

State Advisory Committee (SAC) for Children with Disabilities  
Advising the New Hampshire Department Education per RSA 186-C:3-b

Annual Retreat | Part II  
Virtual  
September 16, 2020  
12pm-3pm

**In Attendance:**

Lisa Beaudoin (chair), Bonnie Dunham (Co-Chair), Janet Reed, Maureen Shields, Violetta Lortie, Dale Boyle, Moira Ryan, Esther Kennedy, Melissa McKeon, Kari Grimes, Gregory Magoon, Karen Rosenberg, Christopher O'Reilly, Tina Greco, Leah Lucier-Pike, Susan Rasicot, Jill Hartmann, Meghan Cullinane  
Susan Rasicot

**Guests:**

Rebecca Fredette, Administrator, Bureau of Student Support  
Brandy Pappas, Bureau of Student Support

**Absent:**

Kerri-Lynn Kimner, Kevin Cushing, Mike Pinard, Elizabeth (BeBe) Casey, Alicia Ferguson, Anna Barrows, Sandi Raeuchle, Jason Henry, Kelley Walker, Thomas Ryan, Senator Jean Dietsch, Representative Tamara Le, Representative Glen Cordelli, Senator Jay Kahn,

**Welcome and Introductions**

Lisa Beaudoin (chair) began the meeting at 12:07pm  
SAC members introduced themselves and in two sentences talked about what fun things they expect to do this fall.

**SAC Membership Update**

Question from Jill Hartmann regarding her appointment to SAC, as she has not received her letter of appointment from the Governor's Office. Question regarding ability to vote if appointment letter has not been received.

Is the practice of SAC if a delay from the Governor's office, members awaiting their re-appointment letter are allowed to vote. If the Governor's office had a problem with an appointment, he would let SAC know.

Bonnie updated the SAC membership list and sent out to members to update their information. SAC currently has vacancies and is the fifth year of not having members from DHHS, and SAC needs two representatives from DHHS.

Current vacancies:

- Representative of a Vocational, Community, or Business Organization concerned with the provision of transition services to students with disabilities.
- Representative of the Department of Health and Human Services involved in the financing or delivery of special education or related services to children with disabilities, recommended by the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services.
- Representative from the Department of Health and Human services responsible for foster care, recommended by the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services.
- Parents of children with disabilities.

### **SAC Membership Update (cont'd)**

If SAC members know of anyone who may be interested in becoming a member, please let Lisa and Bonnie know. Interested individuals need to come to two SAC meetings to observe the Committee and at the second meeting can be nominated.

Several members have terms expiring in the next few months, let Lisa know if you wish to have your appointment renewed. If not, please find a replacement.

### **Distribute and Discuss Draft SAC Report**

SAC members took ten-minute break to review the SAC Report

Do we need to add anyone under Acknowledgements?

Diana Fenton, Attorney, NHDOE | presented on Code of Ethics

Karen – looking at Statute and to whom the SAC Annual Report goes to; the Governor and Legislature. Some of the information provided in the Annual Report may not be interesting for the Governor and Legislature, possibly flip the information in the Report, as to not provide a voluminous document to read, just what SAC has done over the year.

Discussion:

- SAC Report is based on previous Reports.
- Reorganization of the Report is needed.
- An executive summary up front.
- Most important information at the beginning of the Report, then membership, charge and appendices.
- Maybe doesn't need as much information. Posted on the NHDOE website and many don't know who SAC is.
- Any ideas on how we can provide the status of SAC that would be helpful?
- A brief introduction
- Cover the status of education and what SAC has found around our priorities.
- Report on status of education in New Hampshire.
- Incorporate SAC priorities and how we came up with.
- COVID and the switch to remote learning, leaning to lack of in-person education for students with disabilities. SAC recommended the Commissioner ask Governor for an executive order for students with disabilities.
- Doing an executive summary is a great idea. We could also just move some information from the report into separate appendices.

Lisa and Bonnie will review and send out to SAC members for review prior to the next meeting. Becky offered administrative support from the Bureau of Student Support.

Will revisit for upcoming years. SAC use to have a small workgroup to participate in the drafting of the SAC Annual Report, return to this practice. Karen Rosenberg, Dale Boyle, Moira Ryan and Kari Grimes will participate in the workgroup.

## **SAC discussion of current events/issues (may include legislative update and/or update on COVID-19 and its impact on special education)**

### Question/Comments from the Chat

Is there any way we can get the state plan to increase the proficiency scores for kids with IEPs?

- It seems to me that the gap in proficiency scores between kids with IEPs and kids without IEPs is something that could be included in the SAC report since it pertains to the status of education of students with disabilities in NH.
- Weren't those priorities for the past two years? I don't see those included in this report under priorities.
- I think the proficiency scores were touched up. I think the fact that there is a huge gap between non-IEP students and IEP students shows a glaring discrepancy in access to education.

### **2019-2020 Priorities**

Priority 1: General education teachers are not prepared to teach/support all children, including children with disabilities – to include expansion of UDL and coordination with the teacher preparation study group. (This was a continuation of work done by SAC last year)

Priority 2: Parent/Guardian engagement/education, specifically around special education (for parents and others who do not understand the process); using expanded parent engagement to include community engagement (informing all and bringing them into discussions, and creating opportunities – ex: wrap-around service delivery model).

Priority 3: Children with disabilities who are being excluded from school for reasons including school refusal, truancy, and disciplinary removals; as well as considering manifestation and placement issues for children with disabilities who are suspended.

The Bureau of Student Support met requirements in the State Performance Plan. Bonnie asked Becky if she could share the chart with the targets and actual performance in the area this year. SAC could use this list to select priorities.

### Thoughts about this year's priorities

- Melissa and Esther speak about the discrepancy in funding. Funding is encumbered, however not spent.
- Look at funding at the time of COVID and make a lens on what SAC looks at for special education and funding for students with disabilities. Funding and equity.
- Average cost of education for students with disabilities is 25 to 45 thousand dollars; do not believe we are close to that.
- UDL is important in the way we are doing schooling. Truancy is amplified due to COVID.
- Focusing on discrepancy in reading and math, how do we deliver services in the age of COVID and remote learning?
- Tie in COVID, the discrepancy and achieve and funding.

Sounds like there are two different approaches to priorities being considered:

- Weaving COVID into priorities, or
- Making COVID the overarching priority and then weaving the sub-priorities into the overarching one.

Question:

What can SAC offer some of these districts for assistance? Getting calls from director's new to the field and they are looking for direction. This is an opportunity for this committee to come up with what is working and what is not working. In their own bubble. Some school are doing well and some are struggling.

Comment:

The Committee assist with guidance as what is going well to be successful. Has the State reached out to these districts?

The NHDOE website shares strategies, guidance, etc., does this work. Lisa believes the website is not easy to navigate. The NHDOE website or the Remote website.

Becky

The Bureau of Student Support regularly work with districts when they reach out for support; however, the Bureau is finding that districts are not reaching out, and we cannot provide support if unaware of what is happening in the field as we do not know of everything going on. The Bureau is providing supporting when we hear from the districts. During the scheduled Zoom calls, ask for districts to advise what help they need.

Comments:

One idea would be for the Department to host a "resource bank" on its website for information sharing. Another would be for the Department to hold regular brainstorming calls for special educators. Need to target the teachers, not the administrators for positive feedback and activities happening.

Feels in the weeds, a day-to-day conversation and finding new and creative ways to provide services, directors do have good sense. Is on the calls and does hear that, maybe at the beginning of calls ask participate and to please provide the positives. Becky has attempted, will attempt again, and asks to put into chat box if not comfortable with speaking.

Becky, perhaps put aside five minutes in the chat to add positive.

PIC is hearing: One of the most common concerns that PIC has heard from parents is feeling not included in decisions, not listened to and their feedback not truly considered. When parents are told (unilateral decision, not made at an IEP team meeting) "here is what we will be doing for your child," it feels like a "take it or leave it" option, which both discourages and frustrates the parent. If every district had genuine and meaningful engagement with parents for creative, collaborative problem solving, that would make a real difference.

Some students with disabilities are excelling in remote learning, in larger school districts; students with disabilities are being left behind. Honor the places are working well, provide assistance to the places that are not. Many places across the State are getting the services they need, and they taught over the summer under tents.

How can we help the larger districts and the state in assisting, change the pendulum so that they can get the support they need. Not just large districts some of the smaller districts are encountering issues also. How can this Committee help these districts and families?

- A think tank for these districts for resources and ideas?
- Can SAC share with these districts, put something out as a resource for teachers who don't know what to do.
- Role of SAC is to provide advice to the Department of Education. SAC needs to figure out how the DOD can be more proactive, provide oversight on what is more dire. Creative ideas out there as well as funding issues. There are a lot of barriers, SAC needs to figure out where the problems line and provide input to the DOE.

Priorities:

- Funding for school districts. This is a barrier, why they do not provide FAPE for in-home services.
- Look at whether or not COVID is affecting achievement outcomes.
- Support UDL, students with disabilities are allowed back to school, why other students are not. Why do some students get to be in the classroom and other cannot. Shouldn't be in a segregated class setting five days a week.
- Consider these three things through the lens of COVID.
- We can't overlook the staffing challenges. Significant concerns from teachers, para's, and administrative staff.

Comments from the Chat

- One of the positives IS teacher code of conduct and passage of new law to prevent sexual assault on students 16 and older too
- It would be nice for NPR to highlight a positive
- Has NHDOE reached out directly to teachers and asked them? Survey maybe?
  - The Bureau has talked with many teachers, however we find we have to send them back to their directors or administration as their questions relate to decisions that were made at the district level. We have been able to answer some overarching questions however, every district has made different plans and we are not always able to clarify what a district has decided.
- Ok and that goes back to local control, correct.  
I was thinking more along the lines of reaching out to teachers to see if they had something, they could provide more services or improve service development but I see your point here regarding local control.
- If we have COVID as overarching, strongly feel that absenteeism is affective services and math and reading scores.
- If you don't have enough staff then our design for classrooms are significantly impacted, I believe there was no data collected on absenteeism and students with special needs there.

Priorities

COVID – will it be the overarching priority. Has amplified those existing challenges, which existed prior to COVID.

How is COVID affecting the education of students with disabilities? SAC will explore how COVID is impacting students with disabilities and make recommendations.

What have we learned about the status of education for students with disabilities in NH because of COVID?

Unmet needs is SACs charge, so it is important we are advising the DOE and share the positive practices.

Bonnie made a made a motion that the topic COVID, will it be the overarching priority, seconded by DID NOT GET WHO SECONDED THE MOTION.

SAC members took a vote on the following priorities for 2020-2021

Priority	Number of Votes
Absenteeism	2
Funding	3
Discrepancies in Achievement	13
Equity	4
Universal Design for Learning	7
Communication/Parent Involvement	9
Personnel Shortages	3
Data isn't collected on a State level about absenteeism for students with disabilities	1

Bonnie withdrew her previous motion.

Bonnie made a motion that the three top priorities voted on for the 2020-2021 SAC priorities, through the lens of COVID, seconded by Maureen.

All in favor of the motion of the priority on the screen share. Yes, all in favor. Motion is carried.

### **Current Events**

Legislative Updates - Bonnie

The house was voting today on bills that had been vetoed, I checked prior to meeting, none on the list had been voted on.

Question:

What happened at the State Board meeting regarding remote learning?

Bonnie: some written comments received, no one was making the same recommendation. Going look at and come back next month to review and make recommendations.

### **Public Comment**

No public comment

Janet made a motion to adjourn at 2:30pm, seconded by Jill. All in favor.

Next scheduled meeting:

Wednesday, October 7, 2020 | 4:30pm – 7:00pm

Via ZOOM