



Minutes
April 11, 2016
10:00 a.m.

TN School for the Blind
115 Stewarts Ferry Pike
Nashville, TN 37214

Members of Council in Attendance

- Chip Fair, Chair
- Hillary Sims, Vice-Chair
- Alfred M. Hacker
- Brian Brown
- Catherine Knowles
- Chantal Hess-Taylor
- Cleatrice C. McTorry
- David Craig
- Dawn Bradley
- Gayle Feltner
- Mary Meador
- Patricia Valladares
- Shannon Streett
- Shannon Taylor

Members Not in Attendance

- Darlene Walden
- Jason Vance
- Jeff Ker
- Paula Brownyard

TDOE Employees in Attendance

- Joey Hassell, Assistant Commissioner
- Steve Sparks, AC Contact
- Tabatha Siddiqi, AC Contact
- Alison Gauld
- Bill Wilson, Office of General Council
- Blake Shearer
- Evans Murray
- Gary Smith
- Jill Omer
- Joann Lucero
- Kristi Harris
- Rachel Wilkinson
- Ryan Mathis
- Theresa Nicholls

Visitors in Attendance

- Bill O'Donnell
- Loria Richardson
- Ned Andrew Solomon
- Rhonda Thompson
- Sherry Wilds

Objective

- ✓ **To provide policy guidance with respect to Special Education and Related Services for children with disabilities in TN**

Welcome/Introductions

Chip Fair, Chair

- ❖ Farewell to Steve Sparks and Tabatha Siddiqi as department liaisons to the Council.
- ❖ Welcome to Ryan Mathis and Kristi Harris as the new department liaisons to the Council.

Approval of Current Agenda and Minutes (AC Goal 7)

See AC website for agenda

➤ **Action Item**

Council member, Chip Fair, made a motion to approve the agenda with one change recommended: to include a discussion about creating a Program Committee and appointing the committee leader. The motion was seconded by Council member, Hillary Simms.

➤ **Final Action Taken**

The Council voted unanimously in favor of approving the April 11, 2016 agenda with the addition of the Program Committee discussion.

Approval of April 11, 2016 Meeting Minutes

See AC website for October minutes

<http://www.tennessee.gov/education/article/special-education-advisory-council>

➤ **Action Item**

Council member, Alf Hacker, made a motion to approve the January 11, 2016 minutes. The motion was seconded by Council member, Hillary Sims.

➤ **Final Action Taken**

The Council voted unanimously in favor of approving the January 11, 2016 minutes.

Advisory Council Member Spotlight

Chip Fair

- ❖ Shared personal experiences in relation to his own physical disabilities
- ❖ Has watched public consciousness and perception change as the years have passed in regard to individuals with disabilities
- ❖ In years past, children were more tolerant and adults were uncomfortable. Now the reverse is more accurate.

Charter Schools in Tennessee*

Dr. Kristin McGraner

- ❖ Charter School Law passed in 2002
- ❖ 23,000 students in 80 schools
- ❖ National Alliance for Public Charter Schools Conference in Nashville will be held at the Nashville Music City Center on June 26-29, 2016

- ❖ Question – How do you determine, based on how a charter school is typically set up and how they take over neighborhood schools or zoned schools, if a charter school can serve one or more individual students with disabilities who are already students prior to the takeover?
- ❖ Answer – In the application process, there is an entire section devoted to serving students with disabilities whereby you have to outline curriculum, how you'll be responsive to evaluations and eligibility regardless of their background. That is judged as an entire section, in and of, itself which is then aligned to the budget.

- ❖ Question – Do charter schools receive the same funding as state and public schools?
- ❖ Answer – Yes & no. Charter schools receive Title I funds but the district has certain discretions. Charter schools do not receive Title III funds. They do receive IDEA funds - \$1900 per student

- ❖ Question – Do you receive state and local funds?
- ❖ Answer – They receive BEP funds but no capital dollars.

- ❖ Question – If there is a charter school which cannot provide services based on ESLs with IEPs, can the child be transferred to a school which can meet their needs?
- ❖ Answer – Advocate for your rights

- ❖ Question – What is the plan to better train their staff?
- ❖ Answer – The Charter Schools Development Center does a series of professional development which includes Special Education.

- ❖ Question – Are they exempt from all other assessments that all other public schools have to answer?
- ❖ Answer – All local, state, and federal assessments are the same for charter schools.

- ❖ Question – What is the National Alliance for Public Schools?
- ❖ Answer – Represent Public Charter Schools, advocacy, do programming relative to governance and management and curriculum, and research.

**State System Improvement Plan Phase II Review*
(AC Goals 1&6)**

Rachel Wilkinson

- ❖ SSIP report was submitted on April 1
- ❖ Phase II is complete
- ❖ 30 participating districts
- ❖ State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) will finance the SSIP activities

**Disability Criteria Standards Review*
(AC Goals 3,4,5)**

Theresa Nicholls

- ❖ 50 to 75 people volunteered to serve on the Disability Standards Review Committee, which met on March 15.
- ❖ Almost every disability category was recommended for revision.
- ❖ The Advisory Council will receive a copy of the current disability standards, and a copy of the recommended revisions, by the end of April to review and comment on prior to the next council meeting in July. Members are requested to

have all feedback to the speaker 6/1/16, The goal is to combine all of the recommendations, and feedback from relevant stakeholders, to present it to the state board for the final read in October.

- ❖ The ultimate goal is for these revisions to take effect in July 2017.
- ❖ Trainings will take place when revisions are approved.

**TN Assoc. of School Psychologists Update
(AC Goals 3,4,5)**

Theresa Nicholls

- ❖ Discussion has begun on updating the definition of School Psychologist to align it with the school social worker and school counselors.

**Senate Bill 2635/House Bill 2616 (Dyslexia)
(AC Goals 3,4,5)**

Theresa Nicholls

- ❖ Document was developed to provide guidance to parents and educators around dyslexia
- ❖ Legislation is being reviewed regarding how dyslexia and dyslexia screenings might align to the RTI framework.

**Lunch (provided)
(AC Goal 7)**

**Educational Interpreter Task Force Update
(AC Goals 1,4,5)**

Alison Gauld

- ❖ Interpreter policy change states ASL Interpreters must have a Bachelor's degree and pass the performance test.
- ❖ Strictly referring to interpreters of sign language only
- ❖ If districts employ Occupational or Physical Therapists, they are paid out of School Services Personnel Salary Scale. Educational interpreters will now be paid in accordance with the same salary scale if they have a Bachelor's degree or show a commensurate level of experience and training.
- ❖ Issue is student access to quality sign language interpreters.
- ❖ The great majority of training, for those currently employed by districts, occurred in church group classes or clubs. They did not receive training from a certified ASL program.
- ❖ Teachers are the content specialists. Interpreters ensure the content is accessible.
- ❖ Average pay is \$14,000 a year in TN
- ❖ Other states pay \$30,000 to \$40,000
- ❖ The hope is we will retain the quality interpreters we educate, and train, as their

PIE Conference Results*

Ryan Mathis

- ❖ Highest rated PIE Conference to date
- ❖ Overall rating was satisfied and very satisfied

AC Goal Assignments

Chip Fair

- ❖ Small group review session to summarize activities that the AC has undertaken related to each AC goal for FY 16.
- ❖ Possibly change goals at next meeting

Multi State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) Update*

Alison Gauld

(AC Goal 3)

- ❖ Just completed the assessment road show
- ❖ Positive response to this assessment from educators
- ❖ Eligibility remains the same
- ❖ It will take two to three years to get everyone on the schedule
- ❖ Language Arts Assessment closes on May 13
- ❖ Assessment lasts approximately two hours per student
- ❖ Social Studies component of Alt Assessment

Alison Gauld

Content Specialists will weigh in
Optional field test around October
A sample test may be out in February 2017

New Business/Additional Items

Chip Fair

- ❖ Review Council Fact Sheet*
 - **Action Item** Council member, Cleatrice McTorry, made a motion to approve the Advisory Council fact sheet, as is. The motion was seconded by Council member, Hillary Sims.
 - **Final Action Taken**
The Council voted unanimously in favor of approving Advisory Council Fact Sheet.
- ❖ Program Committee created to oversee future agenda items, speakers, and special projects within the advisory council – Hillary Sims will chair & Cleatrice McTorry has volunteered to serve.
- ❖ Proposal to prepare future agendas between meetings at least a month out rather than prepare and share 10 days prior to the next quarterly meeting
 - **Action Item**
Council member, Brian Brown, made a motion to approve the creation of the Program Committee. The motion was seconded by Council member, Chantal Hess-Taylor.
 - **Final Action Taken**
The Council voted unanimously in favor of approving the April 11, 2016 agenda with the addition of the Program Committee discussion.

Call for future meeting suggestions

Chip Fair

(AC Goal 7)

- ❖ Student perspective/voice
- ❖ Project Search participants sharing experiences
- ❖ SKEMA in relation to Occupational Diploma and meaningful work
- ❖ New ECF Waiver through TennCare – opening up 1700 new slots on July 1 for those previously not been served by DIDD. Two priorities are elderly caregivers and Medicaid eligible with an IQ of less than 70.
- ❖ Gateway to Independence
- ❖ Send meeting ideas to the new program committee
- ❖ Member Spotlight volunteer – David Craig

Proposed meeting dates for FY17

Steve Sparks

- ❖ Dates of July 11, October 10, January 9, April 10 were proposed and accepted for FY17 quarterly meetings

Closing Remarks/Adjourn

Chip Fair

- **Action Item**
Council member, David Craig, made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Council member, Hilary Sims.

- **Final Action Taken**
The Council voted unanimously in favor of adjournment.

Upcoming Date(s)

Next Meeting: July 11, 2016

Location: TN School for the Blind

Topic: Ongoing Council procedures/activities

* Meeting handouts and/or PPTs emailed to members after the meeting. Additional copies available upon request to department liaison....Kristi Harris.