

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

**MINUTES**

**Thursday, May 20, 2010**

**Members in attendance:** Lauren Agoratus, Dr. Tracy Amerman, Angela Durso, Scott Elliott, Philip Gartlan, Carolyn Hayer, Dr. Howard Lerner, Kathleen Mullery, Michael Nevin, Kathy Roberson, Rob Sandusky, William Seller, Blanche Stetler

**Resource Representatives in attendance:** Suzanne Canuso, Karen Carroll

**Resource Representatives not in attendance:** Susan Avny, Deborah Stewart

**Presenters and members of the public:** Lorrie Baumann, Pamela Braun, Sol Heckelman, Phil Lubitz, Michelle Mahabirsingh, Jeff Reuter

**I. ACCEPTANCE OF APRIL MINUTES**

The meeting was officially called to order at 10:07 a.m. by Chair, Dr. Howard Lerner. The April minutes were approved and seconded. **All in favor.** Council meeting dates for 2010-2011 were approved and seconded. **All in favor.**

**II. DIRECTORS UPDATE**

Dr. Wohle informed the Council that she would be retiring effective July 31, 2010 and briefly discussed her future career plans.

Dr. Wohle indicated that states would most likely receive their determination of compliance with special education requirements from the USDOE during the first week of June. She anticipates that the systems put in place in response to the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report indicators would be continued next year.

At the State Board of Education meeting on May 19, 2010, the Commissioner recommended the State Board approve the proposed amendments to the Special Education Code to implement new federal requirements regarding revocation of consent by parents of students with disabilities pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:46-1 et seq. There was unanimous agreement from the State Board.

Dr. Wohle discussed two federal data collections with the SSEAC: the revised data collection for Educational Environments of Children with Disabilities Ages 3-5 and the IDEA Part B Maintenance of Effort Reduction and Coordinated Early Intervening Services. She indicated that NJOSEP would obtain input from NJDOE staff involved in data collection activities, local school district contracted vendors, and local district directors to determine the feasibility of revising the preschool environment data collection in time for the October 15<sup>th</sup> NJSMART special education data collection. Dr. Wohle also

indicated that the NJOSEP staff would determine if they would be able to participate in the USOSEP pilot for the Coordinated Early Intervening Data Collection.

Dr. Wohle informed the Council that the NJOSEP is planning to partner with the Office of Educational Support Services with regard to the Memorandum of Understanding with Rutgers University, Center for Applied Psychology to address the needs of students with disabilities with regard to harassment, intimidation and bullying and comprehensive violence, alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention and intervention strategies, with an emphasis on values such as caring, responsibility, honesty, and respect. Through the MOU, school climates surveys will be revised to include issues related to the inclusion of students with disabilities and selected districts will receive training and technical assistance with regard to the above listed areas.

### **III. COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

Council inquired about the status of the Goals and Objectives clarification memo. Dr. Wohle indicated that additional issues have been raised, requiring further review of the NJOSEP response. The Council strongly recommended that the NJOSEP issue the clarification.

Council inquired about the status of issues regarding students that did not pass the Alternative High School Assessment (AHSA). Dr. Wohle indicated that the issue was discussed at the April 21<sup>st</sup> State Board meeting and that Council members refer to the State Board minutes <http://www.state.nj.us/education/sboe/meetings/minutes/2010/042110.pdf>

Scott Elliott distributed the current edition of the *Transition Tribune*.

Michael Nevin shared with Council that he was involved in preparing students for their presentations at the Dare to Dream conferences.

### **IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Michelle Mahabirsingh shared her thoughts about Council's discussion on the Goals and Objectives letter. She also shared concerns about what will happen to Extended School Year (ESY) programs due to district budget cuts.

Pamela Braun introduced herself and reiterated concerns about the need for clarification about goals and objectives for students in general education programs.

Jeff Reuter from the Bancroft School thanked Dr. Wohle for her years of service to Special Education and wished her well in her future endeavors.

Sol Heckleman commented on issues presented to the Assembly Committee Education Committee

### **V. LUNCH**

### **VI. PRESENTATION**

Phil Lubitz, Chair of the New Jersey Mental Health Planning Council (NJ MHPC) discussed the purpose and activities of NJ MHPC as well as the National Alliance on Mental Illness of New Jersey (NAMI

NJ). He indicated that the Council would consider adding a local school district representative to the Council.

Lorrie Baumann, Coordinator of *Educating the Educators* (ETE) at NAMI NJ shared the details of the program with Council. She explained that *Educating the Educators* is a professional development program developed to enlighten and inform K-12 educators about mental illness and presenting practical tools to help motivate children with social/emotional difficulties to succeed in school. Sessions have been conducted in 12 of the 21 New Jersey counties. She also discussed the *Every Mind Matters* teacher friendly instructional modules for Grades 5-8 and 9-12 designed to teach students about mental health and wellbeing.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:48p.m. The next full meeting of the Council is scheduled for Thursday, June 10, 2010 at the Holiday Inn in East Windsor. This meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m.