

SPECIAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES

Location: CAPSS, 26 Caya Avenue, West Hartford, CT

Date: October 21, 2024

Time: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Meeting began at 9:06 AM

In Attendance

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|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1) Adler, Jason (online) | 13) Laubin, Michelle |
| 2) Bowman, Alicia (online) | 14) Lussier, Jennifer |
| 3) Cole, Dawn | 15) McCarthy, Patrice |
| 4) CT-N (online) | 16) Rabinowitz, Frances |
| 5) Feinstein, Andrew | 17) Rosado Burch, Lou (online) |
| 6) Flaherty, Tara | 18) Rossomando, Ray (online) |
| 7) Flippone, Rosalie (online) | 19) Scheinberg Meyer, Kathryn |
| 8) Grove, Mike | 20) Tartaglia, Heather |
| 9) Hammersley, Lisa | 21) Turner, Aimee |
| 10) Helene, Karen | 22) Wanzer, Stephanie |
| 11) Jackson, Typhanie (online) | 23) Yankee, Susan (online) |
| 12) Klimkiewicz, Bryan (online) | |

I. Continuation of Recommendation Reports

A. Continuation of Eligibility Recommendations – Aimee Turner

I. Discussion began with recommendation 7.

7. The CSDE shall revise the MTSS/SRBI guidelines to include current research. MTSS shall be implemented by certified staff in all developmental areas.

B. Discussion on Eligibility Recommendations 8-11

8. The state shall provide a standard eligibility process for gifted and talented to provide opportunities for students of diverse backgrounds (i.e. minorities, low-income, multi-lingual).
9. The CSDE will publish best practices regarding low-cost gifted and talented services students maximizing their potential (including inclusive services)
10. Investigate the development/provision of regional services through RESCs for gifted/talented students.

11. The CSDE will develop standardized gifted and talented forms

C. Presentation of Service Recommendations – Alicia Bowman

1. Increase pathways to special education certification.
2. Ensure that certification pathways align to preparation standards and research-based, high-leverage practices.
3. Collect and analyze certification requirements that are identified as barriers.
4. Ensure pathways are funded so that there is equity across the state, including tuition payments upfront rather than as a reimbursement as that can be a barrier for some people.
5. We support the efforts of the recently established Connecticut Educator Preparation and Certification Board in looking to redefine/update the preparation and certification requirements to increase the number of qualified special educators.
6. We recommend that districts are more proactive in building family and community partnerships. In collaboration with the CSDE, districts shall provide training/resources to families on understanding special education options/rights and share culturally-responsive practices recognizing the diverse needs of students and their families. Potentially, the CSDE in collaboration in CPAC would develop and publish a family resource toolkit, which would include best practices for school and family communication.
7. Caseload/workload is a significant factor in the retention of special educators; therefore, we recommend that CSDE research and define caseload and workload. Along with definitions, the CSDE should provide best practices and guidance for districts in determining reasonable caseloads/workloads. Further, the task force recommends that clerical tasks are separated from educator workloads and that districts hire clerical workers for administrative tasks (scheduling PPT meetings, coordinating transportation, etc.).
8. Professional learning and mandated training for paraeducators should be offered and tracked statewide through on-line modules. The task force recommends micro credentialing and badging as a way to support the advancement of best practice and career advancement.

9. We recommend that districts leverage the new Educator Evaluation and Support Guidelines to provide multiple pathways for participation in professional learning, so that it is differentiated - meaningful and impactful for ALL.
10. We recommend that the CSDE establish a collaborative coalition to examine the potential role of Generative AI in special education (impact on students, families, and educators).

Key Topics Discussed:

- 1) Increase pathways to special education certification.
- 2) Address barriers to recruitment and retention.
- 3) Emphasize the need for upfront tuition payments.
- 4) Discussed the need for professional learning and mandated training for paraprofessionals.
- 5) Suggested micro-credentialing and badging to track training across districts.
- 6) Emphasized the importance of onboarding and relevant experience.
- 7) Recommended increasing starting salaries and providing health benefits.
- 8) Discussed the impact of the para-pro exam as a barrier to employment.
- 9) Suggested examining and potentially revising the content and choice of the paraprofessional exam.
- 10) Recommended that CSDE research and define reasonable caseloads and workloads.
- 11) Suggested separating clerical tasks from educator workloads.
- 12) Proposed establishing a collaborative coalition to examine the potential role of generative AI in special education.

The remainder of original agenda will be discussed at the next meeting on November 5, 2024

D. Presentation of Funding Recommendations – Patrice McCarthy

E. Andrew Feinstein Recommendations

1. Tracking Achievement Gap
2. Oversight of APSEPs
3. Grants to create in district capacity
4. Parental observations

5. Cameras in classrooms
 6. Ban on seclusion; same day notice of restraint
 7. Pay bonus for sped teachers; minimum pay rate for paraeducators
 8. Support for school based health centers.
- F. Consensus on Presented Recommendations/Further Discussion – Tri Chairs
- G. Moving Forward – Tri Chairs
- H. The Report
- I. Inclusion of Consensus Only:
- I. Consensus and All Recommendations with a 2/3 Vote;
 - II. Consensus and Any Recommendation from a Task Force Member

Next Meeting – Tuesday, November 5, 2024