



Benton-Stearns Education District
Special Education Advisory Council Agenda

February 22, 2021

6:00-7:00

[Join Via Zoom](#)

1. Introductions and Welcome

- a. A small group of participants were present tonight for our virtual meeting. We had staff representation from Benton Stearns, and parent representation from Sartell-St. Stephen, Sauk Rapids-Rice, Kimball, and Foley.

2. District Updates

- a. Executive Director Hiring Process
 - Alicia Jepsen has given notice to the Board that she will be resigning at the end of the 2020-2021 School Year after 5 years of service and we wish her the best. Interviews for a new Director will take place February 23rd with the plan to offer the position to one of the candidates to be approved at the March board meeting. The new Executive Director will begin on July 1st.
- b. Return to In-Person Learning
 - All districts have transitioned in and out of each of the three models (in-person, hybrid, distance learning) since our last meeting in October following the Governor's guidance. Schools are all working to get back into fully in-person for all grade levels.
- c. Paraprofessional Recognition Week
 - The Governor declared Paraprofessional Recognition week January 25-31, 2021.
 - We are so appreciative of our paraprofessionals and the great work they do to support the success of our students.
- d. Unified PE in Sartell
 - Sartell offers Unified PE as a course that supports all students in an inclusive setting. Unified PE is sponsored by the Special Olympics and they offer curriculum, resources, and support for the program.
- e. [Child Count 2020](#)
 - December 1st Child Count provides totals of all students served in special education in Minnesota by resident district.
 - Alicia shared 2-year trend of December 1st Child Count. Some districts have had an increase in enrollment and others have had a slight decrease in counts from last year.

- f. Due Process Nights-Virtual Support to Staff
 - Due process nights allow special education staff across our districts to work on due process paperwork and have support with questions. Due to COVID precautions this year, we are offering them virtually. In the past, we have held them in person and hope to reconsider this as an option for the future.

3. Resources

a. Guardianship-A conversation about guardianship took place with a number of resources shared by members:

National Resource Center For Supported Decision Making

[Supported Decision-Making Tools](#)

- Additional Resources Shared:
 - [ARC Mid State](#)
 - Roger Strege at [Special Needs Planner](#)
 - [wingsmn.org](#)
 - [Legal Aid](#)

b. Day Support Programs-Day Training and Habilitation. Alicia shared information about 4 Day Support Programs that serve adults with disabilities in the region. Many of these programs also shut down in-person training opportunities during the last year, and stopped accepting new referrals. Districts can continue to reach out to these organizations when planning with IEP teams regarding a student's participation in Day Support Programs following graduation.

1. [Options Inc.](#) (Big Lake)
2. [WACOSA](#) (Waite Park)
3. [Functional Industries Inc.](#) (Buffalo)
4. [Opportunity Services](#) (St. Cloud)

c. [Vocational Rehabilitation Services](#) is a great resource to work with students and families to provide additional transition aged supports.

d. Supporting Well Being During COVID-19-

- <https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/communities/mentalhealth/mwbcovid19.pdf>
- <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/cope.html>

e. [MN Autism Portal](#)

4 . Meeting Schedule 2020-2021

a. Next Meeting April 12th (location TBD)

5. Other Topics for Discussion

- IEP Goal Development- Resources for SMART Goals
- Updates on Setting IV Enrollment and Facilities

