

Minutes

State Advisory Council for the
Education of Children with Disabilities

The Arkansas Advisory Council for the Education of Individuals with Disabilities met at the Westside School District in the Westside High School Library in Jonesboro, Arkansas, on Wednesday, May 2, 2018.

Council Members Present:

Cindy Ball
Mary Broadway
Dewey Graves
Shelby Knight
Sherry Rogers
Eric Treat

ADE/Special Education Staff Present:

Jody Fields
Yvonne Greene
Richard Harper
Jared Hogue
Beverly Leonard
Dara Nix
Rhonda Saunders
Lisa Tyler

Opening Remarks:

Before the meeting began, Mr. Dewey Graves introduced Mr. Scott Gauntt, Superintendent of Westside School District, and Mr. Michael Graham, Principal of Westside High School, to the Council. Mr. Gauntt welcomed the Council to the district. He thanked the Council members for everything they do for the students of Arkansas and for allowing the district the opportunity to display the services that are provided to their students. Mr. Graham expressed his thanks to Mr. Graves for his impact on special education in the region and state, and stated how grateful they are to have Mr. Graves on their team at Westside.

The meeting began at 9:25 a.m. with Ms. Shelby Knight, Executive Director of the Center for Exceptional Families and acting chair for this meeting, called the Council meeting to order.

Ms. Knight addressed the council and stated her office is located in Jonesboro and that she was thrilled that the Council was getting the opportunity to see Westside and what they have to offer.

The Council was unable to approve the minutes from the previous meeting because there was not a quorum present.

Ms. Lisa Tyler, Associate Director of Special Education for the Arkansas Department of Education, thanked Mr. Graves for inviting the council to attend “The Role of Music in the Lives of Special Needs Children and Adults,” the previous evening.

Presentation: Pat Qualls – The Role of Music in the Lives of Special Needs Children and Adults Concert

Ms. Qualls shared with the council that the idea of the concert began when Ms. Qualls, who is a harpist, felt led to teach a young lady who was nonverbal and nonsocial how to play the harp. After a year of instruction, the young lady was able to come out of her shell and was given an identity and a place. Ms. Qualls approached The Treble Club about having a concert presented solely by special needs musicians. It continued to grow each year and the previous night's performance had over 75 musicians, dancers, and artists. Next year's concert will either be the last Tuesday in April or the first Tuesday in May. The website for the program is <https://www.theroleofmusic.com/>.

Presentation: Carla Knight, Special Education Supervisor, Westside School District

Ms. Knight reported that Westside serves about 1800 students in a rural community and approximately 300 of those are students with disabilities. Ms. Knight stated that her teachers and staff all participate in RtI teams, building leadership teams, and professional learning community teams and they feel like that involvement helps the district keep a consistent focus when developing learning maps for students. The district tries to make sure the special education staff receive the same training that the general education staff do. The district has applied for the Opportunities for Work-based Learning (OWL) grant for the 2018-19 school year and is adding a Transition II class.

Presentation: Jamie Easley, Instructor/Coordinator for Project Search, and [Former Student], a Westside School District alum and Project Search participant

Ms. Easley shared that Project Search is a nine-month job training program that focuses on individuals with disabilities gaining and keeping employment. St. Bernard's Hospital is the host business for Westside students. This program has changed the culture of how St. Bernard's adapted their work systems to accommodate individuals with special needs. Ms. Easley stated that Westside did an amazing job with preparing [Former Student] for the real world academically. The interns from Westside came in very prepared for this program and they understand the value of listening, paying attention, being involved, and being ready to work.

Presentation: Chelsea Lehman, Teacher, Self-contained Classroom

Ms. Lehman highlighted the MobyMax program that allows her to teach students who are at so many different levels. It allows her to assign individual curriculum for every student and get real time data so she can see who she needs to work with individually.

Presentation: Josh Parks and Casey Wells, Agriculture Teachers - Agriculture Barn

Ms. Knight shared that the agriculture program and barn is utilized to ensure growth and employability of the students, and how the inclusiveness of the program has created opportunities for students. Mr. Parks and Mr. Wells hosted a tour of the agriculture barn.

Presentation: [Student] of Westside School District, and [Parent]

Ms. Huffman stated that the agriculture program has been instrumental to [Student's] success. [Student] spoke about how the program had helped [Student] achieve [Student's] goals.

Presentation: Jaelyn Goodwin, Self-Contained Teacher, Westside School District, Belinda Cooper, Paraprofessional, and [Student] of Westside School District – Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and Language Acquisition through Motor Planning (LAMP)

Ms. Goodwin talked about the ABA programming and the district's innovative approach with non-verbal students. Ms. Goodwin also spoke about the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) which consists of small pictures attached with Velcro that can be removed by the students and taken to the person with whom they wish to communicate. [Student] demonstrated using of a piece of assistive technology. Ms. Goodwin reported that with the use of these systems, the students' negative behaviors have improved tremendously since a lot of behavior problems are caused by lack of communication.

Presentation: Tammy McEntire, Westside School District Dyslexia Coordinator, and Lindsey McNair, Elementary Special Education Teacher – Dyslexia

Ms. McEntire and Ms. McNair talked about dyslexia and how the district has worked to create a unified approach between special education and general education for those students who are struggling with reading. The district consistently uses the Connections program district-wide.

Presentation: Dewey Graves, Council Member – Personal Reflections

Mr. Graves thanked the council for coming. He has been at Westside School District for about five years, and spent 28 years doing custodian work for State of Arkansas. He expressed how loving Westside has been. He has been able to assist classes and share his story to motivate students. Over the years, Mr. Graves was taught that he can overcome difficulties, and to never give up. He believes the council is making a difference in Arkansas and he is very proud to serve.

Next Steps and Final Remarks:

The next Advisory Council meeting will be Thursday, July 19. No additional agenda items were suggested to include at the next meeting. Mr. Graves asked that an Advisory Council meeting be held at the Arkansas Career Training Institute in Hot Springs, to include a tour of their center, sometime in the future.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.