

**State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children (SAPEC)  
March 16, 2023**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Call to Order**

The SAPEC meeting was called to order by SAPEC Chairperson, Trisha Prunty. All members were welcomed.

Karen Johnson, Office for Exceptional Children (OEC) conducted roll call. Members absent were Lisa Golden, Antionette Miranda, Charlette Perlaky, Janet Uher, and Bradley Webb.

Trisha welcomed guests to the meeting. Marbella Caceres attended as a substitute for Lisa Hickman and Hager Collier attended for Roya Hood. Barb McKenzie and Daria DeNoia attended the meeting as guests.

Trisha reminded members to complete evaluations that were in the middle of the table. Trisha thanked members for the responses from the last meeting. The feedback received was appreciated.

**Panel Business**

Trisha Prunty, SAPEC Chairperson, asked for a motion to approve the November 10<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. Haydiee Perkins made a motion to approve; Rachel Barnhart seconded. Meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Trisha reminded SAPEC members to state their names when speaking and to utilize the microphones at each side of the room when making any comments or asking questions.

No public comment or unmet needs were shared.

**AIR Special Education Cost Study**

Amanda Danks, Senior Researcher with American Institutes for Research (AIR) presented on the Special Education in Ohio Cost Study – Best Practices, Costs, and Policy Implications. Amanda provided an overview of the study, presenting the program design, best practices, and key findings from the cost study. The study was commissioned under Ohio Senate Bill 310 and conducted by AIR. The purpose of this study was to identify evidence based best practices in providing special education support and services to students with disabilities. The goal was to provide recommendations to the State of Ohio which inform policy decisions that encourage the implementation of best practices.

A professional judgment panel (PJP) was selected from a group of expert practitioners from across the state through a referral and application process for the cost study. There were 86 applicants to form six panels that focused on different disability classifications. The three step process of the professional judgment panel's work included identifying best practices, specific resources, and estimate costs. In addition, interviews and surveys were administered to understand best practices for the use of educational and assistive technology. Six interviews were completed with over 250 survey responses collected. Stakeholders' input was gathered to better understand whether findings from the study aligned with stakeholder experience. Two public stakeholders feedback sessions were held, along with one nonpublic virtual stakeholders feedback session.

The program design best practices field generated recommendations that were developed from the key findings. These recommendations for the field included developing guidance and providing the necessary resources, a multidisciplinary team for the identification, evaluation, and support of students with disabilities, to increase the amount of professional development time given to special educators and related service providers. Key findings from the cost study generated the following field generated recommendations; to revise the funding categories to correspond to student disability and need. Evidence shows an opportunity to align funding categories with the gradient of student need, and to recalibrate existing weights to reflect cost-based evidence, because current weights do not reflect the estimated costs of implementing the identified best practices. Following Amanda's presentation, panel members asked questions regarding the cost study. Sarah James from the Office for Exceptional Children assisted with some of these responses.

### **Office of Early Learning and School Readiness Update**

Sarah Coxson, Education Program Specialist, Early Learning & School Readiness provided an update on Early Learning and School Readiness projects. The Early learning and School Readiness office has new and updated resources addressing the developmental delay age expansion change which allows children who are at least three years of age and less than ten years of age, and Preschool children with the developmental delay disability category to transition to kindergarten under this disability category. For these students, a re-evaluation is no longer required prior to turning age six. The new guidance provided by Early Learning includes a question-and-answer (Q&A) document addressing the new definition, and an overview of the Preschool Special Education PowerPoint video, which includes language about the rule changes. Sarah reminded panel members that any program specific questions can be sent to her or to the Preschool Special Education email at [Preschoolspecialeducation@education.ohio.gov](mailto:Preschoolspecialeducation@education.ohio.gov)

### **Developmental Delay Guidance for School Aged Students**

Bernadette Laughlin and Karen Johnson, Education Program Specialists, Office for Exceptional Children presented on the School Aged Developmental Delay guidance that is currently being updated by the Office for Exceptional Children, to address the age expansion change. The developmental delay age expansion change will go into effect April 6, 2023. The Office for Exceptional Children is working to create guidance to provide to the field as a resource for this language update. Panel members were given time to review the draft guidance in small table groups and discuss three guiding questions; is the guidance clear, is the format reader friendly, and what other questions do you have? Following small group discussions, the groups reconvened as a large group to discuss the feedback and suggestions related to the draft developmental delay guidance document. Bernadette collected the guidance documents from members and suggestions provided to further update the document.

### **Indicator 8 Family Survey**

Beth Crawford, Program Manager, Ohio State Family Engagement Center, presented to SAPEC on the Cohort 3 Special Education Family Survey statewide results. The data was collected via emails to superintendents, all special education directors, and other points of contact. Invitations were emailed to families to participate in the survey. The survey collection period was from March 8 through May 6, 2022, and included in the survey were eligibility questions, 14 statements, four statements grouped into categories regarding communication, school climate, and partnership with the school. One question pertained to Indicator 8, and three new questions regarding graduation, and demographics.

Beth reviewed the results from the survey with panel members. Cohort 3 had 156 participating districts and community schools. Of those participating, 7,190 responses were included in the analysis. The demographics of the responses collected from the survey found that the average age of respondent's

children was in the 10–14-year-old age group. 70% of survey respondents were white non-Hispanic and 15% were black non-Hispanic. Graduation was a new question category added to Cohort 3. The graduation questions were regarding graduation requirements, options for IEP students, and special education services through age 22. All questions were rated as majority strongly agree/agree. Following the overview presentation of the indicator 8 results, SAPEC members discussed the results and questions related to the family survey responses and data collection methods were addressed.

#### **Office for Exceptional Children Updates**

Sarah James, Assistant Director of Resource Management, provided a fiscal update. Sarah had hoped to be able to provide more information on the FY2024 IDEA B application, however the application is not yet ready to be posted. The application will be posted on the department's webpage and that information will be shared with panel members once available. During today's presentation Sarah shared more general information on the duties and roles of the resource management team.

As part of fiscal year monitoring in 2023, the resource management team has completed 13 onsite reviews, 54 desk reviews, and 14 guided self-reviews. The review areas include chart of accounts, proportionate share, maintenance of effort, fiscal and procurement policies.

The IDEA part B application grant for federal FY 2023 state FY 2024 is a big project that is going on in the office right now. The final award amount is still pending. Within that award, the resource management team is provided breakdowns of how much of the award districts can spend on subgroups of activities. Most of the awards are subsidies or flow-through funds to LEAs. However, Ohio may set aside a portion of funds for administration and state level activities. The application will be posted for a requirement of 60 days with a 30-day comment period. Following Sarah's high-level overview, Sarah opened the floor for questions to end her presentation.

#### **Closing Remarks & Meeting Adjourn**

Trisha asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ryan Buckingham made a motion, and Michelle Christman seconded.

Meeting adjourned.