

## APPROVED MINUTES

**Meeting:** Microsoft Teams platform (Virtual)

**Physical Location:** Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council, Capitol Plaza – Suite 342, 100 State Street Montpelier VT, 05602

**Date:** Wednesday, November 17, 2021 – 4:30pm to 7:35pm

### **Agenda: Theme: Discipline, Restraint & Seclusion**

4:30-4:35 Come to Order, Review Meeting Expectations, Approve Minutes

4:35-4:45 Story Share

4:45-4:55 Public Comment

4:55-5:15 Report Back on Area of Unmet Need: Discipline/Bias & Diversity for physical and emotional safety and dignity of students of color and other marginalized populations

5:15-5:35 Guest Speaker: Needs of Students with Hearing Loss, Deaf-Blindness

5:35-6:30 Discussion of Unmet Needs: School Discipline, Restraint & Seclusion

6:30-6:35 Break

6:35-7:05 Rules & Regulations: Input on AOE Tools and Resources for Rules Implementation

7:05 -7:35 Discussion and Vote on SPP/APR Indicators

7:35 Adjourn

**Present:** Sarah Fabrizio, Susan Aranoff, Sandra Chittenden, Jamie Crenshaw, Karen Price, Jacqui Kelleher, Ana Kolbach, Kristen Bigelow, Carrie Lutz, Rachel Seelig, Scarlett Duncan, Susan Comerford, Crista Yagjian, Barbara Joyal, Tracy Harris, Vickie Haskins, Mary Barton

### **Come to Order, Review Meeting Expectations, Approve Minutes:**

Rachel reminded the panel of the meeting expectations. Members volunteered for roles to help facilitate the meeting. There was no discussion regarding the October minutes, Jamie motioned to approve the October minutes and Suzy seconded. Motion was approved.

### **Story Share:**

Suzy shared her personal story on her journey to Vermont and parenthood. Suzy beautifully shared that her daughter has been her greatest teacher, which is what has inspired her both professionally and personally.

### **Public Comment:**

Susan Aranoff commented that she appreciates this group and gave the panel encouragement to continue our work.

### **Report Back on Area of Unmet Need: Discipline/Bias & Diversity for physical and emotional safety and dignity of students of color and other marginalized populations:**

Jacqui and Tracy presented changes that the Agency of Education has been working on to improve Discipline / Bias and Diversity for Physical and Emotional Safety. The AOE is working with 3 districts who are engaged in working with the Success Gaps Toolkit, in addition to working with the toolkit these

districts are reassigning 15% of the IDEA funds explicitly towards the factors that they identify as areas of need. Jacqui highlighted the SSIP Indicators 4, 9 and 10 all targets which identify discipline in schools. The agency has also developed an Equity Impact Assessment Tool which guides those that are writing or interpreting policies. Other additional changes that were made to improve Bias and Diversity are the Special Education Forms are being reviewed, the AOE is strengthening approach to English Language Learners within the area of Assessment, the Administrative State Complaint Form to be more user friendly and translated into multiple languages, Bias in a Special Education Evaluation is being reviewed with training, social emotional learning resources are being offered to school districts to use specifically with COVID-19 Relief Funds, and Mentoring Special Education Teachers for the first two years in the field. Jacqui felt that the feedback from the panel was appreciated and welcomed. She also acknowledges that there is more work to be completed and is looking forward to continuing working with the panel.

Questions asked by the panel:

Who are the three districts that are currently being monitored?

Southwest Vermont, Springfield, Orange Southwest. Springfield and Southwest Vermont were identified as Significant Disproportionality identified students with Speech and Language Impairment. With the Root Analysis the problem was identified from the transition from Pre - K to K. Southwest Vermont and Springfield have developed a well-rounded team including a variety of stakeholders and meet for a year to develop a plan. This year the team is putting together the plan into action. These districts are required to report to AOE on a regular basis and have been very willing participants in the process.

Southwest Vermont is being monitored due to a Significantly Disproportionate number of identifying students of BIPOC in the OHI / ADHD Impairment. This district created a very enthusiastic team which created an action plan to improve the way information is given to parents, conducting training in implicit bias, providing accommodations for all students, and adjusting their budget.

Is there any concern that universal free lunches have skewed the numbers related to free and related lunches during the covid time frame?

The AOE felt this was a really good point and hadn't thought of this.

Is the model policy a requirement or a recommendation?

Every district has to adopt a model policy; however, it doesn't have to the specific model policy created by AOE.

### **Guest Speaker: Needs of Students with Hearing Loss, Deaf-Blindness**

Tabled speaker was unable to make the meeting due to a medical emergency.

### **Break**

### **Discussion of Unmet Needs: School Discipline, Restraint & Seclusion:**

Tracy Harris

Rachel sent ahead of time to Tracy areas of concern that the Unmet Needs had regarding School Discipline, Restraint and Seclusions.

How does the AOE monitor Suspension, Restraint and Seclusions?

Schools use a reporting system that gets logged into the AOE system which provides a significant amount of data fields to disaggregate data. The report goes to the AOE and is reviewed. The AOE monitors the data regarding special education students. If the restraint is longer than 30 minutes, inappropriate restraint or seclusion, or if there is an injury that requires medical interventions. The AOE gives recommendations based on the specific incidents. Many panel members were concerned that schools self-report incidents to the AOE. Some panel members have had personal experiences where there are differences in interpretation on what seclusion is or documentation. If a parent ever has any questions, Tracy offered them to email her or call and she can go back into the data system and look. Tracy has access to records starting in 2011. As the conversation continued some parents continued to express their concerns regarding not receiving reports about restraints and seclusions that are happening at schools. This is very clear in the Rule (Rule 4500) and is troubling to hear the inconsistent practices that are in place.

It was recommended that if a parent knows that their child was restrained to ask for a Records Report. If there is no Records Report, the parent can complete an Administrative Complaint with the AOE, email the Special Education Director, and / or Superintendent.

The panel felt this is the start of a bigger conversation which will turn into recommendations. Some initial thoughts include, inviting the S16 working group, the panel for the meeting, requiring a video and quiz for special educators, collecting stories and present them to stakeholders, in a situation that requires Seclusion adding at least one additional person to witness, document when Seclusions occur, provide a clearer definition for all stakeholders on what Seclusion is, develop training regarding a stronger understanding of when a child is in danger of causing imminent bodily injury, learning more regarding schools seclusion policies, involving school SEPACS, use of the parent survey, and Tracy offered to have a training for families.

Rachel will compile suggestions for the discussion today to provide specific advice for the agency.

### **Rules & Regulations: Input on AOE Tools and Resources for Rules Implementation:**

Jamie provided an update to the panel and gave our recommendations to the AOE personal on the 12th. A few pieces of feedback that was given are: recommendations information was great; however, it was wordy and overwhelming, felt that the training wasn't focused on parents, wasn't clear how information was going to be discriminated, concerns around Goal Writing documents regarding SMART goals. The rest of the recommendations are on the website.

The AOE answered some of the questions regarding the upcoming changes in the Special Education Rules, and provided information that the training are being drafted regarding how Adverse Effect will be used without an SLD model and in the Spring there is an opportunity to revisit the topics

Some additional recommendations to improve training from the AOE is to provide special educators training on why the rules are changing and have a variety of different trainers provide professional development for special educators. Jamie will collect additional input and stories from panel members.

### **Discussion and Vote on SPP/APR Indicators:**

Ana Kolbach

Ana thanked the panel for the work for the past 15 months on the SSP/APR Indicators and feedback that has been given. Parents or other individual stakeholders can still submit suggestions. Rachel composed all the meeting minutes and created a draft document on Indicator recommendations, please see attached recommendations.

Katie made a motion to approve the Indicator recommendations, Sandra seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Election for Vacancy on Executive Committee:**

An additional member is needed for the Executive Panel due to retirement. Molly McFaun volunteered to join the Executive Meeting. Molly motioned to vote, and Suzy seconded. Molly was approved to the Executive Panel.

**Adjourn:**

Crista motioned to adjourn the meeting. Scarlett seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:20.

**Meeting Schedule (Hold the Dates):**

- January 18, 2022 4:30pm-7:30pm (Tuesday)
- February 25, 2022 10:00am-4:00pm (Friday)
- March 15, 2022 4:30pm-7:30pm (Tuesday)
- April 18, 2022 10:00am-4:00pm (Monday)
- May 17, 2022 4:30pm-7:30pm (Tuesday)
- June 9, 2022 10:00am-4:00pm (Thursday)