OREGON COMMISSION ON AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

Commission Update

Vol. 2 2013

What is the Commission Update?

This is the 2nd edition of a regular email newsletter updating you on the activities of the Oregon Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders and its Subcommittees.

What is in this edition?

- Information on the Autism Spectrum Disorder Specialization
- Recruitment for New Members

Autism Spectrum Disorder Licensed Specialist

In 2009, members of a legislative task force on Autism Spectrum Disorders traveled around the state to hear from individuals, families, and professionals from the autism community. One of the themes that emerged from those statewide hearings was concern about the lack of standardized qualifications for Autism Specialists in the public school system. In response, the Oregon Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders created an Educator Credentials Subcommittee comprised of representatives from the Department of Education, local school districts, Educational Service Districts, Teacher Standards and Practices, and Oregon institutions of higher education. The Subcommittee reviewed previous work on this topic, the most current national research and recommendations, and the activities of other states related to autism educator training and credentialing.

The Subcommittee chose to focus the ASD Specialization on those individuals whose role is specifically to train /coach other teachers. The ASD Specialization is not targeted to classroom teachers. The Subcommittee developed competency recommendations that were then shared widely with the education community. After comments were received, the amended recommendations were submitted to the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC), which made the final decision on the type of licensure and the eligibility standards. The specialization on a license for Autism Spectrum Disorder Specialist was approved by the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission in 2012.

To be eligible to be an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Licensed Specialist, an individual must 1) have a Basic, Standard, Initial, or Continuing Teaching License with a special education endorsement 2) have 3 years experience working with a range of ASD learners 3) complete an approved program for ASD Specialization. Individuals using the title Autism Spectrum Disorders

Specialist or Autism Specialist must have the specialization and meet the competencies approved by TSPC.

There are two options for meeting the requirement for completion of an approved program. One option is to participate in a university program. Although all the university education programs have agreed to the standards, currently, Western Oregon University and Southern Oregon University are the only ones to have been approved through TSPC to offer the coursework for the Autism Spectrum Disorder Licensed Specialist. The other option to receive the ASD Specialization is the Alternate Pathway, a portfolio based competency assessment. Western Oregon University has taken the lead in the state to offer the coursework and to begin using the Alternate Pathway process.

While it may take years to increase the number of educators with the ASD Specialization, the Oregon Commission believes this is a critical first step to improving educational services to students on the Autism Spectrum in Oregon.

For more information about the ASD Licensed Specialist and the Alternate Pathway:

Administrative Rules and description of the Specialization Standards and Competencies
http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/pages/rules/oars_500/oar_584/584_066.html

Requirements for meeting the Standards and Competencies through the Alternate Pathway

Questions and Answers about the ASD Licensed Specialist

Recruitment for New Members

The Oregon Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders is looking for new members to replace retiring Commission members. Membership on the Commission is through appointment by the Governor's Office. An application and instructions for submission can be found on the Governor's website: http://www.oregon.gov/gov/Pages/boards.aspx#How_to_Apply

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The Commission is specifically seeking individuals to fill the following slots:
Parent of a child under the age of 18; At-large member; and representative of an Advocacy Organization. Please indicate in your application which position you are applying for.

The Commission generally meets in Salem every other month for a full day. Members are encouraged to be active in at least one Subcommittee. For more information about the work of the Commission check the website at: http://www.orcommissionasd.org/

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