

# STATE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Holiday Inn and the National Conference Center  
399 Monmouth Street  
East Windsor, New Jersey**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, April 21, 2016**

**Members in attendance:** Lauren Agoratus, Myriam Alizo, Beth Kelley, Deborah Lynam, Melanie McGackin, Magaly Milton, Peggy O'Reilly, Amy Smith, Fred Tchang, Dorothy Van Horn

**Members not in attendance:** Susan Colacello, Mary Ann Comparetto, Barbara Gantwerk, Leslie Rubinstein, Tekelah Sherrod

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

**Resource Representatives not in attendance:** Dawn Mergen

**Guests and members of the public:** Lauren Bennett, Kim Murray

### **I. ACCEPTANCE OF MARCH MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order by chair Dorothy Van Horn at 9:41 a.m.

The March minutes were reviewed and after being properly moved and seconded passed unanimously.

### **II. DIRECTORS UPDATE**

John Worthington announced that New Jersey's State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), Indicator 17 was submitted to the federal OSEP office by the 4/1/16 deadline and is now in the correction phase. Additionally, Statewide Assessment Data for Students with Disabilities, for school year 2014 - 2015 was posted to the NJ OSEP website on 4/22/16 and can be viewed at: <http://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/data/Indicator3.pdf>

John Worthington updated the Council on the statewide *Directors Meetings*. The last of the thirteen county meetings was held on 4/18/16.

John Worthington shared with the Council that a Transition Grant was approved and the application was sent out to districts. An LRE Grant is in process and will hopefully be approved in late summer or early fall.

John Worthington informed the Council that NJ OSEP in coordination with the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) will meet on April 27, 2016 to develop a training module on PARCC testing for parents.

John Worthington announced that NJ OSEP will be seeking contractors to facilitate IEP training, targeting larger school districts with heavier IEP case loads. Those selected will be trained over a three-day period in June 2016, with the project being piloted in the 2016 - 2017 school year.

John Worthington provided the Council with an update on the hiring of the Ombudsman position created by the Senate. A Stakeholder meeting will be held on May 11, 2016 to gather input on a job description.

### **III. PRESENTATION**

Kimberly Murray, Manager, Bureau of Program Accountability in the Office of Special Education Programs presented to the Council on the process and function of NJ DOE in “Consolidated Monitoring” of special education programs in school districts. Information on the monitoring process can be found at: <http://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/mon/>. Other monitoring functions of her office include: oversight of IDEA grants, LRE monitoring, per the settlement agreement, and any other areas where there may be issues of compliance.

Ms. Murray also provided an update on the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) assessment in New Jersey. Information can be found at: <http://www.nj.gov/education/assessment/apa/dlm/>

### **IV. COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

Lauren Agoratus continued discussion from the previous meeting on the report issued by the *New Jersey Task Force on Improving Special Education for Public School Students*. She specifically addressed recommendations 21, 22, and 26. Magaly Milton led discussion on recommendation #7 which concerns Special Education Parent Advisory Groups.

The Council also discussed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Lauren Agoratus shared additional information from the Act that is more specific to: Standards, Accountability, Assessment, Report Cards and Aversives/Discipline. It was recommended that the presentation at the January 2017 SSEAC meeting center on updated information about the ESSA.

### **V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Lauren Bennett from the Public Consulting Group (PCG) introduced herself to the Council and shared that PCG contracts with the Department of Education and provides services for Medicaid and NJ SMART, our student information data system. She also commented on using a three-prong approach when transitioning to the least restrictive environment (LRE).

## **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

The public portion of the meeting was adjourned at 11:41 a.m. The standing committee's did not meet over lunch.

The next meeting of the SSEAC is scheduled for Thursday, May 19, 2016 at the Holiday Inn and the National Conference Center in East Windsor, New Jersey.