

APPROVED LTF Minutes and Proceedings
Wednesday, September 7, 2022
Allegheny Intermediate Unit
Local Task Force
475 East Waterfront Drive
Homestead, PA 15120-1144

Members Present

Mr. Regis Charlton
Ms. Haley Dillman
Mrs. Debbie Efke
Ms. Jean Ericsson
Mrs. Mary Evrard
Mrs. Penny Gardner
Mrs. Debbie Garvic
Mr. Dave Giusti, Chairperson
Ms. Amy Guthrie
Mr. Clint Hauser
Ms. Ashley Kostrub
Ms. Natalie Krall, Recording Secretary
Mrs. Leeanna Lawson
Mr. Jim Lilley
Mrs. Nicole Meier
Ms. Ursula Lesic
Ms. Heidi Sasson
Mr. Brian Welles
Mrs. Heather Zak

Guests Present

There were five guests present at this meeting. The following members were unable to attend this meeting: Cynthia Grace Devine-Kepner and Meredith Peterson.

Mr. Dave Giusti, Chairperson of the Local Task Force on the Right to Education (LTF #3) called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM on September 7, 2022.

I. Welcome, Introductions, Excused Members

Members and guests introduced themselves and their affiliations.

II. Review/Acceptance of the Minutes of June 1, 2022

The minutes from the June meeting were reviewed. A motion was made to accept the minutes. Motion was made by Debbie Efke and seconded by Penny Gardner.

III. Treasurer's Report – Mr. Dave Giusti

Mr. Giusti reviewed the September treasurer's report with the membership.

IV. Consumer Concerns

A parent asked about how she can make accommodations with her school district for her child who currently has a 504 plan. The child has a health problem and the child's doctor has written a letter on her behalf to receive accommodations from the school district based on her needs at this time. It was suggested that the parent contact school district administration for assistance.

A parent inquired about how to get an independent educational evaluation for her child because she is having a hard time finding a psychologist to complete it at this time. Leeanna Lawson said she can assist because she is talking with a parent who has someone completing one for her child and will ask the parent for the name of the psychologist.

A parent needs counseling/trauma services for her non-verbal special needs child at his new school. An advocate from Achieva has agreed to assist this parent.

A parent has a child in 1st grade who currently has a speech device he is using in school. The parent wanted to know if training was provided to school staff who work with her son for this device. Several members of the LTF suggested that the parent check with school district administration to see if supports for school personnel have been put in the IEP for the speech device.

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 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.

B. AIU – Special Education – Mr. Brian Welles

Mr. Welles informed the membership that all AIU center based schools are now open and ready for the school year. There is currently staffing shortages at all three center based schools for teachers and school psychologists.

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

Mrs. Lawson shared the Training and Consultation program Professional Development offerings for the 2022-2023 school year. She also explained the Training and Consultation program to the membership.

D. Superintendent Update – Dr. Sue Mariani

Dr. Mariani was not in attendance at this meeting.

D. LTF/STF Update – Mr. Dave Giusti

Mr. Giusti did not have any new updates at this time.

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

Mr. Hauser and Ms. Sasson informed the membership that the Allegheny MH Children’s Team has two new school based liaisons that are attendance at tonight’s LTF meeting and they are Hailey Dillman and Ashley Kostrub. There was also a new educational specialist hired named Melissa Thomas who was not in attendance at the meeting tonight.

Ms. Sasson informed the membership that there is a new School Based Assistance Program starting at Frances McClure Elementary.

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, September, 2022
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-** *Update to Federal Guidance on Discipline with McAndrews Law*, Sept 22, 6:30-8:00pm; <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:

a. [Raise Your Voice, Sept 21, 10am-12pm](#): Advocacy on policy issues

b. [Focus on the Future](#), Annual Future Planning Conference: Oct. 25

c. This [Achieva Family Trust webinars](#) link accesses archived webinars such as: "[Future Planning Conference 2021.](#)"

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. 1, 2022](#)

F. Achieva's [YouTube channel](#)

II. Special Education Topics/ Resources

A. PaTTAN (PA Training and Technical Assistance Network)- [Family Engagement newsletter](#)

[Transition Tidbits, June, 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. Thus 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. Robert Morris University Trees Network Special Education Conference:

Moving Forward Together Monday, October 11, 8:30-2:30; Contact Vicki Donne at donne@rmu.edu or [412-397-5465](tel:412-397-5465) for information. [Register Here](#)

5. 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-

A. **The Arc Pennsylvania; Advocacy & Policy Conference- June 6-7** ** See attached flyer

In Touch newsletter [March 31, 2022](#)

1. Workshops:

[PA Family Network](#) range from: Transition, Waiver, Person-Centered Planning

[Positive Behavioral Supports](#), from ODP

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

3. Arc Discovery Employment Transitions (ADEPT):

<https://includemepa.org/what-we-do/adept/>

4. Policy Information Exchange newsletter: *A Slice of PIE*, [Vol.22, Issue 4, Dec 2021](#) from the PA Developmental Disabilities Council, with information on the state budget, current legislation, and other topics.

- **The Disability Inclusive Curriculum Bill**- passed in July; it will establish a 3-year pilot program to provide instruction to students on political, economic and social contributions of individuals with disabilities. PA will be the first state to introduce disability into the curriculum in a comprehensive way.
- **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](#); [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:

[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 series: [Disability Inclusion & Access](#), free virtual programs in April.

H. Disability Options Network – Mr. Regis Charlton

Mr. Charlton explained his organization to the membership.

I. Arc of PA – Mrs. Nicole Meier

Mrs. Meier informed the membership that the Arc of PA is hosting a book study and after school program for children starting this school year.

J. OVR – Mr. Jim Lilley

Mr. Lilley explained the purpose of OVR and how it works for children.

VI. Committee Update

A. Parent Assistance Line

There were no new calls to the parent assistance line for the months of July 2022 and August 2022. Members who would like to be volunteers to provide assistance to parents through the parent assistance line for this school year should contact Dave Giusti to sign up for a designated month.

B. Cyclical Monitoring – Mrs. Debra Efke

Mrs. Efke informed the membership that she is waiting for the Cyclical Monitoring schedule to come out for the 2022-2023 school year. She will share this with the membership as soon as she receives it from the state.

VIII. Old Business

No old business was discussed at this meeting.

IX. New Business

No New business was discussed at this meeting.

X. Membership Rounder

Penny Gardner's son Bryan got a very nice review from his director of operations at his job.

Heather Zak's children are having a great school year.

Debbie Garvic shared that her son had a tumor removed from his neck during the summer and the surgery was successful. The tumor was also not cancerous.

VII. Motion for Adjournment

A motion was made for adjournment.

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

Meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.