

Special Education State Advisory Panel Meeting

The SAP advises on the unmet needs related to the education of children with disabilities within the State and provides feedback on any rules or regulations proposed by the State regarding special education.

Wednesday, August 28, 2019

Meeting Minutes include Time, Activities and Next Steps

8:00 am – 9:30 am

Mandatory SAP Orientation for New Panel Members - Jurée Hall, Chair and Ganesh Nayak, Vice Chair

Jurée Hall and Ganesh Nayak convened orientation for new Panel members. They provided awareness information and facilitated a discussion based on the following priority points.

- *What experiences brought you to the Panel?
- *How would you describe your perceptions of special education in Georgia?
- *Please describe one positive experience with special education in Georgia.
- *Please describe one thing that you would you'd change
- *What is the role and purpose of the State Advisory Panel?
- *What is the difference between advisory and advocacy?
- *What were the previous areas of focus and/or priority?
- *How can you support the Panel in working together to accomplish its goals and advise the Director of the unmet needs of the state?

10:00 am – 10:30 am

Welcome/Opening Activity - Jurée Hall, Chair & Ganesh Nayak, Vice Chair

The meeting was called to order @ 10 am by the Chair, Jurée Hall, who led the group in an inspirational talk and brief introductions. Each Panel member introduced himself/herself and wrote down a personal experience related to special education that could be positive, negative, neutral or informing.



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10:30 am – 11:00 am

SAP at a Glance: FY19 Annual Report - Jurée Hall, Chair & Ganesh Nayak, Vice Chair

The Chair discussed the FY19 Annual Performance Report and asked the Panel for feedback and suggestions. Panel members suggested that additional information could be provided to reflect major trends and themes from FY19 Public Comments. A committee would convene on Day Two of the Panel Meeting to make specific recommendations for the FY19 Annual Performance Report.

11:00 am – 12:00 pm

State of the State: 2020 Vision - Dr. Zephine Smith-Dixon, State Director

The State Director shared updates about the Georgia Department of Education revised strategic plan, as well as, how the Division for Special Education will move forward with its 2020 Vision. The Division has committed to People First Commitments and will ensure that Georgia's students, teachers, leaders, and families are first.

Video Link: [Moving the 2020 Vision Forward](#)

Vision Statement: Provide the necessary infrastructure and supports for leaders, teachers, and families to meet the whole child needs of each student and improve student outcomes and school climate resulting in increased quality of life and a workforce ready future.

Theory of Action: IF we provide high quality services and supports for leaders, teachers, and families to meet the whole child needs of each student, **THEN** student outcomes and school climate will improve resulting in increased quality of life and a workforce ready future!

Rationale: "If Every Student Succeeds, the commitment cannot be an Act. We must do what is right for the schoolhouse. All students matter! We must give each student the tools necessary to demonstrate readiness to learn, live and lead. We must offer high quality services and supports for teachers and leaders to address rigorous, diverse needs of students. We must prioritize an effective, engaging home-school partnership because families are partners in student success.

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

LUNCH (PROVIDED)

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Georgia's Dyslexia Bill: Timelines and Updates – Stephanie Sanders and Franeka Colley (GaDOE)

Provided awareness information concerning Senate Bill 48 (Dyslexia Bill).

Dyslexia Website: www.gadoe.org/dyslexia

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2:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Georgia's Teacher Shortage (Council for Exceptional Children Teacher Survey Data) - Leslie Allen – Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

Majority of the respondents had been teaching seven years or more.

Four Thematic Areas of the Survey

- (1) Use of the IEP
- (2) The feelings of competence
- (3) Importance for family engagement
- (4) Need for support of providing special education

Respondents shared that they needed resources to implement the IEP;
Reported spending majority of their time in general education environment.

Link: [CEC Report](#)

3:00 pm – 3:30 pm

BREAK/CHECK-IN

3:30 pm – 4:00 pm

Continuation of the 2020 Vision - Zelfhine Smith-Dixon

The State Director continued the discussion about the 2020 Vision and provided priorities to ensure that students, teachers, leaders, and families remain first.

4:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Public Comment(s)

Carmen Allen (Forsyth County)

*Provided public comment via phone conference.

*We need to alter the policies to address the needs of students and parents not the school districts.

*Schools are using inappropriate compulsory attendance report to require students to return to school even without access to FAPE.

*There is a trend of denial of FAPE cases.

Collen O'Toole (Forsyth County)

*Provided public comment via a written statement.

*I have advocated for children with disabilities and specifically students who have dyslexia.

*Georgia does not have robust laws around Dyslexia and teacher training like other states.

*The RTI process must include early intervention.

*We need to provide the intervention regardless to why it happened to the child.

*Students with dyslexia may need more intense interventions.

*School is like running a race. If you fall behind, it will be harder to catch up and more at risk of dropping out.

*All students with dyslexia can learn to read, but we must teach them.

Tina Enberg (Cobb County)

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- *Provided public comment via written statement.
- *I am writing to you because the Panel will discuss dyslexia.
- *Progress monitoring is a critical component of this work and should be appropriately addressed in the handbook.
- *We must consider objective data, subjective data, norm referenced, criterion-referenced data.
- *The special education rule requires the progress monitoring data to be presented at the same intervals for the report card-at a minimum.
- *Parents are not being given appropriate progress monitoring data. Please note example in the Oklahoma Department of Education.

Stephanie Thompson (Fayette County)

- *Provided public comment via written statement.
- *The services are incomplete. The State is failing the students-especially students with dyslexia.
- *Small groups work!
- *We need early intervention!
- *Please note Illinois DOE handbook for dyslexia.
- *We need to simplify the definition of dyslexia.
- *Dyslexia comorbidly occurs with ADHD.

Dianna Spangler (Paulding County)

- *Provided public comment via written statement.
- *Sped services are inadequate and poorly implemented.
- *Services for SWD can be improved by focusing on methods.
- *We need more training on laws and implementation.
- *Leadership must provide guidance. Local schools should comply with this guidance.
- *If I could change one thing, I would recommend all schools provide training at the beginning of the school year.
- *Leaders need training on federal and state laws, as well.
- *Training on differentiation of instruction is critical.
- *Senate Bill 48 – Careful consideration must be given for teacher supports.

Thursday, August 29, 2019

8:30 am – 8:45 am

Opening Activity

Jurée Hall called the meeting to order at 8:30 am. She engaged the Panel by sharing personal reflections developed during the previous Panel workday. In addition to this activity, the Chair allowed Panel members to reflect and ask questions about content from the previous day.

8:45 am – 9:30 am

SAP Workgroups and Debriefing Time

The Co-Chair and Chair provided the Panel Members guidance to form committee workgroups and formally develop feedback to advise the State Director of unmet needs, celebrate accomplishments and share additional questions/needs. The committee groups focused on the SAP Agenda awareness information, as well as, SAP Annual Report. Each committee used a feedback template to summarize the work.

9:30 am – 10:30 am

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Services Agency (GVRA) Updates – Dr. Lee Brinkley Bryant

Discussed the five required Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS).

1. Job exploration counseling
2. Work based earning experiences
3. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in post-secondary educational programs
4. Workplace readiness training
5. Instruction in self-advocacy

*Do some students get PreETS and not GVRA? Yes, this is an option.

10:30 am – 10:45
am

BREAK

10:45 am – 11:30 am

State Identified Alternate Diploma Check-in – Matt Cardoza (GaDOE)

*The Department has completed the public comment process for the ESSA Amendment to address the State Identified Alternate Diploma and submitted the amendment to USED on Friday, August 23rd.

*In addition to the amendment, the Department has requested to has submitted a waiver for the next four years to allow flexibility to phase in this process and not penalize local school districts until the new cohort of students begin to work on the Alternate Diploma.

*Due to property rights, the State is unable to remove the general education diploma option for students previously assessed using the Georgia Alternate Assessment.

Panel members can email Matt for additional questions: Email: mcardoza@doe.k12.ga.us.

11:30 am– 12:30 pm

SAP Priority Setting for FY20/Next Steps

*The Chair discussed the operation procedures, which must be consensus approved during this Panel meeting. The State Advisory Panel is not a governing board and does not approve actions for the public. The State Advisory Panel is an advisory committee that provides advice to the State Director. The Panel Meetings will no longer be open to the public unless noted on the agenda. The Public Comment portion of the agenda will remain open to the public. The public will be able to provide written comments or participate in person or by phone.

Complete	To Do
<p>How can we access teacher pipeline data by district? http://www.georgiainsights.com/teacher-pipeline.html</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can we discuss more Georgia specific data about teacher Retention?• Can we recreate the Public Comment Survey to make available online?• Are there opportunities to make this survey more accessible?• Can we update the 2019 SAP Annual Report to reflect additional information?• Can we provide written responses to questions about GNETS posed in the May 2019 meeting?• The State Director will address Georgia’s IDEA State Determinations during the next Panel Meeting.• The Chair will plan potential field trips because Panel Members have expressed interest in seeing different facilities. These field trips are not officially related SAP business.• On future SAP Agendas, a two- or three-line blurb under each presentation/discussion topic would provide more background context.• The SAP Leadership will work on an updated acronym list.• Provide laminated indicator cards for Panel members.• Include committee discussion takeaways with posted minutes.