



WAPSD

Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities

December 8, 2020, 9:00 a.m., Zoom Teleconference Meeting

Attendance: Amon Bullinger, Ashley Robertson, Christine Bullinger, Dallas Myers, Davey Hough, Erin Swilling, Hayley Speiser, Jennifer Duncan, Julie Heil, Kathy Escobedo, Liz Acosta-McCune, Margee Robertson, Nicky Hulme, Nikki Baldwin, Pam Zamora, Penny Hawk, Rachel Crawford, Shelley Hamel, TJ Mechem

Guests: Deana Smith, WDE; Sarah Compton, Dawn Scarince

MOTIONS

Administrative:

It was moved by Rachel Crawford and seconded by Ashley Robertson that the September Meeting Minutes be approved as written. Motion carried unanimously.

Policy:

Welcome/Opening: Chairman Swilling called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. She opened the meeting for public comment.

Secretary Announcements

Secretary Jennifer Duncan took roll call and it was determined that a majority was present. Duncan asked the panel to review the current Roles and contact information spreadsheet and update anything as necessary. Erin Swilling asked Duncan to address the March meeting location, things being what they are, it is on a To Be Determined basis whether the meeting will occur in person or via Zoom. Margee Robertson reviewed the Roles and noted that 50% of the Panel is to be derived from Parents of Students with Disabilities; Erin Swilling added that Jennifer Neeley will join the Panel as a representative from the Department of Family Services. Duncan also noted that possibility of the legislative representative could be helpful and is a optional opening; Swilling would also like to see more students on the panel but wants to clarify the parameters that student needs to meet, whether they need to be on an IEP or if the possibility exists for students that no longer receive services to provide a voice on the Panel. Julie Heil noted that students were invited from the communities where the meetings were held to present at the meeting. Nikki Baldwin noted that one of her Professional Learning Facilitators would like to join the panel along with her child, adding them would put the Panel in balance the way the By-Laws state it should be.

Chair Report – Old and New Business, Erin Swilling

Erin Swilling began with Old Business, addressing that Pam Zamora brought up during the last meeting what the Panel's responsibility is with regard to writing letters of concern or support for some legislation and budget proposals. Margee Robertson indicated that the Panel's scope of responsibility under the current by-laws would limit their ability to write letters in support of or opposed to legislation.

Robertson indicated it would be proper to make a proposal to change the by-laws, form a committee to review and propose changes then bring them back to the entire Panel for a vote. Swilling said she would set up a meeting with individuals who want to work on the by-laws. Julie Heil, Erin Swilling, TJ Mecham all volunteered to do that work, Margee Robertson and Jennifer Duncan will support the committee during their work.

Another area of old business was the responsibilities of the Committees are; there are no required committees per the by-laws.

Committee Reports

Rachel Crawford shared regarding the Outreach Committee that it would be good for members to be visiting amongst their circles about what the Panel does since large gatherings are difficult right now due to the pandemic, she would also like to see more students on the panel. There will be a mother and daughter joining the Panel together. Julie Heil encouraged members to follow the legislative session and see what bills they would like to see addressed by the Legislative Committee. Jennifer Duncan will provide the committee with updates that she receives via the WDE legislative reports on a weekly basis.

Data Share Out Update

Susan Wagner with Data Driven Enterprises, provided the Panel with an update on Data from school districts for the 2019-2020 school year. Every February is required to submit an Annual Performance Report to OSEP to report on efforts to implement IDEA and how they will improve over the next year based on 17 indicators that measure child and family outcomes and compliance with IDEA; Wyoming consistently has performed well. The Indicators are divided into three monitoring priorities; providing FAPE, General supervision including child, monitoring, mediation and transition services, and disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education services. Wagner reviewed how the state performed on each indicator; some indicators showed a regression from the previous year's results, but the COVID shutdowns had a large impact on these particular indicators. Erin Swilling asked regarding the decline around evaluations for special education services and whether it was impacted by COVID shut downs; Wagner agreed that is a good hypothesis for the lateness of the evaluations; parents being concerned about their children's safety unable to present the child in person for evaluation within the 60 day period. Swilling also asked about how the data is gathered; it depends on which indicator's data is involved; some are gathered by surveys, others via assessment and evaluation and other means.

Mediation Update

Jordan Brock, Dispute Resolution Coordinator with WDE, updated the Panel mediation, which is a requirement of IDEA. Mediation is voluntary, the cost is covered by the WDE, and the mediators set up the location and process of the mediation. Brock reviewed the mediation process, which is a much less formal process than due process or dispute resolution, however, all information is confidential and destroyed at the end of the process. There have been 3 mediation requests; 3 did not agree to mediate; 2 have been held; 2 in full agreement and 1 pending due to issues surrounding COVID-19. Robertson reiterated to the Panel that it is important for districts to understand that IDEA is a Federal Statute and the State has a requirement of Maintenance of Financial support to all districts and districts needs to maintain their Maintenance of Effort in providing services to children with disabilities.

WAVES Update

Deana Smith with the WDE updated the Panel on the WAVES presentations that have been ongoing for the last several months. The upcoming sessions and registration information was provided to the Panel. She encouraged the Panel to let the WDE know if there are subjects they would like to be covered or an area where deeper instruction is needed and presentations can be added; there is no cost to districts, CDC's or educators for these sessions and they are recorded for later viewing.

BHD Update

Kathy Escobedo provided an update to the Panel from the Behavioral Health Division. Escobedo reviewed the budget cuts she reviewed at the last meeting: no vacant positions can be filled due to the hiring freeze, a deeper reduction of program funds mainly Part C, which lost a 22% loss. Because of the loss of funds, at a cost of \$1800 per child, MOE wasn't able to be met but OSEP is working with them. The third step of reductions resulted in no decreases in Part B and Part C.

Wyoming Congressional Awards

Sarah Compton, Executive Director, Wyoming Congressional Award to present information to the Panel regarding the Award. The Award was established in 1979 by Wyoming Senator Malcolm Wallop; the Wyoming Congressional Award has their own office and some awards are given at the state level and one of the few states that have a scholarship that accompanies the Award. It is the highest award a child or student can receive that is non-military; it's open to all youth ages 13.5 through 24 years. It encourages goal setting and fosters principles of citizenship. The process is flexible, accommodations can be made for students with disabilities to apply, it is not attached to academic excellence but many other qualities. Erin Swilling asked if assistance was provided for students that are not able to afford the nominal application processing fee.

SPED Director/WDE Updates

The WDE Deaf and Hard of Hearing team continues to consult with districts and CDC's around best practices for teaching students with hearing loss. There is a major shortage of Teachers of the Deaf and Educational Interpreters. The WDE DHH section is offering special training and mentoring for Educational Interpreters. The Vision Outreach section works with Older Blind Individuals and are offering the upcoming Next Steps Clinics, which allows children to be evaluated for many potential disabilities. The Continuous Improvement Team consisting of Monitoring and Technical Assistance and Professional Development; the goal of this section is to provide monitoring to assure FAPE for all students with disabilities and to provide Technical Assistance and Professional Development to improve outcomes.

Advice, Recommendations and Action Steps

Form a By-Laws Committee to review and meet to develop language about specific work that is the purview/responsibility of the Panel.

Legislative Committee will receive updates from Jennifer on bills they are interested in and will provide appropriate follow-up.

Kathy Escobedo will share a written report with Jennifer Duncan to send to the Panel.

Tentative Upcoming Dates/Locations – **May change due to COVID-19 Health Guidelines**

March 9, 2021 via Zoom.

June 8-9, 2021 in Casper

*All meetings will be from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. at Natrona County School District #1, Fairdale Room unless otherwise noted.