

SUMMARY
March 10, 2023 Meeting
Indiana State Advisory Council (SAC)
on the Education of Children with Disabilities
 Online Virtual Meeting

| <u>Council Members:</u> | <u>Present (Yes/No)</u> |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Melaina Gant , SAC Chair, Department of Child Services | Y |
| Kim Dodson , The Arc of Indiana | Y |
| Bethany Ecklor , Division of Mental Health & Addiction, Indiana FSSA | N |
| Anthony England , Elkhart Community Schools | Y |
| Paloma Garza , parent representative | Y |
| Dennis Heathfield , Cummins, Inc. | N |
| Dr. Nancy Holsapple , Office of Special Education, Department of Education | Y |
| Theresa Koleszar , Division of Disability & Rehabilitation Services, Indiana FSSA | N |
| Funmi Ige-Wright , parent representative | Y |
| Aleesia Johnson , Indianapolis Public Schools | N |
| Donald Koors , Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired | Y |
| Kristi Linson , Children’s Special Health Care Services, State Department of Health | N |
| Molly McGuire , parent representative | Y |
| Dr. John Nally , Department of Correction | Y |
| Dr. Leah Nellis , Indiana University-Kokomo | N |
| Lesa Paddack , IN*Source | Y |
| Michelle Robinson , MSD of Lawrence Township | Y |
| Tiffany Sanders , parent representative | Y |
| Sarah Watson , Archdiocese of Indianapolis | Y |
| Lucy Witte , Indiana School for the Deaf | Y |

Also Attended:

Tracy Brunner and Angela Vaughn, Department of Education; Guests Jonathan Kraeszig, Savanna Musgrove, Angie Burton, Dylan Peers McCoy

Call to Order

Council Chair Melaina Gant called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. A quorum (thirteen of twenty members) attended.

Action Items

Funmi Ige-Wright moved to approve the November 2022 meeting summary. Sarah Watson seconded. The motion passed.

Information Items

1. Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) Updates

Office of Special Education (OSE) Assistant Director Angie Vaughn summarized changes to the State Education Agency's (SEA) process for monitoring local educational agency (LEA) compliance with IDEA Part B requirements, as required through the requisite federally Results Driven Accountability (RDA) process. She presented a brief overview of Indiana's State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) and outlined the steps OSE takes to determine and provide tiered levels of technical assistance and support as necessary to address LEA noncompliance under Indiana's IDEA Part B State Performance Plan (SPP). Then Angie explained how the results of the RDA process are reported to the federal education agency in Indiana's Annual Performance Report (APR). She concluded by encouraging interested attendees to participate in upcoming stakeholder meetings to inform the RDA process with respect to developing the federally required SPP component known as the State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR).

State Director of Special Education Dr. Nancy J. Holsapple presented special education staffing updates at OSE and noted that several veteran local special education directors are retiring this year. She announced Indiana's implementation of an Alternate Diploma for students with significant cognitive disabilities then shared a summary of special education ("December 1 Count") data. Nancy noted increases in the counts of students determined eligible for special education under the Developmental Delay and Other Health Impairment eligibility categories, as well as overall among both school age and preschool (3-5 years) age students. She shared that school personnel are pointing out that now that parents are comfortable sending 3-5 year olds to school following the height of the global pandemic, LEAs are identifying a sharp increase in more intense and challenging students behaviors with no corresponding increase at present in the count of students identified as eligible under the Emotional Disability category.

Nancy updated the Council regarding the redesign of Indiana's Alternate Assessment ("I AM") and work to align Content Connectors with the results of the State's Standards Reduction initiative. She also shared information on some 2023 bills moving through the current legislative session that OSE is watching because they have the potential to impact special education and propose to increase funding for services to students with disabilities. Those include legislation to increase per student funding based on eligibility category as well as increasing the state appropriation for special education excess costs and changing that to a non-reverting fund. In follow up to Nancy's legislative updates, Kim Dodson advised the Council about current bill language about Education Savings Accounts and special education student guardianship that the ARC of Indiana is monitoring this Session.

Discussion returned to special education data, and Nancy responded to members' questions and concerns focused on comparison with prior years' counts and trends, especially with regard to information schools are sharing about student behaviors. Additionally, Angie and Nancy responded to questions regarding the Alternative Diploma versus the Certification of Completion (CoC), how each affects the student's continued access to K-12 special education and related services through age 22 years; exit criteria based on earning the Alternative Diploma, Coc, or diploma that meets federal requirements; and the impact holding each may have on a student's future employment opportunities.

Nancy then provided further information on options under Indiana’s Graduation Pathways as well as the federal limitations restricting – for accountability purposes – the percent of total students who can take the Alternate Assessment (clarifying that a student taking the Alternate Assessment can earn the Alternate Diploma for students with significant cognitive disabilities or a Certificate of Completion but not the federally defined General or Core 40 diploma).

Wrapping up the DOE Update portion of the agenda, Nancy Holsapple discussed Indiana’s process for disseminating and collecting federally required special education Parent Surveys and advised council members of parent resources available on Indiana Department of Education’s public website, through the Indiana Learning Lab, and through OSE’s partnership with Indiana’s parent resource center for families of students with special needs (IN*Source). Nancy also explained that OSE and IN*Source regularly host joint “Office Hours” webinars on topics of interest to parents and gave examples of subjects covered in recent sessions.

Discussion Items

1. Council Member Reports and Concerns

Lesia Paddack shared an abbreviated version of the Local Special Education Parent Advisory Committee presentation she recently gave on behalf of IN*Source at the spring conference of the Indiana Council of Administrators of Special Education (ICASE). Lesia explained that these “SEAC” groups serve an advisory role to local special educators, providing parent input and feedback regarding special education and related services at the local district systemic level. In response to members’ requests, Lesia agreed to share contact information and a copy of the *National SEAC Guide*, which was published by Center for Parent Information & Resources in collaboration with SPAN Parent Advocacy with funds provided by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Next SAC Meeting Date

The Chair noted the council’s next meeting is scheduled for June 9, 2023.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:57 a.m.