



## **Minutes**

January 11, 2016

10:00 a.m.

TN School for the Blind  
115 Stewarts Ferry Pike  
Nashville, TN 37214

### **Members of Council in Attendance**

Chip Fair, Vice-Chair  
Brian Brown  
Catherine Knowles  
Chantal Hess-Taylor  
Cleatrice C. McTorry  
David Craig  
Dawn Bradley  
Gayle Feltner  
Hillary Sims  
James Topp  
Jason Vance  
Mary Meador  
Patricia Valladares  
Shannon Streett  
Shannon Taylor

### **Members Not in Attendance**

Alfred M. Hacker  
Darlene Walden  
Jeff Ker  
Paula Brownyard

### **TDOE Employees in Attendance**

Joey Hassell, Assistant Commissioner  
Steve Sparks, AC Contact  
Tabatha Siddiqi, AC Contact  
Alison Gauld  
Bill Wilson, Office of General Council  
Blake Shearer  
Evans Murray  
Gary Smith  
Lori Nixon  
Nathan Travis, TSB  
Rachel Wilkinson  
Rebecca Wright  
Ryan Mathis  
Theresa Nicholls  
Tie Hodack

### **Visitors in Attendance**

Angela Webster  
Cathy Brooks  
Cynthia Cheshier  
Jennifer Shilling  
Ned Andrew Solomon  
Sherry Wilds

**Meeting Focus/Purpose** *To provide policy guidance with respect to Special Education and Related Services for children with disabilities in TN*

**Welcome/Introductions**

**Chip Fair, Chair**

**Approval of Current Agenda\***

*See AC website for agenda*

- **Action Item**  
Council member, James Topp, made a motion to approve the agenda with no changes recommended. The motion was seconded by Council member, Catherine Knowles.
  
- **Final Action Taken**  
The Council voted unanimously in favor of approving the January 11, 2016 agenda.

**Approval of October 19, 2015 Meeting Minutes**

*See AC website for October minutes*

<http://www.tennessee.gov/education/article/special-education-advisory-council>

- **Action Item**  
Council member, Cleatrice McTorry, made a motion to approve the October, 19, 2015 minutes. The motion was seconded by Council member, Hillary Sims.
  
- **Final Action Taken**  
The Council voted unanimously in favor of approving the October 19, 2015 minutes.

**Member Remarks**

**James Topp**

- ❖ James Topp resigned from the council after 24 years of service.
- ❖ Cynthia Cheshier was acknowledged for her years of service to the council.
- ❖ New council member Shannon Streett was recognized

**Isolation / Restraint Data Update\***

**Chip Fair, Chair**

- ❖ Received a copy of the 14-15 data at the last AC meeting
- ❖ The report of the Isolation/Restraint subcommittee, including this data, will be on the agenda of the April 2016 State Board of Education meeting
- ❖ Guest Comment: Concern about some language in the report. Specifically, the de-emphasis on training by the State.  
Answer: The report provided at the meeting is not a product of the State's data committee. It is the first annual report from the advisory council and constitutes recommendations only. We will include the word "training" in two passages of the report to put more emphasis on training.

➤ **Action Item**

Council member, Hilary Sims, made a motion to approve the documents' submission to the State Board of Education at their April meeting. The motion was seconded by Council member, Shannon Streett.

➤ **Final Action Taken**

The Council voted unanimously in favor of presenting the Advisory Council's first Isolation/Restraint Annual Report to the SBOE in April 2016.

**Vocation Rehabilitation "School to Work" Program\***

**Gayle Feltner**

- ❖ An overview PPT is to be presented on this program at the Partners in Education (PIE) Conference
- ❖ S to W is an employment program of the Department of Human Services with student transition as the focus
- ❖ Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) includes five focus areas:
  1. Job Exploration
  2. Work Based Learning
  3. Counseling for Post-Secondary Education
  4. Workplace Readiness
  5. Instruction in Self-Advocacy and Peer Mentoring
- ❖ There are 25 contracts set up in 27 LEAs and one in both TSB and TSD
- ❖ There will be four job categories to choose from:
  1. Transition Case Manager
  2. Transition Coach
  3. Job Coach
  4. Work Place Readiness Coach
- ❖ Vocational Rehab supplies 70% of the program's funds and LEAs supply 30%
- ❖ Another High School Transition Program is "Project Search"
  1. A school year long program
  2. There are currently three adult programs and six high school programs
  3. The goal is competitive integrative employment
  4. There are 60 to 70 internships each year
- ❖ Question: Do any of these programs serve the juvenile incarcerated population?  
Answer: These programs are only serving students through TN public school systems. However, the YMCA Nashville is partnering with the Department of Labor's work force investment program, to work with out of school youth such as those incarcerated.
- ❖ Question: Now that it's a requirement to have VR counselors see students at age 14, what will be different now? Funding? Lower case loads?  
Answer: The pre-employment services do not require a vocational rehab counselor. They are required when students get ready to move into eligibility. The full roll out of the Occupational Diploma program will help.
- ❖ Question: What effect, if any, have you seen in respect to the Occupational Diploma?  
Answer: We encourage people to use the SKEMA even if they're not going to use the Occupational Diploma.
- ❖ Question: Are you getting feedback from LEAs indicating that the Occupational Diploma is being perceived as a Special Education Diploma and may have an adverse effect on graduation rates?

Answer: No.

### **Transition Framework / Post Sec. Survey\***

**Blake Shearer**

- ❖ Transition Blueprint Task Force met in November 2015 (35 attendees)
- ❖ Extensive breakdown of Indicator 14 Data provided.
- ❖ Question: How will people be notified about training on the Transition Blueprint?  
Answer: Special Education Director Update, Transition Managers Update, and sharing within state agencies.

### **Individualized Education Act (IEA) \***

**Rebecca Wright**

- ❖ Website link: <http://www.tn.gov/education/section/iea>
- ❖ Program enrollment will go into effect in January 2017
- ❖ Application window will open in Summer 2016
- ❖ Significant changes to the rules include: Referring to students as 'students enrolled in the IEA Program' or 'students receiving IEAs' instead of IEA students', revised definition of 'educational therapies', and changed percentage of IEA funds that must be spent each year from 90 percent to 50 percent.
- ❖ Question: Please explain how the unused portion of the 90 percent and 50 percent will be used.  
Answer: If parents do not use all of those funds, the money would revert back to the state or deduct that amount from the parents' next IEA payment. Parents can save a percentage for the students' post-secondary education. If they return to their school district, or withdraw from the program, all of the remaining funds revert back to the state.
- ❖ First monthly IEA update was sent out on October 29, 2015.
- ❖ An IEA Procedures Manual, Program Brochure, and Parent Handbook are being developed.

### **Lunch (provided)**

### **Needs Intervention LEAs\* SSIP Survey Results\***

**Rachel Wilkinson**

- ❖ APR Local Determinations (89 districts met requirements, 34 fell into the needs assistance category, and 16 fell into the needs intervention category).
- ❖ Both Needs Assistance and Needs Intervention districts were required to submit improvement plans which were then posted to ePlan.
- ❖ Additionally, the Needs Intervention LEAs were required to participate in Needs Assessment site visits. Special Populations staff conducted the site visits for each of the 16 Needs Intervention districts. Once a site visit meeting was completed, an improvement plan was developed.
- ❖ Phase 1 of SSIP was done in 2014-15. We are now in Phase 2.
- ❖ The goal is to increase the percentage of students with a specific learning disability, scoring at or above basic in grades three through eight, in Reading and Language Arts assessments.
- ❖ A survey was distributed, in the fall of 2015, to gather input on the department infrastructure, evidenced-based practices, and how the SSIP should be evaluated.
- ❖ Three primary concerns were communication, funding, and time to implement proposed strategies effectively.

- ❖ Question: Since there were only 78 respondents, is there a plan to reissue the survey to enlarge the pool of response?  
Answer: Possibly.
- ❖ Question: Did the survey breakdown who responded?  
Answer: No, because that was not a requested field.
- ❖ The Division is aligning the SSIP with the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) received last year.

### **Occupational Diploma Update\***

**Alison Gauld**

- ❖ This year all TN public high schools are able to offer the Occupational Diploma.
- ❖ Three live webinars were offered in the fall and each was attended by parents, school staff and advocacy groups.
- ❖ Thanks to Disability Rights in TN (DRT) and TN Works, the TN Law Board will offer training on why employers should be seeking to hire individuals with disabilities.
- ❖ On February 11, 2016, there will be a webinar for attorneys, who are in-house council for companies that may hire people with disabilities. HR people will also be included. CLE credit will be awarded through the Bar Association.
- ❖ Occupational Diplomas have been printed and can be ordered through TDOE just as general education diplomas are ordered.

### **Sign Language/Interpreter Task Force\***

**Alison Gauld**

- ❖ TN needs high quality sign language interpreters.
- ❖ Interpreters do more than just translate speech to sign and sign to speech. They are teaching primary language to persons for whom they are interpreting. They are helping individuals develop more sophisticated vocabulary, to move from single word sentences to more complex sentences, and to think more abstractly and thoroughly.
- ❖ Sign Language Interpreters are paid almost twice as much in states other than TN.
- ❖ The TN proposal for licensure would require candidates to have a Bachelor's Degree, hold a national certificate from a national program, and have passed the Educational Interpreters Proficiency Assessment.
- ❖ For existing interpreters, who do not have licensure, there will be opportunity to earn licensure by obtaining a letter of support from the LEA where they are employed and pass the written portion of the proficiency assessment. These two requirements must be attained within a 5 year period.
- ❖ Newly hired but unlicensed interpreters, will need to have an Associate's Degree with a 3.0 on the proficiency assessment and complete continuing education.
- ❖ Question: As these individuals achieve qualifying milestones, will they be eligible for increased pay?  
Answer: Yes, but based on the districts' budget, not the BEP.
- ❖ Question: Are districts using contractors and paying more for them?  
Answer: Right now, some are paying more and some are paying less.
- ❖ Question: So the rules stay the same even for the contractors?  
Answer: Yes.
- ❖ Question: Does the Associates' Degree have to specifically be an interpreting degree?  
Answer: We don't delineate. There are degree options at the two programs.
- ❖ Question: Are interpreters supposed to be knowledgeable about the topics they are translating?

- Answer: The focus is on language not content of what they are interpreting.
- ❖ This proposal will be presented to the State Board at their January 2016 meeting.

### **TN SPED Framework Alignment to OSEP Letter of November 16\***

**Tie Hodack**

- ❖ All training is focused on student access to high quality education
- ❖ Our focus on LRE is well aligned with the OSEP letter
- ❖ TDOE is looking at adding a section at the end of student IEPs which would provide an impact statement.
- ❖ The alignment was released on December 15, 2015.
- ❖ Question: Where can one view the parameters of LRE?  
Answer: The Special Education Framework Manual. Contact Tie Hodack ([Tie.Hodack@tn.gov](mailto:Tie.Hodack@tn.gov)).
- ❖ Question: Will the manual also include how LRE aligns with RTI?  
Answer: Yes and it this can also be found in the RTI manual.

### **SPED Intervention Course Codes\***

**Tie Hodack**

- ❖ There are now course codes for Tier III in Math and Reading.
- ❖ There will also be a special education course code.
- ❖ Students are eligible if they have an educational disability, an IEP, and exceptional relevant academic performance.
- ❖ Courses will remain smaller and more intensive.

### **PIE Conference**

**Ryan Mathis**

- ❖ February 8, 2016 – Pre-Conference – Focus on RTI<sup>2</sup> B
- ❖ Conference dates are February 9 – 11, 2016
- ❖ Location – Music City Center, Nashville, TN
- ❖ 521 registrants for the Pre-Conference and 1,435 registrants for the main conference.
- ❖ For more information, contact Ryan Mathis ([Ryan.Mathis@tn.gov](mailto:Ryan.Mathis@tn.gov)) or Jill Omer ([Jill.Omer@tn.gov](mailto:Jill.Omer@tn.gov)).

### **AC Goal Assignments & Discussion**

**Chip Fair**

- ❖ Email a brief synopsis to Steve Sparks and Chip Fair regarding the goals for which each member is responsible.
- ❖ Gayle Feltner will lead Goal 1.
- ❖ Add Shannon Streett to Goals 2 and 8.
- ❖ May meet 30 minutes before or after a quarterly meeting to discuss goals.
- ❖ Chair will send reminder monthly emails encouraging focus and thought on Goals

### **New Business/Additional Items**

**Chip Fair**

- ❖ Look at previous years' minutes
- ❖ Members are encouraged to read the by-laws

### **Call for future meeting suggestions**

**Chip Fair**

- ❖ Email agenda items to Chair two weeks prior to next meeting.
- ❖ State will send proposed agenda to Chair two weeks prior to each meeting.

## Upcoming Date

**Next Meeting:** April 11, 2016

**Location:** TN School for the Blind

## Adjourn

- **Action Item**  
Council member, James Topp, made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Council member, Hilary Sims.
  
- **Final Action Taken**  
The Council voted unanimously in favor of adjournment.

\* Meeting handouts and/or PPTs available upon request to Department liaison.