

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

MINUTES

Thursday, May 15th, 2008

Members in attendance: Dr. Sharon Maricle, Dr. Howard Lerner, Philip Gartlan, William Sellar, Kathy Roberson and Scott Elliott, Michael Nevin

Members not in attendance: Carolyn Hayer, Kathleen Mullery, Angela Durso, Blanche Stetler and Debra Fernandez

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

Resource Representatives not in attendance: Debbie Stewart

Guests and members of the public: Sol Heckelman, Lauren Agoratus and Mitchell Badner

I. ACCEPTANCE OF APRIL MINUTES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

The meeting was officially called to order at 9:45 a.m. by Chairperson Sharon Maricle. The April minutes were approved and seconded. **All in favor.** After reviewing the day's agenda, Dr. Maricle introduced Michael Nevin, Council's newest member. Michael provided the Council members some background information about his educational and work experiences; Council members then introduced themselves to Michael.

II. COUNCIL DISCUSSION:

Council gave final approval of revisions on the letter to Commissioner Davy from the State Special Education Advisory Council (SSEAC) regarding their recommendations on parent groups. The approval was seconded. **All in favor.** SSEAC members broke into committee groups for one and a half hours. Members of the public were invited to listen to the committee discussions.

III. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Status of Certification Requirements for Speech-Language Specialists:

Roberta Wohle reported that approximately 300 speech correctionists have not enrolled in the speech upgrade program or a graduate degree program that would lead to the speech-language specialist certification. The New Jersey Department of Education's recommendation regarding the certification requirements will be one that does not contribute to an increased shortage of speech-language personnel.

who are certified to work in school districts. The NJDOE's recommendation will be included in the second discussion of the proposed amendments to the Professional Licensure and Standards Regulations that will be presented to the State Board of Education on May 21, 2008.

Community-Based Recruitment Campaign

Roberta Wohle reported that she attended the first community recruitment planning session of the Paterson School District on May 9, 2008. Approximately forty individuals from the Paterson School District's community (faith based institutions, business, recreational programs, government, higher education, board of education representatives) participated in the meeting. The session, facilitated by Vincent Watkins of the National Personnel Center, resulted in several short term and long term recruitment strategies. The Newark School District will hold a similar meeting on May 19th and the Trenton School District is tentatively scheduled to conduct their first session in September 2008.

New Jersey Presentation at National Post-School Outcome Conference

Bob Haugh, NJOSEP Transition Coordinator, represented New Jersey at a national conference focused on post-school outcomes (SPP Indicator 14). Bob presented the process New Jersey used to collect data, the response rate for the data collection, as well as the cohort 1 result of 79% of students with disabilities engaged either in postsecondary education and/or competitive employment within one year of leaving high school.

Early Intervening Services

Barbara Gantwerk, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Student Services, was invited to participate in a meeting to identify and discuss issues related to the federal requirement for states to identify districts for significant disproportionality, require that those districts identified allocate 15% of their IDEA entitlement award to early intervening services, and to track and report the results of the early intervening services. Based on the information shared at the meeting, future guidance from the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs is anticipated.

Proposed Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004

The United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, issued a notice of proposed rulemaking on May 13, 2008. Roberta Wohle briefly reviewed the proposed regulations which included, but were not limited to, the following:

- Parental Revocation of Consent/Parent Consent Initial Provision of Special Education
- Representation by Non-Attorneys in Due Process Hearings
- State Monitoring, Technical Assistance and Enforcement (State Determinations of Local Districts)
- State use of Targets and Reports.

Copies of the proposed rules were distributed to the SSEAC members.

June SSEAC Closing Meeting

Roberta Wohle gave an overview of the SSEAC closing program for the 2007-2008. This year's invited students have participated in one of several programs initiated by the New Jersey Office of Special Education Programs (NJOSPEP) including, but not limited to, Assistive Technology, Positive Behavior Supports, Structured Learning, Community Based Instruction, Self-Advocacy and Capacity Building for placement in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Lauren Agoratus reported several instances of success in her district when students return from out-of-district placements and are educated in-district.

V. LUNCH

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Transition

The committee would like the Office of Special Education Programs to initiate trainings and professional development for staff (teachers, coaches and aides/paras): in the following two areas: 1) the process, of learning to "Fade" use of supports and 2) the teaching of social skills. This committee will meet over the summer to review the significance of social skills to the SPP indicators. The committee will also review the Illinois survey on the teaching of social/emotional skills, hand-outs on structured learning experience and career and technical education.

Inclusion

This committee discussed the professional development needs regarding inclusive practices and the type of support or teachers that can be addressed in the IEP to meet the needs of an individual student. In addition, a meeting of representatives from organizations (e.g. NJEA, New Jersey School Boards, New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association) was proposed to discuss establishing awards or some means of recognition for general educators (principals, teachers, superintendents) that had demonstrated implementation and commitment to inclusive educational practices. Roberta Wohle will schedule a meeting with the organizations. The committee also proposed that LEA rankings be posted on the NJDOE website with respect to the LRE placement categories with intention that this influence positive change before the districts are targeted for the special education self-assessment/monitoring process.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The motion was made and seconded for the Council meeting to adjourn at 1:00 p.m. The next meeting of Council is scheduled on June 12th, 2008 at the Holiday Inn in East Windsor.