



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

Wednesday, September 25, 2024, 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM (EDT)

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

Meeting Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting Room

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 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. Present Gretchen Wendell, Board Member
8. Absent Monica Cleveland, Board Member
9. Present Wendy Kroupa, Board Member
10. Present Rachel Harrison, Board Member



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- 11. Present** Dr. Elizabeth Younce, Board Member, Ed.D
- 12. Present** Dr. Janet Slowman-Chee, 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

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

Presenters/Speakers: Ron Worst, Dr. Elizabeth Younce, and Cherokee Central Schools staff

Others in Attendance:

Arlene Davis	Faith Rosetta	Nicholas Brown
Ashlee Olson	Felicia Brown	Michelle Thomas
Carol Steinsick	Gloria Yepa	Sara Reed
Casey Ambrose	Jenifer Leavens	Scott Norton
Cheryl Johnson	Joann Fields	Sherry Johnson
Crista Davis	John Copenhaver	Tamatane Iatala
Delphina Dayish	Kerbi Lincoln	Tamera Pulver
Doreen Shorty	Kimberly Smith	Tashina Wilson-Yazzie
Edie Morris	Laura Tsosie	Tracy Obuchowski
Eleanor Jones	Lolita B	Zonnie Sombrero
Evangeline Bradley-Wilkinson	Nacelle Reynolds	
	Neal Morton	

8:00 AM – 8:30 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 three day meeting.

Roll Call, Old Business, and New Business

Start Time: 8:05 AM Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)

Welcome and Call to Order – Norman Shawanokasic, Chairperson



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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-Chee
- Gretchen Wendell
- Leslie Finnearty

Absent: Monica Cleveland

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic opened the meeting by stating the importance of the work the Board completes for students with disabilities and he offered an opening prayer in his language. He thanked Dr. Elizabeth Younce for hosting the meeting at Cherokee Central School and acknowledged the meeting was being held on historic Cherokee land. He also acknowledged the past trauma of boarding schools for Indian children, the trail of tears, and forced relocation the Cherokee nation endured.

New Business – Chairperson Shawanokasic explained that at the conclusion of the meeting, the Board will have completed the Annual Report and its accompanying letter.

Question: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Asked if he could make inquiries regarding the Native American Student Information System (NASIS) during the meeting.

Response: Jennifer Davis, DFO – Suggested the NASIS questions be part of the public comment period.

Comment: Jennifer Davis, DFO – Noted she was beginning the process of the new charter. The application process for new Board members will be open soon. The Board currently has one vacancy, but four openings will occur in February with current Board member terms ending.

Comment: Dr. Elizabeth Younce, Board Member – Thanked the Board for visiting Cherokee Central Schools and holding the Board meeting on their campus.

Comment: Leon Reval, Secretary – Noted his son attends all meetings with him. He stated his appreciation for the work the Board is doing for students with disabilities and allowing his son to attend meetings with him.



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Old Business – Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic explained the Board will be working on their Annual Report throughout this meeting.

8:30 AM – 8:45 AM

Advisory Board Work – The Board reviewed the progress they’ve made on the Annual Report and the areas that need more edits. Additional work the Board needs to complete during this meeting is planning the agenda for the January 2025 meeting.

Comment: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Suggested the January 2025 meeting be used to follow up on reports from previous presenters.

Comment: Jennifer Davis, DFO – Confirmed the meeting in Albuquerque will be a two-day meeting. She noted the Board would need to solidify the meeting dates during this current meeting.

Comment: Norman Shawanokasic, Chairperson – Asked the Board to consider dates for the January 2025 meeting. He suggested January 17-18. He also noted the Board has previously met on Saturdays.

Several Board members stated they preferred to not meet on Saturdays. Consensus was reached for holding the meeting on January 16-17.

Comment: Gretchen Lehmann, Board Member – Noted Dr. Thompson could provide updates on the policies and procedures at the January meeting.

Comment: Jennifer Davis, DFO – Noted Ron Worst would provide updates on the policies and procedures during this current meeting and Dr. Thompson could give additional updates in January.

8:45 AM – 8:55 AM

Prepare to Tour School Campus – Board members prepared to leave the meeting room to tour Cherokee Central School campus, K-12 programs.

9:00 AM – 10:30 AM

Campus Tour: Cherokee Central Schools, K-12 Grades – Board members participated in a tour of the various campuses for grade levels K-12. Online Zoom access for the Board meeting was paused for 1.5 hours to allow Board members to tour the school campus.

10:30 AM – 10:45 AM

Break



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10:45 AM – 11:45 AM

BIE Director Office Updates

Presenter: Juanita Mendoza

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic welcomed Juanita Mendoza to the Board meeting. The presenter was asked to provide an update and respond to the following items for this report and discussion.

1. Total student enrollment data (pre and post-COVID).
2. Status of the BIE's Strategic Plan.
3. Provide recommendations to the Advisory Board to address regarding staffing shortages. Strategies to retain current staff?
4. How do the Board's priorities guide your work to improve outcomes for students with disabilities?

Juanita Mendoza introduced herself as the representative of the BIE Director's Office. She reviewed the BIE's mission and vision statements. Following are the responses given by Juanita Mendoza to each of the requested items above.

1. Total student enrollment data (pre and post-COVID).
Juanita Mendoza reported enrollment data from the 2019-2020 school year to the 2024-2025 school year. A drop in enrollment happened during COVID.
2. Status of the BIE's Strategic Plan.
Juanita Mendoza reviewed the timeline for the BIE's strategic plan. The BIE is implementing strategic initiatives to improve outcomes for students. These initiatives include addressing staffing shortages, developing a new strategic plan, and enhancing support for students with disabilities.
3. Provide recommendations to the Advisory Board to address regarding staffing shortages. Strategies to retain current staff?
Juanita Mendoza noted one recommendation was to meet the behavioral and mental health needs of all students. She explained a call line was launched and is available to all students and staff across all schools, colleges, dormitories, and programs funded by the BIE. The call line is available 24/7. The call line provides access to trained crisis professionals. It also provides short-term, solution focused, culturally sensitive, virtual counseling services via a secure telehealth platform.



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Juanita Mendoza noted another recommendation was on BIE staff recruitment and hiring efforts. Human resources has issued several policy memos around updated policies. This includes updating pay settings for new employees allowing more pay increments. Human resources has provided in-person training for business offices and principals to assist with recruitment. They have talent recruiters preparing webinars on how to apply for jobs and attend job fairs. They're working closely with public affairs for social media postings and newsletters to advertise job openings.

4. How do the Board's priorities guide your work to improve outcomes for students with disabilities?

Juanita Mendoza did not share a slide responding to this question.

Question: Gretchen Wendell, Board Member – Asked if schools could currently keep positions open as long as needed.

Response: Juanita Mendoza – Stated schools should be able to keep positions open until they are filled without the post expiring.

Question: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Inquired what has been done to assist schools using a contractor to fill an open position when they cannot find a qualified individual to hire.

Response: Juanita Mendoza – She stated she can recommend their contracting office provide training to schools to help them understand how to easily set up contractors.

Comment: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Encouraged trainings be set up to assist schools in setting up contractors.

Question: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Noted there is current pending legislation allowing J1 visas to be extended for staff hired at Tribally Controlled Schools (TCS). He asked if the BIE was aware of this and working on the legislation.

Response: Juanita Mendoza – Noted they have a staff member assigned to provide input on the pending legislation. This legislation is a complicated issue that doesn't just affect the BIE. There is push back from the Phillipines with the U.S. State Department because of the number of teachers leaving the Phillipines to teach in the U.S.

Comment: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Commended BIE staff for their assistance to all BIE schools on the J1 visa process.

Question: Norman Shawanokasic, Chairperson – Asked what is being done to increase enrollment numbers since COVID and to ensure virtual options are successful.

Response: Juanita Mendoza – Observed virtual options are being provided to ensure all enrolled students and staff have the resources they need to access educational materials.



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Comment: Norman Shawanokasic, Chairperson – Spoke about the rural setting of many BIE schools and their improvements to technology access during and since COVID. He noted concerns about COVID's affects on student mental health.

Response: Juanita Mendoza – Stated the BIE has been reaching out to all schools to help them with digital connectivity.

Comment: Gretchen Wendell, Board Member – Observed schools are trying to move to the main electronic learning system, but there have been difficulties. The staff at her school have attended trainings and worked with the system contractors. Her school had used Google Classroom, and their transition to the BIE-wide system hasn't gone smoothly.

Question: Leon Reval, Secretary – Inquired about compensation for time missed for Individualized Education Program (IEP) services when schools have pivoted to virtual learning or when needed services aren't accessible due to a lack of providers.

Response: Juanita Mendoza – Noted she would bring Secretary Reval's comments back to the BIE team and follow up.

Comment: Gretchen Lehmann, Board Member – Stated all of her school's IEPs have virtual contingency plans to account for situations when schools need to provide education virtually. She noted these contingency plans are a requirement in the state of South Dakota.

Comment: Juanita Mendoza – Noted students with disabilities are part of the strategic plan.

Question: Spencer Churchill, Board Member – Asked if the BIE knows the number of students living on reservations who are not enrolled in BIE schools.

Response: Juanita Mendoza – Stated the BIE does not have that data. She noted the BIE serves students in 23 states from 64 tribes.

Question: Dr. Janet Slowman-Chee, Board Member – Observed COVID cases are increasing again and she inquired if plans were in place to ensure students with disabilities will continue to receive services throughout any future difficulties, including funding difficulties. She stated student progress is not where it should be because of the pandemic's effects.

Response: Juanita Mendoza – Explained additional funding was provided to the BIE via Congress during COVID. The BIE does not currently have similar additional funding allocated. They are not currently asking schools to prepare plans, but she will pass on the concerns of the Board Members. The BIE is working on increasing student proficiencies.

Question: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Noted the decrease in student enrollment and asked if the drop in enrollment has affected funding levels.

Response: Juanita Mendoza – Replied the BIE continues to request additional Indian School Equalization Program (ISEP) funding for needed items such as pay parity and transportation. She has not heard enrollment numbers being a consideration for funding.



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Comment: Norman Shawanokasic, Chairperson – Stated it would be good to know where the students are being educated who are missing from the BIE’s enrollment.

Comment: Juanita Mendoza – Observed with the funding shortfalls in many areas, enrollment hasn’t been a funding issue.

Comment: Gretchen Wendell, Board Member – Noted they are seeing many students who weren’t enrolled during COVID not having enough credits to meet graduation requirements before aging out. She stated her school is looking for creative ways to mitigate this situation.

Comment: Norman Shawanokasic, Chairperson – Observed the lack of credits is keeping many students from returning to school and these students are looking at General Educational Development (GED) options.

Comment: Pilar Peltier, Vice Chairperson – Stated many students at her school are looking at vocational training because they cannot graduate.

Comment: Juanita Mendoza – Explained the BIE’s focus is on student success, which includes vocational training and celebrating successes that match a student’s capabilities.

Comment: Melanie Star, Board Member – Noted many tribal, post secondary, education programs can assist with GED and alternate requirements.

Comment: Juanita Mendoza – Thanked the Board for having her as a presenter. She stated she would pass on the Board’s comments and concerns. She noted she has read the Board's Annual Report and recommendations.

Chairperson Norman Shawankasic thanked Juanita Mendoza for presenting to the Board.

11:45 AM – 12:00 PM

Public Commenting Session #1 (15 minutes)

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic opened the first public commenting session.

Jennifer Davis, DFO, explained the process for providing public comments.

Comment: Leon Reval, Secretary – Noted his role on the Board as a parent of a student with a disability and stated he was making a comment as an audience member and parent. He asked how the BIE budget is compiled and allocated. He stated funding should be well planned to preserve the funding stream.

Comment: Norman Shawankasic, Chairperson – Stated as a grandparent of a student with a disability, and from his experience, the participation of parents of students with disabilities is very important. Sometimes parents don’t understand the services being provided to their children, plans to help their children be successful, and effective post secondary outcomes. He



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noted the Board's Annual Report provides information to Congress, which can provide justification for continued funding.

Comment: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Noted his comment relates to his experiences at Lower Brule Schools in South Dakota. He explained there are issues with NASIS not working. The accommodation/modification section does not define time periods. You cannot check when further testing is required during the IEP meeting. The phone number of the case manager does not populate. For transition, they are required to fill in the section on why someone couldn't attend a meeting, even when everyone is present at the meeting. The assistive technology box does not work. The amendment process requires all information to be re-entered. He stated he will send his list of concerns to Ron Worst, Educational Specialist, at the BIE. The list of concerns he stated were gathered from the schools he works with. He also commended the work Ron Worst has completed to ensure NASIS works for school staff.

Jennifer Davis, DFO, closed the public commenting session.

12:00 PM – 1:30 PM Working Lunch – Cherokee Central Schools (CCS) – Staff presentation during lunch.

Presenter: Dr. Elizabeth Younce and CCS staff

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic welcomed the CCS staff to the Board meeting. The presenters were asked to respond to the following items for this report and discussion.

1. Please provide an overview of your special education programs and related services.
2. What celebrations would you like to share with the Board?
3. What concerns or challenges would you like to share with the Board?

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

1. Please provide an overview of your special education programs and related services.

Dr. Elizabeth Younce introduced herself as the exceptional services director for CCS. Her staff assisted her in delivering the presentation. Dr. Elizabeth Younce explained the theme for this school year is "Every Brave, Every Day." She provided an overview of how many students with disabilities attend the school in elementary, middle, and high school. She then shared enrollment data by disability type for each school level.



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Question: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Asked if the school follows North Carolina definitions for disability type.

Response: Dr. Elizabeth Younce – Explained they do, except they follow the BIE timeline rules because they are shorter than North Carolina's.

Dr. Elizabeth Younce shared their staffing numbers by each school level. Mollie Robinson is a special education teacher support specialist. She shared her position and how she supports teachers. She also explained the role of other district staff including the transition specialist, employment educator, parent liaison, student success advocate, special education document manager, administrative assistant, and director.

Question: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Asked if all the positions detailed by Mollie were mandated by North Carolina or created at the school level.

Response: Dr. Elizabeth Younce – Further explained the roles and noted they were created at the district level.

Question: Dr. Janet Slowman-Chee, Board Member – Asked how the level of support impacts student success.

Response: Dr. Elizabeth Younce – Noted being fully staffed is helpful, but they continue to monitor student progress and adjust programs. She observed COVID impacted some of their success levels. Dr. Younce stated they emphasize inclusion and having students in the least restrictive environment. Their initiatives include creating a sensory room, increasing community partners, promoting staff well-being and team cohesion, increasing parent engagement, improving instructional practices, and increasing behavior strategies.

Question: Leon Reval, Secretary – Asked how about one-on-one support for students and the definition of community partnerships.

Response: Dr. Elizabeth Younce – Replied one-on-one support is provided based on decisions made by the IEP team. Increasing community partnerships includes having places in the community where students can work and visit to gain experience.

Comment: Leon Reval, Secretary – Stated how important it is for students with disabilities to work with local emergency service providers so they get to know each other and then less force is used with people with disabilities.

Question: Pilar Pelier, Vice Chairperson – Asked about support from classroom aides.

Response: Dr. Elizabeth Younce – Stated support from classroom aides is dependent on the needs of the student and the classroom structure.



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Question: Leon Reval, Secretary – Inquired about inclusion in the classroom for students with behavioral disabilities.

Response: Dr. Elizabeth Younce – Explained her team puts together guides for teachers based on student’s needs and accommodations in their IEP. Part of Mollie Robinson’s job is assisting teachers with resources for providing services to students with disabilities.

Betina Woody, occupational therapist (OT), and Allison Reece, speech language pathologist (SLP), presented on the related services at the school.

2. What celebrations would you like to share with the Board?

Allison Reece noted the related services team is fully staffed this school year. They are working on incorporating the Cherokee language in their language and speech therapy services. They work very well across the different grade levels at the school.

3. What concerns or challenges would you like to share with the Board?

Betina Woody explained their challenges include student attendance and behavior. They’ve seen an increase in behavior issues.

Comment: Rachel Harrison, Board Member – Observed the retention and longevity of staff speaks well for the programs and climate at the school.

Question: Spencer Churchill, Board Member – Asked what metrics are used to determine case loads.

Response: Betina Woody – Replied she has never felt her case load was overwhelming. There are state and national OT guidelines for caseloads.

Response: Allison Reece – Noted the state has case load limitations and she has always been able to work with school leadership to manage caseloads.

Question: Dr. Slowman-Chee, Board Member – Asked how the Cherokee language is utilized in related services.

Response: Allison Reece – Stated they have worked to find language options with assistive technology, use Cherokee vocabulary during related service sessions, and help teachers provide activities in the classroom that are culturally appropriate and meet the student’s IEP needs.

Question: Norman Shawankasic, Chairperson – Asked how the school maintains a high retention rate for staff.

Response: Dr. Elizabeth Younce – Explained there is a strong sense of community and the school provides a lot of support to staff members. The community is very supportive of school activities and personnel.



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Question: Dr. Slowman-Chee, Board Member – Asked staff members what makes them feel appreciated.

Response: Shae Deck – Stated she can go to leadership at any time with any problem and she will have help resolving the issue. She noted her son attends the school and she also feels supported as a parent. Pay at the school also exceeds the pay level at local school districts, and funding for services exceeds the local school district as well.

Question: Jennifer Davis, DFO – Explained she looks at the data for the entire BIE and is trying to determine what affects retention. She asked about recruitment methods for personnel and economic resources for the tribe.

Response: Dr. Elizabeth Younce – Explained many programs were already established when she came to CCS. She noted a lot of different funding sources exist that contribute to the success of the school. Part of the proceeds from the casino are earmarked for the school and they have tremendous support from the Tribal Council. Past Tribal governmental bodies have set up a good structure for funding and the school system.

Comment: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Observed the school is located in a heavily populated state and has greater resources and personnel available to them.

Comment: Shae Deck – Reiterated how supportive the community is and how much they invest in the education of their children.

Comment: Dr. Slowman-Chee, Board Member – Stated the teachers are honored by the community because they are invested in outcomes for the students.

Question: Leon Reval, Secretary – Asked the Board how they can provide recommendations that promote cultures similar to CCS's and how to extend the success of CCS to other schools in the BIE system.

Samantha Crow-Hernandez explained she was a student at CCS and is now a teacher. She noted they have exceptional staff and she appreciates all the support she receives. She spoke about the resources she uses with her students in her classroom. She has seen an increase in her caseload, but she has had support and it is manageable. She has held teaching positions at other schools and has never had the level of support she has at CCS.

Shae Deck introduced herself as a fifth grade special education teacher. Her class did a project last year writing and illustrating a book about Cherokee culture that has been published. The class presented their book to the Tribal Council. The book is a permanent installation on the Cherokee book walk.



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Dawn Brooks explained she worked at the state level before coming to CCS. She works at the high school level with students with disabilities. She described high school courses of study, time spent with the students, transition services, employment assistance, and life skills.

Ernie Whitenhouse introduced himself as a social worker for CCS. He is also a former student, his mother attended the former boarding school, and he has worked at the school for 20 years. He described the Pathseekers program, providing smaller classrooms and assistance to students with IEPs who need teachers who know their needs and can provide a quieter learning environment. Currently eight students are in the Pathseekers program. The Pathways program is the most restrictive environment provided at the school. The program prepares students for post secondary employment. Their students are involved with a lot of Tribal agencies and services. The goal of the Pathseekers program is to integrate students back into the general education classroom. Pathseekers works to create a safe place for the students. In the past decade, 14 students have graduated from this program who would not have graduated without Pathseekers. They've had six students who went back to the regular classroom full time. They've also had four students pass away.

Question: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Inquired about curriculum for the Pathseekers program.

Response: Ernie Whitenhouse – Explained they have general education teachers who support the students. It was noted they have an alternative setting at the high school.

Comment: Leon Reval, Secretary – Discussed the opportunities having an IEP brings to students, but he noted the stigma of being labeled as a student with a disability. He commended the school staff on their work.

Comment: Ernie Whitenhouse – Noted they've seen an increase in the number of students with autism. He stated he would like to see a separate high school classroom for students with autism.

Tyson Deal noted she is a middle school teacher and works with students with behavioral disabilities. She focuses on getting students ready for employment after graduation. She has worked with CCS students to build a tower garden promoting hands-on learning and encouraging healthy food choices. In previous positions, she did not feel effective because of her high case load. She noted many of her students have experienced trauma. She thanked the Board for allowing her to present.



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CCS has staff who focus on community relations with students. As mentioned, many of the students come from traumatic backgrounds. CCS staff have hosted a community lunch where people from the community can get to know the students. They have used student input to decide who to invite for the lunch.

2:05 PM – 2:20 PM

Public Commenting Session #2 (15 minutes)

Chairperson Shawanokasic opened the second public commenting session.
Jennifer Davis, DFO, explained the process for providing public comments.

Comment: Leon Reval, Board Member – Stated the working lunch and presentation from CCS staff was informative. He advocated the Board make recommendations using the successes of CCS as an example. He thanked Board members for their hard work.

Comment: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Noted the pay variations across BIE schools throughout the country.

Comment: Dr. Elizabeth Younce, Board Member – Spoke about their success in hiring speech language pathologists (SLPs).

Chairperson Shawanokasic closed the public commenting session.

2:20 PM – 2:50 PM

Division of Performance and Accountability (DPA)/BIE Special Education Program Updates

Presenter: Ronald Worst, Education Program Specialist

The presenter was asked to provide an update and respond to the following item for this report and discussion.

1. Provide an update on the BIE Special Education Policy & Procedures Handbook.

Ron Worst reviewed the mission statement of the BIE and thanked Dr. Younce for the presentation from CCS. He explained the BIE has finished Tribal and in-person consultations on the policies and procedures handbook. They are now in the reconciliation and roll-out phase. As part of that phase, they have reviewed all comments received over the past year and are summarizing them. They have made updates based on the comments or they have determined reasoning for not incorporating comments/suggestions. They are continuing consultations with the BIE solicitors to ensure the policies and procedures meet federal statutes. This includes a



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consultation on timely initial evaluation and how to implement a policy covering all BIE schools while also allowing schools to follow their state regulations. They are also working on how to include the Family and Children Education (FACE) program. They are working on policies and procedures for appointing surrogate parents. They are also developing professional development and universal supports for BIE-funded schools.

Ron Worst shared a mini video the BIE has developed on Child Find requirements. He explained they are developing short videos to share with staff and families on IDEA topics. Each video will have an accompanying one-page resource. Other video topics being developed include Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), informed parent consent, procedural safeguards, prior written notice, and elements of IEPs.

Ron Worst noted two in-person trainings occurred over the summer on school improvement. The BIE was also able to present at the Tribal and School Leadership Summit in Rapid City, SD. Ron Worst reported attendance numbers for the two in-person trainings and he shared evaluation results from the trainings also.

Ron Worst explained DPA staff are working on compiling data for the 2023 State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) due February 3, 2025 to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). He reviewed the data currently being collected and analyzed for the report including assessment, timely initial evaluation, post-school outcomes, graduation rates, drop-out rates, parent involvement, and secondary transition. He explained nuances and deadlines of the data collection process with different schools. The DPA is working on the timeline for schools to be in compliance on their data submission and follow-up for needed corrections.

Ron Worst provided a visual representation of states where BIE schools are located.

- 55 Bureau Operated Schools (BOS) and 128 Tribally Controlled Schools (TCS).
- 45,000 students are across 64 reservations in 23 states.
- BIE operates two post secondary schools: Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) and Haskell.

Ron Worst thanked the Board for allowing him to share updates with them. He noted the DPA has not requested any updates for the special education modules in NASIS. A lot of glitches have occurred as Infinite Campus has made updates.



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Question: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Reiterated concerns with NASIS and Infinite Campus and the impact it is having on the ability of school staff to perform their duties.

Response: Ron Worst, Educational Specialist – Explained the process for submitting support cases with Infinite Campus to fix glitches.

Question: Spencer Churchill, Board Member – Asked if the video learning modules will be available in different languages.

Response: Ron Worst, Educational Specialist – Stated the modules will soon be posted to the BIE YouTube channel, and they will explore expanding the language availability.

Question: Spencer Churchill, Board Member – Asked if there would be any videos on early childhood services.

Response: Ron Worst, Educational Specialist – Explained Part C is covered by Tribal entities and is not controlled by the BIE.

Question: Dr. Janet Slowman-Chee, Board Member – Inquired who was producing the videos and she stated having them available in multiple languages would be good.

Response: Ron Worst, Educational Specialist – Explained the modules are produced by DPA with assistance from a technical assistance provider.

Question: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Stated the original BIE policies and procedures draft requires schools to develop their own policies and procedures. He asked if this was still an expectation.

Response: Ron Worst, Educational Specialist – Explained the DPA is still having conversations with the solicitors on this item.

Comment: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Cautioned the inclusion of FACE because Part C programs look different across BIE schools.

Comment: Ron Worst, Educational Specialist – Noted the nuances they are working on in ensuring the policies and procedures meet IDEA and allow for BIE schools across the country to also work within their individual state policies.

Question: Dr. Janet Slowman-Chee, Board Member – Asked when the policies and procedures would be approved and if review by the solicitors is the final approval process.

Response: Ron Worst, Educational Specialist – Answered there was no official approval process for the policies and procedures.

Question: Dr. Janet Slowman-Chee, Board Member – Asked for more information about the policy around surrogate parents.

Response: Ron Worst, Educational Specialist – Explained each state has their own process for designating surrogate parents. Under IDEA, the BIE is required to have a policy about



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appointing surrogate parents, however, the BIE policy needs to allow schools to work within the parameters of the state they are located in.

3:14 PM – 3:24 PM

Break

3:24 PM – 4:30 PM

Advisory Board Work Session

- Finish any new business or old business.
- Begin working on the Annual Report.

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic made an announcement regarding the weather and the building still being open for for the Board meeting. He then explained the process for working on the Board's report and the report's accompanying letter.

The Board began by editing the the accompanying letter for the Annual Report. Language was added detailing the responsibilities of the Board in relation to providing advice to the BIE. Information was provided on when the Board had last received acknowledgement of their report. It was clarified the letter and recommendations go to the Director of the BIE and the Secretary of the Interior.

Comment: Dr. Janet Slowman-Chee, Board Member – Stated the language in the accompanying letter should be strong to underline the important work of the Board.

Comment: Gretchen Lehmann, Board Member – Recommended edits to the letter around the stated timeline for addressing the Board's recommendations. She noted setting a timeline for addressing the recommendations was unreasonable.

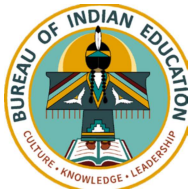
Comment: Spencer Churchill, Board Member – Suggested wording changes regarding the recommendations from the Board.

The Board discussed who should respond to the recommendations from the Board and the efforts made by BIE Director Dearman's office and Secretary Haaland's office.

Comment: Gretchen Lehmann, Board Member – Suggested acknowledging past participation at Board meetings by Director Dearman's office.

Comment: Wendy Kroupa, Board Member – Suggested all Board members physically sign the letter to emphasize the importance of the recommendations.

The Board emphasized the edits they made were to embody a sense of importance to their work and the impactfulness of their recommendations.



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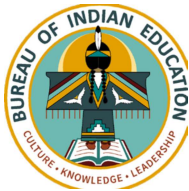
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4:30 PM

Recess

A motion was made by Wendy Kroupa, Board Member, to recess the meeting until the following day. The motion was seconded by Gretchen Lehmann, Board Member.

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic thanked everyone and released the Board until the following morning at 8:00 a.m. EDT.



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BIE Advisory Board for Exceptional Children

Board Minutes - Day 2

Thursday, September 26, 2024, 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM
(EDT)

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. Present Gretchen Wendell, Board Member
8. Absent 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-Chee, 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: Gloria Yepa, Evangeline Bradley-Wilkinson, and Faith Rosetta

Others in Attendance:

Alaina Flower
Arlene Davis

Brooke Ratliff
Casey Ambrose

Cheryl Johnson
Crystal Becenti



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Delphina Dayish
Doreen Shorty
Eleanor Jones
Evangeline Bradley-
Wilkinson
Faith Rosetta
Joann Fields
John Copenhaver

John McIntosh
Kimberly Smith
Loren Hudson
Marcy Starr
Michelle Thomas
Nacelle Reynolds
Neal Morton
Pamela Speaks

Reanna Albert
Rena M Yazzie
Rhonda White
Sara Reed
Sharon Henderson
Tamatane Iatala
Tashina Wilson-Yazzie
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 both days of this meeting.

Roll Call, Old Business, and New Business

Start Time: 8:00 AM Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)

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-Chee
- Gretchen Wendell

New Business – Chairperson Shawanokasic noted Monica Cleveland had several unexcused absences as a Board member and the Board by-laws needed to be examined to see about removing her as a Board member to then allow someone who has time to serve in her position and join the Board.

8:15 AM – 11:45 AM

Advisory Board Work – Work on the Annual Report.



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- Goal is to finalize the Annual Report.
- Work on and finalize the next Board meeting agenda and logistics.

Chairperson Norman Showanokasic explained the objectives of the Board work session. The Board returned to reviewing the letter accompanying their Annual Report. The responsibilities of the Board were inserted into the letter.

Comment: Leon Reval, Secretary – Noted it may not be necessary to include the Board’s responsibilities in the letter.

Comment: Spencer Churchill, Board Member – Suggested including a link to the Board’s charter and responsibilities in the letter.

Comment: Leon Reval, Secretary – Stated the previous day, it had been suggested the Board’s responsibilities be included to underline the importance of the Board’s work.

Comment: Norman Showanokasic, Chairperson – Explained the Board is not required to submit a letter with their Annual Report, but it has been common practice for many years as an explanation.

Comment: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Noted the letter shouldn’t be too long or too negative. He suggested the letter cite the regulations dictating the Board’s responsibilities.

Comment: Leslie Finnearty, Board Member – Concurred the letter should be short and to the point.

The Board updated the stakeholders listed in the letter who presented at their meetings.

Comment: Norman Showanokasic, Chairperson – Recommended leaving in the sentence inviting Secretary Haaland to meet with the Board.

Additional edits were made to make the letter more concise.

Comment: Dr. Janet Slowman-Chee, Board Member – Asked what the Board expected the Department of Interior to do with the letter and recommendations.

Comment: Norman Showanokasic, Chairperson – Noted there is no requirement for the BIE or Department of Interior to respond to their letter and priorities.

Comment: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Observed the reports the Board receives from the Director of the BIE and DPA shows the support of the Department of Interior towards the work of the Board.

Comment: Gretchen Lehmann, Board Member – Stated the number of emails sent to staff throughout BIE schools inviting them to attend Board meetings also shows the support of the BIE for the Board’s work.



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Comment: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Explained the greatest barrier to recruitment and hiring of school special education staff is the length of time required for background checks, which are a federally required safety measure for students.

Comment: Gretchen Lehmann, Board Member – Suggested adding an acknowledgement of the work the BIE is doing to increase the recruitment and hiring of qualified staff, while still noting ongoing concerns on the topic.

The Board reviewed the format of previous annual reports and discussed the best format for the report. It was decided to not list the priorities in the letter and include them in the body of the Annual Report.

Comment: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Suggested using the term “students with disabilities” throughout the document for consistency with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

9:30 AM – 9:45 AM

Break

Chairperson Shawonokasic welcomed the Board back from the break. The Board continued to work on the Annual Report.

Comment: Spencer Churchill, Board Member – Recommended adding eligibility and early learning as possible learning topics in the first priority.

Comment: Norman Showanakasic, Chairperson – Suggested the topic of available resources, including vocational rehabilitation.

Comment: Pilar Peltier, Vice Chairperson – Observed some tribes do not offer vocational rehabilitation services and those services must be provided by the state.

The Board edited the list of suggested learning opportunity topics for priority one. They discussed ensuring the IEP process includes cultural, language, and traditional practices.

Comment: Dr. Eugene Thompson, Supervisory Educational Specialist – Explained the DPA has developed a draft IEP Manual and the DPA will ensure it incorporates verbiage on including cultural, language, and traditional practices in the IEP process. Once the manual is finalized, the DPA will provide training on it.

Comment: Spencer Churchill, Board Member – Suggested adding in a recommendation to ensure resources are in place to support virtual learning for effective instruction during extraneous circumstances such as COVID.

Comment: Gretchen Lehmann, Board Member – Noted part of the eligibility process considers the possibility of lacking instruction.



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Comment: Leon Reval, Secretary – Suggested incorporating Section 504 as a learning opportunity topic.

Comment: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Noted including ongoing research on the effects of COVID was still pertinent.

Comment: Leslie Finnearty, Board Member – Suggested including guardians anywhere parents are mentioned.

The Board made edits to the list of learning opportunities for parents and guardians.

11:00 AM – 11:15 AM Break

Chairperson Shawonokasic welcomed the Board back from the break. The Board continued to work on the Annual Report.

Comment: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Suggested language for the justification of the second priority and the Board edited the justification.

The Board also drafted and edited the justification for the third priority on transition and post graduation results for students with disabilities.

Comment: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Listed the regulations affecting transition for inclusion in the justification.

11:45 AM – 12:00 AM

Public Commenting Session #3 (15 minutes)

Vice Chairperson Peltier opened the third public commenting session.

Jennifer Davis, DFO, explained the process for providing public comments.

Comment: Leon Reval, Secretary – Offered a comment as a parent of a student with a disability, suggesting BIE school staff who aren't tribal members should be considered eligible for health care services from Indian Health Services. He explained it could be a possible recruitment tactic for rural schools that have difficulties retaining staff and are located in areas without a lot of health care facilities open to non-tribal residents.

Comment: Jennifer Davis, DFO – Reviewed the list of speakers and schedule for the afternoon session of the Board meeting. She encouraged members of the public attending the meeting to make comments.



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Comment: Norman Shawanokasic, Chairperson – Reviewed the work the Board needs to complete during the last day of the meeting to conclude the Annual Report and prepare for the meeting in January.

Jennifer Davis, DFO, closed the public commenting session.

12:00 PM Lunch (1 hour)

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic welcomed the Board back from lunch.

1:00 PM – 3:45 PM

Special Education Updates from Associate Deputy Director (ADD) Regions: Bureau Operated Schools (BOS), Navajo Region (BOS/TCS), and Tribally Controlled Schools (TCS)

Presenters: Gloria Yepa, Katharine Ford, Evangeline Bradley-Wilkinson, and Faith Rosetta

- 1:00 – 1:45 ADD BOS – Gloria Yepa and Katharine Ford, Education Specialists
- 1:50 – 2:35 ADD Navajo – Evangeline Bradley, Education Specialist
- 2:55 – 3:40 ADD TCS – Faith Rosetta, Education Specialist

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

1. Describe the challenges and needs within the special education programs in the BIE-funded schools in your region.
2. Status of vacant positions in your region? (special education and related services)
3. What does your region/office/team do to address the known challenges? Please include anything related to aspects of data collection, leadership development with building administrators, and collaboration with others and communication used to support the schools and parents/families of students with disabilities.
4. Please share some of the planned activities for SY 2024-2025 in your region to support the special education program.

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

Gloria Yepa began by sharing the BIE's mission statement. She complimented the work CCS is doing to meet the BIE's mission statement. She reviewed the people who work as staff for the



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ADD BOS. She also reviewed the locations of the four BOS resource centers. Gloria Yepa explained her professional work experience with the BIE.

1. Describe the challenges and needs within the special education programs in the BIE-funded schools in your region.

Gloria Yepa explained she was answering items 1 and 4 together. She noted the challenges include providing technical assistance and consultation in response to requests from BOS on staffing challenges, assisting students with low-incidence disabilities, NASIS, and the special education referral process and pre-referral intervention.

Planned activities for SY 2024-2025 to address these challenges include the following list.

- An ISEP special education review focused on ST Plans utilizing the Indicator 14 – Postsecondary Outcomes checklist and providing onsite technical assistance to schools and Education Resource Center (ERC) staff.
- Developing and implementing a professional development plan to train school transition specialists on best practices.
- Developing and implementing a professional development plan to train school special education teachers on strategies to improve student achievement.
- Developing and implementing a discipline model for incorporation in the school handbook for students and parents; and provide subsequent training on the discipline model.
- Developing and implementing a professional development plan to train school special education teachers on strategies to improve student achievement.
- Developing and implementing a professional development plan to train schools on Child Find practices, gauging outcomes according to the ADD-BOS Internal Controls Current Assessable Unit (Child Find).
- Developing and implementing a professional development plan to train schools on building school capacity to reach out to parents of students with disabilities, gauging outcomes according to the Indicator 8 parent survey.

They plan to offer systemic support by doing the following:

- Acquiring a series of trainings from the National Technical Assistance Center (NTAC-C) on transition of best practices for BOS high schools, monitoring and reviewing high school students' ST Plans, and providing feedback to the schools/ERC/ADD-BOS.
- Acquiring a series of trainings from NTAC-C on best practices for BOS high schools/ERC/ADD-BOS.



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- Acquiring a series of trainings from the National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII) for BOS high schools/ERC/ADD-BOS.
 - Having the BIE Whole School, Community, and Child (WSCC) model; Positive Behavior Implementation System (PBIS); and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) supports for BOS high schools/ERC/ADD-BOSS.
 - Acquiring a series of trainings from NCII for BOS schools/ERC/ADD-BOS.
 - Monitoring and reviewing school's Child Find Procedures and providing feedback to schools/ERC/ADD-BOS.
 - Acquiring a series of trainings from the Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR) for BOS schools/ERC/ADD-BOS.
2. Status of vacant positions in your region? (special education and related services)
- Gloria Yepa explained they have been surveying schools to gather information on vacancies in their region. A total of 15 special education teacher, 14 education technician, one speech language pathologist, and six counselor vacancies are in the BOS region. Challenges with filling vacancies include the BIE hiring process, length of time for background checks, and the cost or lack of housing at some school locations.
3. What does your region/office/team do to address the known challenges? Please include anything related to aspects of data collection, leadership development with building administrators, and collaboration with others and communication used to support the schools and parents/families of students with disabilities.
- Gloria Yepa explained, for data collection, they are reviewing and analyzing parent survey reports; Part B, unmet needs applications, and financial reviews; the BOS Special Education Vacancy Survey; school performance on the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR); school determinations; and requests from schools and ERCs. For data collection, their technical assistance and support is providing a tiered system framework of delivering consultations, technical assistance, and guidance to all schools per the presenting school's need.

Gloria Yepa explained they are addressing the challenges of leadership development with building administrators by providing direct technical assistance and consultation to school staff and administrators; attending meetings and conducting onsite visits to schools to provide consultations, technical assistance, and presentations to school administrators and



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staff; and providing direct email correspondence to address specific questions and requests for technical assistance.

Gloria Yepa explained, to collaborate with others and communicate with schools and parents, they are using a tiered system of technical assistance and professional development and using all levels of support provided by the BIE/DPA, other BIE and Tribal services, and individual state special education programs.

Gloria Yepa explained, to assist parents and families of students with disabilities, they are providing technical assistance to schools via:

- IEP meetings
- Dispute resolution and corrective action plans
- Parent surveys
- Child Find
- Procedural Safeguards
- Dissemination of OSEP resources
- Attending community meetings to provide information
- Ensuring schools notify parents of BIE Advisory Board meetings and opportunities for public comments

Chairperson Norman Shawankasic thanked Gloria Yepa for her presentation to the Board and taking time to answer the Board's questions. Chairpeson Norman Shawanokasic welcomed Evangeline Bradley-Wilkinson to the Board meeting.

Evangeline Bradley-Wilkinson introduced herself as the ADD for the Navejo region and explained her background. She reviewed the BIE's mission statement. She introduced the Navejo region team. She reviewed the six principles guiding IDEA/FAPE, appropriate evaluation, IEPs, Least Restrictive Enviornment (LRE), parent and student participation in decision making, and procedural safeguards. Following are the responses given by Evangeline Bradley-Wilkinson to the four requested items above.

1. Describe the challenges and needs within the special education programs in the BIE-funded schools in your region.

Evangeline Bradley-Wilkinson explained she reached out to schools in her region and asked for their challenges. Responses included the recruitment and retention of special education staff, specifcally the length of time for hiring, shortages of qualified staff, recruiting staff to remote areas, and the length of time for contract set up. These challenges impact the provision of special education and related services by causing missed services for students with disabilities, resulting in required compensatory education. She explained the schools



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relayed they need guidance on developing and implementing student assistance teams, the special education referral process, developing IEPs, and strategies to effectively implement IEPs with fidelity in the appropriate educational setting. She stressed working with parents and guardians as an IEP team to meet the needs of students. She stated additional areas schools need professional development with include the identification and evaluation process for students who may have autism, developing IEPs for students with autism, best practices for aligning instructional strategies to a student's IEP, behavior management, NASIS, and changes to special education forms. In addition, training is needed for parents and guardians on how they can meet the needs of their children.

2. Status of vacant positions in your region? (special education and related services)

Evangeline Bradley-Wilkinson sent a questionnaire to all the schools in the Navejo region to gather information on their vacancies. She shared data collected from the questionnaire based on the ERCs in her region. In one ERC, 9% of schools had a vacancy for special education teachers, another had 24% of schools with a vacancy, and the final had 29% with a vacancy. In one ERC, 41% of schools had a vacancy for educational technicians, another had 24% with a vacancy, and the final had 24% with a vacancy. In one ERC, 32% of schools had a vacancy for related service providers, another had 41% with a vacancy, and the final had 24% with a vacancy.

Evangeline Bradley-Wilkinson noted some schools have a need for additional staff due to increased student enrollment, specifically students with challenging needs. Schools have been using the Unmet Needs application and applying for additional funding.

3. What does your region/office/team do to address the known challenges? Please include anything related to aspects of data collection, leadership development with building administrators, and collaboration with others and communication used to support the schools and parents/families of students with disabilities.

Evangeline Bradley-Wilkinson asked the schools in her region how they are addressing their challenges. Responses included:

- Communicating and collaborating amongst schools
- Providing guidance and support to school principals
- Increasing communication with parents
- Having proactive leadership
- Networking



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Evangeline Bradley-Wilkinson explained the Navajo regional office is:

- Available to respond to school needs
- Providing technical assistance and guidance related to IDEA
- Requesting feedback from schools to determine professional development and training needs
- Ensuring schools are not only in compliance but providing schools support and technical assistance
- Providing guidance to ensure schools provide FAPE in their students' LRE
- Assisting with leadership development to increase the capacity within schools
- Fostering communication and collaboration amongst school team members
- Providing technical assistance for Life Skills programs
- Meeting the educational needs of students who are older and find reading a challenge
- Creating a unified system to support all schools
- Supporting the recruitment and hiring of additional special education staff

4. Please share some of the planned activities for SY 2024-2025 in your region to support the special education program.

Evangeline Bradley-Wilkinson explained planned activities include beginning the ISEP review process and completing school site visits to review their files. Professional development will be provided to ensure schools have clear expectations for their site visits. Data collected from the questionnaire used for information in this presentation will also be used to structure professional development.

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic thanked Evangeline Bradley-Wilkinson for her presentation to the Board.

2:30 PM – 2:45 PM Break

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic welcomed the Board back from the break and invited Faith Rosetta to present. Following are the responses given by the ADD TCS presenter to each of the four items above.

Faith Rosetta introduced herself as the ADD for TCS and provided her professional background. She introduced the TCS regional team members. She expressed appreciation for the



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presentations she has heard during the Board meeting. She explained there are 93 TCS. She surveyed the TCS special education directors to gather information to respond to the questions from the Board.

1. Describe the challenges and needs within the special education programs in the BIE-funded schools in your region.

Faith Rosetta explained the challenges faced by TCS include:

- Vacancies for certified teachers, service providers, and paraprofessionals, which result in missed IEP services
- NASIS IEP editing kinks – there is a need for NASIS training sessions
- Autism evaluations and training for teachers working with students with autism
- Students in special education with challenging and threatening behaviors

2. Status of vacant positions in your region? (special education and related services)

Faith Rosetta shared the number of vacancies among TCS. This includes many vacancies for special education teachers, 16 vacancies for related services personnel, and 27 vacancies for special education paraprofessionals.

3. What does your region/office/team do to address the known challenges? Please include anything related to aspects of data collection, leadership development with building administrators, and collaboration with others and communication used to support the schools and parents/families of students with disabilities.

Faith Rosetta explained they collected data from TCS through surveys on special education programs, vacancies, and technical assistance needs. They will also participate in ISEP IEP reviews by monitoring compliance to identify strengths and patterns of need for recommended professional development and technical assistance. They are also providing resources such as templates for compensatory services, recruitment strategies, and Special Ed Connections. They're working on leadership development with building administrators by completing monthly check-ins, providing professional development, and providing one-on-one technical assistance.

4. Please share some of the planned activities for SY 2024-2025 in your region to support the special education program.

Faith Rosetta shared planned activities including:

- Providing technical assistance



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- Having check-ins with school administrators
- Completing the ISEP review of IEPs including providing feedback and technical assistance in collaboration with the onsite visits
- Providing requested professional development
- Distributing monthly newsletters targeted for special education and peer learning sessions for TCS special education coordinators/directors
- Providing a special education strand at the summer summit

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic thanked Faith Rosetta for presenting to the Board. He opened the time until the public commenting session for the Board to continue their work on the Annual Report priorities. The Board continued working on the third priority regarding transition and post graduation recommendations.

Comment: Leon Reval, Secretary – Suggested ensuring “resources” is adequately defined in the Board recommendations.

Comment: Pilar Peltier, Vice Chairperson – Noted various resources available for students regarding transition and post secondary programs.

Comment: Gretchen Lehmann, Board Member – Reviewed transition procedures for students with disabilities.

Comment: Gretchen Wendell, Board Member – Noted parents are also often lacking knowledge about options available to students at post secondary schools.

3:45 PM – 4:00 PM

Public Commenting Session #4 (15 minutes)

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic opened the fourth public commenting session.

Jennifer Davis, DFO, explained the process for providing public comments.

Comment: Dr. Eugene Thompson, Supervisory Educational Specialist (chat) – Would like to see the TCS vacancy percentages converted to number of vacancies at each school.

Comment: Nacelle Reynolds, Many Farms Community School (chat) – I want to let everyone know how much I am learning about the collaboration of everyone here to meet student needs.

Comment: Jennifer Davis, DFO – Reviewed the agenda for the next day’s Board meeting.

Comment: Dr. Eugene Thompson, Supervisory Educational Specialist (chat) – Have Advisory Board members received a copy of the September DPA newsletter?



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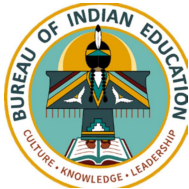
Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic closed the public commenting session.

A motion was made by Dr. Janet Slowman-Chee, Board Member, to recess the meeting until the following day. The motion was seconded by Spencher Churchill, Board Member.

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic thanked everyone and released the Board until the following morning at 8:00 a.m. EDT.

4:00 PM

Recess



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BIE Advisory Board for Exceptional Children

Board Minutes - Day 3

Friday, September 27, 2024, 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM (EDT)

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. Present Gretchen Wendell, Board Member
8. Absent 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-Chee, 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.

Others in Attendance:

Amanda Bryant	Evangeline Bradley-	Mariah Crow
Arlene Davis	Wilkinson	Michelle Thomas
Casey Ambrose	Gloria Yepa	Norma Brown Bull
Eleanor Jones	John Copenhaver	Tamatane Iatala
	Marcy Starr	Tammy Pulver



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Tashina Wilson-Yazzie

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 for both days of this meeting.

Roll Call, Old Business, and New Business

Start Time: 8:00 AM Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)

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 | ● Melanie Star |
| ● Pilar Peltier, Vice Chairperson | ● Spencer Churchill |
| ● Leon Reval, Secretary | ● Dr. Janet Slowman-Chee |
| ● Gretchen Lehmann | ● Leslie Finnearty |
| ● Brian Wagner | ● Gretchen Wendell |
| ● Rachel Harrison | ● Wendy Kroupa |
| ● Dr. Elizabeth Younce | |

The Board meeting was put on hold at 8:08 AM EDT due to weather forcing the Board to evacuate from their location. The Board resumed the meeting at 10:05 AM EDT at a new location. The Board opted to reschedule all speakers for this meeting for their January meeting and finish their Board work and adjourn the meeting. Public comment was open for the remainder of the meeting.

Advisory Board Work Session

- Work on the Annual Report and finalize before adjournment.
- Work on January 2025 meeting logistics, complete a draft agenda, and identify presenters with presenter questions.

The Board continued working on their Annual Report and focused on priority two.



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Comment: Norman Shawankasic, Chairperson – Noted the Board had opted to take a note out of the Annual Report letter explaining there were still concerns about recruitment, hiring, and retention of qualified personnel. He explained the Board needed to decide if they wanted the statement included with the priorities.

Comment: Spencer Churchill, Board Member – Suggested wording edits for keeping the note in the priority section of the Annual Report.

Comment: Dr. Janet Slowman-Chee, Board Member – Advocated having recruiters for the BIE's higher education institutions to encourage students to enter special education and related services preparation programs and recruit them for employment at BIE schools. She recommended a work session for the Board to talk about suggestions they can give to assist with recruitment and retention.

Comment: Melanie Star, Board Member – Noted DPA staff are continuing to work on the personnel shortage issue.

Comment: Gretchen Lehmann, Board Member – Explained the personnel shortage is a nationwide issue and the Board has made recommendations on it for many years. They want to note it is still a concern, but ongoing efforts are moving forward to address it.

Comment: Dr. Janet Slowman-Chee, Board Member – Stated it would be good for the Board to hear updates on the personnel shortage issues.

Public Comment: Arlene Davis (chat) – Tennessee has a Grow Your Own Program where students are recruited: 2 years of PSEO before graduation. Two years of paid college for BA (MN has grants for Indigenous students), and enrollment in a licensed program - sped teacher, school sw, school psych, OT, SLP. The vision to support the community presented to our students. Also, interested in providing Neurofeedback to students through IHS - as trauma changes the brain - all experts recommend Neurofeedback. Ten sessions or five weeks can make a huge difference.

The Board reached consensus on a statement to include with the priorities regarding their concerns on personnel shortages. They also discussed teacher salary disparities across the country.

Comment: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Requested clarification on how support tickets are submitted for issues with NASIS.

Comment: Ron Worst, Education Specialist – Explained the process for receiving support in NASIS and how support tickets are submitted. He asked that DPA be made aware of issues with NASIS so they can ensure it is working for school staff.



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Comment: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Requested clarification on the Annual Performance Report (APR) and determination process.

Comment: Ron Worst, Education Specialist – Explained the timeline for determination letters and data submissions. He also noted increases are in the data being reported. He explained the variances in how the BIE reports data for determination compared to states and territories.

Public Comment: Tammy Pulver (chat) – A technician (with no qualifications) may complete a training to provide Neurofeedback under a therapist’s license. Inmates trained as technicians are getting awesome outcomes.

The Board was excused for a break to grab lunch.

10:58 AM – 11:50 AM Lunch

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic welcomed the Board back from the lunch break. They continued working on their second priority.

Comment: Brian Wagner, Board Member – Asked if there was a calendar of due dates for schools for their data collection.

Comment: Jennifer Davis, DFO – Noted the due dates are listed in the newsletter Melanie Star distributes.

Comment: Gretchen Lehmann, Board Member – Stressed the importance of having due dates to schools in a timely manner.

Comment: Dr. Janet Slowman-Chee, Board Member – Observed schools should know what type of data they need to gather.

The Board came to consensus on the justifications for the second priority. They reviewed all the priorities and made final edits to the Annual Report. The Board began reviewing their agenda for the January 2025 meeting.

Comment: Melanie Star, Board Member – Noted DPA is working on IEP processes as well.

Due to weather disabling the internet service, the Board was no longer able to connect to Zoom and was forced to end the meeting.

12:45 PM Adjourn

Dr. Janet Slowman-Chee, 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 INSERT, 2024.