

ACESD Full Council Meeting Minutes

Virtual Meeting via Zoom
January 31, 2025

Members Present

Allison Adrian, Greta Bailey, Susan Beck, Valarie Bishop, Megan Burns, Jennifer Buster, Shana Charles, Tiffany Eron, Senekita Farmer, Rebekah Francis-Barnes, Jeni Garner, Elaine Gentry, Heather Gooze, Melissa Griffin, Danshelle Guy, Deborah Harris-Sims, Malerie Hartsell, Wendy Hite, Susan Howard, Allison Huffstutler, Kerri Kannengieser, Cathay Kovacs, Angie Lucas, Padgett Mozingo, Gini Nichols, Sadina Outlaw, Lindsay Porter, Anne Radue, Teresa Rhodes, Denean Greene Rivers, Megan Schiraldi, Lindsay Schmelzel, Liz Smithson, Mary Stevenson, Meghan Trowbridge, Laura Vazquez, Margie Williamson, Mary Wood, Amber Woodward, Birley Wright, Elizabeth Young

Guests/SCDE Staff Present

Reade Bush, Lannette Cox, Heather Dillingham, Jenny Dillon, Barbara Drayton, Anita Ellison-Porter (for Erin Laughter), Sherri Evans, Cheryl Fitts, Nicole Hamm, Ayla Horton, Peter Keup, Amanda Klein-Cox, Holly May (ASL interpreter), Lisa McCliment, Marlene Metts, Elizabeth Moore, Deanna Parish, Sharon Reed (ASL interpreter), Tina Ross, Steven Rufe, Susan Thomas, Rebecca Williams-Agee, Michelle Young

Welcome, call to order, by Susan Beck, Chair 10:05 a.m.

Approval of Previous Minutes

Meghan Trowbridge made a motion to approve minutes. Susan Howard seconded. There was no discussion. Approved.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Committee Meetings

Committees met in breakout sessions. Committee returned from breakout sessions at 11:30 a.m.

Committee Reports

Preschool

The committee continued to work on a vision statement, goals and guiding principles for the EC Inclusion State Leadership Team (SLT). The committee has been meeting virtually to move the project forward.

Professional Development

The committee welcomes a guest, Reade Bush, who is a parent of two students with disabilities and has been a member of a local Virginia school district advisory council. He shared his experiences, the benefits of the council and answered several members' questions. The committee reviewed a draft advisory letter and provided input and feedback. The committee also discussed the new US Dept of Ed guidance on inclusion practices.

Transition and Self Advocacy

The committee continued working on the transition tip sheet, which helps parents understand the different levels of high school completion, which they are now calling educational opportunities. The committee focused on including QR codes and links.

Safe Schools/Social Emotional Learning

The committee reviewed SRO implementation data and a map of the locations of SRO's. The committee discussed prevention resources of the SC Dept of Ed and the management of those resources which are being handled by the Dept of Public Health. The committee also reviewed and discussed potential legislation related to student safety.

OSes Updates

General Updates

- provided by Peter Keup

- U.S. Department of Education Updates:
 - There is a new "Dear Colleague" letter and additional guidance on "Inclusive Educational Practices" that was released by the federal Department of Education (linked here: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/policy-guidance/>).
 - A new Presidential administration is bringing new leadership to the Department of Education which is typical. The "acting folks" are in place and won't change. We are waiting on the President's nomination for the head of the Department of Education to be confirmed.
 - The funding memo has been withdrawn. It would not affect any formula grants which is how IDEA is funded.

Strategic Planning Document for the SC Department of Education:

- Four areas are key:
 - Early literacy for IEP students
 - Transition (including reducing dropout rates and graduation rates)
 - Supporting the workforce
 - Behavior (which leads to exclusion of instruction)
- There will be a focus on MAP assessments and improving those scores.
- New math standards are being rolled out this year and will be tested next year.

EDPlan SC:

- It is anticipated that only three or four districts won't roll over to EDPlan SC at the end of this school year.
- The vendor has facilitated a series of webinars for end users to discuss some of the basic commands and functions of the program. OSES has done surveys to find gaps and provide clarification.
- There have been a couple of rollouts of updates (in Oct, Dec) and there are more to come (Feb 27 and April 30). These updates are for large adjustments to the program.
- EDPlan SC will continue to provide translation services for several languages. OSES is considering adding to the list. EDPlan SC's translation services are mainly for IEPs and not the other documents created through EDPlan SC.

Dispute Resolution Presentation

- provided by Dr. Lannette Cox, Heather Dillingham, Tina Ross, Barbara Drayton (in order of appearance)

- Dr. Cox is South Carolina's Ombudsman.
- South Carolina offers facilitated IEPs as a dispute resolution option. South Carolina is one of 26 states to offer this option.
- Individuals can submit state complaints on the OSES website. A state complaint can be submitted by anyone; it does not have to be the parent or the district. A state complaint cannot be anonymous.
- Mediation and Due Process have to be filed by a school district or by a parent. It must be signed by the parent if they file. If the parent and/or their attorney is not the person filing due process, that individual can be accused of practicing without a license. An advocate cannot file due process.
- It is important for parents to be careful who is advising them.
- Dispute resolution filings have increased over the past year.

Fiscal Report

- presented by Michelle Young and Marlene Metts

- More than 90% of annual funds go directly to school districts.
- The leftover is used for support of the school districts with contracts and various state level contracts.

- Wendy Hite asked if the federal formula has changed since 1996. Federal funding formulas were adjusted around that time with re-authorization. Funding used to be determined per pupil. Now, the formula is a standard base amount plus an amount based on the total enrollment of the state and the poverty rate; it is not based on the number of students with disabilities.
- Anne Radue asked if the category of disability (from IDEA) listed on an IEP affects the funding formula. In our state, funding formulas used to be based on the category. In 2022-2023 it changed. All disability categories are weighted the same now (a 2.6 rate applies to any student with a disability).

Organization / Program Briefing

KinCarolina

- presented by Dr. Amanda Klein-Cox

- Presentation Link: <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/138DBYWdU3JXwt0uDFNgBAIOclErzMIMt/edit#slide=id.p1>
- Kinship Care is a temporary or permanent arrangement, in which a relative or non-related adult (also known as fictive kin) has assumed full-time care of a child whose parents are unable to do so. There are many benefits of Kinship Care.
- KinCarolina aims to provide targeted, evidence-based support to kinship caregivers raising children with disabilities in the Midlands region of South Carolina. It is a 6-month program.
- KinCarolina is currently recruiting families.
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cFp9PnqJ8FUNCUKwtrXVL16oKnzuTBDu/view>

Academic Alliance of SC

- presented by Dr. Susan Thomas and Dr. Deanna Parish

- Presentation Link: <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/17RNPO-o4-pis5OPBUvJbWftFjWhhdmRr/edit#slide=id.p1>
- AASC Fast Facts: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1he0j8PyVR9oE1TlPpkOsbFl_vaxhdV3m/view
- The mission of the Academic Alliance South Carolina (AASC) is to research and disseminate evidence-based practices to inform, implement, and sustain an integrated academic and behavioral framework within a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) to improve the academic achievement and social competence of students with disabilities.
- AASC's purpose is to provide expert instruction, coaching, consultation, and support to build the capacity of district and state-level implementers to improve outcomes for students with disabilities by using evidence-based tiered instructional practices in reading, language, and mathematics.
- AASC is a technical assistance provider affiliated with SC-TEAMS and is a partner with USC.
- The technical assistance model includes support at a universal level, targeted level and intensive level.

Behavior Alliance of SC

- presented by Steven Rufe

- Presentation Link: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1-eS8pNxhLtdSa905KYf5kTin_E69P4t1/edit#slide=id.p1
- BASC uses a continuum of support to partner with state and local educational agencies to cultivate effective community-driven systems and practices so all students can experience a sense of belonging and engage successfully in school.
- BASC is a technical assistance provider affiliated with SC-TEAMS and is based at Clemson University (with some offices in Greenville).
- BASC currently partners with 18 districts across the state.

Announcements

- The SC Council for Exceptional Children will be held in Greenville at the Embassy Suites February 28-March 1 (with pre-conference sessions available on February 27).
 - The Parent Academy info can be found here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/18VSRlyxfnnLVVLTpA3oi1GR9X7IzbVuq/view>
 - Conference Registration: <https://southcarolina.exceptionalchildren.org/events/2025-scccec-conference>
 - Conference Schedule: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YezEiPjZLOf85uB0cVySejy4ucjW96M7oA5h9aD6cpk/edit?tab=t.0>
- Anne Radue shared the following announcements in the chat:
 - Down syndrome: Educator Symposium - GiGi's Playhouse in March. Virtual - CEUs available.
 - 2/6/25 Road to Possibilities in Greenville
- Wendy Hite shared the following announcement in the chat:
 - CADRE is a great technical assistance center that has a lot of resources for schools and families.
 - <https://www.cadeworks.org/>
- Susan Beck asked for volunteers to create a survey for Advisory Council members in regards to in-person v. virtual meetings. Danshelle Guy, Tiffany Eron, Beckye Barnes, Greta Bailey and Allison Huffstutler volunteered.

Motion to adjourn

Val Bishop moved to adjourn. Denean Greene Rivers seconded. Meeting adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

Next Advisory Council meeting: Friday, March 28, 2025