

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 Conference Room at the Victory Building, Suite 445, on Tuesday, July 18, 2023.

Council Members Present:

Dr. Marcella Dalla Rosa
Tracy Dowell
Dewey Graves
Teresa Hendrix
Lacey Monroe
Sherry Rogers
Darlene Owens
Rebecca Walker

Special Education Staff Present:

Jeff Adams
Crystal Bethea
Bonnie Boaz
Yvonne Greene
Josh Hart
Rick Porter
Rhonda Saunders
Matt Sewell
Russ Sherrill
Michelle Waldo

The meeting began at 10:02 a.m. with Ms. Rebecca Walker, Chairperson, calling the Council meeting to order. Ms. Walker 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:

There was no quorum; therefore, no action was taken on the minutes from April 18, 2023, meeting.

Mr. Matt Sewell, Director of Special Programs for Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Special Education, shared highlights from the 2022-2023 Arkansas State Advisory Council for Special Education Annual Report and reviewed the focus areas for 2023-2024.

Mr. Sewell shared the following focus areas for the 2022-2023 year:

- Inclusive Practices
 - School Age
 - Early Childhood
- Graduation Expectations
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing Supports
- Review and Revise Special Education Rules and Regulations to allow greater flexibility within a student-focused learning system
- Professional Learning Communities (PLC) Inclusive Practices Project
- Universal Design for Learning
- Executive Functioning Skills
- Instructional Practices and the Science of Reading for Students with Significant Disabilities
- SSIP SiMR (State-identified Measurable Result) refinement of the SSIP Evaluation System

- State Personnel Development Grant - Professional Learning Competency-based System including High-Leverage Practices
- Utilizing Special Education Funding to Support Inclusive Practices
- THRIVE – Multi-Tiered System of Supports for Behavior and Mental Health
- Family Engagement

Ms. Rebecca Walker, Chairperson, mentioned the need for new advocates, parents, and general education teacher representation for the Advisory Council. Please submit all written nominations via email to Rebecca or Matt for consideration.

Ms. Crystal Bethea, State Personnel Development Grant Director, Special Education – Ms. Bethea gave an overview of THRIVE Arkansas’ positive, proactive approach. THRIVE professional learning is backed by evidence-based training and programs - to improve systems of support for student behavior and mental health in and out of the classroom.

Ms. Bonnie Boaz, Arkansas Transitions Services Coordinator, Special Education – Ms. Boaz provided an overview of Film Camp and College Bound Arkansas, two camps for students with disabilities provided by Arkansas Transition Services. Film Camp happens the last week in April on the campus of University of Arkansas Pulaski Technical College and has space for 50 students; College Bound Arkansas is on the campus of the University of Central Arkansas in June and has space for 30 students. While Film Camp provides opportunities for students to learn a variety of employment skills while creating a short film, College Bound Arkansas gives students a chance to see what supports can be available to help them succeed in college.

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 October 17, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting adjourned at 2:07 p.m.