

**SUMMARY**  
**June 9, 2023 Meeting**  
**Indiana State Advisory Council (SAC)**  
**on the Education of Children with Disabilities**  
**Online Virtual Meeting**

<u><b>Council Members:</b></u>	<u><b>Present (Yes/No)</b></u>
<b>Melaina Gant</b> , SAC Chair, Department of Child Services	Y
<b>Kim Dodson</b> , The Arc of Indiana	Y
<b>Bethany Ecklor</b> , Division of Mental Health & Addiction, Indiana FSSA	N
<b>Anthony England</b> , Elkhart Community Schools	N
<b>Paloma Garza</b> , parent representative	N
<b>Dennis Heathfield</b> , Cummins, Inc.	Y
<b>Dr. Nancy Holsapple</b> , Office of Special Education, Department of Education	Y
<b>Funmi Ige-Wright</b> , parent representative	Y
<b>Aleesia Johnson</b> , Indianapolis Public Schools	N
<b>Donald Koors</b> , Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired	Y
<b>Jonathan Kraeszig</b> , Division of Disability & Rehabilitation Services, Indiana FSSA	Y
<b>Kristi Linson</b> , Children’s Special Health Care Services, State Department of Health	Y
<b>Molly McGuire</b> , parent representative	Y
<b>Dr. John Nally</b> , Department of Correction	Y
<b>Dr. Leah Nellis</b> , Indiana University-Kokomo	Y
<b>Lesa Paddack</b> , IN*Source	Y
<b>Michelle Robinson</b> , MSD of Lawrence Township	Y
<b>Tiffany Sanders</b> , parent representative	N
<b>Sarah Watson</b> , Archdiocese of Indianapolis	N
<b>Lucy Witte</b> , Indiana School for the Deaf	Y

**Also Present:**

Department of Education - Tracy Brunner, Michelle Oja, Angie Vaughn,

Guests - Cynthia Arnold, Alicia Cooper

**Call to Order**

Council Chair Melaina Gant called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m. A quorum (fourteen of twenty members) attended.

**Action Items**

Lucy Witte moved to approve the June meeting summary. Donald Koors seconded. The motion passed.

John Nally moved and Lucy Witte seconded to approve the Council’s updated electronic meeting policy. Kim Dodson moved and Lesa Paddack seconded approval of the proposed 2024 meeting dates.

## Information Items

### 1. Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) Updates

Office of Special Education (OSE) Assistant Director Angie Vaughn updated members on the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) process that is currently in a clarification phase to respond to the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) regarding the State’s capacity building activities. Specifically, OSEP has asked for information on how IDOE (1) supports stakeholders’ capacity to be engaged and involved; (2) ensures local educational agency (LEA) correction of noncompliance on a per case basis and moving forward; (3) determines significant disproportionality and whether the State’s methodology is “reasonably designed” to determine if significant disproportionality exists in identifications of students who qualify for special education, and if that methodology needs to be redesigned to meet the federal requirement.

Angie explained the State’s current method for calculating results for the suspension/expulsion compliance indicator, noting that Covid-related closure and disruptions have skewed the data for the look-back period. She also walked members through actual data and the state rate used to compare data of each LEA to identify outliers. Angie advised that State staff involved in IDEA Part B compliance monitoring and data analysis are taking advantage of the new guidance and increased technical assistance available from OSEP as the State moves forward with redesigning its monitoring process and target setting. She pointed out that information sharing and explanation for stakeholders is intentional and purposeful with respect to building the State Advisory Council’s capacity to understand the federal requirements, the State’s process, and then to advise the Department of Education regarding education of students with disabilities. Angie responded to members’ questions and comments before turning over the remainder of the presentation to Nancy Holsapple.

State Director of Special Education Dr. Nancy J. Holsapple thanked Angie Vaughn for sharing SPP/APR updates, and she then advised the Council of planned additions to the OSE compliance and monitoring team that Angie leads. Nancy reported that: OSE recently filled the early childhood education (IDEA-required 619 Coordinator) vacancy and plans to add another special education specialist and data analyst to Angie’s team; OSE is also trying to increase fiscal team staffing as well; and the Office of General Counsel filled the existing special education complaint investigator vacancy and added another new investigator. She reminded council members of Indiana’s upcoming federal Part B compliance monitoring review and shared the revised anticipated timeline for both the pre-visit review process and on-site visit date. She also pointed out today’s meeting agenda includes the link to sign up for OSE’s monthly newsletter and any other IDOE newsletters that may be of interest to members.

Nancy shared updates on funding for special education programs, including increases in state appropriations to help LEAs serve students with high-cost needs and students diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and for auditory-verbal accelerated education for students who meet qualifying criteria. She also gave an overview of 2023 special education-related legislation and related information included with the June meeting materials as well as a reminder on where to find more information as changes are implemented.

## **Discussion Items**

### **1. Council Member Reports and Concerns**

Following Nancy Holsapple's legislative update, council member Kim Dodson shared additional information on 2023 bills that focused on the Science of Reading, financial literacy, streamlining school staff training requirements, and incorporation of the alternative diploma in graduation rates for state-only reporting purposes.

Discussion followed about concerning trends reported by parents of students with disabilities about advocacy during the 2023 Session in support of allowing removal and displacement of students with disabilities, including the potential risk of losing federal special education funding if Indiana were to adopt policy that conflicts with federal requirements under IDEA. Members also voice concerns related to the State's focus on a singular approach to teaching reading and adopting literacy curriculum that could adversely impact reading proficiency among the special education student population if other approaches and targeted supports are no longer emphasized for students with disabilities. Nancy Holsapple offered, and members expressed approval for her, to invite the director of the recently established state literacy center to make a presentation on this topic at an upcoming Council meeting.

## **Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

## **Next SAC Meeting Date**

The Chair noted the council's next meeting is scheduled for September 8, 2023.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 10:57 a.m.