



State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children (SAPEC) Report

Prepared for OAPSA December 6, 2019 Business Meeting

Each state in the Union has an Advisory Council. SAPEC was established in accordance with 34 C.F.R. Part 300.167-300.169 in order to advise and assist the Ohio Department of Education on special education and related services for children with disabilities. The panel members represent various agencies, individuals with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities. As a panel, our job is to help to connect the dots and identify unmet needs connected to students with disabilities. SAPEC meetings are typically held 4 times annually (August, November, March, and May) with 2 additional tentative conference call/webinar dates. We are an “advisory panel” – not an advocacy panel. There is a process in place for raising emerging issues of advising on unmet needs. I am the representative for OAPSA and Talia St. Clair is my designated substitute.

SAPEC held meetings on September 26 and November 5, 2019 and I represented OAPSA and attended and participated in each of those meetings.

During our **September 26 meeting**, we discussed that we would be **focusing on Ohio’s operating standards and revised rules at SAPEC meetings this year.** John Magee presented information on Rule 3301-51-02 (FAPE) and Rule 3301-51-03 (Child Find) and Bernadette Laughlin presented Rule 3301-51-04 (Confidentiality). They each discussed proposed changes and reasoning behind the changes. Most changes were definitions and duplicative language from Federal Regulations. Then SAPEC members divided up into small groups to discuss and provide input on the three rules and also discuss the need for a guidance document to help with understanding since the federal language which was duplicated was eliminated now. Staff from OEC served as table facilitators and notetakers. Each facilitator used guided questions to structure the discussion and the notetakers recorded feedback. Concluding the small table discussion, the large group reconvened and shared highlights of what was discussed. Monica Drvota led the discussion using four guiding questions to garner feedback on the changes to the rules. Panel members were asked to share their thoughts about rule revision process and the option of having a supplemental (perhaps guidance) document that would accompany the new rules and other issues or concerns. **The concern** came up again during this meeting (from more than one group) that **by eliminating the language that was already in Federal Regulations, it causes the information that is left to be confusing** to those of us who are familiar with the present rules plus those who are newer to the field and/or parents reading it won’t know what they don’t know.

We concluded with an OEC update which covered:

- Monica provided update on timelines for 5 year rule review process
- Joe Petraca, provided update on Ohio's Plan to Improve Learning Experiences and Outcomes for Students with Disabilities. They have a steering committee, internal staff committee and 4 workgroups. Those workgroups have been meeting over past few months with their sessions ending in October. He briefly shared information about the workgroup summit where all workgroups came together to discuss commonalities and share their recommendations.
- Amy Szymanski, gave an update on the graduation and secondary transition activities. Projects going on for secondary transition include:
 - family engagement strategy
 - Ohio's secondary transition plan
 - Innovative strategies Grant Cohort 3.

At our **November 5 meeting**, SAPEC members learned that the reason our December SAPEC meeting was canceled and rescheduled for Feb. 27 was that Monica has shared concerns expressed at our last few SAPEEC meetings regarding removing the information contained in the Federal Regulations from Ohio's Operating Standards with our state superintendent. Dr. Paolo DeMaria, Ohio's Superintendent of Public Instruction, made the decision (based upon our concerns) that all **those federal regulations which had been eliminated were now to be added back in**. So OEC is in the process of doing that and the February meeting will cover all the standards we had done before plus the ones we had been scheduled to do in November and December so the length of time will be considerably longer on February 27 and may go until after 3 pm.

Matt Loesch updated us using a comparison between profiles vs ratings. Virginia Ressa updated us on disproportionality when students (from certain racial groups or other groups) are placed in a more restrictive setting or disciplined at a markedly higher rate than their peers. **There's a new calculation from our federal government which require comparison of homogeneous districts to the state** (which is way more complicated than what Ohio used to do). It's very complicated but basically it means that we **will likely see more community and rural schools being held accountable for their students with disabilities and disproportionality**. Matt is working on this now. They are working on a FAQ on this topic at present time and will use the questions we asked today as part of that. The goal is to promote equity through identification and responses to significant disproportionality.

They updated us on the work done by the 4 workgroups connected to Ohio's Plan to Improve Learning Experiences and Outcomes for Students with Disabilities. SAPEC members were divided into small groups to explore recommendations in detail. Groups were assigned one of the four groups to explore in depth. A scribe wrote down details of what we discussed and turned that information into ODE.

We briefly shared with large group our thoughts. **It's noteworthy that all 4 groups identified that more targeted specific training needs to be provided in each one of those four areas.**

We concluded with a condensed version of a presentation by Emily Jordan titled **Tiers Not Tears** which is normally a **3 hour presentation on Mental Health**. She discussed componets of plans and provided helpful information for those plans which schools that received money as a part the \$675 million that Ohio invested in mental health are developing.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna Stelzer

OAPSA Executive Director