

STATE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
National Conference Center at the Holiday Inn
399 Monmouth Street
East Windsor, NJ 08520

MINUTES

Thursday, November 15th, 2007

Members in attendance: Dr. Sharon Maricle, Dr. Howard Lerner, Philip Gartlan, William Sellar, Scott Elliott, Melinda Jennis, Katherine Roberson, , Blanche Stetler, Carolyn Hayer, Kathleen Mullery, Debra Fernandez

Members not in attendance: Dr. Norma Blecker, Melinda Jennis, Angela Durso

Resource Representatives in attendance: Donna Brown, Gordon Reibman, Elizabeth Collins

Resource Representatives not in attendance: Debbie Stewart

Guests and members of the public: John Beryone, Sol Heckelman, Gloria Rodriguez, Maureen Holahan-Saling

I. ACCEPTANCE OF OCTOBER MINUTES

The meeting was officially called to order at 9:40 a.m. by Chairperson Sharon Maricle. The October minutes were approved and seconded. **All in favor.**

II. PRESENTATION: Addressing Assistive Technology for Students with Disabilities in New Jersey.

Dr. Bud Rizer presented an overview of a multi-year project between the New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs and the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, Office of Education. Dr. Rizer summarized his work to date as follows: 1) development of a Statewide Assistive Technology (AT) Training Program 2) development of a draft of statewide AT Guidelines and 3) Two Vendor Fairs. Dr. Rizer also shared several tools that he and his colleagues developed in managing and organizing Assistive Technology:

- The AT Decision-Making Worksheet;
- The Resource Tool for Considering Assistive Technology (RTCAT); and
- Links, Information and Resources on Assistive Technology and/or UDL

As Dr. Rizer continues his work into 2008, he extended an open invitation to all SSEAC members to attend the next Vendor Fair, to be held on May 30th, 2008 as well as any of the remaining trainings being held at the Learning Resource Centers.

III. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Dr. Wohle reported holding a series of presentations for special education administrators of local school districts and charter schools throughout the State. The goal of these nine meetings was to provide updates regarding the New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs'

(NJOSEP) implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) in such matters as public reporting and state determinations of each local district's performance regarding compliance with state and federal special education requirements.

This is the first year that states are required to publicly report on local district performance in relation to state established targets. It is also the first year for state determinations of local district performance.

In fulfillment of these federal requirements, in December 2007, the NJOSEP will publicly report the district profiles on its website. The district profiles will include the following State Performance Plan indicators:

Indicator 1: Graduation Rates – Percent of youth with IEPs graduating from high school with a regular diploma

Indicator 2: Drop-Out Rates – Percent of youth with IEPs dropping out of high school

Indicator 3A: Assessment – District/charter school met the State's AYP objectives for progress for the disability subgroup.

Indicator 3B: Assessment – Participation rate for children with IEPs in a regular assessment with no accommodations; regular assessment with accommodations; alternative assessment against grade level standards; alternate assessment against alternate achievement standards;

Indicator 3C: Assessment – Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade level standards and alternate achievement standards;

Indicator 4A: Suspension/Expulsion – District identified by the State as having a significant discrepancy in the rates of suspensions and expulsions of children with disabilities for greater than 10 days in a school year.

Indicator 5: School Age LRE – Percentage of children with IEPs aged 6-21

- A. Removed from regular class less than 21% of the day
- B. Removed from regular class greater than 60% of the day
- C. Served in public or private separate schools, residential placements, or homebound or hospital placements.

Indicator 6: Preschool LRE – Percent of preschool children with IEPs who received special education and related services in settings with typically developing peers (e.g., early childhood settings, home and part-time early childhood/part-time early childhood special education settings)

Indicator 12: Early Childhood Transition – Percent of children referred by Part C prior to age 3 who are found eligible for Part B, and who have an IEP developed and implemented by the their third birthdays.

Subsequent to the public reporting of local district performance, determination letters will be sent to local districts. Each state must use the four determination categories listed below regarding the districts implementation of state and federal special education requirements.

- 1) Meets Requirements and the purposes of the IDEA
- 2) Needs Assistance in meeting the requirement of Part B of the IDEA
- 3) Needs Intervention in meeting the requirement of Part B of the IDEA
- 4) Needs Substantial Intervention in meeting the requirements of Part B of the IDEA

NJOSEP, for the 2007-2008 school year, has based its determinations on the monitoring priorities set forth in IDEA, i.e., General Supervision, including monitoring, verification, other oversight activities and data submissions; Placement in the Least Restrictive Environment; and Disproportionality.

Specifically, NJOSEP will consider the following factors in making its determinations of local districts:

- Whether the local district corrected noncompliance identified through monitoring activities or other general supervisory activities, in a timely manner
- Whether the local district demonstrated progress in correcting noncompliance
- Whether the NJOSEP needed to provide ongoing oversight as part of its general supervision, to facilitate progress of the local district in correcting noncompliance
- Whether the local district was identified for “Significant Disproportionality” of specific racial/ethnic groups with regard to eligibility or placement determinations, as indicated in its IDEA '08 grant notice
- Whether the local district was identified for the 2006-2007 self-assessment process based on the percentage of students with disabilities educated in separate public and/or private special education settings
- Whether the local district’s data submissions were received by NJOSEP in a timely manner.

IV. COUNCIL DISCUSSION

The SSEAC Committee feels that the addition of a student or recent high school graduate would complement the current Committee and add a new perspective to Council membership. After discussion, it was agreed that each member would explore possibilities and return to the December meeting with their findings.

V. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Ms. Maureen Holahand-Saling, representing a Parent Advisory Group from Monmouth County, reported to the council examples of “retaliation” toward parents at the local level.

VI. LUNCH

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Transition Subcommittee

Each member will begin reviewing code as it relates to transition for specific discussion at the Dec. meeting. This subcommittee will research roles and responsibilities for the position of Transition Coordinator – e.g. structured learning experience; endorsement certificate; and licensing and certification. The committee will reach out to Bob Haugh and Dan Baker

Inclusion Subcommittee

Subcommittee members voiced concern of the unlevelled playing field between local school districts, county school districts and private schools, specifically, with regard to finances reporting requirements, and abilities to raise funds for expansions. Additionally the members were impressed with the concepts in universal design and will be working on a recommendation to the State. The topic will be revisited in December.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approx 1:45 p.m. The next meeting of the Council is scheduled on Dec. 20th, 2007 at the Holiday Inn in East Windsor.