

# SPECIAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE

## AGENDA

July 02, 2024

9:30-11:30

In-Person @ CAPSS

(26 Caya Avenue, West Hartford)

### In Attendance

Adler, Jason (online), Currey, Jeffrey (11:05 AM), Feinstein, Andrew, Flaherty, Tara (online), Grove, Michael, Helene, Karen, Klimkiewicz, Bryan, Laubin, Michelle, Lussier, Jennifer, McCarthy, Patrice, Meyer, Kathryn, Rabinowitz, Fran. Rossomando, Ray, Tartaglia, Heather, Turner, Aimee (online), Wanzer, Stephanie, Yankee, Susan (online)

- I. Introduction and remarks by Tri-Chairs
  - a. The introduction of the tri-chair and members of the task force took place.
    - i. New Tri-Chair is Michelle C. Laubin
    - ii. Michelle is a senior partner at Berchem Moses PC.
    - iii. Her practice focuses on education law, particularly special education law and student matters.
    - iv. Michelle hopes that the addition of ConnCase to the representation of the chairmanship will add to the weight and the consensus building around the recommendations that can come from this task force.
    - v. Introduction of all task force members in attendance took place.
  - b. Funding will be discussed today.
  - c. We would like to go to CEA and AFT and ask them to bring teachers so we can hear directly from the teachers why they think people aren't becoming Special Education teachers.
  - d. Andrew would like for the paraprofessional to be available for the meeting also.
  - e. Fran is not here on August 6<sup>th</sup>.
  - f. Stephanie Wanzer stated that people are on vacation in August. She would prefer that we use September to get practitioners.
  - g. Michael Grove suggested that if we let teachers join in September they can join remotely.
  - h. Michelle suggested that we meet in August and discuss funding and save the practitioners for September.
  - i. Tara would like Dawn Dickau paraeducator of the year be invited to the September meeting.

- i. Dawn Dickau of DePaolo Middle School in Southington was named Connecticut's 2024 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year.
- j. 2 spots on task force available
  - i. 1 (parent or guardian of a student who is enrolled in a public school and receiving special education services – formally held by Sarel Alessi (resigned))
  - ii. 1 (appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives, one of whom is a representative of the Connecticut Association of School Administrators) ? Anthony Ditrio, Principal, Norwalk Public Schools?
  - iii. 1 (The position of representative from an educator preparation program at a public institution of higher education has not yet been filled.)

## II. Discussion of Statutory Responsibilities and Deadline

- a. Chairman Jeffrey Currey of the Education Committee joined the group.
- b. He thanked the task force for their work thus far and appreciates the preliminary report
- c. Jeffrey Currey thinks it is very important to put everything into the report
- d. If you find a consensus on certain items it will make legislation a whole lot easier. However, there will be outstanding issues that you don't have a consensus on. If those are left out of the report you would be doing a disservice to the process.
- e. We want to make 2025 a session of special education and the education committee.
- f. We want to make some movement.
  - i. We want to be able to find the resources.
  - ii. We want to talk about ways for funding.
  - iii. We want to talk about ways, and pipelines for more educators.
  - iv. We want to talk about more support.
  - v. We want to talk about building out certain facilities for therapeutic centers and incentivizing, districts to do that (possibly school construction).
  - vi. Even things a bit more sensitive (suspensions, exclusions, etc.) need to be in the report.
- g. We need to continue to get the administration to focus and care about K-12 education, to help lead on that, and to understand that special education needs those additional supports.
- h. Andy asked Jeff Currey what problems he is seeing in Special Education
  - i. Everything I know is from families, teachers, and those walking in it day-to-day
  - ii. We are NOT fulfilling our federal obligations – everyone is doing the best they can but we are not fulfilling our obligations.
  - iii. We are using support staff in positions they don't belong in.
  - iv. It is important to know that this is not just happening in special education.
  - v. He understands that everyone is working to the bone he is not trying to disrespect anyone.
  - vi. Every possible way to help our districts should be put out there
  - vii. Andy – we need to get the findings report out. Jeff Currey stated that it is a matter of scheduling right now.

- viii. Michelle – resource issue is fundamental. Corrective action – becomes a chicken-and-egg problem. Resolving the resource issues will help.
- ix. Stephanie Wanzer – Many districts have special education directors that are overseeing PPTs and special education teachers but do not have a special education background.
- x. Administrators have certification but do not have the lens of special education.
- xi. Case managers are responsible for entering information into CT SEDS.

#### IV. Discussion of Workplan

##### A. Report on regional public participation sessions by Bryan Klimkiewicz

- I. Since our last meeting, I have had the opportunity to collaborate with Heather Tartaglia (on behalf of the RESC Alliance) and Jane Hampton (on behalf of CPAC) to draft a Special Education Task Force Regional Input/Feedback Session proposal for Task Force consideration.
- II. Proposed number of In-Person Sessions: 6 (1 at each RESC)
- III. Proposed number of Online Sessions: 2 (1 English and 1 Spanish)
- IV. Registration Process: CPAC will coordinate using the Event Brite format. Special Accommodations may be requested including the need for an interpreter at each meeting.
- V. Proposed Location, Date, and Time: All dates are being held until 1 date/time is selected for each RESC. The Task Force can assist in identifying. We will hold 2 morning, 2 mid-day, and 2 late afternoon/evening sessions.

	<b>AM Session 10-11:30 (Capacity, Date and Address)</b>	<b>Midday Session 12-1:30 (Capacity, Date and Address)</b>	<b>PM Session 4:30-6pm (Capacity, Date and Address)</b>
ACES	9/23 205 Skiff Street, Hamden 50 people	9/25 205 Skiff Street, Hamden 50 people	9/18 205 Skiff Street, Hamden 50 people
CES	9//19 40 Lindman Drive Trumbull 50 people	9//19 40 Lindman Drive Trumbull 50 people	9/25 40 Lindeman Drive Trumbull 50 people
CREC	9/23-111 Charter Oak, Hartford- 50 people or 9/30-111 Charter Oak, Hartford- 50 people	9/23-111 Charter Oak, Hartford- 50 people or 9/30-111 Charter Oak, Hartford- 50 people	9/23-111 Charter Oak, Hartford- 50 people or 9/30-111 Charter Oak, Hartford- 50 people
EASTCONN	9/16/24- 376 Hartford Turnpike, Hampton Cedar/Chestnut Capacity: 50	9/24/24-376 Hartford Turnpike, Hampton Room A Capacity:50	9/26/24 376 Hartford Turnpike, Hampton Room A Capacity: 50
Ed Advance	9/17-355 Goshen Road, Litchfield 50 people or 10/1-355 Goshen Road, Litchfield 50 people	9/17-355 Goshen Road, Litchfield 50 people or 10/1-355 Goshen Road, Litchfield 50 people	9/17-355 Goshen Road, Litchfield 50 people or 10/1-355 Goshen Road, Litchfield 50 people
LEARN	9/30 at 44 Hatchetts Hill Road, Old Lyme, 50 people	9/24 at 44 Hatchetts Hill Road, Old Lyme, 50 people	9/19 at 44 Hatchetts Hill Road, Old Lyme, 50 people

#### Meeting Format:

- 90 min in length.
- Facilitated by RESC Alliance, CPAC, and CSDE
- Task force members are invited to attend, but will not have an active roll in the facilitation/presentation. Task Force members will be identified/recognized, and their contributions will be acknowledged.
- 15 min overview of Task Force charge and Summary of Findings
- For 60 minutes, participants will work in groups and have facilitated prompts at each table to provide input on the findings
- 15 min summary/next steps to close the meeting
- Discussions/concepts will be documented and shared by each group
- Participants will have an opportunity to complete a survey/feedback form at the close of the session

- B. Exercise to set priority areas
  - I. Looked at the responses – 13 people responded to the survey
    - i. The majority of priority areas chosen in the survey were
      - 1. Excess Cost Reimbursement
      - 2. Staff Shortages (Discuss in September)
      - 3. Other State Funding for Special Education
- C. Discussion of research resources available to refine and support possible recommendations.
  - I. Run by the RESC but embedded into the public school classrooms
  - II. There are district examples where districts are tuitioning students into programs
  - III. Happening more informally than through a RESC format.
  - IV. Regionalized programs may work.
  - V. Heather can get a list of programs or regionalized programs that are working.
  - VI. Fran is unable to attend the August 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. Andy & Michelle will run the meeting.
  - VII. Fran will follow up with CEA/AFT – the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of September – Make sure Lisa Hammersley will be attending in September.
- V. Adjournment – 11:30 AM