

**Special Education Advisory Panel
Minutes
March 4, 2016**

Members in Attendance

Pat Kopetz	Shawn Nix	Byron Koster
Stephen Barr	Rachel Morgan	Belinda Worley
Elisha Ferguson	Lauren Zeliff	Amanda Kaiser
Christina Booker	Diana Taylor-Soole	Julie Boos
Kim Gee	Tom Bamvakais	Lori Masek
Matt McTeer	Lauree Head	Lynnette Creed
Kent Medlin	Brenda Niemeyer	Gwen Deimeke
Mary Jo Jensen	Maryellen Koch	Donna Cash

Members Not in Attendance

Stacey Anderson	Reta Richmond	Amy Wilson
Cory McMahan	Lisa Robbins	
Jodi Orton	Laurie Truesdell	

Copies of handouts and presentations for this meeting are available at:
<http://dese.mo.gov/special-education/advisory-panels/seap/meetings>.

Call to Order/Introductions – Patricia Kopetz called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Introductions were made.

Approval of Minutes – Diana Taylor-Soole made a motion to approve the panel minutes as written. Tom Bamvakais seconded the motion. Minutes were approved.

Overview of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – Stephen Barr presented information on the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA was signed into law on December 10, 2015, and reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. ESSA requires the U.S. Department of Education to develop and publish regulations for implementation. See powerpoint located at: <http://dese.mo.gov/special-education/advisory-panels/seap/meetings>. Panel members were encouraged to monitor the U.S. Department of Education’s website for updates on ESSA.

Specific Issues Identified in ESSA that Impact Special Education – Stephen Barr presented information related to issues under discussion for alternate assessment and highly qualified teachers. See powerpoint located at: <http://dese.mo.gov/special-education/advisory-panels/seap/meetings>. There was much discussion from panel members on the highly qualified teacher issue. DESE has had discussions with special education directors and MOCASE concerning this issue. Subcommittees were asked discuss this issue further and provide suggestions.

Update on Statewide System of Support – Stephen Barr updated the panel on the multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) and the statewide system of support. See powerpoint located at: <http://dese.mo.gov/special-education/advisory-panels/seap/meetings>.

Working Lunch - DESE Update

- Budget Update – Good support from legislative body. Requesting additional funding for teachers in state operated programs. These teachers are considered state employees and Missouri’s state employees are the lowest paid in the nation. Requesting a \$20 million supplemental for Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) reimbursements. This is due to funds no longer received from the federal recovery act and to an increase in the number of children participating in ECSE.
- EC Waiver – DESE is requesting an ESEA waiver and IDEA clarification from the U. S. Department of Education as it relates to the implementation of a blended early learning program. Due to different program requirements connected to funding sources, barriers have been created for districts developing and sustaining early learning programs. The waiver requests are intended to allow Missouri schools to combine federal, state, and local resources under one process and create fully inclusive high quality early learning classrooms.
- Facilitated IEP Process – There have been two FIEPs (Farmington and Reeds Springs). We are receiving feedback from surveys and plan to have recommendations for the panel at the June meeting.
- On January 21, OSEP visited the Office of Special Education primarily to discuss our state’s systemic improvement plan (SSIP) which is due April 1. It was a good visit and the Office of Special Education feels comfortable with where we are in the process.
- Proposed Missouri Learning Standards – DESE received many public comments regarding the proposed Missouri Learning Standards. The proposed learning standards will be presented to the State Board at their March meeting. To review the agenda item, go to <http://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/LearningStandardsMarch2016.pdf>.
- There are some bills regarding dyslexia in the House at this time. This goes beyond special education as an issue. The Office of College and Career Readiness hired a new dyslexia specialist, Kim Stuckey, effective March 28. The Office of Special Education is offering to help develop the training materials and help provide those materials to school districts unless State statute provides for that development.
- Assessment Program – Using same computer-based platforms as last year but with a few more items. Will be combining the pretest and the final test.
- Learning Standards – Nothing changed from last year. The ACT will be offered again this year and next. End of course (EOC) tests will remain the same.
- Rachel Meystedt is the new legal counsel for the Office of Special Education.

Subcommittee Meetings – Subcommittees met from 12:45 p.m. until 1:30 p.m.

Discussion items for subcommittees:

- ESSA issues (especially HQT)
- What resources and materials are needed to best assist multi-tiered system of support?

Subcommittee Reports

Evaluation

- The draft 2015-16 Annual Report letter was emailed to panel members prior to the March meeting. Tom Bamvakais made a motion to approve the annual report letter as written. Rachel Morgan seconded the motion. Motion passed.
- The subcommittee felt it is hard for small districts to get highly qualified teachers.

Rules and Regulations

- The subcommittee felt more emphasis should be placed on whether a teacher is a good teacher not just whether they are certified or qualified. Suggested content area praxis exams for special education teachers, mentoring programs for special education content areas in districts, and focusing on the art of being a teacher and not just ability to pass a test. DESE currently has a grant from CEEDAR to review teacher training.
- The subcommittee talked about the distinct differences between online and practical training as it relates to MTSS. Online training will be available beginning in July.
- The subcommittee would like an update on the changes to the IEP amendment form that were suggested at the last meeting.
- The subcommittee would like to make sure the panel receives follow-up to issues brought up during panel meetings. In some cases, it might be “still working on the item.” They want to feel they are making a difference.

Monitoring

- The subcommittee asked about OSEP’s recent visit. Stephen indicated OSEP has visited Missouri the last two years. He has actually encouraged them to visit. The state monitoring cycle is about every five years.
- The subcommittee indicated teachers need to be certified and that it is important for general education and special education teachers to work as a team.

Programs

- The subcommittee felt that it was not as important for special education teachers to be certified in all content areas unless they are considered the main teacher. In co-teaching classrooms, the special education teacher does need to be aware of the subject to better assist the general education teacher. Subcommittee suggested offering co-teaching courses for general education and special education teachers.
- The subcommittee suggested having mental health services available as part of MTSS. They would like more parent involvement while their children are in school including when the student is preparing for higher education. Also suggested more technology training for teachers. If a student is using assistive technology, the teacher(s) need to be familiar with that technology.

Nominations– Forms to nominate panel members for officer positions and for the Executive Committee were handed out at the meeting. Lina will email the form to the panel. Forms must be sent to Mary Jo Jensen at jensenm@fredericktown.k12.mo.us. Mary Jo will contact individuals nominated to verify their interest in serving in the position(s).

Public Comment - No report.

Members Issue/Reports

- Donna Cash reported on upcoming changes for homeless children in Missouri. New legislation under ESSA will change the current definition of Homeless Children and Youth. The definition under ESSA will no longer include “awaiting foster care placement.” This change in the definition will go into effect on December 10, 2016, in every state except Delaware and Nevada, where the deletion is effective on December 10, 2017. If a student is identified as “awaiting foster care” between August 2016 to December 10, 2016, they should be deemed homeless. They would retain the homeless definition until the end of the 2016-17 school year.
- Byron brought up a concern that he feels many districts are not recognizing the fact that students with an IEP have the right to continue their education through age 21. It appears this is because of the national level data on four year graduation rates even though there is a five and six year graduation option. If a student graduates in five or six years, the accountability system takes it into account. The five and six year graduation is a state prerogative which MO has implemented.

Adjournment - Meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.