

DRAFT MINUTES

Legislative Task Force on the Best Practices for Special Education

Wednesday, July 6, 2016
10:00 A.M.
Room 130
Little Rock, Arkansas

The Legislative Task Force on the Best Practices for Special Education met on Wednesday, July 6, 2016 at 10:00 A.M., in Room 130 of the State Capitol in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Task Force Members Present: Senator Uvalde Lindsey, Chair, Ms. Lisa Haley, Ms. Renee Johnson, Ms. Sarah Moore, Ms. Bailey Perkins, Ms. Debra Poulin, Ms. Shirley Ann Renix, Dr. Bruce Smith, Ms. Lisa Tisdale-Parker, Ms. Cindy Marie Weathers and Ms. Angela Winfield.

Call to Order

Senator Lindsey called the meeting to order.

Consideration to Approve the Minutes of June 8, 2016

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

Revision of Arkansas Statute to Reflect Federal Mandate- See Handout # 1

Courtney Silas Ford, Staff Attorney, Arkansas Department of Education

Issues Discussed:

- Revisions to A.C.A § 6-41-103 (2016), Identification of children with specific learning disabilities. Currently, this law speaks of specific learning disability and not the other twelve disability categories which a child could be eligible for under IDEA. Federal law requires that each state have and execute policies and procedures to ensure that all children with disabilities, regardless of severity of their disability who are in need of special education are identified, located, and evaluated. This law is being updated to reflect the federal mandate that would identify all disabilities and not just specific learning disabilities.
- Redlined copy to be prepared and sent to Task Force members so that they can see the specific changes.
- Revisions to be included as part of the recommendations in the final report.

Individual Education Plan- Parent Experiences- See Handout # 2

Dollie Spencer, Parent

Trilisa Marshall, Parent

Ana Phakhin, Arkansas Public Policy Panel

Issues Discussed:

- Professional development and proper placement of children into special education classes.
- Registration of grievances and dispute resolution with the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE)
- Request that Bruce Smith draft a flow chart that would assist parents in navigating the system.
- ADE is working on Child Find and Identification and professional development/training on RTI to ensure effective communication and coordination of services on the front end.

Task Force Assignment Updates- See Handout #3

- *Bailey Perkins, Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families gave an overview of the brochure: “Special Education in Arkansas: Where We Are, Where We Need to Be, And How We Can Improve”*

Issues Discussed:

- Increased funding in the matrix for more special education teachers; including a comprehensive review of salaries.
- Streamline paperwork for special education teachers (without removing critical information).
- Create clearer ways of informing parents of their rights and options in special education.
- Support an incentivized paraprofessional-to-teacher program.
- Strengthen accountability methods of schools in the Child Find process.
- Expand services to rural areas.
- Use restorative discipline practices
- Track student progress to measure impact of RTI practices.
- Fund distributions to districts for special education and meaningful professional development.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:51 A.M.

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