

SUMMARY
March 9, 2018 Meeting
Indiana State Advisory Council (SAC)
on the Education of Children with Disabilities
Central Indiana Education Service Center
Indianapolis, IN

<u>Council Members:</u>	<u>Present</u> <u>(Yes/No)</u>
Sirilla Blackmon , Division of Mental Health & Addiction, Indiana FSSA	N
Rich Burden , Council Chair, IN*SOURCE and parent representative	N
Steven Cook , INARF	Y
Michael Dalrymple , Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired	N
Kim Dodson , ARC of Indiana	Y
Gina Fleming , Archdiocese of Indianapolis	Y
Melaina Gant , Indiana Department of Child Services	Y
Kylee Hope , Division of Disability & Rehabilitation Services, Indiana FSSA	Y
Funmi Ige-Wright , parent representative	Y
Latha Joseph , Indianapolis Public Schools	Y
Lisa Kovacs , Hands & Voices International and parent representative	Y
Tom Lindenman , parent representative	Y
Jodi Ichikawa , disability community representative	N
Danielle Molter , parent representative	Y
John Nally , Indiana Department of Correction	Y
Dr. Leah Nellis , Indiana University-Kokomo	N
Danny O’Neill , parent representative	N
Shirley Payne , Children’s Special Health Care Services, Indiana State Department of Health	Y
Dr. Sharon Johnson-Shirley , Lake Ridge New Tech Schools	Y
Kristi Tesmer , parent representative	Y
Dr. George Van Horn , Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation	Y
Lucy Witte , Indiana School for the Deaf	Y
Dr. Pam Wright , Office of Special Education, Indiana Department of Education	Y

Also Present:

Tracy Brunner and Dr. Kenneth Folks, Indiana Department of Education

Call to Order

Chair Pro Tem George Van Horn called the meeting to order at 9:30 a. m. Seventeen of twenty-three members were present.

After brief introductions around the room, the Department of Education’s new Chief Academic Officer Dr. Kenneth Folks spoke briefly about his career in education, his January 2018 transition to a different role at the Department, and his plans to lead the division that includes the Office of Special Education. Discussion followed concerning LEAs’ inconsistent policies on testing accommodations for students with disabilities and the Department’s role in helping to standardize practices across the state.

Action Items

Steve Cook moved and Sharon Johnson Shirley seconded to approve the March meeting summary. Following discussion and general consensus about adding a clarification, the motion passed, and the summary was approved as amended.

Information Items

1. Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) Updates

Dr. Pam Wright presented slides on the Department's 2018 goals and organizational chart, as well as Office of Special Education (OSE) staffing changes. She discussed details of the OSE's role and goals; shared the latest counts and percentages of students with disabilities and Special Education enrollment trend data. Pam took questions about the data and responded to requests for additional information. Her update on the status of the state Special Education Excess Cost (SEEC) fund explained that emergency measures are now in place because expenditures exceeded this year's appropriation and are projected to do so again next year. Pam advised that a stakeholder group has been convened to advise the Department on developing allowable cost policies and establishing parameters for equitable and cost-effective distribution of SEEC funds.

Pam's slide presentation also included information on the new alternate assessment policy and the State's role in administering federal changes to the definition and criteria. She then provided an update on the implementation of Indiana's new Certificate of Completion, noting that schools may begin reporting the new applied courses and credits this year and will be required to do so next year. She said IDOE continues to work toward educating employers about the Certificate and its emphasis on the career readiness and employability of the students who earn it. Next Pam presented an overview of the Office of Special Education's top twenty-seven initiatives, including the three newest ones.

Following Pam's presentation, DOE Early Childhood Special Education Specialist Kristy Wright shared State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) updates. She explained the State's new approach, which was prompted by DOE's reorganization and described work toward achieving the literacy improvement goal set as the "State Identified Measurable Result" (SIMR) required as part of the federal Results Driven Accountability initiative. Kristy reported that technical assistance partners are involved in supporting targeted schools, which have chosen either an MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) or Early Childhood approach. Kristy pointed out that technical assistance is universally available through recorded trainings and online resource materials.

In follow up to questions and concerns raised at the Council's November meeting, Kristy then discussed common challenges involved with providing preschool special education and related services in the least restrictive environment in a state where public preschool is not mandated. She explained what the Department is doing to help improve inclusiveness of preschool programming by facilitating standardization in local educational agencies' policies, settings and approaches. When she finished, Kristy responded to questions and council member input on this topic.

To address council members' requests for more context regarding Due Process data shared at the November SAC meeting, Due Process Supervisor Dana Long, Esq. shared general information about how the data is compiled, reported, summarized and redacted for public posting; how Indiana's data compares nationally; and trends that can be identified upon reviewing Indiana's Due Process data. Dana talked about the nature of parents' specific complaints and about the concerning increase in behavioral health issues that jeopardize school safety. During the general discussion that followed, Dana responded to comments, questions and suggestions from those present.

Pam concluded the IDOE Update by advising that she had hoped to be able to update the council regarding the status of Indiana's federal special education grant award for Fiscal Year 2019. She reported that the federal education agency cannot yet determine state grant amounts due to unresolved federal budget negotiations among elected officials.

2. Council Member Reports

SAC Legislative Committee:

Kim Dodson briefly summarized the number and general scope of education-related bills under consideration by the General Assembly. She noted work progress during the current session on high school diploma designations and the IDOE leadership's work to ensure that a general diploma meets federal criteria to be counted for purposes of graduation rate and school accountability metrics. There was discussion about stakeholders' efforts to educate legislators on the unintended adverse impact and consequences of assessment and diploma legislation on students with disabilities. Kim touched on the progress of a bill concerning screening and education of children with reading disabilities and asked another council member with related experience to share background information on the need for this bill as well as how it is intended to benefit schools, educators and students. There was additional discussion about the pros and cons of this type of bill, which targets a specific disability and imposes an additional unfunded mandate.

Kim went on to share information on the "1102 Task Force," which was created as a result of deliberations during the previous legislative session and is chaired by the Lieutenant Governor. Kim encouraged everyone to provide public comment at this next meeting of this task force to study the availability of services for people with disabilities in Indiana.

Other:

Also discussed under Council Member Reports were members' questions and comments on:

- IDOE methods for disseminating content for specific target audiences
- Whether and how data is collected and used to ascertain the best methods to reach targeted audiences with important communications from the IDOE
- The recent Endrew special education court case decision and available parent trainings, resources, workshops, etc., concerning the outcome of this litigation

Discussion Items

Under the standing item to discuss anything pertaining to the Council's statutory responsibilities per IC 20-35-3-1, there was no discussion.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Next SAC Meeting Date

The Chair noted that the council's next meeting is scheduled for June 8, 2018, and announced that the June meeting will be held at a different location. DOE is trying to reserve a room and will include the location details in the meeting agenda and reminder, which will be sent to SAC members approximately 2 weeks in advance of the June meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:51 a.m.