State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children (SAPEC) Report

 Prepared for OAPSA September 20, 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 May 9, 2019 and August 22, 2019 and I participated.

For the May meeting, Kim Monachino provided update on Ohio’s Strategic Plan and Plan to Improve Learning Experiences and Outcome for Students with Disabilities. [Note: Donna McCance is our OAPSA representative on that steering committee.] Kim emphasized this plan is within the context of the State’s Strategic plan Each Child, Our Future. She shared the structure that includes a Steering Committee overseeing the process and providing direction. There is an ODE internal committee and four work groups. The work groups are

* Literacy,
* Post-Secondary and Graduation,
* Inclusive Leadership and
* Instructional Practices, and Disproportionality.

 Monica Drvota explained mediation and facilitation processes. She also provided updates on dispute resolution data and monitoring data/findings. She indicated that a request for proposal for additional mediators and facilitators is being developed. Kim Monachino, along with Monica Drvota, provided an informational session on Ohio’s Operating Standards for the Education of Children with Disabilities since revision of those standards will be SAPEC’s primary concentration during the 19-20 year. We had table discussion about standards 3301-5-08 on Parentally placed nonpublic school children.

Questions we explored with standards include:

Are there items in the rule that are missing?

Does the Summary of Requirements reflect rules and regulation which are required in addition to the revised rule?

Are there items in the Summary of Requirements which should be removed?

Are there additional comments or concerns?

We also had an update during that May meeting from Barbara Boone, Project Director for the Statewide Family Engagement Center, OSU, on SSIP Earl Literacy Pilot Family Engagement.

At our August meeting, we learned that Kim Monachino went on an extended leave due to family health issues beginning in early July and she will be retiring in December at the end of that leave. So OEC has been in transition deciding who is doing what. JoHannah Ward is the Interim Executive Director of OEC (note JoHannah is also currently still Executive Director of the Ohio Improvement Process at ODE and she used to be in the OEC department.) So, the duties Kim did, are now under the direction of JoHannah and are being divided between Monica Drvota, Assistant Director of Dispute Resolution, who will be in charge of most special education and Joseph Petrarca, Associate Director, who will be in charge of Gifted and Related Service Workgroup. (This is still subject to change but this is what they think will be the plan at this time. They explained that they have been doing triage for 6-7 weeks now.) All ODE OEC staff introduced themselves and explained their role this year. Everyone seems to be very energized now as they rebuild their office.

Joe Petrarca provided us various updates including an update on the Related Service Shortage Workgroup Report. The final report is still in the hands of the Superintendent for review and legal department will not need to review that report. When asked if anyone had any questions about what Joe had reported, I expressed my disappointment as a member of that Related Service Workgroup that all parts for the report were finished by our group in February 2019 and supposed to be in hands of legislators in the spring before decisions were made about budget but that report is still not in the hands of our legislators. (Note: After the meeting I talked with Joe more offering my support to him and indicated I would share copies of the reports I had prepared for OAPSA on that work group and connecting him with the facilitator for that group.)

We discussed the Rule Review process this year and reminded all that SAPEC would be having many more meetings this year since our focus is on the revision of those standards this year.

Each year, each state receives a rating on its implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. For the second year in a row, Ohio has received the highest rating of “Meets Requirements”.

Brad Ingraham, State Legislative Liaison for ODE, provided us with an update on Legislative information including House and Senate Bills. Note that now ESC’s have additional dollars to provide PD to schools to support schools in prevention of drug and alcohol, violence prevention and suicide prevention so watch what ESC’s are offering. ODE is moving from a compliance-based organization to response and supportive organization. Brad is always willing to answer questions about legislation.

In small groups we reviewed the rule on Restraint and Seclusion and Positive Behavior Intervention Supports and worked our way through similar questions that we used in May. Note that OEC is working on new format for rules starting with FAPE and Child Find to make rules easier to read and much easier to know what the federal rule is. So the format will look different next time we meet.

JoHannah ended our session by telling us her story. It was a powerful and moving story explaining why the work of the Office of Exceptional Children is so very important to her. It was the first time any of us including staff of OEC had heard this story and it brought tears to most (if not all) eyes. She explained she wanted all of us to hear her story and that she values this stakeholder group.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna Stelzer

OAPSA Executive Director

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