



Minutes

October 15, 2018

10 a.m.

Scarritt Bennett
1008 19th Avenue South
Nashville, TN 37212

Council Members in Attendance

Shannon Taylor, Chair
Joey Ellis, Vice Chair
Mary Meador
Angela Jackson
Melvin Jackson
Catherine Knowles
David Craig
Chantal Hess-Taylor
Stephanie Ortego
Virginia Crump (TDoC Representative)
Travis Commons
Dawn Fry

Council Members Not in Attendance

Amy Allen
Darlene Walden
Susan Feltner
Jennifer Escue
Paula Brownyard

Department Employees in Attendance

Kate Martin, Executive Director
Rachel Suppé
Crystal McCarver
Nancy Williams
Blake Shearer
Rachel Wilkinson
Erin Lavery
Evans Murray
Michael Holman

Visitors in Attendance

Jennifer Aprea
Loria Hubbard
Sherry Wilds
Patricia Valladares

Objective

Provide policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities in Tennessee.

Welcome/Introductions

Shannon Taylor, Chair

- A brief introduction was made for the final Advisory Council meeting of 2018. Guests, council members, and TDOE employees were thanked for their attendance.

Approval of Current Agenda (AC Goal 7)

See AC website ([here](#)) for agenda

- **Action Item**
Shannon Taylor, chair, made a motion to approve the October 15, 2018 agenda. The motion was seconded shortly after.
- **Final Action Taken**
The Council voted unanimously in favor of approving the October 15, 2018 agenda.

Approval of July 16, 2018 Meeting Minutes

See AC website ([here](#)) for January minutes

- **Action Item**
A motion was made to approve the July 16, 2018 minutes. The motion was seconded.
- **Final Action Taken**
The Council voted unanimously in favor of approving the July 16, 2018 minutes.

Approval of 2017 – 2018 Annual Report

- **Action Item**
A motion was made to approve the 2017 – 2018 Annual Report.
- **Final Action Taken**
The Council voted unanimously in favor of approving the 2017 – 2018 Annual Report.

Scheduling of April Meeting Date

- **Action Item**
A motion was made to schedule the April meeting on the 9th.
- **Final Action Taken**
The Council voted unanimously in favor of scheduling the April meeting for the 9th.

1% Cap

Kate Martin

- The state of Tennessee has a 1% cap for students with disabilities participating in the alternate assessment. However, districts do not have a 1% cap. The state has worked

to anticipate which districts might exceed the 1% cap so that they can be asked to perform a self-assessment.

- Districts that exceed the 1% cap will be sent letters asking for justification.
- Additional training and technical assistance will be extended to districts that exceed the 1% cap.
- Comment: The new guide regarding the 1% cap and the alternate assessment was good.
- Question: Has it been noted that the students who need the alternate assessment are given access to it, or is the 1% cap preventing students from using it?
 - Answer: Guidance has been made available regarding the appropriate circumstances for issuing the alternate assessment and which students might meet the criteria for it, and how to interpret their needs in relation to the alternate assessment.

Special Education Employment Standard Rule Changes

Nancy Williams

- Nancy has been researching the gifted employment standards, the impact surrounding implementation of gifted IEPs, and the level of training that would be required of districts in order to facilitate such an update.
- This matter will be discussed at the January State Board of Education meeting.
- Question: Is guidance given to school psychologists regarding identifying gifted students and if there are particular areas they are gifted in?
 - Answer: There is a large amount of information in the determination documents regarding which tests should be administered in order to find particular strengths and weaknesses.
- Comment: It has been noted, when reviewing IEPs, that gifted students do not receive the same amount of specificity as other students with IEPs. This can be problematic for teachers who require extra guidance on what subjects their gifted students should be challenged in.
- Further training will be offered to districts across the state.

Special Education in TN: A Review of Our Progress

Kate Martin & Rachel Wilkinson

- The Department's vision is to exemplify excellence and equity in order to insure every student is equipped to embark upon their chosen paths.
- For the division of Special Populations and Student Support, it is important that we focus on early intervention, high quality instruction, attention to the 'whole child', and meaningful engagement.
 - Through focus on these division principles, it is our hope that every student is supported and engaged wholly.
- Rachel Wilkinson presented data relevant to the Annual Performance Report.

- The data reflects the progress of the state in implementing special education programming.
- Question: What was done differently that resulted in more positive data from 2012 – present?
- Answer: The inclusion of special education graduation rate resulted in more positive data, as Tennessee has one of the highest special education graduation rates in the country. There was also an increase in students participating in the standard assessment, thus raising participation rates.
- There was a dip in the results in the 2016 report. This was due to an absence of assessment data.
- Kate discussed five goals of the division: 1. Accurate child-find procedures, 2. Increasing participation of children aged 3-5 in the general education setting, 3. Access to high quality core instruction for children with disabilities, 4. Increase the percentage of children with disabilities scoring at or above, 5. Increasing the percent of children with disabilities that are engaged in post-secondary opportunities.
 - Question regarding goal 2: Are there waiting lists for pre-k classrooms?
 - Answer: That can vary by district.
- A school psychologist internship program has been implemented in hopes of drawing in and retaining more school psychologists in Tennessee.
- Survey results from the disability standards training sessions indicate that the information provided was helpful and thorough.
- The Tennessee Department of Education is coordinating with the Tennessee Department of Health regarding speech-language pathologist licensure details.
- Comment from Assistant General Counsel, Rachel Suppé: If it becomes apparent that a student is being denied inclusion in pre-K when it is part of their IEP, please reach out to me.

Alternate Academic Instructional Materials

Blake Shearer

- A facilitator guide has been recorded, based on the Alternate Academic Diploma trainings, so that those that have been trained may redeliver the information to others.
- Professional development requests are reviewed every two weeks.
- Materials are being developed for instructors.

Principles of Transition for Postsecondary Readiness

Blake Shearer

- Three principles of transition courses will be taken to the State Board of Education.
 - The three courses are: 1. The Introduction to Self-Determination, 2. The Focus on Adulthood, and 3. Planning for Postsecondary
- These courses are aimed at readying students and their instructors for postsecondary success.

- Feedback from the public and advisory council is welcomed.
- Comment: The general curriculum could benefit from these courses as well.

Public Comments (as applicable)

- Sherry Wilds: More specific guidance should be given on how current practices relate to the Supreme Court decision regarding 'M-F' and challenging goals for students with disabilities.

Annual Performance Report

Rachel Wilkinson

- It was requested that feedback regarding the annual performance report be sent to Michael.holman@tn.gov

New Business/Additional Items

Shannon Taylor, Chair

- It was decided that a working session would be held for the councils on January 13, 2019.

Call for Future Meeting Topics

Shannon Taylor, Chair

- No future meeting topics were offered. It was suggested that potential topics for discussion be emailed before the next meeting, should anyone think of one.

Closing Remarks/Adjourn

- There was a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded shortly after and passed unanimously.