



**Minutes**

July 16, 2018  
10 a.m.

Scarritt Bennett  
1008 19th Avenue South  
Nashville, TN 37212

**Council Members in Attendance**

Joey Ellis, Vice Chair  
Catherine Knowles  
Paula Brownyard  
Darlene Walden  
Chantal Hess-Taylor  
Mary Meador  
Susan Feltner  
Melvin Jackson  
Brian Brown

**Council Members Not in Attendance**

Shannon Taylor, Chair  
Cleatrice McTorry  
David Craig  
Angela Jackson  
Dawn Fry  
Jennifer Escue  
Amy Allen  
Travis Commons

**Department Employees in Attendance**

Theresa Nicholls, Assistant Commissioner  
Kate Martin  
Evans Murray  
Joann Runion  
Rachel Wilkinson  
Alison Gauld  
Michael Holman  
Gary Smith  
Crystal McCarver

**Visitors in Attendance**

Loria Hubbard  
Colletta Daniels  
Ned Andrew Solomon

## Objective

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

## Welcome/Introductions

**Joey Ellis, Vice Chair**

- After a round of brief introductions from established council members, Joey introduced new council member Melvin Jackson, a self-determination trainer and transition consultant from the University of Tennessee's Center for Literacy, Education, and Employment.

## Approval of Current Agenda (AC Goal 7)

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

- **Action Item**  
Joey Ellis, vice chair, made a motion to approve the July 16, 2018 agenda. The motion was seconded shortly after.
- **Final Action Taken**  
The Council voted unanimously in favor of approving the July 16, 2018 agenda.

## Approval of April 16, 2018 Meeting Minutes

See AC website ([here](#)) for Jan. 2018 minutes

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

## Department Updates

**Theresa Nicholls**

- The Draft IEP Rule that was discussed at the previous meeting passed the State Board of Education's second reading in April. An effective date has not yet been established, as of the time of this meeting.
  - Some revisions were made to the rule based on public comment and State Board of Education feedback. These revisions include language allowing parents to 'opt out' of receiving a draft was added, and an increase in notification time from twenty-four to forty-eight hours prior to IEP meeting.
  - The exact language of the rule can be found on the State Board of Education's website.
  - The rule will become active ninety days after it is submitted to the secretary of state's office. As of the date of this meeting, that has not yet occurred. It is anticipated to take effect during autumn of 2018.
  - The Tennessee Department of Education is in the process of drafting guidance documents to aid LEAs in the implementation of this new rule.

- The TDOE received notification from the United States Department of Education that a decision has been made to delay implementation of significant disproportionality rules at the federal level until 2020.
  - Regardless of this decision at the federal level, states are still required to address this issue.
  - Tennessee will continue to implement significant disproportionality recommendations as outlined by the stakeholder groups involved with the studies.
- The TDOE is continuing to review the policies surrounding caseloads and class sizes.
  - By reviewing these policies, it is the hope of the department to address the disparities associated with the caseload numbers of special educators and related service providers.

### **SPDG 2.0 Update**

**Kate Martin & Gary Smith**

- This update to the State Personnel Developmental Grant (SPDG) has an increased scope which aims to involve more of the state than the previous iteration of SPDG.
- Thirty-three new districts applied, and 20 were selected to participate.
- Each district selects a facilitator and a supervisor to send for a full week of training with the TDOE. Those that are chosen are then tasked with delivering the training they received to others in their district.
- The districts select the schools and grade levels which they would like to aid.
- Question: Will student outcomes be observed in the districts participating?
  - Answer: File reviews, IEP reviews, and universal screener reviews take place in order to observe measurable outcomes stemming from this program.

### **Alternate Academic Diploma Update**

**Alison Gauld**

- Initial training for teachers is being made available on the state website via webinar.
- A separate training specifically for principals and school counselors is also available online in the webinar format.
- Trainings regarding the alternate academic diploma have also occurred during the Partners in Education conference and during multiple mini-conferences around the state.
- STEP has also facilitated trainings for the alternate academic diploma.

\

### **Annual Performance Report Update**

**Rachel Wilkinson**

- Any state that accepts funds from the Office of Special Education Programs is required to submit this report.
- Seventeen performance indicators are observed and measured for this report, ranging from result based items such as assessments to compliance based metrics such as proper transitioning practices, and more.

- The federal government makes 'determinations' based off of the data gathered from this report.
  - There are three different determinations: Meets Requirements, Needs Assistance, and Needs Intervention.
  - For the 2016–17 school year, Tennessee was identified with the 'Needs Assistance' determination.
  - This was a downgrade from Tennessee's previous determination of 'Meets Requirements'. New variables such as the addition of statewide assessments being added to the measurements resulted in a change in which the data was portrayed.
- Question: Is Indicator 14 being tracked?
  - Answer: We are, though OSEP does not include Indicator 14 in their calculations for our determinations.

### **Public Comments (as applicable)**

- No comments were made.

### **Annual Report**

**Joey Ellis, Vice Chair**

- Due to the amount of absent council members, no actions could be taken on this agenda item.

### **New Business/Additional Items**

**Joey Ellis, Vice Chair**

- Meeting dates for the next two meetings were set for Oct. 15, 2018 and Jan. 14, 2019. The April meeting date will be decided during the next meeting.

### **Call for Future Meeting Topics**

**Joey Ellis, Vice 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.