



October 5, 2023 Meeting, Teton County School District #1, Jackson, Wyoming

Attendance: Jennifer Figenser, Brandon Douglas, Katy Schmeltzer, Liz Acosta-McCune, Shannon Cranmore, Cynthia Fischer (proxy for Danielle Wondercheck), Patti Boyd (proxy for Tricia Whynott), Deana Smith, Tanya Barcelona, Rebecca Bullinger, Ragen Latham, Jennifer Neely, TJ Mechem, Margee Robertson, Jennifer Duncan

Absences: Erin Swilling, Hayley Speiser, Dallas Myers, Christine Bullinger, Rebecca Bullinger

Guests:

MOTIONS

Administrative:

Minutes for the June 2023 meeting were presented for approval. Margee Robertson moved and Jennifer Neely seconded approving the minutes as written, the motion carried unanimously.

Tanya Barcelona volunteered to be nominated for Chair-elect. Patti Boyd moved and Ragen Latham seconded the motion to elect Tanya Barcelona as the Chair-elect. Motion carried unanimously.

Policy:

Welcome/Opening: Chair Ragen Latham called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM. There was no public comment.

Secretary Announcements

Panel Secretary Jennifer Duncan asked members to review their information on the Member Roles spreadsheet and to inform her of any changes.

Chair Report – Old and New Business

Chair Ragen Latham didn't have a prepared report and said she would send any kind of updates out to the Panel via email.

Professional Development - Deana Smith

The WDE had a special education conference at the University of Wyoming called WAVE (Week of Academic Vision for Excellence), over 300 people attended, the sessions will be loaded onto the WINWeb for viewing. In addition to WAVE, the WDE hosted a new Special Education Teacher Bootcamp, about 60 teachers signed up and 40 of them were brand new. That will continue each year

to hold it in conjunction with WAVE. Dates for SPED Teacher Bootcamp/WAVE are tentatively set for July 29-August 2. Additionally, there have been 52 virtual sessions over the last couple of years for professional development on a variety of topics. There will also be a new Special Education Director training in September. A priority area is professional development for administrators, superintendents and other district leadership but finding a time that will work for them to be away from their districts is difficult. The WDE worked with Align on a collaborative Early Childhood Education conference in Riverton in September. The Chapter 7 review and re-writing is in the Attorney General's office after stakeholder review. Based on results from the Monitoring Team looking at districts and institutions and their management of students placed in facilities outside their district, a legal training is being held in Lander October 18-19, 2023 to help with professional development about out of district placement legalities.

SPED Directors Report

The State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report (SPP/SPR) was turned in in January. Wyoming fell in the Meets Expectations classification, which is the highest designation there is, but there is still room for improvement. The data that provides this information for the designation is collected from districts then reported to the US Department of Education. The data is reviewed with stakeholders and WDE SPED staff, then reported out statewide. The number one priority for SPED this year is out of district placements, these are the most at-risk students; another priority area is for the WDE to reach out to districts for nominations for a surrogate parent and to assure they are properly trained so that there is a list of surrogate parents for students who are abandoned or don't have a legal parent to assist them with their educational needs with regard to special education. Continuing developing training for institutions and school districts. The number two priority is the Chapter 7 rules redrafting process continues, stakeholders have reviewed and they are now with the Attorney General, after that WDE leadership will review and if no significant changes are needed, they will be promulgated into rules. The new Special Education Director's virtual binder will be an update of the previously printed manual, that will be rolled out soon. Third priority area is Functional skills and behavioral support, Christine Manning will do some communities of practice for educators. Other areas of focus are developing attendance standard for all students, the pandemic has caused some families to lose the value of attending school; WDE will continue to work with BHD and the child development centers on their monitoring results by providing continuing professional development and technical support. SPED Dispute Resolution is assisting the SPED division with the focused out of district placement monitoring that has been ongoing with all 49 districts by assisting with providing training and technical assistance to districts who have findings.

Committee Report Out

- **Family Engagement**

The Family Engagement committee increased in size considerably during the work session the previous day. Reviewed and solidified the progress they've made over the last year. There was a lot of discussion around the family's and district's responsibilities in maintaining good family engagement. The Committee motto is: Educate, elevate and empower families of students. They want to brainstorm about learning family engagement practices and build a toolkit for districts to encourage family engagement and incentivize good family engagement with recognition or additional money for districts. They also want to create a one pager of the Procedural Safeguards, making sure parents have trainings around the IEP process, even in Spanish, and the importance of early intervention. Written report link:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vHa4ylqT0B8FSUPUjwF1glVLj_xyb7dunA2hyghKFV0/edit?usp=sharing

- **Mental Health**

Ragen Latham updated the panel on the mental health committee meeting. The mission of the Committee is to empower students, guardians, and educators to create a safe and supportive environment and access services that meet the mental health needs of students. Written report:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/12jjMTznX1UN5NhfvLBDKkSzfvL4zna8/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=103621275708873476116&rtpof=true&sd=true>

DFS Update, Jennifer Neely

DFS is still working up their technology upgrade within the agency. DFS is working closely with BHD and several other agencies on some of the individual situations that they have been presented with.

BHD Update, Ragan Latham

BHD is working on their Chapter 8 Rules with regard to Special Education for Early Childhood. They are continuing to have individual situations that they are trying to take care of and make sure the child is placed in a safe environment where they will receive FAPE.

PIC Update, Jennifer Figenser

Jennifer is working with several agencies and organizations to provide training around several issues of concern. She also announced that she will be leaving the Parent Information Center in May and the Board is currently drafting a job description for the job and beginning the search for her replacement. They are currently looking for board members from several various populations around the state.

DVR Update, TJ Mecham

Restructuring of the leadership team and job descriptions have been a priority at DVR. There is a large grant in partnership with the WDE that provides funds for mental health assistance and transition assistance.

Elections

Tanya Barcelona volunteered to be nominated as the Chair elect. Patti Boyd moved and Ragan Latham seconded the motion to elect Tanya Barcelona as the Chair-elect. Motion carried unanimously.

Next Meeting Planning – agenda items, lodging and attendance

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

April 23-24, 2024, Casper

July 9-11, 2024, Gillette

September 30-October 1, 2024, Laramie

Potential Agenda items for January meeting

Dr. Elizabeth Price, Wy-Alt Access

Advice Recommendations and Action Steps

Panel needs more parents, possible legislative representation, charter school representation.

_____ the motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:45 pm.
Motion carried unanimously.