

## State Advisory Council for the Education of Children with Disabilities Minutes

The Arkansas Advisory Council for the Education of Children with Disabilities met in the Collaboration Lab on the Lakeside Jr High School campus, Hot Springs, AR on Tuesday, April 18, 2023.

### **Council Members Present:**

Cindy Ball  
Marcella Dalla Rosa  
Courtney Eubanks  
Dewey Graves  
Teresa Hendrix  
Jessica Hickman  
Gregory Hodges  
Lacey Monroe  
Darlene Owens  
Sherry Rogers  
Bruce Smith  
Rebecca Walker

### **Special Education Staff Present:**

Jeff Adams  
Crystal Bethea  
Bonnie Boaz  
Jody Fields  
Josh Hart  
Rhonda Saunders  
Matt Sewell  
Robin Stripling  
Michelle Waldo

### **Guest Present:**

Dylan Campbell

The meeting began at 10:05 a.m. with Courtney Eubanks, Chairperson, calling the Council meeting to order. Ms. Eubanks welcomed the Advisory Council members and Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Special Education (DESE-OSE) staff to the meeting.

### **Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the January 17, 2023 meeting. The minutes were approved by the council.

An election was held for this year's Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. Rebecca Walker was nominated and voted in as Chairperson. Courtney Eubanks was nominated and voted in as Vice Chairperson.

**Mr. Matt Sewell, Director of Special Programs for Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Special Education**, mentioned the need for higher education and parent representation for the Advisory Council. Various people were suggested by Council members. Please submit all written nominations via email to Courtney or Matt for consideration.

**Mr. Matt Sewell, Director for Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Special Education**, gave an overview of Arkansas' Part B Interactive Spreadsheet FFY 23. Every February our annual application for the next year is discussed. The annual application pertains to the money the state received from the federal government for the education of students with disabilities. The proposed budget was discussed, and Council Members provided input.

**Dr. Jeff Adams, State Systemic Plan Coordinator for Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Special Education** - Dr. Adams shared Arkansas Department of Education - Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has formed a partnership with Texthelp Inc., a leading provider of literacy, language, and mathematics support software.

The partnership will provide students and educators with access to innovative digital tools that will enhance literacy, math, and science instruction and help students achieve academic success.

This partnership with Texthelp Inc. offers a range of products designed to support all students. These supports may be particularly helpful for students with dyslexia, reading comprehension difficulties, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia. This solution includes Read&Write, Equatio, and uPar - tools that support literacy, math, and writing.

Through this partnership, DESE will be able to provide three of Texthelp's software solutions to schools across the state. These digital tools will be available to all students in grades 3-12. The software provides text-to-speech, writing support, translation features, and STEM tools, which will enable students to better access and understand academic content.

Texthelp's products are not a replacement for quality literacy, writing, and math instruction. This partnership will provide educators with the necessary tools to support access for and meet the diverse learning needs of all students.

The following presentations were given by various Lakeside staff members:

Mental Health/McKinney-Vento/ACE- Audrey Raper, Lakeside School District McKinney-Vento Liaison and Mental Health Therapist spoke about the McKinney-Vento Program at Lakeside School District. She also discussed a resource available at Lakeside School District called All Created Equal (ACE). This is a program that provides clothing, food, and supplies to students that attend Lakeside and their families.

Junior High & Senior High Inclusive Practices-Dylan Campbell-Lakeside Junior High Principal and Courtney Eubanks-Lakeside School District Administrator over Special Services spoke about Inclusive Practices at Lakeside Junior High and Lakeside High School. They discussed the process and planning they went through to progress to where they are today with inclusion.

WOLF Grant-Courtney Eubanks-Lakeside District Administrator over Special Services discussed the WOLF grant at Lakeside High School and the opportunities students with special needs are able to benefit from in the area of secondary transition services because of this program.

Lakeside Middle School-Thirsty Thursday/Inclusion-Courtney Eubanks-Lakeside School District Administrator over Special Services shared a video developed by the Lakeside High School Broadcasting Department highlighting a school-to-work experience provided at Lakeside Middle School called Thirsty Thursday. Through this program, students are able to gain work experience while making drinks for the staff. The staff members make an order prior to that day, the students then deliver the drink and collect the money on the day of the event. Courtney Eubanks then discussed the inclusion process and planning for the school year. This year, Lakeside Middle School was more inclusive and the student's NWEA/MAP scores increased showing them that what they are doing is working for sure.

Lakeside Intermediate-Language/OT Therapy Group- Mrs. Christy Campbell-Lakeside Intermediate Speech Language Pathologist and Mr. Sandy Hawkins-Lakeside Intermediate Principal shared about the Language/OT Therapy Group that is provided to students once a month. During this time, the therapists pull a group of students and provide an opportunity where both disciplines can work together to achieve skills for each student. One of the activities

that was shared was a Thanksgiving Meal, another activity was the Mardi Gras Parade, there are many more as well.

Lakeside Primary-Push In Therapy-Mrs. Bambi Norman-Lakeside Primary Principal and Ms. Rachel Schirmer-Lakeside Primary Special Education Teacher shared about the inclusive practices provided to students at Lakeside Primary School. Ms. Schirmer is the Resource Teacher at Lakeside Primary and she shared different ways she and the therapists (Speech, OT, and PT) work together to provide students an education in the least restrictive environment.

Lakeside Rams Health Clinic-Mrs. Angie Ralph-Lakeside Middle School Counselor and Mrs. Bambi Norman-Lakeside Primary Principal discuss the process it took for the Rams Health Clinic to be a reality at Lakeside School District. They also took the Advisory Council on a tour and answered any questions that anyone had during this time. The Rams Health Clinic is by the ACE building so the Advisory Council was able to tour both programs during this time.

**Presentation: Dr. Jody Fields, Special Education Data Manager**, presented an analysis of the graduation rate for black males as measured for Indicator 1 of the Annual Performance Report, as requested at the January 2023 Advisory Council meeting.

At the April 2023 meeting, Dr. Fields presented the analysis. The examination of the data found no significant differences between black and white males with IEPs upon exiting from special education with a regular diploma. In 2021/22, 24.17% of special education exiters ages 14-21 were black and 89.43% of those students graduated with a Diploma.

When breaking it down by gender, 92.47% of black females graduated with a diploma compared to 87.88% of males.

#### **Section Reports:**

Section Reports were presented and are available to view on the Special Education website.

#### **Next Steps and Final Remarks:**

The next Council meeting is scheduled for July 18, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was adjourned at 2:03 p.m.