

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

MINUTES

Thursday, April 17th, 2008

Members in attendance: Dr. Sharon Maricle, Dr. Howard Lerner, Philip Gartlan, William Sellar, Kathy Roberson, Carolyn Hayer, Kathleen Mullery, Angela Durso, Scott Elliott, Blanche Stetler and Debra Fernandez

Members not in attendance: Dr. Norma Blecker

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

Resource Representatives not in attendance: Debbie Stewart

Guests and members of the public: Loran Agoratus

I. ACCEPTANCE OF MARCH MINUTES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

The meeting was officially called to order at 9:49 a.m. by Chairperson Sharon Maricle. The March minutes were approved and seconded. **All in favor.** Dr. Maricle reviewed the day's agenda and announced that Dr. Norma Blecker, the Council representative for Higher Education, has resigned due to her heavy work schedule. Dr. Maricle also announced the reappointment of three council members for another period of two years and one new appointment, Michael Nevin for a two year term. Michael will be Council's student representative.

II. PRESENTATION:

New Jersey's Five-Year Career and Technical Education State Plan

Marie Barry, Director - Office of Career and Technical Education – Powerpoint Presentation

Marie Barry updated the Council on New Jersey's Five-Year Career and Technical Education Plan. The Carl D. Perkins Career & Technical Education Improvement Act (CTE) of 2006 requires states to submit a 5-year plan to receive funds. New Jersey receives approximately \$25 million/year. Several changes in the language of this 5-year plan reflect the new focus away from Vocational Education to Career and Technical Education. The 2006 Plan for all students offers 16 Clusters - 81 Pathways for career opportunities. CTE also aligns/supports academics for High School and College partnerships. The change in definition will eliminate the focus on sub-baccalaureate careers, emphasizing preparation for postsecondary education/employment and achievement of a degree, certificate or credential. Increased accountability will focus not only on academic achievement but technical skills, graduation and placement.

The Five-Year CTE Plan is understood to be part of NJ's Unified State Plan in that CTE is a key component of the overall approach to workforce and economic development in the State. The CTE Plan also correlates with the Governor's economic growth strategies. There will be increased accountability for both technical instruction (Perkins) and academic instruction (NCLB). Ms. Barry went on to highlight some new areas of focus :(* **Bold** - topics especially important for students with disabilities)

- Integrating Instruction
- 21st Century Skills
- Career/Technology Student Organizations – DECA, HOSA (**can teach soft skills**)
- **Structured Learning Experience** * – worksite mentors needed
- Workforce Development including entrepreneur areas
- **Career Academy*** – heterogeneous groups (including students with disabilities for Links to Transition)
- Curriculum Development sequence courses i.e. engineering
- Developmental Career Counseling Training for Counselors.
Industry Recognizes Credentials – Certificates of Completion
- **Community Based Instruction** (including students with disabilities for Links to Transition)
- **Teacher Trainings and Professional Development**

III. COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council was asked to review a draft letter from the State Special Education Advisory Council (SSEAC) to Commissioner Davy with regard to parent groups in the State of New Jersey. The recently formed parent subcommittee of Council expressed their concerns regarding parent group confusion and a need to clarify the purpose of these groups as related to the Administrative Code. While each group is free to determine its own specific goals, SSEAC is recommending that the New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs clarify in the regulations, the Department's vision/purpose for these parent groups. Council offered the following examples as areas needing clarification:

- Parent groups are meant to give parents a voice and to help create a collaborative working relationship between parents and district personnel.
- Parent groups should facilitate parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for all children with disabilities – Indicator #8
- The focus of parent groups is meant to be on the larger, districtwide picture as opposed to addressing individual problems.

Council approved that the above recommendations be reflected in correspondence from the SSEAC to the Commissioner.

IV. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

New Jersey Part B – SPP/APR Response Table

The United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs requested the following clarifications from the New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs regarding its February 1, 2008 SPP/APR submission:

Indicator # 5 - APR

- **Status of APR Data/SPP Revision Issue – State's reported APR data was different than "the State's FFY data under IDEA section 618 for this indicator...."**
- **NJOSEP Response - NJOSEP provided the following clarification to this issue on Page 44 of the APR. The clarification states:** For the purpose of this report, New Jersey chose to eliminate nonpublic school (parentally placed) students with disabilities from the calculation of the percentages for 5A, 5B and 5C. Because New Jersey's number of nonpublic school students with disabilities is large, their inclusion in the calculation of 5A, 5B and 5C would skew the percentages of students with disabilities placed by the district of residence. The FFY 2006 LRE percentages reported at www.ideadata.org for New Jersey are lower than reported here because nonpublic school students with disabilities are included in that calculation.

Indicator # 7 - SPP

- **Status of APR Data/SPP Revision Issue – "The State provided improvement activities for this indicator. OSEP cannot accept those activities because they do not cover the remaining years of the SPP."**
- **NJOSEP Response - NJOSEP provided a clarification to this issue on Pages 79 and 80 of the SPP by listing Improvement Activities from 2007-2008 to 2010 to 2011.**

Indicator # 14 – SPP

- **Status of APR Data/SPP Revision Issue – "While the State provided the numbers of surveys used to calculate these data (1696) and the percentages of students that were positively engaged, the State did not provide the actual numbers it used in the calculation."**
- **NJOSEP Response - NJOSEP provided the following clarification to this issue on Pages 122-123 of the SPP. The clarification provided the actual numbers used in the calculation**

Indicator # 20 - APR

- **Status of APR Data/SPP Revisions Issues – The State's FFY 2006 reported data for this indicator are 97%. However, USOSEP's calculation of the data for this indicator is 96.4%.**
- **NJOSEP accepts USOSEP's calculation and has revised the table on Page 126 accordingly. Additionally, this change is reflected on Page 123 in the following sections of the APR:**
 - **Actual Target Data for FFY 2006**
 - **Description of the results of the calculations and comparison of the results to the target**
 - **Discussion of data and progress or slippage toward targets**

Speech-Language Services Survey

The Office of Special Education Programs followed the recommendation from the SSEAC to include clinics and agencies in the speech correctionist survey data. NJOSEP had this information on file and will incorporate the data into the survey results. Upon review of the survey data from local school districts and clinics and agencies, the NJDOE will determine if changes to the rules for Professional Licensure and Standards will be proposed to the State Board with regard to the speech upgrade requirements.

Community-Based Recruitment

The New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (NJOSEP), in collaboration with the federally funded National Center for Special Education Personnel and Related Service Providers (Personnel Center), is facilitating the development and implementation of a community-based recruitment campaign in the Paterson Public School District. The goal of the campaign is to identify and recruit potential candidates into the field of special education, using community member participation and support. Community members will identify recruitment strategies that will be reflected in a recruitment plan.

Paterson Public Schools will launch its campaign on the evening of May 8, 2008. The meeting will be facilitated by Vincent Watkins, a nationally recognized expert in the field of grassroots community-based campaigns, with whom the Personnel Center has contracted as its service provider. It is anticipated that Newark Public Schools and Trenton Public Schools will also launch similar campaigns in May.

No Child Left Behind

No Child Left Behind reauthorization is not anticipated in the near future.

V. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no comments from the Public.

VI. LUNCH

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Council meeting was adjourned at 1:40 p.m. The next meeting of Council is scheduled for May 15, 2008 at the Holiday Inn in East Windsor.

VIII. COMMITTEE DISCUSSION (Inclusion Committee remained after lunch)

Special Education Self-Assessment 2008

Peggy O'Reilly, Acting Director of Program Development, met with the Inclusion Committee to explain the special education self-assessment process as it pertains to the least restrictive environment requirements. The process is summarized below:

<p>Data verification and analyses</p>	<p>Each district identified for self-assessment is reviewing their placement data against the state annual SPP targets. Local districts are required to participate in the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review data charts for students 6-21 and for preschool students from the information provided by NJDOE. Ensure that the data is accurate. • <u>Analyze the district's placement patterns for students with IEPs ages 6 through 21</u>, for 2004, 2005 and 2006 school years, by age and/or grade or grade ranges as well as the nature of the students' disabilities for the following placement categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removed from the general education class less than 21% of the day; Removed from the general education class greater than 60% of the day; and Educated in separate public or private schools. • <u>Analyze the district's placement patterns for preschool students with disabilities</u> for 2004, 2005 and 2006 school years for the following placements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early childhood general education settings; Early childhood special education settings; and Separate public and private schools. • <u>Identify placement trends</u>: (i.e. Does the district has a pattern of placing students with behavioral challenges in public or private separate settings? • <u>Analyze data by CST</u> to identify team trends in placement.
<p>Review Monitoring Reports from other NJDOE Units</p>	<p>Each district is required to review reports from any CAPA reviews conducted during the 2005-2006 school year in schools within the district and the QSAC review, if completed. Insert any findings related to placement of students in general education programs. Review complaint and due process history to identify patterns of concern regarding placement.</p>
<p>Compliance Review and Correction of Noncompliance:</p>	<p>Each district is required to conduct a review of compliance requirements for placement in the least restrictive environment and, where non-compliance is identified, provide activities to correct the noncompliance including revision to procedures, staff training, and the implementation of an administrative oversight mechanism to ensure correction of noncompliance and to enable ongoing compliance. . Districts that self-identify noncompliance will be required to correct noncompliance within one year. Verification of progress toward correction will be conducted within six months of identification of noncompliance by monitors and supervisors of child study.</p>

<p>Review of Practices for Continuous improvement</p>	<p>Each district is required to complete a protocol focused on continuous improvement. In this regard the following practices are reviewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptations and Supports for General Education Programs • Differentiated instructional practices and supplementary aides and services within each building • School Community Integration • Collaboration Within General Education Programs • Parental Involvement • Transition Planning
<p>Plan for Continuous Improvement for LRE/Activities for Continuous Improvement</p>	<p>Each district is required to <u>develop a plan for continuous improvement, based on the data analysis and review of practices, that includes the following:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies <u>activities to address barriers and gaps</u> in special education programs and services. • Activities to <u>transition students</u> with disabilities from separate public or private programs to general education settings. • Activities to <u>transition students</u> with disabilities from special class programs to less restrictive environments.
<p>Targeted Technical Assistance for LRE Improvement Planning</p>	<p>NJOSEP Learning Resource Center staff accompanied by NJOSEP monitors and County Child Study Supervisors met with districts that had been selected for self-assessment/monitoring due to high rates of students in separate special education public and/or private settings. The purpose of these sessions was to provide technical assistance on the development of improvement plans for Least Restrictive Environment. At these meetings districts received assistance in reviewing their current placement data and practices, identifying their needs, and considering strategies to build capacity to educate students with disabilities within general education programs/settings.. Consideration was also given to strategies for transitioning students back from separate special education public/private settings. The continuous improvement review protocol of practices developed by NJOSEP to support students within general education settings was used as the basis of the improvement planning discussions.</p>