

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

Meeting Overview

Thursday, November 20, 2014

Members in attendance: Lauren Agoratus, Myriam Alizo, Suzanne Buchanan, Susan Colacello, Beth Kelley, Deborah Lynam, Melanie McGackin Magaly Milton, Peggy O'Reilly, Leslie Rubinstein, Tekelah Sherrod, Fred Tchang, Dorothy Van Horn

Members not in attendance: Mary Ann Comparetto

Resource Representatives in attendance: Susan Avny, Tracy Nowlin, Nancy Mimm, Robert Paige

Guests and members of the public: Lauren Bennett, Sol Heckelman, Alan Kotzen, Mary Ortner

I. ACCEPTANCE OF OCTOBER MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 9:47 a.m.

The minutes were reviewed and approved with one correction. All were in favor.

II. DIRECTORS UPDATE

Dr. McDonald suggested that Council members look at the 3rd edition of the recently released PARCC Accommodations Manual (<http://parcc.pearson.com/>). She also encouraged members to take the practice test. A New Jersey PARCC Question and Answer document has been drafted and is currently being reviewed by Assistant Commissioner Martz.

Dr. McDonald gave a brief update on the activities of the New Jersey Task Force on Improving Special Education for Public School Students.

Dr. McDonald shared information with the Council on the professional development being created as a result of the Dyslexia legislation. Training webinars, being produced in conjunction with the New Jersey Dyslexia Association and Learning Ally, will go live in either January or February.

Dr. McDonald recommended that Council members take a look at the Common Core Tool Kit for Educators on the Department of Education web site:

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/sca/toolkit/>

She also encouraged them to review www.njcore.org, a source of K-12 Educational Resources - For Educators, By Educators.

Dr. McDonald also updated the Council on the Departments activities on the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) project.

Dr. McDonald announced that she has asked Dr. Daniel Frye, Executive Director of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired to serve as a Resource Member to the Council.

III. PRESENTATION

Kathy Ehling, Coordinator of State Performance Planning in the Office of Special Education Programs spoke to the Council about the most recent changes to N.J.A.C. 6A:14 which were recently brought before the New Jersey State Board of Education. The code changes being suggested are all to align the code with federal law or to create code to implement new state laws.

<http://www.state.nj.us/cgi-bin/education/sboe/sboe.pl?y=2014&m=September&t=public> (Item E)

VI. COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Susan Avny announced her retirement from the Juvenile Justice Commission and introduced her replacement to the SSEAC, Alan Kotzen.

Dr. McDonald asked for input from the Council on potential changes to be made to the Office of Special Education Programs web site. Dr. McDonald will take the suggestions made back to OSEP staff for consideration.

The Council voted to have two committees for the 2014-2015 Council year: Transition and the PARCC. Members on the PARCC committee, chaired by Fred Tchang are: Dr. Peggy O'Reilly, Dr. Suzanne Buchanan, Tracy Nowlin, Deborah Lynam, Magaly Milton and Beth Kelley. Members of the Transition committee are: Dr. Dorothy Van Horn, Melanie McGackin, Dr. Tekelah Sherrod, Rob Paine, Lauren Agoratus, Susan Colacello, Nancy Mimm, Myriam Alizo, Alan Kotzen, Leslie Rubinstein and Mary Ann Comparetto. The Transition committee did not elect a chairperson.

The Council also decided to alter the current meeting agenda so that committees could now meet over lunch at the conclusion of the public meeting. The change will begin with the December meeting.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mary Ortner commented that as a parent she is disheartened that the Council did not form a committee to look at mental health issues. She expressed concern about the impact on impoverished and special education students having to use a computer to take the PARCC examinations. She also asked for clarification on a memo from Bari Erlichson on graduation requirements.

Sol Heckelman also spoke to the Council on the impact of a lack of computer accessibility and literacy by impoverished students as it relates to taking the PARCC examinations. He also echoed Ms. Ortner's sentiments on a mental health committee.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for Thursday, December 18, 2014 at the Holiday Inn in East Windsor

VII. LUNCH