

## **Iowa Special Education Advisory Panel**

**Date:** January 8, 2021

**Facilitator:** Nancy Hunt

**Panel Secretary:** Celina Turner

**Present:** Jennifer Aldrich, Jennifer Anderson, Cynthia Blackard, Dawn Bonsall, Pamela Borkowski, Polly Brekke, Kate Cole, Todd Coulter, Lori Frieden-Janke, Rhonda Haitz, Jessica Iverson, Mary Jackson, Amy Knupp, Pam Litterer, Kim Neal, Keri Osterhaus, Bryan Paulson, Sonia Reyes, Bryan Sage, Tammy Schaapherder, Lisa Shaw, Rachel Terry, Karen Thompson, and Doug Wolfe

**Department Staff Present:** Barb Guy, Nancy Hunt, and Celina Turner

**Absent:** Liz Atkinson, Jodi Bonnett, Molly Brookhiser Smeltser, Genevieve Hart, Sandra Smith, Shannon Tackes, and Daniel Van Sant

**Presenters:** Amy Alfrey, Courtney Clement, and Barb Guy

### **Handouts and Materials**

- [Agenda](#)
- [ACHIEVE Family Portal Ideas](#)
- [ACHIEVE Professional Learning for Families Ideas](#)
- [Iowa Part B State Performance Plan \(SPP\) and Annual Performance Report \(APR\)](#)
- [Postsecondary Readiness Reports](#)
- [Secondary Transition Six \(6\) Critical Elements](#)
- [Public School Unilateral Removal by District](#)
- [Public School Removals by Race and Ethnicity](#)
- [Removal Data, Difference Between CEIS and Indicator B4](#)

### **Welcome/Introductions**

The meeting was called to order by Cynthia Blackard at 9:00 a.m.

### **Approval of Consent Agenda**

The October 23, 2020, meeting minutes were reviewed. No edits were made. Doug Wolfe motioned to approve the minutes. Kate Cole seconded the motion. Motion approved.

### **ACHIEVE Update** – Amy Alfrey

Amy Alfrey provided an update on ACHIEVE, the new IEP/IFSP system, which is set to launch in July 2021. She provided a quick demo of how educators and service providers can enter information on the Dashboard page in ACHIEVE. This page allows educators and service providers to view items on their to-do list, add new items to their to-do list, view their case list, and view their calendar.

Bryan Sage asked whether the calendar in ACHIEVE can sync to a user's personal calendar. Amy Alfrey responded that the ACHIEVE system is not integrated with other calendars. However, the ACHIEVE development team hopes to integrate the ACHIEVE calendar with other calendars in the future.

Amy Alfrey also provided a quick demo of the Learner Management page in ACHIEVE. This page allows educators and service providers to contact a student's family via email. The contact information for the student's family will be imported into ACHIEVE from the student information system held at the student's school. The Learner Management page also allows educators and service providers to keep a record of when and why a student's family is contacted.

Pamela Borkowski questioned whether the ACHIEVE system will allow families to initiate contact with their child's service providers. Amy Alfrey responded that the family portal in ACHIEVE has not been fully developed; however, the ACHIEVE development team plans to provide families with the option to contact their child's IEP facilitator and service providers. The family will also be able to see their child's full IEP/IFSP team.

Amy Alfrey shared some proposed ideas for the family portal in ACHIEVE and asked the Panel for feedback and suggestions. These proposed ideas encompass the areas of general functions, IEP/IFSP access, and progress monitoring. View the proposed ideas as well as the Panel's feedback and suggestions on the [ACHIEVE Family Portal Ideas](#) document.

Sonia Reyes questioned whether the ACHIEVE system will be made available in other languages. Amy Alfrey responded that users will have the ability to select from a variety of languages. Sonia Reyes also asked if training videos or tutorials will be made available to families. Amy Alfrey responded that trainings and professional learning opportunities will be offered to help users navigate the system and learn about the IEP process.

Amy Alfrey asked the Panel for suggestions on the delivery method and timing of the professional learning opportunities offered to families. View the Panel's suggestions on the [ACHIEVE Professional Learning for Families Ideas](#) document.

Barb Guy asked the Panel for suggestions on when and how families should be contacted about training opportunities. Rhonda Haitz suggested providing families with training materials prior to the first scheduled IEP meeting. Any questions or concerns about the training materials could then be addressed at the IEP meeting. Jessica Iverson suggested holding a train-the-trainer event for educators and service providers. These individuals could then use their knowledge of the ACHIEVE system to help train families. Rachel Terry suggested creating a document of the most frequently asked questions to help address the main questions users may have about navigating the system. Bryan Sage suggested creating training videos and uploading them to YouTube.

Barb Guy addressed the potential for equity issues once the ACHIEVE system is launched as some families may choose not to access the ACHIEVE system or may not have the necessary technology, financial resources, or bandwidth to access the system. She asked the Panel to think about ways in which the Iowa Department of Education (Department) can address these potential equity issues from the beginning. She noted that this topic will be addressed further at a future Panel meeting.

## **IDEA Part B State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report** – Courtney Clement

Courtney Clement discussed the IDEA Part B State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR). The SPP is a six-year plan. The previous SPP covered Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2013–2018. This plan was recently extended to cover FFY 2019 as the federal package had not been approved by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The new package was approved by OSEP in October 2020. New targets will need to be set for the plan covering FFY 2020–2025. The Panel will be involved in this target setting.

The APR is submitted to OSEP annually in February. The APR is comprised of 16 indicators: 5 compliance indicators and 11 performance indicators. View the SPP and APR data on the [IDEA Part B State Performance Plan \(SPP\) and Annual Performance Report \(APR\)](#) document.

For the Success Beyond High School indicator on the APR, Courtney Clement clarified that “competitively employed” is defined as a setting in which the student is working at least 30 hours per week in an integrated setting and making at least minimum wage for 90 days.

Courtney Clement provided the Panel with the following additional resources:

- [Postsecondary Readiness Reports](#)
- [Secondary Transition Six \(6\) Critical Elements](#)
- [Public School Unilateral Removal by District](#)
- [Public School Removals by Race and Ethnicity](#)
- [Removal Data, Difference Between CEIS and Indicator B4](#)

For questions on the SPP or APR, contact Courtney Clement at [courtney.clement@iowa.gov](mailto:courtney.clement@iowa.gov).

## **Lessons Learned From COVID-19** – Barb Guy

Barb Guy asked the Panel to reflect on any changes or progressions that have occurred since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and now. Pamela Borkowski shared that the biggest change she’s seen in her school district is the increase in the level of training provided around using technology. Karen Thompson shared that she’s seen students make great strides since the beginning of the pandemic and now. Bryan Sage commented that it’s important for school districts and educators to work collaboratively with students and families.

## **Count Data** – Barb Guy

Barb Guy shared preliminary Count data with the Panel. These data were collected at the end of October 2020. She highlighted that while the Count data for students ages 6-21 increased from 2019–2020, the Count data for students ages 3-5 declined. She assured the Panel that the Department is aware of this decline and is looking into the issue.

Bryan Sage questioned whether the decline in students ages 3-5 occurred due to low referral rates. He commented that it may be difficult for educators to notice when a student needs to be referred for special education services when the student is receiving virtual learning and cannot be evaluated in person. Karen Thompson echoed that the bar for referrals should always be a low bar. Barb Guy stated that referrals are very important, and she assured the Panel that the Department is looking into referral rates.

## **Shelter Situations – Barb Guy**

Barb Guy shared that the Department has been hearing that students with high behavioral needs are increasingly being served in shelter situations. She noted that the Department did a pulse point on these situations and determined that over 50% of students in shelters are on IEPs. She also shared that the Department has heard that the intensity of need is increasing in shelters across the state. She asked the Panel for any recommendations or comments on this situation.

Todd Coulter shared that the regardless of the number of students being served at the State Training School, the percentage of students on IEPs is typically 40-45%. He noted that one significant change during his time at the State Training School is the increase in mental health services. Previously, the State Training School had one psychologist/therapist available to provide services to students. They now have seven Master's level or higher psychologists/therapists and two Master's level social workers that can provide services to students. He stated that within 14 days of arrival, each student at the State Training School receives a mental health evaluation. In addition, students can request to see a therapist at any given time.

Doug Wolfe commented that the Department of Human Services (DHS) has also heard concerns about behavioral challenges at shelters. He noted that DHS is hoping to provide more financial resources to relative caregivers to help allow more relatives to care for these students. He also commented that communication is critical in these situations. He noted that if a student is entering the child welfare program for the first time, DHS staff and school personnel need to meet to discuss the needs of the child. If this is not occurring, this is a significant problem.

## **Continuous Learning Plan – Barb Guy**

Barb Guy shared a conceptual draft of the continuous learning plan that will be built into ACHIEVE. The continuous learning plan accounts for the delivery methods of long-term virtual over two weeks, a hybrid model, and short-term virtual up to two weeks. Barb Guy noted that the Department wants to ensure each of these delivery methods are accounted for in the IEP so that everyone on the IEP team knows what to expect up front. For each of the delivery methods, the continuous learning plan details plans for Goals to Target, General Instructional Format, Special Education Services, Accommodations and Modifications, Related Services, Progress Monitoring, Parent Training, and Technology Supports.

Barb Guy noted that the Department is working on new titles for the continuous learning plan. She asked the Panel for any suggestions. Dawn Bonsall suggested new titles such as Delivery Method Plan, Service Delivery Method Plan, or IEP Delivery Method Pan. She commented that having the words "delivery method" in the title would help to indicate the overall purpose of the document.

Barb Guy noted that the Department has heard that thinking through each of the delivery methods can be overwhelming and time-consuming for IEP teams. Therefore, the Department and the ACHIEVE development team are considering allowing IEP teams to complete the continuous learning plan over the course of a few IEP meetings.

The IEP teams would need to complete the annual IEP for brick and mortar services, but could meet at a later time to complete the plans for the alternate delivery methods. Barb Guy asked the Panel for feedback or comments on this option.

Kim Neal commented that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, IEP teams have already been having conversations around the plans for each of the delivery methods. Therefore, she doesn't believe IEP teams need to be given extra time to plan for the alternate delivery methods. She's hesitant to have IEP teams meet multiple times to complete the continuous learning plan as she's fearful the attendance at the meeting would be low.

Lisa Shaw agreed that the expectation for IEP teams should be to complete the entire continuous learning plan during the IEP meeting. However, exceptions can be given if an IEP team needs more time.

Barb Guy stated that she will share the Panel's feedback with the ACHIEVE development team.

### **Announcements**

Thomas Mayes, the Department's special education attorney, has been promoted to General Counsel for the Department. Peter Anderson is the Department's new special education attorney.

### **Future Agenda Items/Emerging Issues**

No future agenda items or emerging issues were discussed by the Panel.

For any future agenda items or emerging issues, please contact Cynthia Blackard at [cblackard@yahoo.com](mailto:cblackard@yahoo.com) or Bryan Sage at [bssage@gmail.com](mailto:bssage@gmail.com).

Jessica Iverson motioned to adjourn the meeting. Dawn Bonsall seconded the motion. Motion approved. Meeting adjourned at 11:53 a.m.

### **Next Meeting: February 19, 2021**

**9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

**via Zoom**

**Facilitator:** Nancy Hunt

**Minutes:** Celina Turner