



STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
STATE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL  
P.O. Box 500  
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625-0500

JON S. CORZINE  
Governor

LUCILLE E. DAVY  
Commissioner

May 15, 2008

Honorable Lucille Davy, Commissioner  
New Jersey Department of Education  
P.O. Box 500  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0500

Dear Commissioner Davy:

The New Jersey State Special Education Advisory Council (SSEAC) recently formed a subcommittee to consider the parent groups for the State of New Jersey. As members of SSEAC, we have each come across parents, school district personnel and other interested parties, sharing their thoughts about the parent groups as related to our Administrative Code - N.J.A.C. 6A:14-1.2(h). There seems to be a great deal of confusion about the purpose of parent groups. While each group is free to determine its own specific goals, we recommend that the New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (NJOSPEP) clarify in the regulations the Department's vision/purpose for these groups. For example:

- Parent groups are meant to give parents a voice and to help create a collaborative working relationship between parents and district personnel; such a relationship is critically important for a strong and vibrant special education program that serves the needs of all children with disabilities in the district.
- The purpose of the parent groups should be linked to Indicator #8 of the State Performance Plan (i.e., should facilitate parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities).
- The focus of the parent groups is meant to be on the larger, districtwide picture (as opposed to addressing individual problems); by providing information, parent groups can help parents become more effectively involved in districtwide improvement efforts.

The Council firmly believes that these clarifications would benefit the positive promotion and function of all parent groups for districts in New Jersey. Should you have any questions regarding this request for your consideration on behalf of the Council, please let me know.

Educationally yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Dr. Sharon L. Maricle".

Dr. Sharon L. Maricle, Chairperson  
New Jersey State Special Education Advisory Council

c: Willa Spicer  
Barbara Gantwerk  
Roberta Wohle  
SSEAC Members