

STATE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
Learning Resource Center-Central
200 Riverview Plaza
Trenton, NJ 08625-0500

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 14, 2015

Members in attendance: Lauren Agoratus, Myriam Alizo, Susan Colacello, Deborah Lynam, Beth Kelley, Melanie McGackin, Peggy O'Reilly, Leslie Rubinstein, Amy Smith, Fred Tchang, Dorothy Van Horn

Members not in attendance: Mary Ann Comparetto, Magaly Milton, Tekelah Sherrod

Resource Representatives in attendance: Daniel Frye, Alan Kotzen, Tracy Nowlin, Robert Paige

Resource Representatives not in attendance: Nancy Mimm

Guests and members of the public: Sol Heckelman, Mary Ortner, Mariana Renna

I. ACCEPTANCE OF APRIL MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 9:48 a.m.

The minutes were reviewed and approved. All were in favor.

II. DIRECTORS UPDATE

Dr. McDonald announced that May 10-16 is Special Education Week and that an awards luncheon was held on May 11th. Special Education Week in New Jersey is co-sponsored by ASAH and the New Jersey School Boards Association.

Dr. McDonald updated the Council on the status of Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM), the alternative assessments for English Language Arts and Mathematics. She reported that there were some minor issues with items, but that overall the testing went well.

Dr. McDonald reported that a webinar on Reading/Dyslexia was being recorded today. It will be posted to the NJ DOE website in the near future. Three-day training sessions on Dyslexia are currently being conducted throughout the state. She discussed a Dyslexia manual that is being created collaboratively by Middlesex and Mercer counties.

Dr. McDonald shared that she recently returned from the IDEA Data Center (IDC) Interactive Institutes on High-Quality Data and the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP). At the meeting, federal OSEP announced that the deadline for Phase II of the SSIP has been extended until April 1, 2016.

III. PRESENTATION

Transition Committee Update: Susan Colacello, chair of the committee reviewed the process which is leading to the creation of a *Transition Toolkit* for students, parents and school personnel. Members shared their committee responsibilities with the Council which included: website review, public relations strategies, professional development recommendations, future use of technologies, and a review of gaps in support services. Peggy O'Reilly suggested the use of a timeline, with clickable links under each age, as a potential item for the website.

PARCC Committee Update: Fred Tchang, chair of the committee shared with the Council some of the challenges that surfaced around accommodations following the first round of testing. The committee believes that there may be a clearer picture when data is made available after the second round of testing. The committee also spent time discussing how Special Education Parent Advisory Groups (SEPAGs) and the START Project, run by the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN), could be used to gather information about specific accommodation challenges that occurred in-district. Moving forward, the committee will explore the creation of an accommodations document to be shared with parents and district personnel.

IV. COUNCIL DISCUSSION

The Council voted unanimously to continue with the two existing committees during the upcoming 2015 - 2016 school year.

Dr. McDonald shared with the Council that the Office of Special Education Programs will be accepting suggestions on how to improve the current model IEP form, as well as guidance documents on how to develop an effective IEP. Comments will be taken from May 1 to June 30, 2015 through a dedicated email address: **IEPcomments@doe.state.nj.us**.

Fred Tchang and Amy Smith volunteered to be the SSEAC representatives to the Office of Special Education Programs.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mary Ortner shared comments with the Council pertaining to PARCC testing accommodations and the obstacles faced by students after age 21 who aren't Medicaid qualified. She believes that Transition services should begin at kindergarten.

Mariana Renna introduced herself as a first time SSEAC attendee and asked when the Transition checklist will be available.

Sol Heckelman stated that it is often difficult to manage groups who are trying to work collaboratively. He also reiterated the importance of evidence-based research with fidelity.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The public portion of the meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

The Transition and PARCC committees decided not to meet.

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for Thursday, June 4, 2015 at the Holiday Inn and National Conference Center in East Windsor, New Jersey.