

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, October 17, 2023.

Council Members Present:

Cindy Ball
DJ Graham
Dewey Graves
Teresa Hendrix
Jessica Hickman
Dr. Gregory Hodges
Patricia James
Dr. Suzanne Kucharczyk - Online
Leo Mabry
Lacey Monroe
Darlene Owens
Sherry Rogers
Rebecca Walker

Special Education Staff Present:

Jeff Adams
Evan Beavers
Jody Fields
Yvonne Greene
Josh Hart
Danita Pitts
Rick Porter
Rhonda Saunders
Robin Stripling
Michelle Waldo

Guests:

John Copenhaver
Jennifer Mabry

The meeting began at 10:00 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:

Motions were made by Ms. Sherry Rogers and seconded by Ms. Lacey Monroe to approve the minutes from the April 18, 2023, and July 18, 2023 meetings, and the minutes were approved by the council.

Dr. Jeff Adams, Director of Special Education for the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Special Education introduced John Copenhaver - the Director of the Center for Technical Assistance for Excellence in Special Education (TAESE) at Utah State University. TAESE provides special education technical assistance and professional development over a 27 State area.

Presentation: John Copenhaver – Orientation of Advisory Council Members:

Mr. Copenhaver provided an orientation for Advisory Council Members that consisted of an overview of the Council in the context of special education history/laws, the Council purpose, membership responsibilities, by-laws, functions under IDEA, meeting procedures, and setting annual priorities. The membership of the Council begins with the ADE Commissioner appointing individuals. The majority of the members of the Council (at least 51%) must be individuals with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities. The Advisory Council serves as advisory to the State Office of Education, Office of Special Education, and /or directly to the Commissioner of Education.

Mr. Copenhaver reviewed Advisory Council by-laws and explained that they set the ground rules for the day-to-day operation of the Council. Council decisions should move toward consensus, finding an acceptable proposal that all members can support.

Mr. Copenhaver explained that the role of the Council is to give advice, inform, counsel, recommend, suggest, and guide. The primary Council responsibilities are to improve services for children with disabilities and advise the State of unmet needs in the education of children with disabilities.

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 Ms. Rebecca Walker, Dr. Jeff Adams, and Ms. Michelle Waldo for consideration.

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 January 16, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.