

NIA Newsletter

Providing Unmistakeable Value

Dear NIA Partners,

Greetings to all of you! I hope this newsletter finds each of you doing as well as possible given the disruptions COVID-19 has brought to our work and to society at large. I know NIA has been challenged to keep up with ever-changing information. We know that each of our partners is working diligently to do the same. We miss seeing you and being able to work with you in person!

While we are all working at a distance, our team decided to develop a newsletter to increase transparent communication about the work we do on behalf of our partners. As you are aware, we have been collecting your feedback via satisfaction surveys and sharing those results with you regularly for 5 years. We have, however, been less organized about sharing the actions we take based on the data we collect and that is one of the primary goals of this and future newsletters. In short, we want to communicate the things we are doing to create more value for our school partners, students and the community at large.

We know that your time is precious and that reading everything in your inbox is a luxury you don't always have. Please know that we will continue to communicate about important dates and processes in emails directly to you so you don't have to worry about having missed something. We do hope you find value in knowing that we are working on your behalf and we intend that the newsletter communicate the value of NIA to any potential stakeholder. Please feel encouraged to share it with your stakeholders according to your needs and interest.

Have a great summer and don't hesitate to reach out if you need us!

Jon

Important Dates

November 30, 2020

Written notification of significant reduction to the FY22 service request (>1.0FTE) due to NIA.

February 15, 2021

NIA provides the results of annual needs assessment to all partners.

March 30, 2021

Final requests for FY22 services due to NIA.

NIA | THE NORTHWESTERN
ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION

OUR CORE VALUES

We promote a culture of excellence through:

INTEGRITY

We act in a truthful, ethical, and professional manner to build strong partnerships.

COLLABORATION

We cultivate mutual respect and trust through honest interactions that honor the uniqueness and dignity of all.



INNOVATION

We maximize student success through creativity, specialized services, and expertise.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We accept ownership of performance and commitments through transparent communication and fiscally responsible decision-making.

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NIA Administrative Updates:

1. NIA is pleased to welcome Don Robinson to our Business Support Team (BST). Don has extensive finance experience in the public and private sectors and will take over continual process improvements in our Finance Office. If you have any specific feedback for Don as he conducts a review of our current business processes, please email me and I will make sure he receives your comments.
2. Longtime Human Resources Assistant, Jean Tritle, will be retiring in October 2020. We are currently advertising for candidates to fill her position and will keep you posted on this process. If you know any great candidates, please ask them to check out the Employment tab at www.thenia.org for more details.
3. NIA is working with the Northern Illinois YWCA to provide Implicit Bias Training for all NIA Leaders. As an agency, we are committed to ensuring we are part of the solution rather than the problem when it comes to racial justice and institutionalized racism. We view this training experience as one step on our path to making NIA a stronger and more diverse partner of schools and the students they serve.
4. NIA recently sent official ballots to all Member-Superintendents. Directors of Special Education received a copy of the ballot for information purposes. Six of 12 NIA Board positions are currently up for re-election (all board members are elected for 2-year terms. We look forward to counting the ballots as they return and the new version of our Executive Board will be seated in September.



TECHNOLOGY = EFFICIENCY

Project Spotlight: Electronic Student Records

NIA has been using the LEAN process improvement methodology to rethink what we do and how we do it. One of the largest processes we have tackled is student records keeping. Over the past year, NIA teammates have been working to eliminate paper student records and scan them to a system where teammates have the ability to access information from any place, any time. Now that we have an electronic records management system, we are beginning to build processes around student records.

The Therapy Department had a goal to create a progress note system that is not only more efficient, but also captures higher quality notes. The department piloted online progress note documentation last school year and is ready to go live at the beginning of the 20-21 school year.

What's the impact?

- Notes are directly saved to the NIA online student record instead of in a therapist's folder until the end of the year, no more filing and immediate access to the record, improving continuity of care for the student.
- Notes are directly linked to the student's electronic intervention plan, making goals and objective tracking more reliable, efficient and timely.
- **Total savings:**
 - approximately 150 hours filing = \$3,750
 - increasing the quality of care and documentation = priceless
- **What's in the works?**
 - Electronic Change Forms
 - Streamlining hiring forms and human resources documentation



Survey Says...

At NIA we believe what gets measured, matters! Our current survey data is below. The survey questions and results are based on a 5 point scale.

Our Employee Engagement Survey (EE Survey) measures the engagement level of all our employees. The Member District Satisfaction Survey (MDSS Survey) measures how our district partners are feeling about NIA's services and procedures. It is considered our customer satisfaction survey.

■ Customer ■ Employee

2020
EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT
Overall Mean
4.46

2020
CUSTOMER
SATISFACTION
Overall Mean
4.60



NIA Regional Clinics

NIA provides a variety of clinics within our communities and districts to support our students' low incidence needs. In school year 2019-2020 NIA provided clinics, at no-charge to families, to support hearing, vision, orthopedic and durable medical equipment needs. These clinics are available to all students within our 10 county region.

Vision Clinics: Last year NIA supported districts in conducting Difficult to Test Clinics and Low Vision Clinics. Due to school closings, some of these clinics had to be cancelled. However, there were 32 students seen at the Difficult to Test Clinic and 32 students seen at the Low Vision Clinics. Six Low Vision Clinics are held per year serving about 6 students per clinic. Students receive a free low vision evaluation along with glasses and vision aides at this appointment. Difficult to Test Clinics are held up to 9 times throughout the year and serve 8 students per clinic.

Audiology / Hearing Clinics: A total of 1,022 students were seen in school year 2020 for audiology appointments. We will be resuming Hearing Clinic appointments by the beginning of August. Appointments will be prioritized starting with Early Intervention children, newly-identified hearing Loss and then any students who have had concerns regarding any hearing changes. The NIA Audiology Department is following the safety protocols recommended by the CDC with regard to how to conduct clinics.

Durable Medical Equipment Clinic: In school year 2020 NIA held monthly clinics from August-February. During that time we completed 156 visits in Subregion II/III and 171 visits in Subregion I. These visits focused on wheelchair and/or seating evaluations, equipment repairs and providing input for other equipment to improve access to the school environment. Students are seen by equipment specialists and their PT.

Orthopedic Clinic: In school year 2020 NIA held 5 clinics and saw 37 students. Students came from 6 school districts within NIA Subregion I including Aurora 129 and 131, D300, Batavia, DeKalb, and Sandwich. The purpose of this clinic is to ensure students have the appropriate orthotics to support their academic and social goals. All students are seen by a board certified pediatric orthopedic surgeon.

DHH PROGRAM INFORMATION FOR RETURNING IN THE FALL

The DHH program will follow the calendar of D300 along with their recommendations for social distancing and cleaning. We will also be focusing on providing PPE that meets the accommodation needs of our students and staff. In addition to having students who need to see facial cues due to their hearing loss, we also have Deaf staff at both schools who will also need to see facial cues for communication. We will provide clear masks/shields for staff and students. We will also be closely monitoring further recommendations as things change regularly.

We offer after-school opportunities for district students to be involved in Sign Language Clubs at both Hampshire High School and Westfield Middle School. We also sponsor Deaf Clubs for NIA students. These will continue in the fall following ISBE guidelines. We look forward to a school year in which we are flexible for all to support the successful learning of our students.