

STATE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Holiday Inn and National Conference Center
East Windsor, New Jersey**

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 20, 2017

Members in attendance: Myriam Alizo, Paul Barbato, Barbara Gantwerk, Beth Kelley, Melanie McGackin, Leslie Rubinstein, Chris Shamburg, Amy Smith, Fred Tchang

Members not in attendance: Susan Colacello, Mary Ann Comparetto, Deborah Lynam, Magaly Milton, Dorothy Van Horn

Resource Representatives in attendance: Kelley Michalowski, Cheri Thompson

Resource Representatives not in attendance: Donna Holzschuh, Dawn Mergen, Eva Scott

Guests and members of the public: Lauren Agoratus, Sharon Buntin, Francisco Danos, Sol Heckelman, Amanda Kelly, Anfal Muhammad-Jenkins, Lori Ramella, L. Valentin, LaShanda Williams

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ACCEPTANCE OF MARCH MINUTES

The March minutes were reviewed. After being properly moved and seconded, they were approved with one abstention.

III. DIRECTORS UPDATE

John Worthington reminded the Council that the May 15, 2017 meeting would be a shared Stakeholder meeting and encouraged all Council members to attend.

John Worthington asked the Council if they wanted to continue the discussion from the March meeting on teacher certification. (See Council Discussions section for those comments.)

John Worthington the Council on the progress of the Directors Manual and the Model IEP. Both documents are both in final review.

John Worthington announced that the SSIP was submitted to the federal DOE on April 3, 2017. He also commented on the Dispute Resolution Summit that the Office of Special Education Policies and Procedures (OSEPP) will be conducting on April 25, 2017.

John Worthington provided information to the Council on a planned training for the Offices of Special Education staff on the topic of special education law. The training is scheduled for July 19, 2017 and could perhaps be shared with the public at a later date. It might also make a good presentation topic for SSEAC in the future.

Lorelei Drew-Nevola informed the Council that statewide PARCC testing was going well and that over 100,000 students were participating this year.

Lorelei Drew-Nevola announced that there would be a Stakeholder group formed to explore the function of the Learning Resource Centers (LRCs). She asked if any SSEAC members might be interested in joining the group.

Lorelei Drew-Nevola responded to a question about the status of the closing of LRC-South.

Lorelei Drew-Nevola shared with the Council some of the information included in the SSIP (Indicator 17) that was submitted the federal office on April 3rd. As her office, Special Education Professional Development (OSEPD) will be most involved in the delivery, she was very involved in the writing of the document.

Lorelei Drew-Nevola updated the Council on the status of personnel being hired in her Office.

Lorelei Drew-Nevola shared with the Council that the Dare to Dream student conferences had begun and encouraged Council members to attend if possible.

IV. PRESENTATION

Lori Ramella, Bilingual/ESL Coordinator at the New Jersey Department of Education presented to the Council on the topic of English Language Learners (ELL) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). She also spoke about the requirements for immigrant students outlined in Title III as well as Biliteracy legislation. Information from her presentation is available here: <http://www.nj.gov/education/bilingual/>

V. COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council members continued the discussion on teacher certification from the March meeting. Paul Barbato suggested that perhaps PSA/FEA could develop and deliver some of the coursework required for certification. Cheri Thompson inquired whether there would/could be an updating of disability titles on the IEP. Chris Shamburg shared that many high schools in the state were offering coursework onsite through NJ Colleges/Universities to assist teachers in becoming dual certified in Special Education. Barbara Gantwerk commented that it's often difficult for certified teachers in a specific content area to also obtain special education certification and vice versa. Amy Smith suggested that perhaps this would be a good topic at the New Jersey Educators Association (NJEA) annual conference in November. Lori Ramella commented that bilingual education had the same teacher shortages due to the certification requirements.

Melanie McGackin asked how parents find out about all of the services available to them to support their child. Council members responded. Cherie Thompson asked if it's possible to lower the age from 16 that students can begin structured learning experiences. Leslie Rubinstein inquired about the foreign language requirements for students with disabilities. Myriam Alizo

provided information about a SPAN conference to be conducted on May 6, 2017. Amy Smith shared information about the upcoming Autism New Jersey conference on Transition to be held on May 1, 2017.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

L. Valentin stated that as a graduation requirement students must take PARCC in her district. She asked if PARCC was an ESSA requirement.

Sol Heckelman spoke to the coordination of the Department of Health's System of Care with the Department of Education. He queried if a presentation should be made at a future SSEAC meeting.

Anfal Muhammad-Jenkins stated that many Special Education Parent Advisory Groups (SEPAGs) are sharing resources between districts, but that many district personnel are not collaborating with the parent groups.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The public portion of the meeting was adjourned at 11:42 a.m.

The next meeting of the SSEAC is scheduled for Thursday, May 18, 2017 at the Holiday Inn and National Conference Center in East Windsor, New Jersey. It will be a combined Stakeholder meeting.