



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Indian Education
1849 C Street NW, MIB-3610
Washington, DC 20240

BIE Advisory Board for Exceptional Children

Board Minutes - Day 1

Thursday, January 16, 2025 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM (MST)

Name of Committee: Bureau of Indian Education Advisory Board for Exceptional Children

Meeting Location: National Indian Programs Training Center (NIPTC)

1011 Indian School Road NW, Albuquerque, NM and online using the Zoom.gov platform.

FACA Regulations: As an Advisory Board to a federal agency, the Board falls under the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA; 5 U.S.C., Appendix 2). FACA aims to ensure the advice of federal advisory committees is objective and available to the public, and the committee complies with cost control and recordkeeping requirements. The BIE Advisory Board ensures all their Board meetings are open to the public, all meeting notices are published in advance, and Board meetings are advertised using the Federal Register and posted on the BIE website at www.bie.edu. The BIE has provided a Designated Federal Officer (DFO) who is assigned to support the Advisory Board, and the BIE ensures each Board member avoids conflicts of interest and limits their membership terms.

ADVISORY BOARD ROSTER

1. Present Norman Shewanokasic, Chairperson
2. Present Pilar Peltier, Vice Chairperson
3. Present Leon Reval, Secretary
4. Excused Gretchen Lehmann, Board Member
5. Present Leslie Finnearty, Board Member
6. Present Brian Wagner, Board Member
7. Present Gretchen Wendell, Board Member
8. Present Monica Cleveland, Board Member
9. Present Wendy Kroupa, Board Member
10. Present Rachel Harrison, Board Member
11. Present Dr. Elizabeth Younce, Board Member, Ed.D
12. Present Dr. Janet Slowman, Board Member, Ed.D



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- 13. Present** Melanie Star, Board Member
14. Present Spencer Churchill, Board Member

BIE Staff Members: Dr. Eugene Thompson, Supervisory Educational Specialist
Jennifer Davis, Designated Federal Officer (DFO)
Ronald J. Worst, Educational Specialist

TAESE Contractors: Dr. Brenda Smith, Alex Langevin, and Laura Lema

Presenters/Speakers: Klarissa Thomas, Michele Galloway, Norma Brown Bull, Jennifer Young Bull Bear, Tina Two Crow, Mariah Crow, Migan Inez, Kiva Sam, Danielle Sloan, and Bradley LaRocque

Others in Attendance:

Adrian Notsiueh, Jicarilla	Danielyn Pino	Karen Etsitty
Apache Nation President	Danielle Sloan	Katharine Ford
Alexander Booker	David Nikolaus	Kerbi Lincoln
Alison Keplin	Deborah Belone	Klarissa Thomas
Alyssa Yeppa	Delphina Dayish	Laurie Lasley-Santos
Anna David	Detroit James	Leanna Aragon
Annacita Crow, Jicarilla	Earlinda Sells	Loretta Hobbs
Apache Nation	Eleanor Francis-Jones	Marilou Arenó
Councilwoman	Elrisa Naljahih-Sells	Michelle Thomas
Arlene Davis	Erin Trottier	Nacelle Reynolds
Candace Sherwood	Evangeline Bradley-	Nadine Eastman
Cara Koster	Wilkinson	Nicholas Brown
Carmelia Becenit	Faith Rosetta	Pamela Speakes
Carol Steinsick	Greta Skeets	Rachelle Cleveland
Charmaine Rocamora	Holly Traynor	Randall Joe
Cheryl Laughter	J. Kaibah Begay	Rena Tuni
Corry Roberts	Joann Fields	Rita Tsosie
Craig Euneau	John Copenhaver	Roberta Clarke
Crystal Becenit	Jonita Zephier	Rose Klade
Crystal Suazo	Julie Casey	Scott Norton
D. Shorty	Karla Zeck	Samantha Grant



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Savanah Six
Scott Norton
Tana Chavez

Teresa Ramone-Wilson
Teresia Paul
Trena Baldwin

Trista Ayers
Zonnie Sombrero

8:00 AM – 8:15 AM Meeting Logistics

Jennifer Davis, DFO, provided an overview of the meeting’s purpose and objectives, Board authorizations, public commenting sessions, and meeting reminders. Questions regarding the purpose of the Board can be directed to [Jennifer Davis](#). The meeting agenda was reviewed for the two-day meeting.

Roll Call, Old Business, and New Business

Start Time: 8:00 AM Mountain Standard Time (MST)

Welcome and Call to Order – Norman Shawanokasic, Chairperson

Roll Call – Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic completed roll call. The following were present constituting a quorum:

- Norman Shawanokasic, Chairperson
- Pilar Peltier, Vice Chairperson
- Leon Reval, Secretary
- Gretchen Lehmann
- Brian Wagner
- Rachel Harrison
- Dr. Elizabeth Younce
- Melanie Star
- Spencer Churchill
- Wendy Kroupa
- Dr. Janet Slowman
- Leslie Finnearty
- Monica Cleveland

Excused: Gretchen Wendell

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic opened the meeting. He requested the audience members attending the meeting in person introduce themselves. He noted the new and old business agenda item would occur following lunch as part of the Board business session. In person audience members introduced themselves.

Chairperson Shawanokasic introduced the first session of the meeting.

8:15 AM – 9:30 AM Early Childhood Transition

Presenters: Klarissa Jensen, Eastern Region Early Childhood Education Director and Michele Galloway, Cherokee Elementary School Pre-K Teacher & Hope Center Director



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Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic welcomed the speakers to the Board meeting.

The presenters were asked to respond to the following items for this report and discussion.

1. Please provide information on the coordination of Part C services and transition to Part B.
2. How are the tribes providing those services?
3. What are the current challenges in the birth to early childhood transition?

Klarissa Jensen introduced herself. She reported the BIE obligates funding for Part C services to each tribe. The tribes in turn provide, or contract, for programmatic services. The BIE collects information for Child Count information and an annual report.

Question: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Noted his tribe is waiting for their funding this year and he was working on an email to Klarissa Jensen.

Response: Klarissa Jensen – Stated she will look into the issue and respond to Brian.

Michele Galloway introduced herself. She detailed the administrative aspects of receiving funding and providing services for Part C services. She described the process for receiving referrals for children to see if they qualify for an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). They work hand in hand with the agencies from whom they receive referrals. They do all the evaluation services at their facility to determine eligibility for IFSPs. At Cherokee Central Schools they currently have 60 students receiving services. They also provide community outreach. They start the transition process when a child is two and a half years of age. They receive funding for services for children between 3-5 from the BIE and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Funding is provided per student. They have additional funding services to assist students on Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

Michele Galloway reported developing relationships with families since COVID is a challenge. It has been difficult to get families to send their children to school for in-person services and to engage with their programs. With families keeping their children home more, it has been difficult for the school staff to compare their children's progress to other students and understand what services are needed. Staff and teachers also have a challenge completing all the transition paperwork in the mandated 90-day timeline, which delays the provision of services by the age of three. Finding quality, affordable childcare for families is also a challenge. She noted they have great staff with very few staffing shortages.



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Question: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Inquired about the total population for birth to five years of age.

Response: Michele Galloway – Stated they have 22 Part C children and over 30 students receiving special education preschool services.

Question: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Asked how funding allocations are determined for tribes.

Response: Klarissa Jensen – Explained they have a formula provided by the U.S. Department of Education based on each tribe's Child Count data. They often experience difficulties getting Child Count data from tribes, because there is turnover in staff submitting the data. She noted the importance of identifying children eligible for services early.

Question: Dr. Elizabeth Younce, Board Member – Asked how the BIE ensures children aren't double counted for funding and services.

Response: Klarissa Jensen – Explained they rely on tribes to provide them with accurate data.

Comment: Dr. Elizabeth Younce, Board Member – Stated she knew at one point disproportionate funding due to inaccurate child counts was an issue.

Response: Klarissa Jensen – Noted correspondence with states and tribes is important for accurate funding. Many sites have become better at reporting.

Question: Dr. Janet Slowman, Board Member – Asked if they could get data on what interventions are needed in the field. She also inquired if any information was available about how the incoming presidential administration will change policy.

Response: Klarissa Jensen – Explained they are working on data accuracy. They are hearing a lot about needs for speech services and services for children with autism. The need for speech services may be a product of children not getting exposure outside the home during, and following, COVID. She encourages tribes to continue doing outreach with families to identify children who need services early. She explained there has been very little communication from the incoming presidential administration regarding early childhood services, but they are sending information briefs for the incoming administration. They are always advocating for additional funding.

Question: Melanie Star, Board Member – Asked how many Family and Child Education (FACE) programs were in operation and if Klarissa Jensen could explain what the FACE program is for those who do not know.

Response: Klarissa Jensen – Replied the BIE operates 56 FACE programs, which includes four new sites. They provide special education services for families of children between birth and



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two years of age to assist them with their services. They also work with preschool-age children and their families to increase their readiness for kindergarten.

Response: Michele Galloway – Explained they have evening events for families of children in the FACE program.

Comment: Cara Koster – Noted FACE helps families become strong advocates for their children.

Response: Klarissa Jensen – Added FACE helps familiarize families with the education system and the supports they have access to.

Comment: Melanie Star, Board Member – Observed the great benefits of the FACE program and their successes.

Question: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Noted the deficiency in funding because of the federally required application process.

Response: Klarissa Jensen – Explained they have been working on gathering data to show the need for additional funding. They also have anecdotal information from families on the effectiveness of the FACE program.

Question: Leon Reval, Secretary – Asked for further explanation on what FACE does and what the funding does not cover. He explained he is a parent representative on the Board and needs more information.

Response: Klarissa Jensen – Noted she oversees the early childhood programs for the BIE, which includes FACE and preschool services. FACE is solely the birth to age two program and provides services to children and their families (including adult education to support children). She explained additional funding is available for services for children between the ages of birth and five requiring an application. Not every tribe receives funding from their agency; it may come from their state.

Comment: Leon Reval, Secretary – Asked how Board members can encourage their tribal governments to add early childhood funding to their advocacy attempts with Congress. He heard tribal blessings would be covered under Medicaid and he noted tribal elders and advisors should be part of early childhood services to levitate the importance of community.

Question: Norman Shawonkasic, Chairperson – Asked about pulling down funds from North Carolina DPI.

Response: Michele Galloway – Stated they work really well with the DPI office. A lot of work is required to complete reporting.

Comment: Norman Shawonkasic, Chairperson – Stated the Board appreciated being onsite at Cherokee Central Schools in September 2024 and noted his appreciation for Michele Galloway and the team at the school.



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Chairperson Norman Shawonkasic asked if any of the members of the public would like to ask any questions.

Question: Dr. Eugene Thompson, Supervisory Education Specialist – Asked if the most recent biannual report for Part C services could be shared.

Response: Klarissa Jensen – Noted they are still working on submitting the report, which was due at the end of December 2024. As soon as she has the completed/submitted report, she will send it to Dr. Thompson to share with the Board.

Question: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Asked if better communication can be done around deadlines for tribes to report data for the report.

Response: Klarissa Jensen – Noted they changed the due date this year and they will be changing it back for the next report period. A memo will come out at the end of the month (January) with the updated due dates.

Comment: Dr. Elizabeth Younce, Board Member – Praised the great work Michele Galloway is doing with transition services at Cherokee Central Schools.

Response: Klarissa Jensen – Expressed appreciation for Michele Galloway and Cara Koster as points of contact for getting data and information to the BIE.

Question: Delphina Davis, Educational Specialist – Inquired about online services for military families to receive information on supporting their children with disabilities.

Response: Michele Galloway – Noted they are geographically separated from military bases in North Carolina. As far as she knows, none of their families are active members of the military.

Response: Klarissa Jensen – Observed there is potential to coordinate services for military families.

Comment: Norman Shawonkasic, Chairperson – Noted many tribes face difficulties with accessing virtual services due to the infrastructure in rural settings. He noted the importance of incorporating language and culture in all education services.

Comment: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Stated he would like time during this meeting to discuss nursing services at schools.

Response: Norman Shawonkasic, Chairperson – Suggested the discussion occur after lunch during the Board's work session.

9:30 AM – 10:30 AM Panel Discussion: Secondary Transition

Little Wound School, Kyle, South Dakota

Presenters: Norma Brown Bull, Special Education Director, Jennifer Young Bull Bear, Social Worker, and Tina Two Crow, Student Assistant



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Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic welcomed the speakers to the Board meeting.

The presenters were asked to respond to the following items for this report and discussion.

1. What transition supports do you provide for high school students with various disabilities to help them meet their post-secondary goals?
2. What outside agencies have you developed relationships with and how have they provided resources/services for your children?
3. What success stories do you have to share in secondary transition programming?
4. Do you have anything to share regarding conservatorship?

The presenters introduced themselves.

Following are the responses given by the presenters to each of the requested items above.

1. What transition supports do you provide for high school students with various disabilities to help them meet their post-secondary goals?

Norma Brown Bull explained they do parent presentations, site visits/campus tours, transitions forums, and a career fair.

Jennifer Young Bull Bear detailed the presentations they are providing this school year for parents. She noted Little Wound School helps students complete site visits at campuses the students are interested in attending. The visits include reviewing available special education services. They host a one day conference for students with disabilities who are considering college or a technical school. They assist students with completing on the job training.

Tina Two Crow described the summer camp they set up that was funded through the state of South Dakota that assists students with independent living skills. They also set up job training opportunities in Rapid City.

2. What outside agencies have you developed relationships with and how have they provided resources/services for your children?

Jennifer Young Bull Bear reported they work with the Oglala Sioux tribe vocational rehabilitation program to help students do a summer work program. They also work with the Independent Living Choices Transition Program. They have a life skills curriculum program helping students build skills to apply and interview for jobs. They also provided an opportunity for students to run a bake sale and handle monetary transactions during school sporting events.



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Norma Brown Bull described the structure of their life skills classroom and the opportunities students have to assist at the school with tasks that translate to life skills.

Jennifer Young Bull Bear listed resources their school connects students and their families with. These include vocational rehabilitation, mental health, employment, disability rights, family support, and legal services. She described their annual Transition Forum, which they invite other high schools to attend. The forum includes speakers on independent living, vocational rehabilitation, and available benefits.

3. What success stories do you have to share in secondary transition programming?

Tina Two Crow shared the story of a student who now works at the school as a teacher.

Norma Brown Bull shared the story of a student who is now attending Haskell Indian Nations University.

Jennifer Young Bull Bear shared the story of a student who dropped out of school, but was able to re-enter school and graduate. This student is now attending Oglala Lakota College.

Tina Two Crow highlighted a student who experienced family losses and homelessness. This student is now completing a program at Job Corps in Missouri.

Norma Brown Bull outlined the number of staff members their team has and their roles. They have received a grant for a “grow your own” program helping several of their staff members become certified teachers. She highlighted an additional student who experienced being removed from his home. He was able to graduate high school and work as a volunteer firefighter, corrections officer, and security officer. She outlined how much work their staff do to support students who have adverse situations in their home life.

4. Do you have anything to share regarding conservatorship?

Jennifer Young Bull Bear explained conservatorship is a court appointed person who manages financial affairs for a person unable to do so themselves. Guardianship is when a person is appointed to manage the medical and physical care of an individual. They help families complete paperwork to apply for either conservatorship or guardianship. They also provide them transportation services to court to complete the process.



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Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic thanked the presenters for speaking to the Board. He noted how beneficial tribal vocational rehabilitation services are for students. He stated vocational rehabilitation services should be part of the IEP process for transition age students. He stressed the importance of educating parents on the IEP process and services students are eligible for. He noted funding was competitive for vocational rehabilitation services. He spoke about the need for understanding supports for students who have lost their parents. He thanked the staff at Little Wound School for the services and supports they are providing to students with disabilities. Chairperson Shawanokasic praised the success stories shared by the school.

Comment: Wendy Kroupa, Board Member – Congratulated the staff on the success stories and stated she would reach out for resources.

Comment: Monica Cleveland, Board Member (chat) – We have a lot of students and parents who do not think that they can work or attend training or college because of their [situations]. The law requires students to be in school, which parents comply with, so the majority of our students have high school diplomas. However, they can go further and succeed if we just educate our families!

Comment: Pilar Peltier, Vice Chairperson – Thanked the Little Wound team for their presentation and services they provide students.

Comment: Leon Reval, Secretary – Commended the presenters for their work. He stated it is wonderful the school assists families with applications for conservatorship and guardianship. He added doable power of attorney or medical power of attorney with sunset clauses as options for families.

Comment: Holly Traynor (chat) – I share with my students and staff that I have a severe/profound hearing impairment and have earned university degrees, endorsements, certifications, etc. I have worked as a special education teacher and now as Director of Special Education at our school. It can be tricky with getting the right accommodations and persevering during difficult times, but it is amazingly doable!

Comment: Brian Wager, Board Member – Highlighted Little Wound School invites additional schools to their Transition Forum and builds relationships beyond their school.

Comment: Dr. Janet Slowman, Board Member – Noted the relationships between the students and the Little Wound School staff was evident in their presentation. She thanked them for being available to assist students who are experiencing adverse conditions at home.

Comment: Leslie Finnearty, Board Member (chat) – Norma, the amount of love you and your staff have for your students is palpable. Thank you, so much, for that love.



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Comment: David Nikolaus (chat) – Thanks for the information and presentation! Some great ideas and examples to help students transition! Thank you.

Response: Norma Brown Bull – Stated many of the students need school leaders to fill familial roles. She noted their staff try to be honest with families about student trajectories and they work to provide services that will support positive outcomes for students.

Comment: Nacelle Reynolds (chat) – It's not ALL you have - it is ALL YOU SHARE - thank you!

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic thanked the presenter and excused the Board for a break.

10:30 AM – 10:45 AM Break

10:45 AM – 11:45 AM Panel Discussion: Behavioral Challenges

Presenters:

- Cherokee Center Schools, Cherokee North Carolina: Mariah Crow, Student Success Advocate
- Little Wound School, Kyle, South Dakota: Norma Brown Bull, Special Education Director, Migan Inez, Instructional Service Director, and Kiva Sam, School Psychologist
- Turtle Mountain Community High School, Belcourt, North Dakota: Danielle Sloan, Special Education Director, and Bradley LaRocque, Principal

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic welcomed the presenters to the Board meeting.

The presenters were asked to respond to the following items for this report and discussion.

1. Have you noticed an increase in students with challenging behaviors? If so, why?
 - a. What would support and training for the educational and support staff, to address an influx of students with challenging behaviors, look like?
 - b. How can the Associate Deputy Director (ADD), Education Program Administrators (EPAs), Education Resource Centers (ERCs), Division of Performance and Accountability (DPA), and the schools work together to address the influx of students with behavior challenges?
2. What behavioral strategies work well to address challenging behaviors?
3. What are your current challenges when trying to replace inappropriate behaviors with all students?

Following are the responses given by the presenters to each of the requested items above.

1. Have you noticed an increase in students with challenging behaviors? If so, why?



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- a. What would support and training for the educational and support staff, to address an influx of students with challenging behaviors, look like?
- b. How can the Associate Deputy Director (ADD), Education Program Administrators (EPAs), Education Resource Centers (ERCs), Division of Performance and Accountability (DPA), and the schools work together to address the influx of students with behavior challenges?

Mariah Crow stated she represents Cherokee Central Schools. She noted, following COVID, they saw an increase in behavior plans for kindergarten and first grade students. Most of those students no longer have a need for behavior plans. They see a lot of students refusing to complete work. They have completed a lot of training on providing services for students with autism. They have been supporting trainings for general education teachers as well. It is difficult for general education teacher trainings to translate into individualized services for students. For many of their students with behavior plans, those students are often pushed to general education inclusion environments before they are ready. Some students have a sense of belonging and success in smaller special education environments. They work very hard to support the needs of the students.

Danielle Sloan and Bradley LaRocque from Turtle Mountain Community High School introduced themselves. Danielle Sloan noted many of their students were out of school for two years during COVID, and when the students returned to school an increase happened in students with challenging behaviors. The school spent a lot of time correcting regression. They have been providing trauma training for their staff. Bradley LaRocque added they have also been providing cultural training for staff to help them better understand where their students are coming from. He explained Turtle Mountain has an alternative school, and they are seeing an influx in the number of students who want to attend that program.

Kiva Sam and Migan Inez from Little Wound School introduced themselves. They noted COVID did impact their program and they have been reviewing their behavior data. They have a specialized counselor for students who have behavior issues around substance abuse. Megan Inez reviewed their behavior data, noting they are seeing an increase in challenging behavior this year, and they have seen an increase in behavior support for their high school students. Many factors exist outside the school system that impact their students and their behavior. Kiva Sam noted when completing evaluations, they have a lot of students who have been exposed to substances pre-birth. Because of this exposure, they've done a lot of referrals for their students. Migan Inez noted they have been building



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their internal resources to provide eligibility evaluations. They have also been working to assist general education teachers with classroom behavior management skills, which includes helping teachers be active members of the IEP team. Kiva Sam noted teachers only receive one course on classroom management during their teacher prep programs and the Little Wound staff try supporting teachers in building skills to support students who need behavior and social skill supports. They are emphasizing increasing these supports they already have.

2. What behavioral strategies work well to address challenging behaviors?

Mariah Crow explained the function of the behavior must be understood first in order to understand which strategy would be most effective. She noted the effectiveness of environmental arrangements on behavior.

Bradley LaRocque noted the importance of students having a trusting relationship with someone in the school system who is familiar with their story. Turtle Mountain staff are in their second year implementing restorative justice practices. Danielle Sloan noted the importance of focusing on each student's goals and having an end-of-day check-out where they review with the student what worked well, and what didn't work, on meeting their goals for the day. She emphasized the importance of communication with students. They contract with clinical therapists to assist with services the school staff don't have the capacity to provide. She added they have been emphasizing communication and relationship building with parents. Bradley LaRocque noted they created a multi-disciplinary support team helping to fill in gaps for students and ensure information is provided to all staff members.

Kiva Sam expressed the importance of staff mindsets when approaching challenging behaviors. She noted students will exhibit behavior to get out of doing tough assignments and staff need to be able to recognize those avoidance behaviors. She stressed the importance of mindful language being used by staff members. They have also been pushing to complete daily check-in and check-outs with students. They are also promoting processes to maintain consistent data for students. Migan Inez detailed the data for one student and how the data shows progress is being made. She added that specific behaviors need to be taught and mentored. Kiva Sam reiterated the importance of changing environmental factors for students.



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3. What are your current challenges when trying to replace inappropriate behaviors with all students?

Mariah Crow noted maintaining behavior data is always an area that could be improved. She listed challenges in connecting with families and in ensuring staff know what the home environment is for each student. She noted the importance of slowing down to see what is occurring with each student and matching them with the approach that will work best for their situation.

Danielle Sloan noted it is challenging finding time to meet the needs of each student. Many of their students with a lot of needs have large teams and communication is vital to ensure collaboration is effective. They are always struggling finding the time to meet and collaborate. There is also a challenge making sure all staff have the appropriate training to handle the needs of students. Bradley LaRocque stated they are challenged with paying for contractual services. They were able to use COVID funding to pay for many contractual services, but they no longer have that funding source. This lack of funding has forced them to make tough choices about which contractual services they have the budget to provide for students. Danielle Sloan stated staff don't feel they have the time to meet all the students' needs.

Migan Inez noted a challenge for their school is attendance. Their administration is supporting efforts to address chronic absenteeism. Kiva Sam noted they also need to strengthen their positive behavior supports. They noted classroom observations show some classroom time is not engaging for students, which feeds into adverse behavior. She suggested an examination of policies to ensure they match with their trauma-informed approaches. Migan Inez observed another challenge is ensuring staff have opportunities to connect with students. They are also challenged with recruitment, retention, and mentorship of qualified school staff.

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic thanked each of the panel members for presenting to the Board.

Comment: Dr. Elizabeth Younce, Board Member – Noted the struggle of having buy-in from general education teachers. One of Cherokee Central Schools' recruitment strategies is allowing teachers to have their children attend the school regardless of tribal status. She noted many of those students need supports they do not receive funding for. She stressed the need for



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communication to everyone involved with a student and giving them doable tasks. She thanked the panelists for the information they provided to the Board.

Comment: Leon Reval, Secretary – Related his personal experience as a parent and asked what interaction and funding look like for parents who want a one-on-one aide for their student. He noted the importance of providing support to student aides to increase retention of staff.

Comment: Adrian Notsiueh, Jicarilla Apache Nation President – Noted issues in aligning required certifications with the qualifications of interested teacher candidates. He explained the need for changing teacher certification requirements to encourage expert professionals to become teachers. He also explained his own teaching strategies for engaging students to maintain proper classroom management and the importance for teachers to attend school and community events. He noted issues with salary discrepancies between BIE schools and public schools and its effect on teacher recruitment.

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic noted the importance of tribal language and culture in the classroom. He excused the Board for lunch.

11:45 AM – 1:00 PM Lunch

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM Advisory Board Work Session

- Work on new priorities.
- Review Board Members whose terms will end in 2025; and on day 2 of the Board meeting vote on a new vice-chair.
- Work on the next meeting logistics, complete a draft agenda, and identify presenters with presenter questions.

Chairperson Shawanokasic welcomed the Board and guests back from lunch. He introduced the business items to be handled before the Board began its work session.

Comment: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Explained the Board has been discussing the provision of a nurse at every BIE school for several years. He noted each tribal council must request Indian Health Services (IHS) fill the nurse positions. His school has been able to go through the process and are in the process of hiring for their nurse position. This will be the first time their school system will have a nurse. If anyone has questions on this hiring process, Board Member Wagner would be happy to assist.



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Comment: Wendy Kroupa, Board Member – Noted the availability of a nurse for their school system will be very helpful.

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic explained the Board will work on setting priorities for the coming year, which will inform the formation of a draft agenda. He suggested meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico in April and having a virtual meeting in June.

Jennifer Davis, DFO, affirmed having an online meeting in June, and staying in Albuquerque to use the federal training building, would help keep meeting costs down. She noted the Board would also need to set dates for the April and June meetings. She explained applications have been submitted to fill the upcoming vacant Board positions. Four positions will be vacant before the next Board meeting.

Question: Leon Reval, Secretary – Asked if there was any feedback on the Annual Report the Board completed at their previous meeting. He also requested the Annual Report be sent to all the Board members.

Jennifer Davis, DFO, stated the Board needed to review and approve the minutes from their September meeting. She noted she will send the Annual Report to the Board.

The Board reviewed their responsibilities in preparation for setting their priorities for the year.

Spencer Churchill, Board Member, noted the responsibility of the Board to eliminate barriers.

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic noted the language on the Annual Report and the lack of response the Board receives about the report. He noted sending a follow-up letter requesting acknowledgement of the Board's Annual Report would be helpful.

Secretary Leon Reval stated the Board should issue a call for additional funding as one of their priorities. He urged consistency in advisement from the Board. He expressed a desire to ensure the Board is operating effectively to improve outcomes. He supported the idea of sending a follow-up letter on the Annual Report.



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Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic shared frustrations the Board experienced in the past with the recognition of their Annual Report. He suggested the Board work on drafting priorities that can be put in the Annual Report during their last meeting of the year.

Vice Chairperson Pilar Peltier stated it would be nice if the Secretary of the Interior could send a representative to respond to the Board's questions.

Board Member Brian Wagner noted it may be easier to get a representative from the Department of Interior to attend an online/virtual meeting. He asked what the status of the BIE's revised policies are.

Dr. Eugene Thompson, Supervisory Educational Specialist, replied they had received written feedback from the BIE solicitors on the revised policies, and they are working on finalizing them. The policies should be disseminated in the summer.

Board Member Brian Wagner noted the BIE policies instruct schools to follow the policies of the state in which they are located. He explained some states won't fund training for BIE staff to learn their mandated procedures, because those schools are funded by the BIE.

The Board participated in brainstorming activities to percolate possible priority topics.

2:45 PM – 3:00 PM

Break

The Board completed work on the brainstorming activities. The Board drafted the following priorities:

- Gathering, using, and disseminating data effectively in a timely manner
- Quality staff recruitment and retention
- Keeping policies current
- Effectively informing policies
- Creating culturally responsive practices
- More access to evaluation and related services

4:30 PM

Recess

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic thanked everyone and recessed the Board until the following morning at 8:00 AM MST.



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BIE Advisory Board for Exceptional Children

Board Minutes - Day 2

Friday, January 17, 2025 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM (MST)

ADVISORY BOARD ROSTER

1. Present Norman Shawanokasic, Chairperson
2. Present Pilar Peltier, Vice Chairperson
3. Present Leon Reval, Secretary
4. Present Gretchen Lehmann, Board Member
5. Present Leslie Finnearty, Board Member
6. Present Brian Wagner, Board Member
7. Excused Gretchen Wendell, Board Member
8. Present Monica Cleveland, Board Member
9. Present Wendy Kroupa, Board Member
10. Present Rachel Harrison, Board Member
11. Present Dr. Elizabeth Younce, Board Member, Ed.D
12. Present Dr. Janet Slowman, Board Member, Ed.D
13. Present Melanie Star, Board Member
14. Present Spencer Churchill, Board Member

BIE Staff Members: Jennifer Davis, Designated Federal Officer (DFO)
Ronald J. Worst, Educational Specialist
Dr. Eugene Thompson, Supervisory Educational Specialist

TAESE Contractors: Dr. Brenda Smith, Alex Langevin, and Laura Lema

Presenters/Speakers: Teresia Paul, Crystal Becenti, Leslie Crow, Dr. Eugene Thompson, and Ronald J. Worst

Others in Attendance:

Andrea Seatha Pacheco

Anna David

Arelene Davis



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Bertha Elkriver	Frank Rogers	Michelle Thomas
Cara Koster	Greta Skeets	Nacelle Reynolds
Carmelia Becenti	Holly Traynor	Nicholas Brown
Craig Euneau	J. Davis	Rena M. Yazzie
David Nikolaus	Joann Fields	Rena Tuni
Deborah Belone	John Copenhaver	Rita Tsosie
Detroit James	John McIntosh	Roberta Clarke
Earlinda Sells	Julie Casey	Rose Klade
Eleanor Jones	Karla Zeck	Savanah Six
Edie R Morris	Katharine Ford	Scott Norton
Emily Arviso	Lavida B Maestas	Sharon Henderson
Erin Trottier	Leanna Aragon	Sonya Lewis
Evangeline Bradley-	Loretta Hobbs	Tana Chavez
Wilkinson	Mariah Crow	Teresa Ramone-Wilson
Faith Rosetta	Marilou Arenó	Zonnie Sombrero

8:00 AM – 8:15 AM

Meeting Logistics

Jennifer Davis, DFO, provided an overview of the meeting's purpose and objectives, Board authorizations, public commenting sessions, and meeting reminders. Questions on the purpose of the Board can be directed to [Jennifer Davis](#). The meeting agenda was reviewed. She noted that afternoon they would elect a new Vice Chairperson.

Roll Call, Old Business, and New Business

Start Time: 8:00 AM Mountain Standard Time (MST)

Welcome and Call to Order – Norman Shawanokasic, Chairperson

Roll Call – Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic completed roll call. The following were present constituting a quorum:

- Norman Shawanokasic, Chairperson
- Pilar Peltier, Vice Chairperson
- Leon Reval, Secretary
- Gretchen Lehmann
- Brian Wagner
- Rachel Harrison
- Dr. Elizabeth Younce
- Melanie Star
- Spencer Churchill
- Wendy Kroupa
- Dr. Janet Slowman
- Monica Cleveland
- Leslie Finnearty



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Excused: Gretchen Wendell

New Business – Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic explained the Board would need to develop the agenda for the April meeting during today’s work session. He noted they could also leave the meeting with assignments to continue working on their priorities for the Annual Report. He asked audience members onsite at the meeting to introduce themselves.

8:15 AM – 9:45 AM

BIE Behavioral Health & Wellness Program

Presenters:

- Teresia Paul, Student Health Program Specialist, Central Office, BIE Lead, Behavioral Health and Wellness Program
- Crystal Becenti, Student Behavioral Health Program Specialist – ADD Navajo
- Leslie Crow, Student Behavioral Health Program Specialist – ADD Bureau Operated Schools (BOS)

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic welcomed the speakers to the Board meeting.

The presenters were asked to respond to the following items for this report and discussion.

1. General program overview and changes.
2. Specific strategies for educators and school personnel (emphasis on residential).
 - a. Information about physical altercations with students.
 - b. Crisis intervention during instructional time.

Following are the responses given by the presenters to each of the requested items above.

Teresia Paul introduced herself as the BIE Student Health Program Specialist. Leslie Crow introduced herself as a student behavioral health program specialist for BOS. She supports 23 schools in nine states: Arizona, California, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, and Wyoming. Following these introductions, Leslie Crow unexpectedly needed to leave the meeting.

Crystal Becenti explained behavioral health program specialists support building students’ capacity with wellness, trauma-informed, behavioral health, and safety best practices by providing guidance, professional development, and program enhancement through evidence-based research and strategies. The student behavioral health program staff serve as a central support to internal and external partners collaborating with school officials, tribal agencies,



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community organizations, state education agencies, and other organizations in consultation with the ADD and Student Health Program Specialist.

Teresia Paul explained much more focus and supports have happened for behavioral health. She noted the specialists serve as state-level liaisons for the Whole School Whole Community Whole Child Learning Collaborative (WSCC LC) Initiative for participating schools. This initiative strives to enhance social emotional learning, mental health awareness, and student leadership through active student engagement.

Crystal Becenti added these specialists support special education programs by collaborating with special education staff and by providing behavioral health guidance as needed. Specialists work to ensure all students have access to school-based mental health and wellness services. They also establish and monitor service agreements with local providers such as IHS, tribal programs, and other community-based services. They are flexible to meet the needs of each school. She explained they are working on increasing their resources for schools to use.

Teresia Paul noted her primary focus areas are policy, technical assistance, curricula development, and programming. She also works on national crisis support and coordination, and federal, tribal, and state behavioral health and wellness partnerships.

Comment: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Stated appreciation for the speakers and the information they have provided. He observed the level of services provided by IHS are inconsistent across tribes. IHS struggles to retain staff and the turnover affects the resources and services provided by IHS. He asked if that could be looked into.

Response: Teresia Paul – Acknowledged there are difficulties working with IHS, including long wait lists for services. The Navjao area IHS has developed a good model that should be replicated. IHS has a very unique structure and staff are frequently moved to different locations with limited control over their geographic offices. The BIE has asked for service agreements with IHS, but it's up to IHS if they enter into agreements and what those agreements look like.

Teresia Paul explained the BIE has direct control over their Behavioral Health and Wellness Program (BHWP).

Comment: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Explained IDEA requires the BIE and IHS to have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to provide services.



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Question: Norman Shawanokasic, Chairperson – Stated one of the Board’s priorities has been behavioral health. He asked if they subcontract for services.

Response: Teresia Paul – Replied at the national level, there is only one contract for the BHWP. She noted individual schools may have their own contracts for services.

Response: Crystal Becenti – Added schools can use the specialists to help them identify subcontractors. She noted the BHWP is there to assist schools set up their programs.

Comment: Norman Shawanokasic, Chairperson – Stated each tribe’s culture needs to be considered in each school’s behavioral and mental health program.

Question: Leon Reval, Secretary – Asked how the laws can be changed to ensure mental and behavioral health is examined as part of the IEP process.

Response: Teresia Paul – Stated if something is in an IEP, then it must be provided. She noted when mental health or counseling services are included in an IEP, they can be provided. However, including something in an IEP doesn’t guarantee there is actually a qualified provider available for the service. Another challenge is the lack of clarity on school counselor’s roles. Many counselors provide academic support but are not certified to provide mental health support.

Comment: Karla Zeek, Nay Ah Shing School District – Explained she is the special education coordinator at a BIE school and is fairly new to the role. Her school needs a contact person or training on tribal law as it applies to special education. She stated the first priority for all students should be mental health. Their school does not have a school nurse. They need more resources to assist students with autism. She asked for more information on WSCC LC.

Teresia Paul explained the BHWP is set up to illustrate what a school-based program should look like.

Crystal Becenti encouraged school staff to reach out to them to work on personnel shortages. She noted the importance of using the check-in and check-out process with students.

Teresia Paul explained the BHWP provides culturally relevant, evidence-based, and trauma-informed behavioral health and wellness services to students and staff at all schools and all programs funded by the BIE. This includes BOS, Tribally Controlled Schools (TCS), Navajo Schools, post-secondary entities, and all programs and departments funded by the BIE. The BHWP includes a 24/7 call line, virtual counseling services, training and technical assistance, and onsite/virtual crisis support services. The call line offers individual students and staff immediate, 24/7 access to trained professionals who can help people experiencing behavioral



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health-related distress such as thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crisis, emotional distress, or other distress.

Comment: John McIntosh (chat) – We are very thankful for Ms. Paul, the BHWP, and Ms. Crystal Becenti. They have done great work for our schools for a very needed service. We appreciate Ms. Becenti, the BHWP, and their efforts, communication, coordination, and organization as we see and experience the support for our students. Thank you.

Teresia Paul explained the BHWP call line also serves as the referral line to schedule virtual counseling services. These counseling services are grounded in a solution-focused brief therapy framework, school-based models, evidence-based, short-term, HIPAA compliant, and have a six session maximum. These virtual counseling services are provided at no cost to all entities funded by the BIE and are available for adults. They have an additional process for scheduling services for students at BIE schools. She noted they do not provide intensive trauma counseling during the school day, because students need time to process counseling outside of an environment where behavior standards are expected in a classroom. They provide short sessions based on best practices where they can determine if a referral for additional therapy sessions is needed. All staff working on BHWP are licensed certified professionals and the majority are tribal members. The BHWP counseling centers around rapid, sustainable change, signs of strength and success, what's already working and the preferred future, and potential changes to reach desired outcomes. BHWP counseling does not support long-term, intensive therapy, substance abuse treatment, diagnostic testing, sharing of counseling progress with supervisors, or school psychological exams for IEPs.

Question: Norman Shawanokasic, Chairperson – Asked if there was permanent funding for BHWP.

Response: Teresia Paul – Replied funding is for five years. She explained they are gathering data that will support the need to continue funding the program. One benefit of the program is the generation of mental health data. They did a slow roll out of the program to ensure the infrastructure could support the program. They are up to 24 schools receiving live virtual counseling services.

Question: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Inquired about the resources being provided uniformly to all BIE schools, what resources BHWP can assist schools with, and if an IEP team could request school-level services or outside services.



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Response: Teresia Paul – Explained the vendor they use is Tribal Tech. Everything they are using is specifically designed for BHWP. They have a resource list they connect schools with, which they update based on feedback from schools. She noted IEP teams could use the call line for consultation support on resources. They cannot provide special education support, but they can provide resources for mental health services.

Teresia Paul stated onsite and virtual crisis support services can be accessed through the call line. This service includes a timely, 48-hour, post-event response, individualized school/program support, appropriate protocols at the forefront of the response, a short-term recovery model, and extra support after an emergency. This service is a supplemental program to the supports already in place in schools.

Question: Leon Reval, Secretary – Asked what the Board could do to promote priority needs around mental health supports.

Response: Teresia Paul – She noted they have a program now to build on. She stated the benefits of the program can be highlighted. The biggest need is to have a dedicated budget for BIE mental health services. She noted there is now a structured office for mental health services within the BIE, although she is the only employee in the office.

Comment: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Applauded the program and expressed his desire to see further funding for the project.

Comment: Monica Cleveland, Board Member (chat) – Thank you for this great resource for our students. I think this is great in a short-term response for our schools. It opens the door to our students in need to get immediate help and it will encourage them to seek out more long term help if necessary. It may not work for everyone, but it will for some, and that is what is important. We all know the traumas that affect our tribal nations and this is a big resource for them.

Question: Dr. Janet Slowman, Board Member – Requested a snapshot of what is happening across the country with the BHWP, outlining challenges and what works. She asked how the BHWP staff determined if their services and practices were culturally relevant. She noted COVID is still affecting tribal communities.

Response: Teresia Paul – Noted she can provide a snapshot of the program, including regional information. The BHWP is groundbreaking, because it's a free service and isn't tied to insurance or Medicaid. This allows BHWP clinicians to utilize cultural methods and conversations without providing justification for coverage, such as using a sweat lodge. They do not provide any services to students without communication with the school. They meet with the tribe and



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cultural staff at schools to ensure their services are culturally appropriate. The BHWP is clearly creating data illustrating the needs of staff for mental health services and supports.

9:45 AM – 10:00 AM **Break**

Vice Chairperson Peltier welcomed the Board back from break and introduced the speakers.

10:00 AM – 11:45 AM **Division of Performance and Accountability (DPA)/BIE Special Education Program**

Presenters: Dr. Eugene Thompson, Supervisory Education Specialist and Ronald Worst, Education Program Specialist

The presenters were asked to respond to the following items for this report and discussion.

1. Special Education Updates: Including the FFY 2023 State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) data.
2. Provide an update on the BIE Special Education Transition data.

Dr. Thompson thanked the Board for allowing him to speak with them. He noted several DPA staff members were able to attend the Board meeting in person.

Following are the responses given by the presenters to each of the requested items above.

1. Special Education Updates: Including the FFY 2023 State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) data.

Dr. Thompson explained he would be giving updates for the SPP/APR, which is submitted annually to the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The SPP/APR is a requirement under IDEA. The SPP is a six year plan and the APR helps states and the BIE evaluate their efforts toward the SPP. He encouraged Board members to look at the SPP/APR data for the states where their schools are located. BIE staff work year round to collect and analyze data for the APR. The APR is due to OSEP on February 3rd this year. After the APR is submitted, OSEP issues an annual determination based on the APR data. The determination letter is issued each summer and notes where the BIE is with implementing IDEA. Dr. Thompson shared a list of all DPA staff. They have two new staff members who joined them last month.



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Dr. Thompson stated the APR requires stakeholder involvement on their SPP and APR progress. He noted the Board is included as stakeholders and are welcome to submit questions and comments regarding the data. Another important stakeholder group is parents and they are working on doing more to include parental input. They would also like to provide training on the APR for parents. Dr. Thompson provided a copy of the APR indicators to all Board members. He noted they have completed their indicator narratives and most of the data analysis. He explained, if they submit their APR by the February 3rd deadline, they also have an opportunity to submit revised data by April 24th. OSEP will send the BIE their comments on BIE's APR and will conduct a clarification call with their staff. The finalized APR will be publically posted after the April resubmission deadline, and the determination from OSEP will be issued during the summer.

Dr. Thompson highlighted progress on the APR, including:

- An increase in graduation rates
- A decrease in dropout rates
- An increase in the number of children with IEPs inside the regular classroom 80% or more of the day
- A decrease in the number of children with IEPs placed in separate schools, residential facilities, or homebound
- An increase in the parent involvement rate
- An increase in compliance in requirements for transition components of the IEP
- An increase in students enrolled in higher education on the post-school outcomes survey

Dr. Thompson noted that while graduation rates (71.93%) increased, they did not meet their target of 76%.

Question: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Asked about the data collected for graduation rates. He noted data is often gathered based on four year high school attendance, when many students with disabilities attend high school more than four years.

Response: Ronald Worst, Educational Specialist – Explained the data is reported by how many students exit the system each year, which includes graduation, reaching maximum age, dropout, or death.

Dr. Eugene Thompson shared the dropout rate (26.47%) did not meet the target rate of 21.5%.



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Dr. Eugene Thompson explained he did not have a report of assessment data for the presentation. The Chief Academic Office generates the assessment data and it has not been added into the APR yet. They should have the assessment data for the APR by the end of the month.

Dr. Eugene Thompson reported the suspension/expulsion rate of students with disabilities (7.69%) did not meet the target rate of 6.67%. Ronald Worst explained this data looks at suspension/expulsion rates for when students are out of school for greater than 10 days.

Dr. Eugene Thompson explained this data comes from NASIS and the accuracy of the APR is dependent on the accuracy of the data entered by schools in NASIS.

Question: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Asked if the decreased results shown in the APR data for the 2020-2021 school year could be attributed to COVID.

Response: Dr. Eugene Thompson noted COVID did impact results for that school year.

Dr. Eugene Thompson reported the target (78.92%) for least restrictive environment for students inside the regular classroom 80% or more of the day was met at 79.54%. The target for students who are served in the regular classroom less than 40% of the day (5.67%) did not meet the target of 5.21%. The target (.83%) for students served in separate schools, residential facilities, or homebound/hospital placements was met at .31%.

Dr. Eugene Thompson shared the parent involvement rate has been increasing. A total of 99% of all schools submitted parent survey data, and 3,854 parents completed the survey. The BIE does very well compared to states on parent involvement data.

Dr. Eugene Thompson explained the target for the secondary transition indicator is 100%, because it is a compliance indicator. Increases have been made to reach 77%.

Dr. Eugene Thompson explained the target (21.18%) was met for students exiting and enrolling in higher education at 23.77%. At 40.81%, the BIE did not meet the target (52.56%) for students exiting and enrolling in higher education or being competitively employed. At 70.85%, the BIE did not meet the target (75.64%) for students exiting and enrolling in higher education, being competitively employed, or in some other employment.



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Question: Dr. Janet Slowman, Board Member – Asked if the BIE considered doing its own specialized compliance report, including cultural relevancy and responsiveness. She inquired if data was gathered during COVID and what the response to the data was. She also requested more specific information on the APR so they could better understand what the report is, including what information was gathered on the parent survey and how it impacts special education services.

Response: Dr. Eugene Thompson – Stated many conversations have happened about how applicable the APR is to the BIE and the island territories. Many BIE schools have had the opportunity to review their parent survey data and use it to make decisions at the school level.

Question: Dr. Janet Slowman, Board Member – Stated it would be good for the Board to have specific information about the APR.

Response: Dr. Eugene Thompson – Showcased the OSEP website where all APRs are posted and he reviewed the most recently posted APR for the BIE.

Question: Dr. Janet Slowman, Board Member – Asked for bullet points on the APR to help them with their discussions. She requested more data on COVID to ensure the BIE is responding to critical issues resulting from the pandemic. She expressed appreciation for Dr. Eugene Thompson and the work his team does to compile the APR.

Response: Dr. Eugene Thompson – Stated they gathered some of the APR data during COVID.

Question: Dr. Elizabeth Younce, Board Member – Asked for additional information on Indicator 11 regarding Child Find and asked about changing the 60-day timeline.

Response: Ronald Worst, Educational Specialist – Indicated they have not finished analyzing Indicator 11 and he noted it is also a 100% target for compliance.

Response: Dr. Eugene Thompson – Noted they are working on feedback from the solicitors regarding the timeline for Child Find compliance. The solicitors have indicated TCS can follow the timeline established by the state they are located in. He noted Indicator 17 reviews the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), and they are looking at increasing post-secondary outcomes for students with disabilities as their new state-identified measureable result. He also noted there is a new Indicator 18 on the correction of non-compliance.

Question: Dr. Janet Slowman, Board Member – Inquired how Indicator 14 data is gathered.

Response: Ronald Worst, Educational Specialist – Explained a survey is conducted one year after a student has exited school to determine their post-secondary outcomes for education and employment.

Question: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Asked Dr. Eugene Thompson to explain why the BIE does not respond to all the APR Indicators.



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Response: Dr. Eugene Thompson – Explained the APR has 18 Indicators, but several of them don't apply to the BIE. (Other states do respond to all those indicators.) One reason the indicators don't all apply is because the BIE represents a single ethnic group and does not need to do complete disproportionality analyses around race.

Dr. Eugene Thompson explained the reconciliation process has been completed for the special education policies and procedures. The policies and procedures should be finalized soon. The BIE will offer training and support to schools on the development and implementation of these procedures and practices as part of the roll out process.

Dr. Eugene Thompson explained, for the 2024-2025 school year, they will complete onsite monitoring at six schools: Rocky Ridge Boarding School, Dusneith Day School, Tiospaye Topa School, Circle of Life Academy, Northern Cheyenne Tribal School, and To'hajiilee Day School. For noncompliance found during these onsite monitoring visits, the BIE will work with the schools to correct it. These corrections will be done through monitoring reports and technical assistance plans. From the time a finding of noncompliance is issued, the school is allowed one year for correction of the noncompliance to be documented.

Question: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Asked if a full monitoring team would participate in the onsite visits.

Response: Dr. Eugene Thompson – Noted there would be representation from four BIE teams during the onsite monitoring visits.

2. Provide an update on the BIE Special Education Transition data.

Ronald Worst reported on the secondary transition activities associated with Indicator 13. Transition activities include accountability and supports. Secondary transition accountability includes the written findings of noncompliance identified during the 2023-2024 school year. This includes individual student-level corrections (ensuring the eight transition components are included in an IEP) and systems-level corrections to verify BIE-funded schools are correctly implementing the regulatory requirements. He noted the BIE would be highlighting standards for post secondary goals to increase the BIE's compliance with the standards. The BIE will be providing intensive technical assistance for schools struggling with IEP transition components.



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Ronald Worst noted the supports around secondary transition provided by the BIE over the past year included three breakout sessions, showing how secondary transition IEPs connect to graduation rates, dropout rates, and post-school outcomes. The BIE has also hosted a high school panel and increased DPA office hours to assist schools. The BIE is providing ongoing support through asynchronous courses on secondary transition planning/services at BIE-funded schools and targeted and intensive technical assistance. These asynchronous courses also provide guidance on cultural practices for non-native staff members. Ronald Worst noted the great improvement the BIE has made on Indicator 13 toward 100% compliance.

Question: Pilar Peltier, Vice Chairperson – Asked how transition services can be provided to students in remote areas.

Response: Ronald Worst, Educational Specialist – Noted schools have the opportunity to develop post-secondary activities for students to include in their IEPs. This can include local opportunities for job training or online courses.

Question: Dr. Janet Slowman, Board Member – Asked how the Associate Deputy Director (ADD) level is involved.

Response: Ronald Worst, Educational Specialist – Noted the ADD is pulling the Division for Performance and Accountability (DPA) into discussions.

Question: Dr. Janet Slowman, Board Member – Stated her understanding is the ADD is directly connected to the schools. She asked what other expectations existed for DPA staff to collaborate with schools.

Response: Ronald Worst, Educational Specialist – Explained the BIE has been working on breaking down silos to increase the understanding of what the BIE is required to measure around compliance and what the priorities are. He added the DPA and ADD collaboratively work together.

Ronald Worst asked if any Board members had input on the APR indicators.

Comment: Melanie Star, Board Member – Noted she has seen improvements in the schools she works with. She suggested sending the Board a list of duties of all DPA staff members.

Comment: Dr. Janet Slowman, Board Member – Stated there is a lack of communication from the DPA to schools.



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Response: Dr. Eugene Thompson, Supervisory Educational Specialist – Explained each ADD region has their own communication protocols, but they are working on strengthening protocols with all the regions.

Vice Chairperson Pilar Peltier thanked the presenters and excused the Board for lunch.

11:45 AM – 1:00 PM Lunch

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM Advisory Board Work Session

- The Board to elect a new vice-chairperson.
- Work on new priorities.
- Finalize next meeting logistics, complete draft agenda, and identify presenters with presenter questions.

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic welcomed the Board back from lunch. He noted the Board needed to elect a new Vice Chairperson. He explained the Vice Chairperson's role is to conduct meetings during the Chairperson's absence. It was clarified that Leon Reval's appointment as Secretary could carry on until the end of his term.

Jennifer Davis, DFO, stated Dr. Elizabeth Younce indicated interest in being Vice Chairperson.

Brian Wagner, Board Member, nominated Dr. Janet Slowman.

Rachel Harrison, Board Member, nominated Dr. Elizabeth Younce.

Dr. Janet Slowman, Board Member, declined the nomination.

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic conducted a roll call vote. All Board members in attendance voted in favor of electing Dr. Elizabeth Younce as Vice Chairperson, excluding Dr. Elizabeth Younce who voted for Dr. Janet Slowman. Board members who were present for the vote included Pilar Peltier, Leon Reval, Dr. Janet Slowman, Monica Cleveland, Leslie Finnearty, Rachel Harrison, Wendy Kroupa, Melanie Star, Brian Wagner, and Dr. Elizabeth Younce.

Jennifer Davis, DFO, clarified Pilar Peltier would remain as Vice Chairperson until the end of her term in February, at which point, Dr. Elizabeth Younce would become Vice Chairperson for a



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one-year term. She thanked the four Board members whose terms were ending in February 2025: Pilar Peltier, Leslie Finnearty, Gretchen Lehmann, and Gretchen Wendell.

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic thanked the departing Board members. He noted the Board has had the opportunity to hear from many good speakers during this meeting. He noted the Board has prioritized mental health issues for many years, so it was good to learn about the progress on that priority.

Ronald Worst, Educational Specialist, thanked the Board for their work. He observed the Board often feels discouraged when they don't receive responses from the Department of Interior. He noted Dr. Eugene Thompson and the DPA staff hear and utilize the input from the Board. He thanked Jennifer Davis for her work as DFO to build the Board out to full membership.

Vice Chairperson Pilar Peltier thanked the Board for their acknowledgement of her service and the work Jennifer Davis, DFO, has done with the Board. She invited the Board to return to Chemawa Indian School to hold a future meeting.

Secretary Leon Reval thanked the Board and noted the opportunity he's had, as a parent on the Board, to learn about processes. He encouraged other parents to apply to be on the Board.

Dr. Janet Slowman, Board Member, thanked Vice Chairperson Pilar Peltier for her service and her meaningful comments during Board discussions. She noted the Vice Chairperson did well to bring her community perspective to their meetings.

Vice Chairperson Pilar Peltier recognized Chemawa Indian High School and their work experience programs, which they provide transportation services for. She highlighted three students who participated in work experiences at the local casino.

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic asked the Board to consider dates for the April meeting.

Spencer Churchill, Board Member, stated a preference for meeting outside of school days.

The Board scheduled their next meeting for April 25-26, 2025.



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Chairperson Shawanokasic suggested having a large work session during the April meeting to work on their Annual Report. The Board began working on their agenda for the April meeting.

Brian Wagner, Board Member, stated he liked incorporating the public comment periods into the Board meetings.

It was noted Dr. Eugene Thompson would provide additional special education updates during the April meeting, including information on the 2025 summer trainings and monitoring findings.

Secretary Leon Reval asked if the updates from Dr. Eugene Thompson could include information on how to strengthen BIE and state relationships.

Spencer Churchill, Board Member, suggested hearing from a panel of 619 coordinators.

The Board determined they would like a presentation from Spencer Churchill, Board Member, on visual impairments. Questions were developed for his presentation.

Secretary Leon Reval asked for the Board work sessions to be broken up throughout the day and not always be in the afternoons. He noted presenters should be asked what priorities they have for the Board to consider.

Brian Wagner, Board Member, suggested Teresia Paul return to give an update on the BHWP and a listing of specific services they can provide for IEP teams.

Dr. Elizabeth Younce, Board Member, noted the BHWP team worked with her school, and Teresia Paul could speak well about what the program can do for individual schools. The Board developed multiple questions for this agenda topic.

2:31 PM – 2:46 PM

Break

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic welcomed the Board back from break. The Board continued drafting the agenda for the April meeting. The Board recommended hearing from speakers on Friday (April 25th) and an all day work session on Saturday (April 26th).



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Jennifer Davis, DFO, observed the meeting space may not be available on Saturdays. She stated she would check on it but suggested the Board have a secondary meeting date. The Board decided the secondary dates would be May 1-2, with a third option of April 24-25. Jennifer Davis, DFO, noted, with outgoing Board members, there must be at least six members available to form a quorum at the April meeting.

It was determined the meeting space was not open on weekends and the Board finalized the next meeting dates as May 1-2.

The Board determined they would like to hear from representatives from Haskell and the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI). The Board then developed questions for speakers from these post-secondary programs.

The Board returned to the question of dates for the next meeting. The Board determined the best dates were April 24-25. If a hotel room block cannot be secured, a meeting poll will be sent out. The Board decided to meet virtually July 17-18.

The Board finalized their speaker requests for Haskell and SIPI.

Brian Wagner, Board Member, suggested an agenda topic on changes from the incoming presidential administration. Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic suggested having a representative from the BIE Director's office to speak on upcoming administrative changes. The Board then developed requests for this agenda item.

The Board requested public comment be open for the entire April meeting.

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic thanked all Board members for their participation. He acknowledged the work of the Board members whose terms were ending. He thanked the support of the contractors who work with the Board.

Dr. Elizabeth Younce, Board Member, thanked Chairperson Shawanokasic for his work with the Board.

4:00 PM

Adjourn



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Dr. Elizabeth Younce, Board Member, made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Melanie Star, Board Member, seconded the motion. All Board members voted in favor of adjourning the meeting.

Minutes were chair certified for accuracy on February 7, 2025.