

Minutes

State Advisory Council for the
Education of Children with Disabilities

The Arkansas Advisory Council for the Education of Individuals with Disabilities met in the Conference Room at the Victory Building, Suite 445, on Thursday, April 20, 2017.

Council Members Present:

Bobby Acklin
Mary Broadaway
Leslie Faulkner
Bill Glover
Dewey Graves
James (Jim) Short
Deborah Swink
Barry Vuletich

Special Education Staff Present:

Linda Barnes
Jody Fields
Christina Foley
Jennifer Gonzales
Lisa Haley
Jared Hogue
Veronica Milton – for Jeanie Donaldson
Rhonda Saunders
Robin Stripling

The meeting began at 10:15 a.m. with Ms. Deborah Swink, Co-Chair, calling the Council meeting to order and welcoming the Advisory Council members; Arkansas Department of Education, Special Education Unit (ADE-SEU) staff; and the guests of the meeting. Ms. Lisa Haley, Associate Director Special Education, introduced Ms. Wendy Pascoe as a new ADE-SEU staff member. Ms. Swink stated that the Council did not have a quorum present; therefore, the January 19, 2017, minutes could not be approved. Ms. Haley reminded the Council of the importance of regular attendance to ensure adequate representation of each Council member's stakeholders.

Presentation: Dr. Jody Fields – Disproportionality Regulations

Dr. Fields, Special Education Data Manager presented an overview of the new disproportionality regulations. The regulations were released on December 20, 2016, and go into effect on July 1, 2018. These regulations govern the identification of significant disproportionality and the requirements around the provision of Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS) for identified LEAs to meet the requirements of IDEA. The regulations were developed to establish a standard methodology; clarify what states must address; and clarify requirements for the review and revision of policies, procedures, and practices. They also require that LEAs identify and address factors contributing to significant disproportionality.

Early Childhood is included in the disproportionality calculation and districts identified with significant disproportionality are now allowed to provide Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening Services for children ages 3-21 in mandated districts. All states are now required to use the risk ratio standard methodology to identify children with disabilities in accordance with a particular impairment as described in section 602(3) of the IDEA. States must address the placement of children with disabilities ages 6-21 in the educational settings of inside a regular class less than 40 percent of the day, separate schools, and residential facilities (if placed by district).

Using the new methodology, the states must address the incidence, duration, and type of disciplinary removals from placement, including suspensions and expulsions. Dr. Fields presented the method with which the risk ratio is calculated. Using the risk ratio, there are 14 risk thresholds: identification, six disability categories, two least restrictive environments (LRE) categories, and five discipline categories. Identification and disability uses district enrollment as the comparison group. Educational environment/LRE and discipline use district special education child count as the comparison group.

Section Report Highlights

Section reports were presented with questions from the Council.

Jared Hogue gave an update on the Dispute Resolution Task Force. The Council discussed mediations and whether or not attorneys should be present during mediations.

Lisa Haley presented information about Discretionary Grant Procedures, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and the Correctional Education Task Force.

Jennifer Gonzales gave an update on the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP).

Sub-Committee Work

Family Engagement committee will meet via email. Student Engagement committee discussed alternate diplomas. Both committees will report back to the Council at the next meeting.

Next Steps and Final Remarks:

Legislative session update and Licensure information were requested topics for upcoming meetings.

There was discussion regarding the date for the July meeting. Due to scheduling conflicts, the next Council meeting is scheduled for August 24, 2017, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

