

**ACCEPTED** LTF Minutes and Proceedings  
Wednesday, April 5, 2023  
Allegheny Intermediate Unit  
Local Task Force  
475 East Waterfront Drive  
Homestead, PA 15120-1144

### **Members Present**

Mr. Regis Charlton  
Mrs. Debra Efke  
Ms. Jean Ericsson  
Mrs. Mary Evrard  
Mrs. Penny Gardner  
Mrs. Debbie Garvic  
Mr. Dave Giusti, Chairperson  
Ms. Amy Guthrie  
Ms. Natalie Krall, Recording Secretary  
Mrs. Ursula Lesic  
Mr. Jim Lilley  
Dr. Sue Mariani  
Mrs. Nicole Meier  
Ms. Meredith Peterson, Co-Chairperson  
Mr. Brian Welles

### **Guests Present**

There were five guests present at this meeting.

Ms. Meredith Peterson, Co-Chairperson of the Local Task Force on the Right to Education (LTF #3) called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM on April 5, 2023.

### **I. Welcome, Introductions, Excused Members**

Members and guests introduced themselves and their affiliations. The following LTF member was excused from this meeting: Leeanna Lawson.

### **II. Review/Acceptance of the Minutes of February 1, 2023**

The minutes from the February meeting were reviewed. A motion was made to accept the Minutes. Motion was made by Debbie Efke and seconded by Jean Ericsson.

### **III. Treasurer's Report – Ms. Meredith Peterson**

Ms. Peterson reviewed the April treasurer's report with the membership.

#### **IV. Consumer Concerns**

A parent brought up a concern regarding their child's private school LEA sharing their child's documents with non-authorized parties. The parent also had a concern about their child's reading level which is not at the 4<sup>th</sup> grade level at this time. The parent has been in contact with the Peal Center and other advocates and is still experiencing these issues. Regis Charlton from the Center for Independent Living offered his services to this parent. Several members of the LTF suggested that the parent contact Pennsylvania Department of Education – Bureau of Special Education to file a complaint regarding these issues.

#### **V. Guest Speaker – Ms. Jacqueline Lembeck – McAndrews, Mehalick, Connolly, Hulse, and Ryan PC**

Ms. Lembeck presented information to the membership on A Parent's Roadmap to Developing an Appropriate IEP or 504 Plan. Ms. Lembeck explained to the membership very detailed information on how an IEP is developed and how children are identified as a special education student. She also covered the following information in her presentation:

- Identification and Evaluation
- Steps in the Evaluation Process for Special Education
- Classification of Disabilities that are Eligible for IEP.
- FAPE (Free And Appropriate Public Education)
- 504 Explanation
- Dispute Resolution

If you have any further questions, Ms. Lembeck can be reached via e-mail at: [jlembeck@mcandrewslaw.com](mailto:jlembeck@mcandrewslaw.com)

#### **VI. Informational Items**

##### **A. ODS – Mrs. Mary Evrard**

- Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) Office of Developmental Supports (ODS) registers eligible Allegheny County residents with • Intellectual Disability (ID) • Autism • Developmental Disability (DD) prior to age 9 and • Medically Complex Condition (MCC) prior to age 21 to connect them to Supports Coordination and other supports and services. [Diagnosis Eligibility Requirements for stakeholders](#)
- ODS webpage at <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Programs-Services/Disabilities/Intellectual-Disability-Autism.aspx>

Please reach Mary at [mevrard@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:mevrard@alleghenycounty.us) or 412-253-1251:

- If you have any questions about supports and services for individuals with an intellectual disability and / or autism. or  
Your student is not working with a Supports Coordinator or

You are registered with ODS and working with a Supports Coordinator and do not have waiver funding you may be able to receive Family Directed Support Services (FDSS) funding. This funding is provided under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

- If you need information about supports and services for individuals with disabilities, resources for basic needs for everyone or funding sources for various needs.
- To sign up for regular ODS informational e-mails for all stakeholders.

Mrs. Evrard will continue to provide information through periodic emails to the LTF.

#### **B. AIU – Special Education – Mr. Brian Welles**

Mr. Welles informed the membership that the AIU is currently working with Project Seeks to provide social and emotional learning to 10 school districts, 3 universities and 9 community based agencies. Project Seeks is funded by the Allegheny County Health Department as a \$10 million grant for 2 years.

#### **C.– AIU – Training and Consultation Program – Mrs. Leanna Lawson**

Mrs. Lawson was not in attendance at this meeting.

#### **D. Superintendent Update – Dr. Sue Mariani**

Dr. Mariani informed the membership that Duquesne City School District has received Project Seeks funding for a partnership with Pressley Ridge School for mental health services.

#### **D. LTF/STF Update – Ms. Meredith Peterson**

Ms. Peterson informed the membership about Pattan’s Special Education PRO Grab and Go Series on YouTube.

#### **E. MH Update – Allegheny County MH Children’s Team**

The Allegheny County MH Children’s Team was not in attendance at this meeting.

#### **F. Right to Education – Ms. Amy Guthrie**

Ms. Guthrie informed the membership about the following items:

##### **I. Resources from Achieva-** <https://www.achieva.info/>

**A. Advocacy- Individualized support** to assist families in navigating special education and support systems (e.g., Early Intervention, Intellectual Disability, Mental Health, Autism); 412-995-5000 ext. 486.

Join us on Monday, April 24, 6:30-8:00 PM: “Who? What? When? Where? Adult Protective Services.” <https://meet.google.com/sdd-nrij-pyj>; for more info, contact Melissa Skiffen at [mskiffen@achieva.info](mailto:mskiffen@achieva.info).

**B. Achieva Family Trust-** information on webinars, long-term planning, and other resources on the [Achieva Family Trust](#) website

1. For information on the Residual grant program:  
<http://achievafamilytrust.org/charitable-residual-account/>

2. Webinars/ Presentations:

a. This [Achieva Family Trust webinars](#) link accesses **archived webinars**

**C. Achieva’s Empowered Voices Leadership group for self-advocates;** it meets on Thursdays from 6-8pm on zoom. [Achieva.info/ EV Meeting](#)

**D. The Cecil and David Rosenthal Memorial Fund** can provide grants to help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities live more fully included in their community. [For more information and to apply see this link.](#)

**E. Achieva’s Compass newsletter** [March 30, 2023](#)

**F. Autism Connection** <https://autismofpa.org/>; [News@AutismofPAII](mailto:News@AutismofPAII). **Special Education Topics/ Resources**

**A. PaTTAN (PA Training and Technical Assistance Network)-** [Family Engagement newsletter](#)

[PaTTAN Pod](#)

**B. Transition;**

**1. Post-secondary initiatives** for students with Intellectual/ Developmental Disabilities (IDD)-

a. [Think College](#); PA Inclusive Higher Education Consortium <https://pihec.com/>

b. Achieva Post-Secondary College Planning Project 412-995-5000 ext. 486

c. US DOE OSEP guidance issued 1-26-22: Postsecondary courses can be included in a student’s IEP transition plan. When deemed necessary for FAPE, the LEA is responsible for ensuring that the service is provided.

d. [PEAT Inclusive Apprenticeship Programs](#)

e. **For Pittsburgh Public Schools graduates with IEPs:** [Dr. Kaye Cupples scholarship](#)

**2. PEAL-** <https://www.pealcenter.org/>; [Events](#)

a. [PEAL's Youth Resources for Transition](#)

b. [Health Matters: Supporting Children & Youth with Disabilities](#) April 20 @ 9:00 am - 3:00 pm EDT Rodef Shalom Congregation, 4905 Fifth Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15213 April 20, 2023, 9:00am -3:00pm.

c. [Transition Discoveries](#)

**3. Transition Coordinating Council of Allegheny County (TCCAC):** [Padlet and recording](#) NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY MARCH 15TH  
IN PERSON ONLY! 9:00AM-2:00PM REGISTRATION WILL BE FORTHCOMING!!

4. Person-centered planning- <https://www.lifecoursetools.com/>

**5. Family Supports:** a. [PA Parent Alliance](#) [IEP Bootcamp Signup](#)  
b. [Allegheny Family Network](#)

**C. Short-term Online Speech from TechOWL:**

Find the Just SO announcement below and a flier here

<https://www.alleghenycounty.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=6442480150>

The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) is excited to announce a new program available for any individual registered with ODP\*.

ODP has funded online Speech and Language Pathology services through TechOWL at the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University.

Individuals and their families/teams can receive up to 10 hours of virtual services from a licensed and certified speech-language pathologist (SLP). A SLP can work with your team to:

- Assess current communication
- Recommend a communication focus
- Develop a communication support plan
- Teach practical strategies for communication
- Select, set up, and/or customize a communication device, if recommended
- Plan for getting an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) device, including writing an insurance report, if necessary
- Troubleshoot communication strategies, AAC devices, and more

If you are interested in this new, free program go to <https://aaccommunity.net/so-speech-odp/>.

For questions, contact TechOWL at 1-800-204-7428 or [techowl@temple.edu](mailto:techowl@temple.edu).

**III. Legislative/ systems advocacy-** *Update from Nicole Meier Emery*

**A. The Arc Pennsylvania;**

*In Touch* newsletter [March 30, 2023](#)  
[TechOWL's free courses on Augmentative and Alternative Communication](#)

1. **Include me** education resources: <https://includemepa.org/e-learning/>
2. **Arc Discovery Employment Transitions (ADEPT):** <https://includemepa.org/what-we-do/adept/>
3. **Policy Information Exchange newsletter:** *A Slice of PIE*, [Volume 23, Issue 3, 2022](#) from the PA Developmental Disabilities Council, with information on the state budget, current legislation, and other topics.
  1. Legislative Updates:
    1. Representative Dan Miller (Allegheny) introduced House Bill 746 which would codify the right of people with disabilities to accessible digital content on all state and local government websites.
    2. Representative Jessica Benham (Allegheny) and Miller (Allegheny) introduced **House Bill 574** which would apply the special education funding formula to PA charter schools.
    3. Representative Joe Webster (Montgomery) introduced **House Bill 261** which would extend special education enrollment due to COVID-19.
    4. Senator Lisa Baker (Luzerne) introduced Senate Bill 506 which would consider strengthening PA's guardianship laws.

PA **Whole-Home Repairs program** opened on Dec. 12. [Link for more info](#)

#### **B. PA School funding:**

1. **PA Schools Work** <https://paschoolswork.org/resources/webinars/>
2. **Advocacy tools-** [School district data](#); [Advocacy Toolkit](#)

#### **C. Office of Developmental Programs:**

1. Autism and Intellectual Disabilities in PA: <https://aidinpa.org/>; ASERT: <https://paautism.org/resources/>;
2. [My ODP Podcast](#) covers topics relevant to supporting individuals with disabilities. The current topic is self-determination. [AID in PA](#) – a resource collection for Pennsylvanians in the Autism and Intellectual Disability communities.
3. **ODP Launches New Program - Just SO (Short-term Online) Speech Services**

ODP has funded online Speech and Language Pathology services through TechOWL at the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University. Individuals and their families/teams can receive up to 10 hours of virtual services from a licensed and certified speech-language pathologist (SLP). A SLP can work with your team to:

- Assess current communication
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**D. The Arc of the US:** <https://thearc.org/>

[Take Action](#) Tell Congress: No cuts to Medicaid!

Share your story: Why do HCBS Matter?

Share Your Story: SSI Asset Limits

[Virtual Program Library](#)

[Action Center](#) – toolkit for advocacy- factsheets, social media, sample letters to the editor. Congressional districts are changing. Civic action center to register to vote, info on getting out the vote.

**E. Western PA Disability History and Action Consortium:** *Using Disability History to Ensure Disability Rights*

**F. FISA Foundation:** Race & Disability [Recordings of past programs](#)

**G. PA Developmental Disabilities Council (PADDC):** [Outlooks Newsletter, Fall, 2022](#)

H. Frick Park Environmental Center- seeking public input for Sensory Classroom proposal:



[Frick Environmental Center Sensory Classroom | Engage Pittsburgh](#)

The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, the City of Pittsburgh, community organizations, and other key stakeholders will plan and design a fully inclusive Sensory Classroom geared towards learners of all abilities at the Frick Environmental Center (FEC). The project will create a series of different sensory experiences and teaching moments of various sizes and scales, organized along an accessible ...

### **G. Disability Options Network – Mr. Regis Charlton**

Mr. Charlton informed the membership that his Penn Hills office has just hired a new employee. He currently is looking for an employee for his Greensburg office. He also informed the membership that the Dan Miller Summit will be on May 11, 2023 and more information can be found on their website at: [www.disabilitysummit.org](https://www.disabilitysummit.org)

### **H. Arc of PA – Mrs. Nicole Meier**

Mrs. Meier informed the membership that the Arc of PA will be holding a webinar for children on April 18, 2023 and April 25, 2023 that will discuss the book “You Got A Friend in Me”.

### **I. OVR – Mr. Jim Lilley**

Mr. Lilley informed the membership that OVR is currently getting ready for their summer programs for their participants. They currently have three program running this summer including:

- Municipality Program – 30 Municipalities participating this summer in the OVR program.
- CVS Program – 5 Locations are participating and students are going to be working at the CVS retail stores for 10 weeks and must be 16 years old to participate in the program.
- Penn Hills SD Work Experience Program – 8 students will be participating in the profession connection experience with the district.

Mr. Lilley also informed the membership that OVR has also hired 8 new counselors for their program.

## **VII. Committee Update**

### **A. Parent Assistance Line**

There was no phone calls made to the Parent Assistance Line for the month of February and March.



**B. Cyclical Monitoring – Mrs. Debbie Efke**

Mrs. Efke informed the membership that the following school district will be having Cyclical Monitoring on the following dates:

Elizabeth Forward School District – 4/17/23

If anyone has any information on this school district, please contact Debra Efke.

**VII. Old Business**

There was no old business reported at this meeting.

**VII. New Business**

There was no new business discussed at this meeting.

**IX. Membership Rounder**

Everyone wished each other a Happy Easter!

**X. Motion for Adjournment**

A motion was made for adjournment.

Motion was made by Debbie Efke and seconded by Dave Giusti.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:42 PM.