

STATE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Robert Wood Johnson Fitness and Wellness Center
3100 Quakerbridge Road
Mercerville, NJ**

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 18, 2018

Members in attendance: Paul Barbato, Viviana Litovsky, Deborah Lynam, Andrea Moore, Kristy Ritvalsky, Chris Shamburg, Lynda Shanahan, Amy Smith, Dorothy Van Horn, Susan Vandermark, Kerri Walsifer

Members not in attendance: Susan Colacello, Barbara Gantwerk, Vanessa Lombardo, Leslie Rubinstein

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

Guests and members of the public: Lauren Agoratus, Bob Haugh, Sol Heckelman, Nicole Heid, Camy Kobylinski, Matt Korobkin, Lauren Krempecki, Lori Marabella, Somerlee Monaghan, Anfal Muhammad-Jenkins, Michael Steinbruck

I. CALL TO ORDER/PRESENTATION

The meeting was called to order by Chair Deborah Lynam at 9:39 a.m.

New members to the Council were introduced.

Dr. Dorothy Van Horn was presented a plaque recognizing her six years of Council service, two years as chair, on her retirement from the Council.

II. ACCEPTANCE OF JUNE MINUTES

The June minutes were reviewed. After the addition of a missing motion to draft a letter to the Commissioner they were unanimously approved.

III. DIRECTORS UPDATE

Dr. Peggy McDonald informed the Council that the hiring of a new director of the Office of Special Education was still in process.

Dr. McDonald updated the Council on the reorganization that replaced the former Office of Special Education with three new offices: Office of Special Education Policy and Dispute Resolution, Office of Fiscal and Data Services, and the Office of Special Education. Dominic Rota and Kathy Ehling are acting directors of the first two offices, respectively.

Dr. McDonald informed the Council of a new federal grant opportunity out of the Office of Early Intervention.

Dr. McDonald gave updates on the status of the following projects: Reading Grant, UDL, Dyslexia, PBSIS, CBI, PCAST, WIOA and Assessment (PARCC and DLM)

IV. COUNCIL DISCUSSION

The draft letter to the Commissioner of Education in support of improving the process for the certification of American Sign Language Teachers, specifically native deaf candidates facing licensure barriers; and, the expanded use of deaf paraprofessionals in early intervention and classroom settings was reviewed. The letter was composed by Dr. Paul Barbato and Dr. Christopher Shamburg and was reviewed by Deborah Lynam and Amy Anderson for content. A motion was properly made, seconded and unanimously passed to send the letter as written to the Commissioner of Education.

There was a suggestion to revise the monthly agenda to include a section for new Council business before the floor is opened for public comment.

Deborah Lynam shared that the New Jersey Dyslexia Manual has been receiving national recognition for its content. She noted that several states have asked permission to use portions of the manual in their own states.

V. PRESENTATION

Michael Steinbruck and Somerlee Monaghan, representing the Person Centered Approaches in Schools and Transition (PCAST) project at the Boggs Center of Rutgers University, gave an update on the activities of the project over the past year. They showed this video: <https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/transition/person.shtml#video> and discussed the many training offerings available, here: <http://rwjms.rutgers.edu/boggscenter/training/PCAST.html> Council members Viviana Litovsky, Paul Barbato, Lynda Shanahan and Kerri Walsifer commented on positive aspects of the project or made suggestions on how to improve the projects outreach.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Chris Shamburg suggested that the Council discuss two topics at the November meeting: the guidance letter issued on Restraints and Seclusion and upcoming DOE changes to statewide assessments (PARCC and DLM). It was also suggested that DOE office staff with expertise in the selected monthly topic be invited to that Council meeting to share information.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Anfal Muhammad-Jenkins from the Newark Parent Advocacy Group (SEPAG) spoke to the Council on the lack of support the current state regulation gives to SEPAGs. She stated that while the recently published SEPAG Manual is a good document it still puts the onerous on the parents and not the district.

Camy Kobylinski from NJEA thanked Council members for mentioning how often teachers participate in after-hours school activities, partaking in professional development on their own time, and volunteering at other unpaid school related activities. She informed the Council that she could assist with the submission process to present workshops at the annual NJEA conference. She also stated that she could provide information to Council members about the annual NJEA Exceptional Children Conference that she coordinates.

Lori Marabella mentioned the upcoming Learning Disabilities Association of New Jersey Fall Conference & Resource Expo that will be conducted at The College of New Jersey on Sunday, November 11, 2018. She shared with the Council that November is national dyslexia month and that it is also the seventh anniversary of Decoding Dyslexia New Jersey. She read a statement from the organization recapping their past successes, but noted that there was still much more to accomplish.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The public portion of the meeting was adjourned at 11:55 p.m.

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