

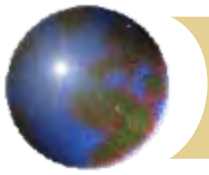


Work Load Plans for Special Educators: Navigating the Process Effectively

Adapted from the following:

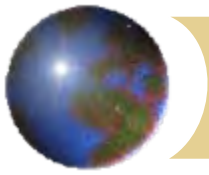
Work Load Plans: How to Navigate the Process Effectively, a presentation at the 2008 IAASE Spring Conference by Dr. Judy Hackett, Dr. Tim Thomas, Bennett Rodick & Mike Loizzi, and

Work Load Plans for Special Educators: “The Sequel,” an NSSEO Workshop by Dr. Judy Hackett & Cathy Kostecki



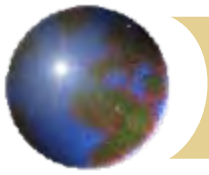
Presentation Objectives

- ⊕ Review work load requirements in the state special education rules
- ⊕ Review the four key elements to be analyzed in developing a work load plan
- ⊕ Provide a suggested flowchart for the process
- ⊕ Review data collection sources to use for work load planning
- ⊕ Review possible implications for labor relations



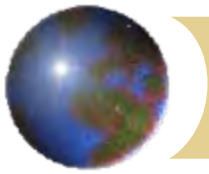
This presentation is NOT:

- ❖ A “one size fits all” plan
- ❖ Legally binding
- ❖ Only about regulatory requirements
- ❖ The only way to do a work load plan
- ❖ Focused on the bare minimums



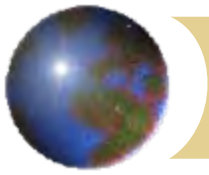
This presentation IS:

- ✚ Intended to provide clarity
- ✚ Share examples for different levels
- ✚ A best practice approach to ensuring that special education service needs in your district can be met through a collaborative, coordinated integration of staffing allocations, resource flexibility and articulation of service delivery



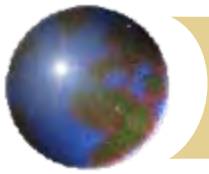
Presentation Outline

- ⊕ Rationale for Change
- ⊕ Plan Requirements (State Rules)
- ⊕ Plan Development
 - ⊞ Example Components
 - ⊞ Process Example
 - ⊞ Activities Analysis
 - Components/Factors to Consider
 - Definitions
 - Data Collection
- ⊕ Resources
- ⊕ Possible Implications for Labor Relations



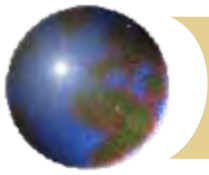
Rationale for Change

- ⊕ Changing practices
- ⊕ Impact of “caseload” size on:
 - ⊞ Special educators
 - ⊞ Students



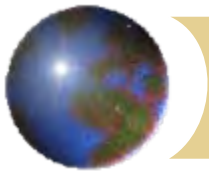
Changing Practices

- ✿ Illinois' special education rules previously equated class size and "caseload"
 - ✿ As educational practices changed, e.g.,:
 - ▣ Focus on increased access to general curriculum
 - ▣ Grouping students based on needs, not labels
 - ▣ Shifting focus of class size from student labels to amount of time students receive special education support
 - ▣ Use of co-teaching approaches to instruction in order to address students' needs
- ISBE identified a need to separate class size from "caseload"



Caseload in Special Education: An Integration of Research Findings (Russ, Chiang, Rylance, Bongers, 2001)

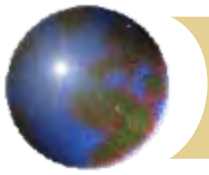
- ❖ Increase in caseloads = increase in meeting times and paperwork demands
- ❖ Researchers suspect that large caseloads contribute to the high attrition rate among special educators
- ❖ 10% of all special educators left teaching within 6 years



Caseload Concerns in Special Education

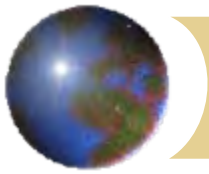
- Priority for professional and advocacy groups
- Caseloads have become “unmanageable”
- 72% of special education teachers reported large caseloads negatively impacted ability to meet student needs
- Larger caseloads are perceived to diminish student outcomes on IEPs

American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA), 2002



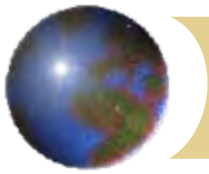
Impact on Students

- ✚ Larger caseloads increase group size and minimize opportunities for academic success
- ✚ Caseloads need to account for the severity of the student's needs and the age of the students
- ✚ Smaller class sizes promote higher levels of engagement



Given these and other factors...

- ❖ In addition to separating class size from caseload, ISBE undertook efforts to shift the focus from *caseload* to *work load*
- ❖ Changes were made in the state special education rules (23 IL Admin. Code 226, effective June 28, 2007, except where otherwise specified)



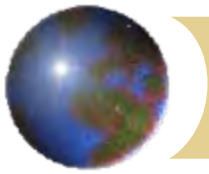
Work Load:

Caseload \neq Work Load

- **Caseload:** A “Head Count” – the number of students with an IEP for which a special educator is responsible.

Speech/language - the only group of special educators that had a specific number identified (both previous and current rules)

- **Work Load:** All of the responsibilities required of special educators; is based upon the severity of the students' needs.

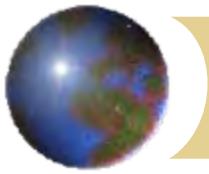


State Rules: 23 IL Admin. Code 226.735

Work Load for Special Educators

In order to provide students with IEPs the free, appropriate education to which they are entitled, each entity subject to this Part shall adopt a plan specifying limits on the work load of its special educators so that all services required under students' IEPs, as well as all needed ancillary and support services, can be provided at the requisite level of intensity.

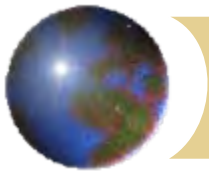
a) Each plan shall be developed in cooperation with the entity's affected employees and, where there is an exclusive representative, in accordance with the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act (IELRA) [115 ILCS 5]. Each plan shall take effect for the 2009-10 school year, or as soon as possible after that date, if a later date is necessary to comply with an agreement under the IELRA in effect at the beginning of that school year.



Section 226.735 continued

- b) Each plan shall be based on an analysis of the activities for which the entity's special educators are responsible and shall encompass, but need not be limited to:
 - 1) Individualized instruction
 - 2) Consultative services and other collaborations among staff members
 - 3) Attendance at IEP meetings and other staff conferences
 - 4) Paperwork and reporting

- c) The number of children served by a speech-language pathologist shall be based on the speech-language needs of each child. The other provisions of this Section notwithstanding, at no time shall the caseload of a speech-language pathologist exceed 60 students.



Plan Development: Example Components

✚ Introduction

- ▣ What are the requirements in the state rules?

✚ Purpose

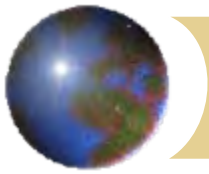
- ▣ What does the work load plan need to accomplish?

✚ Participants/Stakeholders

- ▣ Who is developing the plan?

✚ Work Load Analysis/Data Collection

- ▣ How are you looking at special educators' work load?



Plan Development: Process Example

Leadership team develops draft work load plan utilizing supportive resources including legal counsel, special education requirements, business department, professional groups, etc.



Share plan with Administrative Team



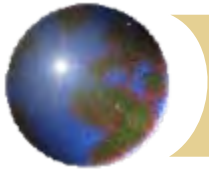
Review work load plan with relevant stakeholders for discussion and input including member districts, special educators, Board members, general education staff, supervisors and coordinators, parents, principals, union members, etc.



Accept or modify plan based upon discussion and input.

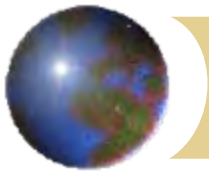


Present final plan to the Board for adoption.



Example Leadership Team Members

- ⊕ Central Office Administrators
- ⊕ Building Principals
- ⊕ Coordinators
- ⊕ Department Heads
- ⊕ Special Education Staff Members



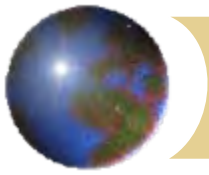
Plan Development: Analysis of Activities

- For each of the four activities:

- Individualized instruction
- Consultative services and other collaborations among staff
- Attendance at IEP meetings and other staff conferences
- Paperwork and reporting

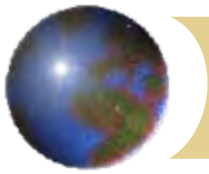
Address the following:

- Activity description
- Current staffing
- Assessment
- Recommendation (if any)



Individualized Instruction

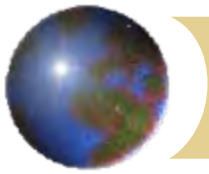
- ⊕ Components/Factors
- ⊕ Definition
- ⊕ Data Collection



Individualized Instruction:

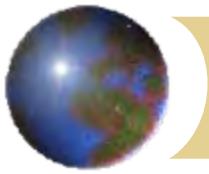
What is it?

- Instruction of each individual student based on his/her unique learning style
- One of the key tenets of special education. The specific instruction and types of services provided to the student are tailored to fit the student and wholly depends on the educational needs of the student.
- Curriculum content and instructional materials, media, and activities designed for individual learning. The pace, interests, and abilities of the learner determine the curriculum.



Individualized Instruction

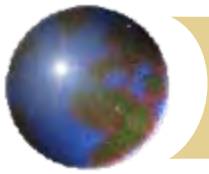
- Examples of Components/Factors to Consider
 - IEP direct service minutes
 - Intensity of service delivery
 - Severity of student needs
 - Interventions
 - Master & building schedules
 - Individual schedules
- Sample Definition: Individualized instruction is the amount of student contact time needed to provide instructional services which meet the individual needs of each student.



Individualized Instruction

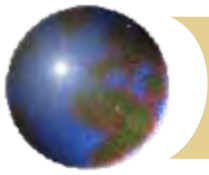
✚ Example of Work Load Plan Language (from NSSEO):

Individualized instruction is the amount of instructional services needed to meet the unique needs of each student and/or the unique instructional delivery system in each program. The amount of direct service minutes delineated on each student's IEP will be taken into account, as will the intensity of services needed and/or the severity of the student's disability as delineated on each student's IEP.



Individualized Instruction: Data Collection Example

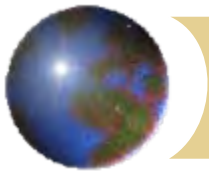
- ✚ Data collected yearly
- ✚ Data sources may include but are not limited to:
 - ▣ IEP minutes
 - ▣ Individualized schedules
 - ▣ Master schedules
 - ▣ Class size
 - ▣ Service delivery models



Individualized Instruction: Appendix

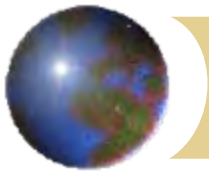
Data Sources

- State Special Education Class Size Rules
(23 IL Admin. Code 226.730, effective
for the 2009-2010 school year)
- Master, Building and Individual
Schedules
- Direct IEP Service Minutes



Individualized Instruction: Examples of Schedules to Review

- ✿ Master Schedules
- ✿ Individual Schedules
 - ▣ Teachers
 - ▣ Related Service Staff
 - ▣ Paraprofessionals
- ✿ Team Schedules
- ✿ IEP Meeting Schedules

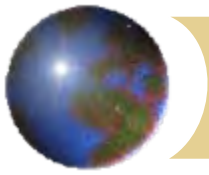


Individualized Instruction: Sample Survey

Questions for Related Services

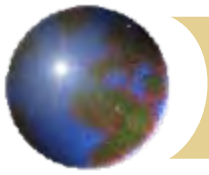
- Indicate the number of classrooms you are assigned to serve.
- Indicate the number of students assigned to your class or caseload.*
- Indicate the number of school buildings you are assigned.
- What are the total number of IEP minutes you are responsible to meet?
- How many students are in a group when you are providing services?

**The term "caseload" is still used here and on other sample survey items in recognition of historical procedures used to assign students to staff and staff familiarity with the term.*



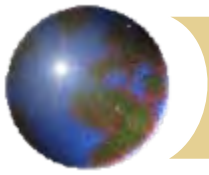
Individualized Instruction: Sample Survey Questions for LBS1 Teachers

- ⊕ Indicate the number of students in each of your classes.
- ⊕ Indicate the number of students assigned to your caseload.
- ⊕ Estimate the percentage of time daily you deliver services to your students using the following:
 - ⊞ 1:1 instruction
 - ⊞ Small group
 - ⊞ Whole group



Consultative Services & Other Collaborations

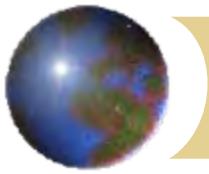
- ⊕ Components/Factors
- ⊕ Definitions
- ⊕ Data Collection



Consultation and Collaboration

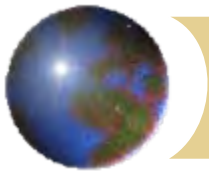
- ✿ “Successful special educators are masters of collaboration” (Fisher, Frey, and Thousand, 2003)





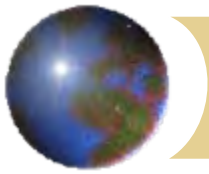
Consultative Services & Other Collaborations

- ✿ Examples of Components/Factors to Consider
 - IEP consult minutes
 - IEP supplementary aids and services
 - Team meetings
 - Parent communication
 - Communication and collaboration with private providers
 - Problem-solving meetings
 - Modeling and training
 - Material preparation
 - Professional development



Sample Definition of Consultative Services & Other Collaborations

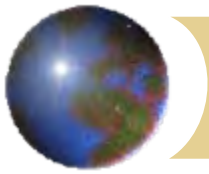
- ⦿ The amount of minutes delineated for a special educator to consult with service providers to effectively deliver the student's IEP
- ⦿ The amount of time needed to discuss a student's instructional program with staff members, administrators, parents, and private providers on behalf of the student



Consultative Services & Other Collaborations

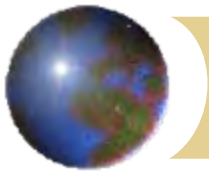
- Example of Work Load Plan Language (from NSSEO)

Consultative services may be indicated on a student's IEP and refer to the amount of minutes delineated for a special educator to consult with service providers to effectively deliver the student's IEP. Consultative services also refer to the amount of time needed to discuss a student's instructional program with staff members, administrators, parents, and private providers on behalf of the student. Additional collaboration may include but is not limited to, weekly team meetings, common planning times, regular parent communications, problem-solving meetings, modeling and training with team members, and instructional service modifications and accommodations.



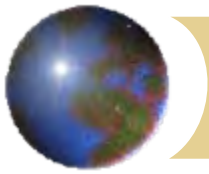
Consultative Services & Other Collaboration: Data Collection Example

- ⊗ Data collected on a yearly basis
- ⊗ Data sources may include but are not limited to:
 - ⊠ IEP consultative minutes
 - ⊠ Number of buildings
 - ⊠ Parent communication needs
 - ⊠ Amount of material preparation
 - ⊠ Training needs (individualized and building-based)
 - ⊠ Number of private providers
 - ⊠ Number of teachers assigned to work with



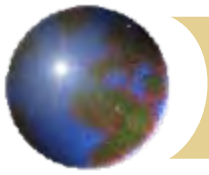
Consultative Services & Other Collaboration: Sample Survey Questions for Related Services

- Estimate the number of minutes weekly you engage in consultation or collaboration services with team members and/or professionals on behalf of your students.
- What is the number of staff/team members you consult with or plan with on a weekly basis?
- What is the average number of private providers per student that you typically communicate with per month?
- What is the average number of parent contacts per student that you make per month?



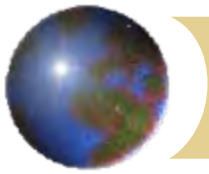
Consultative Services & Other Collaboration: Sample Survey Questions for LBS I Teachers

- Estimate the number of minutes weekly you engage in consultation or collaboration services with team members and/or other professionals on behalf of your students.
- What is the average number of private providers per student that you typically communicate with per month?
- What is the average number of parent contacts per students that you make per month?
- What is the average amount of time you spend on parent communications per student on a weekly basis?



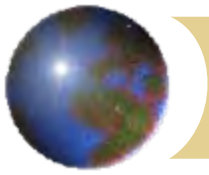
Attendance at IEP Meetings & Staff Conferences

- ⊕ Components/Factors
- ⊕ Definition
- ⊕ Data Collection



Attendance at IEP Meetings & Staff Conferences

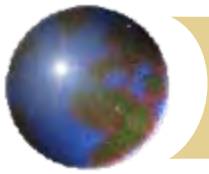
- Examples of Components/Factors to Consider
 - Actual attendance required at IEP meetings averaged over the school year. Included are:
 - Annual Reviews
 - Transition Meetings
 - 3-year Reevaluations
 - Domain Meetings and
 - Any additional IEP meetings.
 - Attendance at required problem-solving meetings or staff conferences pertaining to the planning of special education services and/or the analysis of student data.



Sample Definitions of Attending

- ⊕ The number of times a person attends.
(Merriam Webster)
- ⊕ The frequency with which a person is present. (Answers.com)

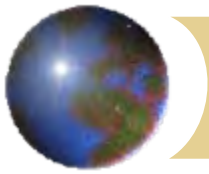




Attendance at IEP Meetings & Staff Conferences

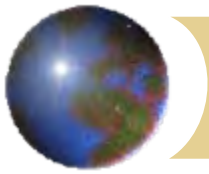
- Example of Work Load Plan Language (from NSSEO)

Staff members are required to participate in student IEP meetings including annual reviews, 3-year reevaluations, Transition Plans, and Domain meetings for students assigned as part of a special educators' case load as well as student IEP meetings or problem-solving meetings in member districts as assigned. Staff and parent conferences pertaining to the planning of special education services and/or the review/analysis of data driving student interventions will be considered as part of the work load time analysis for special educators.



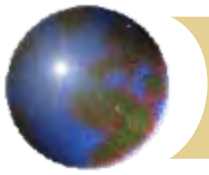
Attendance at IEP Meetings & Staff Conferences: Data Collection Example

- ⊕ Data taken on a yearly basis
- ⊕ Data sources may include but are not limited to:
 - ⊞ Number of IEP meetings
 - ⊞ Number of team meetings
 - ⊞ Number of planning meetings
 - ⊞ Number of data analysis meetings
 - ⊞ Number of additional parent planning meetings



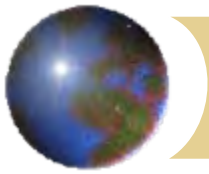
Attendance at IEP Meetings & Staff Conferences: Sample Survey Questions

- ⊕ How many IEP meetings are you scheduled to attend in the month of January?
- ⊕ How many IEP meetings do you typically attend or anticipate attending annually?
- ⊕ What is the average length of time in minutes for scheduled IEP meetings?
- ⊕ What is the average length of time in minutes for team meetings and problem-solving meetings?



Paperwork & Reporting

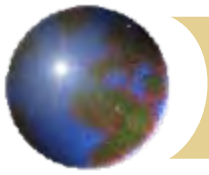
- ⊕ Components/Factors
- ⊕ Definitions
- ⊕ Data Collection



Paperwork & Reporting

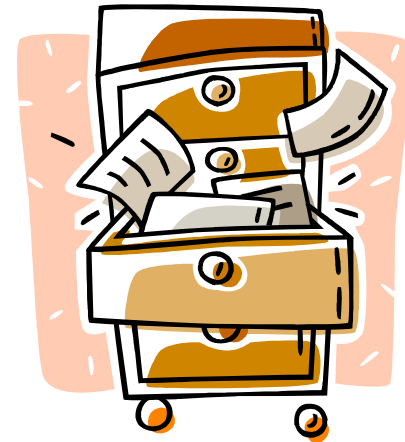
✚ Examples of Components/Factors to Consider

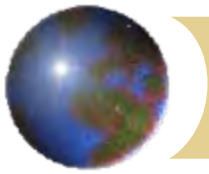
- ▣ Time needed to complete IEP forms averaged over the school year
- ▣ Time needed to complete evaluation reports and IEP goal updates averaged over the school year
- ▣ Data collection and analysis



Sample Definition of Paperwork

- Paperwork is related to student IEP development/progress monitoring and compliance, including compilation of information to complete each student's IEP and evaluations

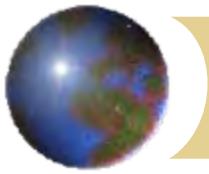




Paperwork & Reporting

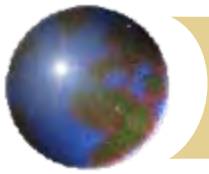
- Example of Work Load Plan Language (from NSSEO)

The collaboration and compilation of information required to complete each student's IEP and evaluations should be considered as part of a special educator's work load. The amount of time needed to complete paperwork is not a part of specific time delineated for individualized instruction. The IEP is an essential part of each student's instructional program and is mandated by federal law and state rules. A distinction must be made between required administrative paperwork and reports as part of the general education requirements and those unique to the work load of special educators.



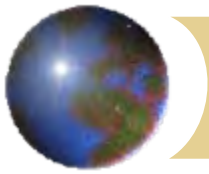
Paperwork & Reporting: Data Collection Example

- ⊕ Data collected on a yearly basis
- ⊕ Data sources may include but are not limited to:
 - Number of IEPs to be completed
 - Number of IEP goals/benchmarks
 - Number of data sources
 - Average amount of time needed to complete an IEP
 - Average amount of time needed to update goals and reports
 - Number of evaluations needed to be completed
 - Average amount of time needed to complete student reports



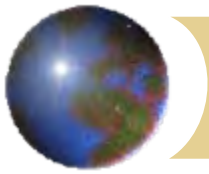
Paperwork & Reporting: Appendix Data Collection

- ⊕ Total number of IEPs
- ⊕ Number of goals/benchmarks
- ⊕ Estimated average amount of time to complete goal updates
- ⊕ Estimated average amount of time to complete IEP paperwork
- ⊕ Estimated average amount of time to complete written evaluations/social history/health update
- ⊕ Additional considerations



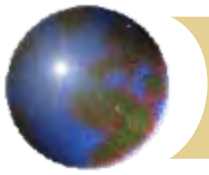
Paperwork & Reporting: Sample Survey Questions

- What is the average length of time you need in minutes (per student) to prepare your portion of the draft IEP prior to the scheduled IEP meeting?
- How many goals did you write for the 2008-09 school year?
- How many goals are you responsible to update on a quarterly basis? Also, indicate the average amount of time you need to update each goal in minutes.
- What is the average amount of time in minutes per student needed to complete a report for an eligibility conference?
- What are the other reports and/or paperwork requirements that you complete on a regular basis?
- What is the average amount of time you spend monthly completing reports and/or paperwork?



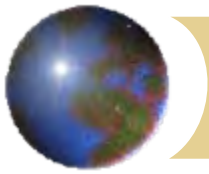
Examples of Scheduling Considerations

- ⊕ Contractual Planning Time
- ⊕ Lunch
- ⊕ Common Team Planning Time
- ⊕ IEP Meeting Schedule
- ⊕ Other Related Team Planning Schedule (for RtI/Problem Solving, Report writing, etc.)
- ⊕ Intervention Groups
- ⊕ Assessment/Observations, etc.



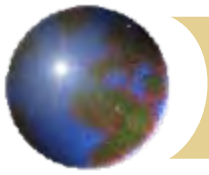
Possible Resources/References for Plan Development

- ✚ Certified/Licensed Staff Members
- ✚ ISBE Special Education Rules
- ✚ Professional Organizations
- ✚ Survey Monkey



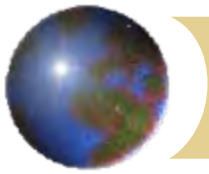
References/Resources (continued)

- ✚ School Social Work Association of America Resolution on School Social Worker staffing needs
- ✚ National Association of School Nurses Position Statement
- ✚ Recommended Practice for Occupational and Physical Therapists in Illinois Schools
- ✚ ASHA Position Paper



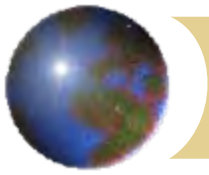
ISBE Guidance

- ✚ Each entity is responsible for developing a work load plan (no format will be provided by ISBE) and ensuring that it meets the requirements specified in the state rules
- ✚ Work load plans are not submitted to ISBE for review or approval
- ✚ Documentation of the work load plan must be maintained locally for review if necessary



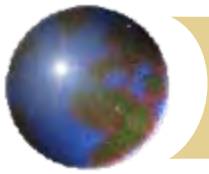
ISBE Guidance

- The work load plan is a fluid document and should be reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects current:
 - Responsibilities of special educators and
 - Instructional service needs of students
- What constitutes a “special educator”?
 - No definition in the state rules
 - Considered to include individuals such as special education teachers and other service providers, but there is no exhaustive list of the types of positions encompassed by the term
 - Critical factor is the type of services an individual is providing
 - Does not include general education classroom teachers



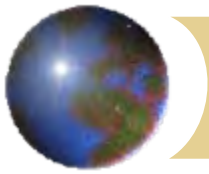
Possible Implications for Labor Relations

Information from Bennett Rodick & Mike Loizzi of
Hodges, Lizzi, Eisenhammer, Rodick & Kohn



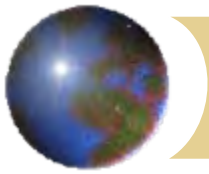
Legal Requirements Governing Work Load Plans

- You must have one
- You must have one in effect for the 2009-2010 school year (absent an agreement under the IELRA that would require a later adoption date)
- You must develop the plan in compliance with the IELRA
- You must develop the plan in cooperation with your affected employees
- You need to remember the rationale behind the Work Load Plan requirement
- Your plan must address at least the four activities listed in the state rules (individualized instruction, consultative services, attendance at IEP meetings and other staff conferences and paperwork and reporting)



What the State Work Load Rule is NOT

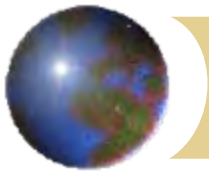
- ❖ A requirement to incorporate work load plans into your collective bargaining agreement
- ❖ A fixed formula for determining whether your current special education staffing is appropriate
- ❖ A requirement for any specific work load standard



How to Avoid Problems

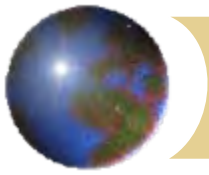
- ⊕ Be Active, Not Passive
 - ⊞ Develop the draft plan administratively
 - ⊞ Consider the legal implications up-front

- ⊕ Actively involve your labor representative



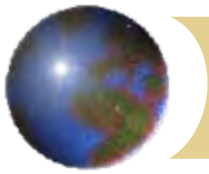
Labor Law Implications

- ✚ Much of what is considered in work load is already a mandatory subject of bargaining
- ✚ Development of a Plan "in accordance with the IELRA" does not mean that the work load plan must be part of your collective bargaining agreement
- ✚ Determine up-front how to engage your special educators and unions



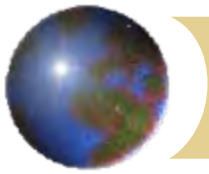
Strategies for Managing the Labor Implications

- Conduct informal consultation with affected unions
- Utilize standing labor/management committees to consider work load issues
- Determine which issues regarding work load are mandatorily bargainable
- Be aware of existing language in collective bargaining agreements regarding district policies or practices
- Beware of proposed contract language incorporating the final work load plan or referencing the work load plan
- Above all, be sensitive to your local labor relations situation and act accordingly



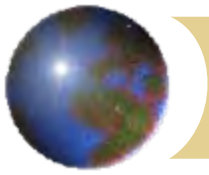
Parting Words of Wisdom

- ✚ Use the data that you currently collect to make staffing decisions
- ✚ Work collaboratively towards agreement
 - seek board approval to reflect process
- ✚ Be cognizant of how current bargaining agreement language may impact work load plan development
- ✚ There is no “one size fits all” plan



When their students achieve, special education teachers feel they are making a difference in the lives of their students and their families, and in the schools and communities, which was their motivation to become special education teachers in the first place.

C. Chambers



*Work for something that is good;
not just because
it stands a chance to succeed.*

V. Hivel