

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

Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025

Location: Victory Building, Suite 445, Conference Room

Council Members Present:

Candie Corona
Sydney Dennis
Ruth Eyers via Zoom
DJ Graham
Dewey Graves
Tim Johnston via Zoom
Dr. Suzanne Kucharczyk
Leo Mabry
Darlene Owens
Kimberly Parks
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

Guests:

Sara Squires, Lisa Tyler

Meeting Proceedings

Call to Order:

The meeting began at 9:00 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 July 16, 2024, and November 6, 2024, meetings made by Mr. DJ Graham and seconded by Dr. Suzanne Kucharczyk. 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. Rachel Hogue, Program Advisor for Monitoring
- Ms. Jennifer Greiman, Educational Consultant for CAYSI
- Ms. Brandy Faught, Program Advisor for Monitoring
- Ms. Leah James, Administrative Analyst for CAYSI
- Mohammed Sanogho, Research Data Analyst for IDEA Data & Research.

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

Presentation on Special Education Annual Performance Report (APR):

Dr. Jody Fields, Special Education Data Manager, along with other OSE staff and consultants, presented the FFY 2023 Special Education APR results in alignment with the State Performance Plan (SPP) targets. The presentation followed a student's educational journey, covering:

- **Early Childhood Indicators:** Preschool Transition (Indicator 12), Child Find (Indicator 11), Preschool Educational Environments (Indicator 6), Preschool Outcomes (Indicator 7), Family Involvement (Indicator 8).
- **School Age Indicators:** School Age Educational Environment (Indicator 5) Disproportionality (Indicators 9 & 10), Discipline (Indicator 4).
- **Academic Progress and Outcomes:** Assessment (Indicator 3), State Systemic Improvement Plan (Indicator 17), Secondary Transition (Indicator 13), Graduation (Indicator 1), Dropout (Indicator 2), Post-School Outcomes (Indicator 14).
- **Other Compliance Indicators:** Resolution Session (Indicator 15), Mediation (Indicator 16), General Supervision (Indicator 18).

The Council asked several clarifying questions to Dr. Fields on the data.

Presentation on Arkansas Special Education Teacher Registered Apprenticeship:

Ms. Lisa Tyler, State Apprenticeship Specialist for Educator Effectiveness and Licensure, discussed the new Arkansas Special Education Teacher Registered Apprenticeship. This initiative, under the Arkansas Grow Your Own program, provides a pathway to teacher licensure through a financially accessible, hands-on approach. Aspiring educators gain classroom experience, earn a salary, and obtain licensure while remaining in their communities without additional financial burden.

Council Membership Updates:

Dr. Kucharczyk nominated the following individuals to join the Council:

- Mr. Joseph Baxter (Commissioner)/Ms. Darlene Owens (Designee), Arkansas Rehabilitation Services
- Ms. Sara Squires, McKinney-Vento
- Ms. Patricia James (Parent)
- Ms. Lacey Monroe (Parent)

Ms. Jolie Whitley seconded the nomination, and all members were in favor.

Section Highlights:

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

Next Steps and Final Remarks:

The next Council meeting is scheduled for April 15, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was adjourned at 2:53 p.m.