

State Advisory Committee (SAC) for Children with Disabilities

Advising the New Hampshire Department Education per RSA 186-C:3-b

Annual Retreat

September 11, 2019

In Attendance:

Bonnie Dunham (Co-Chair), Jill Hartmann, Le' Ann Milinder, Moria Ryan, Kevin Cushing, Mike Pinard, Elizabeth (BeBe) Casey, Janet Reed, Maureen Shields, Violetta Lortie, Dale Boyle, Moira Ryan, Meghan Cullinane, Alicia Ferguson, Esther Kennedy, Senator Jay Kahn, Melissa McKeon, Kari Grimes, Janet Reed, Gregory Magoon,

Guests:

Dale Boyle, IHE Representative

Anna Barrows, Student

Tina Greco, NHVR

Bureau of Student Support: Rebecca Fredette, Heidi Clyborne, Janelle Cotnoir, Elizabeth Graichen, Heather Gage

Absent:

Representative Tamara Le, Senator Jean Deitsch, Kerry-Lynn Kimner, Jason Henry, Susan Raisicot, Karen Rosenberg, Lisa Beaudoin, Sandi Raeuchle, Christopher O'Reilly

Welcome

Bonnie Dunham (acting as vice chair in Lisa's absence)

Introductions

Participants introduced themselves with their names and role on the SAC

Floor was opened for questions and answers

Legislative Update

Bonnie provided updates to proposed legislation and opened the floor for questions.

Discussion:

- Bonnie described the process moving forward with rules that were proposed to the State Board.
- Senator Kahn provided update on House Bill re: teacher preparation
- Bonnie directed attention to the draft 2019 SAC report and requested that members read through the report for input with the intention of approving the report in October.
- Senator Kahn raised awareness that there are two hearings today in the House for the two bills submitted relative to student discipline. Both bills were retained.

Membership Updates

Bonnie sent membership list around the group for review. Bonnie briefed the committee on membership updates and vacancies. Heather provided input that Linda was replaced at the NHDOE by Ashley Greene

Introduction to Planning for the 2009-2020 SAC year

Bonnie reviewed status of last year's priorities:

- First: Student achievement and reducing achievement gap. The SAC recommended to establish the reading specialist contracted by the Bureau be a permeant position.

Heather Gage described the Bureau process for procuring the services of a reading specialist and discussed the budgetary requests to utilize existing funding to put out an RFP for this year. In the budget for 2020-2021 as a contract. Funding also put in for math specialist as a contracted position. Department interested to reclassify a current empty position to become a Language Arts (ELA) Education Consultant.

Motion of acceptance of recommendation by BeBe Casey. Motion seconded by Esther Kennedy with conversation. Martha suggested that the committee table the acceptance to recommend until after the conversation at today's meeting. BeBe withdrew motion.

- Second: School refusal/truancy for students with disabilities. SAC wanted to invite guest speakers to address their understanding and recommend that the Dept collect the data to determine if truancy for students with disabilities is really an issue. Secondly, that truancy may be due to PTSD with regards to the opioid crisis.

Bonnie suggested that SAC wait on voting on this recommendation until the afternoon.

Janet Reed suggested that the SAC not only invite speakers but also reach out to the districts that have taken action and have done it well and look at how to implement processes that work rather than focus on what isn't happening.

- Third: General Education teachers are not prepared to meet the needs of students with disabilities. SAC not prepared last year to draft a motion but did form a subcommittee. SAC would like to recommend a portal be provided on the NDOE website as resources for teacher preparation opportunities. Heather updated the committee that it was raised to the commissioner that the NHDOE may bring back the Key Messages. Last year the SAC discussed reaching out to Mary Lane regarding Universal Design for Learning. Esther spoke about a concern she has regarding how students with IEPs understand and interact with transgender students and the impact of policy changes relative to bathroom access. Senator Kahn raised HB 258 relative to teacher prep for consideration. Senator Kahn also raised the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment of NHVR. Tina Greco clarified that the audit is underway and briefly described the scope of the audit. Lisa Hinson-Hatz identified as point of reference for SAC inquiry. Senator Kahn also raised parental engagement as an area in which the SAC might focus. Moira voiced concerns about the distribution of the parent surveys. Mary Lane to address that subject later in the day.

Break

"State of the State" Updates/reports/presentations from the Bureau of Special Education, Heather Gage and staff

Heather:

- Update on filling the Administrator IV position within the Bureau of Student Support to include the interview process including description of interview teams. The Commissioner and Deputy have the final decision with respect to hiring. Heather opened the floor for questions. Esther asked about time frame for moving a candidate forward. Heather expressed that we may know as soon as the end of this week. Esther spoke to the multiple vacancies with the NHDOE. Senator Kahn asked for clarification as to the nature of the vacancies. Esther suggested that the legislatures consider the low pay of state employees as one of the biggest reasons that the NHDOE cannot fill the vacancies.
- NHDOE Determination letter- OSEP letter determined that the NHDOE needs assistance. This includes areas of complaints and Indicator 13 relative to post-secondary transitions.
 - Elizabeth Graichen briefly recapped that with the reorganization of the NHDOE, the complaints office transitioned from the Bureau of Student support to the Office of

Governance and that with that transition, the NHDOE procedures for managing the complaints process has been revised to be more collaborative between the complaints office and the Bureau. Moira expressed that she believes that parents have complaints and need help accessing the Bureau. Discussion round how to meet parent's needs with a new website in process.

- Janelle Cotnoir and Heidi Clyborne briefly addressed the scope of Indicator 13 and the Bureau's response to include increased training/professional development, greater transparency earlier on in the process to ensure that districts are notified and trained two years prior to, and leading up to, the onsite monitoring process. Process also revised such that the consultants that train the district also conduct the monitoring process. Janelle expressed student centered focus in trainings as well as a focus on compliance. Violetta Lortie asked in the Bureau would provide training throughout the year relative to post-secondary transition. Janelle and Heidi regularly update the monitoring handbook, which is posted on the Bureau page and have made their training available to districts, which are not going through compliance. Melissa will share the Out of District Training coordinators contact information with Janelle.
- General updates-
 - Mary Lane discussed the UDL initiative in the state. Currently working with 64 schools (list of schools provided). Mary also works with the National Instructional Materials Service center and has worked extensively to promote accessibility for all students. Mary explained the framework of UDL and the scope of the program, which is to promote engagement through creating inclusive and accessible environments. Mary explained that going forward; work will be focused on teacher training and the involvement of higher education. Heather opened the floor for comment or questions. Esther suggested that the SAC move forward with proposing the UDL initiative as a priority to provide support for the forward movement of UDL in the state. Senator Kahn has requested that Mary and the Commissioner speak to the Education Committee about UDL and Family Engagement.
 - Mary also discussed Karen Mapp's Dual Capacity-Building Framework Family School Partnerships. Mary explained the scope of the Bureau's work with Scholastic to promote family engagement and family school partnerships with the goal of broadening the reach of the framework statewide. Mary briefly explained that the parent involvement survey is conducted to satisfy our requirements for Indicator 8, which seeks to determine if schools involve parents in their children's special education programs. Discussion about the questions on the survey. Violetta asked how the survey is made available to parents. Mary explained that the PIC helps to notify parents that the survey will be out. Esther clarified that it is ultimately up to the district to send the survey.
 - In response to the SAC's interest in the House and Senate bills relative to discipline; Elizabeth explained to the committee that she provides a training to any district that requests it. The training is called "Understanding the Discipline Process for Students with IEPs". Elizabeth said that she would be willing to come to a SAC meeting to provide more information and/or a similar training to the SAC.
 - Janelle Cotnoir spoke to the recent increase in the requests for an Educational Surrogate parent, which is believed to be the result of the opioid crisis. Brief discussion around when an educational surrogate parent is appointed.
 - Rebecca Fredette spoke to the new training provided by the Bureau relative to Equitable Services for students who are parentally placed in non-public schools.

Rebecca explained district responsibility pursuant to the IDEA with regard to meeting the needs of eligible services.

(Break for lunch)

Nilufer Isvan, Ph.D., Human Services Research Institute. Here for SAC input for the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment for NH Vocational Rehabilitation. Previously conducted and currently working on the need assessment for DHHS. Performing qualitative data analysis. The floor was opened for discussion:

Moira Ryan expressed that she is very happy with her son's experience. Esther and Janet expressed inconsistencies with regard to supports offered and what families are told, within regions. Esther expressed her beliefs that the inconsistencies are due to management. Discussion about personnel changes and vacancies and that impact on individuals receiving services. Discussion about having transition conversations with VR previous to the student's 16th and barriers to that occurring such as a lack of vision for the students' ability and individualized consideration whether or not an individual is eligible. Nilufer proposed that VR counselors might be trained relative to the idea that all individuals are eligible, or training on what eligibility criteria is. Discussion about engaging community/ area agencies. Esther recommended longer than 90 days for support after individual is placed in a job. Discussion about the impact of extending supports past 90 days. Discussion about what, if any, supports the state can offer for students who do not have documented disabilities, such as Employment Securities. Tina Greco raised that employment security is geared more toward adults but that they are looking for ways to connect with youth. Maureen raised IMPACCT from GSIL as a model for youth employment. Tina discussed the scope of Project Search. Dale Boyle spoke to her appreciation of IMPACCT. Senator Kahn spoke to the waitlist (tiered order of selection). He would like to see some data to validate the process. Tina spoke to the process for the order of selection to include what information is reviewed when they determine to what tier an individual should be assigned. Tina spoke to the demographic of the tiers thus far and explained that all individuals within the third tier (most significantly disabled) are employed. The agency is now working on the second tier (significantly disabled).

Approval of Minutes

Bonnie stated that the committee will not be approving minutes today due to their unavailability. Will be reviewed at a future meeting.

(Break out to small groups. No notes taken during the groups)

Small group discussions and identification of the most pressing unmet needs or issues impacting children with disabilities in New Hampshire (each group will make a full list and highlight 3 priorities)
Groups were asked to identify 3 priority areas.

Small groups report back for full group discussion

Identifying Key Issues / Priorities:

Group 1-

1. Expansion of UDL coordination with legislative study group,
2. Identifying what is working, best practices including your over year assessments,
3. Parent/guardian engagement, education, specifically special education.

Group 2-

1. Continue general education teacher prep,
2. children with disabilities (CWD) excluded from school (referral/truant/disciplinary removals
3. math/reading achievement gap including opportunities at all levels – focus on UDL

4. Endorse trauma informed schools and classrooms, UDL state work, training in writing UDL lesson plans

Group 3 -

1. Truancy/discipline/manifestation/placement,
2. expanding family engagement,
3. UDL

Consolidated to the following list:

- a) Continue general education teachers not prep for all children, expansion of UDL/coordination with teacher prop study group- 25 points
- b) Continue CWD who are being excluded from school (refusal, truant, disciplinary removals) as well as manifestation and placement issues for suspended CWD -15 points
- c) Math/reading achievement and opportunities (focus on UDL and being able to evaluate using differential eval tools to measure
- d) Exclusion of CWFD with social interaction issues related to their disability (related to the unintended impact of sexual harassment and transgendered policies- 5 points
- e) Identifying what is working including g year or year assessment/best practices-3 points
- f) Parent/guardian engagement (informing all and bringing them into discussions and creating opportunities, like wrap around svc model) -22 points

After ranking priorities per person, the group chose A and F followed by B as time allows.

Other business

Family engagement month is October. Next SAC is October 2nd. Nomination process is available online for PICs family engagement award- accepting nominations until September 12th.

No nominations

Janet Reed motions to adjourn- Esther Kennedy seconds motion. Unanimous vote to adjourn.

Next meeting: nominations, review of input of last year's SAC report, discuss writing letter of recommendations to Commissioner.

Meeting adjourned at 2:53 pm