

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

MINUTES

Thursday, March 17, 2011

Members in attendance: Lauren Agoratus, Dr. Tracy Amerman, Angela Durso, Phillip Gartlan, Dr. Howard Lerner, Kathleen Mullery, Michael Nevin, Kathy Roberson, Blanche Stetler

Members not in attendance: Scott Elliott, Rob Sandusky, Bill Sellar

Resource Representatives in attendance: Suzanne Canuso, Karen Carroll, Debbie Stewart

Resource Representatives not in attendance: Susan Avny

Guests and members of the public: Natasha Schneider

I. ACCEPTANCE OF FEBRUARY MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 9:58 a.m. by Chair Dr. Howard Lerner. The February minutes were reviewed and approved. All were in favor.

II. ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE

Barbara Gantwerk, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Student Services recommended to the Council that they invite the Acting Commissioner of Education, Christopher Cerf to either the April or May SSEAC meeting. She also suggested to the Council that they compile a list of issues that they feel are critical to the improvement of Special Education in New Jersey to discuss with him.

Ms. Gantwerk informed the Council that the Acting Commissioner is working on a reorganization of the Department and that the current Office of Charter Schools has been disbanded and that a re-staffing is in progress.

III. COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Michael Nevin shared with the Council the letter he sent to the Nutley Board of Education concerning the possible outsourcing of provided services by the District. This led to discussion by the Council on the topic of the trend by districts to outsource a variety of services as a cost cutting device.

Dr. Lerner will write a letter to the New Jersey Educator Effectiveness Task Force thanking them for inviting Kathy Roberson and himself to present to them and for recognizing in the Task Force's Interim Report the need for additional work to develop a fair and comprehensive method for evaluating teachers of special education students.

The Council began listing the issues that they felt were impacting the delivery of Special Education services. They are:

1. Privatization and appropriate use of aides
2. Proper and appropriate identification of students into special education
3. Segregated Charter schools/Autism schools and the impact they'd have on LRE
4. Disincentive to include due to emphasis on assessments and test scores
5. Response to Intervention (RTI)
6. Failure in-district to provide resources/supports for maintenance/expansion of programs to decrease the amount of students being sent out
7. Teacher training programs. General education focus. Lack of special education coursework/instruction
8. Dual certification
9. Post graduation outcomes (CBI, Social Skills, Transition, Life Skills)
10. Behavior issues in general education that lead to classifications in special education
11. Lack of coordinated services statewide
12. Restraints and adversives
13. Lack of supports to general education that lead to special education classification
14. School culture
15. Excessive litigation/due process. Impact on budgets

Council members will categorize and fine tune this working list via email for the next Council meeting in April.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:03 p.m. The next full meeting of the Council is scheduled for Thursday, April 21, 2011 at the Holiday Inn in East Windsor.

VI. LUNCH