Task Force on Blind Student Academic and Vocational Performance
Blind Task Force (BTF)
Minutes
Regular Meeting of Committee Representatives
February 4, 2020

For information on the BTF, visit https://dese.mo.gov/special-education/advisory-panels/blind-task-force

Members in Attendance: Jennifer Carmack, June Lenk, Carla Keirns, Louise Whitworth, Rose Ehresman, Reeda Rippee, Brent Sharp, Stephen Barr, Geoffrey Barney, Angie Yorke, Denise Boucher, Keith Roderick

Members Not in Attendance: Joy Frazier Boyle, Linda Coccovizzo, Stacy Hamlett, Shari Scott, Donna Borgmeyer

Minute taker: Regina Miller, administrative assistant, OSE, DESE

L. Whitworth, 2019 Chairperson, officiated over the meeting.

- **Call to Order at 10:00 a.m. by Louise Whitworth, BTF Chairperson.**

- **Roll Call:** *R. Rippee*

- **Introductions:** *L. Whitworth*
  - Keith Roderick was in attendance filling in for Ian Shadrick who resigned his position with Rehabilitation Services for the Blind effective January 24, 2020. A replacement is currently being sought.

- **Review and approval of February 4, 2020 Agenda:** *L. Whitworth*
  - Motion made to approve agenda with no change. Motion made and seconded.
  - Agenda approved with no changes.

- **Review and approval of November 12, 2019 Minutes:** *L. Whitworth*
  - Motion made and seconded to approve minutes with no changes.
  - Minutes approved as is with no changes.

- **Missouri School for the Blind (MSB) Follow up Report – Presentation of Progress Charts**
  Geoffrey Barney presented the following
  - Information related to collecting data and displaying progress using various charts to monitor yearly growth for every student in every class
  - Data broken down first by measurable learning objectives for the year, and then divided for each month
  - Large charts are displayed, by content area, in a prominent place at the MSB so that stakeholders can see progress
  - Teachers display data for each class outside their classroom on smaller charts
  - Teacher teams meet to discuss the data collected and how students are doing in each class
  - Data is shared with parents and IEP teams as appropriate
  - Students who do not master the measurable learning objectives with a score of 80 percent must continue to learn the material until they reach this mark
• if a class does not make the progress expected, a meeting is held with the teacher and a school supervisor to discuss what supports need to be put in place to help them succeed

• Special Education Teacher Shortage: Including TVI and O&M
Dr. Stephen Barr, using a PowerPoint slide presentation, provided information that focused on feedback obtained from the Teacher Workforce Report submitted each January since 2016. Focus areas included
  o Teacher Retention
  o Outreach Plan Feedback Results
    ▪ Parent Reflections (Survey Feedback)
    ▪ Student Reflections (Survey Feedback)
    ▪ Teacher Reflections (Survey Feedback)
  o Teacher Recruitment

• Children’s Vision Summit Survey Review
Keith Roderick provided a summary handout to all members detailing information provided from the survey.
To view the CVS Summit survey review handout, please visit https://dese.mo.gov/special-education/advisory-panels/blind-task-force/meeting-minutes

• DESE Update
Dr. Stephen Barr presented
  o Budget—state: Budget priorities were outlined during the Governor’s State of the State address on January 15, 2020 with the focus on infrastructure and workforce development remaining unchanged. Special education budget items were consistent with the recommendations by the State Board of Education. The Department met with the House Appropriation Budget Committee on January 28 and will meet again with the Senate Appropriations Budget Committee on February 25.

  o Budget—federal: In late December, Congress and the President fulfilled their required duties to pass a federal budget by October 1 that will provide small increases to funding under IDEA.

  o State Leadership Development Grant: DESE has received a $200,000 a year grant to develop a system of supports and training for Special Education Directors. Kindra Delp, a former principal, was hired to assist with gathering resources, establishing timelines for development, vetting, communication, and implementation by the summer of 2020.

  o State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR): Submitted January 30 to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the US Department of Education. OSEP will conduct an initial review over the next several months. Following this review, OSEP will schedule a week of clarification where states have an opportunity to further clarify information not clear to the OSEP reviewers. Once the clarification period concludes, OSEP will begin the process of making state determinations under their Results-Driven Accountability process.

  o State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP): The Office of Special Education is writing its annual evaluation of the SSIP. The SSIP is indicator 17 of the SPP/APR process that is to be submitted April 1 (two months later than the remainder of the SPP/APR process). The SSIP is the agency’s best effort to support district
continuous improvement over time. Much of the online activity is supported by a Virtual Learning Platform (VLP) that provides resources on demand at no cost to the districts. As it matures, the system will address academic, behavioral, and social/emotional needs with research-based practices.

- **Alternative Assessment Participation:** Changes under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) limit the participation of students on the state’s alternate assessment to one percent of total test takers. Missouri’s Alternate Assessment (MAP-A) is embedded in the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM). Missouri met the federal ESSA requirement related to alternate assessment participation for the 2019-20 school year. DESE is reviewing information from 178 districts that failed to meet the one percent cap. Districts exceeding the one percent cap are required, by federal statute, to explain why they did not meet the goal and outline how they are going to improve in the future. A review of preliminary data for the 2019-20 school year indicates the state is on track to meet its one percent obligation. Data indicate some districts are spiraling upward with little rationale to justify the increase. Contact will likely be made with these districts to ensure they are aware of the issues.

- **Alternative Methods of Instruction:** Legislation, passed last session, allows districts to make up hours of instruction lost due to exceptional circumstances such as weather, power outage or a contagious disease by Alternate Instructional Methods (AIM). The primary alternate process may include virtual instruction or computer-assisted methods. Districts must submit a plan to DESE and be approved by the Office of Quality Schools prior to implementing any AIM hours. To assist districts in thinking through the options and issues, the Office of Special Education, with the support of MO-CASE, field compliance staff, reviews by Blindness Skills Specialists (BSS), and professionals at Missouri School for the Deaf (MSD) and Missouri School for the Blind (MSB), have developed guidance. The guidance supports districts as they consider their options and provides direction for training that may be required.

- **Curriculum Materials for Teaching Severely Disabled Students:** The Missouri Schools for Severely Disabled (MSSD) and the Special School District of St. Louis County (SSD) are combining their resources to develop curriculum materials for teachers of severely disabled students. The materials are aligned to the alternate state standards, or Essential Elements, and are accessible to teachers of severely disabled students across the state through the Build Your Own Curriculum (BYOC) platform. The first release of the curriculum materials, which are posted at https://dese.mo.gov/special-education/missouri-schools-severely-disabled/curriculum, occurred in late January.
• 2020 Sub Committees: Membership and Chairpersons: L. Whitworth
  o Academic & Vocational Services: Add Rose Ehresman as committee member
  o Children’s Vision Summit: Add Rose Ehresman as Chairperson and Denise Boucher as committee member
  o Student Achievement: Add Carla Keirns as Chairperson and Rose Ehresman and Denise Boucher as committee members

• BTF New Members/Vacancies/Updates: L. Whitworth
  o Vacancies as of 2/4/2020 meeting are: (1) Public School Administrator; (1) Public School Building Principal; (1) Employer; (2) Students; (1) Parent; and (1) DSS Representative

• Current Workshops/Events:
  o National Federation of the Blind (NFB) – BELL - July 27-August 7, 2020
  o Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB)-ACE Academy and Blind Socially Savvy in June 2020; Kansas City in July 2020
  o Work-Based Learning Experiences in July - RSB to partner with Missouri School for the Blind (MSB) and Centers for Specialized Services
  o To view additional current workshops/events please visit https://dese.mo.gov/special-education/advisory-panels/blind-task-force/meeting-minutes

• Agenda items for next scheduled meeting May 5, 2020 to be announced and added to May DRAFT agenda.

• Motion to adjourn made by R. Rippee. Motion seconded by A. Yorke. Meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.