

**State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children (SAPEC)
September 28, 2023**

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

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

Tammie welcomed any guests attending the meeting and reviewed the guest responsibilities. Daria DeNoia, representative of the Ohio Education Association attended as a guest.

Karen Johnson, Office for Exceptional Children (OEC) conducted roll call. Members absent were Toni Brenner, Ryan Buckingham, Nathan Dedino, Kathryn Fredrick, Rebecca Hardesty, Lisa Golden, Tony Huff, Antoinette Miranda, Tess Rivero, Lori Robinson, and Noah trembly.

Panel Business

Tammie Sebastian, SAPEC Chairperson, asked for a motion to approve the May 4, 2023, meeting minutes. Haydiee Perkins made a motion to approve; Trisha Prunty 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.

Rachel Barnhart, Membership and Elections Chairperson welcomed the 2023-2024 new panel members. Rachel also took a moment to announce that there are open member-at-large positions on the executive committee. Interested members should send their letters of interest to Parise Callahan.

Parise Callahan, SAPEC Liaison reminded members about the updated travel reimbursement process. Panel members will now submit their travel reimbursement through Microsoft Forms.

No public comment or unmet needs.

Budget Updates

Jennifer Stump, Director Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs, provided budget and legislative updates to the SAPEC panel. The biennium budget bill passed in June 2023 included various funding updates for education. Early Childhood Education will receive an additional \$122.2 million for Literacy. High-quality instructional materials will increase to \$64M and literacy coaches will receive \$6M in fiscal year 2024 (FY24) and \$12M in FY25. There are new standards for teacher preparation programs, educators must complete coursework in effective literacy instruction aligned to Science of Reading, and complete field experience with teachers trained in Science of Reading and structured literacy approach. Regarding workforce readiness, the bill expanded access to career technical education funding to \$300M and provided transition services for students with disabilities \$16M.

Gifted education laws for gifted students were made permanent in the new bill. Gifted funding must be spent on identification, services, and professional development, the department must withhold funding spent on non-allowable items, and districts must annually report the number of students served in each gifted category.

The scholarship programs received updated funding as well. The Jon Peterson Scholarship received an increased base amount of \$7,190. The new bill also qualifies students for Autism Scholarship based on diagnosis of Autism from physician or psychologist and allows COBAs and RBTs to provide services to Autism Scholarship students. Universal eligibility was established for the EdChoice Scholarship program. The department is prohibited from requiring scholarship applicants to verify income (except for EdChoice Expansion).

Other policy changes included the restructuring of the department into two agencies: the Department of Education and Workforce and the State Board of Education. Additional new agencies were created, the new Department of Children and Youth and Ohio Deaf and Blind Education Services. Jennifer stump concluded her presentation with time for panel members to ask questions.

Assistive Technology Decision Making Tool

Megan Flowers and Sara Sadowski, Education Program Specialists, Office for Exceptional Children presented the Assistive Technology Decision Making Tool. The tool was created by the AT&AEM Network which consists of members of the State Support Teams (SST) and The Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) in partnership with the Office for Exceptional Children. The purpose for the tool is to help the IEP team determine if a student needs assistive technology. The tool consists of six steps. It is a progressive tool that IEP teams can use during a meeting based on individual student needs, and the process may or may not include all six steps. If it is determined a student may benefit from assistive technology, additional steps are required such as obtaining parental consent for evaluation is required, and additional steps could include feature matching, trialing assistive technologies, and collecting trial data. Following a background overview and a visual of what the tool consisted of, SAPEC members were asked to work together in small groups to discuss the guided questions and provide feedback on the decision-making tool. Next steps in the process, is to take the feedback received today to the AT&AEM Network and make any necessary revisions, followed by the department's review process before it is finalized.

Early Learning & School Readiness Update

Dr. Margie Spino, Education Program Specialist, Office of Early Learning and School Readiness provided updates. Margie thanked SAPEC panel members for providing feedback for the Preschool Special Education Monitoring Guide. The guide is being finalized by the department for the field. The new monitoring process will be piloted with 10 districts. The focus this year will be ETR/IEPs, indicator 6 – preschool educational environments, and indicator 12 – early childhood transition from Part C to Part B. The preschool special education team will train the SST consultants on the process so they can understand the monitoring process and be able to assist their districts.

Newly created preschool education (PSE) 101 modules are now located on the OCALI website. The self-paced modules are designed to provide critical information for administrators and professionals on the federal, state, and local laws that protect and support students with disabilities.

The office of Early Learning and School Readiness continues to transition to the Department of Children and Youth (DYS). On September 7th Governor DeWine announced Dr. Kara Wentz as the Director of DHS. Other members of the senior leadership team have also been announced. For any questions or follow up continue to reach out to the preschool special education team.

Each Child on Track

Amy Szymanski, Secondary Transition Coordinator, Office for Exceptional Children, provided updates on the state systemic improvement plan; Each Child on Track. The panel members can visit the Each Child on Track webpage, for more information on the theory of action, evaluation information and a blog article describing the project. The project was created to improve the number of students with individualized education programs exiting high school with a regular high school diploma. Cohorts 1 and 2 are currently underway and the department hopes to add at least two more cohorts and a fifth cohort based on districts' interest. Some Education Service Centers (ESCs) will join the work along with State Support Teams in Cohort 3 and beyond. The anticipated project timeline is as follows: Cohort 1 began in spring 2022 and will continue till spring 2026. It includes 6 school districts and 6 State Support Teams. Cohort 2 will begin in winter 2023 and continue till Spring 2026. This cohort will include 14 school districts and 13 State Support teams. Future cohorts will be based on a district's interest. The State Support team and districts' activities include learning sessions and webinars, data meetings and regions meetings, and onsite visits. Following an overview of the project, Amy asked SAPEC panel members to discuss in small groups the guided questions regarding strategies participating districts could use to best engage families. Amy concluded with a large group discussion of the suggested feedback and answered any follow-up questions.

Alternate Assessment Document Updates

Ma'Taya Hammond, Education Program Specialist, Office for Exceptional Children & Office for Assessment presented updates to the Alternate Assessment documents. The Ohio's Accessibility Manual for Ohio's State Test has been updated and posted on the department webpage. The manual defines accessibility features available for all students, students with disabilities, students who are English learners and students who are English learners with disabilities. Ma'Taya reviewed four appendices from the Accessibility Manual, including Appendix B, Appendix G, Appendix F, and Appendix H. Appendix B is a decision-making tool to assist educational teams' in determining student's eligibility for a reading-access accommodation on English language arts state tests. The available reading-access accommodations are Text-to-speech, human read-aloud, screen reader and sign language interpreter. Appendix G is a new appendix within the manual for Speech to Text. Appendix F provides guidelines for sign language interpreters. The procedures listed in Appendix F, are for test administrators and interpreters to ensure standardization of the signs presented to the students and maintain test security. Appendix H is another new addition to the manual which is the non-disclosure agreement for accommodations on the Ohio Statewide Test, and Appendix G covers speech to text.

The Assessment Authoring System (AAS) is another tool provided to assemble and administer assessments. The AAS tool uses released test questions that were written and field-tested for Ohio's State Tests. With this tool, educators will be able to review the entire set of released items, select and administer the items that appropriately meet the students' needs, and see the students' achievement at completion. Ma'Taya concluded her presentation by sharing contact information for the assessment team, shared the opportunity for SAPEC members to be included in stakeholder committees and allowed time for any questions.

Exceptional Children Updates

Monica Drvota, Associate Director, provided a brief update on the Operating Standards. The rules are currently posted on the department's webpage. The five rules that were impacted by the Developmental Delay age range changes are moving through the rules process and should be moved to JCARR in October.

Karen Auble, Assistant Director of the Data team was introduced and provided updates on Ohio's Special Education Profile. The Special Education Profiles are developed annually for each district and community school, and display performance over time on key indicators for students with disabilities. The indicators are grouped into six essential questions based on what they tell us about services and outcomes for children with disabilities. There are two phases of the profile release, one in December 2023, which contains all indicators that may have required actions, and the second release in May 2024 will add students' enrollment and students' outcome indicators that do not have required actions. Additionally, there are two types of profiles that were released, a district facing profile which includes students' level data, all required actions, and can be accessed through a secure platform only available to local and regional staff. As well as a public facing profile which does not include districts' actions to protect students' privacy. This public facing profile can be accessed through the department's webpage. Karen provided a demonstration of how to access the public facing profile from the department's webpage for SAPEC panel members. Following her presentation, Karen answered additional follow up questions.

Closing Remarks & Meeting Adjourn

Tammie asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Haydiee Perkins made a motion, Michelle Christman seconded.

Meeting adjourned.