

New Mexico IDEA Advisory Panel Meeting

MINUTES

2-23-2024

9:00-4:00 via Zoom

Meeting Called By	Jennifer Donelli
Type of Meeting	Advisory Panel Meeting
Facilitator	Jennifer Donelli
Secretary	Hart Lewis
Attendees	<p>Rebecca Cabos, Jennifer Donnelly, Lisa Keck, Christa Kulidge, Dana Malone, Damon Terry, Carli Mortensen, Kara Sanchez, Amy Trevino, Mary Vaughn, Melissa Wassana, Elisa Villanueva, Robert Madrid Melissa Wassana</p> <p>Members Absent: Martha Barrera, Elvira DenNison, Kaitlin Ellis, Lisa Keck, Jessica Powell, Bonnie Chase, Mckenzie St Denise</p>
Introduction of Guests	<p>Dr. Margaret Cage-Director of Special Education, Tyre Jenkins-Deputy Director, Office of Special Education, Miguel Lozano-Chief Counsel, Elizabeth Cassel-Education Administrator, Parent & Community Liaison, Complaints and CAPS, Michael Gadowski-Assistant General Counsel, Charlene Marcotte-Deputy Director of Finance and Data, Jennifer Rodriguez-Executive Secretary/Administrative Support to Director of SED, Lorie Pacheco-General Supervision, Low Incidence, NIMAS/NMIMAC, Trudy Cordova-Education Administrator, Katalina Gallegos-Management Specialist, Ria Gill-EA Admin-ADV, Curriculum Specialist</p> <p>Cabinet Members: Dr.Arsenio Romero-Secretary of the Public Education Department, Dr. Candice Castill, Deputy Secretary of Identity, Equity and Transformation,</p>

Agenda Topics

9:05 a.m.

Call to Order

Jennifer Donelli, Vice Chair

Discussion	Call to order by Jennifer Donelli-Vice Chair. Vice-Chair Donelli noted that a quorum was present and the meeting was being held virtually. Any actions taken during the meeting will be done through roll call voting.
Approval of Agenda	<p>Vice-Chair Doneli asked for a motion to approve the order and content of the agenda. Christa Kulidge provided the motion to approve the agenda as presented, and Rebecca Cabos provided a second.</p> <p>A roll call vote ensued, Rebecca Cabos-yes, Jennifer Donnelly-yes, Lisa Keck-yes, Christa Kulidge-yes, Dana Malone-yes, Damon Terry-yes, Amy Trevino-yes, Mary Vaughn-yes, Alissa Villanueva-yes, Karly Moritzen-yes, Kara Sanchez-yes, Melissa Wassana-yes, Robert Madrid-yes. With members present voting in favor; the motion passed.</p>
Approval of Minutes	Vice-Chair Donelli called for a motion to approve the minutes of September 29th and November 30th. In the November minutes, Krista Coolidge confirmed that she attended the in-person meeting and was not present online. Member Damon Terry motioned to approve the minutes corrected for September 29 and November 30th. Member Krista Coolidge seconded the motion.

	<p>A roll call vote ensued, Rebecca Cabos-yes, Jennifer Donnelly-yes, Lisa Keck-yes, Christa Kulidge-yes, Dana Malone-yes, Damon Terry-yes, Amy Trevino-yes, Mary Vaughn-yes, Alissa Villanueva-yes, Karly Moritzen-yes, Kara Sanchez-yes, Melissa Wassana-yes, Robert Madrid-yes. With members present voting in favor, the motion passed.</p>
Chairperson's Report	<p>Jennifer Donelli, Vice Chair</p>
	<p>During the meeting, Vice Chair Donelli read the report by Chairperson Ellis. Ms. Ellis raised concerns about the increasing number of school districts in our state that are failing to follow the individual education program (IEP) for students with disabilities. Some districts interpret IEPs in a way that favors their interests rather than the students. She emphasized the importance of advocating for the rights of students with disabilities. Additionally, Ms. Ellis acknowledged and appreciated the dedicated educators in our state who are working tirelessly to ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, have the opportunity to reach their full potential. Thanks to their hard work and commitment, many students with disabilities can thrive in their academic pursuits. She urged everyone to continue protecting the rights of students with disabilities and to hold school districts accountable for following IEPs.</p>
Bylaws Review Committee Report	<p>Jennifer Donelli, Vice Chair</p>
	<p>Vice Chair Donelli presented the Bylaw report and informed everyone that the ADHOCK Bylaw Committee group has been working diligently to examine the bylaws. She mentioned that a copy of the report will be shared with all members in the coming weeks to allow them to review it before the next meeting. Vice-Chair Donelli encouraged all members to provide feedback, notes, or comments on the report to facilitate a lively discussion at the April meeting. The aim is to discuss and vote on some of the recommended changes and amendments. In her report, Vice-Chair Donelli highlighted the focus on term limits and the definition of a quorum. She welcomed any input from the members on these topics.</p>
Directors Report	<p>Dr. Margaret Cage, Director of Special Education</p>
	<p>Dr. Cage expressed her gratitude towards her colleagues from the cabinet, the governor's and lieutenant governor's offices, and the Department of Public Education for attending the meeting. She thanked her colleagues at the cabinet level for joining the special education huddle, where they came up with ideas for improving student outcomes and reaching out to parents in different communities across New Mexico.</p> <p>Dr. Cage expressed gratitude to the meeting attendees. She stated that one of the key responsibilities of the Governor's executive office is to establish a connection between all agencies dealing with the Special Education Department and are working diligently towards implementing the priorities of the executive order and those of Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham.</p> <p>Miguel Lozano, Chief Officer of Special Education, made an announcement. that one of the members, Tamara Wheeler, passed away. Tamara was an experienced educator and related service provider in Arizona and New Mexico, including Rio Rancho Public Schools. At Chair Ellis's request, we sent our condolences to her family. Although it has been some time, her family has organized a celebration of life at an elementary school in Rio Rancho. The date and time of the Celebration of Life for Ms. Willard has been provided. He also mentioned that Ms. Willard was a strong advocate for students with disabilities and was never hesitant to speak her mind. She pointed out the things we could have done better a few times. Mr. Lozano appreciated her time and efforts in fighting for students in NM and AZ. He hoped that everyone who could attend would share their sentiments with the family as part of the celebration of life.</p> <p>Dr. Cage then expressed her gratitude towards Chief Counsel Miguel Lozano for his constant support in keeping the panel going and ensuring they have everything they need to succeed. She also thanked her staff for their presence and support in understanding the mission and vision of the Office of Special Education and Governor Lujan Grisham. Dr. Cage presented a brief report on the status of the Office of Special Education Act. She stated that significant progress has been made in the Office of Special Education in the last 100 days. She thanked all the stakeholders for their advocacy, insight, and time supporting her in reorganizing and restructuring the Office of Special Education. The main focus is on executing the priorities of Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's executive order, which aims to increase awareness, advocacy, student outcomes, and inclusionary practices.</p> <p>On her director's report she gave an update on the legislative session. The General Appropriations Act, section 9, page 236, provides stipends and paid differentials for staff special education positions. They are reviewing this section to ensure they can fill those gaps across the State of New Mexico with special</p>

	<p>education and related staff. Another important bill is HB2, which includes school-based inclusion programs that foster one-to-one friendships. These measures will support the Office of Special Education.</p> <p>She also informed the panel of an executive-level special education huddle that meets every Thursday. The committee includes representatives from the governor's office, lieutenant governor's office, secretary of different departments, staff, and other stakeholders from our partnering departments. The committee works to ensure that all portions of the Special Education office are well-structured, processes and procedures are in place and are in agreement, and are working on a state plan, which is also a part of the executive order.</p> <p>Over 60 applicants applied for Special Education positions, and the Special Education Office will offer nine positions by next week.</p> <p>Dr Cage mentioned that the Professional Development plan will be finalized and released by July 1, 2024. It will serve as the roadmap for the Professional Development plan for 2024-2025. She also stated that the IEP template is almost ready for review. She mentioned that the template was created with the input of more than 200 stakeholders and they are delighted to announce that they not only have an IEP template for review but will also have a few addendums for behavior. Additionally, there will be an IEP handbook to accompany this unified IEP template, which will be implemented in every LEA across the state of New Mexico.</p> <p>The Office of Special Education Division's activities include working with the Secretary of Higher Education to improve outcomes for students with disabilities and universities to examine the curriculum used by teachers who have graduated with a teaching degree. The goal is to work together to ensure that general education teachers have special education courses to support students with disabilities better.</p> <p>The Office of Special Education is pleased to announce the upcoming events. The Special Education Directors Academy is scheduled for February 28th and 29th in Albuquerque. The Leadership Academy is going to be held in Santa Fe in May. Parent University is scheduled for the summer of 2024. The Special Education Office is also in the process of creating a Request for Proposal application for companies interested in helping build the IEP infrastructure. The goal is to have a unified structure used across the state. Dr Cage then thanked everyone for supporting the Office of Special Education and Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham in executing the executive order</p> <p>Dr Cage then opened the floor for questions.</p>
<p>Legal Framework for Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavioral Intervention Plans & State Survey</p>	<p>Miguel Lozano, Chief Counsel & Michael Gadomski, Assistance General Counsel</p>
	<p>Miguel Lozano, Chief Counsel, and Michael Gadomski, Assistant General Counsel, gave a presentation requested at the last meeting by the panel on the legal framework for functional behavioral assessments, behavioral intervention plans, and state surveys. Dr. Cage reminded the panel that if they have any concerns about what a school district has or has not done, to follow the complaint process, and they will investigate the complaint. Dr. Elizabeth Cassel is responsible for handling parent complaints in the Office of Special Education. She is a helpful resource for school districts needing assistance with understanding the process. The office is putting in a lot of effort to update its manuals and offer professional development opportunities. If you need more information or would like to offer your support, you can contact their office directly. During the meeting, Mr. Lozano expressed his appreciation to Dr. Cage and welcomed all ideas and suggestions. The main objective of the meeting was to provide guidance for potential solutions. The state survey has been shared with the behavior committee for their review. If you have any specific language or direction that might be useful for potential rule changes, please share it. Any recommendations put forth will be taken into consideration. At the end of the meeting, Miguel Lozano, Chief Counsel, opened the floor for questions.</p> <p>Ms. Trevino thanked Mr. Lozano for listening to her concerns. She's curious about the qualifications required for those conducting FBAs and BIPs.</p>
<p>Special Guest Appearance Secretary of Public</p>	<p>Dr. Arsenio Romero, Secretary of Public Education</p>

Education	
	<p>The Secretary of Education joined the meeting and gave a report on the upcoming Latinos in Action Conference and thanked Dr. Cage's team for their quick responsiveness to local communities. He expressed eagerness to receive updates about the work that needs to be done across NM and to work specifically with each community to address their unique needs. The Secretary of Education concluded by saying they have finished a 30-day session and made progress in improving special education in NM. We're implementing a common IEP process across the state, which means consistent, high-quality education for all students, regardless of location. We're also supporting parents with parent academies. Thank you to everyone involved in this effort. Vice Chair Donelli asked Dr. Cage if a committee could be formed to help with the updates.</p>
Professional Development Plan related to Behavioral Interventions and Supports	Dr. Tyre Jenkins & Charlene Marcotte, Deputy Directors of the Office Special Education
	<p>Deputy Directors Tyre Jenkins and Deputy Director of the Office of Special Education, Charlene Marcotte provided the panel with a presentation regarding the office of Special Education Plan for professional development related to behavioral interventions and supports.</p> <p>Dr. Jenkins and Deputy Director Marcotte discussed their professional development plan, focusing on behavior interventions and support. They have 60+ applications for rapid hires and are working on implementing the plan. They will share collected data and discuss the office's identified areas of need.</p> <p>The state is divided into four quarters, each with a professional development specialist for training and behavioral support. REX provides professional learning opportunities every month. Dr. Cage will introduce office hours in March for stakeholders to ask questions, with a brief professional development session if there are enough requests.</p> <p>Vice Chair Donelli thanked both presenters and asked for any comments or questions. Rebecca Cobos asked for a copy of the presentation. Member Kulidge commented on STARS reporting</p>
Special Guest Appearance	Office of the Lieutenant Governor- Howie Morales
	<p>Lieutenant Governor Howie Morales thanked everyone, especially Dr. Cage and her team, for creating an action panel that provides vital information to reach students with disabilities across the state. He expressed his excitement for the progress that will be made and thanked Dr. Cage for her leadership and continued efforts.</p>

Break: 10:50 a.m.

The meeting Reconvened at 11:00 a.m.

Public Comments	
	<p>Gail Stewart suggests that the state should stop using the phrase "problem behavior" when discussing FBA and BIT issues in IEP meetings. Instead, she recommends using "non-conforming behavior" to avoid negatively affecting children. She also reminds us that fixing the FBA forms alone won't solve the problem; the main issue is often a lack of understanding about the child's disability.</p> <p>Monica Murra is a behavioral advocate and a parent advocate who advocates for children with mental health diagnoses, autism, and general behavior issues across the state. One area she continues to see as an issue is defining what data looks like.</p> <p>Vice-Chair Doneli thanked all members for their comments.</p>

Special Guest Appearance	Dr. Castillo, Deputy Secretary for Identity Equity and Transformation
	Dr. Castilol, the Deputy Secretary for Identity Equity and Transformation, introduced herself and explained her role. She oversees various areas that receive federal funding, including safe and healthy schools, language and culture departments, and education acts. Dr. Castillo expressed her eagerness to learn from everyone and meet some of them in person.
Parents Reaching Out	Jennifer Donelli, Executive Director
	<p>Vice-Chair Donelli gave her presentation on Parents Reaching Out. She stated that the mission of this program is to support all families, including those who have children with disabilities or are otherwise disenfranchised. The program has four main pillars: health information, early childhood education, leadership, and statewide representation. The services provided include workshops, resources, leadership training, and one-on-one support. The impact of the program was also shown, highlighting how early childhood programs support families with parent support for infants and toddlers, advocacy, and record keeping. One key aspect of the program is that they have a neonatal intensive care unit at UNMH. The education program covers the parent training program for New Mexico, which covers children up to the age of 26. The topics covered include the IEP process, self-advocacy, transitions, 504 plans, behavior plans and assessments, disputes, and parental involvement. The program supports literacy and provides resources for what students can do at home. Parents Reaching Out is involved in newer programs such as capstones, graduation profiles, and internships. They also help with the transition from high school to adulthood, covering topics such as student-led IEPs, self-advocacy, college accommodations, healthcare transition, and accommodating the workplace. They also help with the Family to Family Health Information Center, including the Families as Faculty program.</p> <p>Opened it up for questions. Bailey Lee Mceuen represented CYFD, curious about what it would like to partner with PRO.</p>

Lunch Break: 12:00

Reconvene: 12:30

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation –	Casey Stone-Romero, Division Director; Charlene Chavez, Statewide Transition Director, Nash Sisneros, Rehabilitation Services Unit Deputy Director
	Director Dr. Casey Stone Romero and Charlene Chavez from NM Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to provide a presentation on the work of a DVR related to secondary transition programs for students with disabilities. They have 13 staff dedicated to working directly with students with disabilities and have each of our vocational rehab counselors work with a separate school so that we have statewide coverage for these services. Her presentation included the Vision, Mission, and Value of the program. Dr. Romero mentioned that NMDVR has three significant programs and gave an overview and they work closely with workforce boards to help students transition into adulthood.
Future Focus Education	Future Focus Education - Lisa Harmon-Martinez, Learning by Doing Director
	The Future Focus Education presentation highlighted their partnerships with schools, districts, and nonprofits across the state to improve high school experiences. They also emphasized close collaboration with parents. They work with students to pursue a capstone as a graduation requirement and to change the assessment process, which has some implications for students who receive special education services. They work in areas related to assessment, work-based learning, social-emotional well-being, and community engagement. Ms. Martinez provided dates of upcoming conferences, including the EDUprising Conference and Combining Capstones & IEPs as a New Graduation Pathway."

Break 2:00 p.m.

Meeting Reconvened 2:10 p.m.

<p>Committee Reports</p>	<p>Behavioral Committee and Autism Committee</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Behavioral Committee-Damon Terry Damon Terry of the behavioral committee thanked everyone for the presentation on state requirements for functional behavior assessments and plans. The committee wants to create universal templates and plans. They suggest starting pilot programs in the state and are eager to help with training. They believe a systematic approach is important and are excited to make a difference. ● Autism Committee-Jennifer Donelli The Autism Committee discussed what the committee would like to focus on. One topic is promoting and creating an inclusive language and culture for students. They want to shift towards creating IEPs that are student-focused and strength-based. This includes providing professional development opportunities and making suggestions to ensure that the IEP is always student-focused rather than something that is only required. As a committee, they aim to gather data from high-need groups about their concerns and how they can represent them in the final recommendations. They are excited to continue supporting this work and hope to provide input on the new IEP handbook as it gets developed.
<p>Next Meeting Date/Location</p>	<p>When: Thursday, April 25, 2024 Time: 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.</p> <p>When: Thursday, April 26, 2024 Time: 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.</p> <p>Location: NM School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Alamogordo, NM In-person or via Zoom.</p> <p>All panel members were encouraged to attend the meeting in person. Please contact Miguel Lozano and Jennifer Rodriguez to complete a W-9 form for reimbursement.</p>
<p>Adjourn</p>	<p>Vice-Chair, Donelli, thanked Dr. Cage, state attendees, and panel members for virtually attending the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 3:36 pm.</p>