

APPROVED MINUTES

Meeting Place: Microsoft Teams platform (Virtual Meeting)

Date: Tuesday, January 18, 2022 (4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.)

Present: Sarah Fabrizio, Susan Aranoff, Sandra Chittenden, Cynthia Gardner-Morse, Tara Howe, Joy Wilcox, Christopher Kane, Karen Price, Jacqui Kelleher, Ana Kolbach, Carrie Lutz, Tristan McNamara, Molly McFaun, Linda Moreno, Sara Kruk, Rachel Seelig, Susan Comerford, Vickie Haskins, Crista Yagjian

Agenda:

- 4:30 Come to Order, Review Meeting Expectations, Approve Minutes
- 4:30-4:45 Story Share – Carrie Lutz
- 4:45-4:55 Public Comment
- 4:55-5:15 Report Back on Area of Unmet Need: Accessibility Policies and Professional Development
- 5:15-5:35 Report Back on Area of Unmet Need: Ensuring Parents as Equal Team Members
- 5:35-6:05 Rule 2360 and 1300 Implementation
- 6:05-6:30 OSEP Indicators Target Setting – report from AOE on submission of Vermont targets
- 6:30-6:35 Break
- 6:35-7:05 Joint AOE/Panel Item: Closing the Achievement Gap
- 7:05-7:25 Success Story
- 7:35 Adjourn

Come to Order, Review Meeting Expectations, Approve Minutes:

Rachel brought the meeting to order and asked if anyone had any questions regarding the December minutes. There were no questions or discussion regarding the minutes. Crista moved to approve the minutes. Molly seconded. The December minutes were approved without rejection.

Story Share – Carrie Lutz:

Carrie shared her journey from being a student who received special education services in a less than stellar way to becoming a special education administrator. Carrie uses her personal experience as both a student and later as a parent to guide her practice and procedures now as a special education director. Thank you, Carrie, for sharing your personal journey and for your dedicated work to students with special needs within the State of Vermont.

Public Comment:

Mac shared with the panel that he is very concerned about the proposal to delay the special education rules. He feels that the delay will hurt students who are already hurting at this time and will continue to delay their access to special education.

Cynthia would like to know if there are any other council's or people who should be involved in bringing awareness to the delay in the proposed special education rules and urges us to support moving forward with the rules.

Susan is keeping the public location up and running. Susan shared that the disability council voted to testify against the delay of the special education rule changes.

Report Back on Area of Unmet Need: Accessibility Policies and Professional Development:

The Special Education Advisory Panel sent the VT AOE a report of unmet needs that the panel sees as areas of concern. In response to accessibility policies and professional development the AOE has drafted model procedure policies such as child find and parents' rights. These model procedures were projected to be presented to school districts in October of 2021, however it is in its third round of review with the general council. Jacqui predicts the model procedures will be available in the near future. Model procedures can be adopted by school districts, or school districts can use them as a checklist and require additional information. Jacqui is also requesting a findings report from a group of special education mentors as to why people special educators are leaving the field. A big reason for people leaving is the amount of paperwork that is required to complete their job. The AOE is continuing to look at ways to reduce the burden of paperwork. Other professional development opportunities the AOE has provided includes the success gaps tool kit and improving the state administration complaint form.

Report Back on Area of Unmet Need: Ensuring Parents as Equal Team Members:

Jacqui updated the panel regarding changes that have been made by the AOE to ensure that parents are equal team members. The parent survey data that was collected is going to each district and the AOE is promoting the use of the data. The AOE is producing webinars for parents' engagement and knowledge of the IEP process, has created a family engagement tool kit, and is continuing to partner with the Vermont Family Network. The local educational agencies' training has been placed on hold for the time being.

Rule 2360 and 1300 Implementation:

The AOE is going over a complete revision of the IEP form. The training materials are in development and will be rolled out for the 2022/2023 school year when the special education rule change takes effect. Form 4 will stay the same and the AOE is making changes to additional forms to make them more intuitive and easier to use. A panel member asked how the eligibility process would work under the new rule changes. The focus will now be on a conversation around a student's needs and why their needs wouldn't be met in the general education setting. It seems like the process is the same (posing questions/hypotheses) and then finding the appropriate measures to document a student's strengths and challenges. The challenge will be in the final determination. The worksheets presented were clear and great. The AOE is using information gathered from 12 different states to learn what has worked and what hasn't to guide their decision making. Other feedback given was it will be very important to have consistent language across all documents.

OSEP Indicators Target Setting – report from AOE on submission of Vermont targets:

Ana presented all of the target setting data. This presentation will be sent by Ana to Rachel, and Rachel will share the presentation to the panel.

Joint AOE/Panel Item: Closing the Achievement Gap:

The AOE presented data on the current achievement gap between students in special education and students in general education. It is clear there is a literacy gap between the two populations. Now that we know there is a gap, what is missing in these student's education, specifically students with a specific learning disability. The AOE is asking for feedback regarding recommended approaches to help close the gap. This conversation will continue in the March meeting.

Success Story:

This item was tabled, due to the length of discussion regarding the achievement gap presentation and not having a success story prepared for the meeting.

Other Business:

The House and the Senate passed 522 which removed the requirement of an in person location along with a virtual location. Due to this change the February and April meetings will move to a night meeting. There was no objection from any panel members regarding the time change of the meetings.

There has been a push from other panels to delay the special education rules change due to Act 173. Rachel proposed the following stances the panel could take, do nothing, delay funding with no change to the rules, delay the rules and delay funding, delay everything. Due to the diversity of our members the panel opted not to take a position on the matter.

Adjourn:

Crista made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Suzi seconded meeting adjourned at 7:31pm.

Meeting Schedule (hold the dates):

February 23, 2022, from 4:30 - 7:30 p.m.

March 15, 2022, from 4:30 - 7:30 p.m.

April 18, 2022, from 4:30 - 7:30 p.m.

May 17, 2022, from 4:30 - 7:30 p.m.

June 9, 2022, from 4:30 - 7:30 p.m.