

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

IDEA B State Advisory Panel

Moore Norman Technology Center - 13301 South Pennsylvania Avenue – Oklahoma City, OK 73170

1:00 PM- 4:00 PM

Wednesday, September 4, 2019

**Present:**

Sharon Baker, Aaron Bullock, Sherri Coats, Darci Forrester, Cindy Gould, Lynn Hodge, Linda Jaco, Michelle Koehn, Andrea Kunkel, Jamie Lahey, Sharon Long, Cassie Lynch, Kylie Lyons, Bonnie McBride, Becky Moore, Janice Morris, Sonya Parsons, Ashley Rhoades, Jennifer Robinson, Ashlee Robson, Julie Sanders, Mandy Seward, Ginger Trouba, and Lori Wathen.

**Absent:**

JoAnne Blades, Jamie Brock, Kathy Brown, Penny Cantley, Latisha Coats, Sky Collins, Kalyin Coody, Malissa Cook, Malarie Deardorff, Melinda Fruendt, Marsha Herron, Tara Hood, Jordan House, Tiffany Jenkins, Tina Kaminski, and Michelle Keiper.

**State Department of Education Employees:**

Abby Johnson and Todd Loftin

**Bonnie McBride: Welcome**

Bonnie McBride called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m.

**Todd Loftin (OSDE): Role and Purpose of the Panel**

Todd Loftin reminded members that the overall purpose of the panel is to provide improved services for children and youth with disabilities. Mr. Loftin shared that within this perspective, the panel is to also:

- Advise the SEA of unmet needs within the State in the education of children and youth with disabilities. (300.169(a))
- Comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the State regarding the education of children with disabilities. (300.169(b))
- Advise the SEA in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the Secretary under 618. (300.169(c))
- Advise the SEA in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports. (300.169(d))

- Advise the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities. (300.169(e))
- Waiver of nonsupplant requirement. State must consult with the Advisory Panel regarding provisions of FAPE. (300.164(c)(4))

### **Todd Loftin (OSDE): OSDE Updates**

Todd Loftin discussed the following updates for the department:

#### Staff Changes

The department recently hired three new program specialists they are as follows: Michele DeBerry (Evaluation/Eligibility), Jill Hilst (Professional Development), and Jenae Tindell (Behavior).

#### Complaints

The department has also seen an increase in the amount of complaints that we have received over the past year. Commonalities within the complaints include not following Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), child find, and not considering parent concerns. Our remedies to these issues are assurance statements, professional development, and a new complaint form. The new complaint form focuses on key areas such as examples, mediation, verification, and a checklist of all items that should be included.

#### Autism Workgroup

Alongside the Oklahoma Autism Center, the department is working to develop an autism training module. The goal of the project is to train five regional special education professionals on the content and use of the module so that they will be able to train others in future sessions.

#### Summit on Behavior and Climate in Schools

The Summit will consist of three primary activities 1) multiple data gatherings – such as surveys, focus groups, and archival data. This data will serve as the foundation for problem analysis and solution generation from the Summit, 2) data review and analysis by a Guiding Coalition (Oklahoma Stakeholder Group), and 3) generation of specific and actionable recommendations for improving the behavioral and mental health functioning in our schools.

Based upon the data analysis, these recommendations will be associated with legislative, pre-service and in-service changes necessary to improve our schools capacity to address the social emotional and behavioral needs present in Oklahoma schools.

## **Bonnie McBride: SWOT Analysis**

Bonnie McBride led panel members in a SWOT analysis of Special Education. The analysis is below:

### Strengths

- Agency Collaboration – Strong willingness to work together between agencies and partnering organizations.
- Legislative Support – Interim studies
- Sarah Stitt's support for training across the State of Oklahoma. As well as her specific work with trauma informed schools.
- Recognition of our issues – understanding that we are not perfect and there are many topics that we can address.
- SDE Technical Assistance to Districts – Have developed modules and webinars focused on priority topic areas.
- Professional Development funding available – This funding is being used to bring in speakers and other resources at trainings held in various school districts.
- Data Retreats – Targets as determined by Root Cause Analysis include: Assessment, Graduation, and Early Childhood
- Increase in attendance by districts at trainings – Broader support by general education administration has been noticed at trainings.
- Variety of offered trainings – Topics are not just the same at each session and are focused on providing specific training to educators and district leaders. An example of a topic is Trauma Informed Schools.
- Support for New Directors – An emphasis on training and professional development for new Special Education Directors has been developed by SDE-SES
- ICAP Transition Plans – ICAP is providing more opportunities for students with disabilities to have secondary transition plans.

### Weaknesses

- The State of Oklahoma has lost a lot of teachers to other states. This has caused a shortage of candidates to enroll in education degree programs.
- Education Funding – Salaries and class sizes are at the center of conversation as funding for schools continues to be lacking.
- Director of Special Education turnover – This is in correlation with the teacher shortage and lack of candidates in degree programs.
- Shortage of related service providers with specialty knowledge in rural areas.
- Infrastructure for schools or families (are) in crisis as a lack in education funding for operational costs continues to pose a threat to many school districts.
- Standards and expectations for all students to achieve are often set extremely high.
- Lack of capacity for knowledge in suspension/expulsion, especially on the administration side as most are reactive not proactive.
- Removing kids from public school and placing them in virtual schools.
- Lack of options for schools

## Opportunities

- Implement mentorship programs for parents, teachers, and directors of students with disabilities.
- New legislators and elected officials who are focused on continuing the conversation around education.
- Behavioral flowchart or tree identifying resources that can be used to promote additional steps before suspension.
- Offer training to admin and teachers on what is developmentally appropriate.
- Create cohorts of admins that can be trained in Special Education policies tied to accountability and fidelity measures.
- Listen to our stakeholders
- Promote scholarship opportunities for teachers.

## Threats

- Funding – Understanding of what funds should go to and how to use them to better.
- Lack of interest, buy in, and morale for education in general.
- Breakdown in trust – Rising increase in complaints, suspension and expulsion.
- Misunderstanding about how services (ABA) can be used – Specifically regarding function, terminology, and understanding of services.
- Prominence of substance abuse and drug culture.
- Time – As an “instant society” we tend to place unrealistic expectations on how/when we want things done. A specific example is barriers to services.
- Negative public relations – unprepared teachers, lack of funding, too many emergency certified teachers, etc.
- Parents are overwhelmed by the variety of behavior and mental health issues that their children may be facing.
- Access to resources – We are an information overload society that has numerous outlets for obtaining information about specific topics and ideas.

### **Bonnie McBride: Panel Goals for 2019-2020 School Year**

The panel presented the following goals for the 2019-2020 school year:

1. Recommendations for improving certification requirements
2. Mentorship Programs/opportunities for teachers, administrators (i.e., leadership training)
3. Guidelines/professional development opportunities for educators around practical use of technology
  - a. How to use web-based training
  - b. How effective use of technology in the classroom can enhance learning for ALL students and make it possible for more children with disabilities to be included in general education classes
4. Behavior
  - a. Targeted messaging for school administrators to better understand student behavior
    - Change attitudes
    - Public relations campaign
    - How to reach administrators who are suspending children with special needs because of behavior
  - b. How to prevent challenging behavior and develop positive approaches rather than punitive measures (i.e., suspension, expulsion)
  - c. Person at SDE people can call about/questions related to behavior
5. Extend the work of trauma informed schools or educational practices to children with disabilities (i.e., let's ensure schools are not a trigger point for trauma (i.e., bullying, restraint, seclusion, punitive treatment).
  - a. Acknowledgment of the great work started by Superintendent Joy Hofmeister on trauma informed schools.
6. Revise and update Special Education Handbook to reflect current thinking and understanding (i.e., challenging behavior)
7. Incentives for teacher recruitment/retention
  - a. Boost morale
  - b. Resources for the classroom (i.e., supplies and materials)
  - c. Other ways to support teacher retention (i.e., reduced caseloads, reduced class size etc.)

### **Todd Loftin (OSDE): Meeting Dates/Location**

The next IDEA B Panel meeting is December 5, 2019 in Midwest City, Oklahoma at Rose State College.

### **Todd Loftin (OSDE): Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded, meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.