ACESD Full Council Meeting Minutes

In-person Meeting
South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation, Columbia
October 24, 2025

Members Present:

Susan Beck, Valarie Bishop, Carly Bowman, Jane Brandis, Damian Bridges, Megan Burns, Helen Campbell, Shana Charles, Denise Eubanks, Rebekah Francis-Barnes, Elaine Gentry, Heather Googe, Denean Greene Rivers, Melissa Griffin, Malerie Hartsell, Shannon Helton, Mary Higginbotham, Allison Huffstutler, Cathy Kovacs, Erin Laughter, Daphne New, Shannon Polchow, Lindsay Porter, Anne Radue, Holden Roberts, Lindsay Schmelzel, Samica Snipes-Smith, Karen Tucker Margie Williamson, Adair Yatko

Guests/SCDE Staff Present:

Sherri Evans, Samantha Favor (for Mary Stevenson), Cheryl Fitts, Sara Garrett, Katie Heiss, Laurie Lee (for Susan Howard), Rebekah Olivas (for Jeni Garner), Ann Moore, Elizabeth Moore, Redelma Saxby (for Senekita Farmer), Andrea Sinkler-Slaughter (for Nikki Green), Mary Etta Taylor

Welcome, call to order:

Susan Beck, Chair 10:08 a.m.

Approval of August 2025 Minutes:

Holden Roberts made a motion to approve minutes. Anne Radue seconded. There was no discussion. Approved.

Discussion of August 2025 Member Questionnaire

Allison Huffstutler presented the results of the member questionnaire presented at the August 2025 advisory council meeting. Twenty-five percent of the full council responded to the call for feedback. While some topic requests were already on the calendar, such as dispute resolution, the executive committee has incorporated myriad topics into future meetings such as a presentation on the LIFE program and inviting South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center and Disability Rights South Carolina.

Voting Procedures

Susan Beck's term as chair will conclude at the end of this term. When electing a new chair, the Advisory Council's *Procedure Document* states that at the second meeting, the council needs to appoint an election committee that will consist of a chair and two members. At the third meeting, the election committee will announce the window to submit applications, and they will provide a slate for voting at the final meeting. Susan requested that those interested in serving should contact her.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Sub-Committee Meetings:

Committees met in breakout sessions.

Sub-Committee Reports:

Preschool:

Cathy Kovacs and Heather Googe presented on parent and family engagement with Part B. The committee created SMART goals as they create a common terms document, and they established an early childhood transition workgroup.

Professional Development:

The committee reviewed the ELA data for Indicator 3 by looking at the South Carolina IDEA Part B LEA Data Profiles. The committee discussed a request from the Transition and Self-Advocacy Committee to do a deeper dive into the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The committee learned about Melmark and will hear more about the school at an upcoming meeting.

Transition and Self Advocacy:

The committee finalized their transition document from last term. They started work on a collaborative resources guide for transition-age students. The committee started discussing a new collaboration with the Professional Development Committee where the two committees research the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Safe Schools/Social Emotional Learning:

The committee reviewed 2020-2024 data for Indicators 4a, 4b, 8, 9, and 10. All four indicators showed improvements. The committee discussed concerns with preschool suspension and review data at a future meeting. Val Bishop provided some updates from the federal level.

OSES Updates:

- **OSES Director, Peter Keup**

  As the federal landscape changes, the law and regulations have not changed regarding IDEA. SEA and LEA obligations have not changed. South Carolina did get their disbursement of funds, and the state is funded for this school year. It would take legal action to change IDEA.

- **EDPlan SC Update, Katie Heiss**
    - Currently, Greenville County Schools, Florence 1, Anderson 1, and Spartanburg County School District 6 are currently not on EDPlan SC. Spartanburg 6 plans to transition at the end of the year.
    - EDPlan Connect, the parent portal, was in pilot form and will be implemented. OSED will not mandate districts to use it, but they will encourage them to implement it as there is no cost to the district.
    - OSES will continue to incorporate the translation feature. The six additional languages include Arabic, Chinese simplified, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese.
    - A parent can set up a home language, and the parent will receive all communication from the portal in that language.
    - There has been 2500 hours of development based on user feedback.

- **LEA Program Review, Ann Moore, Elizabeth Moore, and Mary Etta Taylor**
    - General Supervision, Ann Moore and Elizabeth Moore
        - The state provides general supervision to school districts. There are several components, including program review.
        - The components of general supervision include fiscal management, integrated monitoring, sustaining compliance and improvement, implementation of policies and procedures, technical assistance and professional development, dispute resolution, data, SPP / APR, integrated monitoring, technical assistance, and implementation.
        - OSEP requires a six-year review cycle. It is a fixed cycle, and OSES is now in year four of the current cycle with two years remaining.
        - Certification is becoming a big issue during the review process. Are the people employed by the district appropriately certified to work with the students they are working with?
    - IEP Development Review Process, Mary Etta Taylor
        - All required documents need to be available onsite.
        - The team reviews individual student records and determine, based on the records, whether the IEP is being implemented.
        - The process includes the IEP Development Individual Report, the IEP Implementation Individual Report, and the LEA Corrections Summary, which needs to be shared with the teachers in the district.
    - Corrections Process, Elizabeth Moore
        - OSES works with the district to develop a plan to correct issues.
        - Correction can look like training, staffing, or policy and procedures changes.
        - The corrections process lasts for a year.

- **South Carolina Pathways Project (SCPP),** Elizabeth Moore

- SCPP's essential question is: How do we prepare South Carolina's students for what happens after graduation?
- Participants include OSES, Career and Tech Ed, Able SC, South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation, University of South Carolina (grant evaluator), York 3, South Carolina Public Charter District, Sumter County, Williamsburg, and Dorchester School District 4.
- The goals for the program are to:
  - increase rates of PWDs graduating with the standard state high school diploma.
  - emphasize a disability-led approach to transition service delivery.
  - equip transition professionals in South Carolina to provide optimal transition services and supports.
  - provide high-quality work experience to South Carolina transition-age youth.
- At the end of year two, two districts have submitted applications for diploma pathways and are awaiting approval. Students have been providing feedback through stakeholder workgroups.
- A new SCPP website will be launching soon.

South Carolina Partnerships for Inclusion (SCPI), Jo Williams

- SCPI provides universal, targeted, intensive supports to increase inclusive opportunities.
- They provide tiered levels of support by partnering with school district preschool programs.
  - **Tier One** includes universal supports and online learning.
  - **Tier Two** includes targeted supports like technical assistance, consultations, and the SEIT Academy.
  - **Tier Three** includes intensive supports like the creation of a district leadership team, strategic planning, and community partnership development.

Announcements:

There were no announcements.

Motion to adjourn:

Allison Huffstutler moved to adjourn. Melissa Griffin seconded. Meeting adjourned at 2:43 p.m.

Next Advisory Council meeting:

Friday, January 23, 2026 (virtual)