



2010-2011 Annual Report Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Wyoming Department of Education



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Message from the Chairperson

As I reflect on this past year, I am both appreciative and proud of work the Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities (WAPSD) has accomplished. As our panel has continued to evolve and improve efforts, all members including myself, have taken seriously this opportunity to grow as parents, education professionals, and advocates for students with disabilities.

Our focus has continued to be an improvement of our overall effectiveness, as well as meeting each challenge set before us. This year we have built relationships with new leaders in the state department of education and other state agencies that influence educational policies for students with disabilities. We continue to gain information regarding the unmet needs of Wyoming students with disabilities by responding to parent concerns that come from both parent advocacy organizations and individuals. We have built our panel priorities around the critical feedback we receive regarding Wyoming districts across the state and the challenges they encounter in meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

We began our year by giving advice to The Wyoming Department of Education regarding the high needs of Wyoming students in residential treatment facilities. In an effort to facilitate improvements in the transition of students with disabilities as they move from out of district placements to their home communities, we as a collective group learned as much as we could about the High Fidelity Wrap Around process. As a result, we recommended to the WDE and Wyoming Department of Health that implementing the Wrap-Around model for our highest need students would improve educational outcomes for at-risk students and overall services to families. Although we are an extremely diverse group, I was impressed with how committed every person was to this particular recommendation.

During our October meeting in Jackson, we continued our efforts to collaborate with other state educational stakeholders by holding a joint orientation meeting with the Early Intervention Council. Through this collaboration and guidance from John Copenhaver, we discovered that our group priorities have many crossover issues. Providing accurate, language friendly information to parents was an important priority for both our groups. We look forward to the possibility of continuing

This has come with great assistance and commitment from Peg Brown-Clark, State Special Education Director, who consistently encourages us to have a voice in the state, while at the same time, teaches us the process in changing policy, rules and legislation that will ultimately affect Wyoming's students with disabilities. As a group, we have been involved in the State Performance Plan, the Office of Special Education Programs Federal Verification visit, given much feedback regarding the new legislation surrounding Seclusion and Restraint in public schools and provided stakeholder responses regarding WDE programs and statewide professional development.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as chairperson. The dedication, strength and vast collective of experiences that come from this panel's membership, have taught me a great deal. I continue to be impressed and moved by this group of passionate and caring people as they unite their voice and energy behind common goals. I feel confident in handing over the panel chairperson responsibilities to Carrie Brasher, who continually motivates and encourages our group to look outside the box for solutions. I would like to give a special thanks to Barb Yates, this year's panel secretary. Her sense of humor and willingness to help me facilitate and organize were invaluable. Also, I would like to thank the Parent Information Center for granting me the time needed to facilitate my work as chair. I am truly grateful to every member for their continued commitment to Wyoming's students. I know that their belief and enthusiastic dedication to changing what is not right and celebrating even the smallest success will continue to affect Special Education outcomes in Wyoming.

Julie Heil

Chairperson ,

Wyoming Advisory Panel For Students with Disabilities

About the Panel

The purpose of the Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities (WAPSD) is to advise the State in ways that promote services for children and youth with disabilities. The Wyoming Advisory Panel exists under the authority of the Code of Federal Regulations. The Panel shall serve as a forum by which issues and benefits regarding current and potential services to individuals with disabilities may be discussed by consumer, public, private, professional, and lay interests.

In order to promote issues that will help facilitate services for students with disabilities, the panel identifies barriers and provides advice related to the provision of quality educational services. The panel receives public comment; provides comments on special education rules and regulations; sets priorities; and engages in a variety of educational and public awareness activities around the state.

The panel is effective because of the diversity of members and the passion the members bring to each issue. There has been a substantial increase in commitment, desire to serve, enthusiasm and participation in panel work and action. This year there has been an increased willingness by all members to a commitment to participate in committee work and overall focus of improvement of our panel actions. One of the most significant contributions each panel member brings to the panel is his/her representation of a specific constituency.

Panel Functions

A critical component that contributes to the success of the panel is ongoing implementation of the panel functions as outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004, including:

- Advise the State Education Agency (SEA) of un-met needs within the State in the education of children with disabilities.
- Comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the State regarding the education of children with disabilities.
- Advise the SEA in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the Secretary under Section 618 of the Act.
- Advise the SEA in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports under Part B of the Act.
- Advise the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.
- Advise on services to eligible students with disabilities in adult prisons. The advisory panel shall also advise on the education of eligible students with disabilities who have been convicted and incarcerated in adult prisons.
- Review any final due process hearing findings and decisions.

Panel Member Contributions

The following are just a few contributions from individual panel members during the 2010-2011 school year:

Professional Memberships/Group Affiliations:

- Wyoming Department of Education Homeless/At Risk Panel
- Wyoming Association of Special Education Administrators (WASEA), Executive Board
- Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)
- Division for Early Childhood (DEC)
- UPLIFT Wyoming—Board of Directors
- Developmental Disabilities Advisory Council
- Parent Information Center (PIC)
- Parent Education Network (PEN)
- Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND)
- Child Developmental Services of Wyoming
- Early Intervention Council (EIC)
- Association of Univ. Centers for Excellence in Disabilities
- LRE Community of Practice on National Level (OSEP)
- Member, Wyoming Information Link for Developmental Disabilities
- Association of Tech Act Programs ATAP—Board of Directors
- Wyoming System of Instructional Support WYSIS Stakeholders Group
- Society for Disability Studies
- National Women’s Studies Association
- American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD)
- Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities

Conferences/Trainings Attended

- OSEP Leadership Conference 2010
- LRP National Institute on Legal Issues
- Teton Summer Institute 2010
- Correctional Education Assoc. Leadership Forum
- National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health Conference
- Pacer TA Alliance Institutes
- P.E.B.C. Thinking Strategies Institute
- Governor's Conference on Workforce Development
- WDE Annual Leadership Symposium 2010
- Wyoming Native American Conference
- National Homeless Education Conference
- Governors Conference on Workforce Solutions
- WASEA Fall & Spring
- Wyoming School Psychologist Conference
- WYSIS Conference
- American Counseling Association Conference
- Association of University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (AUCD) Conference
- TA& D Network presented at Region IV PTAC conference
- Secondary Schools Principals Annual Conference
- Wyoming School Improvement Spring & Fall
- Nebraska Reading Conference
- SOAR Conference
- PAWS ALT Training
- McREL Leadership Training
- Writers Workshop through WIND
- High Fidelity Wraparound Training
- Society for Disabilities Studies Conference
- Wyoming MEGA Conference

Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities

Mission Statement

The mission of the Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities, as a diverse group, is to raise a common voice to advise the Wyoming State Superintendent of Public Instruction on the unmet needs of students with disabilities by advocating for and commenting on the improvement of educational opportunities.

Vision Statement

The vision of the Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities is to provide guidance on education policies for all students with disabilities that create opportunities for them to become compassionate, productive, and contributing citizens of their communities.

Advisory Panel Function

To Give Advice
To Inform
To Counsel
To Recommend
To Suggest
To Guide

Teamwork

The members of the Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities work together as a team to help keep parents, educators, and administrators informed on the six principles of the law:

- Parent and student participation in decision making
- Procedural due process
- Appropriate evaluation
- Free appropriate public education (FAPE)
- Individual education program (IEP)
- Least restrictive environment (LRE)

***Key Activities/Advice
2010-2011***

Key Activities 2010/2011

- Presentation by Terri Meyer- Sipe from the Department of Health on High Fidelity Wrap Around/Systems of Care model– This was requested by panel members in order to gain information that would lead to advice regarding students in out of district placement.
- Letter of advice to Superintendent Cindy Hill regarding the implementation of HFWA in Wyoming as an improvement strategy for students in residential placement and their ability to be successful as they transition.
- Joint orientation with John Copenhaver /Collaboration with Early Intervention Council. Our two councils decided to work on common priority that affect young children in Special Education.
- Guest speakers -Kevin Garvey from C-V Ranch and Kelsey Lewis from Red Top Meadows (2 of Wyoming’s Residential Treatment Centers) pressed on issues surrounding successful transition from Residential placement to public school.
- Forward movement into the Virtual World- Creation of new WAPSD website with up to date information and membership application. Implementation of virtual meeting technology and executive committee phone conferences. We will be facilitating virtual meetings for half of our yearly contact in order to cut expenses and time on the road. Using the advanced technology to meet often through the year provides more opportunities for parents to be consistently involved with our efforts.
- Interview with OSEP for Special Programs verification visit. The WAPSD was interviewed during this verification visit and asked questions about our participation in Special Programs in the state.
- Collaborative presentation with Ms. Donna Sheen and Judge Hartman from the State Advisory Council on Juvenile Justice and Department of Family Services regarding the unmet needs of children with disabilities in treatment centers described by members from our panel.
- Meeting with State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Cindy Hill regarding the WAPSD purpose and mandate to provide feedback, advice

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- Several of our members from WAPSD testified for the Legislative committee on the future of Seclusion and Restraint laws and how this would affect policies in Wyoming public schools. We continued to share the WAPSD position paper on Emergency Seclusion and Restraint developed last year.
 - Guests Speakers from Arapahoe Charter School about the native culture in Wyoming and how schools in the Riverton area respond to the specific and unique needs of Native American Students
 - Participation by WASPD members in every state stakeholder meeting regarding the development of rules for Seclusion and Restraint procedures in public schools.
 - Letter of support to the Wyoming Department of Education for the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy discretionary grant application.
 - Recommendation Letter to WDE and Professional Teaching Standards Board, asking for an improvement and inclusion of awareness and sensitivity towards students with disabilities for all new and renewing teacher and administration certification. This is an effort to reduce prejudice, bullying, and improve general awareness of students with disabilities.
 - Letter of Support to WDE– Special Programs Division for the State Personnel Development Grant application.



Comments from members:

As a member of the Advisory Panel, I have the rare opportunity to have a direct impact on how students with disabilities are taught throughout the state. It gives me the opportunity to have a voice for students, parents, and teachers. The WAPSD offers its members a big picture perspective of issues, procedures, policies, and laws that directly influence a student's daily experience, success and/or failure in education. It has been one of the most rewarding and educationally enriching experiences for me as a parent and educator.

As a representative for a family organization I think it is vital to have the perspective of Wyoming's family organizations on the panel. Representatives are able to bring the input and insight from hundreds of families across the state that deal with a variety of disabilities and special educational needs.

Being a member of WAPSD has provided me with an understanding of where parents and those with disabilities are coming from. This perspective and candid disclosure has positively changed how I teach and guide my clients.

I'm honored to serve on the Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities. Not only do I get to network with parents and agency staff from across the state, I get to travel to different locations and hear about programs and services in local communities. The state special education department keeps us abreast of current issues and they listen to suggestions from the panel resulting in improved services for students with disabilities in the state of Wyoming.

The importance of being a parent member allows me the chance to voice mine and other parent's concerns to committees that can help improve education which can make life altering changes for students with disabilities. Being a parent member gives me an opportunity to make a positive difference for students with disabilities throughout the state of Wyoming.

**Panel Members
2010 - 2011**

Julie Heil Chairperson
Parent, Buffalo

Sandy Root-Elledge Past Chairperson
Parent/Professional Educator, Laramie

Carrie Brasher, Chairperson-Elect
Parent, Cody

Betty Abbott
Adult Corrections, Cheyenne

Becky Anderson
District Special Education Director, Laramie

Dawn Brix
Parent, Wheatland

Shannon Buller
*Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities ,
Cheyenne*

Terri Dawson
Parent/Parent Information Center, Buffalo

Joseph Elledge
Student/Person with a Disability, Laramie

Amy Galley
Parent, Green River

Greta Hinderliter
Homeless Liaison/Instructional Facilitator, Casper

Michelle Jarman
Post-Secondary Education, Laramie

Ted Knowles
Parent, Riverton

Mel Miller

Parent/Charter School Principal, Arapaho

Sara Mofield

EIEP Director, Department of Health, Cheyenne

Peggy Nikkel

UPLIFT, Casper

Tim O’Gan

District Special Education Director, Buffalo

Kristi Porter

Parent/Educator, Cheyenne

Carol Salvesson

Parent/Related Service Provider , Casper

Barb Sellar

Related Service Provider ,Dayton

Dot Sippel

Parent, Laramie

Robyn Thorne

Vocational Rehabilitation, Cheyenne

Dan Wilde

Foster Care, Cheyenne

Diana Schafer

Foster Care, Cheyenne

Pam Zamora

Institutions, Laramie

Wyoming Department of Education

Peg Brown-Clark, State Special Education Director

Stephanie Weaver, Deputy Division Director

Barb Yates, Panel Secretary

Missy White, Panel Facilitator

Additional Information

For further information about the Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities, please contact one of the following persons:

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Wyoming Department of Education
Special Programs Unit
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The Special Programs Unit provided updates on the Annual Performance Report (APR) for Part B and Part C, State Performance Plan (SPP), complaints as well as dispute resolutions, Part B application, Chapter 7 Rules, the state's funding model and policies for the provision of special education and related services, the state's application for Title VI-B funding, the Division's plan toward addressing the transition of students with disabilities to post-secondary education and employment, the process and outcomes of focused monitoring of school districts, graduation rates, and the status of seclusion and restraint policies. The panel also worked closely with WDE regarding the Seclusion and Restraint rules that are going into place this year.

The Special Programs Division facilitated the improvement of panel effectiveness by providing guidance, increased funding, increased administrative support along with continued funding and support for Missy White, Panel Facilitator.



Joint orientation Wyoming Advisory Panel on Children with Disabilities in Jackson, Wyoming on October 7 and 8, 2010.

