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**Minutes**

July 15, 2019

10 a.m.

Tennessee School for the Blind

115 Stewarts Ferry Pk.

Nashville, TN 37214

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| **Council Members in Attendance** | **Department Employees in Attendance** |
| Dawn Fry, Chair  Joey Ellis, Vice Chair | Theresa Nicholls, Assistant Commissioner  Rachel Wilkinson |
| Shannon Taylor | Kate Martin |
| Darlene Walden | Erin Lavery |
| Angela Jackson | Nancy Williams |
| David Craig | Rachel Suppé |
| Chantal Hess-Taylor  Melvin Jackson | Joann Runion  Susan Usery |
| Stephanie Ortego | Michael Holman |
| Mary Meador | Joanna Bivins |
|  | Alison Gauld |

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| **Council Members Not in Attendance** | **Visitors in Attendance** |
| Amy Allen | Karen Pearson |
| Brian Brown  Catherine Knowles  Jennifer Escue | Jennifer Crim  Dianne Barber Miller  Sherry Wilds  Jen Aprea  Kim Kredich |

**Objective**

Provide policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities in Tennessee.

**Welcome/Introductions Shannon Taylor, Former Chair**

* A brief introduction was made for the third Advisory Council meeting of 2019. Guests, council members, and TDOE employees were thanked for their attendance.

**Approval of Current Agenda (Guiding Principle Seven)**

See AC website ([here](http://www.tennessee.gov/education/article/special-education-advisory-council)) for agenda

* **Action Item**

Shannon Taylor, chair, made a motion to approve the July 15, 2019 agenda. The motion was seconded shortly after.

* **Final Action Taken**

The Council voted unanimously in favor of approving the July 15, 2019 agenda.

**Approval of April 9 Meeting Minutes (Guiding Principle Seven)**

See AC website ([here](https://www.tn.gov/education/student-support/special-education/special-education-advisory-council.html)) for October minutes

* **Action Item**

A motion was made to approve the April 9, 2019 minutes.

* **Final Action Taken**

The Council voted unanimously in favor of approving the April 9, 2019 minutes.

**Vote on Chair and Vice-Chair Shannon Taylor, Former Chair**

* A call for nominees to the position of council chair was made.
  + Angela Jackson nominated Dawn Fry, who accepted the nomination.
  + Shannon Taylor nominated Darlene Walden, who declined the nomination.
* Dawn Fry was unanimously voted in as chair of the advisory council and took over the position for the remainder of the meeting.
* A call for nominees to the position of council vice-chair was made.
  + Angela Jackson nominated current vice-chair, Joey Ellis, to the position.
  + There were no other nominations.
  + The council voted unanimously to retain Joey Ellis in the position of vice-chair.

**Bylaws Amendment (Guiding Principle Seven) Dawn Fry, Chair**

* It had been decided by the council at the previous meetings that the bylaws should be reviewed and amended as necessary.
* Dawn asked the council if there was a motion to replace section two, Vision, of the bylaws with the iteration altered by the council. It was also asked if a motion could be made to add the guiding principles into the bylaws.
  + The motion was proposed and seconded.
* Melvin Jackson noted that the term ‘cultural inclusion’ had been removed from the Vision section during revisions and suggested that the council revisit that issue.
  + The council agreed that the issue should be discussed in greater depth.
  + A motion was made that the word ‘inclusion’ should be added into the Vision section again.
    - It was agreed that ‘Inclusion of students with disabilities is a priority’ should be added to the first bullet point of the Vision section in the bylaws.
* A motion was proposed to approve section two of the bylaws, Vision, as amended.
  + The motion was seconded and unanimously passed.

**Department Updates (Guiding Principle Seven) Theresa Nicholls**

* As of this meeting, the department is still waiting for the final iteration of the Strategic Plan.
* The division of special populations and student support has been restructured so that its focus is now on special populations. It is now called the division of special populations.
* The Tennessee Early Intervention System (TEIS) has also shifted to a new chief.
* The 619 team has transitioned from the special populations division to the office of early learning.
* It is expected that a finalized version of the organizational structure will be made public soon.
* Heather Anderson has been added to the department as a new complaints investigator.

**Alternate Academic Diploma (AAD) and Ready Graduate Indicator Alison Gauld**

* Twenty-four educators from around the state joined Alison for two days in which they established and updated course requirements for the alternate academic diploma.
* Those requirements have been submitted to the department’s communications process. Once they have been approved, they will be shared with schools.
* These requirements will offer clarity regarding alternate academic diploma courses.
* The requirements will be made available on the state’s website.

**State Determination Review Rachel Wilkinson**

* This is a report compiled by the federal government regarding the state of Tennessee and its special education practices.
* Half of the determination score is based off assessments, dropouts, and graduation rate. The other half is based off the federal government’s compliance matrix.
* The state has not had long-standing non-compliance in seven years.
* As a result of our determination, the state will be working with technical assistance centers that will aid the state in raising its scores.

**Public Comments (Guiding Principle Seven)**

* Kim Kredich, a volunteer advocate and parent of a child with a disability from Knoxville, spoke regarding inclusion and the challenges that parents and advocates face. She cited a lack of appropriate information being disseminated to parents as an issue that needs to be addressed.

**Feedback on Division Goals Theresa Nicholls**

* The council took part in data based activities wherein they sorted cards and discussed their findings and how they related to the division’s goals.
  + The group found that SPDG districts had a marked increase in progress.
  + The group noticed that the majority of the improvements in data were good, aside from the amount of students participating in the alternate assessment.
    - It was noted that strong communication regarding use of the alternate assessment should be shared.
    - Multiple council members mentioned that it is a possibility that some teachers and parents may not fully understand the long term ramifications of a student participating in the alternate assessment.

**New Business/Additional Items (Guiding Principle Seven) Dawn Fry**

* It was asked that any council members with recommendations of potential new members, particularly those that are parents of children with disabilities, contact Michael Holman at [Michael.holman@tn.gov](mailto:Michael.holman@tn.gov).

**Call for Future Meeting Topics (Guiding Principle Seven) Dawn Fry**

* It was suggested that over-identification of gifted students be addressed.

**Closing Remarks/Adjourn (Guiding Principle Seven) Dawn Fry**

* Dawn thanked everyone for their input and attendance and adjourned the meeting.