

STATE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY PANEL MEETING
MINUTES – September 26, 2024
Hybrid Meeting – OPI 1300 11th Ave/Virtual

8:30 Chairperson Jennifer Schoffer-Closson called the meeting to order and led introductions.

Members Present: Mildred (Millie) Armstrong, Dr. Jennifer Schoffer Closson, Chad Berg, Norah Barney, Deva McNiven, Theresa Baldry, Lisa Fant, Rebekah Serrine, Sandy Cade, Lucy Galarus, Christina Petersen, Vena Dagnall, Christa Gabriel

Members Not Present:

Staff Present: Ty House, Patrick Cates, Kimber Emmons, John Gorton

Public Present: Heidi Gibson from MEC

8:30 a call for Public Comment

Approve the Proposed Agenda— (Action Item)

Proposed: Dr. Jennifer Schoffer Closson

2nd: Christa Gabriel

Approved: Yes

Review/Approve Minutes of March (Action Item)

Proposed: Theresa Baldry

2nd: Christina Petersen

Approved: Yes

Patrick Cates and the Panel members made introductions.

Patrick Cates introduced new OPI staff members: Annette Gorton, Kristie Sears, Kimber Emmons.

John Gorton introduced his new OPI staff: Crystal Wright, and Jillian Bellah.

Patrick Cates reviewed the September 2024 Special Education Annual Report for the Board of Public Education.

9:25-9:35 Break

John Gorton discussed the DMS (differentiated monitoring system) report, paying close attention to monitoring, Fiscal, dispute resolution, and Significant Disproportionality, deficiencies.

*A copy of the Power Point presented to the Panel is included at the end of the meeting minutes.

OSEP is a Federal educational oversight organization.

Kimber Emmons discussed financial allocation from the feds and to districts. Approximately \$48M in 611 & 619 funds and approximately \$41.5M to districts in 611 & 619 funds.

Indicator 17 – SSIP changes and how it relates to recommendations was discussed.

Kimber Emmons discussed the 3 tier of technical assistance and support that OPI offers LEA's.

Panel work groups were discussed.

11:15-12:15 Lunch

Possible Panel Group topics discussed:

Student Advocacy Group

- Mainstreaming staff for Special Ed
- Addressing rate of Suspensions of IEP students

Graduation Advocacy Group

Autism Interventions and Supports

Chad Berg reminded the Panel that the by-laws state the Panel is to advise local government agencies to help develop MT education policy.

Patrick Cates discussed OPI initiatives designed to alleviate Special Education staffing shortages in schools.

Approve the Proposed Work Groups— (Action Item)

- **Student Advocacy Group (Lucy Galarus, Christina Petersen Co-Chairs)**
- **Graduation Advocacy Group (Lisa Fant Chair)**
- **Autism Interventions and Supports (Jennifer Schoffer Closson)**

Proposed: Lisa Fant
2nd: Deva McNiven
Approved: Yes

Panel members will break themselves into the 3 groups and meet prior to the next full Panel meeting.

Patrick Cates reviewed the Panel By-Laws.

Panel was asked for tentative agenda ideas for the January meeting:

- Work group reporting and break out groups (2 hours recommended by Panel)
- Panel By-laws and responsibilities
- Meeting new Autism Support person Katie Mattingly
- Bill Updates
- Inviting the State Billi Taylor from SAM to speak on recruitment
- OSEP DMS report

January's meeting will be virtual

John Gorton discussed Significant Disproportionality.

Panel asked to give feedback on lowering the threshold from 0.5 to 0.25 recommendation to OSEP.

2:15 Adjourn
Proposed: Jennifer Schoffer Closson
2nd: Lisa Fant
Approved: Yes



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