



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
*DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION*



**Connecticut State Advisory Council for Special Education**

**Full SAC In-Person Meeting**

**Wednesday, October 25, 2023**

**\*\*\*\*\* 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. \*\*\*\*\***

**Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)  
111 Charter Oak Avenue (Room 202)  
Hartford, CT 06106**

**Zoom Virtual Meeting: Member Participation**

**YouTube Live Stream: Public Participant Viewing**

<https://youtube.com/live/FullSACMeeting102523>

(Conference Call Information included below)

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Susan Yankee (Chair), Bryan Klimkiewicz (SDE non-voting), Sean Cronin (SDE non-voting), Jennifer Lussier (Vice Chair) Tom Cosker, Kim Williamson, Joshua Martin, Jon Metcalf and Catherine Summ **Online:** Jolie Medina, Jake Shumbo, Missy Wrigley, Cassandra Reilly, Lori Fortuna, Jeffery Spahr, Brian Smith, Nachi Bhatt, Tommy Mellilo, Cassandra Reilly, Tammy Raccio, Denise Drummond, Michael Scanlon and Tylar Young.

**In-Person Guest:** Lisa Nee and Dawn Dickau

**Members Absent:** Mia Dianoto, Mary Beth Bruder, Nancy DeCrescenzo, John King, Allison Kopie and Amy Messinger.

**I. Call to Order and Welcome (9:00 a.m.)**

Susan call meeting to order at 9:12 am.

**II. Introductions/Roles**

**III. Public Comment (9:10 a.m.):**

Lisa Nee (parent advocate) introduces herself. Talks Transition, her experiences and what she is seeing. Would like to work with the SAC to create a transition program that is successful for all CT students.

SAC meetings are public meetings; members of the public may participate by calling in:

- Call-In Number: 1-866-880-0098
- Participant Passcode: 89689633

**IV. Consent Agenda**

a. September 13, 2023, Full Council Minutes

Susan Y. makes motion to approve minutes Tom Cosker makes motion and Bryan Smith seconds. All in favor.

**Old Business**

**I. Executive Committee Report (9:15 a.m.)**

a. Special Education Task Force Update

Last meeting was cancelled and there will be an update after the next meeting. Work will be guided by the SAC members.

b. Setting Timelines for the Annual Report (Completion and submission)

Members have a brief discussion.

i. January 17 Meeting Logistics

1. 9 – 10 am. Legislative breakfast with full SAC meeting immediately following.

**II. Membership Committee Report (9:35 a.m.)**

Catherine S. provides an update.

Paraeducator candidate will be presented for the November 29 full Council meeting.

**III. Legislative Committee Report (9:40 a.m.)**

Jeffrey S. provides brief update on where special education bills stand and where the SAC is looking to respond to.

**New Business**

**I. Round Table (10:00 a.m.)**

a. Agency/Parent Updates

Catherine S. (BESBE): Talks about training for staff, parents, students and team members. Also mentions students events.

Cassandra R. (Charter Schools): Supports and students – matching the best together versus the directions they were provided by the host. Grow continues to be funding landscape. Talks compensatory education.

Tylar Young (Public Teacher): Continued focus on CTSEDS. Districts worked hard on gaining new strengths, talks training in many districts. Seeing special education teachers leaving their positions across CT.

Jane Hampton (CPAC): Discusses families supports by the district – seeing an increase. Understands that there is a shortage in school of teachers in school but out of school students not receiving any services. Lots of concerns on transportation and students not starting school immediately after being registered due to lack of placement commonly because a lack of

staff. Have programs like LEAP working with families. Biggest issues rising to the surface for CPAC at the moment.

Joshua Martin (ConnCASE): Increase in behavioral and mental health of students. Suggests that there is a need for more psychologists.

Ana Wittig (Approved Private Schools): Discusses adjusting and modifications to their plans. Professional development – will try to excite people in special education. Look at things that are available to make their lives easier. Organize and build the pool of educators. Someone at a conference referenced hungry hippo game on trying to get services and how do they increase their marbles (services received)?

Michael Scanlon (Individual): Comments to the members on roundtable updates being relatable. States that all students are different and what works for them will change with each scenario. Student and youth participation is important.

Goviana Morales (Parent): Speaks about interactions with parents. What she sees and what needs to be touched upon. Specific language access.

Representative Comey (General Assembly): Talks Birth to 3 and supports.

Thomas Cosker (Disability Rights CT): Thanks the SAC students for their voice and for being involved with the Council. Touches on what he sees with students after high school. The voices are a big part of special education.

Susan Y. asks about the BSE Call Center and 211. Do they refer calls to the BSE call center. Talks about students that use apps/phones to help with assistive technology and supports. Mention of grants: assistive technology/supports and student need to have their phone with them in school – not in a locked pouch. Grants – competitive, how can they be used for social emotional purposes for the pouches?

Nachi Bhatt (DCF): Mentions the LEAP Program, personnel shortages that miss supplemental services and impact their students. Students end up in programs where the educators are available.

Jane Hampton (CPAC): Responds to Susan Y. on updating special education resources for 211 – something to discuss so that site can be updated as soon as possible. Also, responds to the mention of phones and assistive technology. Also talks transportation.

Tammy Raccio (Parent): Talks about phones being allowed in school. Comes down to communication and receiving/distributing information. Helps parents as well.

Tommy Mellilo (Student): Has made adjustments after having difficulty with accessing resources and assistance with college for students with disabilities. Says that there are programs out for everyone to be supported but students do not know how to access.

Brian K. Smith (DDS): Question for Tommy M. How has he been/or not been supported? Have parents, counselors or school administrators assisted? Tommy responds to say he has many supports – a team and it is the schools that he is looking at that do not provide the supports to the students in their learning aspects. Susan Y. asks for Brian to revisit the transition services, aging out and exiting school. Talks about recent successful transition and

before guidance was received, students with birthdays before July who guided and navigated services themselves.

BREAK until 10:36 am.

**II. Council Priority Review (10:45 a.m.)**

Bryan reviews priority work expectations with the members. Jolie M. will facilitate online group.

- a. Brief update on SAC Work Groups:
  - i. Least Restrictive Environment
  - ii. Restraint and Seclusion
- b. Overview/Review Priorities
- c. Group Work (Template / Padlet to Guide Questions)
- d. Share Out / Next Steps

**III. BREAK**

**IV. Special Education Division Director Report (12:30)**

Jolie action: include note on roundtable in reminder email.

**V. Adjourn (1:00 pm.)**

Meeting adjourned at 12:46 pm.

Missy W. and Brian S. seconds. All in favor.

**State Advisory Council Meeting Dates/Locations:**

Meeting	Date	Time	Location
1.	September 13, 2023	9:00-10:30 pm	Virtual Meeting
2.	October 25, 2023	9:00-1:00 pm	In-Person Meeting Location: CREC - 111 Charter Oak Avenue Hartford, CT
3.	November 29, 2023	9:00-10:30 pm	Virtual Meeting
4.	January 17, 2024	9:00-1:00 pm	In-Person Meeting Location: TBD
	January 24, 2024		Snow Date
5.	February 28, 2024	9:00-10:30 am	Virtual Meeting
6.	March 27, 2024	9:00-10:30 am	Virtual Meeting
7.	April 24, 2024	9:00-1:00 pm	In-Person Meeting Location: TBD
8.	May 22, 2024	9:00-10:30 am	Virtual Meeting (Tentative)