

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

MINUTES

Thursday, June 14, 2007

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

Members not in attendance: Philip Gartlan, Angela Durso, Debra Fernandez

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

Resource Representatives not in attendance:

Guests and members of the public: Dr. David Leigh, Renee Pfaff, Signe Stubbits, Ellen Oxild, Michael Leonard, Susan Galbraith, Sol Heckelman, Sarah Logan, Nicholas Del'Re, Lauren Agoratus, Chris Hayer, Mireille Wahl

I. ACCEPTANCE OF APRIL MINUTES

The meeting was officially called to order at 9:40 a.m. by Chairperson Dr. Sharon Maricle. The May minutes were approved. **Two abstentions. All in favor.**

II. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

In Dr. Wohle's absence, Cecelia Downey of the Office of Special Education Programs provided the Director's Update.

Parent Survey: Indicator 8 of the Annual Performance Report requires that the Department survey parents regarding their satisfaction with their level of parent involvement in the special education process. Letters are currently going out to parents to let them know that their district is being included in the first year of the parent survey. 120 districts will be surveyed during this initial year. Dr. Wohle will see that the Council gets a copy of the survey and will discuss it at the July meeting.

APA: A number of concerns have been raised by districts and federal monitors regarding the Alternate Proficiency Assessment. Among the concerns expressed by the federal peer review is that the test focuses on functional skills, when the federal requirement is to address grade level standards. There is also concern about the inclusion of program components in the rubric for the determination of proficiency. The Department will begin to address these concerns this summer. They are looking to expand the APA Advisory Committee that will consider revisions to the APA. They are currently recruiting general education and special education teachers as well as related service providers to work on the project this summer. The Department expects that some changes will be in place for the coming school year.

III. PRESENTATION: Student Presenters from the Montville *Pathways for Exceptional Children* Student Mentoring Project

Stephanie Jennis, Sara Goodson, and Melissa Czajkowski spoke about their involvement in the student mentoring project. A key aspect of the program is the mentor training. The students demonstrated some of the training activities that help the mentors to develop empathy and understanding of how students with disabilities experience their environment. All of the students felt that their mentoring experience has been a very positive one, especially in helping them to develop patience and improving their understanding of students with special needs. The program has grown from 14 mentors to 650 expected in the coming year.

PRESENTATION: Student Presenters from the *Dare to Dream Student Leadership Conferences*

Rich Andes from Morris Knolls High School shared his Dare to Dream keynote address with the Council. His speech provided fellow students with a "how-to" guide to self advocacy. He also spoke about the activities of his high school self-advocacy group and how it provides support and information to students with learning disabilities.

A student group from Raritan High School presented their workshop activity, Deal or No Deal: The Transition Game. The game, presented to small groups of students at the leadership conference, was designed to help students with disabilities learn about their transition rights and responsibilities in an interactive game format.

IV. PRESENTATION OF STUDENT RECOGNITIONS

Each of the student presenters received an award and the thanks of the Council for their presentations.

V. LUNCH

VI. ADJOURNMENT

With an additional meeting coming up in July, Council agreed to adjourn the meeting early at 12:05 p.m. The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for July 19, 2007 at the Holiday Inn in East Windsor. Committees will meet for their final discussions at that time.