

**SUMMARY**  
**November 3, 2023 Meeting**  
**Indiana State Advisory Council (SAC)**  
**on the Education of Children with Disabilities**  
 Online Virtual Meeting

<u>Council Members:</u>	<u>Present</u> <u>(Yes/No)</u>
<b>Melaina Gant</b> , SAC Chair, Department of Child Services	Y
<b>Kim Dodson</b> , The Arc of Indiana	N
<b>Bethany Ecklor</b> , Division of Mental Health & Addiction, Indiana FSSA	N
<b>Anthony England</b> , Elkhart Community Schools	Y
<b>Paloma Garza</b> , parent representative	N
<b>Dennis Heathfield</b> , Cummins, Inc.	Y
<b>Dr. Nancy Holsapple</b> , Office of Special Education, Department of Education	Y
<b>Funmi Ige-Wright</b> , parent representative	Y
<b>Alesia Johnson</b> , Indianapolis Public Schools	N
<b>Donald Koors</b> , Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired	Y
<b>Jonathan Kraeszig</b> , Division of Disability & Rehabilitation Services, Indiana FSSA	Y
<b>Kristi Linson</b> , Children’s Special Health Care Services, State Department of Health	Y
<b>Molly McGuire</b> , parent representative	N
<b>Dr. John Nally</b> , Department of Correction	Y
<b>Dr. Leah Nellis</b> , Indiana University-Kokomo	N
<b>Lesa Paddack</b> , IN*Source	Y
<b>Michelle Robinson</b> , MSD of Lawrence Township	Y
<b>Tiffany Sanders</b> , parent representative	N
<b>Sarah Watson</b> , Archdiocese of Indianapolis	N
<b>Lucy Witte</b> , Indiana School for the Deaf	Y

**Also Present:** Tracy Brunner, Sarah Parks-Reese, Department of Education; Alicia Cooper, Department of Child Services

**Call to Order**

State Advisory Council Chair Melaina Gant called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. A quorum (twelve of twenty members) attended.

**Action Items**

Lucy Witte moved to approve the September meeting summary; Tony England seconded. The motion passed.

## Information Items

### 1. Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) Updates

State Director of Special Education Dr. Nancy J. Holsapple announced that two technical assistance specialists have joined the IDOE Office of Special Education (OSE) from the recently dissolved Office of Student Supports and Accessibility; and, while the search continues for another Part B fiscal specialist, OSE has hired a contractor to assist with Part B grant processing. She also noted that Lynn Schemel is now IDOE's Chief Academic Officer.

Nancy notified members that an illness required postponement of the Science of Reading update until the Council's March meeting. She recommended that, after reviewing the annual special education dispute resolution update (emailed with November meeting materials), members direct any comments, questions, and feedback to the IDOE Dispute Resolution Team Supervisor. Nancy then briefly summarized details regarding three currently open special education funding opportunities:

**Paraprofessional Training Grant** – \$2,165,000.56 in federal funds was approved in grants to a mix of 119 large, small, rural and urban districts, charter schools, and special education cooperatives. This funding will provide training for paraprofessionals who serve students with disabilities; and OSE hopes to offer this again when the initial grant period ends.

**Robokind Grant** – following the legislature's appropriation of another \$1,350,000 for robots, training, and software to serve students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, 25 more school corporations have been awarded grants for this purpose.

**Auditory Verbal Education Grant** – a \$2 million state grant to St. Joseph Institute for the Deaf was recently approved to support auditory verbal education services for 37 students from 23 local educational agencies (LEAs).

Members were given the names of recipients and descriptions of three recognitions presented to special educators and special education programs at this year's Educational Excellence Awards Gala hosted by IDOE. After which Nancy reported that OSE recently alerted the field about an opportunity to nominate special education paraprofessionals and instructional assistants for an exemplary service award. She also heralded the federal government's October announcement that INSOURCE, Indiana's Resource Center for Families with Special Needs, was one of twelve organizations across the country to receive part of \$11.4 million in new grants to improve and strengthen family engagement programs in the U.S.

IDOE Assistant Director of Kindergarten Readiness Sarah Parks-Reese presented an update on Indiana's early learning initiative, Partnering for Preschool to promote availability of high quality, inclusive early childhood learning programs and professional development. She summarized key points and contact information included in the slides that accompanied the

Council's November meeting materials. In discussion following the presentation, members asked questions and voiced concerns about the state legislature's Science of Reading literacy curriculum requirement will adversely impact educational outcomes for some students with disabilities.

### **Discussion Items**

#### 1. Council Member Reports and Concerns

The list of Hoosier Workforce Resources, which was updated by a SAC subcommittee, accompanied the November meeting materials for council members to review. Because the presenter was unable to attend, the Chair asked if members present had any comments regarding the draft. There were none, and the updated version will be posted by 12/31/2023 on the Indiana Department of Education and Department of Workforce Development websites, as required by law.

Council members revisited the discussion regarding Indiana's adoption of Science of Reading curriculum in public K-12 education throughout the state. Members agreed this State Advisory Council is the appropriate entity to bring forth concerns about the inability of some students with disabilities to access this curriculum and gain literacy skills if this becomes a singular focus – to the exclusion of all other methods – and therefore excludes differentiation that is necessary to meet individualized needs of students with specific learning disabilities.

### **Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

### **Next SAC Meeting Date**

The Chair reminded all that 2024 meeting dates were emailed with their November meeting materials and will soon be posted on the State Advisory Council website at the link provided in the agenda. Before adjourning, Melaina noted that March 8, 2024 is next council meeting date.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 10:33 a.m.