

State Superintendent's Blind and Visual Impairment Education Advisory Council

MINUTES – Meeting #71

November 16, 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.*

Call to Order: 10:08

Introductions

Julie Hapeman

Erikke Nystrom-Grothaus- CESA5/WCASS

Tracey Stanislowski

Colleen Kickbush - TVI Rep

Cheryl Orgas - ABLE and NFB

Wanda Routier

Jessie Grober (10:30)

Dan Wenzel

Julia Hartwig

Martha Berninger

Julie Piper

Jacky Ramirez

Dawn Soto

Mandy Jordan

Public Input/Comments - none received

Minutes Approval - reviewed June 3 meeting minutes and made updates to name spellings and clarifications for initials. Will hold approval of these minutes at the next meeting due to lack of quorum at this meeting.

Council Member Updates

Julie Hapeman (JLH) - O&M rep - at MPS on IEP there is a contingency - is that statewide? Julia Hartwig (JH) - not statewide uniform form, did provide a model for districts to work from and implement locally.

Jessie Grober - WAER - Teacher shortage areas - how/who is responsible for reporting a shortage area, particularly in the area of O&M. It has never been listed as a shortage area in Wisconsin. WAER feels this isn't reflective of actuality. Julia - unsure what triggers the official recognition of a shortage area. I will inquire with licensing about this. Dan Wenzel - also looking at what is an acceptable caseload for an O&M instructor. Wanda Routier - there is also usually additional funding for designated shortage areas, so without it being listed, may affect the shortage also. Tracey Stanislawski - what can we do to support this shortage - advertising as a career option?

WAER April conference this year will be virtual.

0-3 Task Force - Colleen

Dawn Soto was able to seek clarification from DPI on wording.

Pre-Kindergarten licensure clarification. - students in Pre-K have not reached the age for first grade but not enrolled in K-3 through K-5 but is a student who has an IEP and receives primary educational services from a district. So then wanted to know if VI license covered this age group. The answer is yes, they are allowed to teach children who are ages B-3 who are B/VI. But - not allowed to be the lead teacher in an early childhood classroom without an additional early education licensure. PK-12 is teaching ages 0-21. If IEP/IFSP requires additional services beyond VI, the license wouldn't be sufficient. Will clarify that this guidance covers the O&M license as well.

WCBVI did research regarding existing programs in other states for comparisons. A lot of states had consultative Outreach services for 0-3 through training, conferences, etc. Some states had Private/Non-profits do services through grants/donations. Some had fee for service for consultation. Some access Medicaid, researching this more. Talked about how to get DPI/DHS to work together more to improve these services. Hoping to speak at the interagency coordination council. There is a B-3 Council for Hearing, but not for Vision. Hoping to recommend this as well. Also discussed trainings WCBVI will be offering for this age group. VIISA and INSITE Train the Trainer sessions planned, as well as Preschool Conference. Want to encourage Concordia to add some B-3 info in their program to help better prepare. Changes in APH Quota eligibility for this population, which will be shared in Outreach update.

Babies Count - registry/survey that service providers fill out with families that collects information about this age group. Use the data to help inform the taskforce recommendations. Wisconsin will be participating. Colleen will be the coordinator. Excited to be getting data to use to help improve services for this population. Also gives a forecast to schools which students will be coming into the school-age level who will need services. Julia Hartwig - we can include this information in the weekly newsletter to

Directors of Special Education. Erikke - RSN network within the CESAs - can send the information to Erikke who will share with the CESAs RSN who will share with the network.

DPI Update - Julia Hartwig

New staff - hiring freeze. Ryan Gollner is WESP-DHH Center Director.

National - At the end of September OSEP released a new Q&A document related to COVID. There are still no flexibilities being offered around IDEA. This is getting more and more complicated for districts. District still has the obligation to provide FAPE for students. Virtual works for the majority of students - individualized decision. For a very small group of students it will not work for a specific set of activities. Progress monitoring is very important to keep track of potential compensatory services.

OSEP has initiated a new differentiated monitoring system for states to a cyclical approach from a risk approach. Statewide assessments will continue to be required this year. Validity not confirmed virtually, so know we must give the tests, but not virtually. Access pushed back to end of February. There may be changes with a new administration. If not, likely small groups of students - very specific problem solving will need to be done around this requirement.

State - Resources - Questions and Answers Document updated nearly weekly. Teleservices webpage. Community of practice regular meetings. Additional services guidance.

Seclusion and Restraint - March 4, 2020 - WI Act 118 - revised the S&R law related to school. DPI has developed two documents - one is a side by side comparison and the other a summary of the revisions. As part of the revisions, each LEA must report to DPI by December 21 S&R data de-segregated by school, including those with/without disabilities.

Title IV - New regulations require LEAs to develop and adopt policies and procedures for investigating sexual harassment allegations. Information is posted on WASB website.

Federal identifications - under IDEA as well as ESSA - have worked to combine federal identifications. Most LEAs have the same as last year. Being as flexible as we are able to be. Preliminary notifications will go out in December, final in March. Maintaining continuous improvement data analysis.

PI-11 rule changes - some of this came from recommendations from this Council - Special Education Impairment Area Categories and Identification Criteria. B&VI - With Legislative Council now, likely a public hearing at the end of December. Thank you for your advocacy for that. Also DHH update. Adding DeafBlind classification. A number of other revisions.

Submitted Biennial Budget request to the Governor. Special Education Request, and Mental Health Request infographics. COVID changed what the request was, but hope to get to the 60% threshold over the next two bienniums.

Julie Hapeman - do we have to wait until next evaluation for this designation? Julia - yes - could do sooner than 3-year once it is finalized.

Colleen - what happens after the Public Hearing - After the hearing, we incorporate/reconcile input/feedback, then Carolyn signs and it passes through other signatures before legislature. Dawn - VIISA/INSITE - mentoring program to assist.

WCBVI Updates - 11:15

Dawn - An adventure re-imagining how we provide services. Outreach staff excited to be able to reach folks a little more quickly than we used to be able to. Some equity brought in due to not having to travel to provide services. Specialists really able to connect and provide services. Jacky Ramirez, Outreach OOA, has done much work streamlining processes, and data collection. Reimagined every program - example - Low Vision Clinics - were always done in spaces throughout the state. Mini Virtual Low Vision Clinics - consultations. Tricia Weis - colored glasses and ways to modify. Alisha Ragainis - school aged students - access materials. Amy Snow - Assistive Technology Specialist. Then loaning devices that the team would like to share. Already booking into spring. Spring 2021 Preschool conference will be virtual - doing learning and training kits to send to participants and families. Friday family support group time was a very popular part of the in-person conference. Will be using that model throughout the spring. Short Courses - Girls Group program - self care for girls, followed APH curriculum for Health and Wellness. Doing similar for Boys this winter. High level of family engagement. Many book clubs going on as well.

Book production with... BRF files, exploring additional projects.

APH Eligibility criteria for B-3 - allows pediatricians to certify the visual impairment.

Julie Piper - WSBVI programming - Reimagining Capacity. In the Spring we did asynchronous learning through a Remote Learning Portal on our website. Delivered materials and accessible materials, tools, Assistive Technology via mail. Helped build resiliency, flexibility, and also relationship building. In the Summer we piloted synchronous programming - Summer Camp - had 20 course offerings, with 12 elementary and 20 high school students participating, which was more than we have had in the older age group. Using Google meet, which gave our staff the opportunity to build capacity with that tool. Created learning kits with all the supplies needed for each course and delivered via mail. Through those two experiences, we were staying in touch with stakeholders and families to allow us to assess what we could do to get stronger. This Fall we are 100% virtual still. We have built a system with 4 days synchronous and 1 day asynchronous schedule. Mindful of screen fatigue, so not replicating a traditional school day schedule - the morning has synchronous classes, with lab times in the afternoon. All staff had to build capacity to do work in a different way. Emphasize that teachers need to focus on teaching, so we assigned IT support and Google Meet Masters to support the tech roles. It is powerful to watch this amazing team working. Deployed one to one technology for the first time - all students received laptops and headsets, with applicable assistive technology. Students are also building their capacity.

Watching progress very closely and keeping track of data. If changes are needed, reconvening IEP to discuss - access to learning, is progress being made? Looking at alternatives. Looking at how we could do individualized instruction for specific goals. Exhausting all efforts and documenting these efforts. Excited by the progress we are seeing. Have put a lot of attention into staff and student connections. Making sure student social/emotional learning needs are met. Student connections/lounge every morning. And

between some classes. Evening activities. Strong student services team doing "Temperature Checks" with students and families as well as staff to make sure their needs are being met. This week we get to offer an extracurricular activity - Forensics. Seven states participating. So excited to get a chance to participate.

Families are still contacting us for tours, so we are working on our virtual tour.

A time of great challenge, but also a time of great growth as well. A lot of opportunities and chances for opportunities in the future.

Jessie Grober - Braille Challenge/Fest? - Julie Piper - yes we will try to put something together! Dawn Soto - we are beginning to explore possibilities. Shipping has been a challenge.

Dan - Thankful for the strong management team. Thinking outside the box on creative ways to meet these challenges. Virtual programming, assessing quarter by quarter.

Website, email, internet, phones down since Tuesday - Thankfully have still managed to be able to provide all student services. Thinking outside the box for problem solving.

Meet weekly with Rock County Public Health and Rock County School Superintendents. Has been a good collaborative resource.

Recruitment - hiring freeze. Able to creatively recruit for some vacancies, but also having trouble getting applicants.

One student who is working with us virtually, who needed some in-person instruction. Were able to work with the LEA to provide this. Another student who attends Blackhawk Technical College, and has to attend some in person classes. Have worked with the team for the student to come down to attend classes in person. Working with him on lodging and transportation. A great opportunity for the student to build skills he would need anyway.

WTBBL Updates

Zarina unable to attend

Martha - info via Kurt Keifer who represents WI on National Library Council - October - update from NLS - There is discussion about changing the definition of eligibility criteria - anticipating more roles that can act as certifying authorities. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SqDt6IUjv3tIU_6ux4OtCaVWnO-5ZUI/view?usp=sharing

Zarina via email: WTBBL has reached out to our NLS Network Consultant regarding the definition of certifying authorities, and was reassured that we can anticipate a change regarding this (noted on slide 5 of Karen Keninger's presentation) in the next six to nine months.

ABLE - progress on Wisconsin Authors for WTBBL. Hoping to continue to work with Milwaukee Public Library and Museum and WTBBL on Braille Games. A Braille e-reader being tested from NLS - Cheryl is a tester. Looking at 2022 release potentially.

Concordia - we have students in courses right now. 12 week courses. Braille 1 now, Braille 2 in the spring. Hopefully to prepare for the test in the summer. A couple new students to start in January. Continuing to get the courses up and running. Close to being finished with courses, within the next 6

months. Summer residency (postponed this summer). If cannot do it in person this summer, will do a virtual alternative.

Next meeting -

February 15

June 7

Martha - as part of the library team - Now in the process of finishing up consolidation into one team. Ben Miller who has been the assistant director will be head of the Library Team. Martha will be retiring toward the end of next year.

Jessie Grober - WAER - Scholarship and Fundraising committee - have created an Amazon Smile account for support.

12:10