



**Brain Injury Advisory Council Meeting
Online via ZOOM
June 11, 2021**

MEETING MINUTES

Public notice of upcoming meetings will be available on the Department of Education website under “conferences & meetings” at least 10 days prior to each meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rhonda Alcorn, Tiffany Armstrong, Emaly Ball, Jerry Bryan, Ashley Davis, Joni Dulaney, Jo Gunderson, Dale Johannes, Sarvinoz Kadyrova, Amy Levering, Brooke Murtaugh, Judy Nichelson, Peg Ogea-Ginsburg, Peggy Reisher, Tamara Snider, Shawna Thompson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Penny Clark, Tania Diaz, Cindy Hoffschneider, Karen Houseman, Carla Lasley, Zoe Olson, Michelle Ploeger, Frank Velinsky

STAFF PRESENT: Keri Bennett, Ashley Hernandez, Nancy Noha

VISITORS: Andrew Ngochoch, Will Schmeeckle, Chris Stewart

The meeting of the Nebraska Brain Injury Advisory Council commenced at 10:03a.m. Public notification of this meeting was made on the Nebraska Department of Education website.

ATTENDANCE

Council roll call was conducted, and introductions were made. New member Rhonda Alcorn introduced herself as a family member of an individual living with brain injury and shared her background with the council. Tamara Snider was welcomed and Judy shared new member Michelle Ploeger from QLI will be joining at the next council meeting.

AGENDA APPROVAL

The agenda for the day was reviewed. A motion was made by Joni Dulaney and seconded by Peggy Reisher to approve the agenda as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

APPROVAL OF MARCH MEETING MINUTES

The minutes from March 12, 2021 were reviewed. A motion was made by Peggy Reisher and seconded by Ashley Davis to approve the March 12, 2021 meeting minutes as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

OPEN MEETINGS ACT

Judy Nichelson stated that the meeting was an open meeting, and the Open Meetings Law was posted.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was shared.

BRAIN INJURY REGIONAL SCHOOL SUPPORT TEAMS (BIRSST)

Jo Gunderson discussed there are five regional BIRSST teams across the state, tasked with return to learn working on individual student cases. Jo shared all the teams attended the BIA-NE annual conference and Karen McAvoy from Colorado also provided a half day training for the teams. Each team is made up of a variety of individuals from different avenues such as athletic directors, nurses, special education representatives, school administrators and more. Jo discussed the resources being provided to teachers regarding concussion awareness and how they can support students with brain injury. The five teams are Omaha Metro, South East, North East, Central and Western Regions. Jo stated the BIRSST website is available through the Nebraska Department of Education, Special Education website to find information and contact information. Peggy Reisher shared via written comment a copy of the flyer with the Get Schooled on Concussion information that Jo was mentioning.

https://www.dropbox.com/s/yec2pi233x1w0bd/GetSchooled_FullPage.pdf?dl=0

Chris Stewart mentioned the TACT tool and BIRSST during BRAIN Talks for Education Students at Wayne State College. Rhonda Alcorn asked when a student returns to school following an injury with HIPPA privacy laws how do the teachers know they need additional supports? Jo shared this is self-reported from the student and/or family unless it occurred at school so it can vary greatly if students choose to report; sharing students can also work with the school nurse or school psychologist. Keri Bennett asked after talking to two mothers this past week regarding their students whom had brain injury concerns, if a student with acquired brain injury versus traumatic are they still able to work with BIRSST teams? Jo shared, yes, acquired brain injury is serviced with BIRSST teams. Keri asked if contacting a BIRSST team directly is ok for a parent and Jo stated, yes, that was fine.

Jo provided the following link for BIRSST contact information:

<https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/BIRSST-Team-Contacts.pdf>

BIRSST website:

<https://www.education.ne.gov/sped/birsst-brain-injury-regional-school-support-teams/>

BIA-NE UPDATE ON PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Peggy Reisher shared a PowerPoint presentation with the council updating the council on current happenings at the Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska. Peggy reviewed the BIA mission and the make up of the current BIA-NE Board of Directors. Peggy shared the 2021 BIA-NE budget breakdown of: 16% event revenue, 45% contributions/donations and 39% government grants. Peggy summarized BIA-NE's Core Programs and Services: Prevention, Education, Advocacy, and Support. Peggy discussed BIA-NE's training presentations as well as programs with the BI Screening Tool. Peggy reviewed the legislative activity and advocacy events worked on by the Brain Injury Alliance. Peggy shared their work with NCCD and their collaboration on the 4th Annual NE Disability Pride Day on July 23rd. Chris Stewart discussed her role as a Resource Facilitator and the work of the Resource Facilitation program. Chris reviewed the work of Gina Simanek the Statewide Brain Injury Specialist and her background. Chris discussed that resource facilitation is similar to peer support and highlighted that they are collecting data from a dynamic list used to develop and expand services across the state. Chris discussed that resource facilitation engages people living after brain injuries through grant work, engagement groups, BRAIN Talks and the Unmasking Brain Injury Project. Chris reviewed their work on expanding statewide resources. Peggy's presentation was shared through this link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/ej6u2p32eg7c9ft/6-11-2021%20BIAC%20Presentation%20about%20BIA-NE%20%28003%29.pptx?dl=0>

COMMITTEE REPORTS

No questions or discussion was shared regarding the committee reports.

PEER TO PEER SUPPORT PILOT UPDATE

Emaly Ball shared they have been meeting weekly with their partners and have created eligibility criteria and marketing materials. Emaly discussed things are quickly moving along and they are beginning to see the materials develop. Emaly shared they are hoping to launch soon with marketing starting in the next couple of weeks and hiring for their positions.

BI TRUST FUND UPDATE

Peggy Reisher shared the committee has been meeting monthly since December, stating they last met April 21st. Peggy reported the committee has created the by-laws and looked at how they will distribute funds. A vote was conducted to disperse funds to the BIA for resource facilitation. The next committee meeting will be July 28th. Peggy discussed the committee is working on creating markers, sharing funds have not yet been distributed and they will not be making hires until funds are distributed.

Judy Nichelson discussed her role on the trust fund committee and shared how she independently, not as a BIAC member, has been actively challenging the interpretation of LB481 and asked the BIAC to hear her concerns and consider writing a letter supporting the challenge to the committee's current interpretation. Tiffany Armstrong asked if this was written on the agenda and if this should be discussed at this time of the meeting, Brooke Murtaugh supported this question and stated this should have been public comment. Tiffany Armstrong stated she would like it reflected in the minutes that the Chair was questioned on the agenda and chose to overrule the request without discussion. Judy presented a PDF outlining LB481 and her concerns, and said the PDF will be sent out to council members after the meeting. Judy said she contacted the Governor's office and spoke with a representative there regarding her concerns. Brooke Murtaugh and Tiffany Armstrong stated they would like to comment and council comments should be heard. Judy Nichelson suggested a separate meeting would be scheduled via Doodle Poll for discussion on her concerns. Members discussed the need for council member comments to be heard. Brooke Murtaugh stated this issue is not part of the role of the council as the BIAC has written their support of the trust fund; stating this is for the board of the trust fund not a role of the BIAC if there is concern that needs to go to the trust fund board and the BIAC should not have a special meeting for work of the trust fund board. Brooke shared the University of Nebraska is the owner of the fund and is not something BIAC has to comment on and she is unsure if council members would be in support of writing a letter. Tiffany Armstrong shared concerns regarding Judy using the BIAC time and agenda for this matter. Joni Dulaney shared she is offended by Judy's comments today, stating she is a member of both the BIAC & trust fund oversight committee sharing she feels this presentation is not giving the oversight committee credit for the amount of work they have done in a limited amount of time. Joni stated she feels these comments were part of a personal agenda and shared she feels this is inappropriate to be brought to the BIAC, stating this needs to be brought to the oversight committee. Brooke Murtaugh shared this is unfortunate that there are now two competing entities fighting over funds which is causing a fracture to the limited funds and resources now limiting services and resources for individuals and families in the state which should be working together in service of individuals with brain injury. Tiffany Armstrong requested the minutes show many opinions differed from what was presented. Judy repeated her comments were shared not as a BIAC member but as an individual living with brain injury. Members discussed the wording of the legislation. Ashley Davis suggested that this information should have been sent in advance by email to prepare. Rhonda Alcorn stated there are so many people that have so many needs like her son and shared she feels its important the money is focused on the survivors and she feels there are so many opportunities for things to be done for survivors and she is looking for help for those types of needs. Judy requested that Keri send out a Doodle Poll to schedule a possible follow-up meeting for discussion on this issue.

Amendment: Keri sent Judy's document, titled "LB481 Assessment" to members via email on June 11, 2021. On July 12, 2021, Keri sent a follow up email to BIAC members stating the special meeting to discuss Judy's concerns will not be held. In lieu of the meeting, members were asked to read LB481 and

the PDF document from Judy, and consider attending the Trust Fund Oversight Committee meeting on Wednesday, July 28 from 1:00 – 3:00 pm, as the meeting is open to the public.

ACL FEDERAL TBI PROGRAM UPDATES

Keri Bennett reported they have filed a no-cost extension to request using the remaining grant funds through the end of next May. The new grant application has been submitted and shared the award should hopefully be granted in July. Keri shared the new grant application includes a task force related to Covid-19 survivors and their complications with brain injury. Keri stated she is looking into collaborating on this with Iowa who also has a Covid-19 task force. Keri reported the NASHIA Conference will again be held virtually and she will send the NASHIA conference registration information to council members.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was presented.

ADJOURN

The next meeting is scheduled for September 10, 2021. The meeting adjourned at 11:39 a.m. with a motion made by Emaly Ball and seconded by Shawna Thompson. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**