

# STATE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Robert Wood Johnson Fitness and Wellness Center  
3100 Quakerbridge Road  
Mercerville, NJ**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, May 17, 2018**

**Members in attendance:** Myriam Alizo, Susan Colacello, Barbara Gantwerk, Beth Kelley, Deborah Lynam, Amy Smith, Dorothy Van Horn

**Members not in attendance:** Paul Barbato, Melanie McGackin, Magaly Milton, Leslie Rubinstein, Chris Shamburg, Fred Tchang

**Resource Representatives in attendance:** Kelley Michalowski, Eva Scott, Cheri Thompson

**Resource Representatives not in attendance:** Donna Holzschuh, Deborah Verbos

**Guests and members of the public:** Lauren Agoratus, Marybeth Berry, Sol Heckelman, Camy Kobylinski, Lori Marabella, Carolyn Marano, Mary Ortner

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Deborah Lynam at 9:41 a.m.

### **II. ACCEPTANCE OF APRIL MINUTES**

The April minutes were reviewed and unanimously approved.

### **III. ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER AND DIRECTORS UPDATE**

Carolyn Marano, the newly appointed Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Learning Supports and Specialized Services introduced herself and gave an overview of goals for the division. They include: utilizing A.C.E. (Assessing.Creating.Executing.) methodology to all activities and decision making; improving communications to the district level; reviewing current personnel and how best to reorganize for efficiency; involving the community more in PARCC/Assessment decisions; and, getting more input from the State Special Education Advisory Council (SSEAC). Council members asked her about: Child Study Teams (CST) and Transition services; NJTSS and the Dyslexia Handbook at the early childhood level; self-contained programs; and, private schools.

Lorelei Drew-Nevola, Director, Office of Professional Development Activities shared with the Council that moving forward her office will be developing professional development modules and utilizing the website more for training.

Lorelei Drew-Nevola stated that five Dare to Dream Conferences had been completed and that there were four more to be conducted.

Lorelei Drew-Nevola, Kathy Ehling, Bill Freeman and Damian Petino attended two conferences with content on Indicator 17 of the State Performance Plan (SPP), and the SSIP (State Systemic Improvement Plan).

Lorelei Drew-Nevola shared a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) handout with the Council from CAST, along with our UDL Classroom Walkthrough guidance form.

Lorelei Drew-Nevola encouraged Council members and the public in attendance to visit the GRAD 360 website for current up-to-date information on New Jersey's Annual Performance Review (APR). Here: <https://osep.grads360.org/#program>

John Worthington shared with the Council that the IDEA Part B application was submitted to the federal office on May 16, 2018. Their determination will be released on July 1, 2018.

John Worthington informed the Council that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Dispute Resolution Summit was conducted on May 4, 2018. Council member Barbara Gantwerk suggested that a monthly presentation be conducted where the Council looks at past decisions, reasons for delays, data from the OAL, training for judges, and attorney's fees. Deborah Lynam suggested that the Council also conduct a more in depth look at mediation data.

John Worthington shared the statistics for Year 2 of the Facilitated Individualized Education Program (FIEP). There were 39 requests conducted by the four contracted facilitators.

John Worthington updated the Council on the status of the Seclusion/Restraints stakeholder report, the Model IEP document and the Community Resources Guide.

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

Susan Colacello spoke to the Council about the challenges of the Special Olympics Unified Sports programs in urban settings. New Jersey is one of eight states to receive a national Special Olympics Urban Innovation Grant.

Cheri Thompson informed the Council that the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is awarding 16 grants, totally three million dollars, to districts to be used for pre-employment/transition.

Deborah Lynam commented that she had attended the Dispute Resolution Conference and shared some takeaways with the Council.

#### **VI. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Sol Heckelman commented on his involvement with community school models in relation to urban sports. He also spoke about the past history of mediation. He suggested that a best practice is for the Child Study Team to have a conversation with parents prior to the meeting to discuss what will occur during the meeting.

Mary Ortner inquired as to whether or not data is collected on the frequency of use of seclusion and restraints. She spoke about underserved communities in the southern counties of New Jersey and asked if the Department of Education considers regional issues.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

The public portion of the meeting was adjourned at 11:57 p.m.

The next meeting of the SSEAC is scheduled for Thursday, June 7, 2018 at the Robert Wood Johnson Wellness and Fitness Center in Mercerville, New Jersey.