

**State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children (SAPEC)**  
**March 25, 2021**  
**Virtual Meeting**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Call to Order**

Jo Hannah Ward, Director for the Office of Exceptional Children (OEC) welcomed members to today's meeting. As we awaited our special guest, Ron Rogers, SAPEC Chair, called the meeting to order and roll call was conducted.

Sandy Kaufman, Office for Exceptional Children, conducted roll. Members absent were Valerie Alloy, Tina Evans, Liesl Gyurko, Jennifer Hull, Jessica Minor, Judith Sgambati, & Mike Zaborowski.

Following roll call, Superintendent Paolo DeMaria joined the meeting to acknowledge SAPEC members and the work they have done, not only during this SAPEC year but all the work they have contributed to for the Office for Exceptional Children and the Department of Education. Paolo acknowledged that the work they do is appreciated and their feedback and accomplishments do not go unnoticed. Following Paolo's remarks, Jo Hannah Ward echoed his sentiments and thanked all SAPEC members for their hard work.

Ron Rogers, SAPEC Chair, welcomed all guests to the meeting and reviewed guest responsibilities. Barb McKenzie, representing Ohio TASH attended as a guest during today's SAPEC meeting.

Ron reminded members to complete the SurveyMonkey meeting evaluation. There were only four members who completed the survey from the last meeting.

**Panel Business**

Ron Rogers, SAPEC Chair, asked for a motion to approve the February 18 meeting minutes. Traci Arway made a motion to approve; Bonnie Brown seconded. Meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Bonnie Brown discussed the application process for next year. There are areas of the state that are not well represented. They are mostly in the rural areas of the state. If anyone is interested or knows anyone who should be on SAPEC please have them apply.

No public comment or unmet needs.

**Office for Exceptional Children Updates**

Monica Drvota, Associate Director, Office for Exceptional Children gave updates on the Operating Standards for the Education of Children with Disabilities. In February, the Office for Exceptional Children presented the first group of rules to the State Board of Education Integrated Students Supports Committee. At the beginning of March, the second group of standards were presented to the committee. In April, the final group of standards will be presented. The Operating Standards will be voted on by the committee in May and go to full board for approval in July. The Office for Exceptional Children will keep members apprised as the rules process moves forward.

An update on *Each Child means Each Child* was provided by Monica. The plan is now posted on the Ohio Department of Education website. It was introduced by Superintendent Paolo DeMaria and Jo Hannah

to the State Board of Education in March 2021. It received very good feedback. Monica encouraged members to look at the final plan.

Monica gave members an update on what is to come for our May 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. Members will review another rule. Exceptional Children will also be bringing new Restraint and Seclusion guidance for members to review and provide feedback on. A presentation on graduation and seals will also occur. Kara Waldron will have more updates on indicator work. As a final update, the State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children meetings will be virtual again next season.

Sarah James, Assistant Director for the Resource Management team gave a brief update on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Federal Award for Federal Fiscal year 2021. As part of the fiscal application process, the Office for Exceptional Children has developed a draft application packet for IDEA Part B funds and has made the application available for review and comment. The application, developed by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) includes a summary of the assurances, certifications and IDEA use of fund descriptions the state will use to implement Part B of IDEA. The team will address comments received after the public comment period is closed. The public comment period will be open from April 2<sup>nd</sup> through May 2<sup>nd</sup> and comments can be sent to [exceptionalchildren@education.ohio.gov](mailto:exceptionalchildren@education.ohio.gov). The resource management team will review all feedback received.

The Federal Award application includes five sections that schools requesting funds are required to fill out. These sections include the submission statement, list of assurances, a description of use of funds, State Administration, and maintenance of state fiscal support and significant disproportionality. The total award received from special education programs is determined by the US Department of Education. OSEP provides a breakdown of what allowable activities schools and districts can spend their funds on. These allowable activities include subsidies to LEA's, funds for administration, and funds for state level activities. Sarah mentioned that the final state allocation amounts are still pending.

### **Office for Early Learning and School Readiness Updates**

Jody Beall, Assistant Director for Preschool Special Education provided the Early Learning and School Readiness updates. Early Learning recently hosted another town hall meeting. As a reminder, Early Learning and School Readiness is hosting a town hall series of meetings with teachers and educators to discuss challenges, successes, and other topics as it relates to the pandemic. This town hall meeting was the first with preschool teachers which included, general education and special education teachers. Everyone that was present shared very good insight regarding how they have survived the pandemic and how they have adapted in this setting. Following each town hall meeting, Early Learning and School Readiness is taking the information received from each meeting and synthesizing the feedback to see if there are any new ways they can support teachers in the field.

Jody also shared three new webpages that Early Learning and School Readiness has recently shared through their EdConnection newsletter as useful resources for families. The first webpage is InspirED, which provides a variety of virtual learning series for educators, administrators, and families of children with disabilities. This webpage is a collaboration between the Ohio Department of Education and OCALI. The Learning Aid Ohio webpage is a useful resource to provide in-person supplemental learning support for students on IEPs or 504 plans during the pandemic. The final webpage shared is the Data Insights section of the Reset and Restart guidance webpage that the department of Education continually publishes. The data shared shows how the pandemic is affecting the 2020-2021 school year and highlights state level data points on several key themes including education delivery models, technology

needs, student enrollment, attendance, and fall assessment. Jody hopes that the information is helpful and useful for all members and encourages all to share with those who may find it helpful. If there are any questions on the webpages shared or anything related to early learning, please reach out.

### **SAPEC Learning Topic (Surrogate Parent Professional Learning Modules)**

Karen Johnson and Chrissy Cline, Education Program Specialists, Office for Exceptional Children, gave an overview on the Surrogate Parent Professional Learning Modules. Historically there has been training for surrogate parents. However, it is very outdated. The Office for Exceptional Children has been working on updating the training and modules for Surrogate Parents. The team wanted to bring the modules to SAPEC members for review and feedback ahead of the training. Following a brief overview, SAPEC members were placed into facilitated breakout rooms for discussions on specific sections of the surrogate parent modules. Any additional feedback SAPEC members have regarding the Surrogate Parent Modules outside of what is discussed in their groups should be emailed to Parise Callahan.

SAPEC members were brought back for a large group discussion to share their feedback from the breakout discussions. Karen and Chrissy appreciated all the feedback, suggestions received and will take all considerations back as they work on moving the Parent Surrogate modules forward.

### **SAPEC Learning Topic (Indicator 8 Special Education Family Survey and Target Setting)**

Kara Waldron, Program Administrator, Office for Exceptional Children, introduced our partners from the Ohio State University. Beth Crawford, Dave Julian, Melissa Ross, Kenyona Walker, and Barbra Boone joined the SAPEC meeting to provide an overview of the new survey on indicator 8 and review the results from the first cohort that was conducted as part of the target setting goal.

The presenters from Ohio State briefly provided an overview of the new survey, the survey construction, included a review of previous surveys and surveys from other states, OSU also convened local experts and discussed critical information needs which they then turned into questions. From there the highest priority questions were selected for the survey. The indicator 8 question was "Taking all things into account, do you believe your child's school works with you to best meet your child's needs?" Please respond on a scale of 1-10, 1 means "not at all" and 10 means "a great deal." A 7 or above was defined as in agreement. To find participants for cohort 1, emails were sent to superintendents and all special education directors with an invitation for families to participate in the survey. The survey collection period was open from October 1<sup>st</sup> through November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. As a result, 155 districts and community schools participated, 144 of those had responses, 9,970 responses were collected, and 7,302 of those responses were eligible to be included in the analysis. The survey included eligibility questions (age of children, district/community school attending, child on IEP), 14 agree/disagree statement questions, open ended questions, and several demographic questions.

Following the conclusion of the first cohort, results were gathered regarding demographics, quality indicators, communications, school climate, and partnering with schools. Key takeaways from the demographics of the survey showed that 39% of families who responded had students age 10-14 years of age and 36% of families who responded had students who were in grades 1-5. A surprising result was found in the race category. 72% of survey respondents were white non-Hispanic and only 11% were black non-Hispanic, although they made up of 20% of total school enrollment.

As a result of the quality indicator question, two demographics from the results were highlighted. The first question to survey respondents was "Taking all things into account, do you believe your child's school works with you to best meet your child's needs?" Most parents reported that schools facilitated

parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities. However, Black, and Multi-racial families reported at a lower percentage than other races, and families with children ages 3-5 showed the highest agreement with the question.

In the areas of communication and school climate and partnership with schools, the questions were met with responses that strongly agreed, or agreed which showed that parents felt that the child's school communicated well with them in times of need, there was a good understanding of how the school was carrying out the child's IEP, and the school and the family were on the same page about the child's learning needs.

The next steps for the indicator 8 work are to begin setting targets for the indicator 8 goals and other indicators with SAPEC and other groups. The goal is to look at the history, and develop a target setting process that is rigorous but attainable. Ohio State is excited to partner with the Office for Exceptional Children and work with SAPEC on this work.

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

Ron reminded members to complete the meeting evaluation through SurveyMonkey. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned. Our next SAPEC meeting is scheduled for Thursday May 6<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.