

**SPECIAL EDUCATION
PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**
Thursday, May 29, 2025

The meeting began at 11:00 AM

Welcome and Introductions

Victoria Bower welcomed everyone to the meeting. Meeting participants introduced themselves.

Members in Attendance

Kendall Newhouse, Portage; Victoria Bower, Gull Lake; Leigh Hall, Schoolcraft

Directors/Administrators in Attendance

Angela Telfer, KRESA; Shelly Hawthorne, KRESA; Rikki Saunders, Central Service Area; Jeanine Mattson-Gearhart, Southern Service Area

Guest Parent (nonmember)

Beth Allen, Kalamazoo Public Schools

ISD Plan Review – Angela Telfer and Shelly Hawthorne

Angela and Shelly explained to the group the changes in the ISD plan recommended by the Michigan Department of Education.

- Shelly and Angela shared the plan with the group and explained the changes in each section.
- PAC members in attendance were emailed the documentation to review. PAC members asked questions related to the changes. All PAC members in attendance voted to approve the changes, 100% in support. The Plan will be sent to the regional superintendents for approval and is hoped to be completed/approved by the end of July and will be uploaded to the KRESA website.

Questions asked:

1. Do you have to have a child with an IEP attending a local district to be a member of the PAC
 - a. Yes, A child can also attend a KRESA program and be a member from your local resident district
 - b. Parents of students with an IEP or 504 plan are welcome to attend the PAC meeting, however, cannot vote on anything presented unless they are approved by the local school board and KRESA's board to be an official PAC member
2. In the Visual Impairment section of the ISD plan, it is curious why it specifies that a VI specialist does not need to attend an IEP.
 - a. The language of a VI specialist is an alternative way to provide services. A VI Specialist often provides direct instruction and specialized services to students; a VI teacher consultant typically focuses on supporting and advising the educational team to ensure that students with visual impairments receive

appropriate accommodation and support. KRESA has VI teacher consultants in our county and so currently we do not have a need for VI specialists as an alternative.

3. Alternative Program or Services section – Class caseloads and the reduction, what is the plan in the local districts to accommodate that? Will they hire more teachers or is it possible a student will not be able to receive their services?
 - a. Some districts have grow your own programs to support staff (often paraprofessionals) to get a teaching certificate. There are several other grant programs now to help people wanting to go back to school to become teachers. Each district will have to hire to legally service every student with an IEP. It is illegal to not provide services outlined in a student's IEP in alignment with the class size guidelines specified in the Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE) and the ISD plan.
 - b. Each district will look at caseloads and make a determination about whether they need additional teachers to meet the new lower class size requirements in the ISD plan.
4. Will the change in caseload sizes affect Paraprofessionals?
 - a. Paraprofessionals are placed in classrooms based on individual needs and/or a district plan. It is not a requirement for resource room programs. Paraprofessionals are a support not a service to a student's IEP.

Director's Reports

Jeanine Mattson-Gearhart – Southern Services:

- Jeanine shared the Vicksburg success of Data Use and Action Process work with the MDE Office of Special Education Services and the KRESA technical assistance team. The process resulted in marked improvement in Reading for 4th grade students at Sunset Lake Elementary.

Rikki Saunders – Central Services:

- Kalamazoo Public Schools will be offering summer school to students grade 1-5, 6-8 and high school.

Sharing:

Victoria asked if it would be possible to change the meeting times for future PAC meetings. This may help by allowing more members to attend.

- The possibility was discussed to offer every other meeting to rotate between a daytime meeting and evening meetings was proposed.
- Discussion about the challenge of evening meetings for families with children in sports or other activities or childcare should inform the planning of meeting times, as this was done in the past, with better results (more parents attending) during the day than in the evenings.
- Victoria will send some options to the group in order to set meeting dates for next school year by the end of June.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:01 p.m.