

**BIE Advisory Board for Exceptional Children**  
**DAY-1, Thursday, January 18, 2024, 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM (MST)**



**BIE Advisory Board for Exceptional Children**  
**BOARD MINUTES - Day 1**

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

**Meeting Location:** SHERATON UPTOWN

2600 Louisiana Blvd NE, Albuquerque, NM and online using the Zoom.Gov platform and teleconference.

**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](http://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. Present Monica Cleveland, Board Member
9. Present Wendy Kroupa, Board Member
10. Excused Rachel Harrison, Board Member
11. Present Dr. Elizabeth Younce, Board Member, Ed.D
12. Present Dr. Janet Slowman-Chee, Board Member, Ed.D

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

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

**Presenters/Speakers:** Eugene Thompson and Wendy Cooley

**Others in Attendance:**

Arlene Davis	Christina Berens	Neal Morton
Charmaine Rocamora	Felicia Brown	Candace Sherwood
Delphina Dayish	Melba Martin	Cheryl Johnson
Helen Martinez	Sarah Decker	Phneiltray Beyale
Laura Krause	Alberto Castruita	Renee Tolino
Margo Weber	Tyson Charley	Rose Klade
Nikole Cheskey	David Nikolaus	Scott Norton
Romancita Adams	Elrisa Naljahih-Sells	Wanema Garcia
Stephen Smith	Jennifer Westphalen	Adrian Smith
Tara Dupuis	Loren Hudson	Ashton Pewenofkit
John Copenhaver	Shelly Spence	Katharine Ford
Cheryl Laughter	Evangeline Bradley-Wilkinson	Zonnie Sombrero
Nadine Eastman	Erin Trottier	Gina Lewis
Melanie Star	James Patterson	Gloria Yepa
Joann Fields	Loretta Hobbs	Elaine Ignacio
Allen Mayo	Paolinn Guzman	Lilly Dominguez
Mark Dreyer	Patricia Gonzales	Mary Begay
Narcy Ka'Won	Regina Bitsoi	Marcy Starr
Nicholas Korn	Roberta Clarke	Laura Tsosie
Sharon Henderson	Seatha Pacheco	Danielyn Pino
Tashina Wilson-Yazzie	Cathleia Balansag	Margho DeLaune
Tia Holyan	Tamatane Iatala	Jennifer Toledo
Regina Yazzie	Teresa Ramone-Wilson	Carol Nelwoo

**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 both days of the meeting.

**Roll Call, Introduction of New Board Members, Old Business, and New Business**

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**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
- Wendy Kroupa
- Brian Wagner
- Dr. Elizabeth Younce
- Leon Reval, Secretary
- Dr. Janet Slowman-Chee
- Gretchen Wendell
- Leslie Finnearty
- Monica Cleveland
- Pilar Peltier, Vice Chairperson
- Excused: Rachel Harrison

**New Business** – Chairperson Shawanokasic explained the Board would be working on the annual report during the meeting by developing priorities. He noted the importance of the annual report in documenting the recommendations of the Board. Chairperson Shawanokasic requested in-person visitors state their name and sign in. Online visitors entered their names in the Zoom chat.

**Old Business** – Chairperson Shawanokasic asked if any Board members had questions or clarifications from previous meetings.

Jennifer Davis, DFO, reminded the Board they would need to determine the location of the next meeting and develop the agenda for the next meeting before this current meeting adjourned.

Brian Wagner, Board Member, asked if the Board could discuss the Indian School Equalization Program (ISEP) budget changes either at this meeting or the next meeting. The proposed changes are at the tribal consultation level.

Jennifer Davis, DFO, suggested the ISEP budget discussion occur at the next meeting so questions can be formed by the Board and responded to by BIE staff.

Chairperson Shawanokasic explained the purpose of the Board to act in an advisory capacity and provide recommendations.

**8:30 AM – 9:30 AM**

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

**Presenter: Dr. Eugene Thompson, Supervisory Education Specialist**

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic welcomed Dr. Eugene Thompson to the Board meeting. Dr.

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Thompson introduced himself.

The presenter was asked to prepare updates on the following items for this report and discussion.

1. BIE FFY2022 State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) update.
2. BIE Special Education Policy & Procedures Handbook update (Tribal Consultation Comments, roll out activities, etc.).
3. BIE's SY2023-2024 Fiscal and Programmatic monitoring activities update.

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

1. BIE FFY2022 State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) update.

Dr. Thompson explained the purpose of the APR and reviewed the data BIE staff have put together. He explained Indicator 1 measures the percent of youth with individualized education programs (IEPs) who exit special education due to graduating with a regular high school diploma and he explained how the percentage is calculated. The percentage for Indicator 1 for school year 2021-2022 was 67.9%, an increase from the previous year (61.04%). The target for the 2021-2022 school year was 75.67%.

Dr. Thompson explained Indicator 2 measures the percent of youth with IEPs who exited special education due to dropping out and he explained how the percentage is calculated. For school year 2021-2022 the percentage was 28.82% with a target of 22.0%. This percentage was a decrease from the previous school year (37.66%).

Dr. Thompson reviewed Indicator 3 – participation and proficiency assessment data for math and reading/language arts. He explained an issue happened with the data submission for Indicator 3 from the Native American Student Information System (NASIS) and he would not be able to report data on it. They are working on the submission of the data for the APR.

Dr. Thompson noted he would not be reporting on Indicator 4 – data on suspension and expulsion rates for students with disabilities and would have the data available at the next meeting.

Dr. Thompson explained Indicator 5 reviews the percent of children with IEPs aged 5 who are enrolled in kindergarten and aged 6 through 21 served inside the regular classroom 80% or more of the day; inside the regular classroom less than 40% of the day; and served in separate schools, residential facilities, or homebound/hospital placements. He reported 79.17% of students with IEPs were served inside the regular classroom 80% or more of the day during the 2022-2023 school year. For the 2022-2023 school year, 5.45% of students with IEPs were served inside the regular classroom less than 40% of the day. For the 2022-2023 school year, 0.53% of students with IEPs were served in separate schools, residential facilities, or homebound/hospital placements.

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Dr. Thompson explained Indicator 8 measures the percent of parents of a child receiving special education services who report their child's school facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving special education services. This indicator is measured by responses to the parent involvement survey. For the 2022-2023 school year, 95.75% of parents responded saying their child's school facilitated their involvement. The target for the year was 93.87% and 3,274 surveys were completed.

Dr. Thompson explained Indicator 11 measures the percent of children who were evaluated within 60 days of the school receiving a parent consent for evaluation. For the 2022-2023 school year, 79.62% of children were evaluated within the 60-day timeline. The target for Indicator 11 was 100%. He stressed the importance of timely evaluations.

Dr. Thompson explained Indicators 12 and 13 measure if IEPs include appropriate, measurable, postsecondary goals based on age-appropriate transition assessments. These indicators also review if each student was invited to their IEP team meeting where their transition goals were discussed. For the 2022-2023 school year, 53.79% of IEPs were compliant with secondary transition requirements. This percentage has increased over the past few years. The goal is 100%

Dr. Thompson explained Indicator 14 measures postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities, which includes the following three categories:

1. The percent of youth enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school.
2. Percent of youth enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school.
3. Percent of youth enrolled in higher education, or in some other postsecondary education or training program or competitively employed, or in some other employment within one year of leaving high school.

For the 2022-2023 school year, 16.38% of youth were enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school, 48.12% were enrolled in higher education or were competitively employed within one year of leaving high school, and 72.01% were enrolled in higher education, or in some other postsecondary education or training program, or were competitively employed, or in some other employment within one year of leaving high school. The BIE is working toward better postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities.

Dr. Thompson reviewed the APR submission timelines and process.

**Question:** Gretchen Wendell, Board Member – Asked if the parent survey was available

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electronically.

**Response:** Dr. Thompson – Responded the parent survey was available both electronically and as a paper version.

**Question:** Norman Shawanokasic, Chairperson – Asked if there was funding to train parents on the parent survey process.

**Response:** Dr. Thompson – Replied there is funding for schools to provide training for parents. Twenty-five schools did not have any surveys submitted from parents and the BIE is working with those schools to increase responses from their parents.

**Question:** Norman Shawanokasic, Chairperson – Asked who developed the survey questions and how it is revised.

**Response:** Dr. Thompson – Explained the survey was recently shortened to fewer questions based on feedback the BIE received. The questions are based on example questions developed by federal technical assistance centers for Indicator 8.

**Question:** Gretchen Wendell, Board Member – Clarified schools need to distribute the parent survey, even if they do not request funding.

**Response:** Dr. Thompson – Responded that Gretchen Wendell’s statement was correct.

**Question:** Brian Wagner, Board Member – Asked if schools could have access to the survey year-round so they could distribute it following IEP meetings.

**Response:** Dr. Thompson – Replied different distribution timelines could be considered, however, the survey is intended to gather input on the entire school year and they don’t want surveys completed at IEP meetings early in the school year, because parents wouldn’t be able to respond to the questions based on their experiences throughout the whole school year.

**2. BIE Special Education Policy & Procedures Handbook update (Tribal Consultation Comments, roll out activities, etc.).**

Dr. Thompson explained a monthly special education newsletter is being issued to provide additional information on updates. He detailed they are working on written findings of noncompliance and reviewing secondary transition and initial evaluation timeline data.

Dr. Thompson noted they held three tribal consultations last fall and received public comments on the BIE Special Education Policy & Procedures Handbook. They are working on reconciling those comments with the handbook and planning the roll out of the handbook. They have received comments from tribal leaders, parents, educators, related service providers, special education directors/coordinators, administrators, and BIE staff. They had 150 participants in the tribal consultations. Dr. Thompson reviewed the sections of the handbook that received public comments. Based on those comments, they are increasing the clarity on parental consent and refusal for services or evaluations, Independent Educational Evaluations, when Prior Written Notice is required,

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requirements for secondary transition, and students in dormitory settings or off-reservation boarding schools. Internal agency comments identified inconsistencies in the handbook and suggested language clarification. They are currently reviewing all comments, consulting with the BIE solicitors, determining how input was addressed, and collaborating across the BIE to roll out the handbook.

**3. BIE’s SY2023-2024 Fiscal and Programmatic monitoring activities update.**

Dr. Thompson explained they have been working on the verification of long-standing noncompliance. Currently, they are working with two schools on long-standing noncompliance. From the 2022-2023 school year monitoring visits, they have verified 10 findings as corrected and are working on 26 open findings with schools. They are currently completing IEP reviews, data collection, financial reviews, establishing fiscal monitoring procedures, and working on annual IDEA determinations. They are also working on identifying schools for onsite and virtual reviews. They have been working to streamline the monitoring process across the BIE by reducing redundancies, increasing clarity of roles/responsibilities, utilizing cyclical cohorts, and maximizing desk audits through NASIS. They are preparing for the 2024-2025 school year by implementing integrated monitoring, revising monitoring indicators, and designing and offering enhanced supports to schools.

**Comment:** Brian Wagner, Board Member – Noted Indicator 14 data does not capture students who age out of services. He explained he has advocated for changes in the procedures for postsecondary data collection for many years and will continue to do so.

Chairperson Shawanokasic thanked Dr. Thompson for his presentation and excused the Board for a break.

**9:36 AM – 9:51 AM      Break**

**9:51 AM – 10:45 AM**

**Advisory Board Work – Review annual report recommendations for FFY2020, FFY2021, FFY2022, and FFY2023**

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic opened the meeting following the break. He explained the Board would be reviewing previous report recommendations. The Board puts a lot of time in developing their annual report recommendations and priorities. BIE Director Tony Dearman has reported in the past to the Board how they are working on recommendations from the Board. Annual reports can be found on the [BIE website](#).

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Chairperson Shawanokasic read the recommendations from the FFY2020 annual report.

**Question:** Norman Shawanokasic, Chairperson – Asked Dr. Thompson if the BIE provides a comparison of their APR data to other states.

**Response:** Dr. Thompson – Explained there isn't a comparison document, but all APR reports for each state can be found [online](#) for comparisons.

Chairperson Shawanokasic read the recommendations from the FFY2021, FFY2022, and FFY2023 annual reports and commented on the justifications for the recommendations. He noted themes that continue in the recommendations from year to year, particularly the recommendations related to recruitment and retention of school staff and the social, emotional, behavioral, and cultural needs of students and their families. Chairperson Shawanokasic opened a discussion from the Board on previous annual report recommendations.

Jennifer Davis, DFO, noted several similar recommendations have been made for many years. She particularly noted that staffing issues have been repeatedly addressed by the Board over the past ten years. She also stated coordination of services has consistently been addressed as a Board priority too.

Norman Shawanokasic, Chairperson, reminded the Board their priority is providing advice on services for students with disabilities to improve their outcomes.

Jennifer Davis, DFO, explained the annual report is shared with the Director of the BIE, the Indian Affairs Office, the Secretary of the Interior, the U.S. Department of Education, and Congress. The BIE office sent a letter acknowledging their receipt of the 2023 report. Jennifer encouraged all meeting attendees to provide feedback to the Board on their annual reports during the public comment sessions.

Leon Reval, Secretary, suggested a recommendation to incorporate a bridge between the Section 504 and IEP processes. He asked for input on including Section 504 on a new recommendation.

Dr. Thompson explained Section 504 does not fall under his office; he suggested having the BIE Section 504 Coordinator attend a future Board meeting to explain the Section 504 process. He noted the BIE has developed a new support phone number for students to call when experiencing emotional crises.

Norman Shawanokasic, Chairperson, discussed the need to ensure special education services are equitably provided to students in rural settings while culture is prioritized. He reiterated the importance of cultural emphasis in the provision of services for students with disabilities.



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Brian Wagner, Board Member, reminded the Board COVID-19 is still an issue in schools and needs to be considered in Board recommendations. COVID-19 is still impacting school attendance, which may eventually impact funding levels. He stressed the importance of keeping this an issue that Congress is aware of in funding considerations.

Norman Shawanokasic, Chairperson, noted the importance of Board members' experiences in guiding the recommendations made in the annual report.

Dr. Janet Slowman Chee, Board Member, noted the cultural relevancy students with disabilities deserve. She explained students with disabilities are sometimes denied access to cultural activities in school settings.

### **10:45 AM – 12:15 PM**

#### **BIE Office of the Director**

**Presenters:** Juanita Mendoza and Dr. Wendy Cooley

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic welcomed Juanita Mendoza and Dr. Wendy Cooley and introduced the session.

The presenters were asked to prepare updates on the following items for this report and discussion.

1. Provide an update on the progress regarding the recommendations within the previous annual reports (FFY2020, FFY2021, FFY2022, and FFY2023).
2. BIE plans for school year 2023-2024 update.
3. BIE Strategic Direction update.
4. BIE National Conference and Interactive Data Workshop update.
5. BIE upcoming projects and events, school initiatives, collaborations, etc. update.

Following are the responses given by Juanita Mendoza and Dr. Wendy Cooley to each of the requested items above.

1. Provide an update on the progress regarding the recommendations within the previous annual reports (FFY2020, FFY2021, FFY2022, and FFY2023).

Juanita Mendoza reviewed the recommendations and their progress. Outreach is ongoing to send information to schools specifically regarding job recruitment and using social media. She discussed efforts to increase behavioral health supports to students, which includes higher education students. She explained the new call line for mental health support for students. She noted she would send flyers to Jennifer Davis, DFO, to distribute to the Board. She explained the Family and Children Education (FACE) program and how they provide early childhood special education services. The BIE has been

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working on improving communication and collaboration through a monthly newsletter. She noted the inception of the interactive data workshops and prerecorded mini-webinars for all BIE schools. They also provide lunch hour trainings for anyone to access. Juanita Mendoza explained they started a workforce plan, but progress was halted while strategic directions were developed.

**2. BIE plans for school year 2023-2024 update.**

Juanita Mendoza explained the update on the BIE plans for the 2023-2024 school year would be part of the update at the BIE National Conference and Interactive Data Workshop.

**3. BIE Strategic Direction update.**

Dr. Wendy Cooley introduced herself and reviewed the process to develop the BIE Strategic Direction for 2024-2029. She explained the strategic plan lays out the actions the BIE will take to fulfill its mission. She explained research completed on viable strategic planning. She mentioned how data would be collected to measure progress toward strategic plan actions. Dr. Wendy Cooley explained high performing schools limit their number of strategic goals and the new strategic direction follows this model. She discussed how strategic direction terminology was defined to promote a cohesive plan. The overall philosophy for the strategic direction was to have fewer, focused priorities; a tangible, achievable, and meaningful roadmap; and to eliminate silos. She explained the process to gather stakeholder input and insight for the strategic directions. Listening sessions were hosted to reach a broad audience for stakeholder input. The strategic directions process resulted in revised Vision, Mission, and Core Values with three overarching priorities and 13 strategies. The strategic directions will be brought to tribal consultations for further input and refinement. It is expected the revisions following tribal consultations will be completed by June 2024. The tribal consultations will be held in person and virtually.

**4. BIE National Conference and Interactive Data Workshop update.**

Juanita Mendoza explained the BIE would not be able to host a national conference this year. They are planning on hosting a national conference in 2025. Trainings will continue regionally and they are trying to be more economically efficient on how staff time is utilized for trainings. She explained they will be combining the Interactive Data Workshop with the Principal's Leadership Academy. It will be held the weeks of June 10<sup>th</sup> and June 24<sup>th</sup>.

**5. BIE upcoming projects and events, school initiatives, collaborations, etc. update.**

Juanita Mendoza noted they are expanded to 22 additional schools this year with the strategic directions. They continue to provide trainings to BOS on the Schoolology program and they continue to reach out to TCS to provide support to them on Schoolology. She discussed the initiative to establish food hubs to provide indigenous foods to students. They have a new Chief Academic

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Officer, which means all their senior leadership positions are filled.

**Question:** Brian Wagner, Board Member – Asked if mental health services are being provided directly to students.

**Response:** Juanita Mendoza – Explained the crisis call line is for students and staff to receive direct services.

**Question:** Brian Wagner, Board Member – Asked if the crisis call line was open for both TCS and BOS students and staff.

**Response:** Juanita Mendoza – Replied it was open to students and staff at both TCS and BOS.

**Question:** Brian Wagner, Board Member – Asked if education leaders put together comments for the strategic direction, would they be reviewed.

**Response:** Dr. Wendy Cooley – Invited comments to be [emailed to her](#) to be incorporated into the process.

**Question:** Monica Cleveland, Board Member – Inquired asked how implementation of the strategic directions would be measured.

**Response:** Dr. Wendy Cooley – Noted they developed key performance indicators to assist with measuring progress toward the strategic directions. She explained they are also working on ways to ensure data on the key performance indicators is shared. She further discussed the formation of progress measures being developed.

Chairperson Shawanokasic thanked Juanita Mendoza and Dr. Wendy Cooley for providing an update from the BIE Office of the Director.

**Question:** Brian Wagner, Board Member – Asked for clarification on updated regulations for ISEP.

**Response:** Juanita Mendoza – Replied they are currently working through listening sessions to get comments. After comments, it goes to the negotiated rule making phase and tribal consultation. They will be removing obsolete information from the regulations, updating terminology, and accepting comments/recommendations on other regulation updates. They do plan on updating the transportation section.

**Question:** Brian Wagner, Board Member – Inquired on the timeline.

**Response:** Juanita Mendoza – Explained listening sessions will occur until March. Following that, updates will begin.

**Question:** Dr. Elizabeth Younce, Board Member – Asked for consideration for funding for the children of staff members be included in the updates. Allowing staff members' children to enroll in schools has been used as a hiring technique.

**Response:** Juanita Mendoza – Stated she would listen to the recording of the Board meeting and address all concerns Board members have voiced.

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**12:15 PM – 12:30 PM**

**Public Commenting Session #1 (15 minutes)**

Chairperson Shawanokasic opened the first public commenting session.

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

**Comment:** Jennifer Davis, DFO – Stated it is sometimes difficult for the Board to receive feedback from the public during the public comment sessions. She encouraged attendees to ask questions either the Board or Dr. Thompson could respond to. She stated questions that arose following the Interactive Data Workshops would be appreciated as well. She explained the requirement and purpose for having public commenting sessions during Board meetings.

**Comment:** Mary Begay, Pinon Community School – Asked about Indicator 3 and the lack of data for the APR and if the school data they submitted was utilized.

**Response:** Dr. Eugene Thompson – Explained how NASIS collects data from schools and transfers it to the BIE. He detailed the process to review the submitted data and ensure it is valid and in the required format for the APR. They are manually transferring data for the APR submission. He discussed the challenges to analyzing the data.

**Comment:** Monica Cleveland, Board Member – Asked if there was a requirement for special education teachers and principals to attend Board meetings. She suggested recommending teachers and principals attend at least one meeting a year.

**Response:** Jennifer Davis, DFO – Explained it wasn't a requirement, but it is appreciated when teachers and principals can attend meetings. She noted the meetings include virtual access to encourage participation and the meeting minutes are posted for the public to review. She noted Board members have made a commitment to attend meetings.

**Comment (Jamboard):** Carol Nelwood, Pinon Community School – My name is Carol Nelwood, Business Manager of Pinon Community School. I would like to thank BIE for providing the Interactive Data Workshop in Summer 2023. It was very informative and beneficial for our school. I also would like to acknowledge Arizona Central Team Members as they reach out to provide technical assistant. They are doing a great job!

Chairperson Shawankasic closed the public commenting session and excused the Board for lunch.

**12:30 PM                      Lunch (1.5 hours)**

**2:00 PM – 2:15 PM**

**Public Commenting Session #2 (15 minutes)**

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Vice Chairperson Pilar Peltier opened the public comment session. Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic was excused for a portion of the meeting.

Jennifer Davis, DFO, noted the Board had a quorum present and repeated the public comment guidelines. She read the comment made in Jamboard by Carol Nelwood at the end of the first public comment session.

**Comment:** Pilar Peltier, Vice Chairperson – Suggested BIE staff receive professional development on working with students with autism and training be provided for parents of students with autism.

**Comment:** Brian Wagner, Board Member – Noted he forwarded the mental health flyers that were shared earlier in the day. He received a request for information on virtual (not telephone) resources.

**Comment:** Marsha Dano, Pueblo Public Education Director – Recommended the BIE work better with tribes to determine available resources for students with disabilities. There is very little communication between BOS and tribes on what resources and services are needed. She discussed difficulties hiring staff and the need for equitable services across all BIE schools. She stated tribes should not have to approach BOS to get information about resources students need in the community. She stated their tribe has offered to fund positions at their BOS to fill the gaps in services, but were denied.

**Comment:** Jennifer Davis, DFO – Noted the BIE website lists all resources provided at BOS for students. She noted the BIE is also sending out a newsletter each month with special education updates.

**2:15 PM – 4:00 PM**

**Advisory Board Work – Priority Setting Activity (15-minute break from 3:00 – 3:15 PM)**

Vice Chairperson Pilar Peltier introduced the priority setting activity. This activity was facilitated by Alex Langevin from the Center for Technical Assistance for Excellence in Special Education (TAESE) at Utah State University. She reviewed the Board priorities from the previous year and the duties of the Board for the annual report. For the activity, she explained the Board needed to determine, “What are the unmet needs, policies, or findings related to the coordination of special education services the Board would like to advise the BIE on in the upcoming year?” Board members took 10 minutes to individually brainstorm responses to this question. They then worked in small groups to distill their brainstorm responses down to top ideas. Top ideas were shared from each small group, and then similar ideas were grouped together to determine priority topics. The final priority groupings were named:

- Training
- Social Emotional, Mental Health, and Trauma
- BIE Accountability and Responsibility
- Staffing Issues and Concerns
- Post-Graduation and Transition
- Parental Support

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**4:30 PM**

**Recess**

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**BOARD MINUTES - Day 2**

**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
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7. Present Gretchen Wendell, Board Member
8. Excused Monica Cleveland, Board Member
9. Present Wendy Kroupa, Board Member
10. Excused Rachel Harrison, Board Member
11. Present Dr. Elizabeth Younce, Board Member, Ed.D
12. Present Dr. Janet Slowman-Chee, Board Member, Ed.D

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

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

**Presenters/Speakers:** Berdine Largo, Grace Benally, and Kelly Whiting

**Others in Attendance:**

Arlene Davis	Melanie Star	Loren Hudson
Daisy Thompson	Nikole Cheskey	Zonnie Sombrero
Nikole Cheskey	Rose Klade	Delphina Dayish
Tamatane Iatala	Amanda Bryant	Loren Hudson
Cheryl Laughter	Cheryl Johnson	Narcy Ka'Won
Eleanor Jones	Felicia Brown	Petra Solimon
Margo Weber	Joann Fields	Roberta Clarke
Mark Dreyer	Karen Malone	Amy Suman

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Alberto Castruita	Shelly Spence	Laura Tsosie
Evangeline Bradley-Wilkinson	Allen Mayo	Margo DeLaune
Petra Solimon	Arlene Tachine	Carol Nelwood
Sharon Henderson	Candace Sherwood	Elaine Ignacio
Shelly Spence	Elrisa, Naljahih-Sells	Paula Seanez
Tashina Wilson-Yazzie	Helen Martinez	Marcy Starr
Katharine Ford	Norbert Clarkson	Laura Tsosie
John Copenhaver	Rachel Yonnie	Lilly Dominguez
Wanema Garcia	Seatha Pacheco	Jennifer Toledo
Neal Morton	Treva Roanhorse	Mary Begay
Nicholas Korn	John Begay	Danielyn Pino
Sharon Henderson	Veronica Perez	Gloria Yepa
Carol Nelwood	Petra Solimon	Gina Lewis
Rachel Yonnie	Carmelia Becenti	
Kiva Sam	Danielyn Pino	

**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 the meeting.

### **8:30 AM – 8:45 AM**

#### **Roll Call**

**Start Time:** 8:30 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
- Pilar Peltier
- Leslie Finnearty
- Wendy Kroupa
- Brian Wagner
- Gretchen Wendell
- Dr. Elizabeth Younce
- Dr. Janet Slowman-Chee
- Leon Reval
- Excused: Rachel Harrison and Monica Cleveland

### **8:45 AM – 10:00 AM**

**Panel Discussion – BIE Special Education Coordinators**



## **BIE Advisory Board for Exceptional Children**

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A live discussion on special education topics happened between a panel of Special Education Coordinators, who work within various BIE-funded high schools, and the Board members. Representatives were invited from each of the three ADD regions: Bureau Operated Schools (BOS), Tribally Controlled Schools (TCS), and Navajo Schools (BOS and TCS).

**Presenters:** Grace Benally and Berdine Largo

Robbin Sanders joined the meeting as a presenter but was unable to get her audio to work.

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic introduced the session and welcomed the panelists

The following questions were provided to the panelists to prepare for this report and discussion.

1. What are some success and challenges related to post-school outcomes, transition, and graduation within the school?
2. Are there any other special education areas/topics you would like to highlight?
3. What strategies are used to engage students who have left high school and are now in college, post-secondary training, or competitive employment?
4. What resources are provided to both the students with disabilities and their parent(s) regarding the transition to higher education?
5. How many students with disabilities are being referred for vocational rehabilitation services?

The following are the responses given by the presenters to each of the questions.

1. What are some success and challenges related to post-school outcomes, transition, and graduation within the school?

Berdine Largo, Special Education Director from Mescalero Apache School in New Mexico, stated their successes include building a bridge between the community and the school. They have been working with students on transition and assisting with placing them in job settings. They work with the community to build trust with employers. They offer local college field trips to help students become familiar with campuses. Their transition specialists assist students who want to attend out of state colleges or trade schools to connect with those campuses. They also assist students with attending a hands-on job fair at their local resort/casino. These transition opportunities connect the student's classes and skills to the job positions they are interested in. Their challenges include transportation. They are located in a rural area and it can be difficult to transport students to job sites.

Grace Benally, Head Teacher from Wingate High School in New Mexico, introduced herself. She explained her focus on determining the individual needs of each student with disabilities and communicating those needs to all teachers. She and her team work to create opportunities for their

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students. They focus heavily on graduation and transition outcomes for students with disabilities. Their successes include inspiring their students to succeed at school. One of their challenges is communication and training for parents. They work to communicate with parents and continually work to bolster parent engagement. They also work on providing a safe school environment where parents feel welcome. They have been working on individual parent communication. They have a partnership with the University of New Mexico to provide technical classes for their students. Their students also participate in an onsite work experience program at the University of New Mexico to boost their employability skills.

They now have a transition specialist who works on acquiring resources for their students. She gave some examples of students who had unique transition opportunities to postsecondary settings. Each of their students are given the opportunity to participate in various transition services and form connections. They have three special education teachers, one transition specialist, and a secretary for their special education program. Their staff is very proficient and does well providing special education services. Their challenges include transportation. They have a dorm and all students are eligible to reside in the dorms. Most of their students are day students. Sometimes they need to make transportation arrangements for students to get to their schools. They have an 80% graduation rate for their students with disabilities. If students aren't meeting graduation goals, they have a team to assist them in meeting the goal.

They need professional development opportunities for their staff to attend and spend time collaborating together. More face-to-face professional development would allow their teachers to make better connections. Recruitment of staff takes a very long time because of the hiring system requirements. This is a hardship for all BOS. They are working on defining and setting up professional learning communities (PLCs). She discussed staff workloads and the time management necessary to ensure all tasks are completed. The timeframe to have policies and procedures approved by the BIE solicitors is lengthy and the solicitor legal interpretations are difficult for staff to interpret and implement within their system. It would be helpful for schools to have procedures in writing for them to follow. Providing related services are a challenge for them. It would be helpful if a system existed for BOS to gain support for related services. The process to find related service providers and have them approved is laborious.

### **2. Are there any other special education areas/topics you would like to highlight?**

Berdine Largo stated they offer dual credit options, which includes fire fighter certification. They involve students and parents in the transition portion of the IEP to assist with self-determination.

Grace Benally noted they have been working for several years to link students with vocational

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rehabilitation services. Their students have the option to obtain vocational rehabilitation from the state of New Mexico and the Navajo Nation. In some cases, students are obtaining services from both vocational rehabilitation agencies. Relationships with vocational rehabilitation have been very beneficial. The vocational rehabilitation agencies have had challenges providing transportation for remote students to reach job locations. They encourage students to reach out post-graduation in case they need transportation (or other) assistance to access services. She highlighted their practices to ensure a safe and welcoming school environment. They are developing curriculum guides with listed services and academic expectations. They try to align their budgets with the needs of their students.

### **3. What strategies are used to engage students who have left high school and are now in college, post-secondary training, or competitive employment?**

Berdine Largo explained their counselor follows up with their student's post-graduation and they work with the BIE to have their students complete the postsecondary outcomes survey. They also encourage their students to reach out post-graduation if they need additional support. They reach out to students who stay in the community to see what assistance they need.

Grace Benally stated they follow up by doing postsecondary outcomes surveys with their students. They collect contact information for both the students and their parents to follow up and learn how they are doing. Their school is very active in using resources to follow up with students after graduation. They are limited on the number of staff they have to complete follow ups with students. Most communication occurs virtually or by phone. They always request students remain in contact with their vocational rehabilitation counselors after exiting high school. Their students undergo mock interviews and job setting scenarios to assist them in achieving competitive employment.

### **4. What resources are provided to both students with disabilities and their parent(s) regarding the transition to higher education?**

Berdine Largo explained they use their tribal education department, the New Mexico division of vocational rehabilitation program, and their tribal vocational rehabilitation program to provide resources. Each student's participation in their transition planning helps the staff match student interest and abilities with the available resources. They regularly communicate with students and parents to prepare students for workplace settings, trade school, and college.

Grace Benally noted they do a lot of similar things Berdine described. They have flyers and LRP resources for parents, which they distribute at the beginning of the school year to provide parents transition information. They provide an orientation on transition services for all juniors and seniors, which is required for students to attend. Contact information for services is provided during this

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orientation. They have a monthly parent meeting. They promote EPICS training each year encouraging/funding parent attendance. They also provide dorm training for parents. Parents have direct contact information for the special education unit at Wingate High School. They use a parent portal where all grade and attendance information is provided.

5. How many students with disabilities are being referred for vocational rehabilitation services? Berdine Largo stated all of their students are referred to the New Mexico vocational rehabilitation department. All parents are introduced to the vocational rehabilitation representative and given the representative's contact information.

Grace Benally explained their school had all students (over 20) attend their vocational rehabilitation orientation at the beginning of this school year. Of these students, eight of them signed up to receive services from vocational rehabilitation. They've seen an increase in vocational rehabilitation services participation since they began offering the orientation.

Grace Benally thanked the Board members, BIE staff, her peers, and parents for all their work to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. She acknowledged the work that occurs to provide special education teachers with instructional tools.

Berdine Largo thanked BIE staff who support their staff. She also thanked parents and the Board members for their support.

Chairperson Shawanokasic encouraged the presenters to review the Board's annual report and the priorities they have identified in the report.

An audience member spoke about the need to provide more effective professional development options and supports for new educators. Another audience member noted state vocational rehabilitation agencies have budgets to offer transition services and to work with students who haven't been determined eligible yet for vocational rehabilitation services or who haven't graduated from high school. Another audience member noted the need to reteach skills to students at transition points in their education timeline and the need to provide information for parents periodically about special education processes.

Grace Benally noted all the transition points for special education students and how easy it is for parents to become overwhelmed during the process.

Berdine Largo stated the need for staff to communicate continually with parents about the IEP

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process.

**Comment:** Norman Shawanokasic, Chairperson – Stated the role of vocational rehabilitation services for transitioning students to reach successful postsecondary outcomes is critical. He noted the importance of parents knowing the goals listed in their child’s IEP and how their child’s transition is being implemented.

**Question:** Brian Wagner, Board Member – Applauded the work being done in schools for transition. He asked panelists to let the Board know their concerns so the Board can share them.

**Response:** Grace Benally – Stated concern about the BIE policies and procedures being communicated adequately with all stakeholders who provide services for students with disabilities. She noted a second concern with the lengthy process for recruiting and hiring credentialed special education teachers. She also expressed difficulties for staff to obtain credentialing from states where schools are located.

**10:00 AM – 10:15 AM**

### **Public Commenting Session #3 (15 minutes)**

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic opened the public comment session and Jennifer Davis, DFO, reviewed the guidelines for public commenting.

**Comment:** Amy Suman (Jamsoard) – Staffing: There is a national special education shortage in the U.S., and it is magnified in my state (NM) as well as in rural, micro-districts. For example, there are approx. 3,000 SpEd vacancies in our state, 300 are within 150 miles of the Pueblo of Laguna. High poverty schools tend to have higher numbers of Special Education students...some public schools have budgets to attach \$10-25,000 signing bonuses...we, TBS, cannot compete. We are “growing our own” as fast as we can, but we require increased funding to staff these positions. My suggestions include not only funding, but incentivized pay for teachers who obtain SpEd endorsements and legislation to require teacher prep programs to include SpEd training for dual certification for ALL new teachers.

I was a special education student for both an intellectual and a physical disability; I would not have graduated high school without Special Education. I have earned 3 degrees and am working on my doctorate...this demonstrates the potential that SpEd kids have! It is also worth mentioning that some of the more recent brain-based research around trauma-informed teaching and SEL initiatives in children have revealed the brain scans (PET) of children who have endured trauma are nearly identical to those with learning disabilities. I think this is important when people begin using the “over-identifying” argument...the school I worked for last year was a high-poverty, gun-violence-ridden, urban charter school in the city...30% of our kids were on IEPs. Here at our LDoE, we are at

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nearly 30% as well. Chronic understaffing of SpEd is not an excuse to let 30% of our children fall through the cracks! Educational equity is directly tied to health equity. This has been my career focus for 20+ years.

**Comment:** Gina Lewis, Isleta Elementary – Added transportation is difficult for students in rural areas.

**Comment:** Leon Reval, Board Secretary – Noted the difficulty in determining students who are eligible to be tribal members and enroll them in services provided by the BIE and various tribes. He stated the need to ensure tribal students are part of the determination process and the community.

**Comment:** Nikole Cheskey, Pierre Indian Learning Center – Stated she has been glad to attend the meeting. It is the first Board meeting she has attended and she found it very insightful.

**Comment:** Treva Roanhorse, Navajo Nation – She commended Grace Benally and Berdine Largo for their commitment to students at their schools and for their efforts working with parents to include them in the special education process. She noted the great efforts of school staff to encourage communication from students after exiting high school. She encouraged the use of vocational rehabilitation funding to support students in the transition process. She stated the need to communicate with parents about opportunities and resources for students after high school is a necessity. She thanked the Board, teachers, and school administrators for their work providing services for students with disabilities.

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic closed the public comment session.

**10:15 AM – 10:30 AM Break**

**10:30 AM – 11:30 AM**

**Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)/Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation (CANAR)**

CSAVR collaborates with a variety of partners and stakeholders in vocational rehabilitation. CANAR serves as an avenue for collaboration and cooperation between the administrators of rehabilitation agencies serving American Indian and Alaskan Native persons with disabilities to enhance the quality of services, resulting in positive employment outcomes.

**Presenter:** Lanor Curole, President of CANAR

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic welcomed the Board back from their break and introduced the session.

The following questions were provided to the presenter to prepare for this report and discussion.

**1.** How many students are being referred to vocational rehabilitation (VR) services?

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2. How are CANAR services coordinated with the state VR?
3. How are students supported once they are admitted into the VR services? If so, what supports are provided?
4. If a student leaves VR services, is there an exit interview?
5. What is the student success rate when a student accesses VR services?

Lanor Curole shared information about what American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) is and how CANAR fits into it. She explained AIVRS was set up under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to meet the specific cultural needs of individuals receiving vocational rehabilitation services. Ninety-three AIVRS programs are in the country. Students who are eligible for the program must reside on or near a program's reservation or defined service area, must be an enrolled member of a tribe, must have documentation of an impairment that is a barrier to employment, and must be expected to benefit from the program. The vision of AIVRS is to provide support for individuals with disabilities as one of the most disadvantaged groups in society. AIVRS must provide comprehensive, culturally appropriate, vocational rehabilitation services to eligible individuals who reside on or near a reservation or service area, that are consistent with their strengths, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and informed choice to secure meaningful employment. AIVRS programs are intended to be customized for the tribal community to ensure culture is considered in the program design and supports traditional healing. [CANAR](#) is the consortium for administrators of AIVRS programs and it works to advocate for the improvement and expansion of AIVRS services. They have a volunteer board of current and former AIVRS directors.

Following are the responses given by the presenter to each of the questions.

1. How many students are being referred to vocational rehabilitation (VR) services?

Lanor Curole noted the number of referred students is based on local demographics and programs. There are many points of entry for vocational rehabilitation services.

2. How are CANAR services coordinated with the state VR?

Lanor Curole stated tribal vocational rehabilitation services are required by law to coordinate with the state VR agency. It is common for CANAR to share cases and the success of sharing cases differs based on each state. Each state VR program has different policies and procedures that AIVRS services need to coordinate with. State agencies don't have the resources to provide culturally responsive services, so they can work with AIVRS programs to be more culturally responsive.

3. How are students supported once they are admitted into the VR services? If so, what supports are provided?

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Lanor Curole explained the first step is to support students with the intake and eligibility process. Following that, an individualized plan for employment is developed to identify services to assist the individual with a disability and to identify who has responsibilities for each item in the plan. Eligibility is determined within 90 days of receiving an application for services.

#### **4. If a student leaves VR services, is there an exit interview?**

Lanor Curole noted exiting the program occurs either because an individual is successfully employed or unsuccessful in obtaining employment. Employment must be held for 90 days for a case to be labeled successful. Exit interviews are good practices and occur between the individual and their counselor.

#### **5. What is the student success rate when a student accesses VR services?**

Lanor Curole explained success rates vary. They usually aim for a 60% success rate with individuals being placed in employment. Success rates are generally higher when vocational rehabilitation programs interact earlier with applicants for services.

Chairperson Shawanokasic thanked Lanor Curole for her presentation.

**Question:** Gretchen Wendell, Board Member – Stated off reservation boarding schools have a difficult time working with vocational rehabilitation services because their students come from a variety of locations. She inquired about the process for connecting students with vocational rehabilitation programs in their home location.

**Response:** Lanore Curole – Explained tribal VR services can only serve their local students. However, state VR services should be able to assist with providing services to students in their home locations. She stated her willingness to connect school staff with state-level contacts. She suggested state VR agencies may be able to reach out to other state VR agencies to provide supports for students living at boarding schools.

**Question:** Brian Wagner, Board Member – Asked if tribes could contract out their vocational rehabilitation services.

**Response:** Lanore Curole – She responded tribes could not contract out their VR services because they are responsible for applying for the funding and meeting the funding requirements, which includes identifying a tribal unit responsible for identifying individuals who are eligible for services.

**Comment:** Norman Shawonokasic, Chairperson – Clarified where vocational rehabilitation funding comes from and noted tribes would have policies regarding culturally appropriate services.

**Comment:** Brian Wagner, Board Member – Noted individuals could access both tribal and state vocational rehabilitation services.



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**Comment:** Pilar Peltier, Vice Chairperson – Explained she works at Chemawa Indian School and they work with tribal VR to provide services for students at their home residence. She stated her experience is tribal VR programs are easier to work with than student’s home state VR agencies. She talked about transportation issues for students participating in employment experiences as part of their transition and VR services.

**Response:** Lanore Curole – She responded she would work on putting together materials on how to connect students at boarding schools with VR in their areas of residency.

**Comment:** Dr. Janet Slowman Chee, Board Member – Stated the provided information was very beneficial. She recommended a flowchart should be developed for schools and parents to increase their understanding of the VR process.

**Response:** Lanore Curole – Noted the location of VR services would drive the program process. She observed CANAR can help form connections with local VR agencies and assist with parents and schools understanding the process.

**Question:** Dr. Elizabeth Younce, Board Member – Asked if funding agreements could be shared for VR agencies.

**Response:** Lanore Curole – Replied funding agreements would need to be requested from the individual tribal organizations.

**Question:** Carol Nelwood, Pinon Community School (chat) – Pinon Community School (PCS) serves Residential Students from 1st to 12th grade, who attends nearby Public School. Their IEP is developed by the State School, but enrolled with Tribally Controlled Grant School, are they eligible for these services? If so, we would like more information. PCS is located on the Navajo Reservation. Thank you!

**Response:** Lanore Curole – Replied funding agreements would need to be requested from the individual tribal organizations.

**Comment:** Paula Seanez, Director Navajo Nation – There is currently a request out for applications for tribal programs. She encouraged tribal representatives to review the grant announcement and apply for services.

**Comment:** Treva Roanhorse, Navajo Nation – Noted tribal VR services will be offered in the language that is appropriate for the recipient of the services. She noted programs are funded with 90% of monies coming from the federal government and 10% provided by the tribe.

**Question:** Pilar Peltier, Vice Chairperson – Asked how boarding schools can get VR resources translated into the preferred language of the student and family?

**Response:** Lanor Curole – Replied tribal VR agencies should be able to provide resources in the student’s language. She stressed the importance of starting the VR application process with students early.

Chairperson Shawanokasic thanked Lanor Curole for providing information for the Board and

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answering all the Board's questions. He stressed the need to provide resources to students and craft individualized VR plans for people with disabilities. He noted memorandums of understanding (MoUs) need to be developed with state VR agencies to ensure services are provided by them and by tribal VR agencies.

Lanor Curole encouraged the Board to stay in touch with CANAR.

**Question:** Brian Wagner, Board Member – Asked if there were any concerns with the federal funding for vocational rehabilitation programs.

- **Response:** Lanor Curole – Noted the five-year cycle of the federal funding for tribal VR programs prompts staff turnover because of the uncertainty of salary funding.

**11:30 AM – 11:45 AM**

### **Public Commenting Session #4 (15 minutes)**

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic opened the public comment session and Jennifer Davis, DFO, reviewed the guidelines for public commenting.

**Comment:** Jennifer Davis, DFO – Encouraged participants to view the [BIE special education newsletter](#) and submit a story from a school for the newsletter.

**Comment:** Anonymous (Jamboard) – How can we address and correct the inequity of pay that exists between BIE teachers and public schools in New Mexico (and perhaps other states as well)? As a member of a federally recognized tribe, Seneca Cayuga, I am saddened to experience this within the BIE. I have had the opportunity to accept local positions in public schools, within 100-mile radius of ABQ, for \$10-\$15,000 more per year, but have denied these opportunities so I can work with native students.

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic closed the public comment session.

**11:45 AM**

**Lunch (1.75 hours)**

**1:30 PM – 2:30 PM**

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic welcomed the Board back from lunch and established a quorum was present.

### **LRP Products**

Provided information about three LRP products provided by the BIE for all BIE-funded schools (Bureau Operated Schools and Tribally Controlled Schools).

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**Presenter:** Kelly Whiting, LRP Representative

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic introduced the topic.

Jennifer Davis, DFO, explained the BIE purchased LRP products during the 2017-2018 school year and these products have been offered to all BIE schools since then. She works with Kelly Whiting to provide information to schools about LRP products and resources. LRP provides electronic professional development resources. She explained she oversees the BIE's contract with LRP for these resources.

Kelly Whiting provided a review of the LRP products. They provide DirectSTEP learning courses, Special Ed Connection, and ESEA Now under their contract with the BIE. LRP originally stood for Labor Relations Press when their company was founded in the 1970s. Their resources are available to all BIE staff and all BOS/TCS staff. Parents of students with disabilities at BOS can also access LRP resources.

Kelly Whiting highlighted Special Ed Connection and explained it is an online source for information and guidance on all aspects of special education. It includes special education news, guidance, and resources; explanations of IDEA, ADA, FERPA, and other laws impacting special education; best practices to meet legal and regulatory mandates; insights from special education, Section 504, and Rtl experts; and case-based insights to help staff avoid missteps that lead to litigation. The content is developed by attorneys, special education experts, general education experts, editors, copyright experts, and IT staff. It also includes resources and guidance created by LRP as a result of case law. It is not licensed for use by parents.

Kelly Whiting highlighted ESEA Now. This is their newest resource. It delivers information on meeting the needs of homeless students, students with disabilities, and English Language Learners; implementing proven school improvement strategies; preparing for a Title I monitoring visit or audit; how federal allocations could affect a budget; and complying with fiscal requirements. It is not licensed for use by parents.

Next, Kelly Whiting reviewed Direct Step. These courses provide staff with real-life examples to apply to their day-to-day decision making, avoiding missteps and disputes with parents. Staff can learn at their own pace for the greatest possible comprehension and retention, save money on staff travel and bringing in costly one-time trainers, and have peace of mind knowing the content is created by education professionals. Parents can have access to the courses.

[Kelly Whiting](#) explained schools can email her to request orientations for school staff on how to access the three aforementioned tools. The orientations are offered through the BIE contract at no cost to

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school staff. Schools can contact Jennifer Davis to get login information for LRP resources. Kelly Whiting then provided a tutorial for the ESEA Now, Special Ed Connection, and Direct Step websites.

**Question:** Brian Wagner, Board Member – Asked how frequently Direct Step usernames needed to be updated.

**Response:** Kelly Whiting – Responded usernames and passwords do not need to be updated.

Jennifer Davis, DFO, thanked Kelly Whiting for her presentation.

**2:30 PM – 2:45 PM      Break**

**2:45 PM – 4:00 PM**

### **Advisory Board Work**

- **Work on next meeting logistics.**
- **Start working on the first priority for the annual report as a group.**
- **Lesson Learned – what went right and what went wrong?**
- **What can be improved (e.g., processes, methods, strategies, productivity, etc.)?**
- **Recommendations for future projects or meetings.**
- **Discuss next steps.**

Chairperson Norman Shawanokasic introduced the agenda item. He explained the objectives of the Board workshopping session.

Chairperson Shawanokasic reviewed location options for the April 2024 meeting. He suggested returning to Albuquerque.

Elizabeth Younce, Board Member, suggested meeting in North Carolina at Cherokee Central School. Participants could fly into Asheville and would be shuttled to the school where the meeting could be held. Their culinary arts students would provide breakfast and lunch. The commute from the airport to Hara's casino, where the Board would stay, is over an hour drive.

Jennifer Davis, DFO, inquired if the public would be able to access the meeting space without disturbing the students.

Elizabeth Younce, Board Member, stated their meeting space is large enough and would be accessible to the public. She stated the school would be available April 18-19 or April 25-26.

Leon Reval, Secretary, noted he is limited on traveling because of his parenting obligations and would

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not be able to attend meetings in person outside of his driving distance.

Several other locations were suggested for the April meeting. The Board decided to meet in Albuquerque, New Mexico on April 25-26 and in Asheville at the Cherokee Central School on September 26-27.

Brian Wagner, Board Member, suggested hearing a follow up from Indian Health Services (IHS) during the April meeting.

Leon Reval, Secretary, suggested having a presentation from the BIE Section 504 office. He also requested clarification on enrollment based on tribal membership and the quarter-blood decree.

Requesting ISEP as a presenter was suggested with several questions for them to respond to regarding funding.

Leon Reval, Secretary, suggested topics around parent supports.

Dr. Thompson noted the BIE is looking at funding for physical facilities and what is an allowable cost.

Gretchen Lehmann, Board Member, stated having a presentation that explains funding would be beneficial and noted she would enjoy a panel discussion from individuals working in the field.

Jennifer Davis, DFO, recommended having a panel discussion from special education coordinators.

Dr. Thompson suggested a panel discussion from school-level Section 504 Coordinators.

Pilar Peltier, Vice Chairperson, asked if behavioral health specialists from the school-level would be beneficial for a panel discussion. She wanted information on how schools can navigate behavioral disturbances and physical aggression in schools.

Dr. Thompson recommended a presentation on the behavioral health and wellness program.

Dr. Elizabeth Younce, Board Member, suggested a panel of behavioral specialists. Board members will need to send Jennifer Davis names of schools that have behavioral specialists.

Brian Wagner, Board Member, recommended a panel of postsecondary transition specialists.

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Gretchen Lehmann, Board Member, requested a NASIS/Infinite Campus update.

Jennifer Davis, DFO, asked if the Board wanted to hear updates from Dr. Thompson during the April meeting.

Leon Reval, Secretary, stated support for a presentation from the EPICS parent organization.

Jennifer Davis, DFO, noted some online Board members have left the meeting. Seven Board members are required to have a quorum to make decisions. It was determined a quorum was present. She also noted having a refresher training on Board member responsibilities and a by-laws review would be beneficial.

Brian Wagner, Board Member, recommended Board members continue editing questions for the April meeting presenters via email.

### **4:35 PM MST                      Adjourn**

Brian Wagner, Board Member, made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Dr. Elizabeth Younce, Board Member, seconded the motion.

All Board members voted in favor of adjourning the meeting.

*Minutes were chair certified for accuracy on April 25, 2024.*