

## **State Superintendent's Blind and Visual Impairment Education Advisory Council**

### **MINUTES – Meeting #73**

**June 7, 2021 – 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.*

Call to Order: 10:05

- Public Input and Comments, Introductions

### **Introductions**

Council Members:

Julie Hapeman

Jennifer Ottowitz, HE Representative

Colleen Kickbush, TVI at Vision Forward, TVI Representative, Babies Count Coordinator

Jessie Grober, TVI in Green Bay, WAER President, WAER Representative

Nissan Bar-Lev, DSE CESA 7, SED Representative

Wendy Leising, CESA1 SE Coordinator, CESA Representative

Wanda Routier, Concordia, General Member

Erikke Nystrom-Grothouse, CESA 5 Education Director, WCASS Representative

Cheryl Orgas, ABLE, NFB Representative

11:00 Tracey Stanislawski

Stakeholder Attendee:

Linda Bailey, Concordia TVI

DPI/WCBVI Representatives:

Dan Wenzel, Director, WCBVI

Dawn Soto, Outreach Director

Jacky Ramirez, WCBVI Outreach OOA

Kay Rhode, O&M Consultant WCBVI Outreach

Martha Berninger, DPI Library Services Assistant Director  
Barb Van Haren 11:45 am

**Public Input/Comments: None received.**

- **Prior Meeting Minutes Approval**

Motion to approve: Jessie Grober, Second Jennifer Ottowitz. No discussion. Passed unanimously.  
Approved as written

- **Council Member Updates** (Council Members report on stakeholder activities and/or concerns)

Babies Count: Colleen Kickbush - For national registry. Since April has received many contact requests, and is working on getting contact information for the rest of the counties. Please share the information in your area. Working on training providers right now to administer the survey. Have to have 25 surveys completed by June 30 to be included in the count this year. About halfway to this goal. Please contact Colleen to be involved and help get to the goal. Julie H apeman: Are WI Parents of Blind Children aware? CK: They are the next contact point. Cheryl Orgas: Will share with WPBC.

Jessie Grober: WAER Updates - Virtual Conference was held in April. Went very well. Considering doing virtual every other year. Will be in person next year, however.

Cheryl Orgas: NFB - National Convention is virtual this year. Will share link. ABLE gearing up for the next school year. Ready for new assignments.

- 11:00 am Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Updates - Julia Hartwig unable to attend. Barb Van Haren will attend after a morning meeting to answer any questions. Julia provided the following update in writing:

**American Rescue Plan Act**

On May 27<sup>th</sup>, the Joint Finance Committee took up the Department of Public Instruction request for approval of a plan for the receipt of federal funds under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). [Paper #1: Plan for Federal Funds Received by DPI under the APA Act](#)

- [Motion 51](#): *Not adopted, 4-11*
- [Motion #57](#): *Modify DPI ARPA Plan Adopted, 11-4*

On Friday, May 28<sup>th</sup> the USDE sent a [letter](#) to State Superintendent Stanford Taylor expressing concerns that recent actions taken by Wisconsin's Joint Finance Committee may impact on the ability of the State and its local educational agencies (LEAs) to comply with federal Maintenance of Effort fiscal requirements.

Wisconsin will additionally receive an increase in IEA funds (approximately \$47M). 100% will flow through to LEAs.

## Biennial Budget

On May 27th, the Joint Finance Committee also took action on DPI's budget proposal, including General School Aids and Revenue Limits; Categorical Aids; Choice, Charter, and Open Enrollment; School Operations and Curriculum; and Administration and Other Funding.

- [Motion #59](#): Rep - DPI Omnibus Motion. Omnibus motion. *Adopted, 11-4*
- Motion #51: Dems- Omnibus K-12 motion. Omnibus motion. *Not adopted, 4-11*

## Considerations For Students Who Will Be Graduating With a Regular High School Diploma or Reached the Age of 21 During the 2020-21 School Year

DPI sent communication to all LEAs to provide additional attention to (IEP) teams for students who will be graduating with a regular high school diploma or reaching the age of 21 during the 2020-21 school year, as to whether compensatory or recovery services are required due to the effects of the pandemic. This information was also updated in the [DPI Special Education Team COVID-19 Question and Answer document](#).

## PI 11 Disability Criteria Changes

- Blind and Visual Impairment: No action taken by the Committee on Education or JCRAR, so will tentatively become effective on August 1.
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing: No action taken by the Committee on Education or JCRAR, so will tentatively become effective on August 1.
- Deafblind: No action taken by the Committee on Education or JCRAR, so will tentatively become effective on August 1.
- Speech or Language Impairment: Has been filed and will go into effect August 1.
- Emotional and Behavioral Disability: Revisions requested by JCRAR.
- Specific Learning Disabilities: Resubmitted with germane modifications. Is currently with the Committee on Education.

## Target Setting for Wisconsin's Six-Year Plan for Learners with IEPs

You are invited to participate as a member of the public as the State Superintendent's Council on Special Education sets targets. Click on the dates below to register for each of the sessions:

1. [June 25](#) | 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. | How well is Wisconsin preparing learners with IEPs for life after high school?
2. [September 24](#) | 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. | Are Wisconsin learners with IEPs learning in the same spaces as their peers? How engaged are Wisconsin families in the learning of their children with IEPs?
3. [December 3](#) | 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. | How are Wisconsin learners with IEPs performing in key areas?

If you're unable to attend the sessions, we will be inviting feedback through a [website](#) and Google form (coming soon). We hope you can join us! Please share this invitation with others in your organization and outreach circles. Thank you!

- **10:45 am WCBVI Updates**

Dan Wenzel: WSBVI - Statewide assessments are complete. We sent staff to students throughout the state, and had some students on-site to test.

Have continued to do evening residential activities virtually, including prom this week, virtual braille fest this April. Students are engaged in these opportunities outside school.

In April, began offering in-person instruction to local students. Provided support for them to participate in their virtual classes. Five students attended. Therapies and O&M were also able to be provided for some students. This gave us the opportunity to prepare and plan for future reopening. We do plan to be open in the Fall for residential programming for our students. Facilities - use goalball tape to mark six feet distance, some one-way hallways. Worked with O&M staff to assist.

Summer - Virtual Adult program last full week in June. Two-week EmployAbility program. One-week student program virtually as well for Expanded Core Curriculum. Also will have a two-week in person summer program for the students to access additional needed services identified by the IEP team. This also gives the next step of procedural practice for having students return. Students will have access to the dorms as well, including recreation in the evenings and weekend.

Very high vacancy rates (most departments 20-30% vacancies)

Dawn Soto:

TVI Vacancies in the state: 13, Dual: 2, O&M: 1 - Plus ones just posted by WSBVI.

Kay Glodowski, Statewide Support Specialist, retired this spring. Will be recruiting this, as well as the braille transcriber position, and a Short Course consultant.

Had Outreach inservice last week. Jacky Ramirez a great help in procedures and data. Working on streamlining paperwork process. Allowed to shorten response time, and focus on customer service. New customer service survey.

Family Support Team (FST) in addition to Professional Support Team (PST).

From OSEP/OSERS - two priorities for grant programs due July 20. Model Demonstration Projects. Projects to Support SEL.

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-05-21/pdf/2021-10729.pdf>

- **11:15 am Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library Updates**

Zarina Mohd Shah was unable to attend the meeting today due to an NLS/KLAS conference. Provided update: This info is in our current Newsletter: WTBBL has started registering readers for our Summer Reading Program. (We have 69 registrants so far this morning!) New this year, the Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library will be opening Summer Reading to patrons of **ALL AGES!** This year, the reading logs will be in Braille/Large print bingo sheets available for kids and young adults ages 0-21, as well as an adult sheet. To be entered in the drawing for the grand prize, you must complete a BINGO! (three boxes in a row— horizontally, diagonally, or vertically) and return the sheet to WTBBL by August 31, 2021. Everyone who completes Summer Reading will get a prize. If you are interested in participating or would

like more information, contact WTBBL at **1-800-242-8822** or **414-286-6918** or by email at [wtbbbl@milwaukee.gov](mailto:wtbbbl@milwaukee.gov).

- **10:15 am Teacher of the Visually Impaired Training Program Update**

Nissan Bar-Lev: Very difficult to fill TVI positions. Looks like 2-3x vacancy rate than students enrolled in Concordia. How can we assist students to chose/participate in this program?

Wanda Routier: Three students going into their second year, three students started in January. Three more to start July 1. Rolling admissions. Most of the people enrolled are already teaching, with emergency licenses.

Julie Hapeman: How can we help recruit? Is there a way to send to school districts?

NBL: We can share, but would like to also get the word to Concordia students who are undergrads so they continue along with the program.

Colleen Kickbush: Has it been promoted in the DPI Newsletter that goes to Special Ed Directors?

Dawn Soto: We see the same thing Wanda mentioned - that SEDs are sending an already working staff person. We have a spot on our website that shares Concordia, and adjacent state programs, and Higher Ed Aides Board Grants. <https://www.wcbvi.k12.wi.us/resources/> :

<https://www.wcbvi.k12.wi.us/resources/become-tvi-om/> Colleen Kickbush: Make sure to share these resources among our contacts, Facebook groups we are members of. JH: WAER could assist with this.

Dan Wenzel: Contact DPI Guidance Department to share this information with High Schools also.

NBL: We will ask Barb Van Haren when she joins the meeting. BVH: Send in DLS newsletter (share with Sherri Honaker), and share with WISCA. Also new Consultant at DPI - Andrea Donovan. Connect with her to help promote. Shortage Toolkit: <https://cedar.education.ufl.edu/shortage-toolkit/>

OSEP Personnel information: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/osep-fast-facts-part-b-personnel-20/>

Jessie Grober: Make sure they are aware of funding availability also.

Jennifer Ottowitz: Are we also recruiting from other programs to help fill these shortages? NBL: Yes we are, and as it is a shortage area nationwide, it is difficult. JO: Recruit for specific positions, but also recruit for the field. Wendy Leising: Paraprofessionals also - individuals that have often already exhibited passion for working with our students. Dan Wenzel: Also look at people attending B/VI training centers.

JH: Try to seek from undergrad programs to recruit.

Wanda Routier: I communicate with the undergrads about this program. Many students are continuing into graduate programs after their undergraduate is completed. Still working on getting exposure to the low incidence disabilities so they are interested in continuing in this type of program.

Summer residency this summer, was cancelled last year. Virtual.

Concordia has a grad program for adults with an undergrad degree not in ed, to become teachers, including special ed. Those students can then continue with VI courses to the VI licensure.

[Julie Hapeman](#) - perhaps because it is a grad program, so would like to have something specific to share with Counselors that acknowledges that, but also how to prepare for it.

WR: - we do share it among many different programs.

- B-3 Taskforce

Colleen Kickbush: Read letter of recommendation:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1F2MJrEkQZSnux4vDrXMDtR4WjBJew7zjT8H0sMWeIkY/edit?usp=sharing>

Taskforce Notes: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/146ue-m4pOJC9ZS0BqWullfSTAsnWW89y5V0F7ncMo4M/edit?usp=sharing>

Julie Hapeman: would like to share with DPI, then ask for a response at the next Council meeting. Dan Wenzel will share on behalf of the Council.

Motion: Jennifer Ottowitz - to accept the report from the B-3 taskforce, and submit their letter to DPI along with a request to contact the Taskforce Chair with questions/concerns. Jessie Grober 2nd.

Discussion: Tracey Stanislawski - add a timeline to the question. Julie Hapeman: Add requested response date. Colleen Kickbush - Prior to next taskforce meeting. JH: July 31. JO: accepts amendment. JG: accepts amendment. Other discussion: Dan Wenzel - remind that new State Superintendent begins July 5, along with additional staff turnover. JH: they can communicate that to Colleen. CK: Do not want to wait until the beginning of the school year. DW: Understood. Motion passed unanimously. Thank you to the taskforce for your work.

11:55 (after BVH joined) Tracey Stanislawski: Discussion on how CESA services in this age group could work, especially with TVI shortage.

Colleen - summary of the requests in the letter

BVH - a critical conversation regarding the role of DHS, DPI, and the state schools. Support the conversation with the transition this July. Further exploration needed. Around authority for licensing around B-3 - DPI does not have. Working with teacher prep programs to make sure the training is included. Exploring how ECH licensing is. Funding issue with federal grants and indicators.

Discussion

- 11:35 am WI Braille Competency Exam - Dawn Soto

July 26-29, DPI/WCBVI Outreach offering the Braille Refresher Course, and Braille Competency Exam July 30. These items have been shared in the Outreach Weekly Update. Over the next year, will be working on transitioning the Braille Refresher Courses, and looking at expanding the course to include Nemeth with UEB, Music, Formatting, and Tactile Graphics.

Julie Hapeman: From the field, the question is about switching to the National Braille Exam, and what the switch could look like.

Dawn - currently DPI recognizes two pathways, but the current administrative rule references only the national exam. Parallel example - Foundations of Reading Test (FORT) is required. This is an example of a validated exam, not given by DPI. The WBCE is not a validated formal assessment tool.

DW - not looking to take away a pathway for teachers to demonstrate their competency. Looking for Outreach to provide support for pathways and best meet the needs of the field.

Linda Bailey - glad that the current students are able to have a solution. Would like to advocate for keeping a state exam. DW - Not opposed to state test, but wanting to focus on preparation and support.

JH - What are proctor requirements for either exam? Dawn - braille specialist proctors for the state. The National Exam -<https://www.nbpcb.org/ncueb/#Link13> JH - perhaps then Concordia could be a site to offer the National test. DW - WCBVI would support test taking. Barb Van Haren - CESAs? Tracey Stanislawski - Vision Forward could also host. Wanda Routier - Concordia would host. Encourage virtual Refresher Course available more than once a year. Dawn Soto - yes that is the plan! Also for more content than is just needed for the test. A large demand for refresher availability throughout the year, and for additional skills.

- O&M Shortage Taskforce

Julie Hapeman and Dawn Soto - in connecting, what we wanted to do was take feedback received from Outreach and DPI, bring current information. Two existing training programs in adjacent states, which qualify for HEAB grants. The bigger question is assisting upcoming vacancies/retirements. No emergency/provisional licensing for O&M.

Discussion. Julie Hapeman and Colleen Kickbush will connect to form a parallel taskforce for TVI shortage. Barb Van Haren - encourage to stay in connection with similar DPI efforts.

Wendy Leisig - use WECAN search to look at those interested in SE jobs.

Tracey Stanislawski - It would be great offer "mini-courses" or something at the undergraduate levels in vision so that it could get some interest.

W MI reached out to Colleen Kickbush to ask if we needed support.

Barb Van Haren - thank you all for serving on the Advisory Council, and pass appreciation along from Carolyn Stanford Taylor.

- Membership Committee

3 parents

Certified Braille Transcriber

Regular Ed Teacher

District Administrator

School Board Member

Fall meeting: Virtual, October 25 10:00 am

Discuss term limits (do review of Council Policies, including term limits)

- Adjourn 1:02 pm

Motioned Nissan Bar-Lev, Tracey Stanislawski second. Unanimous