

New Mexico IDEA Advisory Panel Meeting

MINUTES

Day 1

11-30-2023

9:12 AM

Meeting Called to Order By	Kaitlin Ellis
Type of Meeting	Advisory Panel Meeting
Facilitator	Kaitlin Ellis
Secretary	Hart Lewis
Attendees	<p>Roll call was taken by Secretary Lewis.</p> <p>In-person: Jennifer Donelli, Kaitlin Ellis, Christa Kulidge, Hart Lewis, Dana Malone, Jessica Powell, Kara Sanchez, Amy Trevino, Mary Vaughn</p> <p>ZOOM: Damon Terry, Robert Madrid, Elvira Dennison, Maureen Lesky, Melissa Wassana, Carli Mortensen, Kara Sanchez, Robert Madrid</p> <p>Absent: Martha Barrera, Lisa Blue, Rebecca Cobos, Lisa Keck, Catherine Quick, Debra Poulin, Mckenzie St.Denis, Shannon Vasquez, Elisa Villanueva, Tamara Wheeler</p>
Excused	
Guests	NMPED Panel-Dr. Margaret Cage, Miguel Lozano, Rita Guild, Zoom: Laurie Pacheco, Mathew Kump,
Agenda	<p>Chair Ellis asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Jennifer Donelli made the motion to approve the agenda; a second was provided by Carli Mortensen. Hearing no discussion, a roll call vote ensued: Elvira Dennison-yes, Jennifer Donnely-yes, Kaitlin Ellis-yes, Damon Terry-yes, Karli Moritzen-yes, Jessica Powell, Kara Sanchez-yes, Amy Trevino-yes, Mary Vaughn-yes, Melissa Wanassav, Robert Madrid-yes, Christa Kulidge-yes. With all members voting in favor, the motion passed.</p>
Minutes	<p>Chair Ellis asked for a motion to approve the September 29, 2023, minutes. Correction to the September minutes: Damon Terry was present. However, his name was transposed in the minutes on page 3. Chair Ellis asked for a motion to table the minutes to make the corrections as requested. Karli motioned to table the minutes from September 29, 2023, until the requested changes had been made. Jennifer Donelli provided a second.</p> <p>A roll call vote ensued: Elvira Dennison-yes, Jennifer Donnely-yes, Christa Kulidge-yes, Damon Terry-yes, Karli Moritzen-yes, Jessica Powell-yes, Kara Sanchez-yes, Amy Trevino-yes, Mary Vaughn-yes, Melissa Wanassa-yes, Robert Madrid-yes. With all members voting in favor, the motion passed.</p>

Agenda Topics

9:18 AM

Chairperson's Report	Chair Kaity Ellis
	<p>Chair Ellis took a moment to welcome everyone to the meeting. She also thanked Miguel Lozano for coordinating the conference, especially given the inclement weather. She thanked all who attended virtually and appreciated their time and participation. Lastly, Chair Ellis wanted to give a big thank you to Dr. Cage for attending the IDEA B Panel meeting.</p> <p>Chair Ellis introduced Dr. Margaret Cage to the panel. Dr. Cage expressed her pleasure at being present at the meeting and thanked the panel for braving the inclement weather. She acknowledged the presence of two staff members who had been guiding her through the process for the last 40 days and Chief Council Miguel Lozano for his skills and for coordinating the meeting. Dr. Cage introduced herself to the panel and gave a brief introduction about her background. She then gave the Director's Report.</p>

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Director's Report	Margaret Cage, Director, Special Education Division
	<p>Dr. Margaret Cage gave a brief report sharing information that will help with Special Education. She feels like she hit the ground running on her first day by participating in listening and advisory groups. She has been truly instrumental in outlining the work ahead of them. The report provided an idea of the previous work and how to work as a whole state. She has identified three significant focus areas.</p> <p>One of the significant areas that the state will focus on is accountability and compliance. Everyone is curious about what the Office of Special Education State Plan will look like. The plan, which will include a 3-year strategy, is set to be released on July 1, 2024. The plan will involve many people across the state, and a needs assessment will be put out in January to capture the views of all stakeholders, including students and parents.</p>

The State has developed relations with the OSEP office in Washington DC, NASDE, NCSI, and TAESE to provide mentorship for state directors of special education. When the current director entered the position, they had no idea about these organizations. However, they have graciously accepted their help and guidance because all the people in those organizations were previous state directors of special education.

The second central area is professional development. One thing contributing to high turnover rates is that employees leave frequently at all levels, from the classroom to the boardroom. To ensure that our students across the state, especially those with disabilities, receive the best possible education, we need to establish a pipeline and a cyclical process for training our frontline staff.

Our third primary focus is to partner with the help of contracts we have already secured and some currently being vetted by the department under the Office of Special Education (SPED). The objective is to increase our SPED teachers' capacity and enable those already certified to teach special education classrooms. According to the LFC report released before Thanksgiving, several SPED (Special Education) teachers across the state need to teach in their field. We are researching to create incentives and possible pay differentials to encourage these teachers to return to teaching in SPED classrooms. We have also vetted an IEP (Individualized Education Program) template that will be released in the spring of 2024.

In addition, we are in talks with a company to establish a unified IEP infrastructure to store and manage all IEPs across the state. Every LEA (Local Education Agency), charter school, and Indian Nation must input information into the system. Once the information is in the system, it will not matter where our students move across the state. Their name will surface as a student with an IEP, and it will only be a matter of changing jurisdiction from one place to another. Will put procedures in place on how that process happens when a student transfers from one area to another. All the topics mentioned in the report relate to compliance, accountability, and professional development.

During the upcoming legislative sessions starting in January, Ms. Cage will request an increase in our Special Education (SPED) staff within the Office of Education. We plan to be mobile with many of our employees to provide direct support to our Local Education Agencies (LEAs) rather than just through team meetings or emails. This way, we can monitor and support processes that we are expecting as a state department and also ensure that the professional development we are providing is being implemented across the state.

Chair Ellis suggested training the HR department to place licensed SPED teachers in SPED classrooms. In response, Dr. Cage mentioned that we

	<p>are currently studying the PED (Public Education Department) rules to be able to provide clearer information to our LEAs (Local Education Agencies) that teachers must be teaching in the areas they are certified. Additionally, we are exploring other ways through our state processes and the legislative sessions to ensure we meet IDEA requirements effectively.</p> <p>Chair Ellis requested that before officially launching the program across the state, we gather input from students with disabilities and disabled adults. We need to understand how adults can advocate for their needs. The IEP has been reviewed and discussed with the Chief Counsel. At present, we have three templates and have received feedback from LEAs to create a determination. We were part of the project group and presented written feedback to the Director. The director stated that it has been a lengthy process, but we can certainly circle back to see what stakeholders we have to review the IEP.</p> <p>A panel member, Carli Mortensen commented that the process has been quite lengthy. She also mentioned that the panel should have been consulted during the process. Going forward, she emphasized the importance of involving the panel members in providing input into the direction of the policies.</p> <p>"The Vice Chair is excited about the unified template. She asked if every school would have the same template. Dr. Cage stated that she would like to create rules before creating the statute and that we need to be careful before putting something out.</p> <p>During the meeting, the Chair asked if any members on Zoom had any questions. Robert Madrid expressed concern for state-supported education programs such as NM Corrections, juvenile justice, and adolescent care. He reminded everyone that we are part of the school system and districts, so it's important to consider those students under their care when reviewing documents.</p>
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Discussion	Public Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ms. Leski, as a parent, would like to recommend more feedback on the IEP template. She has not heard about any efforts in this regard. ● Chair Ellis, suggested a discussion regarding the IEP process. The Director has mentioned that it would not be a problem to have a written report and can arrange a meeting beforehand and include the panel and 5 quadrants of the state to review and have input for the process to ensure it is inclusive of all. ● Member Mortizen had concerns about the timeline panel in February.

Break at 10:01 a.m. Reconvened at 10:06 a.m.

New Business	Presenters: Miguel Lozano, Chief Counsel for Special Education, and Michael Gadomski, Assistance General Counsel
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Special Education Dispute Resolution Update -Miguel Lozano, Chief Counsel for Special Education, and Michael Gadomski, Assistance General Counsel<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ During the meeting, Mr. Lozano and Michael Gadomski introduced themselves. They gave presentations on Resolving Disputes Related to Special Education and Notable Decisions Related to such disputes in the years 22-23 and 23-24. Mr. Lozano presented recent process updates and shared data on dispute resolution processes. He mentioned that the due process hearing decisions were reviewed, resulting in very few cases reported in New Mexico. The updated data presented included information on the number of cases that needed to be resolved in schools throughout New Mexico and the number of cases that have been mediated and resolved. Additionally, Mr. Lozano stated that New Mexico has the lowest rate of disputes compared to other states. This year, there were a total of 51 cases that were opened. <p>Mr. Gadomski presented on Notable Dispute Resolution Decisions from 22-24 and highlighted issues in Private Schools cases, specifically child find duty. The overview included Child Find/Evaluation, Consultation, and Equitable Services.</p> <p>A question was raised about who is responsible for staff training in resolving issues. The answer was that districts and charter schools must hire an independent trainer approved by the PED (Public Education Department) to provide staff training. This is to ensure that accountability is maintained for implementing the training.</p> <p>Chair Ellis asked PED about progress monitoring and academic monitoring. PED will review IEP and goals for progress monitoring, while academic monitoring includes measuring progress, correcting actions, addressing systemic issues, and preventing recurrence for other students.</p>
	Special Education Professional Development Activities Miguel Lozano presented on Professional Development as requested. He explained that it is contracted with Regional Educational Cooperatives and grouped with technical assistance. He elaborated on the contracts' responsibilities with the REC's.
Lunch	12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Reconvene	Meeting Reconvened at 1:00 p.m.
New Business	Vice Chair welcomed Tribal Education Departments with their presentations.

	<p>Education for Parents of Indigenous Children with Special Needs Presenter: Denise Yazzie -Melissa Wasana</p> <p>During the presentation on EPICS Overview, Ms. Yazzie discussed the organization's mission, values, and target population based on OSEP Fast Facts. She shared a brochure that provides information about the services and training offered by EPICS, which includes values and testimonial opportunities. Ms. Yazzie also mentioned that the parent ambassador training focuses on comprehensive training and leadership, advocacy, and capacity building. Recently, the EPICs 2023 Native American Special Education Conference was held, which was a great success.</p>
	<p>Bernalillo Public Schools Special Education Programs Presenter: Jayme Schutte, Director of Special Education at Bernalillo Schools</p> <p>Jayme Schutte, the Director of Special Education at Bernalillo Schools, introduced herself and presented on the IDEA Funds for the 2023-2024 school year spent at Bernalillo Schools. She highlighted the achievements made this year through collaboration with the community, parents, and teachers and how thoughtful communication played a vital role in presenting the end-of-year data. She used a PowerPoint to display the demographics of students with disabilities. Then she shared some Celebrations, which included DVR/JVR/CCMR Collaboration, Rehabilitation Counselor, Gifted Screening, and Therapeutic Program for Elementary students. She emphasized that transparency is essential when preparing a budget, and Bernalillo Schools includes input from the community, staff, and students to support students best academically, culturally, socially, and emotionally. Finally, she thanked the panel and Dr. Cage for today's informative meeting and received great information about Special Education and their needs.</p>
Adjourn	Vice Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

MINUTES

Day 2 December 1, 2023

9:18 AM

Meeting Called to Order By	Chair Ellis called the meeting to order at 9:18 a.m.
Type of Meeting	Advisory Panel Meeting
Facilitator	Kaitlin Ellis
Secretary	Hart Lewis

Attendees	<p>Roll call was taken by Secretary Lewis.</p> <p>In-Person: Kaitlin Ellis, Hart Lewis, Jessica Powell, Kara Sanchez, Amy Trevino, Mary Vaughn, Elisa Villanueva, Bonnie Sax, Kara Sanchez, Hart Lewis</p> <p>ZOOM: Damon Terry, Jennifer Donelli</p> <p>Absent: Martha Barrera, Rebecca Cobos, Elvira Dennise, Christa Kulidge, Dana Malone, Lisa Keck, Mckenzie St.Denis, Robert Madrid, Elvira Dennison, Melissa Wassana, Carli Mortensen</p>
Excused	
Guests	

	<p>During the meeting, Chair Ellis expressed gratitude to the Vice Chair for standing in yesterday. The agenda for the meeting involves discussions on plans that will take place until approximately 10:45 AM. During this time, committees will gather feedback from students and staff. Those who are attending the meeting via Zoom are kindly requested to share district updates.</p>
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10:15 a.m	Break
10:45 a.m.	Reconvene from break
10:45 a.m.	<p>Committee Meetings Members were broken out into committees to visit students and staff in the classroom.</p>

11:30 a.m.	<p>Committee Report from Committee Leads Chair Ellis mentioned that the participants gained valuable insights during the morning class visits. The chairperson thanked the Bernalillo school district for their honesty and openness regarding their requirements and how the committee can support them. The chair also expressed their eagerness to collaborate with the district to ensure that students with disabilities have equal opportunities to succeed, just like other students.</p>
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	Additionally, such students' families should receive the necessary support throughout the process.
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	<p>High Needs Committee Report</p> <p>Jennifer Donelli, who heads the high-needs committee for students with autism, presented a report on their district's efforts to support these students. The committee has been working extensively and even surveyed parents of children with autism. The survey revealed a severe lack of support and training for parents and personnel. She appreciated the insights shared during yesterday's meeting and learned about the various training resources available. The committee discussed a recommendation tool and emphasized ensuring that information reaches the right people and that personnel receive appropriate training and support. We aim to make recommendations to the administration to improve the support system for autistic students. We had productive conversations and thanked Dr. Page for joining our table and providing valuable input.</p> <p>After Ms. Donelli presented her report, questions were asked, and Chair Ellis thanked the High Needs Committee for their efforts.</p> <p>Trauma Committee Report</p> <p>Ms. Trevino and Mr. Damon discussed the changes in the group's membership from last year. They also talked about the issue of trauma in schools. Dr. Cage provided a lot of valuable information and education during the meeting. The discussion then shifted to Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). They addressed concerns related to the 45-day rule and collecting data from schools. The group plans to conduct research to see what other states are doing in this regard, and Mr. Lozano has volunteered to help provide information. Dr. Cage was not sure where the 45-day rule came from but would research where it came from.</p>
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	<p>Chair Ellis offered assistance and praised High Needs' performance. She expressed that the IEP is a guiding document for schools. And appreciated Dr. Cage and panel having interaction to come up with solutions and goals for the state of nm special education.</p> <p>Chair Ellis expressed gratitude to Bernalillo High School for providing their facilities and reminded the panel that the final meeting for this year will be held at the School for the Blind on April 25th-26th in Alamogordo. Members who wish to attend will need to contact PED.</p>
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Next Meeting Date	Next Meeting Date February 24, 2024: Available Virtual and In-person Mr. Lozano requested the panel to submit their reimbursement forms for both today's meeting and the meeting in Alamogordo.
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Adjournment	Chair Ellis adjourned the meeting at 12:15 p.m. as there were no additional questions or concerns.
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