

Minutes

State Advisory Council For the Education of Individuals 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, July 31, 2014.

Council Members Present:

Christine Archer
Bill Glover
Dana Davis
Sarah Allen
Julie Mayberry
Jonathan Bibb
Deborah Swink
Marylene Tate
Kathleen Atkins
Jim Moreland
Barry Vuletich

Special Education Staff Present:

Christina Foley
Samantha Duclos
Lisa Haley
Jennifer Gonzales
Howie Knoff

Guest(s) Present:

Denise Ennett Jones – Parent Advocate
Bryan Ayres – Easter Seals

The meeting began at 9:09 A.M. with introductions and welcoming of the Advisory Council Members and Special Education Staff by Chairperson Deb Swink. Ms. Swink noted that the Advisory had a few visitors at the meeting so introductions were made. Council member, Julie Mayberry, introduced herself as a parent advocate. She mentioned that her husband was a state representative but did not run again for office. She ran for the office and will be the new state representative as of 2015. She would like to know if this new position would prohibit her from serving as a council member on the advisory board. Chairperson, Deb Swink, noted that the Advisory does not have enough members at this meeting for a quorum therefore, can not vote on the minutes from the previous meeting. Deb Swink then introduced the new Associate Director of Special Education, Lisa Haley. Ms. Haley became Associate Director as of July 1, 2014. Martha Kay Asti retired as of July 31, 2014. Ms. Haley mentioned that the ADE Special Education Unit (SEU) has some positions to fill and a lot of work to do. SEU will move forward in finding great people to fill the vacant positions.

Lisa Haley, Associate Director, Special Education Unit – Ms. Haley briefly discussed the State Determination for Results Driven Accountability (RDA). The Office of Special Education (OSEP) has created a new state determination process. State determinations will no longer focus solely on compliance indicators, but will now include results indicators for a more balanced system between compliance and results. The SEU has always reported results indicators in the Annual Performance Report, but in the past state determinations were based solely on compliance indicators. This year, Arkansas, along with 23 other states, are now in “Needs Assistance.” Last year AR was in “Meets Requirements”. This new determination status is due to the combination of compliance and results indicators. Ms. Haley stated that she agrees Arkansas belongs under “Needs Assistance” because there is work that needs to be done to

increase results of students with disabilities. OSEP will provide technical assistance to Arkansas. The SEU is working on a plan to improve outcomes for students with disabilities in Arkansas, which will include building state and district capacity to implement evidence-based practices.

Howie Knoff, State Personnel Development Grant Services – Mr. Knoff provided an overview of the SPDG's last quarter accomplishments. The SPDG filed its Year 4/5 annual report to OSEP in Washington, DC. Included in this report were the SPDG's highlighted accomplishments over the past year. SPDG continues to build on the lessons and outcomes of the first Arkansas SIG/SPDG by more strategically implementing scientifically-based interventions and strategies in schools and districts that are in School Improvement status or that need to enhance their services for students with disabilities. The SPDG has three initiatives through which evidence-based professional development is provided to support specific competencies in the areas of effective instruction, literacy, behavior and teacher recruitment and retention.

The SPDG supports the SEU and the ESC's across the state relative to the state's approved Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility process. SPDG continued to work on-site with a number of schools and districts across the state, and added some additional schools/districts through the SPDG Request for Service process. SPDG staff are also providing Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) training and technical assistance in a number of secondary schools across the state.

SPDG staff continues to participate in a number of web- and tele-conferences with other SPDG staff and evaluators across the country in our primary areas of focus: leadership, strategic planning and organizational development, literacy, mathematics, PBSS, data-based problem solving, and recruitment/retention.

The SPDG continues to support special education recruitment and retention activities across the state, as well as financially supporting paraprofessionals working toward their highly qualified status and undergraduate students who are earning licensure in different areas of special education.

Jennifer Gonzales, State Systemic Improvement Plan Coordinator (SSIP) – Mrs. Gonzales provided an update on the State Program Development section of the SEU. An education interpreter committee has completed the final draft of Educational Interpreter Standards Handbook. Educational Interpreters Performance Assessment testing is scheduled to take place in Little Rock on August 16, 2014. There is discussion about purchasing training through Boys Town video conferencing and Technical Assistance of Excellence in Special Education/Training of Interpreters in Public Schools through TASK12 in order to help educational interpreters increase their skills.

Tuition reimbursements continue to be provided for teachers pursuing Special Education Licensure or degrees in Vision, Hearing and Speech Therapy. SEU has investigated updating the Paraprofessional Modules for Core Paraprofessional training.

Jennifer Gonzales became the Project Director for the Federal Deaf/Blind Grant called Children and Youth with Sensory Impairment and other disabilities (CAYSI) following Martha Kay Asti's retirement. CAYSI has developed a needs assessment that was distributed via Survey Monkey to teachers and administrators who serve children with dual sensory impairment. CAYSI provides

technical assistance to support students with dual sensory impairments, their families, teachers, and collaborates with other agencies as necessary.

The Arkansas Co-Teaching Project completed its yearlong professional development package for a statewide cohort of 19 schools from seven districts. Of the schools represented, three had been identified as Priority schools and 14 as Needs Improvement for 2013. In addition to working with schools involved in the package, the AR Co-Teaching Project team continues to develop resources that will be available to administrators, co-teachers, and other support staff. Additional updates were made to two of these resources: an online co-teaching Moodle course for beginning principals and a course for special education supervisors. These online courses were created by the project team for the ADE Teacher Effectiveness Unit and are offered as options for new administrators who are required to take online courses as part of their mentoring program.

The AR Co-teaching Project was recently recognized by OSEP as a highly rated State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) initiative because of its continued refinement of professional development implementation evaluation practices. The project team presented information on its work during a national webinar to state SPDG directors and others.

Lisa Haley, Associate Director, Special Education Unit – Ms. Haley provided the update for the Monitoring and Program Effectiveness section and its FY 2014 results. 39 school-age programs (ages 5-21), five early childhood programs (ages 3-5), and one state-operated program have been monitored for compliance with state and federal regulations governing programs for students with disabilities. Based on the information collected and analyzed, it was determined that as of, July 16, 2014, five school-age programs were out of compliance with requirements set forth in the regulations and corrective actions were necessary. These programs were cited for noncompliance in the following issues and areas: due process, protection in evaluation procedures, individualized education programs (IEPs), and least restrictive environment.

Ms. Haley also provided an update on the tiered system of monitoring. Three school-age programs and one early childhood program participating in the self-monitoring pilot have completed the process and received a report from the IDEA Data and Research Section that will assist them in planning for program improvement. When all seven programs participating in the pilot have completed the self-monitoring activities, the process will be reviewed with program staff, and revisions will be made based on their feedback.

Three meetings have been held this year with the 20 LEAs piloting the new Existing Data Review/Notice of Decision (EDR) and Evaluation/Programming Conference Decision Form/Notice of Decision (EPS) forms, and ongoing technical assistance has been provided to these programs by Special Education Area Supervisors. The overall response from the Pilots continues to be extremely positive.

Courtney Salas-Ford, Attorney, Special Education Unit – Mrs. Sales-Ford was not able to attend the meeting but submitted a report detailing the activities of the Dispute Resolution section of the Special Education Unit. Two due process hearing reports had been issued since the April meeting and included allegations of failure to comply with provisions set forth in Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), specifically by failing to provide a free appropriate public education. Neither of the allegations was substantiated. State complaint investigation issues included: that the district failed to implement the Student's IEP for the 2013-14 school year; failed to conduct a re-evaluation within the required timelines; failed to provide

the Complainant the opportunity to participate in the IEP meeting; failed to provide notice for the meeting; failed to develop an appropriate IEP; failed to provide FAPE by not implementing the Student's IEP; failed to provide an evaluation sufficiently comprehensive enough to identify all of the student's education and related service needs, whether or not commonly linked to the disability category to which the Student has been linked; failed to implement the Student's IEP by not providing special education and related services during the state mandated testing, including providing modifications in the general education classroom; and, failed to provide occupational therapy as written in the IEP.

15 new hearing requests have been submitted since the last meeting and 9 hearings have been closed. Currently there are 11 open hearings. There are 6 open complaints and 2 new complaints have been submitted since the last meeting. One complaint has been closed.

Chris Foley, Finance Administrator– Mrs. Foley reported that ADE Finance would be calculating the 611 and 619 allocations for special education programs and reimbursing programs for costs incurred. The special education finance office will continue to approve budgets and payments to programs for IDEA eligible expenses. The Grants and Data staff will continue to provide technical assistance to district and Education Service Cooperatives (ESC) personnel. Grants and Data continues to make monthly/periodic payments to district/co-ops/agencies for Title VI-B, Special Education Preschool, ARMAC, Medicaid Match payments, Area Service Grants, and state appropriated programs: JDC, Residential, Easter Seals, HDC, DYS-JTC, etc.

Deb Swink, Chairperson for the Advisory Council – Ms. Swink reported on the fourth quarter claim amounts relating to Medicaid. The amount of Direct Services was \$8,277,975.56, which represents the amount billed by School Districts/Coops/Charter Schools for services provided such as Therapy, Personal Care, Vision/Hearing Screens, Audiology, and School Based Mental Health. The amount of Indirect Services was \$3,505,105.87, which represents the amount generated by the ARMAC program. The 2013-14 district profiles will be posted on www.armits.org so that districts can review their total Medicaid/ARMAC reimbursements.

Bryan Ayers, Director of Easter Seals Outreach – Mr. Ayers spoke briefly about the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the National Center and State Consortium (NCSC). He reported that the PARCC Assessment is replacing Arkansas's statewide Benchmark Assessment and NCSC will be replacing the Alternative Portfolio Assessment. He stressed the importance for districts to review the PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodation's Manual so that PARCC accommodations are documented correctly in students' IEPs. He provided an overview of the NCSC Curriculum and Assessment materials that have been developed for educations.

Jennifer Gonzales, State Systemic Improvement Plan Coordinator (SSIP) – Mrs. Gonzales presented on the State Systemic Improvement Plan. The SSIP is a piece of the larger RDA initiative, from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The SSIP work has focused on sharing general information about the SSIP with multiple stakeholder groups and completing a broad infrastructure and data analysis. Ms. Gonzales presented a broad data analysis on graduation rate, post school outcomes, and literacy and math achievement. She also provided an overview of the infrastructure analysis the SEU completed through a Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threat Assessment. Based on feedback from the Special Education State Advisory Council, the ADE-SEU has decided the SSIP will focus on literacy.

Deb Swink stated that the next Advisory Council meeting would be held on October 30, 2014. The council will vote on the April and July minutes at that time. She asked if there were any additional questions or comments from the council. There were no additional questions or comments.

Barry Vuletich gave the motion to adjourn. Christine Archer seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 2:16 P.M.