



STATE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY PANEL MEETING PROPOSED AGENDA—March 23 and 24, 2023

Day 1 - March 23, 2023

8:15-8:30 Meet and Greet, Coffee/Tea/Water

8:30-9:00 Welcome: Call the Meeting to Order – Marisa Britton-Bostwick; Chair

- Introductions: Members, Staff and Visitors –
 - Jennifer C called the meeting to order at 8:33
 - Introductions made
- Review the Proposed Agenda (Action Item)
 - JP wants to add 1% at the 10:45 time on 3/24 –
 - Tammy Lysons will not be at the 9:00 am update on 3/23
 - Theresa motion to approve as amended
 - Norah seconded
 - Unanimous
- Review and Approve Minutes of January 18-19, 2023 Meeting (Action Item)
 - Theresa Baldry had several changes to be made to the minutes – Anne Rainey has them
 - Will add link to the article Chad wrote
 - Motion to approve the minutes as amended – Cindy G
 - Seconded – Opal B
 - Unanimous
- Announcements (if needed)
 - Opal's Question: Any updates on amending the language of 504 (legislative item)
 - JP said he saw it went to the floor; Opal asked for the link to make public comment; Jennifer asked JP to send it to all of the panel
 - Jennifer C attended the MCEC conference and stated it had a good turnout
 - Serena (OPI) – April 24-26 – High Tiered Community of Practice in Glendive – Anne will send the link to the panel; youth panel from Dawson Promise and a dino dig on the last day; OPI Sped Supports this

9:00-9:45 Updates from OPI Special Education Staff

- John Gorton – Monitoring
 - Shared PowerPoint with JP/Anne – Anne will send it out
 - Which districts/coops monitored – added a few additional districts due to the inability to monitor the previous year due to lack of staff
 - What was observed during the monitoring cycle
 - High incidents throughout the State
 - Trainings being offered
- JP Williams / Anne Rainey – Fiscal and Reporting
 - APR submission and Clarification
 - APR (Annual Performance Report) was submitted January 31st
 - Clarification period is anticipated to be April 13-27
 - Will provide updates on this at the May 11th meeting



- JP Williams - Special Education Director
 - Staffing updates
 - Shara Blair – new AIM TA for SPED; came from Hellgate Elementary, will eventually be taking over some of the IDEA data collections
 - Patrick Cates – new Senior Manager, starts May 1, coming from Belgrade Public Schools

9:45-10:30 Work Group Updates - Jennifer Schoffer Closson

- Theresa Baldry – Training Programs for Providers for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Visually Impaired, and Deaf-Blind
 - Goal: create list of service providers to this population; definition of those roles; develop list of where the training programs are
 - Will bring to Advisory Panel and then provide it to OPI to distribute to districts
 - Want to bring forward recommendations to OPI
 - Reached out to MSDB (Carol Clayton-Bye) to attend
 - Carol brought information on what MSDB can do and their list of providers
 - Question from Opal
 - How does a district go about providing adequate mental health services to students in this population?
 - From Theresa: create clean effective pathway for the exchange of information as step one; then figure out what other pieces need to be considered for the individual
 - From Jen: working with a graduate student on a presentation about how to use evidence based practices more effectively use therapy time with students on the Autism Spectrum
 - Opal would like that presentation
 - Rebekah would like to have Jen's presentation done for Voc Rehab and/or Pre-ETS
 - Lacey wants it for their joint Voc rehab/SiLC (state independent living council) meeting in May (same days as our panel meetings)
- Opal Besaw – Mental Health
 - Talking about seclusion and restraint and the increase in calls regarding those (as well as shortened days)
 - Recommend that there be some anonymous anecdotal surveys put out to schools by OPI to get information on actual numbers of incidents of seclusion and restraint
 - They have some data on it, but want to see what districts have to say, since if its in the IEP or behavior plan it isn't included in the data
 - Looking at teacher burnout and mental health services for teachers and staff
 - Encourage districts to make mental health services available and known to staff all the time, not just when a trauma occurs
 - Watching some legislative bills
 - HB22
 - Maybe asking Jamey Peterson for more information
 - HB 334
 - JP would like the group to refine their goals to bring forward to meeting in May and to the legislative body



- JP would also like to explore into setting up a few schools as models for teletherapy – perhaps schools could be pilot schools who can do the research on how it's working, what's the cost, where does the funding come from, how do you build a comprehensive system, what is allowable and permissible per CFR, ARM, and OPI policies
 - Resources for students, staff, and administration
- Put in information from Theresa (she will send to Anne)
- JP expects this Panel to be leading the state in the actions that need taken for student Mental Health.
- JP Williams and Jennifer Closson – Recruitment and Retention
 - Met with Jenny Malloy (Park County Coop Director) – her recommendations are:
 - Would like funding for mental health prevention and/or less limitations with funding
 - Reduce guidelines of number of kids per counselor in a school and make part of the FTE prevention
 - Currently at 1 counselor per 400 students, possibly reduce to 300 students so .25 FTE can be prevention
 - Mental health providers outside the school do not have knowledge of school systems - which can result in disruptions - therefore training and guidelines would be beneficial
 - More trainings on behavior
 - OPI needs to enforce caseload caps
 - Guidelines on caseload numbers of sped teachers, SLPs, etc.
 - Guidelines on when to hire a support para (at what point of overage and associated FTE)
 - Paraeducators need more training
 - Put on steps and lanes promotion to incentivize training
 - Change focus to the value of our paraeducators
 - Funding to support special education secretaries to free up special educators to actually do teaching
 - Rural areas need a community of support
 - JP will get notes from Jennifer on her concerns from the work group – caseload cap sizes or recommendation from the state; Danni provided history of the reason for no longer having a cap or recommendations – based on individual student needs, up to the districts
 - Opal asked if there was a specific way to send up the panel's recommendations; not at this time
 - Work groups are new as of last years panel

10:30-10:45 Break

10:45-11:45 Annual State Application for Funds – JP Williams

- JP discussed the federal requirement of the state application



Public comment and posting of the application (Missoula, Kalispell, GFalls, Bozeman, billings for 3/19 & 3/22 for Helena & Butte)

- GEPA Form for the state and a GEPA form for all school districts; new requirement for the state;
- Assurances section of the application
- LEA Input from the state director's call on 3/8/22
- Opal question: Would Doug be a good person to speak to the panel/Opal about aversive treatment plans and mental health
- MFS Discussion
- Significant Dispro
- Budget work sheet, review of last years FFY22 budget – Danni explained
- Montana Youth Leadership Forum (MYLF) is recruiting for more delegates; there is an open house/mtg tonight – self advocacy, living, disability history (leadership)

11:45-1:00 Lunch

1:00-1:45 Annual State Application for Funds cont.

- JP discussed the proposal of new budget for FFY23
- Danni detailed the information of the line items

1:45-2:00 Break

2:00-2:15 Public Comment

- Christy Hendricks, OPI, made comment about being a guest speaker on the recruitment and retention work group to discuss Title II funding
 - Anne will send Christy's contact information to the panel so they can contact her for information

2:15-3:00 OSEP Verification Visit Planning - JP Williams

- Cohort 1 states
- Visiting at the end of June – 26-30
- Currently reviewing our website and additional documents submitted to OSEP (Office of Special Education Programs)
- Areas monitored: fiscal, EAP, monitoring, SPP/APR, data, & Sig Dispro
- Panel members could potentially be contacted by OSEP to answer questions; possibly need to schedule a quick mtg with panel members if requested by OSEP
- Opal asked if the panel has to be present for the mock visit – answer is no
- OSEP has reached out to DRM and possibly others throughout Montana
- Theresa stated she reviewed Part C-MT DMS report and was concerned with how we will do. Danni & Anne explained those concerns in the Part C report should not be concerns within Part B. Some concerns have already been identified by us as a state and we have taken action already to make the changes or is on our radar to make those changes.
- Theresa asked if we completed more than just the paperwork and took actions in addition to the paperwork regarding the 1% waiver for Alt Assessment

3:00 Adjourn



Day 2 - March 24, 2023

8:15-8:30 Meet and Greet, Coffee/Tea/Water

8:30-9:00 Welcome: Call the Meeting to Order – Jennifer Schoffer Closson – Vice Chair

Meeting called to order 8:31 a.m.

- Introductions: Members, Staff and Visitors
- Announcements (if needed)
 - Vena - There will be a Deaf/Hard of Hearing event in Helena on 3/25
 - Jennifer - Temple Grandin will be in Hamilton speaking on 3/25
 - Rebekah – has information and flyers about the MYLF camp this summer; also has information about the STEAM Camps being offered this summer; Movin' on in Montana – in Billings this summer – Pre-ETS students stay on campus for a week to experience college life and help them prepare – will send information to Anne and Anne will distribute to the Panel
 - JP – reminder about Youth Days coming up in April in Missoula; Summer Institute in Bozeman in June

9:00-9:30 OPI Executive Updates – Superintendent Elsie Arntzen

- Elsie gave her background in public education and thanked the panel for their passion and service
- Legislative Updates
 - Facial recognition or biometrics bills seem to be big – what will that mean for schools
 - Governor signed the bill for school funding – budget sheets have been sent to districts
 - Bill got tabled related to teacher compensation and health care
 - Bill on the table to have the state take over the health care costs and coverage for district staff
 - Partnership with Special Olympics – will have a rotunda day at the Capital next week to showcase that
- 1% waiver
 - Was denied
 - Elsie wants the panels support as she reviews new assessments that we could use to replace what we have now so that it's an easier to test and we can meet the 95% participation requirement
- Questions?
 - Opal – in relation to the partnership with Special Olympics - did you see the article about her curriculum she developed for general education students to be taught about disabilities and how to better include them in activities with typical peers; would be happy to send that to the Superintendent



- Superintendent asked her to send it so that it can be included in the COMPASS.
- Opal requested that next time the Superintendent is in Kalispell to give her a call so they can meet

9:30-10:30 Work Group Time

- The workgroups met and were tasked with coming up with recommendations to make to stakeholders at the May Meeting
- Recruitment and Retention – JP Williams
 - Discussed some areas where they want to make recommendations – will iron out and have ready in May
- Mental Health – Opal Besaw
 - Working on recommendations
 - More use of universal mental health screening – not sure where funding would come from quite yet – still allow an opt out
 - Maybe Pilot Program for mental health screening of all school/district staff
 - Sending out small anecdotal surveys on seclusion and restraint (as discussed yesterday)
 - Serena asked: Could questions be added to the YRBS to address some of these questions?
 - JP suggested possibly just developing our own version of the YRBS
- Training Programs for Providers for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Visually Impaired, and Deaf-Blind
 - Looking at 3 recommendations
 - Students are identified in the evaluation process and carried over to the IEP under all areas in which they qualify
 - Within the IEP form under the special factors section – add deaf and hard of hearing supports mirrored as they are for Blind/Visual Impairment
 - Pathway guide for districts to use when presented with a deaf, hard of hearing, visually impaired, and/or deaf-blind student

10:30-10:45 Break

10:45-11:15 Panel Feedback on meeting and topics

- **1% update – JP Williams**
 - <https://opi.mt.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=ppUmztQE44Q%3d&portalid=182>
 - To ensure that as a state, overall, we meet 2 criteria
 - 95% of all special education students are tested – either Alt or Regular
 - Montana hasn't met that requirement – it's close but not quite there
 - Plan moving forward is to develop 3 tiers
 - Tier 1: meeting 1% compliance and have opportunities for TA and PD at district discretion
 - Tier 2: close to meeting 1% but just over, will have recommended TA, and some determined PD
 - Tier 3: over 1%, required TA and PD
 - Waiver was denied – letter received
 - We did not meet the 95% criteria (looked at it overall – grades 3-8 and 11)
 - ELA = 94.9%



- Math = 94%
- Science = 93.9%
- Parent opt Out is not allowed, but some districts are allowing it
 - The stress it causes some students to take the test just isn't worth it so parents are just not sending students to school during testing
 - Teachers/District Administrators need to understand how to make sure the technology is ready to be used to take the test

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11:15-11:30 Additional Items

- Meeting May 10 (Joint Stakeholders), and May 11 (Advisory Panel)
- Non-Employee Reimbursement Forms
- Certificate of Renewal Units
- Other

11:30 Adjourn

- Serena made the motion to adjourn at 11:38 a.m.
- Rebekah seconded the motion
- Motion passed unanimously