

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 19, 2022.

Council Members Present:

Cindy Ball
Kimberly Clayborn
Tracy Dowell
Courtney Eubanks
Leslie Faulkner
Dewey Graves
Teresa Hendrix
Jessica Hickman
Tim Johnston
Lacey Monroe
Bruce Smith
Robyn Williams

Special Education Staff Present:

Jeff Adams
Crystal Bethea
Jody Fields
Yvonne Greene
Amy Goddard
Josh Hart
Danita Pitts
Rick Porter
Rhonda Saunders
Matt Sewell
Robin Stripling
Michelle Waldo

Guests:

Caryn Allison – Easterseals
Nancy Dunn - Easterseals
Sarah Humphrey – Intern
Dalene Magsam – Easterseals
Mallory Walley – Intern
Rebecca Walker – Easterseals

The meeting began at 10:05 a.m. with Ms. 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. Mr. Matt Sewell, Director for Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Special Education, introduced the newest staff members over the last year and a half.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the April 19, 2022, meeting. The minutes were approved by the council.

Mr. Matt Sewell, Director of Special Programs for Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Special Education, shared highlights from the 2021-2022 Arkansas State Advisory Council for Special Education Annual Report and reviewed the focus areas for 2022-2023. Mr. Sewell mentioned he would like for Ms. Amy Goddard to present her Inclusive Practices presentation around Executive Functioning.

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

- Inclusive Practices
 - School Age
 - Early Childhood

- Graduation Expectations
- Behavior and Mental Health Supports
- 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

Mr. Matt Sewell, Director of Special Programs for Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Special Education, provided updates on the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Differentiated Monitoring and Support (DMS) 2.0. Arkansas is in cohort one of this monitoring process, and the DESE-OSE administration team has been preparing for multiple sessions with OSEP staff. An onsite visit for DMS 2.0 is scheduled to occur in November of 2022.

Ms. Yvonne Greene, Administrator for Monitoring and Program Effectiveness of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Special Education, gave an overview of the monitoring process.

Reviewing the Regulations began in 2017 with the Monitoring and Program Effectiveness (MPE) Team comparing Arkansas regulations to IDEA. MPE team used red strikethrough to indicate areas in the Regulations that are not in IDEA. The A-Team then began reviewing (2018-2020) each section and discussing what Arkansas added to the IDEA. DESE invited a group of special education directors to give feedback on redlined items that are needed to help ensure students have what they need. (2021-2022). The A-Team is in the process of reviewing LEA group feedback. Section 10 was fast tracked due to an error OSEP told us we must correct. Sent to Legal in June.

The LEA Stakeholder process involved a series of 8 meetings over twelve months. The goal of the stakeholder meetings was to see how the rules could be simplified to help students get better services, and to make special education implementation easier. The LEAs submitted feedback via a form indicating what DESE should consider keeping and why.

The timeline breakdown for the remaining work includes sending stakeholder surveys to special education teachers, OTs, PTs, evaluation staff, families, and Disability Rights. MPE plans to send these surveys in August. In September MPE will review feedback and begin to develop a draft which will go to ADE Legal in October. There will be a public comment period for 60 days. MPE's goal is to have the rules to the Legislature for the January 2023 session.

The section that has involved much input and discussion is Section 17, which is almost all Arkansas specific rather than IDEA. This section outlines caseloads, per period class limits, and defines specific classes. As MPE moves to more inclusive services these regulations can be

limiting in meeting student's needs. MPE is considering how a workload model can be used while also allowing districts to use a caseload model.

MPE provided a feedback form for the advisory council to use to submit feedback.

Ms. Nancy Dunn, Director for Easterseals Arkansas Outreach Program and Technology Services, presented an overview of their program, highlighting two projects. The first is on their work supporting R.I.S.E. implementation for students with complex learning needs. Then highlighted general, targeted, and intensive supports available for Arkansas schools around assistive technology.

Ms. Robin Stripling, Curriculum and Assessment Coordinator for Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Special Education, shared information pertaining to the path Arkansas is on regarding special education. Based on student outcome data and reviews of federal laws, Arkansas will move toward increasing students with disabilities receiving core instruction in the general education classroom. Students may require a variety of supports and many of those were outlined. Several resources that districts might find helpful were shared:

- *Yes, We Can* by Heather Friziellie, Julie Schmidt, and Jeanne Spiller
- *Reimagining Special Education* by Jenna Mancini Rufo and Julie Causton
- *The Principal's Handbook for Leading Inclusive Schools* by Julie Causton and George Theoharis
- *Six Shifts to Improve Special Education and Other Interventions* by Nathan Levenson

Section Reports:

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

Future Agenda Item Suggestions:

- Updates on Statewide System of Support for Behavior including BX3 – Shelia Smith
- Accessible Educational Materials – Evan Beavers
- Transition/Film Camp – Bonnie Boaz
- Regulations Review (Change to Rules Review) – Yvonne Greene
- ESVI/Cane Quest – Christy Dixon

Next Steps and Final Remarks:

The next Council meeting is scheduled for October 18, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.