

# Special Education Task Force Minutes

**June 13, 2023**  
**9:30 AM - 11:30 AM**

## **In Attendance (In Person)**

Feinstein, Andrew (Co-Chair)  
Rabinowitz, Frances (Co-Chair)  
Klimkiewicz, Bryan (CSDE)  
Russell-Tucker, Charlene (CSDE)  
Tartaglia, Heather  
Rosado Burch, Louis (CEA)  
Helene, Karen

## **In Attendance (Via Zoom)**

McCarthy, Patrice  
Adler, Jason  
Cynthia (Deputy  
Yankee, Susan  
Flaherty, Tara  
Wanzer, Stephanie

- Welcome
  - Welcome to Task Force Committee members and those visiting.
  - Several people are joining us via Zoom, and this meeting is being recorded.
  - Fran reiterated that this Task Force would make significant but realistic recommendations.
  - The Legislature updated and changed some of the parameters of the task force.
    - Later date
    - Eight (8) new members will join the committee
    - Additional responsibilities have been added.
  - We are pleased with the progress so far. We have looked at a lot of data and gained much understanding, such as your increasing percentages are directly tied to the quality of general education.
  
- Commissioner Charlene Russell Tucker's Remarks
  - Good morning to all in the room and joining virtually.
  - I appreciate the fact that we always do the work together. We don't always agree, but we are always in the same space working together to solve issues.
  - Introduction to [Deputy Commissioner Sinthia Sone-Moyano](#)

- She looks forward to collaborating with all and bringing her expertise of 20-plus years in education and is ready to work with you.
  - Soon to be announced, released, and launched is our Call Center.
    - It is an excellent partnership with CPAC and CSDE.
    - This will allow parents and the community to call and to have folks who are trained to answer questions and provide direction.
  - Discussion took place regarding amplifying the teaching position.
    - Compensation
    - The climate in which you work - the value for what you do
    - Respect - making sure our educator's voices are heard
    - Social Media Campaign is so powerful and connects with the younger generation
  - Susan Yankee recently went to the Connecticut Teacher of the Year website. She had to go back as far as 2010 to find anyone with special education experience. She did see a para-educator, Teacher of the Year. She asked if there was any consideration for a Special Education Teacher of the Year.
    - The Commissioner stated that she would take that question back to the team to see if there is anything that we can do to amplify the work and the efforts further.
- Presentation of Special Education in Connecticut 2023- Bryan Klimkiewicz
  - [Special Education Task Force 6/13/23 Slide Deck](#)
    - **Three Bureau Units**
      - ***Due Process*** (tasked with overseeing complaints, mediations, and process hearings but also proactively looking at mechanisms to train and inform our stakeholders to reduce the need to access those formal procedures within conflict resolution.) New consultants: Jennifer James, Kirsten Dovenberg
      - ***Program Improvement*** (looks to everyone's collaborative and collective goal of improving outcomes for students with disabilities.)
      - ***Grants, Funding & Communications*** (Oversees our grants and funding in our communication to districts. New consultant: Renee Kleinman
    - OSEP (Office of Special Education Programs) - this is where we report directly from a Federal component.
      - There is a cohort-based model for evaluating State's effectiveness.
      - They have gone through the first cohort.
      - It is a three-year process.

- Connecticut will not engage in OSEP’s direct monitoring until the 2025-2026 school year because we are in cohort IV. Part of the reason is that we haven’t had issues at the Federal level concerning our determinations in the past. The other reason is that before Brian started, there was onsite monitoring not too long before they started this process.
- There are only 22 states currently meeting OSEP requirements. Connecticut is one of those 22 states.
- All of our technical assistance, training, and professional development are aligned with our federal requirements.
- 16 Million Dollar investment was made in the emergency funding.
  - Targeted that concept of recovery for school districts - this money was used for
    - delayed, interrupted, suspended, or inaccessible IEP services/supports
    - \$30K/\$40K/\$80K/\$120 Stipend
    - \$25K priority bonus
  - Special Education Tutoring (\$2M)
    - Primary Disability Category (SLD/Dyslexia)
    - 3092 Students
    - \$650/student
  - Special Education Evaluations (\$1M)
    - Regional Evaluation Teams
    - 3 Year Re-Evaluations
  - DDS (Department of Developmental Services) High Needs (\$275K)
    - In-home support (“high needs students”)
    - Support to access LEA remote instruction
- ESSER 3 Special Education Related Initiatives
  - Special Education Recovery (\$4M)
    - Delayed, interrupted, suspended, or inaccessible IEP services/supports
    - Summer/ESY
    - ParaEducator Professional Development
  - Assistive Technology (\$1M)
    - Regional A.T. Support
    - Technical Assistance

- Evaluation/Assessment
  - Early Childhood (\$550K)
    - Extended Early Intervening Services
    - NAEYC Accreditation
    - Early Childhood Consultation Partnership
  - Special Education Recruiting (\$300K)
    - A website dedicated to Special Education and related services job openings
    - Social media marketing
- ARP IDEA Part B Section 611/619 Federal Formula
  - overs 7/1/21 - 6/30/23
  - 611 - \$27,238,088 - 100% flow through to LEAs
  - 619 - \$2,495,071 - 99% flow through to LEAs
  - Our message to districts is to spend old money before new, know when the funding expires, and utilize those funds appropriately for the timelines.
  - 27 million allocated to the LEAs and almost 2.5 million for our 3 to 5 population within the school districts.
- CT SED implementation stipend - over \$3 million
  - Based on the number of IEPs
  - Also available for APSEPS/Charters/RESCs
  - Funds were allocated to districts to assist with the implementation (funds went either to teachers, clerical staff, or administrators for the additional time that went into training and support.
- Special Education Service Delivery
  - 2023-2024 IEP Quality & CT-SEDS Professional Support
    - IEP Quality Training (July 2023-March 2024)
      - Pre-K Educators
      - K-12+ Educators
      - Approved Private Special Education Programs (APSEPs)
  - CT-SEDS Summer Collaborative Working Sessions (July & August 2023)
    - 2-hour in-person sessions that offer a brief demonstration of the IEP Process and Progress Reporting modules and how to avoid common errors in CT-SEDS.
    - Participants attending will be paid a stipend (from CSDE to the district) of \$150.

- New IEP Overview for Parents
- [What's New About Connecticut's Individualized Education Program \(IEP\) Document](#)
- Students with Disabilities Spending 79.1 - 100% of Time with nondisabled Peers (Ages 6-21), Trend State of Connecticut
  - Have seen a decrease in the amount of access our students had in the general education setting over time.
  - There was an increase in 2021-2022 data when we looked at all disability categories
  - Our population of students with intellectual disability as a primary disability category is included 80% of the time.
- [OSEP Fast Facts - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#)
- Special Education Service Delivery
  - CT has the highest percentage of outplaced students compared to any other state. Part of that is because we have 92 approved special education private programs, whereas you look at other parts of the country that may have few or very few.
  - Students served in separate settings such as correctional facilities, hospitalized, or placed in a private special education program - CT is 6.82% which is well above the country as far as average.
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  - [Trends in Dispute Resolution FFY2020-21](#)
  - [CT-B Dispute Resolution 2021-22](#)
- Response by Task Force Members to CT. Data Presented to Date-Implications for Task Force
- Summary of 2023 Legislative Session as it Relates to Special Education Task Force- Andrew Feinstein
- Subgroup reports
  - Eligibility- Aimee Turner is taking over this subgroup.
    - We were unable to meet
  - Funding- Patrice McCarthy
    - Did not meet due to the legislative session
  - Services- Alicia Bowman
    - Met for the first meeting - Heather, Tara, Alicia - went through expectations of the working group, took notes, broke down next steps for action - plan to meet on Tuesday for a virtual meeting.
- Next Meeting Date and Possible Agenda Items
  - No July Meeting - ***The committee will reconvene on August 8, 2023***
  - The meeting adjourned at 11:25 AM