ~~(d) Additional time for diagnostic testing and classroom observation; coordination of the program; parent, staff and agency conferences concerning individual children; staff development activities; and follow-up; and the demands of an itinerant schedule, including the number of buildings, the distance between the buildings, and travel.~~



Changes to 3301-51-09 (Subsection 3)

- ▶ (3) Related service providers for preschool and school-age children with disabilities shall provide ~~direct services~~ pecially designed instruction in accordance with the following ~~ratios~~ requirements limiting the number of students per licensed professional: ~~Additionally, consideration shall be given to paragraph (l)(l) of this rule. Indirect and direct services shall be provided in accordance with each child's IEP.~~



Changes to 3301-51-09 (Subsection 3f)

- ▶ ~~(f) A speech and language pathologist shall provide services to no more than eighty school-age children with disabilities; or no more than fifty school-age children with multiple disabilities, hearing impairments, or orthopedic/other health impairments; or no more than fifty preschool children with disabilities. Each school district shall provide services at a ratio of one speech and language pathologist per two thousand children as required by division (F) of section 3317.15 of the Revised Code.:~~

(i) Eighty school-age children with disabilities, or

(ii) No more than fifty school-age children with multiple disabilities, hearing impairments, autism, or orthopedic/other health impairments, or

(iii) No more than fifty preschool children with disabilities, or

(iv) A combination of preschool and school-age children with disabilities or children with multiple disabilities, hearing impairment, autism, or orthopedic/other health impairments proportionate to the ratios set forth in (1)(3)(f)(i), (ii), and (iii).



Waivers and Monitoring

- ▶ Waivers will only be granted for one year maximum
- ▶ Must submit a plan and timeline for bringing the district into compliance within one year and no later than June 30th of the school year the waiver request was granted
- ▶ OSEP's emphasis on Results Driven Accountability (RDA) focuses on the importance of data collection, results
- ▶ OEC's onsite monitoring teams will monitor for caseload/workload compliance as part of RDA



A Process to Consider Workload and Calculate Caseload Ratios
Charles H. Carlin, Ph.D., CCC/SLP
The University of Akron

1. Determine length of workweek and workday per provider.
2. Determine when students are available for instruction and services/interventions.
3. Determine standard deductions
 - a. Lunch
 - b. Planning time (at least 200 minutes a week or employment contract)
 - c. School duties
 - d. Staff meetings and professional development
 - e. Supervision and mentorship
 - f. Travel/transitions
 - g. Other (e.g., time allocated to administrative tasks, professional development of staff).
4. Ensure IEPs and 504 plans reflect FAPE.