

APPROVED MINUTES

Meeting Place: Virtual Meeting

Address: Microsoft Teams platform

Date: Thursday, March 18, 2021 (4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.)

Agenda:

4:30 Come to Order

4:30-4:35 Review and Approve Minutes, Questions on Executive Board Actions

4:35-4:40 Story Share

4:40-6:55 AOE Items

- State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) Report
- IDEA Part B Grant Application Public Comment
- Fiscal Processes & Budget Alignment with Programs
- SPP/APR Target Setting: Indicator 5 (Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) School-Age) & Indicator 6 (LRE Pre-school)
- Critical Shortage Areas

6:55-7:25 Committee Updates

- Evaluations & Reporting
- Rules & Regulations
- Unmet Needs

7:25-7:30 Public Comment

7:30 Adjourn

Present: Sarah Fabrizio, Sara Kruk, Karen Price, Kaiya Andrews, Susan Aranoff, Cassidy Canzani, Crista Yagjian, Brandon Dall, Jamie Crenshaw, Joy Wilcox, Barbara Joyal, Julie Regimbal, Jacqui Kelleher, Ana Kolbach, Alex Langevin, Mary Barton, Katie McCarthy, Molly McFaun, Amy Murphy, Clare O'Shaughnessy, Patti Smith, Robin Hood, Kate Rogers, Sandra Chittenden, John Spinney, Susan Comerford, Vickie Haskin, Jacqui Kelleher, Tara Howe

Call to order:

Rachel brought the meeting to order quickly due to meeting having a full agenda.

Review and Approve Minutes, Questions on Executive Board Actions:

There was no discussion of the minutes. Jamie made a motion to approve the minutes. Crista seconded. Minutes were approved. There were no questions regarding the last Executive Board meeting.

Story Share:

Sandra Chittenden bravely shared her personal story; her story was warmly received by the panel. The story shares have been a wonderful way to learn more about each individual panel member's personal stories and their unique reasons that bring them to this panel and to this work.

AOE Items:

SPP/APR Target Setting: Indicator 5 (Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) School-Age)

Ana Kolbach and Cassidy Canzani presented the FFY19 data for Indicator 5 and 6 for the state SSIP report. The data that is collected comes from the child count which is provided to the AOE from each school district's LEA.

During and after the presentation many discussions occurred.

Rachel raised concerns that data that was presented doesn't give insight to the many reasons why special education students are placed in certain environments. In some situations, students need a higher level of services that are more restrictive, which is the best place for the student, while other students need more inclusion within their education. Rachel is concerned that providing an opinion on setting data work is going to be challenging.

Robin would like to see training on data collected for LEA, on what the data is representing and training on how to get students back to their original school district.

Jacqui discussed that she doesn't want the process to be rubber stamped, that this is a new process of setting data points and extra time will be needed to make recommendations. The panel needs time to process the numbers, and Jacqui would like feedback on how for the process to move forward.

Rachel suggested that the data setting work be moved to the evaluation subcommittee. This would give subcommittee members time to process the data collected and give time to provide an informed comment on what target data numbers should look like.

Sarah F raised a concern around the general conversation of target setting. Within school districts different LEA's interpret these data goals and LEA's have a fear of what will happen if their district doesn't make the target. Special needs families will hear from their school district, we can't be above a certain percentage of students who are in this demographic due to this issue, special education students are forced to take tests, be in educational placements that do not work for them and other important decisions are made that might not be part of their best interest and are only made to meet target data sets.

A question was raised that due to the unique nature specific disability categories could the target goals be set for each group? For example, intellectual disability often has students in sub separate classrooms for most of the school day, where students with specific learning disabilities are pushed into the classroom which doesn't fit their needs.

Indicator 6 (LRE Pre-school):

Katie explained the importance of inclusion within early childhood education and how the indicator 6 data is created. VT has hit its target every year for this indicator for the past five years, however the data is slowly trending down throughout the past five years. This is due to a small N size which compresses data along with outliers. A question was raised around students who are in a pre-k program and who's family situations don't allow for them to attend the school's program. It seems that there is no set standard and that each school district creates their own policy around services for pre-k students.

Katie explained that if this trend continues that VT will not reach their targets. There are many reasons why this is occurring, including COVID, and small N sizes, Katie answered questions from the panel's jamboard on data that was previously presented to the panel.

State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) Report:

Betty asked after reading the report what are some questions the panel has? There was a miscommunication and the panel did not receive the report. Due to this the panel did not have any questions.

Betty Roy pivoted to an update on the parent survey, and the changes that were made to the parent survey based on recommendations by the panel. In addition to improvements within the survey the data collected will also be easier to interpret and be used by school districts. Jacqui thanked the panel for helping assist in the change to the parent survey.

All other AOE panel items were tabled due to time:
IDEA Part B Grant Application Public Comment
Fiscal Processes & Budget Alignment with Programs
Critical Shortage Areas

Committee Updates:

Unmet Needs:

Sandra presented that their meeting was cut short, and a meeting was rescheduled.

Evaluations & Reporting:

Sara Kruk presented an update. The group met and discussed the next indicators, which we will review in April, and how we can provide advice on assessing the effectiveness of professional development and technical assistance offered by the AOE. The subcommittee will be inviting Chris Kane to a future meeting to discuss this further.

Rules & Regulations:

Jamie Crenshaw updated the panel on the sub committee's latest meeting. In the meeting the subcommittee talked about the state board of ed proposed rule changes and if the proposed rule changes are approved where it will go next. Rachel gave an update on the independent schools and will be sending out a draft to the subcommittee. The subcommittee will decide if they want to make public comments.

Membership and Bylaws:

There was no update from the membership and Bylaws subcommittee.

Due to a quick reporting by the sub committees time was added back into the meeting, Jacqui was asked if she wanted to talk about critical shortage areas and agreed to discuss this issue with the panel.

There is a major concern of special education teachers who are leaving the field or not entering due to burn out or concern about entering the job. Because of this, there is new focus on attracting, recruiting, and retaining special educators for the state. Without high quality special educators there is no personal to educate special education students. Special education teachers are 2.5% more likely then general educators to leave the profession. Currently VT is not at a critical shortage status, however, there is more work that needs to be done around understanding the data and what is happening in the field. Jacqui opened up the discussion to learn more about why this is occurring.

Susan gave her personal insight from teaching college students that she hears from students that special education teachers spend most of their days completing paperwork and less time teaching, which isn't why

the students came into the field to start with. Suzi suggested that a mentoring program is created to help new special education teachers and to help support them as they enter the field. Jamie suggested to survey current teachers. Jamie has heard from special educators within her child's school districts, that there are large caseloads, significant paperwork, lack of training, lack of support, lack of resources, equity issues, and culture.

Robin provided her insight as to why this problem is occurring, including compensation across the state is widely varied, many teachers start in a rural area and then end up moving to Chittenden county for better pay which causes a high turnover rate for rural schools, stress levels, intensity of the needs of students are increasing, regular education teachers who believe that special education students aren't their student and are unwilling to work collaboratively or use universal design, lack of subs, a wide variety of training of special educators, personal safety, and lack of mentors.

Crista a former special education teacher explained why she left special education. Some of her reasons included caseloads, culture, limited access to para educators, and limited access to outside service providers PT/SLP/OT.

The conversation will continue to provide more resources to help retain, attract, and recruit special educators.

Public Comment:

Susan Aranoff gave a shout out to Rachel for running an amazing meet and to the staff from the AOE. The board of ed meetings has taken the panel's public rules comment very seriously and the amount of attention and expertise that the panel has given is very exciting. The panel has come a long way and Sue feels that this panel is a tremendous group.

Laurie Mulhern gave public comment as well. She said that she is a parent of two children with disabilities and is deeply involved in special education and agrees with everything that has been said around the current problems that face special educators and how overwhelming the job can be. Laurie is in awe of all the topics that the board is trying to cover and looks forward to seeing the work ahead. Laurie would like to support the panel moving forward.

Adjourn:

Rachel makes a motion to adjourn the meeting Crista motions, Scarlett seconds.

Meeting adjourned at 7:37pm

Meeting Schedule (Hold the Dates):

April 19, 2021 4:30-7:30 (Monday)

May 18, 2021 4:30-7:30 (Tuesday)

June 23, 2021 4:30-7:30 (Wednesday)

July – TBD

August – TBD

September 23, 2021 4:30-7:30 (Thursday)