

Reports from the Field – SEAP Meeting November 10, 2020

Member: Julie Bartanen

- How virtual instruction and school closures will have an impact on ESY determinations and appropriate data collection on ESY determinations.
- Conducting and determining appropriate change of placements and transitions this school for students in new learning models.
- Concerns with various partnerships that are continuing to operate in one model only or were not deemed essential workers while public schools were. This includes Head Start, ASDB, FBC, AzEIP, etc. It has created a strain on families and remains difficult for schools to support and foster continued collaboration.
- Staffing shortages continue to grow and create stress across the board. While decrease enrollment is seen across public education special education enrollment seems steady.
- Continuing to adapt and adjust to special education in a COVID world – Masks, assessments, etc.

Member: Martha Cocchiarella

Report: I read content within “Viewpoints” authored by Sybil Francis, a guest columnist in the AZ Republic, October 25, 2020. The article was entitled, *Tackling the learning loss*. The potential learning loss for children/youth during the pandemic is impacting their academic and social-emotional progress. Others impacted by this consists of; children/youth with and without disabilities, families, educators, administrators, and communities. With this comes a time of uncertainty and unpredictability in being able to project how learning loss will be assessed, addressed, and recouped.

Identification of the author: Sybil Francis is president and CEO of the Center for the Future of AZ.

Questions posed:

- How might SEAP intersect more with nonprofit groups such as the one mentioned above
 - o since such an entity is working toward the best interest of individuals in the state of AZ just as SEAP is doing? Included would be individuals with disabilities/exceptionalities.
- Is it feasible to have groups come together to discuss what they are doing to address learning loss?

Member: Ceci Hartke

What parents are concerned about, at the moment are primarily COVID related.

- Parents are feeling like their children receiving FAPE only if attending in person. The distance learning options for those that are not ready to go back to school are not meeting the needs or addressing the IEP in its entirety.
- Schools are behind on Evaluations and reevaluations.
- There are many families that are thinking about ESA as a solution to their current situation.
- The concern that going back to full time distance learning this winter is inevitable, due to the COVID numbers.

Member: Julie Niven

Concern that our October 1 count is lower than years past which goes along with funding for next year, due to reduced youth being detained during Covid. Currently minimal access to adult detention jail schools due to Covid. Challenging to provide special education services and general instruction to youth and adults in detention. Using zoom when possible.

Member: Kathleen Puckett

The continuation of COVID restrictions has meant that internships, or pre-student teaching field placements, have been curtailed, with most schools not allowing these students on campus. Universities have had to adjust curriculum to develop alternate practice-based opportunities. Most student teachers, however, are allowed to practice teach with a

certified special education mentor teacher, following the school schedule of teaching face to face, remote, or a hybrid combination. CEEDAR has funded a small grant for institutions in Arizona to document the issues and solutions.

The recent action of State Board of Education approving add-on endorsements in Visual Impairment and Deaf and Hard of Hearing for teachers who already have a license in another field has been met with mixed reviews. Personnel from some universities spoke against the proposal, fearing that it would dilute the training in these areas. Other universities are discussing ways to offer these courses within the current degree/certificate structures.

The Council for Exceptional Children is in the process of revising their teacher preparation standards. University programs would appreciate guidance on updating program approval standards as these standards are officially approved.

Member: Shalylyn Savage

Teachers are feeling more burnt out than usual and many are resigning or retiring. Decline in enrollment has also caused teachers to be moved to different schools and positions. Collaborative professional developments put on by ADE and AZCEC have been helpful for teachers to support one another. Another concern has been districts struggling to have the personnel to do paperwork clean up from the spring and continue with the fall timelines as well as address compensatory services.

Member: Kara Swierz

While many students have returned to in-person instruction, some families have reported that their District has been unable to adequately support homebound students who have pre-existing health conditions the opportunity for meaningful educational accommodations. This population of students are unable to attend in person schooling however they have not qualified for the state's standards for Homebound Education. Some of the District's online learning has been offered as FAPE, although this platform is not ideal for every student. During these extremely challenging times, an option families have suggested the District entertain, is providing homebound students access to virtual live instruction in a similar manner that some Charter and Private Schools have been offering.

We share our deepest gratitude and appreciation to all the educators, support staff, and administration for their tireless efforts to educate our students during these trying times and less than ideal situations. Students' needs are dynamic and unique which adds to the complexity to service all students sufficiently. We continue to request and appreciate the transparency, collaboration, and strong family-school partnership needed for success and growth now and in the future. We are truly grateful.

Member: Susan Voirol

- There is a continued need to have a *skilled* workforce coming out of high school/higher education to meet industry demands.
- New landscape of employment needs due to pandemic; how to assure educators are integrating and instilling these skills sets considering what employers are seeking in employees (i.e. flexibility, virtual work, less hands-on, lack of personal contact and learn and embrace different ways to keep connected, engaged and successful in their job duties, self-disciplined). Special educators could collaborate with the CTE departments to keep a pulse, as well as increase the number of specials education students in these programs.
- How can we/are we assuring students are aware of all paths and resources i.e. internships, apprenticeships, Job Corp, so they are making informed choices regarding their pathways.
- Constant need to remind all working with students/young adults with disabilities that we are an Employment First state, and we must move into this space by preparing all students for end outcome of competitive employment.