

**State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children (SAPEC)
November 2, 2023**

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

The SAPEC meeting was called to order by SAPEC Chairperson, Tammie Sebastian. All members were welcomed to the meeting.

Tammie welcomed any guests attending the meeting today and reviewed the guest responsibilities. Erin Hinkel from Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities, and Daria DeNoia from the Ohio Education Association attended as a guest.

Karen Johnson, Office for Exceptional Children (OEC) conducted roll call. Members absent were Nathan Dedino, Lisa Golden, Rebecca Hardesty, Tony Huff, Lori Robinson, and Stacey Spencer.

Panel Business

Tammie Sebastian, SAPEC Chairperson, asked for a motion to approve the September 28, 2023, meeting minutes. Haydiee Perkins made a motion to approve; Katlyn Merzke seconded. Meeting Minutes were approved unanimously.

Tammie reminded SAPEC members to state their names when speaking and to utilize the microphones at each side of the room when making any comments or asking questions.

An unmet need was presented by Tammie Sebastian. Tammie read a letter, regarding the recent restructuring of the Office for Exceptional Children, and the Department and the lack of transparency from leadership.

McKinney Vento – Homeless Involved Youth

Susannah Wayland, McKinney-Vento Coordinator and Betsey Hauck, Court Involved Youth Coordinator, Office of Whole Child and Student Supports, presented on Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness and Students in Foster Care. The Ohio Education Directory System (OEDs) is utilized to keep track of local McKinney Vento and foster care liaisons. McKinney Vento and foster care liaisons must ensure that homeless children, and youth receive educational services, distribute public notices about educational rights. Enrollment disputes are mediated. School personnel providing McKinney-Vento services receive professional development and other support.

In the 2021-2022 school year a total of 21,395 students experiencing homelessness, which is described as a student living in an alternative setting. In the 2021-2022 school year 16,722 students were placed in foster care. The overall graduation rate for all students in the 2021-2022 school year was 87%. However, the graduation rate for those experiencing homelessness was 60.4% and those in foster care was 63.1%. Homeless students were 65.1% chronically absent, and 37.5% of students in foster care were chronically absent. During the 2021-2022 school year, 5,036 homeless students received special education services, and 8,107 students in foster care received special education services.

In 2015, Congress reauthorized the McKinney Vento Act as part of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA defines homelessness as children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime

residence including shared housing, bus and train stations, public places, shelters, and hotels, and camping grounds.

Betsy Hauck continued the presentation discussing foster care. Foster care is defined as 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the child protection agency has placement and care responsibility.” This includes, but is not limited to, placement in foster homes, kinship care (which is placement with a relative or family friend), group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, childcare institutions, and pre-adoptive homes. When a child is facing foster care it is important to work together to continue educational stability for the child. Betsy shared the foster care webpage with panel members as an additional resource which includes an overview of foster care provisions, educational stability for foster youth, information about the districts points of contact and transportation. The Office of Whole Child Supports is always available for further follow up questions.

Assessment Updates

Wendy Stoica, Assistant Director from the Office of Assessment and Ma’Taya Hammond, Education Program Specialist, from the Office for Exceptional Children & Office of Assessment presented on Assessment updates. The Alternate Assessment spring 2024 testing window opens February 26 and runs through April 19th, 2024. The spring test will be online. The paper testing window will be open November 21 and run through December 6, 2023. To prepare for the Alternate Assessment test, a test certification course and practice test are available to complete ahead of the testing windows. The Ohio Accessibility Manual defines accessibility features available for all students, students with disabilities, students who are English learners and students who are English learners with disabilities. Updates to the manual were recently made and include Appendix B: A Decision-Making Tool for a Reading Access Accommodation on English Language Arts (ELA) Ohio State Tests; Appendix F: The addition of Sign Language Interpreter Guidelines and Glossary; Appendix G: Speech-to-Text (Dictation) – must request permission through Ohio Help Desk at 1-877-231-7809 or OHHelpDesk@cambiumassessment.com., and Appendix H: A Non-Disclosure Agreement is now included.

Students with IEPs and 504s are allowed to use manipulatives on Ohio’s State Test. If students use manipulatives to access instruction, then they are allowed to use them to access state assessments. The Department encourages the use of manipulatives, especially for the Alternate Assessment for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities.

A new tool created is the Assessment Authoring System, which is an online tool to assemble and administer assessments using released test questions that were written and field-tested for Ohio’s State Tests. Educators will be able to review the entire set of released items, select the ones that meet their needs, administer to their students when they feel appropriate, and see their students’ achievement when completed.

Wendy and Ma’Taya shared that the Alternative Assessment 1.0 percent waiver public comment window was now open from October 30 through November 13th. As an update from the last presentation the 2022-2023 1.0% cap data for the Alternate Assessment had been received and Ohio received less than 1.0%; 0.9% for Reading, Math, and Science. For more information on Ohio’s Alternate Assessment, Ma’Taya and Wendy shared the Alternate Assessment webpage and their contact information for any follow up questions. They concluded their presentation by answering questions from panel members.

Special Education Rating Criteria and Enforcement Actions

Karen Auble, Assistant Director, Office of Accountability, presented on Ohio's Special Education Ratings. Every year, districts and community schools receive a Special Education Rating on the performance of their special education programs. Annual special education ratings for states and local school districts are part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, or IDEA. These ratings evaluate the implementation of IDEA requirements. Ohio and every other state receive an annual Special Education Rating from the U.S. Department of Education. Special Education Profiles and Special Education Ratings are Ohio's two primary special education accountability initiatives. These are issued to every district by the Department every year. The rating is based on much of the same data that is reported in the preceding profile. To make annual Special Education Ratings for districts, the Department uses the final data that districts submit through the Education Management Information System (EMIS). There are four ratings as required by the federal Office of Special Education Programs: Meets Requirements, Needs Assistance, Needs Intervention; or Needs Substantial Intervention. The 2023 district ratings will be based entirely on procedural compliance data from the 2021-22 school year. This data is duplicative of the data reported in the 2022-23 Special Education Profile in January 2023.

The 2023 ratings are based on the same measures as 2022. Results indicators will be provided for continuous improvement planning and will be included in a projected rating. This will provide a preview of the impact on the overall rating. The 2023 rating is based only on compliance indicators. The projected rating includes both compliance and results indicators. The projected rating which includes the results compliance indicators, were first reported in January 2023 via the Special Education Profile. Eight different measures are used to determine the district's overall rating. To calculate the projected ratings, take:

- The totals the points across the compliance measures and divides that total by the number of compliance measures for which the district has data. That total can be up to eight, and not every district has data for every measure. This is the compliance score.
- The total points across the results measures and divide that total by the number of results measures for which the district has data. That total can be up to two, and not every district has data for both measures. This is the results score.
- The compliance score and add it to the results scores then divide that total by two to determine the overall score.

After calculating the scores, OEC identifies the district's rating by linking the score to the corresponding rating category. While the 2023 rating is based entirely on compliance indicators, the overall compliance score is not the only criteria used to determine this year's rating. The rating will now take into consideration successful completion of the prior Special Education Profile monitoring cycle. For the 2023 rating, this is based on the 2022-2023 profile released in January 2023. Districts and community schools that were unable to demonstrate systemic improvement will receive a rating of Needs Intervention regardless of the overall score. This allows the Department to increase support to districts and community schools sooner and aligns with newly released federal guidance.

Karen concluded her presentation by showing SAPEC members how to access the special education ratings through the department website. She also provided a list of resources and assistance should members have any follow-up questions.

Family Engagement Updates

Sarah Westerfield Brooks, Assistant Director and Lyndsay Havey, Education Program Specialist, Office for Exceptional Children shared some highlights of the family engagement work that is happening at the Department. Lyndsay began by highlighting the Families of Students with Disabilities webpage, which

was created after great feedback and suggestions from the SAPEC panel. Lyndsay reviewed the Families of Students with Disabilities webpage with the panel and highlighted the evaluation roadmap and secondary transition roadmap. Lyndsay discussed the Parent Mentor Program. Parent mentors are another part of the family engagement work. Parent mentors are there to help families understand the special education process, advise them on how to communicate effectively, and provide topical information/resources. Often, parent mentors attend IEP/ETR/other meetings, meet with families to respond to questions or prepare families for IEP meetings. Mentors are also there to connect families to schools and communities by providing links to local services and organizations that support students with disabilities. Parent mentors benefit both the families and the schools because they help in the conversations between districts and families, which results in more productive meetings; offer parents different perspective to the district/ESC, and the ability to provide parents a voice in the team discussions. The Biggest benefit is the opportunity to proactively engage with families of students with disabilities.

The Department works collaboratively with the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities (OCECD) on family engagement efforts. This year's goals are OCECD Trainings on Changes to Operating Standards and accompanying supporting documents, providing regional support services to Parents and Families of Children with Disabilities, and the Reading Tips for Families website. The Reading Tips for Families website was developed to help Ohio's families learn more about reading. OCECD continually updates the webpage with valuable resources and activities for students and families.

The Department also works with the Ohio State University Center on Education and Training for Employment on family engagement efforts. This year's goals are the Annual Special Education Family Survey for Indicator 8 (cohorts 4 & 5), the Ohio Model Schools for Family Engagement, and Ohio Family and Community Engagement Network. The Ohio Model Schools for Family Engagement will provide the infrastructure, professional development, and supportive guidance for developing a network of Ohio Model Schools for Family Engagement. This will include professional learning, information sharing, community of practice, and program development and tools for inclusive practices in family engagement.

Lyndsay and Sarah will continue their family engagement discussion on Charting the LifeCourse in Schools and Synergy Conference 2023 during an upcoming SAPEC webinar.

Exceptional Children Updates

Monica Drvota, Associate Director, Office for exceptional Children provided director updates. The final Operating Standards that were impacted by the developmental delay age range language will be finalized in December. Their effective date will be December 1st and all of the Operating Standards for the Education of Children with disabilities will be in effect. The Procedural Safeguards Parent Notice document is currently with the Department's leadership team for review. Once the leadership team reviews, the team will send the document back to OCECD for necessary edits and updates.

OSEP has announced that Ohio will be in the monitoring Cohort 4. This should occur in 2025-2026 and OSEP will provide the month they will visit in the fall of 2024.

Monica announced that this was her last SAPEC meeting, as she has accepted another position.

Closing Remarks & Meeting Adjourn

Tammie asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Rachel Barnhart made a motion, Haydiee Perkins seconded.

Before concluding the meeting, Rachel Barnhart made a quick announcement regarding the Membership and elections committee needing volunteers to help with reviewing new member applications. Interested individuals should email Parise Callahan and she will connect them with Rachel for the next steps.

The SAPEC meeting was adjourned.