

State Special Education Advisory Council (SSEAC)

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

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 16, 2019

Members in attendance: Paul Barbato, Susan Colacello, Deborah Lynam, Vanessa Lombardo, Leslie Rubinstein, Andrea Moore, Lynda Shanahan, Kerri Walsifer

Members not in attendance: Barbara Gantwerk, Viviana Litovsky, Kristy Ritvalsky, Chris Shamburg, Amy Smith, Susan Vandermark

Resource Representatives in attendance: Eva Scott, Cheri Thompson

Resource Representative not in attendance: Donna Holzschuh, Kelley Michalowski

Guests and members of the public: Lauren Agoratus, Kendra Carter, Debora Esposito, Sol Heckelman, Camy Kobylinski, Lori Marabella

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Deborah Lynam, Chair at 9:58 a.m.

II. Acceptance of April Minutes

The April minutes were reviewed. They were approved, with one abstention.

III. Deputy Assistant Commissioner of Student Services Updates

Dr. Peggy McDonald shared that Dr. Kim Buxenbaum has begun work as the new Director of the Office of Special Education at the end of April and will attend the June meeting.

Dr. McDonald stated that half of the twelve Dare to Dream Conferences have been completed.

Dr. McDonald informed the Council that the Social Emotional Learning Conference will be conducted on the Busch campus of Rutgers University on May 23, 2019.

Dr. McDonald told the Council that notification for the third and final cohort of the New Jersey Tiered System of Supports Early Reading Grant Initiative (NJTSS-ER) went out to districts this week. Council member Kerri Walsifer's Tinton Falls district was selected in this cohort.

Dr. McDonald shared that a statewide Equity Conference will be held on July 31, 2019 at the College of New Jersey. Registration is still open.

Dr. McDonald stated that the Office of Special Education Policy and Dispute Resolution would be meeting with the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) on May 29th and 30th.

Dr. McDonald discussed that Preschool Outcomes will be moving away from using the Batelle Developmental Inventory (BDI) and replacing it with the Child Outcome Summary (COS). A pilot cohort of schools will be identified. As a result, the State knows that it will be “out of compliance” with Indicator 7 during the next school year.

IV. Presentation

Dr. Todd Glover from the Rutgers Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology presented an update on the activities of the NJTSS-ER grant. Information about the project can be found at: [New Jersey Tiered System of Supports](#)

V. Old Business

Dr. Paul Barbato reported that the Restraint and Seclusion Committee continues their work outside of Council meetings.

Linda Shanahan asked the Council if anyone else was interested in working with her and Susan Colacello on a Transition Committee. Leslie Rubinstein volunteered. The committee hopes to create a working Transition document for school districts in New Jersey to use.

VI. New Business

There was no new business.

VII. Announcements

Dr. Paul Barbato shared that the Bergen County Education Association conducted the *2nd Annual Mental Health Symposium for Educators* on May 8, 2019 at Bergen County College.

Leslie Rubinstein shared that the Learning Disabilities Association of New Jersey (LDANJ) successfully conducted the *Life in High School and Beyond Conference and Resource Expo* on Saturday, May 11, 2019 at the College of New Jersey. She was excited that there was a television crew onsite reporting on the event.

VIII. Public Comment

Lori Marabella representing Decoding Dyslexia NJ expressed to the Council the importance of evidence-based practice, awareness for all of the Big 5, and working with teacher education programs to train future teachers.

Debbie Esposito from the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) discussed the importance of building family capacity and engagement through the collaboration of SPAN with the NJTSS-ER districts.

Lauren Agoratus representing Family Voices spoke of the work by the SPAN Special Education Volunteer Advocates (SEVA) initiative. She also referred to initiatives by of the Centers for Independent Living (CIL's) and the National Alliance on Mental Illness New Jersey (NAMI NJ). She stated that the largest barrier to health care is the lack of literacy.

VIII. Adjournment

The public portion of the meeting was adjourned at 12:12 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 13, 2019 at the Robert Wood Johnson Fitness and Wellness Center in Mercerville, New Jersey.