

State Superintendent's Blind and Visual Impairment Education Advisory Council

MINUTES – Meeting #70

June 3, 2020 – 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Zoom Virtual Meeting

The State Superintendent's Advisory Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment Education:

- *advises the state superintendent on statewide activities to benefit students who are blind or visually impaired;*
- *makes recommendations for improvements in services provided by the Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (WCBVI);*
- *and proposes ways to improve the preparation of teachers and staff and coordination between the department and other agencies that offer services to the visually impaired.*

10:04 Call to order

Review Zoom Norms and meeting guidelines.

Introductions

Council Members & DPI Representatives:

Julie Hapeman, MPS O&M, O&M Rep, Chair

Jennifer Ottowitz,

Melissa Winsor,

Nissan Bar Lev, Special Ed Director, General Member

Colleen Kickbush, TVI Vision Forward, TVI Rep

Julia Hartwig, DPI Director of SE

Tracey Stanislowski, VF Early Education Manager,

Wendy Leising, CESA1 Itinerant Coordinator,

Jessie Grober, TVI Green Bay, WAER Rep

Linda Lustig, MPS TVI

Wanda Routier, Director of Graduate SE Programs Concordia, General Member

Dawn Soto, WCBVI Outreach Director DPI Vision Consultant

Lisa Misco, CESA8 DSE, WCASS Rep

Dan Wenzel, WCBVI Director

Zarina Modh Sha, Management Librarian at Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library

Martha Berninger, Director DPI Resources for Libraries and Lifelong Learning

Cheryl Orgas, ABLE, NFB Rep

Guests:

Julie Piper, WSBVI Principal

Rhonda Mulligan, WSBVI Nursing Supervisor

Andy Soto, WSBVI Dean of Students

Jane Charlton, WSBVI O&M

Meghan Fredel, COMS and TVI - WCBVI Short Course Ed Consultant

Michelle King, WSBVI O&M

Linda Bailey, Retiring from TVI O&M School District of Beloit

Mysie Sabin, TVI & O&M

Jesse Harmon, MPS O&M

Kay Rhode, WCBVI Outreach O&M Specialist

Chris Hudson, WCBVI IS Supervisor

Micaela Smith, Travel Instructor/COMS/TVI from Northwestern WI

10:19 Public input and comments

None

10:20 - TVI Training Program Update

WR - 3 students now who are taking special education courses while the TVI courses are being written. Some others interested. Working with Financial Aid office. Hired adjunct instructors and consultants to write and teach the VI coursework. July 1 begins fall semester. Continue to do recruiting.

Not a cohort model. Rolling admissions and enrollment, with course sequencing when needed. JO - who are the staff? Kristin Grender, Deborah Benish, Linda Bailey, Luke Scrimon

Originally had planned June summer residency, but this was of course cancelled. Will hopefully be able to do this next year.

12:33 - When writing funding proposals, must support the need with documentation. Has reached out for statistics re: students receiving services, as well as TVIs throughout the state. Almost an impossible task. The closest numbers able to be provided were the APH quota numbers, but nothing from DPI. Important to know these numbers for her purposes, but also for you all as service providers. Concerning that it isn't easily available as it is for other disability populations. JH - where does that information come from for other disability areas? WR - Third Friday Count, or other disability organizations. DS - A great point, we are also addressing this with families - as we do not have a list of these things. APH Federal Quota, but only for those who meet the APH criteria specifically. DPI WISE Data - very limited in this area. Access to TVIs that we know of. TS - It would be interesting to find out how many children are identified as needing VI as they enter public school that were not served in Birth to 3 and where they are in terms of early literacy. Also early identification of children on a state registry similar to sound beginnings. NBL - what about Third Friday Count? WR - Looking for how many children with VI were being served? Could not find. NBL - Should be there, and question of having someone identifying the information? Re: TVI - compare to licensure, and Fall Staff Report? This group can/should emphasize this importance to DPI, as the goals mentioned align with the scope of the Council. JH - Is this something we should create a recommendation around? NBL - I think that would be appropriate. Perhaps WR could draft a paragraph and we can share through emails to fine tune. DS - this also plays directly to the Birth to 3 conversation, and making sure the school districts are prepared for the students in their areas. We would welcome support as we move to connect DPI and DHS and the new Babies Count Registry with APH. NBL - include in agreements between DPI and DHS for sharing information.

Wanda Routier - Move that Council make a recommendation to the State Superintendent that collecting data on the number of children who are visually impaired ages Birth through 21 in birth to 3, elementary, middle, high school in the state of Wisconsin, regardless of the setting of the services, be made available to the public/this group on an annual basis. And that the teacher count be collected for the number of TVIs throughout Wisconsin.

NBL - feels too important to rush this. Would like to hold until the next meeting so we have more chance to interact and collaborate on this.

JH - Primary disability on WISE. Licensing info available comparing WISE Staff to Licensing. WI

DPI data request information: <https://dpi.wi.gov/wise/data-requests>

Discussion on primary vs. secondary/other disability identification.

1:00 Many people had to leave meeting due to other meetings, no quorum present.
Motion tabled

10:26 Prior Meeting Minutes Approval

Corrections: Spelling made

Motion: NBL as corrected

Second: MW

No discussion

Carried

10:29 Council Member Updates: Council Members report on stakeholder activities and/or concerns

Colleen - update re: B-3 taskforce re: licensing, other issues. NIU B-3 Interventionist program. Interested Members: Collen, Tracey, Marilyn Harmon, Katie Griffin, Tina Mekeel, Linda Bailey, Cheryl Orgas. Need DHH Teacher, Parent. WCBVI Outreach staff members will support. Others interested should contact Colleen ckickbush@vision-forward.org. Julie Hapement will officially appoint taskforce members.

Nissan Bar-Lev - CASS Guide for IEP Teams for students with print disabilities. Working now on a new guide and gathering a task force. Hoping to begin work in September, and to conclude in March.

Julie Hapeman - overall concerns over providing services to students in the past three months, as well as what fall will look like. Especially with inability to social distance in our type of instruction. Julia Hartwig will address in her updates below. Dan Wenzel - Meeting attended of many groups of/for the blind, more ideas. JH - many discussions on listserv over service delivery. Jessie Grober - WAER Board has had discussion of how to gather resources. Dawn Soto - As we have looked at communications, started with the Outreach Weekly Update, we seek to add information to the DPI Division for Learning Support newsletter, and connect with the RSN Consultants through CESAs. We try to reach everyone we can, including Special Ed Directors. We include in our email signatures the information to sign up for the DPI Weekly updates to build that list. Building modules for professionals on where to find the resources, and built up Outreach homepage with digital learning resources. Never fully know if we have reached everyone. We try to keep updated who is in the field, and improving this is part of the Outreach strategic planning. JH - a database of sample lessons? WAER Vis tagline - "for resources, go to" to have it in front of everyone constantly. DS - APH is working on developing this resource, along with connecting content-area experts to the resources.

Jessie Grober - WAER Annual Meeting via Zoom on Monday, August 3, along with honoring Award Recipients.

Cheryl Orgas - NFB Update - State Convention first weekend in March. Parents activities have had to be cancelled. National Convention will be virtual. ABLE - Very concerned about what is happening with getting braille to students. Wrote a grant for a monthly braille packet project - Braille Games Home Edition - 4-6 months, will mail out a monthly braille packet - books, puzzles, activities, including print curriculum to assist families interacting. Claire Egan - transcriber and TVI - is developing these packets. Open to ideas and collaboration. Discussion on how to reach families.

11:17 - DPI Updates

Now through June 30 closure. After June 30 will be a local decision. Encouraging districts to work with County health authority, families, legal counsel, to put solid plans in place. Will be able to be more flexible than we were with the full closure regarding instructional plans/models

- alternate locations, sizes, “pods” of students. Discussions on balancing Least Restrictive Environment with Health and Safety. Plans will change based on location, infection rate, etc. A district by district decision. Guidance recommends districts have Plans A, B, C in place, involving creative methods as well, including for students with IEPs. WSBVI, with added residential aspect included, is another layer to consider. Very challenging decisions to make, and likely fluid decisions. Act 185 requires DPI to develop Return to School Guidance. DPI is meeting with the Governor’s office as well as DHS. Many stakeholders involved providing feedback, much of which has been incorporated and now attempting to align with DHS and CDC guidelines. Hopefully some guidance will be released in the next couple of weeks, from DPI, but also DHS, Governor’s office. Reference the Badger Bounce Back for the benchmarks. Areas including development of virtual and blended summer school, cafeteria and food service, transportation. All being developed with DHS as well.

Since last Council meeting in March, much has happened. Closure timelines. The guidance DPI received from OSEP came in two waves to states. Initial guidance was more related to a short-term closure, with schools reconvening - so the lens of if schools are not providing any services to students, then not obligated to provide SE services. Once settling into the reality of the longer closure, really emphasised providing support to the extent possible. Fear of not providing adequate support should not overshadow good faith effort to provide support and access to general education curriculum as well as IEP services to the maximum extent possible. Many challenges and successes experienced. At the federal level released some recommendations to congress, but congress hasn’t acted. Operating right now within the flexibility allowed within IDEA. DPI has released a lot of guidance on this. FAQ updated regularly. Q&A Document for extended school closures. Teleservices. Virtual IEPs. Family-gearred Webinar also. Updates are also housed on the WCBVI Outreach website. Additional service guidance released last week - each state developing their own (no OSEP guidance) - Intentionally didn’t use “compensatory” services due to negative associations. How to determine what additional services a student should receive as a result of the school closures. Six month time frame. Expecting IEP teams to meet. Also opportunity to make changes without an IEP meeting, but emphasize that the changes be made collaboratively with families and documented.

CARES Act - there are funds specifically allocated to school districts based on Title 1 formula. LEAs received their amounts and a worksheet for planning the use of the funds. A list of allowables, including SE and Mental Health. Anticipate and encourage using these funds for additional services on return.

Equitable Participation - The decision for WI was to use the Title 1 formula rather than the Title 2 formula. State Schools are not LEAs so not included in these formula funds. There is a state-level set aside fund, and some of those funds will be used for these costs at the state schools. JH - what is the difference between the funds? JH - In this scenario, the calculations for Title 2 - results in private schools receiving more funds than under the Title 1 formula. T1 formula uses poverty count. T2 uses population. The way the law is written is for T1 calculation. Subsequent federal guidance said to use T2, but DPI has decided to follow the way the law is written and use T1.

NBL - How does the CARES funding impact the Maintenance of Effort. JH - it could, awaiting OSEP guidance/flexibility. In return to school guidance, there is embedded consultation time with DPI Rachel Zellmer to work through issues. Trying to be as proactive as possible. RZ will be

monitoring and in contact with districts. Not out of the realm of possibility that it could cause MOE concerns.

Absent OSEP guidance on data collections, DPI has made decisions to lower the burden on districts, and provide supports, while meeting requirements.

At the last meeting, the Council made recommendations re: terminology. DPI is currently waiting to submit this as a package with perhaps some other changes in other areas.

Special Education Q & A document regarding extended school closure:

https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/pdf/Extended_School_Closure_due_to_COVID.pdf

Teleservices guidance: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/pdf/covid-teleservice-considerations.pdf>

Additional services guidance: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/laws-procedures-bulletins/bulletins/20-01>

Guidance on conducting family-friendly virtual IEPs: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/college-and-career-ready-ieps/learning-resources/virtual-iep-meetings>

Presentation on the Q&A document:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fa6Uj6eDe1o&feature=youtu.be>

IDEA data collections and monitoring information/changes:

<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/pdf/covid-district-action.pdf>

DPI-wide COVID-19 page: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/2019-novel-coronavirus>

WCBVI Outreach Homepage: <https://www.wcbvi.k12.wi.us/outreach/>

<https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/laws-procedures-bulletins/bulletins/20-01>

11:41 - WCBVI Updates

Dan Wenzel - since the last meeting, many changes. WCBVI has been working on ensuring students receive remote instruction. Julie Piper will cover this more shortly. Had to make some changes to summer programming - will be offering virtually this year. Will be sending information shortly. Two youth programs, virtual employment program, Adult program. Each a week in length.

Moving forward with filing the WSBVI AT Teacher vacancy. Will have some other vacancies to announce shortly.

WCBVI working on return plan, that accounts for a number of different possibilities, including in person, remote, and hybrid options. Working with DPI and Rock County Health Department, City of Janesville. Preparing as best we can.

WCBVI has a very strong management team. The team works well together and has many strengths. Two unable to join the meeting - Brain Fruits is the Business Office Director for WSBVI as well as WESP-DHH. He has worked quickly with us during the closure to procure items needed for remote instruction, such as cell phones for our staff to contact students. Holly Berry is the Buildings and Ground Supervisor for both campuses as well.

Julie Piper, joined us in July. Over 25 years of experience in school administration. Wonderful professional and great hire. No one could have predicted the roller coaster of a first year she

has had! JP - certainly a team effort from this strong management team. A gift to be able to join the team! The entire year we have been working under the premise of "Building Capacity" and this situation has prompted us to build capacity and have grown in ways we could have never imagined. Very excited about this. Started with a vision for what online learning could be, with a lens on our staff student, and tech capacity. The short notice that we have all had added to the challenge. Feedback from students, families, staff for assessing our need. Capacity building has happened on all fronts. Asynchronous learning format - created some systems in place to support the plan. You can visit our remote learning portal that has plans for each week. Accessible format. In terms of equity - for students who cannot access virtually, we send in braille or large print. Have all student contact staff engaged - assigned to student support teams with roles for teachers, classroom aids, dorm staff. Connecting with each student at least twice a week, not just on academic needs, but also physical and mental needs. Serving as a resource. Mailing books every other week. A lot of parent coaching. Pupil Services team meeting regularly to make sure the connections stay strong, maintaining relationships to families and students, as well as staff to staff. Informal and formal connections. Trying to pay attention to all aspects of good practice re: healthy cultures for learning, and maintain that. For summer, we are moving to the next level of synchronous learning, using Google platform for some live lessons. Acknowledging the graduating class of 8 students. We will be making drive by diploma visits, caravanning around Wisconsin. Recording and compiling into a virtual ceremony that we will then watch via a Watch Party at the end of June. Graduates are so excited. All of this has been such a great team effort in keeping everyone engaged.

Andy Soto, Dean of Students - Share how things have been changed in residential programming. Looked at how the residential team could support the education team remotely. This is their role when students are on campus as well. The team is very connected with the students and their families. Their role is as mentors in this process, including assisting with educational supports. When we return to students in the dorm, will return to activities of supporting the Expanded Core Curriculum in the evening, as well as fun activities out in the community. Altered Prom this year - did a Zoom prom, which was very successful! It was one of the first times the students were able to communicate with one another since the closure. They were chatting so much they didn't care about the music! This has pushed us to increase our capacity for support, excited to continue this whenever we return to campus. Great collaborations to continue with to support our students.

Chris Hudson, IS Supervisor - Very impressed with his team members as well as the other departments, at pulling together to make this learning happen.

Rhonda Mulligan, Nursing Supervisor - 4 nurse clinicians on team. Busy working preparing for return. Typically the nursing staff trains staff members annually to administer medications to students. We require staff to view all the trainings each year (required every 4) for over 50 employees. This is especially important since we try to have students very active on and off campus, and having staff able to meet their health needs off campus facilitates this. Also facilitate student independence if able surrounding administering their medicines, refills, doctors appointments, etc in a safe environment.

Dawn Soto, Outreach Director - The team has been working hard on modifying Outreach services during the pandemic. Strategic Planning for the next year. Looking at the statutes. Will be sending surveys to stakeholder groups. Thankful for the work of the consultants. Looking at needs statewide, added Outreach Open Office Hours. Many resources have been requested

from this, and it has helped change our work in ways to meet stakeholder needs. Making sure DPI resources/guidance is shared. Virtual assistance form. Tried very hard to be available to the state. Materials and Production has moved to the phone without access to the building. Looking forward to resuming materials and how the process may change. Meghan Fredel and others working on modules available to anyone. Additional registration available to have access to the full supports. Working on Virtual programs, supports, professional development. Mentor training in August including statutes, APH roles, Council roles, etc. Licensing questions recently - Outreach Consultants assist, but point to DPI licensing for details. O&M is not allowed to be emergency licensed. Be sure individual licensing questions are directed to the DPI licensing team as each individual licensing pathway can look very different. Julie Hapeman - equipment requests sent now, will Outreach hold equipment? DS - Yes, as we are just starting to receive shipments, we will work through.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzI3yv6ky-awrO8XcTK11AQ>

See "Optional Learning Resources" : <https://www.wcbvi.k12.wi.us/outreach/>

Library Updates

11:15 - Martha Berninger - Biennial Budget Process Update - Supporting Newsline for the Blind and the WTBBL. Newsline has been able to secure improved pricing on the telecommunications piece, and are passing along a pro-rated cost (around \$16,000 to around \$3,000). We have had extremely strong support for Newsline and TBBL in all previous years, so cautiously optimistic that this will continue.

12:47 - WTBBL opened May 11 due to order allowing curbside in conjunction with DPI and Milwaukee Health Department. MHD did a walkthrough of the building (they are located in the Milwaukee County Library Building) Started working with the backlog. Throughout the week had 13 mail bins delivered from USPS (which were sequestered for 72 hours before handling). All caught up with circulation. WTBBL staff worked from home during the closure on applications and trainings. May circulation surpassed March circulation. In terms of Outreach events, participated in Braille Games on March 12. Have acquired some technology to allow to do video services. Newsletters delayed. Summer newsletter will be published Mid-June. Encouraging People to check out Audio and Braille downloads - in April there were 10,767 downloads.

1:02 - Discussion: Remote Learning - Challenges, Successes & Insights

Informal discussion following meeting for those interested.

Public input and comments

JH - two students from WI that made it to the braille challenge finals for their age groupings. Ellie M from Wausau at Apprentice (youngest) Kaitlin H from MPS at Varsity Level.

Next Meeting Date and Location

Do via email

1:06 Adjourn

Motion - Tracey Stanislawski

Second - Jessie Grober