

State Advisory Council for the Education of Children with Disabilities Minutes

The Arkansas Advisory Council for the Education of Children with Disabilities met online via Zoom, on Tuesday, July 14, 2020.

Council Members Present:

Joseph Baxter
Marcella Dalla Rosa
Dana Davis
Courtney Eubanks
Shelby Knight
Christy Lamas
Lacey Monroe
Candia Nicholas
Sherry Rogers
Bruce Smith
Deb Swink
Eric Treat
Robyn Williams
Sonja Wright-McMurray – for Dr. Angela Kremers

Special Education Staff Present:

Jeff Adams
Crystal Bethea
Jeri Clark
Jody Fields
Yvonne Greene
Lisa Johnson
Wendy Pascoe
Danita Pitts
Rick Porter
Tanya Powell
Rhonda Saunders
Matt Sewell
Robin Stripling
Michelle Waldo

The meeting began at 10:06 a.m. with Ms. Deb Swink, Chairperson, calling the Council meeting to order. Ms. Swink welcomed the Advisory Council members and Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Special Education Unit (DESE-SEU) staff to the meeting.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the April 7, 2020, meeting. The minutes were approved by the council.

Presentation: Ms. Courtney Eubanks, Special Services Administrator for Lakeside School District – Ms. Eubanks shared her presentation, “Lakeside is ON” that gave an overview of what Lakeside School District has done in the way of online learning, teletherapy, and Google classroom for their students.

Ms. Eubanks presentation included:

- One-to-One Initiative
- Academics
- Teletherapy
- Visuals
- Activities
- Special Speakers
- Virtual Field Trips
- Training, Meetings & Conferences
- Student Recognitions
- Senior Surprise
- Virtual Graduation

Presentation: Ms. Yvonne Greene, Administrator for Monitoring and Program Effectiveness for Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Special Education - Ms. Greene shared her presentation, “An Overview of the Monitoring Process” that covered:

- The Purpose of Monitoring
- Monitoring Cycles and Annual Monitoring
- 2020-21 Monitoring Considerations
- Tools in the Process

Mr. Matt Sewell, Director for Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Special Education, welcomed the newest member of the Advisory Council, Mr. Joseph Baxter, the new commissioner of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services. Mr. Sewell presented the current status of the Advisory Council Membership. Mr. Bruce Smith accepted appointment for a second term on the board. Mr. Smith represents higher education. Please submit all written nominations via email to Deb or Matt for consideration. The Council is looking for new parent/general education teacher representation from the Southern Region of Arkansas.

Mr. Sewell shared some “encouraging words” to the Council for moving forward:

- Recently, we received our state determination, we are one of 21 states to now be classified as meeting the federal Part B requirements for the purposes of the federal IDEA Act. This is the first time as a state that “met requirements” in seven years. We had six consecutive years of “needs assistance”. This is due in large part to the work Robin and her team have done around the 1% criteria, in conjunction with school districts across the state, training that they have done to identify those students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. It is a step forward but we know we still have a lot of work to do to impact the outcomes, the true growth and achievement for students with disabilities in our state. This is a step in the right direction.
- Teachers, administrators, parents and staff are really trying to wrap their minds around what it is we all need to do. There are no waivers for IDEA and we have tremendous responsibilities for all of our students, specifically those with disabilities. We also have an opportunity to do things differently now more than ever before. We have been literally forced to stop our traditional approach to education and think about how we will be innovative. How are we going to deliver services in a new way? I have been encouraging people to focus on the services and not as much on minutes. What is the service the student would require to make progress and receive FAPE? I believe our people are going to rise to the occasion. We are hearing good things. What we heard about today that is happening at Lakeside and at other places are the kind of examples we can be encouraged by. There is still a lot of hard work ahead of us.
- Our unit has created documents specifically to support students with disabilities to address re-entry, writing IEPs, considerations for learning in a virtual environment, changes in our new physical environments and more that must be reviewed by legal and others before we can release them. We plan to set up trainings and get the word out.

Mr. Jeff Adams, State Systemic Plan Coordinator for Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Special Education - Dr. Adams informed the Council Members of an upcoming Virtual Meeting on August 11, 2020 from 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. The Arkansas

Collaborative Consultants in association with the DESE/Special Education Unit are hosting the first annual Arkansas School-Based Therapy Conference. This virtual, no cost professional development will highlight High Leverage Practices with an emphasis on collaboration. This training is appropriate for occupational therapists, physical therapist, speech-language pathologists, and special education administrators.

Ms. Rhonda Saunders, Special Programs Coordinator for Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Special Education – Ms. Saunders informed the Council Memebers of the upcoming 2020 LEA Administrator's Academy. This year's Academy will focus on providing the latest information in the field of special education to special educators, general educators, school and program administrators, and related service providers. This years Academy will be virtual Thursday, September 24 8 a.m. – 12:10 p.m. through Friday, September 25 8:30 a.m. – 11:50 a.m. The event is free of charge.

Section Reports:

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

Future Agenda Item Suggestions:

- Deb Swink – EARS Program

Next Steps and Final Remarks:

The next Council meeting is scheduled for October 20, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.