

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

**MINUTES**

**Thursday, Sept. 18, 2008**

**Members in attendance:** Dr. Sharon Maricle, Dr. Howard Lerner, Philip Gartlan, William Sellar, Katherine Roberson, Debra Fernandez, Carolyn Hayer, Kathleen Mullery and Michael Nevin

**Members not in attendance:** Scott Elliott, Angela Durso and Blanche Stetler

**Resource Representatives in attendance:** Robert Paige, Gordon Reibman and Elizabeth Collins

**Resource Representatives not in attendance:** Debbie Stewart

**Guests and members of the public:** Lauren Agoratus and Sol Heckelman

**I. ACCEPTANCE OF JUNE MINUTES**

The meeting was officially called to order at 9:40 a.m. by Chairperson Sharon Maricle. The gavel was temporarily yielded to Dr. Roberta Wohle so that the Council could conduct voting for a chairperson and co-chair. The Council reelected Dr. Sharon Maricle as the chairperson for the 2008-2009 school year. Dr. Howard Lerner was reelected as co-chair. **All in favor.** The June minutes were approved and seconded. **All in favor.**

**II. TRANSITION COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Transition subcommittee met in July. This group remains committed to the teaching of social skills and its influence in the following areas: self advocacy, linking social skills with academics and in its relevance post school outcomes. A letter was drafted and will be sent to council members for review before the October SSEAC meeting, when further discussion will take place.

**III. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

**CORE Legislation - Uniform Shared Services and Consolidation Act** – In response to concerns raised by the Council, Dr. Wohle indicated that the provision of the CORE Bill would be clarified with respect to the role of the Executive County Superintendent. Specifically, the County Office would not have the authority to override IEP team placement decisions. Rather, their role was to proactively provide information to school districts about available in-district public school special class programs. Council members indicated that the program data base should be available to families as well as school districts.

**Federal Determination Regarding State Implementation of the IDEA** – Dr. Wohle distributed and reviewed correspondence from the United States Department of Education regarding the federal determination regarding New Jersey's implementation of the IDEA. Specifically, the USDOE determination for New Jersey, issued on June 6, 2008 was **Needs Assistance in meeting the requirements of the Part B of the IDEA.** Specific factors affecting the determination of needs assistance for New Jersey included that the State reported: (1) 91% compliance for Indicator 11 with

progress from 83.9% and did not demonstrate correction; (2) 90% compliance for Indicator 15 with progress from 80.89%; and (3) 83.4% compliance for Indicator 16 with progress from 80%. The USDOE also considered that the State reported that it continued to have uncorrected noncompliance regarding discipline procedures (reported in Indicator 4A) in two districts that were identified with significant discrepancies in discipline for children with disabilities in FFY 2004.

The State's determination for the FFY 2005 APR also was needs assistance. Since the State was determined in need of assistance for two consecutive years, the Secretary of Education has taken the enforcement action of advising the State of available sources of technical assistance related to Indicator 11 (timely initial evaluations), Indicator 15 (timely correction of noncompliance), Indicator 16 (complaint timelines), and Indicator 4A (suspension/expulsion). For the indicators listed above, the State must report with its FFY 2007 APR submission (due February 1, 2009) on: 1) the technical sources from which the State received assistance and 2) what actions the State took as a result of that technical assistance.

**Federal Guidance: Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS)** – Dr. Wohle provided Council members a copy of the USDOE guidance regarding Coordinated Early Intervening Services. The restrictions on the use of funds were discussed with regard to districts required to allocate 15% of their IDEA award to CEIS because of significant disproportionality and districts that voluntarily elect to allocate a portion of their IDEA award for CEIS. Dr. Wohle also indicated that she and Mary Jane Kurabinski, Office of Literacy, had been invited to speak at the USOSEP Leadership Conference, held in August 2008, on New Jersey's approach to CEIS.

**Status of Speech Certification** – Fran Leibner, Program Development Specialist, NJOSEP, summarized the results of the 2008 Speech-Language Services Survey and explained the proposed code amendments for Professional Licensure and Standards related to Speech. The State Board of Education is expected to vote on the proposed code amendments before the end of the year, as the licensure code sunset date is January 20, 2009.

Ms. Leibner reported that 615 out of 647 districts (95%) responded to the survey. Results indicated that 540 individuals currently employed in the schools hold Speech Correctionist certificates. (This type of certificate was not issued after 1988 when the department raised the entry requirements to a master's level.) About half of the 540 individuals are currently enrolled in either the department-approved speech upgrade program or a master's program, yet 275 are not currently enrolled. Based upon those numbers, the department has proposed an amendment. The amended language at **N.J.A.C. 6A:9-13.6(d)** would allow individuals holding a valid New Jersey speech correctionist endorsement to serve in a position requiring speech-language specialist certification **until August 31, 2015, by which date they shall have obtained the speech-language specialist endorsement or completed a department-approved retraining program.**

Until November 1<sup>st</sup>, the department will accept written comments from the public regarding both the proposal to change the speech-language specialist upgrade requirements at **N.J.A.C. 6A:9-13.6(d)** and the proposal to clarify the emergency speech-language specialist certificate at **N.J.A.C. 6A:9-13.6(e)** below:

An emergency certificate may be issued to a candidate who **either** holds a bachelor's degree in speech pathology or is **currently** enrolled in a master's program in speech pathology [and] **in which the candidate** has completed a minimum of 12 graduate semester-hours in speech pathology. All study must be completed at a regionally accredited college or university. The

emergency certificate may be renewed a total of four times.

The Council decided to send a letter to the State Board of Education supporting the proposed amendment at N.J.A.C. 6A:9-13.6(d).

#### **IV. COUNCIL DISCUSSION:**

Dr. Maricle asked council members for input regarding subcommittees for next year. The Transition and Inclusion Subcommittees will be continued. Additionally, additional committees may be formed as ad hoc committees, dependent on future concerns and issues.

SSEAC members expressed interest in the following topics that will be considered when planning for 2008-2009 speakers for council meetings:

- proposed regulations
- funding
- county superintendents
- statewide assessment results
- outcome of Governor's Grant awardees – Final reports for autism grants are currently being reviewed.

#### **V. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Sol Heckelman commented on the highlights of the day's meeting: He applauded the efforts of the Transition Committee and their work to advance Social Skills within the Core Curriculum. He also recognized the "level of trust" as being a necessary component of communication between schools and parents.

#### **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned prior to lunch at 12:15 p.m. The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for October 16, 2008 at the Holiday Inn in East Windsor.

#### **VII. LUNCH**