

Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)
Education Committee Meeting Minutes
December 4, 2018

Members Present

Bob Kresmer, Chair
Ed House
Lisa Jackson
Doris Woltman
Lisa Yencarelli
Julie Urban

Members Absent

Jared Kittelson

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Guests Present

Diane Shifflett

Call to Order and Introductions

Bob Kresmer, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:08 pm in the RSA Conference Room, Phoenix, AZ. Introductions were made and a quorum was present.

Approval of October 30, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Lisa Yencarelli motioned to approve the minutes from the October 30, 2018 meeting. Ed House seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

High Stakes Test Score Collection Discussion

Bob Kresmer inquired how TUSD was able to ensure that students taking the SAT and ACT tests received accessible tests. Diane Shifflett stated TUSD had a Testing Department, which provide large print and Braille tests to students. She noted the testing coordinators would coordinate with the testing department to ensure that the students received the appropriate tests according to their needs. Bob Kresmer inquired regarding the number of blind and visually impaired students that participated in the SAT and ACT tests. Diane Shifflett stated that she was trained as a proctor and was able

to administer the tests and she made sure that each blind or visually impaired student took the tests.

Bob Kresmer inquired whether the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB) co-operatives had considered using teacher input to review and compare student test scores. Doris Woltman stated that some school districts had benchmark and formative tests, which allowed the teachers to compare the test scores of blind and visually impaired students to their peers. Doris Woltman stated she knew how teachers could review and use that information, although she was unsure how the committee could review that information. Bob Kresmer stated the Education Committee was interested in obtaining data-based information that could develop curriculum and best practices that could be shared with schools. Ed House stated the committee needed to identify the data the committee could obtain, such as data from the schools and information regarding the impact of the Transition Program on the success of the students. Ed House suggested the committee obtain a list of every school with a blind or visually impaired student, which would benefit the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program in disseminating information about the Transition Program. Bob Kresmer inquired whether Lisa Yencarelli and Doris Woltman had standardized the information and materials that all ASDB schools and co-operatives received. Lisa Yencarelli stated that she and Doris Woltman had reviewed the Braille production, devices and materials and how to offer training on using devices. Ms. Yencarelli noted that retention and recruitment of staff was handled by the Human Resources and Professional Development departments. Bob Kresmer inquired whether the committee should contact the ASDB Superintendent with questions regarding teacher and student access to information and training. Lisa Yencarelli stated that she could disseminate the information. She noted that she struggled to obtain training for teachers on different Assistive Technology (AT) devices and would appreciate any feedback or suggestions. Bob Kresmer stated ASDB received grant funds several years prior for teachers to obtain two weeks of intensive AT training. Lisa Yencarelli stated ASDB would offer a two-day training and she was interested in hearing about alternate training methods.

Julie Urban stated she noticed a need for more Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVI)s, although she was unsure whether the individuals would pay for the training. Bob Kresmer thanked the committee members that attended the Vision Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Expo (VRATE), although he noticed that over the years, less teachers were attending and less teachers brought students to attend the conference. Julie Urban stated that not all teachers were aware of VRATE, especially new teachers. Doris Woltman stated that she sent information about VRATE to teachers, although the teachers struggled to allow a student to miss a day of class.

Julie Urban inquired whether students would benefit from attending an AT panel. Bob Kresmer stated that students might not attend if the teachers were not permitted to allow the student to miss school.

Early Childhood Activities Discussion

Bob Kresmer stated the Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) had developed an eye screening policy for students, which assisted in correctly identifying students with vision impairments. Diane Shifflett stated she was the Lead Teacher at TUSD and had attended a session of Babies Count, a national database that collected epidemiologic and demographic information on infants and toddlers that are blind or visually impaired. Ms. Shifflett stated the database was able to identify the most prevalent vision impairments of Optic Nerve Hypoplasia (ONH) and Cortical Vision Impairment (CVI), a neurological impairment. Diane Shifflett stated the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AZEIP) contracted with Dynamite Therapy, a Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) to provide home based therapies and interventions for children ages 0-3 in the TUSD. Diane Shifflett stated each student then had a Support Coordinator, who would send a referral to TUSD. She stated that when a child was between 2 years and 6 months and 2 years and 9 months, AZEIP would hold a Transition Conference to share educational options within the TUSD such as community or private preschools. Diane Shifflett stated the information and reports would be released to the school district if the child had a vision impairment. Ms. Shifflett stated TUSD had a department, Child Find, which would develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) before the child's third birthday and the child would then be enrolled in the least restrictive environment. Diane Shifflett stated the least restrictive environment was based on academic need so that students with disabilities were placed with their peers in inclusive classrooms. Diane Shifflett stated there were a Title 1 inclusive classroom, which included a general education teacher with one teaching assistant, an Exceptional Educational Inclusive Classroom, an Exceptional Education teacher and two teaching assistants. She added there were Community Preschools, a childcare opportunity, and the Infant Early Learning Centers that parents could select and pay for. Diane Shifflett stated there was also the Preschool Development Grant, were created to expand access to high quality preschools for children from low and moderate-income families. Diane Shifflett stated the TUSD Head Start programs required that 10% of students be special education students with an IEP. She noted the general education or inclusive setting indicated that 50% of the students are typical students and 50% of the students had an IEP. Diane Shifflett stated TUSD was in the second year of full inclusion programming.

Diane Shifflett stated each school within TUSD performed regular annual vision and hearing screening at the beginning of preschool, kindergarten, 1st grade, 2nd grade, 4th grade and 7th grade. Diane Shifflett stated the Lion's Club would sign up to go to schools to offer vision screening for every student in every grade at that school. Diane Shifflett stated she was unsure where that information was kept, although the records were likely kept by the school nurse. She noted that she did receive referrals through classroom observations for students that could potentially have a vision impairment. Bob Kresmer inquired how the referrals for vision testing were handled. Diane Shifflett stated the nurse would often contact the family to inquire whether the family had a medical report that indicated a vision impairment, or the Lead Teacher would obtain any medical records or classroom data that would indicate a vision impairment. Bob Kresmer inquired whether the vision screening process included students in charter schools, private schools or home schools. Diane Shifflett stated those students would still be part of TUSD and noted that TUSD did not provide services at the private school but would provide the assessments and the recommendations. Bob Kresmer inquired regarding the population of professionals working and supporting the blind and visually impaired students. Diane Shifflett stated TUSD had 6 full-time teachers, 2 part-time teachers, 1 full-time Brailist, 2 Orientation and Mobility (O&M) specialists, and several paraprofessionals.

Bob Kresmer inquired whether the Babies Count program identified methods of reaching out to students. Mr. Kresmer noted that many parents did not regularly take their children to the doctor for vision screenings. Diane Shifflett stated the program encouraged individuals to participate in the database so that professionals could identify trends and allow teachers to plan for those students. Bob Kresmer inquired whether TUSD received alternate format materials in a timely manner through the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) program. Diane Shifflett stated TUSD used quota funds to purchase materials through APH and the Foundation for Blind Children (FBC) and noted the materials were received quickly. She added that TUSD received new Braille embossers, which allowed for an electronic delivery of files.

Bob Kresmer stated that Lisa Jackson and Jared Leslie would begin collecting data from the new APH census. Lisa Jackson stated the census began January 1st every year. Bob Kresmer stated that Lisa Jackson and Jared Leslie would work together in reviewing that data. Lisa Jackson stated that she and Jared Leslie shared the information for the preschool students and infants. Bob Kresmer inquired whether the census would offer more information that could be shared with the committee. Lisa Jackson stated the census did not offer a lot of information, although she could share the

number of students with siblings that were also part of the census. Dr. Jackson stated the census identified whether a student was legally blind, the individual's reading medium, and their primary, secondary and home language. Bob Kresmer inquired whether Lisa Jackson and Jared Leslie were able to obtain more information without potentially identifying the student. Lisa Jackson stated that she would have more information through her database, although the census data offered limited information.

Youth Transition Program Discussion

Bob Kresmer inquired whether a high majority of TUSD high school students participated in the Youth Transition Program. Diane Shifflett stated that students were encouraged to participate in the Youth Transition Programs. She added that the majority of blind or visually impaired students in a public school might be the only individual with a disability in the classroom and students were encouraged to participate in summer programs with other students with disabilities, which was an empowering experience. Diane Shifflett stated students were also encouraged to participate in tutoring classes at organizations such as SAAVI Services for the Blind.

Date and Agenda for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Education Committee TDB. Agenda items are as follows:

- High Stakes Test Score Discussion
- Early Childhood Program Discussion
- Youth Transition Program Discussion

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Public Comment

A call to the public was made with no responses forthcoming.

Adjournment of Meeting

Julie Urban motioned to adjourn the meeting; Lisa Yencarelli seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion was passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 pm.