

SUMMARY
June 10, 2022 Meeting
Indiana State Advisory Council (SAC)
on the Education of Children with Disabilities
Online Virtual Meeting

<u>Council Members:</u>	<u>Present (Yes/No)</u>
Kim Dodson , The Arc of Indiana	Y
Bethany Ecklor , Division of Mental Health and Addiction, Indiana FSSA	N
Melaina Gant , Department of Child Services	Y
Dennis Heathfield , Cummins, Inc.	N
Dr. Nancy Holsapple , Office of Special Education, Department of Education	Y
Theresa Koleszar , Division of Disability & Rehabilitation Services, Indiana FSSA	N
Funmi Ige-Wright , parent representative	Y
Aleesia Johnson , Indianapolis Public Schools	N
Donald Koors , Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired	Y
Kristi Linson , Children's Special Health Care Services, Department of Health	N
Molly McGuire , parent representative	Y
Dr. John Nally , Department of Correction	Y
Dr. Leah Nellis , Indiana University-Kokomo	Y
Lesa Paddock , IN*Source	Y
Aura Roblero , Family Voices Indiana	N
Tiffany Sanders , parent representative	N
Linda Schroeder , Old National Trail Special Services	N
Dr. George Van Horn , SAC Chair, Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation	Y
Sarah Watson , Archdiocese of Indianapolis	Y
Lucy Witte , Indiana School for the Deaf	Y

Also Present:

Jen Thompson and Angie Vaughn, Department of Education

Call to Order

Council Chair Dr. George Van Horn called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. A quorum (twelve of twenty members) attended.

Action Items

John Nally moved to approve the March meeting summary. Melaina Gant seconded. The motion passed. During discussion of the summary, Funmi Ige Wright asked if the draft can be sent to members

shortly after each meeting. She noted having difficulty remembering details of the meeting by the time the summary is typically distributed with the agenda and materials for the next meeting.

The Chair called for discussion and a vote to approve the proposed dates for next year's meetings. Don Koors moved to approve the schedule as written, and Funmi Ige-Wright seconded. The motion passed.

To assess members' preferences, George Van Horn conducted a brief poll among meeting participants regarding the virtual versus in-person meeting format. General discussion followed about gasoline costs, travel time, and other logistics involved with in-person meeting attendance; possibilities for offering a quality hybrid option; and members' general sense about the pros and cons of in-person versus virtual meetings. All who participated in the discussion expressed willingness to do whatever the group decides. The Chair thanked everyone for their input, which will be considered for future planning. He noted arrangements are already in place for the September 2022 meeting to be virtual.

On the heels of this general discussion, one member referred to recent information released regarding Indiana's annual state appropriation for Special Education Excess Cost and the non-reverting nature of this funding. State staff present at the meeting clarified that this state appropriation is available only for the current budget biennium, and any amounts encumbered but not expended during that fiscal period revert back to the State General Fund rather than being available (or "carried over") for use in any subsequent fiscal period(s). There was brief, additional discussion about recent increases in the numbers of students requiring high-cost placements, vendor's rates for providing such services, and the disproportionate impact that pandemic-related disruptions have had for students with self-regulation problems and other extreme behaviors.

Informational Items

1. Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) Updates

State Director of Special Education Dr. Nancy J. Holsapple introduced Office of Special Education (OSE) Assistant Special Education Directors Jen Thompson and Angie Vaughn. She explained that Jen oversees the special education fiscal team and is recording the summary of today's meeting; Angie leads the special education monitoring team. Nancy also shared: (1) a brief reminder that anyone who wants to receive regular updates about the work of OSE can email Tracy Brunner with a request to be added to the newsletter distribution list; and (2) that the OSE staff now includes Jennifer Spencer, a new special education specialist who recently joined the monitoring team.

OSE Assistant Director Angie Vaughn then gave an overview of the monitoring team's work, in consultation with the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCS), to review Indiana's current IDEA Part B monitoring system (commonly referred to as Results Driven Accountability or RDA), which has been in place over the past six years. The goal is to assess how this RDA process aligns with federal requirements and explore possibilities for updating it. Through meetings with stakeholder groups, OSE obtained and considered input before submitting Indiana's latest State Performance Plan (SPP) in February for federal review. This fall, OSE will share with stakeholders,

including the State Advisory Council, the feedback that Indiana receives as a result of this review by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). OSE is now focused on stakeholder input regarding Indiana's chosen state-specific SSIP (State Systemic Improvement Plan, or compliance Indicator 17) targeting Grade 3 reading proficiency. OSE is not only required to obtain but actively encourages SAC member feedback on the SSIP.

Before concluding, Angie noted that OSE is also working to streamline how it communicates RDA results with local educational agencies (LEAs). The team is working with state information technology staff to create a secure web-based system for this purpose. In the meanwhile, LEAs receive this information via email. IDEOE will receive OSEP's IDEA Part B state determination for Indiana on June 23 and share the State's federal rating at the next SAC meeting.

Following the monitoring and compliance update, Nancy Holsapple presented special education funding updates, which included a description of the SEEC (Special Education Excess Cost) fund and the types of costs for which LEAs can request this state financial assistance to help serve students with exceptional needs. As pointed out in response to a question posed earlier, SEEC is a finite appropriation, any remainder of which reverts to the State General Fund under state statute. As of May, requests exceeded the available funds for this budget period by approximately \$2.4 million. Recently, OSE is meeting with a stakeholder group to examine existing SEEC policies and procedures then recommend changes that will allow LEAs to serve as many students as possible with this state appropriation. The agency is exploring the possibility of requesting an increase in the total amount appropriated as well as a statute change to make this a non-reverting fund.

Nancy also reported that, under the American Rescue Plan, public schools were allotted additional federal IDEA Part B grant funds to help address pandemic related challenges and disruptions. She pointed out these supplemental federal special education funds, LEAs are able to allocate Part B dollars to innovative projects and costly purchases for which they typically lack sufficient Part B funds. For example:

- One district budgeted ARP Part B funds to build a 3-bedroom house for students ages 18-21 in its Community, Habilitation, Opportunity, Independence, Cooperative Education program. This program to promote independent living can currently serve only 10 students in a rented building that is not ADA compliant. The city donated the land where the new ADA-compliant home will be built by students in their Construction Ed Class that typically involves students in Habit for Humanity construction projects. The new building will allow expansion of the program to serve 30 students, including many who could not have been served in the non-ADA compliant setting due to accessibility limitations.
- Districts are also budgeting ARP Part B funds for things like:
 - specially equipped school buses and adaptive playground equipment;
 - tactile sensory wall murals;
 - stipends, bonuses and tuition reimbursement to help recruit/retain qualified personnel

To conclude the OSE Updates, Nancy advised the Council that legislation passed in 2022, which takes effect July 1, authorizes the state Medicaid and Education agencies to collaborate on the necessary Medicaid State Plan, rule, and claims processing system changes to expand, beyond those in students' IEPs, Indiana Medicaid coverage and reimbursement to include medically necessary services that schools are required to provide under federal and state mandates. Following all the necessary steps for implementation, this will include mandated medically necessary services that public schools provide per individualized healthcare plans, 504 accommodations plans, behavioral intervention plans, and non-public school service plans of eligible students.

Discussion Items

1. Council Member Reports and Concerns

Referring to materials previously shared with members, the Council Chair reminded those present that, as part of an upcoming on-site review, federal reviewers plan to meet with state advisory council members about their involvement in advising the Office of Special Education to help inform the State's approach to general supervision of special education programs, including Results Driven Accountability, technical assistance, and guidance for LEAs. George and Nancy clarified that OSEP reviewers could contact them as early as this fall, but it could be as late as next spring.

When the Chair asked if other council members had reports or concerns to come before this meeting, one asked when trend data on student performance will be available. Nancy replied that this is typically shared in the fall (usually November), after all state assessment, expulsion, grades, and other data collections are received and compiled.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Next SAC Meeting Date

The Chair reminded everyone the next meeting is scheduled for September 9, 2022.

Adjournment

The meeting concluded at 10:24 a.m.