



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Connecticut State Advisory Council for Special Education

Wednesday, November 6, 2019

******* 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. *******

Southington Municipal Center

200 North Main St.

Southington, CT 06489

(Conference Call Information included in Meeting Invitation)

MINUTES

Members Present: Jen Lussier, Audra Mae Talbot, Rick Raucci, Meg Walsh, Nachi Bhatt, Mike Nunes, Brian Smith, Ana Wittig, Kim Williamson, Patricia Nunez, Catherine Summ, Tom Cosker, Bryan Klimkiewicz (non-voting) Jolie Medina (non-voting), Doris Maldonado, Kasey Considine and Cassandra Reilly.

Conference Line: Jake Shumbo and Alex Steinbrick

Members Absent: Sheila Crocker, Louis Tallarita, Alex Steinbrick, Jeffrey Spahr, Melvette Hill, Jane Goundrey, Sean Cronin (CSDE), Marisa Mascolo-Halm, John Flanders and Joan Nicoll-Senft.

Legislative Representative: Robin Comey

Public:

I. Call to Order and Welcome:

Meeting called to order at 9:09 am by Tom Cosker.

II. The Council Members introduced themselves and their role on the Council.

III. Council Purpose and Function: Tom Cosker reviewed the council purpose and function.

IV. Consent Agenda

- a. Membership Committee October 21, 2019 Meeting Minutes
- b. Executive Committee October 7, 2019 Meeting Minutes
- c. Executive Committee October 30, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Tom Cosker accepted the consent agenda.

V. Public Comment: N/A

Old Business

VI. Executive Committee Report

- a. Present and discuss final SAC recommendations from the 18-19 Council priorities

Tom Cosker and Bryan Klimkiewicz presented the final document/summary of the four priority areas from the previous year. They were projected for the Council. The Council engaged in discussions as to the communication of the priority discussions. The four priority areas include:

- i. Meaningful Inclusion
 - ii. Mental Health/Special Education
 - iii. Parent/School Partnerships
 - iv. Secondary Transition
- b. 2019-20 Council Priorities

Tom Cosker presented the 2020-2021 Council Priorities based upon Council input and feedback during the summer orientation and follow up activities. The priority areas include:

- i. Secondary Transition
- ii. Teacher Preparation/Teacher Diversity
- iii. Assistive Technology

Council members are advised to select an area in which they would like to participate/contribute to the development of priority recommendations.

VII. Membership Committee Report

Jen Lussier provided an overview of the membership activities including Council attendance, current vacancies, and the membership recruitment process. The membership committee is also in the process of developing a new member overview to discuss important aspects of the Council including but not limited to purpose, role, and stakeholder representation.

a. Recommendation for Council Consideration

- i. The membership committee presented Tammy Raccio as a Parent Representative candidate for the full Council's consideration. Ms. Raccio was recommended and approved by the Executive Committee at the 12/4/19 meeting. Ms. Raccio's background, experience, and interest in the Council was shared. A motion was made by Catherine Summ to approve Tammy Raccio as a member of the State Advisory Council for Special Education pending an appointment letter by the Governor. The motion was seconded by Meg Walsh. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Legislative Committee Report

The Legislative Committee has not met since the last meeting. Bryan Klimkiewicz summarized the process for the annual report and indicated that the Legislative session would be beginning in February. Representative Comey summarized the legislative process and some of the ongoing initiatives.

- IX.** September 25, 2019, Full Council meetings minutes were reviewed. A motion made by Jen Lussier and seconded by Audra Talbot. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

X. Round Table

Sonia Taylor-Smith (Parent): Discussed roles and the PPT process. In her experiences, some staff are not aware of their role/function.

Jake Shumbo (Student): Updated the Council on Youth Advisory Board (YAB) work and his experiences as a speaker, some of his work on the CPAC website, advocating for himself, and NTACTION invitation in December.

Audra Mae Talbot (Parent): Commented on her parent role of two children ages 9 and 12 with variety of needs as well as her role as the President of Bristol SEPTO and Outreach Chair for Alliance, along with assisting in the organization of other district SEPTOs.

Kasey Considine (Disability Rights CT): No updates at this time, looking forward to continued work in the areas of priority.

Rick Raucci (Public School Teacher): Discussed the Unified Sports program and grant to assist students access the prom (use of noise cancelling headphones). Susan Yankee offered to put Rick in touch with a contact for headphone equipment for prom.

Tom Cosker (Parent) Mentioned the CIAC December 4 event at Sheridan in Rocky Hill.

Tammy Raccio (Parent): Finds CPAC and Eventbrite helpful for advertising. Speaks about day groups at Yale and monthly SPED support groups.

Representative Comey (General Assembly): Freshman legislator on the public/children's committees, 504 Plan food allergies, work 3 years locally now at state level to train. Talks to parents/constituents about advocacy for student needs, working with BESBE and parent interest in restraint/seclusion. Encourages SAC assistance in her work to move forward.

Monica Hatton (Parent): On the North Haven Special Advisory group and SEPTA. Speaks of being resourceful and being a democrat along with working with republican legislators.

Doris Maldonado (Parent): Adoptive parent of high school students, mentions various advocacy roles.

Margaret Walsh (ConnCASE): Current work in secondary transition on goals and collaborative work with colleagues/universities for students who are aging out of special education, ongoing issues with teacher recruitment, speech and school psychology shortages across the state.

Mike Nunes (DOC): Has hired 22 new staff filling the roles of social workers/related services/teachers specifically at York CI and Manson Youth CI.

Brian Smith (DDS): Triage resolutions – behavioral, DCF, health, looking at plans and services. Promoting events that happened or are happening.

Ana Wittig (CAPSEF): CAPSEF is currently working with ConnCASE to identify positive student outcome measures across programs. This is a difficult task as APSEPs vary in the student populations that they support.

Cassandra Reilly (Charter School): Discussed her current and previous professional roles. Lack of funding and collaboration between charters and districts are current challenges that are being addressed.

Patricia Nunez (Judicial): Work with Hartford and Bridgeport detention centers regions and programs.

Catherine Summ (BESB): Talked about role as an education supervisor, partnership work with the state universities to work on dual certifications and mentions the fall series training now at 7 not 6 this year in the areas of preschool paraprofessionals, teachers for braille/ large print, and CVI Phase III. Encourages professional development, online training for visual impairment, in person and online training attendance.

Alex Steinbrick (Student) Although unable to attend, the SAC received a report read by Jen Lussier: "Upon completing my internship. The owner of the company offered me a paid internship at the corporate office. I enjoyed working in the marketing field throughout the summer. I will continue working there on my breaks from college. Vocational Rehabilitation has been extremely supportive of my future. College is going well. My grades are good. I had a few hiccups with accommodations and it is all straightened out. I've been included in more rapidly and more sincerely than I ever have in my life. The ADA para transportation is horrible. They have no concern about me arriving places late. They are not supportive of me being independent in the community. I have been on time 3 times out of 10. Last Friday they ended up showing up late and I ended up having someone else take me so I could take my exam. And Yes I have built in a 15 minute cushion into my reservation time and they are still late. Their policy is that I must be out there and if I am not there in five minutes they leave me stranded. They have no understanding of my disability."

Jen Lussier (CPAC): John Flanders not present, Jen gives a PTI update on Family Engagement work with the CT Family School Partnerships (CFSP), which is a collaboration of CPAC, CREC, AFCAMP, SERC and the CSDE, as it related to the SAC's previous year's priority area of family engagement.

XI. Due Process Hearing Review (10:45)

The Council worked in five groups to review recent Due Process Hearing Decisions. The groups read the reports, discussed issues as a group, and identified a process to review future and ongoing hearing decisions in order to identify trends/issues and a manner in which the Council can advise the BSE on these issues.

XII. The Council took an extended bread for lunch.

XIII. Special Education Division Director Report: (1:00)

The special education division director presented a brief PowerPoint with the Council, highlighting current Bureau activities.

XIV. Council Priorities/Ad Hoc Committee Work. (1:30)

The Council worked in small groups to begin identifying/prioritizing activities related to the following priority areas:

- a. Secondary Transition

- b. Teacher Preparation/Teacher Diversity
- c. Assistive Technology

Subgroups will continue to work to develop an action plan.

XV. Action Items/Summary

XVI. The meeting was adjourned by Tom Cosker at 3:04pm.