# **APPROVED** LTF Minutes and Proceedings

Wednesday, January 5, 2022

Allegheny Intermediate Unit

Local Task Force

475 East Waterfront Drive

Homestead, PA 15120-1144

# **Members Present**

Mrs. Cynthia Grace Devine-Kepner

Mrs. Debra Efkeman

Mrs. Mary Evrard

Mrs. Penny Gardner

Mrs. Debbie Garvic

Ms. Amy Guthrie

Mr. Clint Hauser

Mrs. Sharon Janosik

Ms. Natalie Krall, Recording Secretary

Ms. Ursula Lesic

Dr. Sue Mariani

Ms. Heidi Sasson

Mr. Brian Welles

Mrs. Heather Zak, Chairperson

# **Guests Present**

There were five guests present at this meeting. The following members were unable to attend this meeting: Regis Charlton, Cindy Duch, and Leanna Lawson.

Mrs. Heather Zak, Chairperson of the Local Task Force on the Right to Education (LTF #3) called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM on January 5, 2022.

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

Members and guests introduced themselves and their affiliations.

**II. Review/Acceptance of the Minutes of December 1, 2021**

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

minutes. Motion was made by Penny Gardner and seconded by Heather Zak.

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

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

**IV. Speaker – Ms. Janice Meinert – PA Health Law Project**

Ms. Meinert informed the membership about her organization the PA Health Law Project and how they can help people at this time. The PA health law project provides legal services and advocacy to PA residents having trouble accessing publicly funded health care coverage and services.

Ms. Meinert also talked about the following information with the membership:

* Medicaid eligibility for children.
* Medicaid categories for eligibility.
* Youth on SSI and Medicaid
* Household Income for Medicaid

Ms. Meinert can be reached by e-mail at jmeinert@phlp.org or by phone at 412-434-5637. You can also reach out for help by e-mail at [staff@phlp.org](mailto:staff@phlp.org) or by phone at 1-800-274-3258.

**V. Consumer Concerns**

Several concerns were brought up by parents in the Mt. Lebanon School District. Their children have been given out of school suspensions due to behavioral issues they were having while they were in school. All of their children have IEP’s and paraprofessionals who assist them throughout the school day. All children also have an outside behavioral therapist who has volunteered to work with school staff who come in contact with them throughout the school day but the principal has refused to allow this to happen at this time. The parents are looking for assistance and several members of the LTF suggested that they schedule a meeting with both the school district superintendent as well as the school district special education director. The membership also suggested that the parents contact the PA Department of Education – Bureau of Special Education, Peal Center, ARC Program, ACHIEVA Advocacy, Allegheny County Mental Health Children’s Team for assistance with this matter.

**VI. 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 of the staffing shortages in special education and school transportation at this time. The AIU is working to get more younger people interested in pursuing careers in education.

**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 staffing issues in her district due to Covid as well as various other issues. She is in need of all school staff at this time especially teachers, bus drivers, and cafeteria workers.

**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.

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

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

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, January, 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.”

***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*** [Dec 30, 2021](https://mailchi.mp/achieva/happyholidays2021?e=0429402a66)

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

***A. PaTTAN (PA Training and Technical Assistance Network)*-** [Transition Tidbits](https://www.smore.com/d1cyk-pa-transition-tidbits?ref=email)

[PaTTAN Training events](https://www.pattan.net/events/)

[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/);

b. PA Inclusive Higher Education Consortium <https://pihec.com/>

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

d. **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:** January 18, 2022, 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.

* [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.
* Many bills address topics relevant to people with disabilities, such as: clarifying how medical excuses are accepted for school attendance records (HB 94); streamlining hiring and promotion of individuals with significant disabilities (HB 114); School Student Mental Health Assistance (HB 407).

**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:**

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)

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 was not in attendance at this meeting.

**VII. Committee Update**

1. **Parent Assistance Line**

There were no calls to the parent assistance line in the months of December.

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

**VIII. Old Business**

There was no old business discussed at this meeting.

**IX. New Business**

A suggestion was made to invite Keith Focht to a future LTF meeting as a guest speaker to explain the history of the LTF to the membership.

**X. Membership Rounder**

Everyone wished each other a wonderful New Year!

**XI. Motion for Adjournment**

A motion was made for adjournment.

Motion was made by Penny Gardner and seconded by Heather Zak.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:00 PM.