

DRAFT
ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON AUTISM
MEETING
JULY 20, 2012

The Arkansas Legislative Task Force on Autism met Friday, July 20, 2012, at 1:00 p.m., in Room 130 at the State Capitol, Little Rock, Arkansas. Senator Mary Anne Salmon and Representative Uvalde Lindsey, presided.

Task Force members present were Senator Mary Anne Salmon, Representative Uvalde Lindsey, Marjorie Greenberg, Dr. Tyra Reid, Dr. Charles Green, Dan Honey (sitting in for Jay Bradford), Dianna Varady, Karan Burnette, Eric Moxley, Dr. Loretta Cochran, Karen Massey, Kay Michael, Amanda Holsted, Maureen Bradshaw, and Martha Asti.

Other invited guests were Ms. Tracy Harris, DDS; and Ms. Kimberly Parker, Family Support Advocate at Special Child Northwest Arkansas.

Senator Salmon opened the meeting. The Minutes to the June 15, 2012 minutes were approved by acclamation.

Update on UAMS Department of Pediatrics' CoBALT Project Budget Proposal

Dr. Tyra Reid gave an update on the UAMS' CoBALT project. Dr. Reid's handout explained the UAMS' CoBALT project has trained six pediatric mini-teams. The mini-teams are referring children to early intervention services through their pediatric clinics. Currently, 48 children have received early developmental assessments from their pediatrician without having to be referred to the Dennis Developmental Center and wait for an appointment. Dr. Reid said several mini-teams are receiving PCP referrals from around the state for developmental assessments. The CoBALT project needs \$270,000 one-time funding to add four additional mini-teams and \$700,000 to sustain the program annually.

Presentation of Transition from Public School to Career Education and Rehabilitation Services' Flowchart

Ms. Martha Kay Asti, Department of Education, explained when a student with a disability enters 7th grade, ADE-Special Education administers assessments to determine the student's needs, strengths, preferences and interests in the areas of employment, education/training and independent living skills. As the student enters the 9th grade, the monitoring of his skill assessments and interests continue and the IEP team uses the results to develop a transition plan that includes post-secondary goals, services and courses to reach those goals. As the student progresses through the 12th grade, the IEP team works to provide services included in the transition plan and make post-secondary resources available. Post secondary services are provided by Arkansas Rehabilitation Services to IEP students referred by their school district. Private school students and home school students do not have an IEP and are not involved in the ARS transition process until they are eighteen years of age. Home school students and students

who are enrolled in a private school have a service plan different than an IEP, therefore they are only entitled to a proportionate amount of services that public school students are offered.

Mr. Jim Moreland, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS), explained ARS services help individuals with a disability achieve a specific vocational goal. Many ARS services include funding for on the job training. ARS will pay a vendor to help the individual find a job, and provide support for a job coach. ARS services are terminated after the individual has been placed in the job ninety days. There are many areas within the state that do not have supported employment opportunities. ARS informational materials are available to anyone with a disability.

Mr. Robert Gunter, Career Education, explained technical education courses are available to 7th and 8th grade students with a disability. The student and his parents will meet with the Career Technical Education (CTE) counselor and the IEP team to explore different vocational courses that can be offered as the student progresses through high school. The CTE counselor will provide the necessary adaptive equipment for the student's accommodations while he is enrolled in the CTE course. The CTE counselor will continue to participate in the IEP meetings and provide the necessary accommodations for the student throughout the CTE training. The CTE counselor will provide feedback to the special education teacher regarding the student's progress. Once the student graduates, the relationship between the student and the CTE counselor ends.

Mr. William Walker, Director, Department of Career Education, explained the only authority CTE counselors have with the student is what the school permits. Mr. Walker said CTE services become available to the student after the student graduates high school. Mr. Williams said CTE resources are funneled through the Department of Education.

Mr. Robert Trevino, Commissioner, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, explained the Federal Rehab Act allows ARS to participate in the students transition process. ARS does not have enough funds to hire an adequate number of counselors for every school. ARS is working on a pilot program that involves four full-time CTE counselors to participate in the student's transition program. Mr. Trevino said the pilot program has produced favorable results. CTE is working to be innovative and serve as many schools as funding will allow.

Dr. Green said if the Medicaid Waiver is converted to a state plan, a citizen with a physical or mental disability should be entitled to receive employment services.

Discussion of the Flexibility Waiver for NCLB

Dr. Laura Bednar, Assistant Commissioner Learning Services, Arkansas Department of Education, gave an overview of the Flexibility Waiver for No Child Left Behind (NCLB). She said ADE's goal is that all schools in the state are made aware of the statewide system of support and services that are available under the Flexibility Waiver. The waiver will help schools set high standards and expectations and emphasize goals that are ambitious but attainable for all students. ADE believes this will offer an incentive to improve student growth achievement and graduation in all schools, and identify the schools that need the most assistance.

The waiver will allow schools more incentives and focus to continue improvement for all schools and all districts regardless of their achievement status. The waiver focuses on intensive support and interventions for schools that are struggling the most. With the state-wide system of support, schools will be made aware of services that are available to them.

Mr. Dan Honey, Arkansas Insurance Department, stated autism is included in PPO and HMO health insurance plans

Meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.