



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Connecticut State Advisory Council

On Special Education

DRAFT – NOT APPROVED – DRAFT

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 27, 2018

******* 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. *******

Town Municipal Center (John Weichsel Building)
200 North Main Street
Southington, CT 06489

Recorder of Minutes: Jolie Medina, BSE

Members Present: Nachi Bhatt*, Megan Collins, Tomas Cosker, John Flanders, Louis Tallarita, Mike Nunes*, Siobhan Peng, Bryan Klimkiewicz

Staff: Jolie Medina

Members Not Present: Nancy Alisberg, Shiela Crocker, Susan Davis, Allison Kopie, Kathy Musto, Joan Nicole-Senft, Audra Mae Talbot, Kelly Neyra, Hilda Santiago, Catherine Summ, Meg Walsh,

Members At Large Present: Craig Drezek, Gladys Hogan, Jennifer Lussier, Jon Metcalf, Jeffrey Spahr*, Cate Tower

Members At Large Not Present:

Public/Guest: Brian Smith, Kasey Considine,

I. Call to Order and Welcome

With a quorum present Tom Cosker (Chair) called the meeting to order at 2:37pm.

Old Business

II. Introductions:

All members present introduced themselves.

III. Review Council Purpose and Function

Tom Cosker reviewed the Council purpose and function with the Council. The Council recommended introductory packets for all new members and interested parties. Terry-Jo and Bryan will work to get these packets completed prior to the next full Council meeting.

IV. Membership Update

Bryan provided a handout and a short summary of the current membership status as well as a status report of formal appointment letters.

V. Approval of February 27, 2018 Minutes

A motion was made to approve the February 27, 2018 minutes by Siobhan Peng. Cate Tower seconded it. All were in favor. The motion passed. Minutes were approved.

VI. By-Laws Reviewed

Tom Cosker reviewed the proposed revisions to the Special Education Advisory Council By-Laws: The Council engaged in a discussion, made comments, and suggestions for revisions. **Section 1 Article 4:** add: "Student with a disability as defined by the IDEA". There was also a typo discovered in that there are 2 Article 5's; recommendation: change the second Article 5 to Article 6. The Council determined that By-Laws could not be voted on today as 2/3 of the committee are not represented at this meeting. The By-Laws will be voted on during the following meeting. Additionally, a suggestion was made to create a process for proxy vote prior to the May 23rd meeting with a formal vote on said meeting. Terry-Jo and Bryan will work on a process for proxy vote prior to the May 23rd meeting.

VII. Public Comment

N/A

VIII. Updates from Committee Members

Tom Cosker: asked members to provide updates based upon their current roles and current activities for the benefit of the Council.

Nachi Bacht: DCF/Child Abuse Protection: Discussion related to child find activities; look at language (ED 621; referral form, how many are being completed in districts?); discussion related to prevalence rates (much higher percentage in USD2).

Mike Nunes Department of Corrections: comment, the DOC is absorbing USD2 teachers from the training school but they do not have an exact number. He will have the exact numbers after the completion of the academy training.

Jeff Spahr: Concern about student lock down procedures (shelter in place) across the state, concerned especially as this process relates to students with Autism specifically their behavioral responses during such drills. Additionally, he is concerned about public fear and misconceptions associated with the disability and acts of violence. April is Autism awareness month.

Siobhan: mentioned her daughter's experience related to the Youth Leadership Forum and Student Voice Activities; May 11th symposium and upcoming activities related to Special

Education Youth Advisory Council. Bryan K. provided additional information related to this initiative. Is there a state curriculum for these types of drills or resources that schools can access? Some of these drills are scary and throw off routines for students. John Flanders: Individual plans for students with disabilities because of trauma history and traumatic events in school.

Cate Tower: CAPSEF, there is little understanding of these programs across the state, it is difficult to define educational benefit targets across these types of programs because of the diversity and intensity of population they serve as well as the nature of enrollment (Temporary). Cate provided an open invite for anyone to observe/tour their programs.

Louis Tallarita McKinney-Vento/Homeless liaison: Managing response of displaced students from storms (Puerto Rico). Statistics were shared regarding the number of homeless/displaced students and the percentage of special education population within. Displaced students are being supported by 73 districts across the state. There is an application process for reimbursement from the Federal Government, however full reimbursement may not be realized if the schools that displaced the students are not closed.

Brian Smith: DDS: Discussion related to funding for graduates (last year, funding amount was not known until November) no money going to graduates from June through November. Brian Smith has been identified by the DDS commissioner to replace Lynn-Fogg Cornelio due to her retirement. The Council thanks Lynn for her dedication and support of the council over the previous years.

Meghan Collins: Disability Rights of Connecticut: concerned about students, school violence, how to handle threats and student expulsion, concerned about the school to prison pipeline. Brought up practice from Florida called Parent Café in which the state director would provide listening posts to hear parent concerns across the state. Bryan K. is interested in a similar model and will work with CPAC and SERC to formalize a structure.

John Metcalf: Parent Involvement and Engagement, interested in Parent Observations in schools, resources for parents that are clear, concise, and parent friendly. Will send a resource to John Flanders regarding social media advertising.

Jennifer Lussier: Parent: Conference: Parent Leader Advisory Councils, (MA/NJ: Legal mandates each district to have a training for parents to understand their special education rights) (Advisory Councils). Concern regarding AAC devices; schools aren't adequately prepared to meet the student's needs. Schools need to be more prepared. Communication is a basic human right

John Flanders: Geographically/Economically piloting Parent Advisory Council with districts (documented within the BSE/CPAC Contract); other issues growing: School nonattendance, homebound education, suspension/expulsion for students with disabilities.

Gladys Hogan: Asked about outcomes related to students after they graduate. Bryan K. mentioned Indicator 14 Post School Outcomes surveys and the challenges related within.

Tom/John Flanders/Brian/Bryan: Discussion on a SAC email rather than individual emails. No action taken on this issue.

IX. Committee Discussions:

- a. **Executive Committee:**
- b. **Legislative Committee:**
- c. **Membership:**
- d. **Nominating:**

A brief overview of the committees was provided. Council members were asked about their level of interest with serving on the committee in the future. During the following meeting an update of committees will be provided, including individuals that are interested in serving in the future.

X. Advisory Work

The Council's input was received/documented as participants worked in small groups to provide input in the following three areas:

- The IEP Document
- Chronic Absenteeism
- Approved Private Special Education Programs

Time will be allotted in the next full council meeting to summarize input and continue this work. Additional topics that were presented but not examined within this structure were:

- Bureau of Special Education Guidance
- CTAA (CT Alternate Assessment) Data
- Least Restrictive Environment Data
- Special Education Prevalence Rates Data

XI. Action Items

- a. Introductory Packets for new members.
- b. Share Post School Outcome report with SAC
- c. Add Brian Smith to the email list

XII. Adjourn:

Tom asked for a motion for adjournment. The Motion was made by Siobhan Peng and second by John Flanders. All were in favor and the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 5:00pm.