

Approved LTF Minutes and Proceedings
Wednesday, January 4, 2023
Allegheny Intermediate Unit
Local Task Force
475 East Waterfront Drive
Homestead, PA 15120-1144

Members Present

Mr. Regis Charlton
Mrs. Cindy Duch
Mrs. Debbie Efke
Ms. Jean Ericcson
Mrs. Mary Evrard
Mrs. Penny Gardner
Mrs. Debbie Garvic
Mr. Dave Giusti, Chairperson
Ms. Amy Guthrie
Ms. Christa Jones
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
Ms. Heidi Sasson
Mr. Carl Shandor
Ms. Denise Wagner
Mr. Brian Welles
Ms. Christina Yauch

Guests Present

There were two guests present at this meeting.

Mr. Dave Giusti, Chairperson of the Local Task Force on the Right to Education (LTF #3) called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM on January 4, 2023.

I. Welcome, Introductions, Excused Members

Members and guests introduced themselves and their affiliations.

II. Review/Acceptance of the Minutes of December 7, 2023

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

Minutes with changes. Motion was made by Penny Gardner and seconded by Cindy Duch.

III. Treasurer's Report – Ms. Meredith Peterson

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

IV. Consumer Concerns

A parent brought up a concern regarding their child with mental health issues who is supposed to graduate high school at the end of this school year but may not have enough credits to graduate. Several members of the LTF informed the parent that she needs to contact the school district to state on the child's IEP that they do not have to earn all of the credits needed to graduate. An IEP can supersede in instances such as this one and the child can graduate on the terms stated on the IEP.

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 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 about three important bills that being voted on by Pennsylvania legislature soon including:

Act 55 – School-Based Mental Health Professional Internship Stipend Program.

Senate Bill 1285 – School Safety and Security Program

Senate Bill 1207 – Schools Annual Medical Emergency Response Drills

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

Mrs. Lawson informed the membership that there is a lot of school staff that can't attend trainings because of substitute shortages. She is currently trying to find other ways to train teachers and staff at this time.

D. Superintendent Update – Dr. Sue Mariani

Dr. Mariani informed the membership that the Duquesne City SD is currently experiencing staff shortages in all areas.

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

Ms. Peterson informed the membership that she will be sending State Task Force updates from Keith Focht to all members via e-mail as they arrive.

Pattan State Conference will be held on March 1, 2023 and all participants must register by February 14, 2023. The conference will be held in person and virtually.

E. MH Update – Allegheny County MH Children's Team- Ms. Heidi Sasson

Ms. Sasson did not have any new information to report to the membership.

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.

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. [Understanding the Basics of OVR](#) Jan. 18, 2023, 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 [Dec. 8, 2022](#)

F. Autism Connection <https://autismofpa.org/> **II. 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; 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 [In Touch newsletter, Dec. 22, 2022](#)

[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.

Governor-Elect Shapiro and Lieutenant Governor-Elect Davis will be sworn in on Jan.

17. PA General Assembly and US Congress and Senate were sworn in on Jan. 3

Gov. Wolf's **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.

D. The Arc of the US: Jan. 4, 2023:

Life in the community matters for people with disabilities, and Medicaid home and community-based services help make that possible. But a lack of funding for these services and other critical care needs has created a care crisis that's limiting the lives of millions of Americans.

[We need immediate action](#) from Congress now, including:

- Funding for programs that allow people with disabilities to live at home in their communities, without having to wait years to get the supports they need.
- #PaidLeaveForAll so workers don't have to risk losing their jobs when taking time off to care for a loved one.
- Better pay and benefits for direct care workers, who perform a critical job but do not earn a living wage.

[Sign our petition](#) to show your support for a much-needed investment in the care infrastructure!

[ADD YOUR NAME](#)

[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 ...

engage.pittsburghpa.gov

G. Disability Options Network – Mr. Regis Charlton

Mr. Charlton 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 Westmoreland and Penn Hills offices for his organization are in need of staff members and he is willing to train them.

H. Arc of PA – Mrs. Nicole Meier

Mrs. Meier informed the membership that the Arc of PA will be holding a book on January 10, 2023 from 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM for the book “Good Kings/Bad Kings” for children 17 and up.

I. OVR – Mr. Jim Lilley

Mr. Lilley informed the membership that OVR currently has hired nine new counselors that are starting this month in the Pittsburgh office.

VI. Committee Update

A. Parent Assistance Line

There was one phone call to the Parent Assistance Line for the month of December 2022 from a mother and father regarding their child who is attending a partial program in the Highlands School District. The parent was referred to Emily Born with the Allegheny County Mental Health Children’s Team for assistance with this matter.

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:

South Allegheny SD – 1/16/23

Fox Chapel SD – 2/6/23

Keystone Oaks SD -2/6/23

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 New Year.

Meredith Peterson informed the membership that the Frick Sensory Classroom Project will have public meeting dates and they will be posted on the following website:

<https://engage.pittsburghpa.gov/fcc-sensory-classroom>

Leanna Lawson informed the membership that she will be a grandmother soon.

X. Motion for Adjournment

A motion was made for adjournment.

Motion was made by Debbie Efke and seconded by Amy Guthrie.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.