



WAPSD

Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities

October 12, 2021, Zoom Meeting

Attendance: Anedra Selley, Char Norris, Christine Bullinger, Dallas Myers, Deana Smith, Erin Swilling, Grace Norris, Hayley Speiser, Jennifer Duncan, Jennifer Figenser, Liz Acosta-McCune, Margee Robertson, Nikki Baldwin, Penny Hawk, Ragen Latham, Rebecca Bullinger, Shannon Cranmore, TJ Mechem, Tricia Whynott

Guests: Kim Caylor, BHD; Steve Slyman, Albany County School District #1 SPED Director

MOTIONS

Administrative:

It was moved by Penny Hawk and seconded by Deana Smith that the minutes of the June 8, 2021 meeting 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. There was no public comment.

Secretary Announcements

Jennifer Duncan asked members to confirm their contact information on the Panel contact list, there is an opening for a parent of a child with a disability on the panel due to a member stepping off the committee.

Chair Report – Old and New Business, Erin Swilling

New business item for discussion is the kindergarten entry changes, which was changed via new legislation. The cutoff date for children to turn 5 will be September 15, and it will be a district obligation by implementing policies and procedures to determine if a child is kindergarten ready if they turn 5 by September 15, however, they cannot deny a child who turns 5 before August 1. Deana Smith has been providing training with regard to the new legislation and how it applies to children with disabilities. Children who are already receiving special education services must continue to receive those services in the least restrictive environment. If during the evaluation process for determining if the child is kindergarten ready a disability is determined to be present, special education services must be provided in addition to the child moving into kindergarten. This process and determination must be completed within an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and an IEP team.

Committee Reports

Individual committee reports will be part of all Panel meeting agendas. Ragan Latham would like to join the By Laws and Legislative Committees. Margee Robertson suggested the possibility of having individual committee meetings the night before the business meeting as a way to build in work time

during regularly scheduled business meetings. Committee involvement time is only about an hour a month. Liz Acosta McCune would be happy to facilitate activities for the Outreach/Public Relations Committee, she's just looking for guidance from the Panel. Deana Smith would like to see more information go out to CDC's and school districts to inform parents about the Panel and it's role. Other ideas that have been suggested are news releases, social media releases, setting up vendor tables at WDE and other events around the state.

SPED Director/WDE Updates

Margee Robertson provided updates for the Panel. Chapter 7 Rules flesh out IDEA federal statute; Chapter 7 has not been renewed for a long time, a committee has been working on the new draft. There have been some staff losses as well as an increase in dispute resolution cases so the rules work has been delayed, but staff are being hired to hopefully spread the workload so the work on the rules can continue.

State activities monies are being focused on professional development opportunities for districts and CDC's. Some of the trainings offered include MTSS, DBI, training modules on a variety of subjects available on canvas, as well as the WAVES sessions being presented virtually. Technical assistance is also being provided via guidance documents, which are available on the WDE website. The website is being worked on to be more functional and intuitive, especially for parents to access and find information.

Monitoring is also a responsibility of the SPED Division. Data received from districts is reviewed and then reported to the Federal government to assure state compliance with IDEA Federal law. Districts are monitored for compliance, which consists of measuring several indicators that are outlined by OSEP, and how the districts are doing in all those areas. Depending on areas of non-compliance, professional development and technical assistance are provided to the districts. Annually, a statewide data drill down and share out is done where stakeholders are invited and given the results of the data drill down both for the state and individual districts.

Dispute resolution has 3 processes available: dispute resolution, mediation and due process. All are varying levels of complaint and follow through that a parent can avail themselves of when they feel their child's needs aren't being met. Common issues are comprehensive evaluation, least restrictive environment (LRE),

Proposed By-Laws changes

At the June meeting, John Copenhaver, suggested reviewing some of his proposed changes. The By-laws committee has not had the opportunity to meet and review his proposed changes, so this will be moved to the agenda for the January meeting. The committee will hold a meeting to finalize the changes to be voted on at the next meeting.

WAVES Update/Resource Guide – Deana Smith

Deana Smith provided an update on the resource document that she created that provided links and information about resources that can be accessed by parents, students, teachers and administrators. She asked the Panel for input for more content and to make sure the information on the document is current.

Smith provided information regarding the upcoming WAVES sessions for the school year. WAVES are virtual professional development sessions that are offered several times per month. Archived recordings and meeting materials are available on the Wyoming Instructional Network (WINWeb).

BHD Update

Ragen Latham provided an update from BHD. The EIEP was monitored by the WDE and BHD is busy working on the findings of that monitoring and addressing those issues. Comprehensive evaluations, FAPE were some issues that had varying levels of strength and weakness around the state with the goal being a better networking system so ideas and processes can be shared across all the CDC areas.

PIC Update

Erin Swilling provided an overview of the Parent Information Center as she previously served as the Executive Director. They are a resource center for parents and educators to assist with training and providing information regarding services for students with disabilities.

Transition Teams Update

TJ Mecham reported on the multidisciplinary team that helps assist children transition from school to either college or moving into the work force. The main area of focus at this time is to find universal issues that affect all students with disabilities with a focus right now to create formal collaborative agreements between education entities, agencies and employers to assist with student transition. There are great transition processes in place in some places around the state, and other areas that need better processes – one goal of the team is to increase networking of knowledge so that all areas of the state are all set up with good transition processes.

Residential Placement Guidance Document

Margee Robertson shared the Residential Placement Guidance Document that was prepared by Gail Eisenhower with WDE. It reviews the responsibilities of districts when a child is placed in a residential facility. Children in residential placement are still entitled to all the processes for students with disabilities as provided in IDEA and this document outlines the necessary requirements and processes. It also outlines the responsibilities of the residential treatment facility to provide FAPE and how conflicts are handled

OSEP Letter, ECE specifically

OSEP sent to all states a letter that there are no wavers in the delivery of FAPE due to COVID. An additional letter from OSER that was a Q&A on a wide variety of topics, with specific focus on COVID. Swilling will send copies of these letters to the panel secretary, who will forward them to the panel.

Advice, Recommendations and Action Steps

Kindergarten start date discussion – different district approaches.

By-laws committee to meet and finalize by-laws for voting at the January meeting.

By-law committee meeting and other committee meetings, how to build into regular meeting time

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

January 19, 2022 in Cheyenne via Zoom

April 5-6, 2022 in Sheridan

July 13-14, 2022 in Saratoga

*All meetings will be from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted.