# **APPROVED** LTF Minutes and Proceedings

Wednesday, November 3, 2021

Allegheny Intermediate Unit

Local Task Force

475 East Waterfront Drive

Homestead, PA 15120-1144

# **Members Present**

Mrs. Emily Born

Mr. Regis Charlton

Mrs. Debra Efkeman

Mrs. Mary Evrard

Ms. Penny Gardner

Ms. Amy Guthrie

Ms. Natalie Krall, Recording Secretary

Mrs. Leanna Lawson

Mrs. Joanna Patterson

Ms. April Tucker

Mr. Brian Welles

Mrs. Heather Zak, Chairperson

# **Guests Present**

There were three guests present at this meeting. The following members were unable to attend this meeting: Cynthia Grace Devine-Kepner, Debbie Garvic, Marci Katona, and Sue Mariani.

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 November 3, 2021.

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

Members and guests introduced themselves and their affiliations.

**II. Review/Acceptance of the Minutes of October 6, 2021**

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

minutes. Motion was made by Debra Efkeman and seconded by Penny Gardner

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

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

**IV. Consumer Concerns**

A concern was brought up by a parent from the North Allegheny SD. She wanted options for inclusion for her daughter and the school district is not providing inclusion services to her daughter. The parent specifically wanted an assistive technology evaluation for her daughter but the school did not provide it at this time. Several members of the LTF suggested that the parent contact the PA Bureau of Special Education as well as the Allegheny County Children’s Team for assistance.

A concern was brought up regarding an adult who has autism but just received a large settlement and wasn’t sure how to handle it at this time. Several LTF members recommended that this individual contact Achieva Family Trust at this time.

**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 school district special education plans for phase I and III are due to the state by June 1, 2022.

Mr. Welles also informed the membership that all Allegheny County Special Education Directors are being sent a survey from the AIU regarding staff shortages in special education at their districts. After the surveys are taken, Intermediate Units will compile a report on the information and send this information to all of the school districts. The APR (Attract, Protect, Retain) Program is trying to address special education shortages.

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

Mrs. Lawson informed the membership that the AIU Training and Consultation (TAC) Program has currently been busy with classroom consultations.

Mrs. Lawson also informed the membership that the AIU Training and Consultation program is holding virtual trainings now and in-person trainings starting in January 2021.

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

Dr. Mariani was not in attendance at this time.

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

Mrs. Duch and Mrs. Zak informed the membership about the following State Task Force events:

State Task Force Meeting – 1/15/2021 – 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM – The meeting will be conducted online.

Bureau of Special Education Conference – March 2-4, 2021.

1. **MH Update – Allegheny County MH Children’s Team – Mrs. Emily Born**

Mrs. Born informed the membership that there is mental health staffing shortages in all mental health areas.

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, November, 2021**

***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: [Oct. 13, 2021](https://mailchi.mp/achieva/trust-matters-july2021-5234164?e=a3c18524db)

1. For information on the Residual grant program: <http://achievafamilytrust.org/charitable-residual-account/>

2. [Achieva Family Trust Webinars](http://achievafamilytrust.org/our_services/webinars-and-events/)- a. see this link for **archived webinars** such as: **“**Special Needs Trusts and ABLE Accounts,”

b. **register for upcoming topics**:

***Focus on the Future***, Nov. 10, 8:30-3:00 [Register here](https://calendly.com/info-20600/focus-on-the-future/2021-11-10T08:30:00-05:00?month=2021-11&date=2021-11-10)

Please join us on Wednesday, November 10, 2021, for a day-long virtual conference dedicated to future planning for people with disabilities. You can attend all the sessions, or choose which ones you are interested in. The purpose of the conference is to educate and inform families, professionals and self-advocates about the importance of Future Planning for Individuals with Disabilities. Topics to be covered include: Special Needs Trusts, ABLE Accounts, Housing Options, Supported Decision Making and Power of Attorney, Government Benefits.

***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*** [Oct 21, 2021](https://us17.campaign-archive.com/?u=26aa29fbc6030d3b4aa356be3&id=72affbd9f0) ; [Archived newsletters](https://www.achieva.info/newsletters)

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

***A. PaTTAN (PA Training and Technical Assistance Network)*-**

[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) – HELIX (High Expectations for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities): November 8, 9, 10, 2021

***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. [The Arc PA's Transition Tidbits](https://www.smore.com/14vh8-pa-transition-tidbits?ref=email)

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

a. [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, beginning October 15th, 2021 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

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

c. [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:** November 16, 2021, January 18, 2022, March 8, 2022, April 5, 2022, May 10, 2022- 11th Annual Mock Interview

***C. FISA Foundation Disability Inclusion & Access***

[Race + Disability Program](https://fisafoundation.org/disability-inclusion-pgh/race-disability-upcoming-programs/)- upcoming webinar: Nov. 18, 2:00-3:30- [Transformative Justice in the Lives of Survivors with Disabilities](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/transformative-justice-in-the-lives-of-survivors-with-disabilities-tickets-160618230451); [Recorded webinars](https://fisafoundation.org/disability-inclusion-pgh/race-and-disability/)

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

**A.** [**The Arc Pennsylvania**](https://thearcpa.org/)**;** [In Touch, Oct 7, 2021](https://mailchi.mp/14037e5e00c6/the-arc-of-pas-in-touch-7224198?e=dcd71f5f92)

**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/>

* If an individual does not have a direct support professional (DSP) that can provide them with the appropriate COVID-19 vaccine and healthcare provider information, they can call the **PA Health Hotline**at **1-877-724-3258**
* 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.

a. **Senate Bill 924**- moratorium on the closing of White Haven and Polk state centers; The Arc and other advocacy organizations are watching this. [Find your Legislator](https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/)

b. COVID-19 Resources and Information

c. Many bills address topics relevant to people with disabilities, such as: higher education for students with disabilities (HB85), update guidance for Centers for Independent Living (HB87), MH supports in schools (HB 102).

**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 has been scheduled for Nov. 12, 2021. <https://www.fundourschoolspa.org/>

**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.

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

[The Arc of the US Advocacy priorities](https://thearc.org/covid19recovery/?utm_source=mc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=fusion):

* **The Better Care Better Jobs 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)
* [US Department of Education resource on supporting students' social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health](https://www2.ed.gov/documents/students/supporting-child-student-social-emotional-behavioral-mental-health.pdf); this document presents challenges and recommendations.
* The House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties hearing: [Oversight of the Americans with Disabilities Act: the current state of integration of people with disabilities](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=GaYU1jEX55Y). Many witnesses spoke about ongoing discrimination.
* Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee [Strategic Plan update](https://iacc.hhs.gov/publications/strategic-plan/2017/); [Request for Public Comments](https://iacc.hhs.gov/meetings/public-comments/requests-for-information/2021/strategic-plan.shtml) (Oct. 1, 2021- Nov. 30, 2021)

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 shared with the membership that the Center for Independent Living will be at a rally at the PA Capital to fight cuts in disability funding.

**VII. Committee Update**

1. **Parent Assistance Line**

The following calls were made to the Parent Assistance Line during the month of October:

A parent from the Brentwood SD called regarding his son who has ADHD and has another daughter who is currently a runaway. The parent was referred to the Peal Center and the Allegheny County Children’s Team for assistance with both of these matters at this time.

A parent from the Fox Chapel SD called regarding their daughter’s IEP. There is not enough time put in place in the IEP to get her schoolwork done during the school day. The parent was referred to the Peal Center and the Allegheny County Children’s Team for assistance with this matter.

A parent from the Pittsburgh Public Schools called regarding their child who has anxiety issues at school. The parent was referred to the Peal Center for assistance with this matter.

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

Mrs. Zak informed the membership that first cyclical monitoring for the 2021-2022 school year is:

Baldwin-Whitehall SD – 1/17/2022

**VIII. Old Business**

There was no old business discussed at this meeting.

**IX. New Business**

Heather Zak wanted to know if the LTF membership had any speaker recommendations. If you have any suggestions please contact Heather via e-mail.

The LTF membership decided to continue holding virtual meetings until the spring due to corona virus and bad weather in the winter months.

**X. Membership Rounder**

Everyone wished each other a wonderful Thanksgiving.

**XI. Motion for Adjournment**

A motion was made for adjournment.

Motion was made by Debbie Efkeman and seconded by Penny Gardner.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:56 PM.