

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

MINUTES

Thursday, May 19, 2011

Members in attendance: Dr. Tracy Amerman, Angela Durso, Scott Elliott, Dr. Howard Lerner, Kathleen Mullery, Michael Nevin, Kathy Roberson, Bill Sellar, Blanche Stetler

Members not in attendance: Lauren Agoratus, Phillip Gartlan, Rob Sandusky

Resource Representatives in attendance: Susan Avny, Suzanne Canuso, Karen Carroll

Resource Representatives not in attendance: Debbie Stewart

Guests and members of the public: Sol Heckelman, Renee Pfaff, Melanie O'Dea, Natasha Schneider

I. ACCEPTANCE OF MARCH MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 9:49 a.m. by Chair Dr. Howard Lerner. The March minutes were reviewed and approved. All were in favor. The SSEAC meeting dates for the 2011-2012 school year were reviewed and approved. All were in favor.

II. ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE

Barbara Gantwerk, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Student Services updated the Council on the status of the reorganization at the Department of Education. She also shared with the Council national rankings for New Jersey by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

Ms. Gantwerk shared with the Council the Acting Commissioner's reform initiative which includes four key areas: Academic Excellence, Teacher and Leader Effectiveness, School Innovation and Choice and Accountability.

III. PRESENTATIONS

Scott Elliot and Renee Pfaff from The Progressive Center for Independent Living, Inc. presented to the Council the Center's *Promoting Self-Advocacy* program. The New Jersey Centers for Independent Living assist students with disabilities in the areas of: Self-Discovery; Self-Advocacy and Self-Determination; Disability Awareness, Laws and Accommodations; College, DVRS Services/Employment and Accommodations; Employment Skills and Community Links; and, Independent Living and Social Skills.

Melanie O'Dea, Acting Manager, Bureau of Program Development, Office of Special Education Programs presented to the Council the Department's *The Inclusive Schools Climate Initiative (ISCI)* created in collaboration with The Center for Applied Psychology at Rutgers University. The ISCI pilot is designed to help schools develop and sustain an inclusive, safe and supportive environment through a focus on the inclusion of all students, and the promotion of core values. Additionally, support and technical assistance to schools is provided in the areas of prevention and intervention strategies for incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB) and for violence, alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (ATOD). The initiative is currently being piloted in ten schools.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:04 p.m. The next full meeting of the Council is scheduled for Thursday, June 9, 2011 at the Holiday Inn in East Windsor.

VI. LUNCH