

# **State Special Education Advisory Council (SSEAC)**

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

## **Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, February 14, 2019**

**Members in attendance:** Paul Barbato, Barbara Gantwerk, Viviana Litovsky, Vanessa Lombardo, Deborah Lynam, Andrea Moore, Kristy Ritvalsky, Lynda Shanahan, Susan Vandermark

**Members not in attendance:** Susan Colacello, Leslie Rubinstein, Chris Shamburg, Amy Smith, Kerri Walsifer

**Resource Representatives in attendance:** Donna Holzschuh, Eva Scott, Deborah Verbos

**Resource Representative not in attendance:** Kelley Michalowski, Cheri Thompson

**State Board Members in attendance:** Mary Beth Berry, Kathy Goldenberg

**Guests and members of the public:** Lauren Agoratus, Debora Esposito, Sol Heckelman, Peg Kinsell, Matt Korobkin, Lauren Krempecki

### **I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Deborah Lynam at 9:41 a.m.

### **II. Acceptance of December Minutes**

The December minutes were reviewed. They were approved with one abstention.

### **III. Deputy Assistant Commissioner of Student Services and State Board of Education Members Update**

Dr. Peggy McDonald, Deputy Assistant Commissioner informed the Council that in response to the concerns expressed by Paterson school district parents at the December meeting the Department has assigned someone to work with the district to address those concerns.

Dr. McDonald updated the Council on the Community Based Instruction (CBI) and the Person-Centered Planning (PCP) trainings that are presently being conducted.

Dr. McDonald informed the Council that the State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Review (APR) were submitted to the federal office on February 1<sup>st</sup>.

Dr. McDonald gave updates on ongoing and new DOE initiatives:

- Dare to Dream – twelve conferences to be held from March to June
- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – trainings to be conducted this week
- New Jersey Tiered System of Supports (NJTSS) – applications received for third cohort
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL) – Instructional materials information provided in the next DOE Broadcast Memo
- Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) and the Commission for the Blind interagency agreement for pre-transition services through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- Announced the formation of a Deaf Education Advisory Group which had its first meeting on 2/7/19. There will also be three regional meetings held for parents and there is a Grant Application on the Commissioners desk to fund play groups on weekends for parents and children.

Kathy Goldenberg, State Board of Education Vice President shared with the Council the activities conducted during the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Showcase conducted during the February State Board of Education meeting. She also shared details of her participation in a CTE activity sponsored by IBM in Brooklyn, New York.

#### **IV. Presentation**

Wendy Eufemia, Learning Disabilities Teacher-Consultant with the New Jersey Specialized Child Study Team for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and Kara Rogers, Education Consultant for Students with Hearing Loss presented to the Council on the services they provide to district personnel, parents and students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

#### **V. Old Business**

Dr. Paul Barbato gave a brief update of the activities of the Restraint and Seclusion Committee in the absence of Dr. Chris Shamburg.

#### **VI. New Business**

There was no new business.

#### **VII. Announcements**

Eva Scott announced that Bernice Davis, Psy.D. has been named the Executive Director of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Deborah Lynam invited Council members to attend the 7th Annual Research to Practice Symposium, *Reading, Math and the Brain* to be conducted by the AIM Institute for Learning and Research on March 11, 2019.

## **VIII. Public Comment**

Lauren Agoratus from Family Voices stated that the restraint and seclusion law encouraged rather than discouraged their usage. She also stated that federal law does not allow the use of restraint in New Jersey.

Peg Kinsall from the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) expressed displeasure that SPAN was not included in discussions prior to Public Law 2017, Chapter 291 being passed in January of 2018. She shared with the Council national statistics resulting from the use of restraint and seclusion. She also stated that statistical information is only kept on the use of restraint and not the number of incidents using seclusion.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

The public portion of the meeting was adjourned at 11:38 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 14, 2019 at the Robert Wood Johnson Fitness and Wellness Center in Mercerville, New Jersey.