

**The Arc Michigan Education Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 4, 2024**

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

**Present:** Debbie Whitford, Michelle Driscoll, Kim Faiman, Sue Lind, Andrea Beachnau, Margarita Rodriguez- Curry, Kenya Harper, Kelsey Biswanger, Emily Henderson, Sherry Kenworthy, Katherine Mills

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:** Meeting minutes from March 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.*

Legislative break. The legislature will be heavily budget focused the next couple of months. 16th special election for house seats (democratic expected). The MI voting map is in violation, Detroit split up 2020 redistricting roped metro Detroit in with surrounding areas. Did not give power to the minority population as it should have. New maps will be better balanced, demographics shifted. Discussion on Detroit and historical issues. Senate districts were in violation as well so new maps for 6 senate districts.

**School Safety Bills:** Discussion on concerns of the bills; creation of commissions and who would set on those commissions, along with concerns for students with disabilities and/or mental health issues and protecting their behavioral and mental health needs. Emily stated that we will need lots of education on the bills and to others moving forward: 5 bills: HB 4089, HB 4092, HB4095, HB 4096, and HB 5549. Sue asked if anyone specializing in disabilities/mental health would be on the committee. There is discussion on exploring that with legislators. Margarita expressed concerns about this affecting kids in school and parents having to get attorney representation to assist with dispelling a threat. Katherine suggested inserting language about a requirement of recognizing past disability issues.

Members of Arc MI Governmental Affairs Committee are meeting on April 15th from 10-11 to discuss these School Safety Bills. If interested in participating on this committee, please let Michelle know.

*House Hears Testimony on School Safety Bills*

The House Education Committee took testimony on a package of bills that aim to address school safety following the events at Oxford High School in 2021. The package, which includes five separate bills, would do the following:

- [House Bill 4089](#) would create the School Safety and Mental Health Commission in the Department of Education. Members appointed would include a school

psychologist/psychiatrist, prosecutor, teacher, parent, as well as individuals with separate experience in school mental health, law enforcement, school administration, school threat assessments, and experience providing inpatient treatment to minors. These individuals would be tasked with seeking input on changes needed to support at-risk students, addressing youth suicide, engaging in public awareness efforts around mental health, making recommendations for state funding, among other items.

- [House Bill 4092](#) would amend the law which created the Office of School Safety by requiring that the office, in conjunction with Michigan State Police (MSP), notify the emergency and safety manager of an intermediate school district (ISD) of a tip received relating to a school within that ISD no more than 24 hours later.
- [House Bill 4095](#) would require that schools and districts adopt and implement standardized response terminology laid out in HB 4096.
- [House Bill 4096](#) would require MSP to promulgate rules establishing a standardized response terminology plan. This plan must include proper use of the following words: lockdown, secure mode, shelter in place, reverse evacuation, and room clear.
- [House Bill 5549](#) requires that the board of each public school have a behavioral threat assessment and management team. The team would have to include a school administrator, a mental health professional as defined and authorized under the Public Health Code, and a school resource officer or other law enforcement official as needed. The team would be tasked with defining prohibited and concerning behavior and educating the community on when someone is at risk for harm to themselves or others, monitoring/assessing/inquiring about concerning behavior, distinguishing between credible and noncredible threats, developing a central reporting mechanism and educating individuals on what is appropriate to report and how to do so, defining the relationship with law enforcement and determining when a situation would require their intervention, and developing a written plan to assist a student with concerning behavior.

These bills are still in the early stages of the legislative process and have already seen substitutes to make updates to language. A summary of each bill can be found [here](#) with more information. The Arc MI is working on recommendations to share with the bill sponsors.

### **Discussion on Public Comment –Proposed Rule Changes/Part B IDEA Application**

#### [Special Education Programs and Services Rule Set](#)

Discussion on wording changes. Michelle made a suggestion that if a verbal request is made that it is written in the rule that the verbal request is documented, and a statement issued to the parent that documents the verbal request. Sue suggested that when the school receives and documents a verbal or written request for an evaluation, and the parent is sent written notice, that a timeline for the evaluation

process be provided to the parent as well. For example, MDE's [Initial Evaluation Procedures for Special Education Programs and Services - Visual Representation](#) Michelle will formulate a response in draft form and send it out to everyone before presenting it to Sherri.

#### [2024 Part B of IDEA Application](#)

Discussion of Part B Assurances statements. No public comments are being provided.

#### [School Social Worker Certification Code](#)

No public comments are being provided.

### **SEAC Report Summary:**

*Kelsey Biswanger, Arc Michigan SEAC Representative*

#### *Legislative Update*

- *Budget discussions come later this month, touched on impact and importance*

#### *High Expectations for Transitions*

- *Advocate and promote self-advocacy for the entire lifespan—adult longer than a child*
- *Begin with the end in mind—self-determination and dignity of risk is key*
- *Collaboration with school provided supports with self-advocacy*
- *Capitalize on every resource possible (school programs and supports, therapists, CTE, MRS at 14yo, Social communication)*
- *Natural opportunities at home, school, and community to nurture skills*
- *Higher expectations for all*
- *True sense of belonging*

#### *Transition Best Practices, Teri Rink*

- *Presented to Michigan Transition Services Association and shared with SEAC*
- *If you look at the data, it may not be required to start transition planning until 16, but we should start at 14*
- *Encouraged districts to have high schools and middle schools work together to start at 14 as a best practice*

#### *MiLEAP Update, Teri Rink*

- *Interim Director, Michelle Richard*
- *MDE is working with USED and the federal OSEP to ensure all obligations of the Part C and Part B 619 (3-5 year olds) grant conditions are met*
- *MDE and MiLEAP are developing a series of Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) to specify the obligations and the role and responsibility of each state agency*

- *MiLEAP prioritizes education from preschool through postsecondary with a focus on preparing children for kindergarten and helping more people earn a skill certificate or degree to help them secure good paying jobs. To accomplish this goal, MiLEAP will mobilize all resources*

*Due Process Case Review*

### **Additional Business**

Will hold off on talking about additional position statements. Michelle asked everyone to think about their priorities and what we might want to target for discussion.

Michelle provided some initial comments about HB 5549 and will share these with the committee. If committee members have any comments about the rule changes or anything discussed, please send them to Michelle prior to the next meeting. .

**The next meeting is Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> from 10:00am-11:30am**

### **Upcoming Monthly Meeting Dates**

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