**ACCEPTED** Minutes and Proceedings

Wednesday, February 6, 2019

Allegheny Intermediate Unit

Local Task Force

475 East Waterfront Drive

Homestead, PA 15120-1144

# **Members Present**

Mr. Regis Charlton

Ms. Cynthia Grace Devine-Kepner

Mrs. Cindy Duch

Mrs. Debra Efkeman, Chairperson

Mrs. Mary Evrard

Mrs. Penny Gardner

Mrs. Janice Geniviva

Ms. Amy Guthrie

Mr. Clint Hauser

Ms. Sharon Janosik, Co-Chairperson

Ms.Christa Jones

Ms. Natalie Krall, Recording Secretary

Ms. Leanna Lawson

Ms. Sue Moyer

Ms. Heidi Sasson

Ms. Michelle Walker

Mr. Brian Welles

Mrs. Susan Wuenstel

# **Guests Present**

There were four guests present at this meeting.

Ms. Sharon Janosik, Co-Chairperson of the Local Task Force on the Right to Education (LTF) called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM on February 6, 2019.

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

Members and guests introduced themselves and their affiliations.

The following member have been excused from this meeting: Iris Heiser and Marci Katona.

**II. Guest Speaker – Best Buddies Pennsylvania – Ms. Nicole Meier**

Ms. Meier informed the membership that Best Buddies is an international nonprofit 501(c3) organization dedicated to establishing a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). One way that our organization works to achieve this mission is through our school friendship programs. The Best Buddies Friendship Program functions as a student-led organization that pairs students with IDD in a one-to-one friendship with a peer without a disability. Through Best Buddies chapter activities, students get the opportunity to grow and foster these friendships, breaking down social barriers within the school and wider community. At the same time, students learn valuable leadership skills while running and managing their chapter. For individuals who have graduated from high school and are not associated with a college chapter can get involved in our Citizens program. This program runs similarly to our school friendship program, except citizen members are a part of our community. Outside of our chapter activities the Best Buddies Pittsburgh team hosts events and fundraisers throughout the year. Ms. Meier informed the membership that they can contact her at by phone at 412-402-8230 or by e-mail at [nicolemeier@bestbuddies.org](mailto:nicolemeier@bestbuddies.org) to volunteer with the program or sign up their child for the program.

**III. Review/Acceptance of the Minutes of January 2, 2019**

The minutes from the January meeting were reviewed. A motion was made to accept the

minutes with changes. Motion was made by Janice Geniviva and seconded by Penny Gardner.

**IV. Treasurer’s Report – Ms. Sharon Janosik**

Ms. Janosik reviewed the February Treasurer’s Report with the membership.

**V. Consumer Concerns**

There was a concern brought up by a parent from Highlands School District about her son’s IEP and various issues with transportation from the school district. Several members of the membership and the Allegheny Mental Health Children’s Team offered their support to this parent.

**VI. Informational Items**

1. **OID – Mrs. Mary Evrard**

Mrs. Evrard informed the membership about the following information:

 Office of Intellectual Disability (OID) and Key Communicator flier

 Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services contact flier

 Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) brochure

 From the ASERT newsletter: “A quick and easy guide for your toolbox to help you understand why behaviors are happening and what you can do to help”

 ASERT: Common Abbreviations: Autism Services and Special Education

 Dan Miller Disability and Mental Health Summit March 13 through 15

 ASERT brochures

 Allegheny Link palm card

 2019 Powerful Tools for Caregivers Training Series flier

 Through their Eyes: Supporting Students with Autism in Your Classroom

1. **AIU Special Education – Mr. Brian Welles**

Mr. Welles informed the membership that Jim Palmieri is now with AIU and is the Director of Special Education Services.

Mr. Welles also informed the membership that Sharon Janosik (LTF Co-Chairperson) presented to the Special Education Liaisons about the LTF at their January meeting and did a wonderful job.

1. **– AIU – Training and Consultation Program – Ms. Leeanna Lawson**

Ms. Lawson informed the membership that the AIU presented a workshop on social thinking and it went very successfully.

Ms. Lawson also informed the membership there will be a training on Autism called “Through Their Eyes, Supporting Autism in Your Classroom” held at the AIU on Monday, March 4, 2019 and it is free and open to the public.

1. **Superintendent Updated – Ms. Sue Moyer**

Ms. Moyer informed the membership that the Safe to Say program has been very effective and has saved a school district from a potential issue since is has opened. The Safe to Say program has received over 600 phone calls since it has become live a few weeks ago.

**E. LTF/STF Update – Ms. Sharon Janosik**

Ms. Janosik informed the membership that the PDE Conference was discussed at the State Task Force Meeting and will be held on March 11-13, 2019 in Hershey, PA.

Ms. Janosik also informed the membership that LTF #2 and LTF #3 have partnered up to present a workshop called “Making Inclusive Education A Reality for Your Child”. It is sponsored by the PEAL Center and the Education Law Center and will be held at the AIU on February 11, 2019 from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM. All are welcome to attend but must register with the PEAL Center before attending.

1. **MH Update – Allegheny County MH Children’s Team – Mr. Clint Hauser and Ms. Heidi Sasson**

Ms. Sasson and Mr. Hauser did not have any new information to present to the membership at this time.

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

Ms. Guthrie informed the membership of the following items:

* ACHIEVA Family Trust Training – Employment for People with Disabilities – February 7, 2019 from 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM.
* ARC in Touch Newsletter
* Education Law Center – They are having a statewide campaign for bold school funding.

1. **Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) – Ms. Marci Katona**

Ms. Katona was not in attendance at this meeting. She will be presenting at the LTF March meeting.

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

Mr. Chartlon did not have any new information to share with the membership at this time.

**VII. Committee Update**

1. **Parent Assistance Line – Ms. Sharon Janosik**

Ms. Janosik had the Parent Assistance Line for the month of January and had the following phone calls:

A parent from the Pittsburgh Public schools called and Mrs. Efkeman referred them to LTF #2 for assistance.

A parent from the Fox Chapel School District called for an advocate. Their child was recently in the RESOLVE program and needs assistance getting back into the school district. The Allegheny County Mental Health Children’s team will contact this parent to offer their assistance to this parent.

1. **Cyclical Monitoring – Mrs. Janice Geniviva**

Mrs. Geniviva informed the membership of the upcoming Cyclical Monitoring schedule:

2/18/19 – Highlands School District

2/25/19 – Wilkinsburg School District

3/4/19 – Propel Charter School – Braddock Hills

3/11/19 – Avonworth School District

4/15/19 – Cornell School District

5/6/19 – Propel Charter School - Homestead

1. **Parent Satisfaction Survey – Mrs. Susan Wuenstel/Mrs. Debra Efkeman**

Mrs. Wuenstel and Mrs. Efkeman informed the membership that 61 parent satisfaction surveys so far have been sent back from Woodland Hills School District parents. Woodland Hills School District sent over 900 surveys to the parents of special education students.

**VIII. Old Business**

Mrs. Debra Efkeman informed the membership that she sent the letter from LTF #3 to Anne Hinkson-Herrman but has not received a response at this time.

**IX. New Business**

A motion was made to nominate Christa Jones as a new member to LTF #3.

Motion was made by Cindy Duch and seconded by Penny Gardner.

Motion was discussed.

Motion was passed unanimously.

**X. Membership Rounder**

Regis Charlton offered his assistance to all of the Highlands School District parents.

Debra Efkeman commented on the Microsoft commercial shown during the Super Bowl and said that it was uplifting to see how people with disabilities are getting assistance from them.

Sharon Janosik informed the membership that she has been accepted to the Temple University Disability Institute.

Michelle Walker expressed her gratitude to Jamie Upshaw from the Autism Open Connections community. Michelle is currently a member of this group and a board member.

Cindy Duch encouraged everything to attend the Peal sponsoring training this upcoming Monday at the AIU.

Christa Jones and the parents from Highlands SD expressed their gratitude to the LTF.

**X. Motion for Adjournment**

A motion was made for adjournment.

Motion was made by Cindy Duch and Sharon Janosik.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:45 PM.