

**ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON AUTISM**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**NOVEMBER 20, 2015**

The Arkansas Legislative Task Force on Autism met Friday, November 20, 2015, at 1:00 p.m., in Room 151, State Capitol, Little Rock, Arkansas. Senator Uvalde Lindsey, Senate co-chair, presided.

Task Force members present were: Senator Uvalde Lindsey, Mr. Seth Blomeley, Ms. Karan Burnette, Ms. Tina Davis, Dr. Richard Frye, Ms. Lisa Haley, Ms. Teresa Hardin, Dr. Steve Kahler, Ms. Connie Meeks (*for Dr. Michael Martin*), Ms. Karen Massey, Ms. Robin Lockhart (*for Mr. Eric Moxley*), Dr. Tyra Reid, Ms. Linda Rogers, Ms. Dianna Varady, and Ms. Nancy Wells. Advisory members Dr. Charlie Green, and Ms. Veronica Myers also attended.

Senator Lindsey called the meeting to order.

**Adoption of Minutes from October 16, 2015 [Exhibit C]**

The minutes from the October 16, 2015, meeting were approved by acclamation.

**Compliance Update on Guidelines on the Use of Restraints in Public Schools [Exhibit D]**

Senator Lindsey recognized Ms. Debbie Poulin, Legal Director, Disabilities Rights Arkansas (DRA), and Ms. Theresa Caldwell, attorney, Caldwell Law Office, to address the lack of oversight with the state's public schools abusive use of restraints on students with autism.

**Discussion on Programmatic Priority [Exhibit E]**

Senator Lindsey recognized Dr. Peggy Schaeffer Whitby, Assistant Professor, University of Arkansas-Fayetteville. Dr. Whitby gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding the 39 Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA's) who are currently working in central, northwest and northeast areas of the state. She said of the 39, only 10 offer to supervise BCBA graduates. Dr. Whitby's office is writing an Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) grant. The University will partner with rural school districts that do not have a BCBA. Candidates must be a Special Education teacher with a masters degree and an interest in obtaining a BCBA certificate. The grant will cover cost of books and tuition for 8 candidates each year. Once the first 8 BCBA's graduate from the program, they must continue to work in their school district two years, attend a one-week workshop at the University campus every summer, and supervise upcoming BCBA graduates. The grant will be written each year for a total of five years. Dr. Whitby said there should be a total of 32 BCBA's graduating at the end of the five-year program. Dr. Whitby added her department would greatly appreciate the task force writing letters of support for the program.

Dr. Whitby is requesting \$2.5 million to build Autism Research Centers in rural areas. The Centers will provide support and evidence-based intervention training to parents with autistic children. Dr. Whitby welcomes Southeast Arkansas Education Service Cooperative's partnership with the BCBA program.

Senator Lindsey recognized Ms. Karen Burnette to give an update on the Autism Medicaid Waiver. In June 2015, the waiver application was submitted to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Ms. Burnette said the waiver is currently under a ninety day extension for modifications to meet CMS' requests.

Meeting adjourned at 2:53 p.m.