

State Advisory Council for the Education of Children with Disabilities Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, April 15, 2025

Location: Victory Building, Suite 445, Conference Room

Council Members Present:

Candie Corona via Zoom
Sydney Dennis
Ruth Eyers
DJ Graham via Zoom
Dewey Graves
Tim Johnston
Shelby Knight
Dr. Suzanne Kucharczyk via Zoom
Darlene Owens
Kimberly Parks
Sara Squires
Michael Stewart for Tracy Dowell
Rebecca Walker
Jolie Whitley
Cindy Willis

Special Education Staff Present:

Dr. Jeff Adams
Becky Bell
Crystal Bethea
Bonnie Boaz
Dr. Jody Fields
Dr. Laura Goadrich
Yvonne Greene
Josh Hart
Becky McIver
Danita Pitts
Rick Porter
Rhonda Saunders
Michelle Waldo

Meeting Proceedings

Call to Order:

The meeting began at 10:05 a.m., led by Mr. Dewey Graves, Co-chairperson. Mr. Graves welcomed all Advisory Council members and Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Special Education (DESE-OSE) staff.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

A motion to approve the minutes from the January 21, 2025, meeting made by Ms. Rebecca Walker and seconded by Mr. Tim Johnston. The council approved the minutes.

Introduction of New ADE-OSE Staff Members:

Dr. Jeff Adams, Director of Special Programs for the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Special Education (DESE-OSE), introduced newly appointed staff members:

- Ms. Teja Pudota, IDEA Coordinator
- Ms. Deborah Grimmett, Public School Program Advisor for Assessment & Curriculum
- Ms. Sarah Simpson, Compliance Specialist for Dispute Resolution.

All council members introduced themselves and spoke about the stakeholders they represent.

Arkansas' Part B Interactive Spreadsheet FFY 25:

Dr. Jeff Adams, Director of Special Programs for the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Special Education (DESE-OSE), gave an overview of Arkansas' Part B Interactive Spreadsheet for FFY 25. The annual application pertains to the money the state received from the federal government for the education of students with disabilities. The proposed budget was discussed, and Council Members provided input. Chairperson Walker

indicated that in her observation, at the local level, monitoring has lead to improved program effectiveness and IEPs are better as a result of that process.

Presentation on Building the Foundations: Early Childhood Special Education Birth to Five:

Ms. Danita Pitts, Administrator for Early Childhood Special Education B-5, gave an overview of Part B and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, including federal requirements for both programs. For each requirement, recent Annual Performance Indicator data was covered to provide an overview of the measurement. Feedback was sought from the Council.

The transition indicator was discussed specifically regarding exit from Part C to Part B. Feedback was obtained to gain perspective on why discrepancies might be happening with the data and ways to improve and align transition supports moving forward.

Future Meeting Topics:

- Legislation Specific Discussion
- Assistive Technology
- New CIRCUIT (ARTASC)
- PowerSchool Update
- Invite Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders

Section Highlights:

Section Highlights were presented and are available on the Special Education website.

Ms. Jolie Whitley made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Cindy Willis seconded the motion.

Next Steps and Final Remarks:

The next Council meeting is scheduled for July 22, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was adjourned at 1:59 p.m.