# **APPROVED** LTF Minutes and Proceedings

Wednesday, February 2, 2022

Allegheny Intermediate Unit

Local Task Force

475 East Waterfront Drive

Homestead, PA 15120-1144

# **Members Present**

Mrs. Emily Born

Mr. Regis Charlton

Mrs. Cindy Duch – Co-Chairperson

Mrs. Cynthia Grace Devine-Kepner

Mrs. Debbie Efkeman

Mrs. Mary Evrard

Mrs. Penny Gardner

Mrs. Debbie Garvic

Ms. Amy Guthrie

Ms. Kelly Hast

Mrs. Sharon Janosik

Ms. Natalie Krall, Recording Secretary

Ms. Ursula Lesic

Dr. Sue Mariani

Ms. Nicole Meier

Ms. Heidi Sasson

Mr. Brian Welles

Mrs. Heather Zak, Chairperson

# **Guests Present**

There were four guests present at this meeting. The following members were unable to attend this meeting: Leanna Lawson.

Mrs. Heather Zak, Chairperson of the Local Task Force on the Right to Education (LTF #3) called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM on February 2, 2022.

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

Members and guests introduced themselves and their affiliations.

**II. Review/Acceptance of the Minutes of January 5, 2022**

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

minutes. Motion was made by Sharon Janosik and seconded by Debbie Efkeman.

**III. Treasurer’s Report – Mrs. Heather Zak**

Mrs. Zak reviewed the February treasurer’s report with the membership.

I**V. Consumer Concerns**

Several concerns were brought up by parents in the North Allegheny School District. Their children are not being given adequate time for inclusion with their regular education classmates and sometimes are not given time to interact with their peers. Several members of the LTF suggested that the parents meet as a group with the school district Superintendent to discuss inclusion issues with their children in the district. It was also suggested that the parents contact Amy Guthrie – Achieve (aguthrie@achieva.org) , Nicole Meier – Include Me PA ([nmeier@includemepa.org](mailto:nmeier@includemepa.org)), Allegheny County Mental Health Children’s Team, and Pennsylvania Bureau of Special Education for assistance with this matter.

**V. Informational Items**

1. **ODS – Mrs. Mary Evrard**

Mrs. Evrard 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. If you need information for individuals with disabilities or resources for basic needs.: [mevrard@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:mevrard@alleghenycounty.us)  412-253-1251
* Visit the ODS webpage: <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Programs-Services/Disabilities/Intellectual-Disability-Autism.aspx>
* Find a more organized announcement page here! [https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Programs-Services/Disabilities/Key-Communicators.aspx](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.alleghenycounty.us%2fHuman-Services%2fPrograms-Services%2fDisabilities%2fKey-Communicators.aspx&c=E,1,IcO_-J7TGonMoZO4SCUwu9dQgGh3aa0OC7u2GgYrvUTDlsDYBUGV5PQ42kn-5eRV1BOtwr_PAmSZA6a_ZQNoztErPkwoUvwXfrkF3OgQKTsyG2s,&typo=1)

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

Mr. Welles informed the membership that Keith Focht – LTF Pennsylvania State Director spoke at the January 2022 – Special Education Liaisons Directors meeting. He encouraged special education directors to ask parents in their district to attend LTF meetings.

Mr. Welles also informed the membership that staffing ESY programs for the upcoming summer will be difficult this year due to staffing shortages.

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

Mrs. Lawson was not in assistance at this meeting.

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

Dr. Mariani informed the membership that there is still staffing issues in her district due to Covid as well as various other issues.

**E. LTF/STF Update – Mrs. Cindy Duch and Mrs. Heather Zak**

Mrs. Zak informed the membership that the Special Education Conference will take place on March 2-4, 2022 in Hershey, PA. She will be representing the LTF #3 along with Cindy Duch at the conference this year.

Mrs. Zak also informed the membership that the State Task Force Meeting is taking place on March 6, 2022 from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM.

1. **MH Update – Allegheny County MH Children’s Team – Mrs. Emily Born and Ms. Kelly Hast**

Mrs. Born and Ms. Hast informed the membership that Rusty Hewitt is now providing MH services to the Pittsburgh Public Schools and they are seeking a replacement for his past position at this time.

Mrs. Born and Ms. Hast also informed the membership that their office is experiencing staffing shortages at this time due to mental health issues in schools around the county.

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

Ms. Guthrie informed the membership about the following items:

**Achieva/ Arc of Greater Pittsburgh updates for LTF2 & LTF3, February, 2022**

***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](http://achievafamilytrust.org/) website; to subscribe to the AFT newsletter ***Trust Matters***, see the most recent edition: [Dec 15, 2021](https://www.achieva.info/family-trust/blog/trust-matters)

1. For information on the Residual grant program:

[http://achievafamilytrust.org/charitable-residual-account/](http://achievafamilytrust.org/charitable-residual-account/ )

2. [Achieva Family Trust webinars](https://www.achieva.info/family-trust/resources?search=1&search_category=7) this link accesses **archived webinars** such as: **“**Future Planning Conference 2021.”

Weds. Feb. 16, 10AM-12PM: [Successful Models, Strategie of Employment](https://achieva.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_zu66BKUQQL6Yl8zczgD6cA)

Weds. Feb. 16, 12-1PM: [Transitioning into Adulthood](https://www.achieva.info/events/transitioning-into-adulthood)

***C. Achieva’s Empowered Voices Leadership group for self-advocates*;** itmeets on Thursdays from 6-8pm on zoom. [Achieva.info/ EV Meeting](https://achieva.zoom.us/j/96795009607?pwd=%20WEJPNjR6TUg1bFZqZjBFc3RYRXI0dz09#success)

***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](https://www.achieva.info/cecilanddavid).

***E. Achieva’s Compass newsletter***  [Jan. 20, 2022](https://www.achieva.info/blog/proposed-rates-fail-employment-first-fail-people-with-disabilities)

**F. Achieva’s podcast** <https://www.achieva.info/caretolisten> ***II. Special Education Topics/ Resources***

***A. PaTTAN (PA Training and Technical Assistance Network)*-** [Family Engagement newsletter](https://www.smore.com/7w6yh-family-engagement?ref=email)

[Transition Tidbits](https://www.smore.com/d1cyk-pa-transition-tidbits?ref=email)

[PaTTAN Pod](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLCkBP2csbOssi3rUsfM-yQT1DVGUihxg2)

[PaTTAN Conferences](https://www.pattan.net/Training/Conferences) – [PA Dept of Education Conference, March 2-4, 2022](https://www.pattan.net/Training/Conferences/Pennsylvania-Department-of-Education-Conference)

***B. Transition***

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

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

b. Achieva Post-Secondary College Planning Project [Koosterhous@achieva.info](mailto:Koosterhous@achieva.info); 412-995-5000 ext. 606

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

d. Research and Design Internship for students with Spinal Cord Injury or Spina Bifida- For more information, and to schedule a phone interview, contact Josh Marino, Education & Outreach Coordinator, at [josh.marino@pitt.edu](mailto:josh.marino@pitt.edu)

e. **For Pittsburgh Public Schools graduates with IEPs**: [Dr. Kaye Cupples scholarship](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fdocs.google.com%2Fforms%2Fd%2Fe%2F1FAIpQLSfJk8lXFPmRHtVH0pE574fiDo5YEGdxiOix3rdNkHulZEL8VQ%2Fviewform%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR07Y-zLXohKA_x0EzixsMDKOebVSt3h07c-h99hvlhsUzMKSIhdWSJsDeg&h=AT2TIM_hQSQe_2SSdVu2MAtmYiq-0WvgOibpTfF_bjhDtEQfr1s4yfGDodo_Ad4MnCfsjPdK6QsBIvU_zVxIh0S_dUVIgKTY5c_xim9jJipf28Hx1BJW5yyDN7mQUScYzA&__tn__=-UK-R&c%5b0%5d=AT32yy7U8GIxx0tq6a7IbmD6RbDK6vSpUQo9xf3O6S8CeefGlZWTqrH3AwnfsUiU-B8XV5JdS_u4jmenl8o14VnvV8o-4j4kcIqNFvNSCxmBR6BDeljyKBmLJdaaC7aSup0PXRe9Pw_Syt4wqwyDgH2vn7RwOlxCUn1u8ZvXVj2D2g)

**2.**  **PEAL-** <https://www.pealcenter.org/>;

**a. Keynote & Q&A Presentation by Keith Jones**- Jan. 18. 12-1:30 PM [After 22- Family is the Key to Achieving and Thriving](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/after-22-family-is-the-key-to-achieving-thriving-keith-jones-registration-229439217877)

b. [PEAL's Youth Resources for Transition](https://www.pealcenter.org/youth-and-young-adults/); [Youth Development Trainings](https://pealcenter.us16.list-manage.com/track/click?u=ce102732c8968be2cd2e38884&id=743d941c3e&e=5322656350)- Every Other Friday, from 12:00-1:00 pm on Zoom.

[Youth Virtual Coffee Drop Ins](https://www.pealcenter.org/event/youth-virtual-coffee-drop-ins-2/2021-09-02/), every Thursday at 12PM

c. Transition Tuesdays [Archived webinars](https://www.pealcenter.org/transitiontuesdays/#youth_young)

d. [Transition Discoveries](https://www.transitiondiscoveries.org/)

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

**4. Transition Coordinating Council of Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh (TCCAC)** [Register for meetings at this link](https://www.smore.com/jkaz4); **For more information:** Dr. Erin Grimm [erin.grimm@aiu3.net](mailto:erin.grimm@aiu3.net); 412-394-4952

**Meeting dates:** March 8, 2022, April 5, 2022, May 10, 2022- 11th Annual Mock Interview

***III. Legislative/ systems advocacy-***

**A.** [**The Arc Pennsylvania**](https://thearcpa.org/)**;** *In Touch* newsletter [Dec 16, 2021](https://us8.campaign-archive.com/?u=4d3151ca1b38a632a9445b3d9&id=810b673e12)

**1.**  [COVID-19 resources](https://thearcpa.org/resources/corona-virus-resources/corona-virus-covid-19-resources.html): Call 1-800-424-4345 for assistance

[PA Department of Health](https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx); <https://www.pa.gov/guides/responding-to-covid-19/>

* Disability Rights Pennsylvania is operating a Vaccine Hotline to assist Pennsylvanians with disabilities who are interested in getting the COVID-19 vaccine Monday – Friday 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. at 1 (833) 377-2829 or vaccine@disabilityrightspa.org.
* When arranging for an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing to receive information via telephone, PA Relay Services are available by **dialing 711.**

**2. Making connections for the 21st century workforce:** [The Arc of PA's youtube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCN_3iaU-WYuY_MdO1i5ZWtw/videos)

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

**4. Arc Discovery Employment Transitions (ADEPT):** <https://includemepa.org/what-we-do/adept/>

**5. Policy Information Exchange newsletter:** *A Slice of PIE,* [Vol. 22, Issue 3- 2021](https://www.paddc.org/slice-of-pie/vol-22-issue-3-2021/) - from the PA Developmental Disabilities Council,with information on the state budget, current legislation, and other topics.

* **The Disability Inclusive Curriculum Bill**- Listed as **HB 726** in honor of the date of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), it would establish a pilot program to provide instruction to students on political, economic and social contributions of individuals with disabilities. The Special Education Sub-Committee will hold a hearing on February 10, 2022. This hearing is the next step in the process of getting this legislation passed.
* [Senate Bill 924](https://thearcpa.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=4d3151ca1b38a632a9445b3d9&id=86e83bc7c0&e=dcd71f5f92), which was introduced by Senator Michele Brooks, would halt the announced closure of Polk and White Haven State Center for at least 5 years. Institutes a task force to review the impact of the planned closure to the residents, staff, and local economy. A closure can only move forward once a majority vote of the task force approves the closure. The bill was voted out of the Senate by a vote of 32-18. It will now go to the House for consideration.
* **The Charter School Reform Act of 2021 (HB 272)-** Fixing Pennsylvania’s Charter School Law to protect kids and taxpayers

**B. PA School funding:**

**1. PA Schools Work** <https://paschoolswork.org/resources/webinars/>

**2. Advocacy tools**- [School district data](https://paschoolswork.org/school-district-data/); [Advocacy Toolkit](https://mcusercontent.com/0a17ee9f29e887a408e1a3de5/files/4a74c95e-0444-44bd-a81f-a72ffb25bb3b/Advocacy_Training_Toolkit_Winter_2021_FINAL_2_.pdf)

**3. Fund Our Schools PA Case Trial** –the trial began on Nov. 12, 2021. <https://www.fundourschoolspa.org/>; Click here for [Daily highlights from the trial](https://www.fundourschoolspa.org/news)

**C. Office of Developmental Programs:**

**PHAN webinar on state waiver programs** that was to take place Jan 28 has been moved to Friday, Feb. 4th 2:30 - 3:30pm. [Register](https://pahealth.salsalabs.org/ruralaccessodpwaiverstraining/index.html?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=8299c55d-0e8b-4044-be57-a35ea99c948f); [zoom link](https://default.salsalabs.org/Te9d95b18-6fed-4589-8583-e73453acff9d/03f741cf-755a-4396-980d-439d61569dd1)To join by phone call (646) 876-9923 and enter meeting ID 847 6873 1212

1. Autism and Intellectual Disabilities in PA: <https://aidinpa.org/>;

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

**3.** [My ODP Podcast](https://www.myodp.org/mod/data/view.php?id=28133) covers topics relevant to supporting individuals with disabilities. The current topic is self-determination.

[AID in PA](https://aidinpa.org/) – a resource collection for Pennsylvanians in the Autism and Intellectual Disability communities.

**D. The Arc of the US:**

[Virtual Program Library](https://programlibrary.thearc.org/browse?utm_source=cc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=cfp)

[The Arc of the US Advocacy priorities](https://thearc.org/covid19recovery/?utm_source=mc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=fusion): **The Build Back Better Act**- Invest in Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS)- expand access and create more and better direct care jobs [Share your story about why Home and Community-Based Services matter](https://p2a.co/zc2H8lN?p2asource=fb-091021&fbclid=IwAR0oHO0pG-0Ssts2TnjhVuhuLx_VPXODhsOL_L-8dYAZ3HxQGtL9-Bb3jWE)

* Invest in Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services
* Create a national paid leave program
* Improve Supplemental Security Income

[Action Center](https://p2a.co/lRPDZ5C)

**E.** [**Western PA Disability History and Action Consortium**](https://www.wpdhac.org/): *Using Disability History to Ensure Disability Rights*

**F. FISA Foundation Race + Disability series**: [Disability Inclusion & Access](https://fisafoundation.org/disability-inclusion-pgh/race-disability-upcoming-programs/), free virtual programs in February and March.

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

Ms. Katona was not in attendance at this meeting.

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

Mr. Charlton informed the membership that he is currently involved in assisting an individual with a disability get a handicapped parking spot in front of their house.

Mr. Charlton also informed the membership that the Disability Options Network is holding a disability support group on 2/15/22 in Bakery Square. Please contact him at 724-652-5121, Ext: 403 if you are interested in attending.

**VI. Committee Update**

1. **Parent Assistance Line**

There were two calls to the Parent Assistance Line in the month of January:

A parent from the West Mifflin School District called regarding her 11th grade son who was re-evaluated by the district and his IQ dropped 30 points since the last evaluation. Since this occurred, the school district wants to send her son to an outside placement school. It was suggested that the parent contact the Peal Center, Allegheny County MH Children’s Team, and Achieva.

A parent who has a daughter at Shady Side Academy called regarding her daughter who attends the school. Shady Side Academy would like the parent to move her child to another school but the parent is not comfortable doing this at this time and the school has several ADA volitions. It was suggested that the parent contact the Peal Center, ACHIEVA, Allegheny County MH Children’s Team, Education Law Center, and the AIU Equitable Participation Program.

1. **Cyclical Monitoring – Mrs. Heather Zak**

Mrs. Zak informed the membership that cyclical monitoring will take place on:

Woodland Hills SD 2/14/22

Montour SD 3/7/22

**VII. Old Business**

There was no old business discussed at this meeting.

**VIII. New Business**

A proposal was made to the LTF to write a letter to Pennsylvania State Representatives regarding House Bill 726 which is a pilot program for schools in the state that teach children lessons about disabilities. These lessons are written by people with disabilities and include people with disabilities as role models, highlighting people with disabilities in a positive way, and lessons about people with disabilities. Sharon Janosik will write the letter and send it to Heather Zak so she can forward it to the state to show the LTF’s support of HB726.

A motion was made to approve this letter being sent by the LTF to the state regarding HB726.

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

Motion was passed unanimously.

**IX. Membership Rounder**

Cynthia Grace Devine-Kepner informed the membership that Joel Halpin a past LTF member has moved to New Orleans, LA and has been appointed to her school district Superintendent’s Special Education Advisory Council.

Everyone wished each other a great month and safety at this time due to winter snowstorms.

**X. Motion for Adjournment**

A motion was made for adjournment.

Motion was made by Sharon Janosik and seconded by Heather Zak.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.