

**ACCEPTED** LTF Minutes and Proceedings  
Wednesday, June 7, 2023  
Allegheny Intermediate Unit  
Local Task Force  
475 East Waterfront Drive  
Homestead, PA 15120-1144

### **Members Present**

Mr. Regis Charlton  
Mrs. Cindy Duch  
Mrs. Mary Evrard  
Mrs. Penny Gardner  
Mrs. Cynthia Grace Devine-Kepner  
Ms. Amy Guthrie  
Ms. Natalie Krall, Recording Secretary  
Ms. Ursula Lesic  
Mr. Jim Lilley  
Dr. Sue Mariani  
Mrs. Nicole Meier  
Ms. Joanna Patterson  
Ms. Meredith Peterson, Co-Chairperson  
Ms. Heidi Sasson  
Mr. Brian Welles

### **Guests Present**

Meredith Peterson of the Local Task Force on the Right to Education (LTF #3) called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM on June 7, 2023.

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

Members and guests introduced themselves and their affiliations. The following LTF member was excused from this meeting: Debbie Efke and Dave Giusti.

### **II. Review/Acceptance of the Minutes of May 3, 2023**

The minutes from the May meeting were reviewed. A motion was made to accept the Minutes. Motion was made by Penny Gardner and seconded by Ursula Lesic.

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

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

### **IV. Consumer Concerns**

There was no consumer concerns discussed at this meeting.

## **V. Guest Speakers – Tina and Nick Ference**

Ms. Ference talked about her son Nick's experience in school and the activities he participated in while at school. Nick recently graduated from the South Park School District and two senior classmates helped him walk across the stage during his graduation ceremony. Ms. Ference informed the membership that it was on several TV stations newscasts. The school district wanted a paraprofessional to help him during this time for graduation but two fellow senior classmates stepped in and assisted Nick at the graduation ceremony.

## **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 [www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Programs-Services/Disabilities/Intellectual-Disability-Autism.aspx](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Programs-Services/Disabilities/Intellectual-Disability-Autism.aspx)

Eligibility requirements at <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=6442480654>

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.
- Your student is not working with a Supports Coordinator
- You are registered with ODS and working with a Supports Coordinator and do not have waiver funding as 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 students at the AIU Special Education Centers are ending the school year at this time.

Mr. Welles also informed the membership that the ESY program is staffed nicely for this summer for all three center based schools.

**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 she has a fully staffed ESY program at Duquesne City SD.

Dr. Mariani also informed the membership that she received a grant to bring back high school students to Duquesne City School District in the fall of 2024 and has also hired a full time Special Education Director.

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

Ms. Peterson did not have any new updates for the membership.

**E. MH Update – Allegheny County MH Children’s Team – Ms. Joanna Patterson and Ms. Heidi Sasson**

Ms. Patterson and Ms. Sasson informed the membership that the Allegheny County MH Children’s Team is having a summer training program for professionals this summer.

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

Ms. Guthrie informed the membership about the following items:

**Achieva/ Arc of Greater Pittsburgh updates for LTF2 & LTF3, June, 2023**

**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: ***The next application deadline will be July 1.***

<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](https://achieva.info/EVMeeting)

**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** [May 11, 2023](#)

**F. Autism Connection** <https://autismofpa.org/>; [News@AutismofPA](mailto:News@AutismofPA); [April 28, 2023 II. Special Education Topics/ Resources](#)

**A. PaTTAN (PA Training and Technical Assistance Network)- Family Engagement newsletter** [Family Engagement, June 2023](#)  
[PaTTAN Pod](#)

[Prior Written Notice, Consent for a Reevaluation forms- updates](#)

**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. [Transition Discoveries](#)

**3. Transition Coordinating Council of Allegheny County (TCCAC):**

<https://aiu3tac.padlet.org/eringrim2/april-tccac-meeting-padlet-wcgp328rhffn92cm>

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

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

**b. [Allegheny Family Network](#)**

**C. Assistive Technology:**

**1. SafeinHome will be taking part in the Virtual Technology Summit on June 15th from 9am-12:30pm.**

The summit is free to all attendees. Please feel free to pass the information along.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAode2vpz0rHNLSMmPoZu6uTwN-c8E0LKJZ.#/registration>

**1. Staying Safe on the Internet**

**2. Setting up a Smart Home**

**3. Remote Supports: Staff Are Just a Phone Call Away**

**4. Using Technology to Get a Job**

**5. How to Apply for the \$30/mo. Affordable Connectivity Program?**

**6. Artificial Intelligence and ChatGPT**

## 7. How Can Alexa Voice Assistant Help You?

### 2. *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).

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).

***D. OSEP Memorandum Apr. 10, 2023: Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) / Response to Intervention (RTI) Process Cannot Be Used to Delay/Deny an Initial Evaluation*** [Memorandum link](#)

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

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

*In Touch* newsletter [May 11, 2023](#)

[TechOWL's free courses on Augmentative and Alternative Communication](#)

#### **1. Include me education resources:** <https://includemepa.org/e-learning/>

##### **a. [Includicon](#); June 20-22; Join us for our virtual 2023 Summer Inclusion Institute!**

**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 4- 2022-2023](#) from the PA Developmental Disabilities Council, with information on the state budget, current legislation, and other topics.

#### **1. Legislative Updates:**

- Representative Dan Frankel (D- Allegheny) and Nelson Napoleon (D - Montgomery) introduced a package of legislation that would expand and protect hate crime bills. There are a total of 4 bills that have been introduced:
  - HB1024 proposes providing Pennsylvania's law enforcement with the training they need to properly investigate, identify and report crimes of ethnic intimidation.

- HB1025 proposes training educators and school administrators to identify and address hate incidents before they become deadly.
- HB1026 proposes requiring, as a condition of probation or parole, an individual who is convicted of ethnic intimidation to perform community service or complete educational classes relating to the motivating factor of the underlying crime.
- HB1027 proposes strengthening Pennsylvania’s “ethnic intimidation” criminal penalty language and step up civil penalties on those who target individuals or groups because of their race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, or disability of an individual or group of individuals.

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://pautism.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:** <https://thearc.org/>

**Medicaid Work Rules in Debt Limit Bill Puts People With Disabilities at Risk**

On April 26, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 2811, the [Limit, Save, Grow Act of 2023](#), which includes radical new work rules for Medicaid enrollees in exchange for lifting the debt ceiling. Section 321 of the bill requires all Medicaid beneficiaries ages 19 to 55 to meet an 80-hour per month work-reporting requirement unless they can meet an exemption. Failing this test would cut off federal funds for that individual with states having the option of terminating coverage.

The legislation applies to all Medicaid pathways, including for those on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and home and community-based services (HCBS) waivers. People with disabilities would need a doctor or other medical professional to deem them “physically or mentally unfit for employment” to be exempt from the work rules.

In a statement, [The Arc urged](#) Senators and the President to reject this extreme benefit test and other harmful cuts contained in the bill as they work towards a deal to lift the debt ceiling.

**[Make Your Voice Heard: Protect Medicaid!](#)**

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

Mr. Charlton informed the membership that he currently trying to get his staff to work with more youth during the summer.

Mr. Charlton also informed the membership of the following events:

June 28, 2023 – His office will be having a picnic from 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM at the Penn Hills Office.

August 25-26, 2023 – Disability Options Network is partnering with Disability Pride Pittsburgh at Schenley Plaza for a festival this summer.

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

Mrs. Meier informed the membership that the Includi-Con conference currently has 70 participants registered at this time.

She will also be holding three different book clubs over Zoom this summer for children and young adults.

### **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 programs running this summer including:

My Work Initiative – 180 students are registered will be working at municipalities and non-profit organizations.

CVS Program – Professional connections program – 16 Students are registered for this program.

Work Experience Program – 50 students are registered for this program.

Future Camp – 15 students are registered and will be attending art/music/multimedia camp.

He also informed the membership that the Citizens Advisory Committee will be meeting virtually on June 13, 2023 from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM. If you would like to attend, please contact Jim Lilley at [jalilley@pa.gov](mailto:jalilley@pa.gov) or Pete Huey at [thuey@pa.gov](mailto:thuey@pa.gov) to receive the link to the meeting.

## **VI. Committee Update**

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

There was no phone calls to the parent assistance line this month.

### **B. Cyclical Monitoring**

Cyclical Monitoring is done for the school year.

## **VII. Old Business**

There was no old business reported at this meeting.

## **VIII. New Business**

A motion was made to nominate Ursula Lesic and Debbie Garvic as new co-chairs for the LTF for the 2023-2024 school year. Motion was made by Penny Gardner and seconded by Amy Guthrie.

Motion was discussed.

Motion was passed unanimously.

## **IX. Membership Rounder**

Everyone wished each other a wonderful summer.

Penny Gardner informed the membership that her son Bryan has worked at PA Connected Communities since 2015 and has scanned over 3 million documents since he was hired over 8 years ago.

Meredith Peterson informed the membership that the PALS program at the University of Pittsburgh is in need of volunteers for children for the summer.

## **X. Motion for Adjournment**

A motion was made for adjournment.

Motion was made by Ursula Lesic and seconded by Penny Gardner.



Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.