

Minutes

State Advisory Council for the Education of Children with Disabilities

The Arkansas Advisory Council for the Education of Individuals with Disabilities met in the Conference Room at the Victory Building, Suite 445, on Thursday, January 22, 2015.

Council Members Present:

Sarah Allen
Kathleen Atkins
Dana Davis
Courtney Eubanks
Bill Glover
Jim Moreland
Candia Nicholas
Kimberly Parker
Deborah Swink
Marylene Tate
Barry Vuletich

Special Education Staff Present:

Becky Cezar
Jody Fields
Chris Foley
Jennifer Gonzales
Lisa Haley
Lisa Johnson
Howard Knoff
Beverly Leonard
Courtney Salas-Ford
Rhonda Saunders
Tammy Thorn

Guests Present: None

The meeting began at 9:15 a.m. with Ms. Deborah Swink, Chairperson, noting that the council did not yet have a quorum present, but due to the full agenda, the meeting would commence and the minutes from the October 30, 2014 meeting would be reviewed and approved later. Ms. Swink began with recognizing the vice chair, Ms. Courtney Eubanks, and the welcoming and introductions of the advisory council members and Arkansas Department of Education, Special Education Unit (ADE-SEU) staff.

Lisa Haley, Associate Director, ADE-SEU – introduced new council member, Ms. Candia Nicholas, who is the Coordinator of the Community Parent Resource Center (CPRC) in Northwest Arkansas and is also a parent of a child with a disability. She is serving on the council as the director of CPRC. Ms. Haley also introduced Ms. Becky Cezar, a new employee with ADE-SEU who is the Administrator for Monitoring/Program Effectiveness. Ms. Cezar has a background in school psychology and has been a director of a day treatment facility, a local special education director at a school district, and a teacher. Ms. Haley also introduced Lisa Johnson, a new employee with ADE-SEU who joined the staff as the Personnel Development Coordinator. Ms. Johnson came to the unit from the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) where she worked for approximately seven years on positive behavior supports and literacy, and was also involved in the parent initiative. Prior to her work with the SPDG, Ms. Johnson worked for many years with the Arkansas Special Education Resource Center, which was formerly the technical assistance hub for special education in the state.

Becky Cezar, Administrator of Monitoring/Program Effectiveness, ADE-SEU – introduced Ms. Tammy Thorn as a new area supervisor in the Monitoring/Program Effectiveness section.

Ms. Thorn comes from Cabot School District where she was the due process monitor and served as a teacher before that with experience in math and co-teaching.

At this time, Ms. Swink stated that the council had a quorum so she asked the members to look over the minutes of the October 30, 2014 meeting for consideration of approval. A motion was made by Mr. Jim Moreland, council member and representative of Mr. Jonathan Bibb, Commissioner, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, to approve the minutes. This motion was seconded by Courtney Eubanks, Special Education Director of Lakeside School District in Garland County; the motion was passed and the minutes were accepted. Ms. Swink stated that the minutes for the current meeting would be sent to members sometime before the next meeting so that everyone would have time to review beforehand.

For the sake of the new people, Ms. Swink asked that everyone introduce themselves and state their roles.

Jody Fields, Special Education Data Manager – reviewed Arkansas’ FFY 2013 Special Education Annual Performance Report (APR) submitted to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), U. S. Department of Education. Instead of submitting the APR as a word document, there is now an electronic submission system built by the U.S. Department of Education and much of the data is pre-populated from data files already submitted. Dr. Fields used screen shots from this system in her PowerPoint presentation.

Dr. Fields stated that OSEP has made several changes to the report including taking away a few indicators and adding a new indicator. Indicator 17 is the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), which is coordinated by Ms. Jennifer Gonzales. Indicators 1-14 did not have any changes. Indicators 17, 18 and 19 became Indicators 15 and 16.

Indicator 1: Graduation

Results Indicator: Percent of youth with IEPs graduating from high school with a regular diploma.

The FFY 2012 percentage reported was 79.15% and the FFY 2013 percentage is 80.44% so even though Arkansas did not meet the statewide target of 85%, graduation rate continues to increase every year.

Indicator 2: Drop Out

Results Indicator: Percent of youth with IEPs dropping out of high school.

The target for FFY 2013 was 2.77% and the actual reported rate was 1.97% so the target was met.

Indicator 3: Assessment

Results Indicator: Participation and performance of children with IEPs on statewide assessments.

Indicator 3A: Annual Measurable Objective

Percent of districts with a disability subgroup that meets the State's minimum "n" size that meet the State's adequate yearly progress (AYP)/annual measurable objective (AMO) targets for the disability subgroup.

This will be the last time the State reports on ACTAAP. Next year, the State will be reporting on PARRC and NCSC alternate assessment.

The State no longer uses AYP, but uses AMOs. AMOs take into account whether or not a student is showing growth and meeting proficiency levels. When discussing growth, AMO does not include alternate assessments. The State has not changed the baseline or target that was set. As the State changed from AYP to AMO, the target of 19% of districts proficient by 2018 remained.

Last year, the State met their AMO target and had a massive increase as a result of the growth model, but this year saw a big decline. The State went from approximately 80 districts meeting AMO down to four districts. Dr. Fields noted that the State's performance level on the ACTAAP has stagnated in regard to the number of students reaching proficiency with the growth model. Districts may achieve the outcomes needed to meet AMOs one year, but the growth needed to meet AMOs the following year is difficult to achieve. Next year, the State will set a new baseline and target using PARRC data instead of ACTAAP.

Indicator 3B: Assessment

Participation rate for children with IEPs on the statewide assessment

For the first time, the State did not meet the target. Every grade level saw a drop in participation. The State will analyze data to identify potential contributing factors.

Indicator 3C: Assessment

Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade level, modified and alternate academic achievement standards.

The State met targets for both reading and math for FFY 2013. These targets will be reset after PARRC and NCSC data is received.

Indicator 4A: Discipline

Results Indicator: Percent of districts that have a significant discrepancy in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs.

For this indicator the State is looking at K-12, which is the required data set for the indicator. Arkansas identified 12 of 258 districts as having a significant difference in discipline yielding a rate of 4.65%, 1.12 percentage points below the target of 5.77%. The State did meet the target even though the rate increased from the FFY 2012 rate of 3.69%.

Indicator 4B: Discipline

Compliance Indicator: Percent of districts that have a significant discrepancy by race or ethnicity in the rate of suspensions and expulsions.

The federal target is zero. The State identified 11 districts as having a significant discrepancy. After a review of their policies, procedures and practices through the self-assessment, the State did not determine any district's discrepancies were based on inappropriate policies, procedures and practices; the target of 0% was met.

Indicator 5: Education Environments

Results Indicator: Percent of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21 served:

- A. Inside the regular class 80% or more of the day;
- B. Inside the regular class less than 40% of the day;
- C. In separate schools, residential facilities or homebound/hospital placements.

When the State set the initial targets for this indicator eight years ago there was a big push for co-teaching, which influenced growth in relation to this target; it has stagnated since then. In setting new targets, Dr. Fields recommended realigning the target to be more representative of the actual data, but council members requested this issue be reviewed again and consideration be given to setting the target more in line with the national rate.

The State's target for the percent of children with IEPs served inside the regular class 80% or more of the day (Indicator 5A) was not met. The data for 5A resulted in a rate of 52.90% with a target was 53.97%. The state also failed to meet the target for 5B (percent of children with IEPs served inside the regular class less than 40% of the day), which was 12.99% with the actual data resulting in a rate of 13.39%. However, there was no slippage observed for 5A or 5B. The state did meet the target of 2.55% for 5C (percent of children with IEPs served inside the regular class less than 40% of the day) with the actual data yielding a rate of 2.37%.

Indicator 6: Preschool Environments

Results Indicator: Percent of children aged 3 through 5 with IEPs attending a:

- A. Regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program; and

- B. Separate special education class, separate school or residential facility.

The State did not meet the target for the number of students with disabilities receiving services with their nondisabled peers. However, the State did meet the target for the number of students receiving services in a separate special education class, separate school or residential facility.

Indicator 7: Preschool Outcomes

Results Indicator: Percent of children aged 3 through 5 with IEPs who demonstrate improved:

- A. Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships);
- B. Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy); and
- C. Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

The State did not meet the targets in these three categories and experienced slippage from the previous year.

Indicator 8: Parent Involvement

Results Indicator: Percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities.

The State met the target for parents of early childhood students receiving special education services; however, did not meet the target for parents of school-age students and experienced slippage from the previous year.

Indicator 9: Disproportionate Representation

Compliance Indicator: Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services that is the result of inappropriate identification.

No districts were identified as having disproportionate representation that was a result of inappropriate identification; therefore, the State met the target of 0%.

Indicator 10: Disproportionate Representation in Specific Disability Categories

Compliance Indicator: Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories that is the result of inappropriate identification.

Six districts were identified and were required to do a self-assessment which was reviewed by their Monitoring/Program Effectiveness area supervisor to determine if the identification of the students was inappropriate. None of these six districts were determined to have disproportionality in racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories as a result of inappropriate identification.

Indicator 11: Child Find

Compliance Indicator: Percent of children who were evaluated within 60 days of receiving parental consent for initial evaluation or, if the State establishes a timeframe within which the evaluation must be conducted, within that timeframe.

The target percentage for FFY 2013 is 100% and the State was slightly under that at 99.62%.

Indicator 12: Early Childhood Transition

Compliance Indicator: Percent of children referred by Part C prior to age 3, who are found eligible for Part B, and who have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthdays.

The State did not meet the target percentage of 100%, but no slippage was reported due to an increase (99.86%) from the previous year.

Indicator 13: Secondary Transition

Compliance Indicator: Percent of youth with IEPs aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based upon an age appropriate transition assessment, transition services, including courses of study, that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals, and annual IEP goals related to the student's transition services needs. There also must be evidence that the student was invited to the IEP Team meeting where transition services are to be discussed and evidence that, if appropriate, a representative of any participating agency was invited to the IEP Team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority.

The target is 100%; last year the State was at 98.58%, which is a recovery from the previous year rate of (89.07%).

Indicator 14: Post-School Outcomes

Results Indicator: Percent of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school, and were:

- A. Enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school.
- B. Enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school.
- C. Enrolled in higher education or in some other postsecondary education or training program; or competitively employed or in some other employment within one year of leaving high school.

The State met the targets for students enrolled in higher education ("A") or competitively employed ("B") within one year. However, the overall target for "C" in FFY 2013 was 59.36% and the actual data was 54.64%.

Indicator 15: Resolution Sessions

Results Indicator: Percent of hearing requests that went to resolution sessions that were resolved through resolution session settlement agreements.

The target for FFY 2013 was 56.96% and the State surpassed that with 86.96%.

Indicator 16: Mediation

Results Indicator: Percent of mediations held that resulted in mediation agreements.

The target for FFY 2013 was 73.60%; however, the actual data resulted in a rate of 97.06%. The State met the target by 23.46 percentage points.

Indicator 17: SSIP

Jennifer Gonzales, Coordinator of Arkansas State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) summarized Phase I of the SSIP. She discussed the SSIP's state-identified measurable result, improvement strategies, and the Theory of Action. Phase I of the SSIP will be submitted by April 1, 2015 and include an extensive data analysis, infrastructure analysis, state-identified measurable result, coherent improvement strategies, and Theory of Action.

Ms. Swink noted that the quarterly reports from the various sections of the ADE-SEU were included in the members' folders for their review.

Ms. Haley stated that some of the topic suggestions for future meetings included TESS, licensure changes, and PTI.

Ms. Swink stated that the next advisory council meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 23. Because there was not a quorum at the end of the meeting, Ms. Swink adjourned.