

STATE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Holiday Inn and National Conference Center
East Windsor, New Jersey

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 15, 2018

Members in attendance: Myriam Alizo, Paul Barbato, Barbara Gantwerk, Beth Kelley, Deborah Lynam, Magaly Milton, Leslie Rubinstein, Chris Shamburg, Amy Smith, Fred Tchang, Dorothy Van Horn

Members not in attendance: Susan Colacello, Melanie McGackin

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

Resource Representatives not in attendance: Deborah Verbos

Guests and members of the public: Lauren Agoratus, Karen Antone, Mary Beth Berry, Denise Cole, Deborah Esposito, Sol Heckelman, Debra Jennings, Maureen Kerne, Camy Kobylinski, Matthew Korobkin, Lauren Krempecki, Jeannie Lopez, Rhonda Montemore, Anfal Muhammid-Jenkins

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Deborah Lynam at 9:45 a.m.

II. ACCEPTANCE OF FEBRUARY MINUTES

The December and January minutes were reviewed and approved. There was one abstention from the December minutes and three abstentions from the January minutes for attendance reasons.

III. PRESENTATIONS

Debra Jennings and Karen Antone from the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) presented on the *Special Education Parent Advisory Groups in New Jersey Guide to Developing and Conducting an Effective SEPAG* as part of the START Project.

The START Project offers programs and services that support the engagement of families to improve outcomes for students, including developing and supporting special education parent advisory and support groups in communities and school districts. Through workshops, regional meetings, and parent leadership development activities, they help parents and parent leaders:

- Become informed and active participants in their child's education.

- Partner with educators in improving educational programs students with disabilities, particularly in the area of Inclusion.
- Start or strengthen a parent advisory group or parent support group in your area.

The link to the Guidebook, in English and Spanish, is here:

<http://www.spanadvocacy.org/content/special-education-parent-advisory-groups-new-jersey-l-guide-developing-and-conducting#overlay=node/6639/edit%3Fdestination%3Dadmin/content%253Fpage%253D1>

IV. DIRECTORS UPDATE

Lorelei Drew-Nevola shared with the Council that the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) trainings, part of the LRE settlement, ended this month. Trainings will be offered on demand beginning in September to those who request them.

Lorelei Drew-Nevola updated the Council on the progress on the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) (aka, Indicator 17) that is due to the federal OSEP office on April 1, 2018.

Lorelei Drew-Nevola also updated the Council on the status of the Parent Engagement and Learning Resource Center-South grants.

John Worthington shared with the Council that there would be a Stakeholder meeting on Restraints and Seclusion immediately following today's SSEAC meeting. He anticipates that a guidance document will be available sometime within the next month.

John Worthington informed the Council that he anticipates a forthcoming Broadcast Memo with guidance on the new Alternative Settings Chart.

John Worthington updated the Council on the status of the ESSA Waiver Application.

John Worthington informed the Council that Special Education Due Process Hearing Decisions are now available to the public on the OSEP website, here: <http://www.nj.gov/education/legal/specialed/>

John Worthington shared with the Council that the first annual report of the services provided by the OSEP Ombudsman will be shared with the New Jersey State Board of Education at their next meeting.

John Worthington informed the Council that New Jersey's Draft Application Under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 for Federal Fiscal Year 2018 is posted on the OSEP website and comments will be accepted until April 20, 2018. To view the application, and to comment, go to: <http://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/idea/partb/>

John Worthington shared that the new Procedural Flow Chart for Considerations When Suspending Students With Disabilities is available on the OSEP website at: <http://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/info/discipline.shtml>

V. COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Cheri Thompson shared with the Council that there are two remaining public forums to be conducted by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation on March 20th and 21st.

Leslie Rubinstein shared with the Council that the annual Learning Disabilities Association of New Jersey (LDANJ) conference will take place on the campus of The College of New Jersey on Sunday, June 3, 2018.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Anfal Muhammed- Jenkins stated that the SEPAG Manual presents the best case scenario for parent groups in districts and believes that districts often disregard parent group input and recommendations.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The public portion of the meeting was adjourned at 11:23 p.m.

The next meeting of the SSEAC is scheduled for Thursday, April 15, 2018 at the Robert Wood Johnson Wellness and Fitness Center in Hamilton Township, New Jersey.