

APPROVED MINUTES

Meeting Place: Virtual Meeting

Address: Microsoft Teams platform

Date: Tuesday, May 18, 2021 (4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.)

Agenda:

- 4:30 Come to Order
- 4:30-4:35 Review and Approve March and April Minutes, Questions for Executive Board
- 4:35-4:45 Public Comment
- 4:45-4:55 Story Share: Jamie C.
- 4:55-6:40 AOE Items:
 - (1) Target Setting: Indicators 15 (Resolution Session) and 16 (Mediations)
 - (2) Administrative Complaint Process Review
 - (3) Dispute Resolution Summaries
 - (4) Closing the Achievement Gap
- 6:40-6:45 Break
- 6:45-7:25 Action Item: Vote on Endorsing Unmet Needs to submit to AOE
- 7:25-7:35 Action Item: Future Meeting Topics
- 7:35 Adjourn

Present: Sarah Fabrizio, Sara Kruk, Rachel Seelig, Crista Yagjian, Susan Comerford, Vickie Haskins, Ana Kolbach, Jacqui Kelleher, Joy Wilcox, Susan Aranoff, John Spinney, Clare O'Shaughnessy, Barbara Joyal, Carrie Lutz, Robin Hood, Kaiya Andrews, Alex Langevin, Katie Ballard, Brandon Dall, Karen Price, Danielle Howes, Glenn Bailey

Come to Order:

Susan motions to approve the March and April minutes, Crista seconds the motion. There was no discussion around the March and April minutes. Both the March and April minutes were approved.

Public Comment:

Susan Aranoff asked a question about if the third round of ESR funds are on the meeting agenda for tonight, Rachel responded that round three ESR funds will be addressed during the meeting, however ESR funds are not specifically on the agenda tonight.

Story Share:

Jamie C. shared her personal experiences with special education both personally and as a parent. Thank you, Jamie, for sharing your deeply personal experience with special education and sharing with the panel your journey and the reasons for your dedicated work to the panel.

AOE Items:

(1) Target Setting: Indicators 15 (Resolution Session) and 16 (Mediations)- Ana Kolbach shared with the panel the new SPP APR website and showed the panel where to find the SPP APR forms. These forms can be used for both the panel members or members of the public to submit feedback regarding the SPP APR targets. The AOE reviewed the historical data of these targets (resolution session and mediations) and provided hypothetical situations to demonstrate what potential setting target data would look like. It is important to note that for indicator 15 the AOE isn't held to the data target until there are ten or more resolution sessions.

(2) Administrative Complaint Process Review- There are four types of dispute resolutions. The four types are mediation, administrative complaint, due process, and resolution session. The AOE reviewed the difference between mediation, administrative complaint, due process and resolutions and explained to the panel the process of when a parent calls with a concern how the AOE helps assist the parent with their concern.

(3) Dispute Resolution Summaries- The AOE provided historical data or dispute resolutions and gave context regarding some of the dispute cases and why some of the cases weren't considered settled. For some dispute cases this was because the parties settled before the dispute and for others dispute cases the parties only partially settled. Ultimately the dispute process is a personal decision for the families involved and there is not a one size fits all approach. However, looking at all the dispute resolutions there is a common theme where a breakdown of communication and trust between the school and the families has occurred. One way to improve communication and trust between schools and families is to provide special education evaluation assessment results and other important information ahead of the special education evaluation meetings.

The panel provided feedback to the AOE which included: a need for parent training on how to file a complaint, a deeper understanding why the dispute cases are so low, a request that after schools go to meditation or due process that as part of the settlement action steps can should be to improve the process for the school district, facilitated IEP meetings, and equity issues regarding families being able to retain legal counsel within due process cases.

(4) Closing the Achievement Gap -Glenn Bailey presented on the Achievement Gap using information from the SBAC data with a visual representation of the data. This is the beginning of a long term discussion of the data and how we can work to support closing this gap. During the presentation there were wonderings on how the data was graphed and what the data is showing. This presentation is a starting point to guide further decisions on where the achievement gap is and how to address closing the achievement gap.

Break

Action Item: Vote on Endorsing Unmet Needs to submit to AOE:

Crista and Sandra presented to the panel from the Unmet needs committee. The unmet needs committee started with a brainstorm list which was presented to the panel. The panel gave feedback to the subcommittee, after the feedback was given the committee used this information to create a table. The table was then presented to the panel and the panel was surveyed on what panel members felt was the greatest

area of unmet need. After the survey results were analyzed the unmet needs subcommittee organized. There were five themes that resulted from this work. The five themes are:

- 1) IEP meeting process and services, educator training, family
- 2) School collaboration
- 3) Literacy
- 4) Discipline
- 5) Bias and diversity work.

The presentation was well received by the panel. A discussion ensued and during the process the following next steps were identified.

1. The unmet needs subcommittee meets next week to organize info for AOE feedback
2. A member of the AOE will be present at the subcommittee meeting to receive information from the subcommittee
3. The subcommittee will be invited to an AOE committee meeting perhaps in June
4. Consider larger action next steps related to use of ESSR funds (gathering info from larger group)

Sandra made a motion to vote on the top five priorities of unmet needs to be sent to the AOE for further discussion for the AOE, Susan seconds. The motion passes.

AOE IDEA Part B Grant: Application Public Comment, Fiscal Processes:

Jacqui Kelleher presented the IDEA Part B interactive spreadsheet which is on the AOE website with the panel. Jacqui explained the administrative cost, additional funding, and how the optional authorizations funding is broken down. Jacqui is looking for public comment on the part b application specifically around the optional authorized activities and what categories are being funded.

Jacqui stated that this is a financially tight budget and that if optional authorized activities monies are allocated into different areas other items would need to be removed from the budget. One question that was raised is how much does it equate to, what does it mean in people hours etc., grant deliverables around what does the numbers mean? Jacqui offered to provide more information to the panel at the next meeting.

A recommendation was made that two areas where IDEA B money should be shifted to is reducing the paperwork and recruitment/hiring. Mary L shared her concerns as an LEA in Chittenden county which typically does not struggle to find employees and how recently she has received a few applications for open positions along with unqualified people for the job.

In the past the panel has continued the work in a subcommittee to create a written public comment which is then voted on by the panel. With the timeline of public comment ending on 4/31/21 there isn't enough time for this to occur.

Jen Perry presented the responsibilities of the AOE IDEA-B 611 and 619 funding is broken down, along with deadlines for school districts, and what are considered eligible funds for special education. The financial side of special education is an important piece of the puzzle and is connected to the SIIP target setting.

Action Item: Future Meeting Topics:

Robin Hood is retiring as an LEA from the Winooski school district after 40 years of working within the special education field and will be stepping down from both the panel and the executive board. Robin's contribution to the panel has been greatly appreciated and we are very sad to see her go, however wish her the best of luck in her new endeavors.

The panel members were asked about any items they would like to see addressed during future meetings; the following list was created.

Diversity work

Continue to work collaboratively with the AOE by providing unmet needs for their review

Addressing needs for families in poverty

Literacy and closing the gap

First instruction

Post transitional years

Consistent process throughout the state for the special education evaluation process with the changes around the rules ideal time for the training for the process.

Mediation

Improving the evaluation process specifically the difference between an independent eval compared to a school districts evaluation

Addressing professional development opportunities statewide

Teacher retainment

With the time left in the meeting Jacqui presented/ forecasted the ARP ESR funds

There was 256 million dollars from the ESR 1, ESR 2, ESR 3 funds allocated to the state of Vermont. In order to get the remaining ESR 3 funds the state of Vermont needs to develop a plan. The initial ask for the plan was June 7th, however there has been a request for an extension to July. An important part of this plan is to receive meaningful input from a variety of stakeholders on the state of Vermont's current status and needs. The plan needs to identify needs of underserved students, covid impact, what support LEA needs to help support students, supporting the educator workforce, and how the ESR funds will be monitored. The AOE will be using the unmet needs report that will be sent to them to help guide the ESR plans.

Adjourn:

Crista motions to adjourn the meeting Susan seconds. The meeting adjourned at 7:38pm

Meeting Schedule (Hold the Dates):

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

July 22, 2021 4:30-7:30 (Thursday)

August 17, 2021 4:30-7:30 (Tuesday)

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