

The Arc Michigan Education Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 7, 2024

The meeting came to order at 10:00am via Zoom.

Present: Debbie Whitford, Michelle Driscoll, Maggie Kolk, Andrea Beachnau, Margarita Rodriguez-Curry, Tom Kendziorski, Tina Miller, Kenya Harper, Kim Faiman, Deborah Moffat, and Kelsey Biswanger

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Meeting minutes from February were previously sent out to committee members and approved with no changes.

Governmental Affairs/Legislative Update:

Emily Henderson, Governmental Affairs Consultant and Lobbyist for Arc Michigan with McCall Hamilton.

According to the State budget timeline, we have now passed the point where the Governor can make recommendations for the States budget. The official deadline for the budget is July 1st. The general consensus is that there will not be a lot of money to fund additional things. A new state budget review and outlook will be accessible in May. Expect legislative policy initiatives to pick back up closer to elections in November. We may see some redistricting.

- **Dyslexia Bills:** K through 3rd grades screened 3x a year. Teachers will be trained to screen for dyslexia as well. The bills will go into effect in 2027-2028 school year.
- **Foster Care Education Bills:** Passed the senate, aim is to address graduation rates for those students in foster care. This is a three-bill package, and we can expect some changes in those as there is ongoing discussion on the language of the bills. Two of the 3 bills have been signed by the Governor.

Maggie asked about bills to reduce property taxes (concern about schools).

SEAC Report Summary:

Kelsey Biswanger, Arc Michigan SEAC Representative

Legislative Update from Dr. Sheryl Kennedy

Dr. Kennedy provided an overview of the Committee Hearings scheduled this week. This included:

- Universal School Meals Hearing
- House Education Hearing - off site
- House Education: SB 518 - Special Ed Alternative Route Cert Sunset Extension
- Senate Housing and Human Services: HB 4676 (PA10-4678 (PA11) - Foster Care Education Package
- Senate Education: SB 567 & 568 Dyslexia Package

- Senate Education Committee - Mandatory Kindergarten

Updates from the Michigan Teacher of the Year, Candice Jackson

Ms. Jackson shared the importance of parental and community engagement. She highlighted nine specific ways to measure engagement from the parents and community and how to engage them.

Dyslexia Handbook, Lisa Owens, Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Ms. Owens provided an overview of the [*Michigan Dyslexia Handbook: A Guide for Accelerating Learning Outcomes in Literacy*](#). This included a dyslexia definition, causes, and characteristics; the development of skilled readers; instructional implications; and eligibility for special education services.

Office of Special Education (OSE) Report, Teri L. Rink, Ed.S., Director

Ms. Rink provided an update of ongoing OSE activities including cooperating with SEAC and the Special Education Instructional Leadership Network (SEILN) to gather feedback about implementation of upcoming Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) monitoring of intermediate school districts (ISDs). Clarification on SEAC feedback from last month was provided.

- January to March collecting feedback from SEILN (ISD Directors of Special Education)
 - Already shared with directors in January
 - Directors have until April to provide feedback
- April to May collecting feedback
- June 2024
 - Announce participants of Cohort #1 (10 ISDs that will move through scheduled events throughout the school year)
 - Share final resources (SRR, interview questions, parent focus group description)

Additional Business:

Guest Presenter:

Sungti Hsu, Michigan Department of Education, Contractor

Social Worker Certification Code Proposed Draft Rules

Sungti Hsu introduced himself. He began talking about the difference in school worker descriptions and the role of a professional social worker in schools.

Certification needs to be separated (part of it better defined) standards/rules are not defined. There needs to be a new set of rules. The purpose of the rule changes is to recognize school social workers as a profession working with specific groups of students who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) and a requirement that these students must be served by school social workers. There is misunderstanding about the school social worker's role and what they do.

Current rules are outdated and structured by approval, full approval and temporary approval. Michigan Department of Education applies for certification as the employer, individuals can't apply for certification themselves. With the proposed new rules,

individual school social workers will apply and maintain their own credentials and professional development.

New proposed rules include Preliminary (just completed training/no experience), Professional (completed training with experience), and Permit (in training, not yet fully qualified).

The proposed new rules allow individuals to have out of state experience; current rules do not allow this.

Michigan Association of School Social Workers are not happy about these changes.

Kelsey asked if there are any challenges with starting this immediately and how long might this take. Response: there is a transition period for this rule to take effect, reaching out to individuals and groups, school districts, ISDs. A question was asked about fees related to the certification/credential process. When MDE applied, they paid the costs. Response: there is no cost for the initial certification after the approval during the transition. There are fees associated with other professions (school psychologists, teachers, etc.), they are not asking school social workers to do anything different. There is a challenge reaching everyone individually.

Question was asked about school social worker certification and special education teacher standards. Response is that there is a difference between social worker and special education teacher rules, and they don't cross. Need to learn and work with others in a multidisciplinary team. MDE has standards for specific sets of disabilities.

Kenya asked about caps on social worker caseloads. Response is that the bills only address standards and new rules, nothing about how many students will be served by each social worker.

In preparation for the April meeting, Michelle asked committee members to

- review SSW Certification proposed rules and bring comments to the next meeting
- review the proposed draft rules for [Special Education Programs and Services Rule Set 2023-76ED](#) in order to provide public comment.
- Prioritize Position Statements (which one to start with)

The next meeting is Thursday, April 4th from 10:00am-11:30am

Upcoming Monthly Meeting Dates

Apr 4, 2024

May 2, 2024

Jun 6, 2024

Aug 1, 2024 (If needed)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81104962316?pwd=WFA3eVFoNC92U3JJSFZmcjVzdEd2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 811 0496 2316 / Passcode: 707193

The meeting adjourned at 11:30am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Driscoll for Debbie Whitford