

MINUTES

Legislative Task Force on the Best Practices for Special Education

Wednesday, May 11, 2016
10:00 A.M.
Room B, MAC
Little Rock, Arkansas

The Legislative Task Force on the Best Practices for Special Education met on Wednesday, May 11, 2016 at 10:00 A.M., in Room B of the MAC Building in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Task Force Members Present: Senator Uvalde Lindsey, Chair; Representative Tim Lemons, Vice Chair; and Representative Sheilla Lampkin. Ms. Carla Brainard, Ms. Lisa Haley, Ms. Renee Johnson, Ms. Sarah Moore, Dr. Greg Murry, Ms. Shirley Ann Renix, Dr. Bruce Smith, Ms. Lisa Tisdale-Parker, Ms. Tina Vineyard, and Ms. Cindy Marie Weathers.

Other Legislators Present: Representatives Kenneth Ferguson, Jack Ladyman and Dan Sullivan.

Call to Order

Senator Lindsey called the meeting to order.

Consideration to Approve the Minutes of April 5, 2016

A motion was made to approve the minutes and without objection the minutes were approved.

Best Buddies Arkansas (Working Matrix Items H, I, J and K) [See Exhibit C for full report]

Dr. Angela Kremers, State Director

Lisa Derox, Best Buddies International

Briana Washington, Easter Seals

Caitlyn Fite, UALR Best Buddies Chapter

Julia Cockmon, Community Member

Kristen Taylor, Best Buddies Arkansas

Issues Discussed:

- Segregation of special needs students
- Development of appropriate social skills through regular interaction with typical peers
- Supported employment program
- Financial obligation for state participation include chapter dues of \$350.00; this covers summer conference fees for leadership students in Indiana
- Implementation of program in the Camden/Fairview Area as well as other areas of the state

Best Practices in Early Childhood Education Programs (Working Matrix Item O)

Karen Massey, Early Childhood, Southwest Arkansas Education Coop, Early Childhood Ages 3-5 Coordinator

Judy Clay, Arch Ford, Retired Early Childhood Coordinator

Tina Rooks, Arch Ford, Early Childhood Coordinator

Becky Butler, Southwest Cooperative, Speech Pathology, Autism Team

Angie Bobo, Southwest Cooperative, Early Childhood Behavior Interventionist

Michelle Sadler, Southeast Cooperative, Early Childhood Coordinator

Carla Bryan, South Central Service Cooperative

Lana Bullington, Ozarks Unlimited Resource Cooperative of Harrison, Arkansas

Issues Discussed:

- There are 15 education cooperatives in the state of Arkansas that provide services for the public school systems in their respective areas, all have the early childhood special education program with a goal to locate, identify, evaluate, and service children ages 3-5 with disabilities
- Services are provided at Head Start Centers, Arkansas Better Chance Programs, public/private daycares, public school classrooms, and some children come in for itinerant services operating under an Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- Staff includes early special education teachers, speech language pathologist, para-educators, behavior specialists, physical therapist, and occupational therapist
- Referrals are provided by parents, grandparents, childcare providers, teachers, and physicians. Services begin immediately after the child is determined eligible
- Enhancing parental involvement using technology
- Initiation of summer screenings
- Identifying children on the autism spectrum and providing services
- “Buddy”, the robot is a pilot experiment designed for student involvement. Up to 5 different people can watch one event through “Buddy” for training purposes. Buddy costs approximately \$4,000.00
- Behavior Interventionist services provided: universal classroom observations, functional behavior analysis, parent/teacher professional consultation, home visual support, social stories, social/emotional assessments, developmental positive support plans, and social skills groups
- Utilizing speech assistants in rural areas where speech pathologist are not available
- Transition conferences for public schools teachers and officials
- Capacity for preschool inclusion and inclusion training for all daycares and programs served

Task Force Assignments

Issues Discussed:

- Develop a recommendation on how to handle the transition so that those who need services get extension of the categorical guidelines. Consider as a state moving to non-categorical to eliminate any gap in the funding stream during transition
- Implementation of a transition flag to help identify those who continue to need services; receiving teachers should start RTI immediately

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:13 P.M.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 8, 2016 at 10:00 A.M. in Room 130 of the State Capitol.