CSA TODAY

A NEWSLETTER OF THE OFFICE OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Director's Blog

Scott Reiner, Executive Director

Greetings to the "CSA Universe". It has been, and continues to be, quite a year. As the holiday season is upon us, I wanted to open this message with my heartfelt wishes that each of you, your families, and your communities make the time and space to acknowledge that we have much to be grateful for despite the challenges we face.

The last months of 2020 bring us much to contemplate here at OCS and the broader CSA community. The recently released and long-awaited JLARC report on CSA, particularly the private special education aspect of our mission, gives us much to think about. There are numerous recommendations to be considered by the General Assembly in the upcoming 2021 Session. The 18 JLARC recommendations are found in a separate article in this Newsletter, and the full report at http://jlarc.virginia.gov/.

Perhaps most striking, the everyday reminders of the importance of relationships in helping us maintain our sanity in these troubling times. The recently concluded virtual CSA conference was awash in Chat posts reflecting the importance of these relationships, even those made virtually. This reflects our basic human need for connectedness. There is nothing technical about this or anything that requires fluency in Zoom … It is in meeting these needs that we survive and we thrive, even during a pandemic. I have taken to reaching out over the phone, rather than just an extended e-mail exchange, to make connections that are more personal. Those conversations are typically the highlight of my day (and does wonders for keeping my e-mail box more manageable.) 🙂

We are continually re-examining how we provide training and technical assistance in the time of COVID. This month we held our first monthly OCS Office Hours to make us more accessible to our community partners and deepen our connections in less formal interactions. As you well know, there is no shortage of things to do … meetings to attend, data to crunch, reports to write, and practices to improve on. None of that important work happens outside of the context of our relationships with each other. I am thankful each day for the relationships that exist and those that are yet to be developed.

The OCS team is beginning to get our minds around how we can be a resource and provide leadership to our local programs and partners to identify and address issues of inequality and systemic racism in our child-serving systems. Each of us has a part to play in this critical work. We will be reaching out soon to discuss how we can collaborate with you to make our systems better reflect our shared values of equity.

Until next time ….

JLARC
JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT & REVIEW COMMISSION

Study of the Children's Services Act and Private Special Education Day School Costs

On November 16, staff from the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) presented their report, "CSA and Private Special Education Day School Costs," to the General Assembly members appointed to the Commission. The report results from an extensive study that included data analysis, interviews and surveys of state and local stakeholders, and national and historical perspectives.

The Office of Children's Services appreciates this thorough and thoughtful report and now looks forward to working with the General Assembly to implement the recommendations. The following information is drawn directly from the report. The full report can be found at http://jlarc.virginia.gov

WHAT WE FOUND

Spending on private special education day school services has driven overall CSA spending growth.

- Restricting use of CSA funds to private day school services could prevent children from receiving comparable services in a less restrictive setting.

- VDOE would be a more logical administrator of private day school funding.

- Private day school performance expectations should be comparable to those for public schools.

- CSA services benefit most children, but the multidisciplinary service planning process can delay the start of services.

- More children could be served through CSA.

- The CSA program could benefit from more well-defined OCS responsibilities and active OCS role.

The 18 specific recommendations are presented in an abbreviated form and reflect actions the General Assembly may consider in directing action by OCS, VDOE, or other parties.

Recommendations 1 – 9 address private day special education and 10 – 18 address the CSA program generally.

RECOMMENDATION 1
Make the annual reporting of tuition rates charged by private day schools a condition for private day schools to receive state funds.

RECOMMENDATION 2
Develop a standardized reporting process and template for private special education day school tuition rates to ensure that tuition rates can be accurately compared across schools and over time.

RECOMMENDATION 3
Allow Children's Services Act pool funds to pay for services delivered in the public school setting for students enrolled in a private special education day school or residing in a residential treatment facility to help transition students back to public school.

RECOMMENDATION 4
Allow the use of Children's Services Act funds for services delivered to students with disabilities in public schools if the school IEP team has determined that the services may prevent a more restrictive placement.

Study of the Children's Services Act and Private Special Education Day School Costs *(continued)*

RECOMMENDATION 5

Transfer funding for private day school placements to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) effective July 1, 2022 and direct the VDOE to develop a detailed plan to administer this funding.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Require the VDOE to direct that individualized education program (IEP) teams (i) identify any children with disabilities who may need additional services outside of the school setting and (ii) refer them to the local family assessment and planning team.

RECOMMENDATION 7

Prohibit the use of state funds for any private day school tuition payments to schools that are not licensed by the VDOE, or in the case of out-of-state schools, the respective state's licensing agency.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Direct VDOE to collect and publish the following data on each private day school annually: (i) number of teachers not fully endorsed in content they are teaching ("out-of-field"); (ii) number of teachers with less than one year of classroom experience; (iii) number of provisionally licensed teachers; (iv) educational attainment of each teacher; (v) number of career and technical education (CTE) credentials earned by students; (vi) accreditation status; and (vii) number of incidences of restraint and seclusion.

RECOMMENDATION 9

Directing the Virginia Board of Education to develop and promulgate new regulations for private day schools on restraint and seclusion that establish the same requirements for restraint and seclusion as those established for public schools.

RECOMMENDATION 10

Require local Children's Services Act (CSA) programs to measure, collect, and report timeliness data at least annually, and OCS should use the data to identify local CSA programs with relatively long start times for services, provide assistance to these programs, and notify Community Policy and Management Teams of their low performance relative to other CSA programs.

RECOMMENDATION 11

Require all local CSA programs to serve all children identified as eligible for CSA pool funds because of their emotional or behavior problems, regardless of their eligibility for sum-sufficient funding and to utilize the state CSA funds set aside for this purpose.

RECOMMENDATION 12

The State Executive Council (SEC) should form a committee composed of selected SEC members, State and Local Advisory Team members, and Office of Children's Services staff to assess the feasibility and efficacy of initiating an SEC-administered competitive grant fund to fill gaps in children's services.

RECOMMENDATION 13

Direct the Office of Children's Services (OCS) to provide for the effective implementation of the Children's Services Act program in all localities by (i) regularly monitoring local performance measures and child and family outcomes; (ii) using audit, performance, and outcomes data to identify local programs that need technical assistance; and (iii) working with local programs that are consistently underperforming to develop a corrective action plan that will be submitted to OCS and the State Executive Council.

Study of the Children's Services Act and Private Special Education Day School Costs *(continued)*

RECOMMENDATION 14

Collect annually from each local Children's Services Act program the number of program staff by full- and part-time status and the administrative budget of each program broken out by state and local funding to understand local program resources and target technical assistance to the most under-resourced local programs.

RECOMMENDATION 15

Direct the Office of Children's Services to develop and submit a plan to modify its staffing and operations to ensure effective local implementation of the Children's Services Act. The plan should include any new or different positions required, how those positions will be used to monitor and improve effectiveness, and the estimated cost of implementing the changes.

RECOMMENDATION 16

The Office of Children's Services should modify its Continuous Quality Improvement tool to allow local Children's Services Act programs to review metrics on a service and provider level, including changes in Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) scores, length-of-stay in services, and spending per child.

RECOMMENDATION 17

Design and administer a statewide survey of parents/guardians of youth who are receiving CSA services to obtain their assessment of how the program and the services it pays for has impacted their child's emotional and behavioral challenges.

RECOMMENDATION 18

Work with (i) the Department of General Services to determine the benefits and feasibility of a statewide contract for children's services and the types of children's services and service providers that would be included and (ii) the Office of the Attorney General to develop contracts to be made available to all local Children's Services Act programs where beneficial and feasible.

CANS and Service Planning Update:
We're Back!
Carol Wilson, Program Consultant

OCS is excited to announce the "CANS and Service Planning" training will be offered in a virtual format.

The tenacious nature of COVID-19 has required us to re-think the delivery of the "CANS and Service Planning" training. Before COVID-19, OCS Program Consultant Anna Antell and I launched this training, providing it on three occasions. Our fourth scheduled training was on March 13th but fate intervened on March 12th with an announcement by the Governor that all state training events were cancelled. Our scheduled event in Norfolk on April 30th was cancelled. As was our scheduled training for Nottaway and surrounding regions in June… and then even our trip "out west" to Floyd County and Norton in July.

Because of the continued interest, we've decided to offer the training virtually beginning in 2021. We have two events scheduled already! The training will be shorter than the in-person event, lasting about two hours. We're working on the curriculum changes with the goal of making it as interactive as possible.

Each time we offered the training, we reviewed the feedback and adjusted the content. Many CANS raters understand the basic logic of rating the CANS, but some express a lack of confidence in their ability to appropriately assess items. The first part of the training will focus on strengthening rating skills by better understanding how to rate the items in a meaningful way. If time permits, participants will also take a look at the individual and caregiver reports in CANVaS that case managers can access to monitor child and family progress. The second half of the training takes the participant to the logical next step of building a service plan based on a strong assessment.   CANS identifies the needs and strengths and service planning puts them to use in creating a plan developing SMART goals and objectives.

If you are interested in having your locality "host" one of these training sessions, please let us know.

Auditor's Corner

Audit Process Improvement: Auditing Remotely

Stephanie Bacote, Program Audit Manager

Due to pandemic restrictions that began in March 2020, CSA program audits have been limited to desk reviews that do not include the examination and evaluation of confidential client records. The ability to perform audit procedures onsite, particularly confidential records, is central to our standard audit process. Likewise, ensuring the health and safety of audit staff and local stakeholders is of utmost importance.

Uncertainty remains as to when we will be able to safely resume normal operations. In light of this uncertainty, we have reengineered the audit process such that it is suitable for operating in a remote environment. The remote auditing process will replace our standard audit process until such time as pandemic restrictions that encourage working remotely have been lifted. The exhibit below provides a complete description of the remote auditing process from start to close of the engagement.

The formal implementation of the remote audit process is effective December 1, 2020. For questions about the remote audit process, contact Stephanie Bacote, Program Audit Manager. Contact information is available on the CSA website. Thank you for the work you are doing in your communities and please remain safe through using the recommended precautions.

EXHIBIT: REMOTE AUDITING PROCESS		
PLANNING & COORDINATION		• Communications with audit clients will occur by email and tele/videoconference. • Entrance conference presentations to discuss the audit period, objectives, and scope shall be via videoconference, where feasible. 　○ CPMT meetings by phone or video conference. 　○ Google Meets scheduled by the auditor (if other than a scheduled CPMT meeting). Audit client will provide the auditor with an invitation list. • The auditor will email a request for information to the CSA Coordinator and CPMT Chair using encrypted email. • The CSA Coordinator will forward the requested documents as attachments, using the reply function of the encrypted mail. All documents including confidential and sensitive information must be encrypted/password protected upon transmission. • Questions regarding coordination of the audit engagement should be directed to the assigned auditor-in-charge.
FIELD-WORK	**General Audit Procedures**	Audit staff will objectively evaluate alternate procedures adopted locally to ensure continuity and access to services and funding impacted by COVID-19
	Client Case Reviews	Localities will be asked to scan (paper to .pdf) a select number of files for audit examination that will be transmitted to the auditor securely (password protected/encrypted). • The auditor will select a limited number of client records with transaction history during the most recent 12 month period from when the audit is initiated (e.g. September 19 – August 20). • The number of records requested is based on the client population of the locality as indicated by CSA utilization reports maintained by OCS. <table><tr><td>Population</td><td># of Files Requested</td></tr><tr><td>1 to 50</td><td>5 cases</td></tr><tr><td>51 to 500</td><td>10 cases</td></tr><tr><td>> 501</td><td>15 cases</td></tr></table>

Auditor's Corner
(continued)

EXHIBIT: REMOTE AUDITING PROCESS		
FIELD-WORK	**Client Case Reviews Continued**	• The auditor will provide the CSA Coordinator with a standardized document request form identifying the cases selected for review and the specific documents from each file to be securely transmitted to the auditor. This will ensure that efforts focus on specific documents rather than the full client record. The form also serves as a checklist for the auditor and the local CSA office to record documents submitted for review or provide justification for the absence of the requested information. The CSA Coordinator will securely transmit the document request form and related documents to the assigned auditor-in-charge. • Questions regarding document request and client records should be directed to the assigned auditor-in-charge.

REPORTING		• Communications with audit clients will occur by email and tele/videoconference. The auditor will verbally present preliminary audit observations to the CPMT Chair and CSA Coordinator by telephone, with a follow-up summary by email that includes a list of additional documentation that may be required to complete the evaluation.
		• Exit conference presentations to discuss the audit results shall be via videoconference, where feasible.
		   o Meetings will be scheduled with the CPMT Chair, Fiscal Agent, and CSA Coordinator, unless otherwise requested by the audit client. CPMT Chair will be responsible for sharing results (i.e. draft report) with the full CPMT.
		   o Google Meets scheduled by the auditor (if other than a scheduled CPMT meeting). Audit client will provide the auditor with an invitation list.
		• The CPMT will have 10 working days to provide formal written responses (by email) to audit observations that will be included in the final report prior to distribution. An extension may be granted upon request by the CPMT Chair.
		• Final reports will be distributed by email.
		• Questions regarding communication of audit results should be directed to the assigned auditor-in-charge and/or the audit manager.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLANS		• A Quality Improvement Plan is required for all audits where the final audit report includes observations and recommendations.
		• Quality improvement plans are due to OCS 30-45 calendar days upon receipt of the final report.
		   o 30 Days - Self-Assessment Validations
		   o 45 Days – Onsite Audits
		• Quality improvements plans must be emailed to the assigned auditor-in-charge.
		• Questions regarding communication of audit results should be directed to the assigned auditor-in-charge and/or the audit manager.

Updated Utilization Review Guidelines

Anna Antell
Program Consultant

On September 1, 2020, the updated Utilization Review (UR) Guidelines were distributed via Administrative Memo #20-08 and uploaded to the CSA web site. In addition to defining Utilization Review and its requirements for local CSA programs, the Guidelines overview best practices of UR and provide a structure for implementing a quality UR program at the local level.

Embedded in the Guidelines are sample UR's as well as several tools localities can utilize in their UR program. Specifically, we'd like to highlight the Family Satisfaction Survey. In a System of Care, service planning should be family-driven and youth-guided. Capturing input from youth and family regarding the CSA process and services received and utilizing that input to drive family and youth engagement, service planning, and local policy development is an essential component of quality UR.

We invite you to review the Guidelines and consider how your locality can incorporate into your UR program, practices that deepen engagement with youth and families. The UR Guidelines can be found on at https:/www.csa.virginia.gov/content/doc/Utilization_Review_Guidelines.pdf

Improvements to Utilization Reports

In September, the Office of Children's Services rolled out improvements to the CSA Utilization Reports. The reports provide local and statewide data about the unique number of children served, costs and lengths of stay by Service Placement Type, Mandate Type, Service Name Category and Demographics.

The enhancements include reporting of net expenditures rather than gross expenditures, the ability to retrieve year-to-date figures for current and previous fiscal years and the capacity to track length of stay across multiple fiscal years. The new CSA Utilization Reports and the accompanying user guide are located on the CSA website under Statistics and Publications > Statewide Statistics > CSA Utilization Reports:

- http://www.csa.virginia.gov/OCSReports/Reports/UtilizationReport.aspx
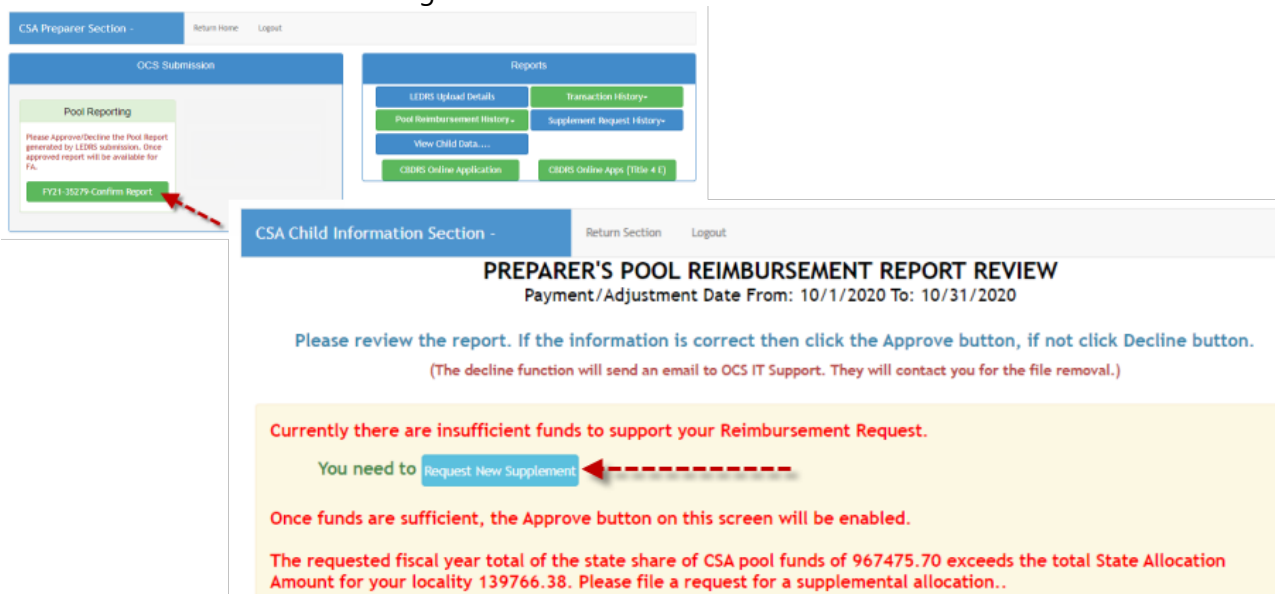- http://csa.virginia.gov/Content/doc/How_to_guide_for_CSA_Utilization_Reports.pdf

The revamped CSA Utilization Reports, together with the CSA Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) dashboard, are part of a larger effort to build on the resources available to assist local CSA offices in managing their programs efficiently and effectively.
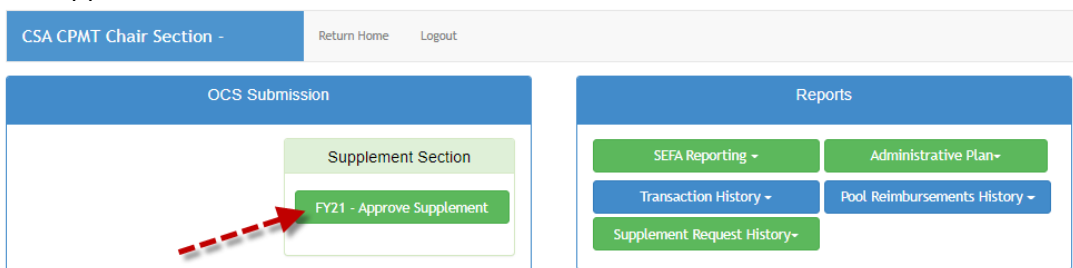
IT Updates
Preetha Agrawal, IT Director

Supplement Update

Beginning Fiscal Year 2021 there are a few major updates in the Supplement process:

1. **The Report Preparer will initiate the Supplement request process from the Pool Reimbursement Report confirmation page**. When and if the funds are insufficient, a new button will appear on the top of the page to request supplemental funds / release of supplement. The supplements will be initiated from the screen as shown in the figure below.

2. **The calculation of supplements will now be based on the effective match rate**. Effective match rate is based on the locality's utilization of the three different match rates: Base Rate Services, Community Rate Services (50% less than Base Rate), and Residential Rate Services (125% of Base Rate) as of the date of the supplement's fiscal year. To see your locality's effective match rate for the supplement request, go to Effective Match Rate Report then select the supplement request's fiscal year, its prior fiscal year and click on Search button.

3. **Supplements Process now has CPMT Chair in the approval flow**. After the Report Preparer submits the supplement, it will go to the CPMT Chair for approval. After the CPMT Chair approves it, the Fiscal Agent will receive it for approval. After the Fiscal Agent approves it, the supplement will be sent to OCS for OCS approval.

 Local Government Reporting application password will need to be changed every 42 days as per the new IT security policy for sensitive systems.

Resource Roundup

Good Read:
"Supporting Child, Caregiver, and Family Well-Being in Times of Crisis: Strategies to Promote Effective Virtual and Phone Engagement" Available here.

Coming soon!
Web-based training sessions, from Virginia HEALS providing an overview of the HEALS Toolkit, Screening for Experiences and Strengths (SEAS), and the Referral and Response Protocol. Sessions will be held:

- Wednesday, December 9th, 12:30-4:30 PM.
- Tuesday, December 15th, 10 AM-2:30 PM
- Wednesday, January 13th, 12:30-4:30 PM

Register HERE or see the Virginia Heals website for more information.

At-A-Glance

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Distinct Child Count	15,748	15,744	15,645	15,285
Gross Expenditures	391.4M	415.7M	427.1M	446.6M
Net Expenditures	382.0M	393.9M	418.2M	438.3M
Average Expenditure	$24,254	$25,021	$26,731	$28,676
Base Match Rates	--	--	--	--
Effective Match Rate	0.3438	0.3430	0.3397	0.3397

Finance

Demographics/Utilization

Outcome Measures

Location

Even if you haven't seen the latest Netflix hit, *The Queen's Gambit*, CPMTs and local CSA teams can use Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) to ***"check"*** and review CSA data, trends in finance, demographics, utilization and outcomes measures for the win! See all of the updated CQI tools and data on the OCS website here.

TA Question of the Quarter

What reports can our CSA teams use to conduct utilization reviews, community assessments and long-range planning?

The CANVaS 2.0 system hosts a series of reports that may be useful for carrying out Utilization Review of children and families receiving services through CSA. *The Individual Progress Report (IPR)* compares a child's ratings on their Initial CANS to the two most recently completed CANS and may be converted to a graph for a visual comparison. **The Permanency Report** (available only for the DSS-Enhanced CANS) provides a similar comparison of Initial CANS to the two most recently completed CANS for each Caregiver rated.

"Longevity Reports" available to the CANVaS Local Administrator includes an additional individual child progress report (**Individual Collaborative Formulation**) that has multiple filters to allow more flexibility than the IPR in comparing items across assessments. The remaining four Longevity Reports provide aggregate data for the locality, so will be most helpful with community assessment and long range planning:

- The *Item Breakout report* identifies a cohort of children with treatment needs (scores of "2" and "3") by date of Initial assessment and compares to a second assessment, noting what percentage of children show the need is continuing, what percentage show improvement or worsening and what, if any, children show a new treatment need.
- The *Multi-level Collaborative Formulation report* identifies the items most endorsed in the locality as treatment needs from the Life Functioning, Emotional/Behavioral Needs, and Child Risk domains allowing for a quick look at what raters have noted are the primary needs in the community.
- The *Strengths Development report* measures whether or not the aggregate assessments reflect progress in strength-building for the children in the locality.
- Lastly, the *Average Impact report* reflects whether there is overall improvement in aggregate treatment needs.

For more information, please see Administrative Memorandum #20-08 "CSA Utilization Review: Guidelines for Best Practices" here and on the OCS website.

Got Questions?

Get answers by using the OCS Technical Assistance Help Desk. OCS staff will receive your questions immediately and will respond quickly, with the goal of same-day responses.

You can also reach CSA staff by using the OCS Technical Assistance Help Desk on the CSA website or by clicking here.

Would you like to be contributor to CSA Today?
If you have information you would like to share with
CSA colleagues around the state, please follow the guidelines for
submission located **HERE…**