

**APPROVED** LTF Minutes and Proceedings  
Wednesday, February 1, 2023  
Allegheny Intermediate Unit  
Local Task Force  
475 East Waterfront Drive  
Homestead, PA 15120-1144

**Members Present**

Mr. Regis Charlton  
Ms. Haley Dillman  
Mrs. Cindy Duch  
Mrs. Debbie Efke  
Ms. Jean Ericsson  
Mrs. Mary Evrard  
Mrs. Penny Gardner  
Mrs. Debbie Garvic  
Ms. Amy Guthrie  
Ms. Natalie Krall, Recording Secretary  
Mrs. Leanna Lawson  
Ms. Meredith Peterson, Co-Chairperson  
Mr. Brian Welles

**Guests Present**

There were no guests present at this this meeting. The following members were excused from this meeting: Sue Mariani, Nicole Meier, and Heather Zak.

Ms. Meredith Peterson, Chairperson of the Local Task Force on the Right to Education (LTF #3) called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM on February 1, 2023.

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

Members and guests introduced themselves and their affiliations.

**II. Review/Acceptance of the Minutes of January 4, 2023**

The minutes from the January meeting were reviewed. A motion was made to accept the minutes with changes. Motion was made by Debbie Efke and seconded by Cindy Duch.

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

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

#### **IV. Guest Speaker – Mrs. Cindy Duch – Peal Center**

Mrs Duch explained the Peal Center to the membership. The Peal Center is an agency that advocates for children and families. She focused on the following points during her presentation:

- Explore the purpose of the Peal Center.
- Explains how the Peal Center advocates for children and families.
- Information on how to access Peal resources.

#### **V. Consumer Concerns**

A concern was brought up regarding behavior guidelines that have come out from over the summer and mental health issues among children. Children with positive behavior plans are having problems with teachers not giving participation credit to students and not allowing students to do work at school. Children are failing classes at this time. It was suggested that families meet with the child's educational team and have a consultant to come up with a plan for the child to succeed in their classes this school year.

#### **VI. Informational Items**

##### **A. ODS – Mrs. Mary Evrard**

Mrs. Evrard shared the following items with the membership:

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>

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 regular ODS informational e-mails. [mevrard@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:mevrard@alleghenycounty.us) or by phone at 412-253-1251.

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

Mr. Welles informed the membership the AIU special education schools are currently full and there is a wait list to get into each of the schools because of short staff issues at this time.

He also informed the membership that ESY is starting to be planned for this upcoming summer.

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

Mrs. Lawson shared the Allegheny County Transition Coordinators newsletter with the membership at the following website: [www.smore.com/egzld](http://www.smore.com/egzld)

Mrs. Lawson also informed the membership that Pattan has revised the toolkit for families and schools.

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

Dr. Mariani was not in attendance at this meeting.

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

Ms. Peterson informed the membership that Ursula Lesic will be attending the PDE conference for the LTF.

**F. MH Update – Allegheny County MH Children’s Team- Ms. Haley Dillman**

Ms. Dillman informed the membership that the Allegheny County Children’s Team Diversion Program is currently on hold due to staffing issues.

**G. 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, 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:  
<http://achievafamilytrust.org/charitable-residual-account/>

2. Webinars/ Presentations:

- a. [Saving for the Future with PA ABLE Accounts](#); Feb. 21, 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** [Jan. 19, 2023](#)

**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):** [Padlet and recording](#)  
NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY MARCH 15TH  
IN PERSON ONLY! 9:00AM-2:00PM REGISTRATION WILL BE FORTHCOMING!!
4. Person-centered planning- <https://www.lifecoursetools.com/>
- 5. Family Supports:** a. [PA Parent Alliance](#) [IEP Bootcamp Signup](#)  
b. [Allegheny Family Network](#)

**C. 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). A SLP can work with your team to:

- Assess current communication
- Recommend a communication focus
- Develop a communication support plan
- Teach practical strategies for communication
- Select, set up, and/or customize a communication device, if recommended
- Plan for getting an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) device, including writing an insurance report, if necessary
- Troubleshoot communication strategies, AAC devices, and more

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).

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

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

*In Touch* newsletter [Jan. 19, 2023](#)

[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

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://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.
3. **ODP Launches New Program - Just SO (Short-term Online) Speech Services**

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). A SLP can work with your team to:

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## **D. The Arc of the US:** [Capitol Insider, Jan. 23, 2023](#)

### [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](https://engage.pittsburghpa.gov)

#### **I. Allegheny County Discounted Fares Pilot Program**

<https://discountedfares.alleghenycounty.us/>

#### **H. Disability Options Network – Mr. Regis Charlton**

Mr. Charlton informed the membership that his organization is currently hiring a new director.

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

Mrs. Meier was not in attendance at this meeting.

#### **J. OVR – Mr. Pete Huey**

Mr. Huey was not in attendance at this meeting.

### **VII. Committee Update**

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

There was no phone calls to the Parent Assistance Line for the month of January 2023.

#### **B. Cyclical Monitoring – Mrs. Debbie Efke**

Mrs. Efke informed the membership that the following school districts will be having Cyclical Monitoring on the following dates:

Fox Chapel SD – 2/6/23

Keystone Oaks SD -2/6/23

If anyone has any information on these school districts, please contact Debra Efke.

**VIII. Old Business**

There was no old business reported at this meeting.

**IX. New Business**

There was no new business reported at this meeting.

**X. Membership Rounder**

Everyone wished each other a great Valentine's Day and a wonderful month.

**VIII. Motion for Adjournment**

A motion was made for adjournment.

Motion was made by Penny Gardner and seconded by Mary Evrard.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:06 PM.