

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY PANEL MINUTES
ALABAMA INDUSTRIAL TRAINING CENTER (AITC)
GEORGE HOWARD TRAINING CENTER
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA
9 AM – 12 Noon
OCTOBER 19, 2023

IN PERSON

Kameron Carden, Pamela Fossett, Jane Lamb, Jessica Pelt, Graham Sisson, Shana Smith, Shenika Weatherly

ZOOM

Lisa Balazs, Tranesia Brown, Kristen Dial, Tasha Harrison-Betts, Shanquail Horton, Evandra Jackson, Jean Marzullo, Keren McElvy, Ashley McLeroy, Kate Simmons

NOT PRESENT

Volante' Blackmon, Felicia Carswell, Tara Cook, Valencia Curry, LeAnna Feely, Carin Mayo, Temeyra McElrath, Tiffany Moore, Hank Poore, Kathy Poore, Lisa Powell, Christi Rubin, LaDonna Rudolph, Alyssa Spivey

OTHERS PRESENT

- Alabama State Department of Education-Special Education Services (ALSDE, SES) Special Education Advisory Panel (Panel) representatives–DaLee Chambers, Ashley Cawley, Beth Herndon, Shonta Jackson
- ALSDE, SES Staff – Jennifer Burt, Kemeche Green, Erika Richburg

The meeting was called to order by Chair Graham Sisson. Jessica Pelt motioned to approve the June 29, 2023, meeting minutes; Pamela Fossett seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Sisson called roll and briefly introduced the new members: Jane Lamb, Kate Simmons, Shenika Weatherly

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES (SES) FISCAL TEAM PRESENTATION: Erika Richburg, ALSDE, SES Fiscal Administrator, presented Alabama's draft Part B Application. The ALSDE is asking for stakeholder input on activities and programs that could be considered for next year's budget. These ideas will be discussed at the January Panel meeting.

ALSDE, SES DIRECTOR'S REPORT: DaLee Chambers

- Dr. Chambers encouraged the formation of local advisory panels.
- An update on the status of current initiatives to address the teacher shortage was provided. A \$1000 stipend paid to special education teachers and speech and language pathologists with state funding was a token of appreciation by our legislators. Dr. Chambers encouraged Panel members to thank legislators. Legislation will be encouraged to reconsider the proposed \$5000 stipend for special education teachers.
- A review of Alabama's FFY2021 State Determination and the new guidance from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) released in June 2023 was provided. The Panel requested copies of the OSEP documents. Dr. Cawley will email those to the Panel after the meeting.
- Panel member Kameron Carden asked how samples for monitoring are chosen. Lisa Balazs asked how the data were collected. Dr. Chambers provided detailed responses to both questions.
- Upcoming guidance in response to the Department of Justice (DOJ) Letter of Finding regarding Specialized Treatment Centers (STC) was shared. Dr. Chambers clarified who is responsible for servicing a student in an STC.
- Proposed changes to Alabama's Procedural Safeguards (Special Education Rights) were shared with the Panel for review and feedback. The new document will be longer but is designed to be more parent friendly. It will be more organized with subject areas that are easy to locate.

- Chair Sisson proposed a question to the Panel addressing vocational rehabilitation and special education. Panel member Tasha-Harrison Betts, Statewide Transition Coordinator, provided a detailed response about work-based transition with the most significant barrier being student schedules.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- No public comments were received by the ALSDE, SES prior to the meeting nor requested at the meeting.

BREAK

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **MEMBERSHIP** (Committee Chair: Lisa Balazs)
 - Upcoming end of term for Dr. Pamela Fossett and Temeyra McElrath. Dr. Cawley and Chair Sisson shared words of appreciation to both members.
 - Current vacancies: Charter School; Private School; parents or individuals with disabilities (IWD).
 - Panel members were provided with the applications of three potential new members to review in advance. The Panel voted unanimously to recommend the new members to Dr. Mackey for appointment.
 - Dr. Cawley shared current Panel membership compliance numbers. At least one more parent or IWD is needed to serve on the Panel.
- **BYLAWS** (Committee Chair: Carin Mayo)
 - The Bylaws Annual Review requirement and process were explained.
 - Panel members were provided with a copy of the proposed changes to the bylaws in advance.
 - Motion to approve proposed changes passed unanimously.
- **STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT** (Committee Chair: **OPEN**)
 - The former committee chair was no longer able to fulfill the responsibilities. The position remains open to any Panel member who would like to serve.
 - Dr. Cawley described some of the committee's potential tasks and encouraged members to consider the role.
- **STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND DATA** (Committee Chair: Kameron Carden and Alyssa Spivey)
 - A SPP/APR data preview meeting will be held by the ALSDE, SES Data Team with the committee in December. Panel members not on the Student Achievement and Data Committee will also be invited to attend.

OLD BUSINESS

- Deaf or Hard of Hearing Focus Group:
 - The first meeting is scheduled for October 26, 2023.
 - The focus group will be facilitated by SES staff and comprised of individuals representing deaf or hard-of-hearing stakeholders throughout the state.
- Adaptive PE Certification: Alabama no longer requires certification in Adaptive PE. All PE teachers (P-12) are trained to provide adaptive PE services to students with disabilities who need those services.
- After the meeting, ALSDE information about Adaptive PE Certification will be emailed to the Panel.

NEW BUSINESS

- The 2022-23 Annual Report: Panel members were provided a draft of the 2022-23 Annual Report for review. There is no federal requirement for states to complete and submit a report. It is a way to share the Panel's work each year. Panel members were given the opportunity to pose questions or recommendations. Once the final draft is approved by ALSDE leadership, a copy will be sent to the Panel and posted to the ALSDE webpage.
- The 2024 meeting schedule and location were proposed. Dr. Cawley recommended that the Panel consider holding two meetings during January-May and two during August-December, holding work sessions, and

writing the Annual Report in the summer. The Panel agreed to host one meeting in person and one meeting virtually bi-annually.

- The Panel was asked for feedback regarding developing an organizational/procedural handbook.
- Dr. Cawley reminded the Panel that any recommendation or advisement for the ALSDE must come from the Panel in writing. Additionally, Dr. Cawley shared that the 2022 SEAP recommendation report was written by the Panel and submitted to the ALSDE. The ALSDE, SES, or members of the Panel from the ALSDE, SES cannot write the SEAP recommendation report.
- No additional recommendations or questions were received.

PANEL MEMBER NEWS

- November 9, 2023: Central Alabama's 8th "Unlocking the Mystery of Developmental Disorders" Conference in Homewood, AL.
- Kameron Carden shared about current studies on cognitive change and reading comprehension in teens and young adults with Down syndrome.
- LeAnna Feely could not attend today because she became a first-time grandmother this week.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:46 AM.

NEXT MEETING:

TBD

January 18, 2024

9 AM – 12 Noon