

**ACCEPTED** LTF Minutes and Proceedings  
Wednesday, October 5, 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  
Mrs. Debbie Efke  
Mrs. Mary Evrard  
Mrs. Penny Gardner  
Mrs. Debbie Garvic  
Mr. Dave Giusti, Chairperson  
Ms. Amy Guthrie  
Mr. Pete Huey  
Mrs. Sharon Janosik  
Ms. Ashley Kostrub  
Ms. Natalie Krall, Recording Secretary  
Mrs. Leeanna Lawson  
Dr. Sue Mariani  
Mrs. Nicole Meier  
Ms. Meredith Peterson, Co-Chairperson  
Mr. Zac Stranko  
Mr. Isaac Tarbell  
Ms. Melissa Thomas  
Mr. Brian Welles  
Mrs. Heather Zak

**Guests Present**

There were four guests present at this meeting.

Mr. Dave Giusti, Chairperson of the Local Task Force on the Right to Education (LTF #3) called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM on October 5, 2022.

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

Members and guests introduced themselves and their affiliations.

**II. Review/Acceptance of the Minutes of September 7, 2022**

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

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

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

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

### **IV. Consumer Concerns**

There was no consumer concerns discussed at this meeting.

### **V. Informational Items**

#### **A. 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 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>

And 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 ODS informational e-mails.
- Mrs. Evrard discussed Family Directive Services Funding (FDSS) with the membership. She informed the membership that if they are interested in this funding to contact their supports coordinator. Funding is limited to \$2,000.00 per person.

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

Mr. Welles informed the membership about Act 91 of 2001 and shared the ODR Annual Report with everyone.

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

Mrs. Lawson shared the September TCCAC Meeting Padlet with the membership. It can be accessed at the following website: <https://aiu3tac.padlet.org/eringrimm2/8fhcun0hwxzag5tv>

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

Dr. Mariani did not have any new information to share with the membership.

**D. LTF/STF Update – Mr. Dave Giusti and Ms. Meredith Peterson**

Mr. Giusti informed the membership that his goals for the LTF for this year is to increase parent membership in LTF #3.

Ms. Peterson will be updating the LTF #3 Facebook page and will share LTF announcements on this page.

**F. MH Update – Allegheny County MH Children’s Team- Mrs. Emily Born, Ms. Ashley Kostrub, and Ms. Melissa Thomas**

Mrs. Born introduced Ashley Kostrub – School Based Liasion and Melissa Thomas – Education Specialist who just started with the Allegheny County MH Children’s Team this school year to the membership.

Mrs. Born also informed the membership that East Allegheny SD – Logan Elementary School currently has a children’s mental health program which is supported by the Allegheny County MH Children’s Team.

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

Ms. Guthrie informed the membership about the following items:

**I. Resources from Achieva-** <https://www.achieva.info/>

**A. Advocacy-** 1. 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.

2. Webinars- **Why Paid Work Experience is Important to Students with Disabilities**, presented by Mary Hartley, Executive Director, PEAL Center; Oct. 13, 6:30-8:00; Join with Google Meet - [meet.google.com/sdd-nrij-pyj](https://meet.google.com/sdd-nrij-pyj) or dial (US) 1.929.269.1859 PIN: 732 386 456#

**B. Achieva Family Trust-** information on webinars, long-term planning, and other resources on the [Achieva Family Trust](#) website; to subscribe to the AFT newsletter *Trust Matters*, see the most recent edition: [Aug 9, 2022](#)

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

2. Webinars/ Presentations:

a. **Focus on the Future**, Annual Future Planning Conference: Oct. 25 [Register here](#)

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** [Sept. 29, 2022](#)

**F. Autism Connection** <https://autismofpa.org/> **II. Special Education Topics/ Resources**

**A. PaTTAN (PA Training and Technical Assistance Network)-** [Family Engagement newsletter](#)  
[Transition Tidbits, Oct. 2022](#)  
[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. **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. Person-centered planning-** <https://www.lifecoursetools.com/>

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

b. [Allegheny Family Network](#)

### **C. Office of Civil Rights**

[Factsheet- FAPE for students during pandemic under 504](#) - Students with disabilities may be entitled to Compensatory Services if they did not receive appropriate evaluations or services during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**D. OSERS-** US Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services:

[Mar 24 letter to Educators and Parents regarding new CDC recommendations](#)

*If students are at higher risk of hospitalization and or death from COVID, that IEP or 504-plan team needs to ensure that they are able to receive FAPE safely. In addition, schools are obligated to make necessary modifications/accommodations to do that without segregating students with disabilities. One option might be, on a case-by-case basis, expecting others who interact with them to wear masks. Another might be to have smaller groups of nondisabled peers for instruction so they can be included in at atmosphere with fewer risks.*

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

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

*In Touch* newsletter [March 31, 2022](#) [Sept. 29, 2022](#)

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*, [Vol. 23, Issue 2, July, 2022](#) from the PA Developmental Disabilities Council, with information on the state budget, current legislation, and other topics.

- [Senate Bill 1333](#) proposes updates to Pennsylvania Guardianship Laws. The legislation is now eligible to be brought forward for a vote by the full Senate.
- [Senate Resolution 339](#) recognizes October as Disability Employment Awareness Month in Pennsylvania. The bill has been referred to the Senate Rules and Executive Nominations Committee.

#### **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/>;

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

3. [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:**

- **H.R. 4786- RISE Act-** was passed by the House; it will eliminate barriers to accommodations faced by students with disabilities in higher education.
- **H.R. 8863- Words Matter Act of 2022** was introduced. It will update U.S. code with the term “intellectual disability.”

[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](#)

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

Mr. Charlton informed the membership that his organization will be holding a peer group at the Panera Bread in Bakery Square the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of each month.

Mr. Charlton also informed the membership that his organization assists individuals with disabilities with independent living as well as transition services.

**I. Arc of PA – Mrs. Nicole Meier**

Mrs. Meier informed the membership that the Arc of PA will be holding an after school hangout series from 4:30 PM – 5:30 PM. The October session will cover Setting Boundaries and Sticking to Them. Please register on their website [bit.ly/hangoutOct](http://bit.ly/hangoutOct) if you are interested in attending this session.

Mrs. Meier also informed the membership that the Arc of PA is sponsoring an online book study. If you are interested in attending, please register at <http://www.thearcpa.org>

**J. OVR – Mr. Pete Huey**

Mr. Huey informed the membership how OVR works with transition for adults with disabilities.

He also informed the membership that the OVR Early Reach Team is currently working on a working skills program for high school students.

Mr. Huey informed the membership that OVR is currently offering apprentice opportunities to individuals with disabilities at CCAC – West Hills and at the Carpenter Training Center.

Mr. Huey can be reached at 412-392-4958 or by e-mail at [thuey@pa.gov](mailto:thuey@pa.gov) if you have any further questions regarding OVR and their programs.

## **VI. Committee Update**

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

There was one phone call to the Parent Assistance Line for the month of September 2022 and it was from a parent looking for an advocate. A return phone call was made to this parent but they have not called back at this time.

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

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

West Jefferson Hills SD – 11/14/22

Hampton SD – 12/5/22

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

## **VIII. Old Business**

The Disability Inclusive Curriculum Bill will enable school districts to provide a K-12 curriculum inclusive to individuals with disabilities and has passed in the state of Pennsylvania. It is currently in the pilot phase at this time.

## **IX. New Business**

Brian Welles informed the membership that all LTF virtual meetings will be held on Microsoft Teams in the upcoming month since the AIU has now adopted this as their online meeting resource.

## **X. Membership Rounder**

Debra Efke informed the membership that the Best Buddies Tastebuds Fundraiser will be held on 12/5/22 at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center.

Penny's son, Bryan, works competitively at two part-time jobs. Both jobs have recently commended Bryan for being a hard working and great employee. When Bryan was transitioning from school to work, she was told by the school district and other professionals that Bryan would never be competitively employed and should be placed in a sheltered workshop. Penny wants other parents to never give up on their sons and daughters and believe in their capabilities.

Brian Welles shared that AIU Center School graduate Hannah Feda is now working full time at her family's business called Cookie Cookie Ice Cream in McKees Rocks. Hannah has been a very successful employee there and has been interviewed by KDKA recently regarding her position at the business.

Meredith Peterson informed the membership that Down Syndrome Awareness Week is currently this week. She also informed the membership that the Pittsburgh Buddy Walk will be taking place on October 23, 2022 from 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM at Schenley Plaza. Dave Giusti informed the membership that his son Wyatt just began attending the Watson Institute and is doing well there.

## **VII. Motion for Adjournment**

A motion was made for adjournment.

Motion was made by Penny Gardner and seconded by Sharon Janosik.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.