



WAPSD

Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities

December 6, 2022, Meeting, Zoom Platform

Attendance: Christine Bullinger, Jennifer Figenser, Char Norris, Brandon Douglas, Erin Swilling, Deana Smith, Rebecca Bullinger, Nikki Baldwin, Shannon Cranmore, Alisha Rone (proxy for Danielle Wondercheck), Tricia Whynott, Ragen Latham, TJ Mechem, Jennifer Nelly, Hayley Speiser, Margee Robertson, Jennifer Duncan

Guests: Carri Eldridge, Elliot Regenstein, Jenn Davis

MOTIONS

Administrative:

It was moved by Ragen Latham and seconded by Tricia Whynott that the minutes of the September 2022 meeting be approved as written. Motion carried unanimously.

Brandon Douglas moved and Ragen Latham seconded adjourning the meeting at 1:15 PM.

Policy:

Welcome/Opening: Chairman Christine Bullinger called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. There was no public comment

Secretary Announcements

Jennifer Duncan asked the Panel members to review the Membership List and advise her of any changes in contact information. She also notified the panel that the WDE Finance division approved Parent Panel Members to receive a daily stipend for attending WAPSD Panel meetings, the process just needs to be ironed out for how those will be determined and paid.

Chair Report – Old and New Business

Chairman Christine Bullinger welcomed Brandon Douglas onto the Panel and is looking forward to Carri Eldridge being approved. The Committee work will focus on a list of priorities that will be set by the panel in the interim. Bullinger also inquired as to the due date of the Annual Report that the Panel typically releases once per year, Margee Robertson indicated that it has been presented at the June meeting, which is the end of the Panel year typically. An annual report hasn't been done for a couple of years.

PDG Group, Elliot Regenstein

Elliot Regenstein presented to the Panel about the Preschool Development Grant and the state of Wyoming's early childhood special education administration. Two workgroups were set up: one focused on finance and the other on evaluation with members representing a variety of state agencies and local education agencies. The finance workgroup developed a framework for how they would analyze the differences between school district special education funding and child development center special

education funding. The evaluation group developed a set of recommendations that were circulated to districts and child development centers to get input from their districts. The major issues focused on were how disabilities are classified, types of capacities of evaluators, what tools are being used, how local collaboration is structured, Professional Development and Technical Assistance and data. Chris Bullinger asked when the finance group would be able to put forth their recommendations. The funding model for early childhood in the state is different than any other state; child development centers and districts have two completely different models of funding even though the expectations are the same for all students ages 3-21. Regenstein hopes eventually the recommendation can be made to the legislature to change the funding model.

Governor's Mental Health Council, Jen Davis

Jen Davis with the Governor's office provided an update on the Mental Health Council that has been assembled in response to the rising occurrence of mental health issues in both students and adults. Mental Health Summit was held in October and the next steps are an educational series in partnership with Align with a webinar on Mondays that will cover a variety of issues and subjects surrounding mental health care and preventive measures and to assist with building the future mental health care system in Wyoming. The Council is also meeting with other states and other national technical centers to find solutions for the state. Margee Robertson shared that many districts and parents of students with disabilities have expressed concern that there are very few local facilities to deal with mental health issues and that many times the individual needs to be placed out of state to receive appropriate services.

SPED Directors Report

Statewide monitoring is occurring within the Special Education Programs Division. Rather than focusing on specific districts to be monitored for this year, a specific area is being monitored for in all districts – student groups that are at risk of not receiving free and appropriate public education (FAPE), out of district placements. Depending on the type of placement, the responsibility of providing FAPE falls either on the district or on the institution where the students are placed. The WDE will be available for institutions and districts who may need technical assistance or professional development by providing on site visits, in person and virtual trainings and being available to walk through processes and answer technical questions. Over 60 sessions covering a variety of subjects have already been recorded and are available in the archive on the WinWEB and are available to anybody with access to that website. The Deaf/Hard of Hearing Team is providing transition training in January and February, these trainings are also listed on the WinWEB.

BHD Update

Ragen Latham updated the panel on BHD activities – they are continuing to follow up on compliance activities with various centers around the state with regard to provision of FAPE and meeting other IDEA indicators for early childhood. A new crisis coordinator position has been approved for BHD and will provide a contact for parents of children in crisis and the BHD. There may be some changes to Part C services, which is children under the age of 3, especially services for babies that have been born in an at-risk situation i.e., low birth weight, addicted to drugs – this project will be piloted over the next year to see if it's a viable program to bring in the BHD and establish policies and statutes to support it. Currently, there are private funds available for this pilot.

DFS Update

Jennifer Neely provided an update from the Department of Family Services for the Panel. They will be getting a new computer data system to assist the department with assisting families in crisis. DFS works closely with local law enforcement, schools and doctors to study and find trends in particular communities to identify where maltreatment of children may be occurring and providing the proper assistance to the family. Neely is also pleased with the collaboration with regard to mental health between several state agencies and private industry.

PIC Update

Jennifer Figenser provided an update on WPIC.org is the new Parent Information Center website and provides a great resource for parents. Two new part time staff members have been hired, which will increase availability. The majority of calls have been about behaviors and in and out of school suspension as has been the pattern with most parent advocacy agencies. The annual conference is also coming up soon.

Committee Report Outs

There are two committees that provided report outs. Ragen Latham is the chair of the Mental Health Committee and reported that the group will meet in the interim to finish their work. They would like to focus on reducing the stigma associated with mental illness, providing education and resources and normalizing advocacy. There are several types of resources available through schools, however, students may not understand how to access them. They proposed some type of mass email to students describing the services and how to access them.

Nikki Baldwin is the chair of the Family Engagement committee; they met a day earlier and then again during this meeting. She shared their vision for districts to take responsibility for educating and empowering families about their rights and exercising them and utilizing the resources available to them; recognize and utilize family strengths and expertise and elevate family voices. They want to enter the conversation as influencers of districts and parents by finding ways to give families a voice; highlight successes; try to change mindsets in districts where things are not going well; consolidating resources for families. The Panel agreed that having a “one stop shop” for parents would be advantageous.

Brandon Douglas moved and Ragen Latham seconded adjourning the meeting at 1:15 PM.

Next Meeting Planning – agenda items, lodging and attendance

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

March 7-8, 2023 Lander Wyoming; Tour Life Resource Center, Reservation, Job Corps

June 6-7, 2023 Worland Wyoming; Tour Wyoming Boy’s School, CDC Region 1

September 26-27, 2023 Jackson, Wyoming; Tour Vertical Gardening, C Bar V, Red Top Meadows, CDC

Potential Agenda items for March meeting:

Legislative Update

Presentations from PIC, UW-WIND, Uplift

Advice Recommendations and Action Steps

Find resources for families: PIC, WATR, Uplift, Deana Smith-Erin Swilling Resource Document

Encourage interim committee meetings

Recruiting an additional parent and interviewing current applicants – parent from the central part of the state, parent of a preschool child with a disability, parent of a child with a significant cognitive disability,

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

March 7-8, 2023 Lander Wyoming; Tour Life Resource Center

June 6-7, 2023 Worland Wyoming; Tour Wyoming Boy's School, CDC Region 1

September 26-27, 2023 Jackson, Wyoming; Tour Vertical Gardening, C Bar V, Red Top Meadows, CDC

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