



CSA TODAY

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Director's Blog

by *Scott Reiner, Executive Director*

Fall has arrived and the word for the season is "alignment." One definition of alignment is: a "position of agreement or alliance." The 1992 purpose statement for the CSA in the Code of Virginia speaks to creating a "collaborative system of services and funding." This is one expression of the vision for alignment held by the authors of the CSA and for over 25 years, we have collectively endeavored to bring this vision to reality.



Recent developments reflect current and renewed efforts to move our alignment forward. On September 17, the State Executive Council for Children's Services (the SEC) and the State and Local Advisory Team (SLAT) held a day long joint meeting to develop a two to four year strategic plan for the CSA.[1] The two groups prepared by learning more about the status of current activities within each of the major systems that serve children and families and engaged in meaningful discussions of how the SEC, SLAT, OCS and the groups represented by each participant can better align our work. With so much going on, alignment is critical – alignment between state agencies, local programs, public and private sectors, parents and families. The results of the discussions are now being digested, a draft Strategic Plan is being developed and the "finished" product will be presented at the December SEC meeting for final approval. I say "finished" because the environment is fluid and the implementation of the Plan will require flexibility as we move forward toward our shared goal of better outcomes for children and families.

In the spirit of alignment and collaboration, I want to make you aware of an exciting training opportunity to take place in the Spring of 2020. OCS, along with our state and local partners at VDSS, BDHBS, DMAS, DJJ, and DOE are planning a series of five regional learning collaborative events. Local and/or regional teams will be invited to come to learn about and plan together to enhance readiness to adopt and successfully implement evidence-based programs (EBPs). The focus will not be on any specific program, but the core steps needed to make the most of the new EBPs coming down the road through the family First Prevention Services Act, the Behavioral Health Redesign, the DJJ Transformation and the Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports. Please keep an eye out, just after the first of the year, for more information and the application process. The planning team intends for this to be the first step in cross-systems support for local EBP implementation.

As we head into the buzz of the upcoming legislative session, there is lots going on here at OCS. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me or any of the OCS team with questions or ideas.

[1] A special shout out to Nancy Toscano, Lindsey Layne, and Nancy Campos from United Methodist Family Services for the outstanding facilitation of the session.

SAVE THE DATE

9th Annual Commonwealth of Virginia CSA Conference

Waves of Change Oceans of Opportunity

October 29-30, 2020

Waterside Marriott Hotel & Convention Center
Norfolk, VA

Room blocks at the Marriott and Sheraton open January 1, 2020

Conference registration opens July 1, 2020

Visit www.cpe.vt.edu/ocs for more details

Planning is currently underway for the 9th annual Children's Services Act (CSA) Conference which will take place October 29-30, 2020, at the Norfolk Waterside Marriott Hotel and Convention Center, in Norfolk, Virginia. The conference, entitled "Waves of Change-Oceans of Opportunity," will celebrate the evolution that is currently taking place within Virginia's child-serving systems and help equip those in the CSA network with new skills and perspectives that will directly impact their ability to embrace new opportunities. Visit the conference web page or follow the "Annual Commonwealth of Virginia CSA Conference" on Facebook for more information.  

Training Calendar

CLICK **HERE** 

TO LEARN ABOUT TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE
THROUGHOUT THE STATE!!



CANS Update

by Carol Wilson, Program Consultant, OCS



Identifying and Rating Caregivers (Who, Why, and How)

If you are assessing a child and family using the CANS, it's important to understand not only **who** you should rate as "caregivers" but also **why** you're rating caregivers. All caregivers are rated on the "Caregiver Strengths and Needs" Domain. For families served by a local department of social services (LDSS), caregivers are also rated in the Child Welfare Domain. Let's look first at the "Caregiver Strengths and Needs" Domain.

Who are you rating?

Caregivers are birth parents, adoptive parents, relatives or fictive kin. Foster parents are **not** rated as a child's caregiver unless 1) parental rights have been terminated and the foster parents plan to adopt OR 2) if an older youth has remained in foster care. Agencies such as the LDSS or Court Services Unit as well as residential programs are not named or rated as caregivers.

Typically, the caregivers that should be rated are those individuals with whom the child is living, **except** foster parents unless as noted above, the foster parents plan to adopt. If a child is in foster care, you should rate the birth parents or other family members from whom the child was removed and/or to whom the child will return or be placed. These caregivers are usually the child's biological parent(s) and the goal is reunification. Or perhaps a grandmother has been identified as a placement option if the child cannot return home to his/her biological parents.

Why are you rating caregivers?

The purpose of rating the "Caregiver Strengths and Needs" Domain is to determine the ability of the parents or caregivers to appropriately supervise the child and ensure the child's needs are met, **even if the child is not currently living with that caregiver.**

If a child is out of the home in a residential placement or in foster care, the ratings should reflect how the **planned permanent caregiver** would be able to supervise and meet the child's needs at the time of the assessment, **i.e. if the child were placed at home with the caregiver on the assessment date.** This provides additional data to support either reunification, or the continuation of the child in placement as it will provide documentation which demonstrates the caregiver is not able to currently meet the child's needs. Or perhaps a relative is being considered as a possible placement and is rated as to how their strengths and needs at the time of the assessment would reflect their ability to support and care for the child.

The DSS Enhanced version of the CANS permits up to three caregivers to be rated to assist in concurrent planning. The Child Welfare Module was added to the DSS version of the CANS to allow for assessment of specific caregivers regarding protection and permanency. When you rate this module, you should consider **only the specific caregiver (or potential caregiver)** that you are rating. For example, if you are rating an aunt as a prospective caregiver, on the "Condition of the Home" item, you would rate the aunt's home. If an item does not apply (e.g., "Commitment to Reunification" for a child who is living with parents), rate a "0."

How do you rate older youth?

A frequently asked question is how to rate the Caregiver Domain and Child Welfare Module for older youth who do not plan to return home, and for whom the plan is to be self-sufficient. It may be helpful to rate the youth on the items in the Caregiver Strengths and Needs Domain (e.g., if this youth were living on his own today, how well would he be able to care for himself? Would he be able to safely self-supervise? Would he have stable housing? Does he have adequate transportation?) For LDSS youth, if this option is chosen, the Child Welfare Module would be rated all "0s." Another option for all older youth with the Caregiver Strengths and Needs Domain is simply to rate all "0s" as not applicable.

CANS Update (continued)

Case situations: Who should I rate as the caregiver(s)?

Choose the most appropriate caregiver(s) to rate in the following examples.

#1-Tony was removed from his birth mother due to allegations of neglect and placed in foster care. The goal is to reunite him with his mother. The paternal grandmother has also expressed an interest in caring for Tony if his mom is unable to do so.

- a. Birth mother
- b. Paternal grandmother
- c. Foster Parent
- d. Both a. and b.

#2- Jacob is placed in a pre-adoptive home with resource parents. Parental rights have not been terminated.

- a. Birth parent(s)
- b. Pre-adoptive parent(s)
- c. Both a. and b.

#3-Emily is a 19 year old youth participating in Fostering Futures. She resides in an Independent Living Arrangement supervised by LDSS.

- a. Emily
- b. No caregiver
- c. LDSS
- d. Both a. and/or b.

#4- Whitney is a 16 year old placed in residential through a CSA Parental Agreement. The goal is to return her home to her mother.

- a. Residential program
- b. Birth mother

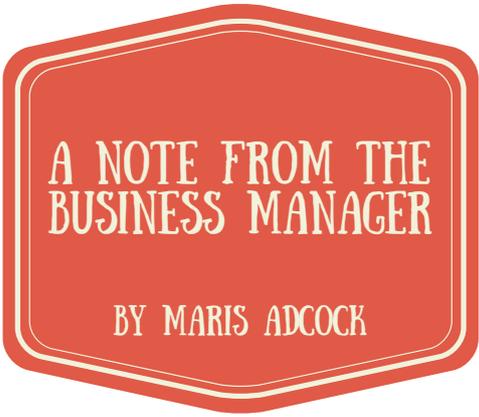
Correct Answers: 1. d, 2. c, 3. d, 4. b

FISCAL YEAR 2019 WRAP-UP

The FY2019 CSA program year ended at midnight September 30. The total CSA expenditures for FY2019 were \$418,208,262. This represents a 6.2% increase in expenditures over FY2018. In FY2019, there was a total of \$24,242,438 more in expenditures than in FY2018. Costs for private day special education and foster care were the biggest drivers of the cost increases in FY2019.

Thank you to everyone for your work in submitting your local CSA reimbursement data to LEDRS and closing the 2019 fiscal year. I look forward to working with you as we move forward into fiscal year 2020.

Thank you-
Maris



A NOTE FROM THE
BUSINESS MANAGER

BY MARIS ADCOCK



Guidelines for Newsletter Submission

If you have information you would like to share with your CSA colleagues around the state, please follow the guidelines for submission located [HERE...](#)



GUIDELINES

Audit Process Improvement: Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) Follow-Up

Audit Corner

by *Stephanie Bacote, Program Audit Manager, OCS*

The real value-added benefit of the audit occurs during QIP implementation and subsequent follow-up verification stages of the audit process. Community Policy and Management Teams (CPMT) and auditors should continuously monitor implementation of the QIP as a means to ensure reported audit observations are addressed appropriately and timely. Accordingly and in addition to follow-up verifications completed during the next scheduled audit, OCS' program auditors have relied on CPMTs to provide periodic status updates on the implementation of tasks documented in the QIP adopted and submitted to OCS following the issuance of the final audit report.

This process has not effectively functioned as intended. With few exceptions, CPMTs often did not provide the periodic updates necessary to achieve continuous monitoring and that would ensure timely resolution of reported deficiencies. Further, frequent and routine monitoring by program audit staff proved challenging due to resource limitations of the manually driven process. Therefore, OCS endeavored to bring about quality improvement in this stage of the audit process. An internal QIP was adopted that focused on the following tasks: identify, evaluate and acquire an automated solution to support continuous monitoring efforts. We are pleased to announce that these tasks have been completed.

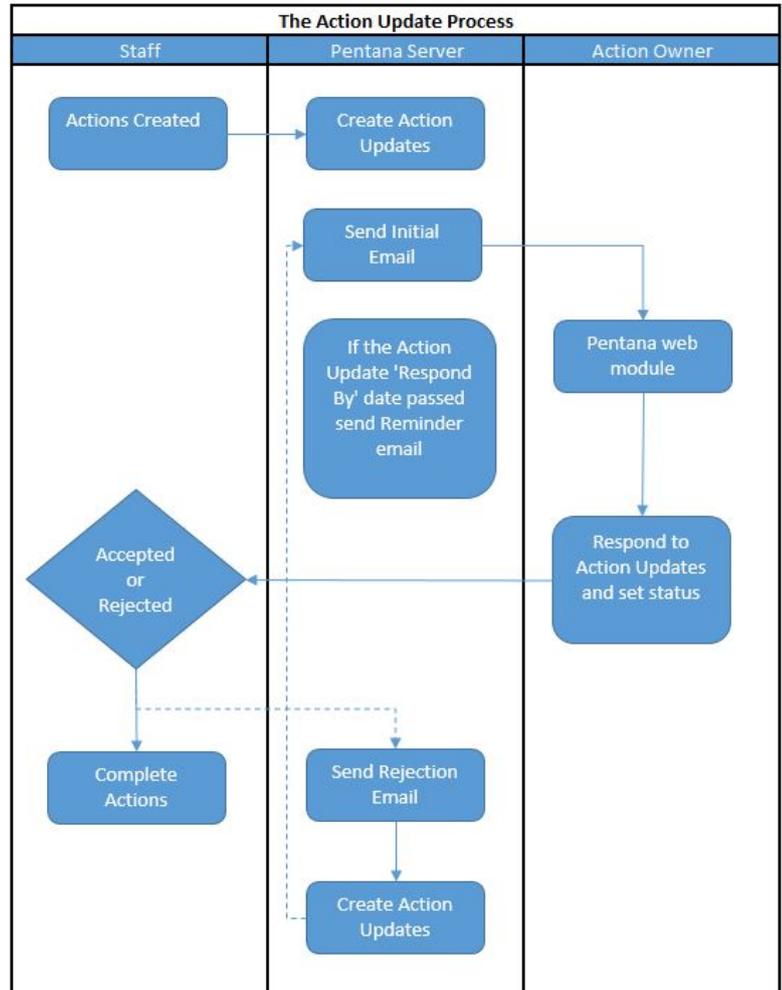
Effective July 1, 2019, OCS program auditors began using Pentana Audit Management Software. This software application includes a module referred to as "Action Tracking" that allows for timely and ongoing monitoring of the status of QIP tasks (i.e. action items). A primary feature of this tool is that it will automatically generate email reminder notifications to a designated CPMT representative instructing them to provide an update on the status of their QIP by a specified due date. The designated CPMT representative will then click on a link that will take them directly to the "action item" where they can record the status update. Subsequent reminders will continue until the action item is completed. This is a web-based solution and does not require the locality to provide any additional resources or support. It is very much similar to responding to an online survey. The process flow is illustrated below. This process will not be applicable to any audits completed prior to the start of the 2020-2022 audit cycle, which began on July 1, 2019. Thus, OCS will continue to track and monitor the status of those QIPs manually.

In the near future, we plan to offer a demonstration of the "Action Tracking" solution via webinar. Please monitor your email for notifications of scheduled events. We anticipate full implementation of this process by January 31, 2020. The Program Audit staff and OCS' senior management are very excited to have this added resource. We are certain it will be an excellent complement to OCS' ongoing quality assurance and monitoring efforts.



Action Update Work Flow

The diagram below shows the normal work flow around Action Updates and has been included for information purposes only.



Spotlight on Success

by *Sophia Booker, Youth Development Coordinator, Project LIFE & Kristi Schabo, Program Consultant, OCS*

Youth MOVE Showcase



Youth MOVE Virginia hosted their 3rd annual showcase in July and it was a huge success! This year's theme "Indestructible Resiliency" was highlighted throughout the night through artistic expression. There were over 130 people in attendance to see the Youth MOVE group share their story and experiences through dance, music, poetry and more. Youth resiliency shined throughout the night beyond measure! Words and pictures doesn't come close to the magic that was emulated in the room during the showcase; it was truly something special! Youth dedicated their time to plan this event. From decorations to food, the youth were a part of the planning process to make this event happen!



The showcase was a true example of the power of youth voice and how it is brought to light. Congratulations to all the youth and youth leaders Sophia Booker and Ana Tello-Durán, Brandi Tinsley, and Amanda Long for another successful showcase!

Youth MOVE Virginia (YMV) is a contractual agreement between the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) and NAMI Virginia for youth and young adults launched in 2014. Youth MOVE (Motivating Others through Voices of Experience) is a platform for young people to share their story and inspire others. YMV is Virginia's Statewide Youth Network and voice for young people with systems experience. In addition to the mental health system, YMV is open to youth and young adults who have experience in the child welfare, education or juvenile justice systems, including foster care and substance use/recovery services. Their mission is to support a grassroots peer network for youth and young adults to be empowered, active guides in their own care, while advocating for mental health policy and programs that are specific to their unique needs and experiences. They envision a culture that emphasizes community engagement, resiliency and unconditional support for youth and young adults throughout the state.

More information on Youth MOVE VA can be found at:
<https://namivirginia.org/programs/youth-young-adults-youth-move-virginia/>



Resource Round Up



Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center

The Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) builds positive futures for Virginia's children by working collaboratively with families, schools, and communities in order to improve opportunities for excellence in education and success in school and community life for children with disabilities and their families. They accomplish this by providing:

- Services and support for families and professionals;
- Easy-to-understand, research-based information and training; and
- Opportunities for strategic partnerships and advocacy for systemic improvement.

PEATC assists families in creating, developing and maintaining collaborative partnerships with the systems and professionals involved in their child's life. PEATC assists parents in navigating special education in Virginia and works to support parents in advocating for their child through the effective communication of their child and family's needs. PEATC also supports families in fostering self-advocacy and self-determination in their children.

Along with supporting families, PEATC offers support to professionals through the delivery of consultation and high-quality training sessions on topics such as:

- The Medicaid waiver system in Virginia;
- Understanding the strengths and dreams families have for their children;
- The provision of effective and innovative services; and
- The power of partnerships and successful collaboration.

More information about PEATC, as well as upcoming training opportunities can be found on the PEATC website, at: <http://www.peatc.org/>. PEATC training opportunities can also be found on the OCS Training Calendar.



The Office of Children's Services (OCS) strives to provide valuable resources to stakeholders through the OCS resource library (on the CSA website) and the Virginia Learning Center. Our most recent Learning Center release is a finance training, entitled "CSA Financial Procedures for Local Government." This module was created for local CSA finance staff and covers the foundations of CSA finances and specific financial procedures for local governments. You can access the Commonwealth of Virginia's Learning Center from the applications area on the OCS home page (<http://csa.virginia.gov/>)

As you explore the OCS website, be sure to check out the newly updated CHINS Frequently Asked Questions, Fostering Futures Guidance, Primary Mandate Type (PMT Definitions), 2018 User Guide for the Children's Services Act (CSA User Guide); 2019 Policy Manual for the Children's Services Act; Model IFSP and UR Addendum; New Editions of CSA Today; Administrative Memos; Program Audit Reports, and CQI tools.

CQI Tools for CPMTs

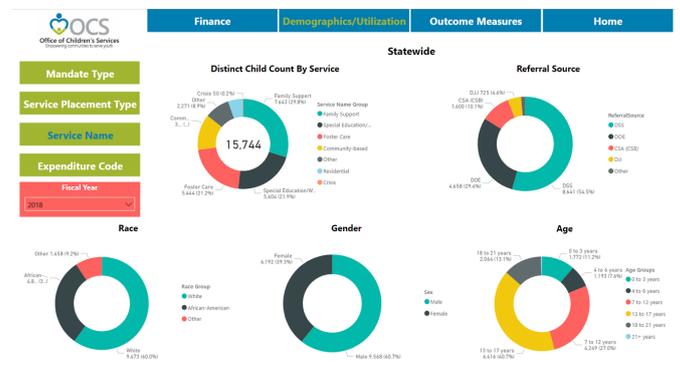
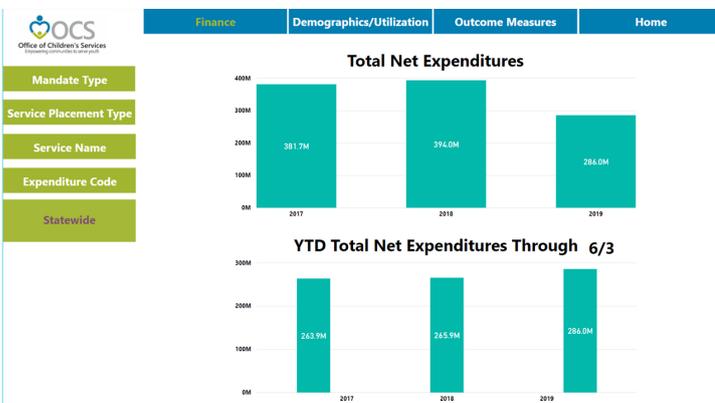
To provide CPMTs additional resources to monitor and enhance local CSA programs, the Office of Children's Services released a set of tools for Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). These tools are the result of a year of work, initiated by the State Executive Council (SEC) and under the leadership of a workgroup that included SEC members, local CSA Coordinators, the Virginia Municipal League, the Virginia Association of Counties, and OCS staff.

With guiding principles of providing a common language and easy to use tools for localities to address minimum requirements for utilization management, long-range planning, and regular review of program data with an eye toward program improvement, the following resources were developed and are currently available on the CSA website (<https://www.csa.virginia.gov/Resources/ContinuousQualityImprovement>):

- **A data dashboard** that brings all local CSA data into a single location, grouped under "Expenditures", "Demographics/Utilization", and "Outcomes" (thanks to OCS Senior Research Analyst Howard Sanderson)
- **A CQI documentation spreadsheet** that allows for localities to record their review of data, their impressions of that data and plans to address those findings
- **A set of terms and definitions**
- **A PowerPoint deck** from the training developed to accompany the tools

Training for CPMTs on the background, purpose, and use of these new tools is available to local programs from OCS (by request) so they may continue their efforts to use funds wisely, serve populations in need with the right resources, and achieve improved results from those efforts.

Please take a few moments to review the CQI tools. Don't hesitate to reach out to Zandra Relaford (zandra.relaford@csa.virginia.gov) with questions, comments, or to request training for your CPMT.



TA Questions of the Quarter

by Carol Wilson, Program Consultant, OCS



Can CSA pay for enhanced maintenance for a IV-E eligible child when IV-E disallows the cost due to the VEMAT not being done on time?

No. Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Foster Care policy does not permit **either** IV-E or CSA to pay when a VEMAT is not done in a timely manner, no matter the source of the child's maintenance funding (IV-E or CSA). See Sections 18.2.2.3 (referring to initial VEMAT) and 18.2.2.6 (Frequency of Administering the VEMAT) in the VDSS Foster Care Manual. Local-only funds must be used for these costs for the time frame for which there was no completed VEMAT. Once the VEMAT is completed, if the child is IV-E eligible, IV-E may resume payment going forward. If the child's maintenance is funded by CSA, CSA resumes payment of the enhanced maintenance.

This is a VDSS policy, not a CSA policy, so local DSS offices should be aware that CSA cannot pay due to requirements of their agency. CSA does not circumvent the policies established by the partner agencies such as VDSS.

How do FAPTs and CPMTs handle the transition of services and funding when a child moves to Fostering Futures?

As of July 1, 2019, Fostering Futures, the extension of foster care past the age of 18, completed its three year implementation. One previous area of concern that has been resolved is how to manage the transition to Fostering Futures when a foster child attains age 18. It is very important for local DSS and FAPTs to plan ahead when a foster child's 18th birthday is approaching.

The youth has 30 days to enroll in Fostering Futures as of his or her 18th birthday, which is done by agreeing to conditions stated in a Voluntary Continuing Support and Services Agreement (VCSSA). Eligibility for Fostering Futures is established as of the date of the last required signature on the VCSSA. Only the youth's signature and that of the LDSS Director, or designee, are required.

When foster youth enroll in Fostering Futures, their eligibility for Title IV-E is re-determined based on the youth's income. Some youth who were IV-E before turning 18 may no longer be IV-E eligible. Some youth may be determined IV-E eligible that previously were not eligible. There are time frames built into this process, including a time frame for referral to IV-E, and a 45-day period in which the IV-E determination is made. The child's previous maintenance source, IV-E or CSA, continues to pay during this time, assuming FAPT has recommended as needed, and CPMT approves. Funding for maintenance and services does not stop as of the youth's 18th birthday.

If a CSA youth is determined IV-E eligible under Fostering Futures, then that IV-E eligibility will extend back to the effective date of the VCSSA. If the youth is not determined IV-E eligible under Fostering Futures, the youth's maintenance will be funded by CSA.

As with maintenance, services should not end as of the foster youth's 18th birthday. FAPTs should plan ahead for these youth assuming that the youth will enroll in Fostering Futures. Services and funding that will continue past the youth's 18th birthday should be recommended by FAPT prior to the youth's 18th birthday. CPMT may authorize these expenditures. If the youth does not enroll in Fostering Futures within 30 days of his/her 18th birthday, then authorization for services and funding is not needed and void.

Private Day Cost Study



The Virginia General Assembly directed the Office of Children's Services (OCS), the state administrative agency for the Children's Services Act, to conduct a cost study for private day special education programs. OCS through a Request for Proposals, contracted with Public Consulting Group, Inc. (PCG) for this effort.

Since October 2018, PCG has been engaged with OCS and individual private day special education service providers to collect, analyze, and compile cost data to inform a rate setting methodology. The report incorporates the results of that work and includes:

- a national environmental scan of funding mechanisms for private day special education programs;
- the cost and personnel data collected to inform this study, as well as data quality assurance processes, and results from the cost study;
- stakeholder engagement activities and feedback collected during those sessions; and
- a proposed rate methodology along with study limitations and future considerations, including the impact of recommendations on local school districts, local governments, and public and private educational services providers.

Key Data

In collaboration with OCS and service providers, PCG developed cost and personnel data collection tools. PCG provided training for educational providers on how to complete the tools and ongoing technical assistance throughout the data collection period.

- Approximately 40% of individual schools provided data.
 - 39 schools reported some data on at least one tool (cost or personnel).
 - 58 schools did not participate.
- Responding schools accounted for 2,625 students out of 4,100 students funded by CSA in FY2018 (approximately 64% of the overall private day school student population).

Proposed Methodology

Operating Costs

Operating costs included expenditure data related to the day-to-day costs of operating the school. These costs were inclusive of 22 components including depreciation, mileage, and property damage but exclusive of staff salaries and benefits as well as subcontractor costs. To make meaningful comparisons between schools, each school's operational costs were divided by the number of student days they reported. This provided a method to normalize the data and compare how costs might increase or decrease based on the total student days.

Personnel

The personnel component of the daily rate is composed of salary costs and benefits including healthcare, personnel taxes, retirement, worker's compensation, and other fringe benefits. These costs were collected using a personnel survey sent to each school. The survey allowed schools to report the salary and benefits for each person employed by the school as well as their profession. These professions were reported at a granular level and were grouped into 11 unique categories.

Private Day Cost Study

CONTINUED 

Major Findings and Recommendations

- Funding for private day special education programs is managed uniquely from state to state. Rates often vary considerably within and between states with states deploying various methods for developing rates.
- To develop school and/or program specific rates for Virginia's private day special education schools, a secondary round of data collection mandated by the State is recommended. While the data collected during the engagement was sufficient to inform the development of a proposed rate methodology, a full set of expenditure and personnel reports is necessary to calculate specific rates. Full participation is critical to accurately reflect provider costs associated with delivering services. Non-participation could result in skewed base rate calculations and trend line adjustments, and, ultimately, rates that over or under fund programs.
- Future data collection efforts provide a detailed breakout of indirect costs (from Parent Organization).
- The addition of a logic-check to each component to ensure only those costs incurred by each school will be built into the school's rate.
- A geographic approach to rates be developed, where each state defined region would have a unique set of base rates derived from the costs of providers specific to that area. Few nationally or state recommended geographic indices are available to adjust rates, and the data collected in this study were not sufficient to analyze geographic differences due to the low response rate.

The complete Cost Study of Private Day Special Education Programs report can be accessed at:
<https://rga.lis.virginia.gov/Published/2019/RD424>

Happy Halloween from OCS



Don't forget....along with a variety of resources, you can find contact information for the Office of Children's Services staff as well as local CSA Coordinators, CPMT Chairs, Fiscal Agents, Report Prepares, and DSU/RAs on the OCS website.

Just visit <https://csa.virginia.gov>, click on the "Contacts" tab in the upper right-hand corner. You can also submit question to the OCS Help Desk and request On-site Technical Assistance from that tab as well.