

**APPROVED** LTF Minutes and Proceedings  
Wednesday, December 7, 2022  
Allegheny Intermediate Unit  
Local Task Force  
475 East Waterfront Drive  
Homestead, PA 15120-1144

**Members Present**

Mr. Regis Charlton  
Mrs. Mary Evrard  
Mrs. Penny Gardner  
Mrs. Debbie Garvic  
Mr. Dave Giusti, Chairperson  
Ms. Amy Guthrie  
Ms. Ashley Kostrub  
Ms. Natalie Krall, Recording Secretary  
Mrs. Leanna Lawson  
Mrs. Ursula Lesic  
Mr. Jim Lilley  
Dr. Sue Mariani  
Mrs. Nicole Meier  
Ms. Meredith Peterson, Co-Chairperson  
Mr. Carl Shandor  
Ms. Melissa Thomas  
Ms. Denise Wagner  
Mr. Brian Welles  
Mrs. Heather Zak

**Guests Present**

There were four 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 6:35 PM on December 7, 2022.

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

Members and guests introduced themselves and their affiliations. The following members were excused from this meeting: Cindy Duch and Debbie Efke

**II. Review/Acceptance of the Minutes of November 2, 2022**

The minutes from the November meeting were reviewed. A motion was made to accept the minutes. Motion was made by Heather Zak and Debbie Garvic.

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

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

### **IV. Consumer Concerns**

A parent from the Gateway SD brought up an ongoing concern with the school district getting a driver to drive her son to his private school. The district is currently providing professional development to a driver that will be able to drive her son but the driver is currently not ready yet. Amy Guthrie from Achieva is currently trying to assist the parent with this matter.

### **V. Informational Items**

#### **A. ODS – Mrs. Mary Evrard**

Mrs. Evrard will continue to provide information through periodic emails and shared the following items with the membership:

- 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 IDS 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 for individuals with disabilities or resources for basic needs, please contact me by e-mail or phone [mevrard@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:mevrard@alleghenycounty.us) 412-253-1251.

Visit the ODS webpage here: <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Programs-Services/Disabilities/Intellectual-Disability-Autism.aspx>

Learn about *Timely and helpful information and resources* here <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=6442456626>

And access a *Community and service systems* resource list here <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=6442467069>

Please contact Mary to sign up for ODS informational e-mails.

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

Mr. Welles informed the membership that Allegheny County and the AIU have received a grant for mental health services for 10 school districts to use over the next 10 years.

Mr. Welles also informed the membership that there is currently a lot of vacant positions at the AIU Center schools.

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

Mrs. Lawson informed the membership that there is a lot of new staff members in the school districts that currently need professional development and technical assistance training.

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

Dr. Mariani informed the membership that she was recently inducted into the Western PA Association of Superintendents.

Dr. Mariani also informed the membership that Duquesne City SD is in need of personal care assistants.

**D. LTF/STF Update – Mr. Dave Giusti and Ms. Meredith Peterson**

Ms. Peterson and Mr. Giusti informed the membership that they will send e-mails on webinars and surveys from the State Task Force to the membership as they receive them.

**E. MH Update – Allegheny County MH Children’s Team- Ms. Ashley Kostrub and Ms. Melissa Thomas**

Ms. Kostrub and Ms. Thomas informed the membership that the Allegheny County MH Children’s Team is currently receiving funding for transition age youth as well as adults for mental health services.

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

Ms. Guthrie informed the membership about the following items:

**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.

**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. [Preparing Transition Students for the Workforce and to be Financially Successful](#) Dec. 6, 10:00 AM

b. 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** [Nov. 23, 2022](#)

**F. Autism Connection** <https://autismofpa.org/>

## **II. Special Education Topics/ Resources**

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

[Transition Tidbits, Oct. 2022](#)

[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; Youth Development Trainings](#)- Every Other Friday, from 12:00-1:00 pm on Zoom.

[Youth Virtual Coffee Drop Ins](#), every Thursday at 12PM

b. Transition Tuesdays [Archived webinars](#)

c. [Transition Discoveries](#)

**3. Transition Coordinating Council of Allegheny County (TCCAC): Jan. 18, 9AM-12PM** [Meeting schedule & registration November 2022 TCCAC meeting padlet](#)

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

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

b. [Allegheny Family Network](#)

### **C. Office of Civil Rights**

[Factsheet- FAPE for students during pandemic under 504](#) – Students with disabilities may be entitled to Compensatory Services if they did not receive appropriate evaluations or services during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**D. OSERS-** US Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services:

[Mar 24 letter to Educators and Parents regarding new CDC recommendations](#)

If students are at higher risk of hospitalization and or death from COVID, that IEP or 504-plan team needs to ensure that they are able to receive FAPE safely. In addition, schools are obligated to make necessary modifications/accommodations to do that without segregating students with disabilities. One option might be, on a case-by-case basis, expecting others who interact with them to wear masks. Another might be to have smaller groups of nondisabled peers for instruction so they can be included in an atmosphere with fewer risks.

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

#### **A. The Arc Pennsylvania;**

In Touch newsletter [Oct. 27, 2022 Voting and Disability Toolkit from Disability Rights PA](#)

[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.

- [Senate Bill 1333](#) proposes updates to Pennsylvania Guardianship Laws. The legislation is now eligible to be brought forward for a vote by the full Senate.
- [Senate Resolution 339](#) recognizes October as Disability Employment Awareness Month in Pennsylvania. The bill has been referred to the Senate Rules and Executive Nominations Committee.
- [H.B. 404 / S.B. 1269](#) Children’s Mental Health Ombudsman; Referred to Aging and Youth, June 14, 2022

#### **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/>;

2. ASERT: <https://paautism.org/resources/>;

3. [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.

**D. The Arc of the US:** [Capitol Insider, Nov. 28, 2022](#)

- **Increase asset limits for people receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** so people can save for emergencies instead of being forced to live in poverty. The asset limit has not been updated since 1989!
- **Make the Money Follows the Person (MFP) program permanent** to assist people with disabilities and seniors to move back home after time in a nursing home or congregate setting. This program has already helped over 100,000 people move back home, but it needs to be made permanent.
- **End the use of torture devices at the Judge Rotenberg Center in Massachusetts.** This is the only place in the country where people with disabilities are shocked using electric shock devices.
  - [Link to Take Action](#)

[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.

U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living  
[National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers](#)- Opportunities for public comment until Nov. 30, 2022, for more information: <https://acl.gov/CaregiverStrategy>; [Click here for online form to submit comments](#)

**[E. Western PA Disability History and Action Consortium](#)**: Using Disability History to Ensure Disability Rights

**F. FISA Foundation**: [Race + Disability Continuing the Conversation, Nov. 17 1-4:30PM](#); [Recordings of past programs](#)

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

**H. National Aviary** Sensory Friendly Mornings are from **10 a.m. - 12 p.m.** on the following dates in 2022: **December 12**. Admission to Sensory Friendly Mornings is **free** by contacting [info@aviary.org](mailto:info@aviary.org) or 412.323.7235. Reserving tickets is required to prevent crowding.

**I. Special Olympics Young Athletes (ages 2-7)** Sundays, December 4 from 10 - 11 a.m. Location: William Pitt Union (WPU), 3959 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh 15260; For more information, contact [pittsopaya@gmail.com](mailto:pittsopaya@gmail.com).

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

Mr. Charlton informed the membership that his organization will be holding a peer group at the Panera Bread in Bakery Square the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of each month.

Mr. Charlton also informed the membership that his organization assists individuals with disabilities with independent living as well as housing services. They also assist individuals with employment services at this time.

Mr. Charlton also informed the membership that the Disability Options Network held their Thanksgiving Luncheon at Burgatory.

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

Mrs. Meier informed the membership that the Arc of PA will be holding an after school hangout series from 4:30 PM – 5:30 PM online. The December session will cover All the World's A Stage . Please register on the Arc of PA website at: <https://thearcpa.org> if you are interested in attending this session.

The Arc of PA will be holding two book studies for children in the following age ranges:

Ages 8-16 – Out of My Mind

Ages 17 and Older – Good Kings, Bad Kings

## **I. OVR – Mr. Jim Lilley**

Mr. Lilley informed the membership that OVR is currently in the classroom and assisting students with obtaining their services.

Mr. Lilley also informed the membership that the OVR Early Reach Program will be starting different programs in school district classrooms starting this spring.

Mr. Lilley also informed the membership that OVR is currently experiencing a worker shortage at this time.

## **VI. Committee Update**

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

There was one phone call to the Parent Assistance Line for the month of November 2022 and it was from a parent who needed an advocate.

### **B. Cyclical Monitoring – Mr. Dave Giusti**

Mr. Giusti informed the membership that the following school district will be having Cyclical Monitoring on the following date:

Hampton SD – 12/5/22

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**

A motion was made to nominate Carl Shandor as a new member of Local Task Force.

Motion was made by Amy Guthrie and seconded by Dave Giusti.

Motion was discussed.

Motion was passed unanimously.

A motion was made to nominate Denise Wagner as a new member of the Local Task Force.

Motion was made by Amy Guthrie and seconded by Dave Giusti.

Motion was discussed.

Motion was passed unanimously.

## **IX. Membership Rounder**

Everyone wished each other a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Meredith Peterson informed the membership that PALS Camp for children with intellectual disabilities will be taking place this summer from 7/11/23 thru 7/16/23 at the University of Pittsburgh.

## **X. Motion for Adjournment**

A motion was made for adjournment.

Motion was made by Heather Zak and seconded by Brian Welles.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM.