

## Minutes for the

### March 4, 2020 State Advisory Committee (SAC) for Children with Disabilities meeting

The March SAC meeting was held from 4:30 to 7:00 pm at the Parent Information Center's office, 54 Old Suncook Road, Concord, NH 03301.

In attendance (based on the sign-in sheet): Lisa Beaudoin, Dale Boyle, Kevin Cushing, Bonnie Dunham, Tina Greco, Kari Grimes, Esther Kennedy, Viola Lortie, Melissa McKeon, Le'Ann Millender, Christopher O'Reilly, Sandi Raeuchle, Susan Rasicot, Karen Rosenberg, Moira Ryan, Maureen Shields, and Kelly Walker.

Absent members: \*Anna Barrows, \*Elizabeth Casey, \*Meaghan Culinane, \*Alicia Ferguson, \*Jill Hartmann, \*Jason Henry, Gregory Magoon, Leah Lucier-Pike, Michael Pinard, Janet Reed, and Thomas Ryan (\* indicates those absent members who notified SAC in advance that they would be unable to attend),

Members of the General Court who serve on SAC were absent due to other business: Rep. Glen Cordelli, Sen. Jean Dietsch, Sen. Jay Kahn, and Rep. Tamara Le.

Guests in attendance: Mary Lane from the NH Department of Education; Tania Cruper, Marie Sullivan and Sherri Wilson from Scholastic; Katie Scarpati and Susan Lauze from the Concord school district; and William Caruso, parent from Belmont

SAC determined that we had a quorum for the meeting.

#### 4:30 – Welcome, Introductions, Approval of Minutes, Public Comment, Correspondence

- Following a welcome to the meeting, SAC members and guests introduced themselves
- Esther Kennedy made a motion to accept the minutes and Karen Rosenberg seconded the motion. All members who had been present at the February meeting voted to accept the minutes as written.
- There was no public comment
- Lisa shared correspondence from SAC member Alicia Ferguson about her concerns regarding the coronavirus and its impact on children with disabilities who, due to their own health conditions, were unable to attend school. [Note: this was prior to the Governor's emergency school closure order and the state's transition to remote learning.]
- Bonnie shared her legislative update and encouraged members to review it to find the status of bills in which they have an interest. [Note: this was scheduled for the end of the meeting, but Bonnie said that she was bringing it up now so that the remainder of the meeting could be focused on the family engagement topic, which SAC identified as its #2 priority.]

#### ***SAC Priorities for the 2019-2020 Year:***

***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.  
(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.

#### 4:45 – Mary Lane and Scholastic Center for Authentic Family Voice

- Mary and our guests from scholastic provided an overview of the work that Scholastic has done on parent/school collaboration and family engagement. The content of their presentation was covered in the handouts that they provided; the handouts will be provided electronically to all SAC members.
- Two Concord schools, Mill Brook and Broken Ground spoke about the work they have done to increase parent engagement and their experiences as a result. Both discussed how they were able to build on their existing family-focused activities and Broken Ground described how they have moved to the next level of family engagement.
- Mary Lane shared information about an upcoming Family Engagement Summit [Note: status uncertain]
- Lisa B. asked about the percentage of families, particularly those experience low socio-economic status, who have participated. The representatives from the Concord schools discussed strategies they used, including providing transportation to assist families to attend evening activities.
- Bonnie asked about families of children with disabilities and noted that unless steps are taken to ensure that they feel welcome, they may be reluctant to attend. She gave an example of how she has spoken to families of children with disabilities who were unsure if they would be welcome at typical school group activities, such as PTA/PTO meetings. Both Concord schools said that they believed that parents of children were well-represented among the participants of their family engagement activities. They noted, however, that they did not collect data on the demographics of participants.
- Mary L. spoke a little about the history of the NH DOE’s family engagement work and why they broadened the focus beyond just special education. She also spoke about the struggles that the NH DOE and school districts have had in getting the desired response rate for their annual surveys (indicator 8).
- Moira asked about how they engage families at the high school level and talked about how families of older students are often less involved.
- Scholastic and the Concord school representatives noted that the core teams all include parents, but not always parents of children with disabilities. They believe that they do have the involvement of parents of children with disabilities on school-level teams.
- Scholastic identified the 5 communities with which they are involved right now (in their brochure/handouts).
- Esther spoke about school districts (local education agencies/LEAs) that are not on the list and how that does not mean that they are not working on family engagement. She noted that there were strict criteria as part of the selection process for this particular program that many schools could not meet. Also, some schools had already spent a substantial amount of time and resources (including funding) on family engagement-focused professional development, so did not believe that it would be beneficial to start over with a different approach.
- Lisa B. asked if, to build sustainability, the current team members, including parents, are being trained to train others.
- There was some discussion about the need to be sure that the state-level work did not result in a few “pilot” districts benefiting, without there also being some statewide impact.
- Lisa had sent a list of questions generated by SAC at the December SAC meeting to Mary. She reviewed those questions and Mary and Scholastic provided some responses.
- Bonnie D. raised a concern about IDEA funds being used when the project does not focus on children with disabilities. Bonnie noted that while family engagement is a topic that is important for all children and families, it seemed unreasonable that the cost was being supported solely through IDEA funding sources. Mary clarified that this does not use any IDEA funds that would have otherwise been directed to local districts for special education. Bonnie still had concerns about the inequity of the funding source vs. the population being served by the project.

- Lisa B., Karen R. and others asked about what the data showed in terms of the involvement of, or impact on, children with disabilities and their families.

**6:45** – Nominations, Old Business, New Business, Announcements, Comments from the Chair

- There were none

**7:00** – Adjourn – Le’Ann M. made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Melissa M.

Motion passed unanimously.

*Next meeting April 1, 2020, NH DOE, room 15 [NOTE: Has been rescheduled to be a remote work-session focused on the coronavirus/COVID-19 and special education/students with disabilities]*