



Jill K. Underly, PhD, State Superintendent

Wisconsin Council on Special Education Meeting Minutes

Date December 02, 2022

10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Department of Public Instruction, Virtual Meeting

Meeting #336

Business Meeting #336: Judy Conlin called meeting to order. There were 14 council members in attendance. Quorum was met at time of voting for the approval of council minutes, but no quorum was met at the end of the meeting and no vote taken on the recommendation to the State Superintendent.

Council Attendance: Allison Gordon, Judith Conlin, Doan Bui, Lisa Stewart, Jacob Roberts, Hugh Davis, Lama Bergstrand Othman, Loucretia Carson, Erin Vaara, Lisa Misco, Jeanette Nowak Goniou, Jenny Evrard-Larson, Alison Peetz, Beverly Walker

DPI Attendance or Presenter: Cheri Sylla, Ellen Antoniewicz, Paul Manriquez, Daniel Parker, Patricia Williams, Lynn Winn, Seth Bishop.

Public Attendance: None

I. Welcome and Correspondence Chairperson's Report

- a. At 10:01am, Council's co-chair Judy Conlin welcomed council members and thanked council members for their participation in the recent council public forum listening session.

Co-chairs Judy Conlin and Hugh Davis reminded council of the role of council in making recommendations to the State Superintendent. Specifically, as members of council it is important for each member to actively participate in council discussions because each council member has a unique perspective, knowledge of, and experience with the topics we discuss.

Council speaks as one voice when making recommendations to the State Superintendent. Council members were reminded to use individual voices during discussions, and when decisions are made and voted on, that it is expected that council members will support those decisions. Council members were also reminded when talking with community members, council members should make it clear that individual comments are personal viewpoints and that they do not represent council when speaking at public or governmental events as this could lead others to believe individual views represent the views of the council on special education.

Some council members serve dual roles (e.g. school, district, or state leadership, family support and advocacy organizations, parent leaders in the community, etc). It is important to separate roles and recommendations as a representative of council versus the role as an individual or as part of a separate organization. For example, it is important and expected to share individual experiences and information from your organization at council meetings. However, when at non-council public events, those perspectives and opinions should not be shared to reflect the opinions of the full council on special education and should be shared as a perspective either individually or through your non-council role.

In addition, council chairs recommended that any calls or questions from the media related to council recommendations should be referred back to the Wisconsin DPI special education team.

II. Public Appearances:

- a. There were no public appearances.

III. Review Minutes of Meeting 335

- a. Council reviewed the council meeting #335 draft minutes and voted to approve them as written. No council members opposed the draft meeting minutes or requested revisions.
- b. Past council minutes can be found on the DPI [Council on Special Education Agenda and Minutes webpage](#).

IV. Idea Complaint and Due Process Hearing Findings & Decisions

- a. Council reviewed previous quarter IDEA complaint and due process hearing data summarized by the DPI special education team. IEP implementation was a common complaint topic this last quarter.
- b. Council members asked DPI to develop an end of year report of complaint and due process hearing findings to identify common patterns in complaint decisions. Council can then consider whether to utilize this for a potential council recommendation. Patti Williams, DPI Special Education Director, stated this could be generated and combined with the Procedural Compliance Self-Assessment common errors data and presented in the June meeting or first meeting of the new council year in 2023-2024.
- c. Complaint and due process hearing decisions can be found on the DPI [complaint](#) and [due process hearing](#) webpages.
- d. Patti Williams also discussed how DPI can look at both student level complaints through the IDEA complaint process as well as systemic issues in providing a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to a group of students. Complaints can address either student-specific issues or district-wide corrective actions. Anyone filing a complaint on a group of students should indicate this on the complaint submission to DPI. This may then initiate a general supervision revision where DPI investigates the district for systemic concerns related to students with disabilities. In addition to filing a complaint, anyone may contact DPI directly with a systemic issue or concern through the main DPI special education team webpage and phone number.
- e. A council member inquired about how best to support complaint processes under Title 7 and Title 9 with special education complaint processes. DPI recommends that districts work with their district Special Education Director on how to pull together that district level and state level complaint information. Council members discussed the importance of solving concerns between students, families, and educators at the local level.

V. Special Education Team Director's Report

- a. Patti Williams, Director of the Special Education team provided an update. Patti expressed gratitude for her new role as the director of special education. She also provided updates related to new DPI personnel on the special education team, recent guidance from the United States Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs, and updates related to recent Wisconsin DPI guidance resources and discretionary grant projects.

Council asked if for the Procedural Compliance Self-Assessment (PCSA) the district special education director should share out information of findings on how the district is doing at each building level. Patti commented this is something they can look at emphasizing in the process steps for PCSA to

share back with individual buildings and encourage districts to look at ways to communicate building level issues to the building personnel.

A council member commented that they worked at a CESA and many LEAs do district-wide trainings after they get the results of their PCSA. RSN also helps with these trainings. Patti thanked the RSN and recognized the great work they do to help districts with the PCSA.

VI. Lunch

VII. Indicator 8 Family Engagement Survey Comments

- a. Cheri Sylla, from the Wisconsin Statewide Parent Educator Initiative (WSPEI), provided a general overview of the Indicator 8 Family Engagement Survey. This survey is a federally required cyclical data collection that one fifth of all districts in the state complete each year. The process for implementing the survey and general findings of the survey were discussed. 4,501 parents completed the survey, the most ever, in the 2021-2022 school year. Districts also did better in meeting response rate targets across student race last year but there is still more work to be done in this area.
- b. Daniel Parker provided an overview of the draft comment report that summarizes key themes of the additional comments parents shared in the comment section of the survey.
- c. Council inquired if a report could be developed to disaggregate responses by race or ethnicity. Seth Bishop, DPI data analyst, shared how a report could be developed in this manner.

Council asked if there could be revisions to the survey questions. Seth responded that revisions to the targets requires stakeholder input on target setting and approval from the US Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs. It is not advised to change the survey frequently and recommend only once every 5-6 years when we set a new cohort for the reporting cycle so that it is consistent over the 5-year reporting period. 2025-2026 may be the best timing to reset questions. However, any ideas for changing questions could be submitted to Cheri Sylla, csylla@cesa1.k12.wi.us, who is contracted with DPI to support this data collection.

Council asked if families with suspended students are included and DPI responded that suspended and expelled students still have an attendance record and are included in the sample sent to school districts on who to contact.

Council asked about redaction rules for reporting. Seth Bishop, DPI data analyst, shared that redaction rules are used if a data element is considered sensitive (this includes Indicator 8) or with a minimal cell size of 20 or more. DPI [rules for redaction](#) are on the DPI webpage.

Council asked what types of data can be disaggregated. DPI responded that the data is linked with student IDs and any other disaggregation could be completed for information attached with student IDs (e.g., free and reduced lunch status, English learner status).

Council also inquired if Title I collects any data on family engagement or parent involvement. DPI will follow up with Title I for a response.

DPI shared that all school districts have reports generated for question percent agreement on the family engagement survey. These district summaries are available for open record requests.

VIII. Special Report: Debrief on Public Forum Listening Session

- a. Council shared several comments that the forum was very productive and many of the issues raised were broad and not just specific to individual students. Some council members wondered if the sample of those commenting was too small to determine trends. Many council members felt the comments summarized a need for professional learning for educators working with students with disabilities. In addition, not enough staffing in schools was seen as a pattern of concern as well as training contributing to the concerns of parents. A council member commented that, as a general education teacher, it was eye opening to see the parent perspective on what districts are not doing. Other council members shared that the comments echo what they hear from families on a daily basis while working with family support and advocacy organizations.
- b. Council identified a few items they may be able to address more easily, versus larger systemic issues, such as helping parents understand the IEP process or helping parents better access and understand the procedural safeguards. Council shared interest in having the procedural safeguards be more understandable to parents. Council discussed that the harder topics to address are comments related to conflict between procedural requirements of IDEA and helping educators develop a deeper understanding of students with disabilities.
- c. Council discussed how in special education there are a lot of procedural requirements and if IEP teams could spend more time talking about the student and the student's individual needs than this would be better for the student. They discussed how the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the most comprehensive civil rights law for children. If parents and educators can have tools to better understand IDEA, then they can focus more on student needs.
- d. Another topic that council wanted to address based on the comments from public forum and the Indicator 8 survey was looking at the educational environment students receive and student performance in those environments. Specifically, when is it productive to be educated in general education and when a student needs a different environment and how to address general education supports when a paraprofessional or special education teacher is not immediately available due to individual needs of

another student. Council shared interest to look at research about inclusion and encourage educators to provide supports based on research and ensure those are in place before looking at other educational locations for special education services. In addition, council recommended looking at districts that do well in supporting students with disabilities in the general education setting.

- e. Council recommended getting a national speaker on the topic of inclusion of students with disabilities to speak to council at the next meeting. DPI responded that they would reach out to national technical assistance organizations to see if they could fill this request. Syracuse University and TIES Center were mentioned as possible locations to identify a speaker.

IX. Special Topic: Brief IEPs and Procedural Safeguards

- a. Daniel Parker, Wisconsin DPI, shared current resources such as the “Communication Options for Families” document and shared DPIs current format for procedural safeguards. Although DPI is required to share specific information outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), DPI can investigate if there are other versions or ways to develop an “at a glance” version of the procedural safeguards. DPI will report back at the next council meeting on this research. Council stated that any initiative to make IEPs more digestible for everyone involved would be a step forward.
- b. Council discussed the challenge to get the child’s homeroom teacher to read the IEP. Council discussed the idea of a brief IEP and one council member shared examples of what they use in districts to give to general education teachers to summarize components of the IEP. Council liked this idea and thought this could also be helpful for parents. Several council members discussed interest in meeting as a workgroup to discuss what a model template for a “brief IEP” or “IEP at a glance” might look like. DPI said they would develop a workgroup with council and open it up through an open meeting to the public prior to the next council meeting.
- c. Council also discussed the idea of creating short videos to help parents understand the IEP and special education process. DPI shared that the Wisconsin Statewide Parent Educator Initiative (WSPEI) had a similar idea and started work on some video scripts with DPI. DPI will include this in the special workgroup meeting prior to the next council meeting to discuss those ideas for video scripts and share out some of what WSPEI has developed.

X. Special Topic: Professional Development Recommendation

- a. Council revised the recommendation that was originally drafted last school year and further refined in the September meeting. Council did not have a quorum at this point in the meeting to vote on the recommendation. DPI will look into options for how council can approve the recommendation prior to the next council meeting in March so that

the recommendation can be considered as DPI develops their contracts and grant projects for the new school year.

- b. Judy Conlin thanked everyone that participated in the council special meeting that took place prior to the council meeting today to revise the recommendation as well as those that further helped revised the recommendation today. Council agreed the recommendation was ready for a vote next time council had a quorum.

XI. Special Topic: Messaging the Importance of Social and Emotional Learning

- a. Council co-chair Hugh Davis shared the importance of social and emotional learning and how council members should be aware that some school boards are not allowing social and emotional learning initiatives in their schools.
- b. Council reviewed this [national resources from CASEL](#) on social and emotional learning. Council recommended continuing this discussion in the next council meeting and possibly having a presentation from the Wisconsin DPI Student Services Prevention and Wellness team. DPI stated they would follow up to see if the SSPW team could provide a presentation to council. The following link that has several more links to [meta-research on SEL along with additional videos](#) was also shared with Council.
- c. Council asked if anyone had collected data on how widespread opposition to social and emotional learning is in Wisconsin. A council member shared that the Wisconsin Association of School Boards may have information on the types of changes taking place in schools and concerns about what is being taught. Council discussed how school boards have policies that if a parent disagrees with curriculum, they can be offered an alternate option.

XII. Old Business

- a. Suggested Agenda Topics for December's Meeting were discussed earlier in the meeting based on discussion of professional learning priorities.
- b. Council agreed that a public forum in the spring was not needed, and that council should focus on the fall public forum comments when considering future topics for meetings.
- c. There were no Council Member Reports and Issues at this time.
- d. No comments were made on the 2022-2023 Meetings Calendar. However, council did request that DPI make sure to add the next meeting date to the agenda for each meeting and the council ticker.
- e. A council member recommended to have a timeline of the last 5 years and concerns brought up at council meetings along with any recommendations that led to new resources or guidance. This then could be shared with people that attend the public forums to show that council is acting on those concerns brought by the public. Outlining the concerns and

recommendations shared at council meetings with actions of council and DPI could then be included in promotional materials in the future as well as the response letter to those attending public forum.

f. There were no other announcements.

XIII. Public Appearances:

a. There were no new public appearances.

XIV. Adjournment

a. The meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm by council co-chair Hugh Davis.

Council on Special Education Roles

The Council on Special Education is a committee appointed by the state superintendent to provide policy guidance to the Department of Public Instruction and its Division for Learning Support (DLS) in matters related to the education of all children with disabilities in Wisconsin. (34 CFR 300.167 and 15.377(4), Wis. Stats.).

The Council:

- advises the State Superintendent of unmet needs within Wisconsin in the education of children with disabilities;
- comments publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by Wisconsin regarding the education of children with disabilities;
- advises the State Superintendent in developing evaluations and reporting on data to OSEP under IDEA;
- advises the State Superintendent in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in Federal monitoring reports under IDEA; and
- advises the State Superintendent in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

(34 CFR 300.169)

As noted above, the role of council is to advise the State Superintendent.

Thus, any letters of support for specific budget or other educational initiatives should be sent to the State Superintendent and not directed to other entities (i.e. state legislature). As stated in s.15.377(4), Wis Stat., public comment is limited to rules proposed by the Department of Public Instruction regarding the education of children with disabilities.

Thus, there are specific processes and requirements for how public comment is provided on rules proposed by the Department of Public Instruction that Wisconsin DPI and council must follow.

