

**Council on Educational Services for Exceptional Children**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**June 11, 2008**

Members Present

Sonja	Brown	
Odell	Clanton	
Sally	Hunter	
Doris	McCain	
Jill	Scercy	
Andy	Thacker	
Curt	Garland	(for Gloria Upperman)
Mark	Yost	
Jane	Young	

Members Absent

Bob	Atwater
Marcy	Cooper
Jana	Griggs
Esther	High
Linda	Jones
Cathy	Kea
Sheila	Knapp
Shary	Maskel
Debra	McHenry
Teresa	Mebane
Linda	Nelson
Dwight	Pearson
Deborah	Whitfield
Laura	Wiley

Visitors Present

Cynthia	Daniels-Hall
Eric	Hall
Laurie	Jaegers
Lynn	Nietfeld
June	Richardson
Lynn	Rogers
Ellen	Russell

DPI Staff / Presenters

Tish	Bynum
Kate	Neale
Pollye	Pruitt
Mary	Watson

**Welcome / Review of Agenda / Approval of Minutes**

Chairperson Jane Young called the meeting to order. Council members and guest provided introductions.

At the inception of the meeting, Chairperson Young noted that a quorum did not exist in order to approve the March meeting meetings. A motion was made to defer approval of the meeting minutes until later in the meeting in hopes of a quorum.

**Report on State Advisory Panels**

Presenter Pollye Pruitt, Dispute Resolution Consultant, attended a MidSouth Regional Resource Center Meeting regarding state advisory panels (SAPs). This regional meeting combined states' Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) with the State Advisory Panel and suggested states have these two groups meet together at least once a year. This assists with

coordinating efforts for all children. Both groups collectively review topics such as public comment, state performance plan (SPP), annual performance report as well as networked.

It was stressed that SAPs should be active and instrumental in setting targets for SPP Indicators that are not deemed compliance Indicators. Handouts were provided from other states' SAP, i.e. brochures, newsletters, and quick-reference guides.

Diversity (by gender, age, race, disability) of the SAP membership was discussed. Term limits, attendance requirements and removal policy varied by each state. Generally, a new member orientation was recommended at the first meeting of each year. Special education acronyms, federal guidelines, SAP purpose and encouraging involvement were samples of new member orientation topics. SAP functions were also discussed, such as reviewing/revising the bylaws every year and that SAPs should accept public comment. It appeared that the majority of other states' SAP had a process by which to accept public comment. It could be by email, 800 telephone number and/or written. Some SAPs met in different regions of the state primarily to receive public comments. Ellen Russell noted concern about the public comment piece. The public would need to have a clear understanding of expectations from the SAP and that each LEA should have their own advisory council with opportunity for public comment.

Also, the agenda for the first meeting of the year included setting two to four priorities for the SAP to focus on for that year.

There is an emphasis that SAP meetings should not be a sit-and-listen meeting, but it must be an active, involved source to each State Board of Education to provide viable suggestions/recommendations to the State Board to make positive change for children with disabilities. Some SAPs send members to State Board of Education meetings; others produce newsletters. An idea was suggested to have a working breakfast/lunch with the State Board of Education to discuss the SAP's purpose. Mary Watson advised it would be good to have SAP representation at State Board of Education meetings so children with disabilities would have more of a public voice.

It appeared from the regional meeting, that most SAPs formed subcommittees as needed.

Chairperson Jane Young recommended the Council form subcommittees in order for the Council to address its responsibilities. The subcommittees needed at this time are: 1-Bylaws; 2-Public Relations; and 3-Meetings.

Committees can consider phone conferences, absentee ballots/quorum by email and any use of technology to address their needs.

The Bylaws subcommittee will review and revise as needed. The Bylaws subcommittee should also look into voting by simple majority instead of specified quorum and new member orientation.

The Public Relations subcommittee can form a draft to address public comment and good news reporting and, along with the Meeting subcommittee, a collaborative meeting with ICC and/or SBE.

The Meetings subcommittee can form a draft regarding a collaborative meeting with ICC and/or SBE as well as the logistics. Once logistics are determined, advise Tish in order to have DPI paperwork processed.

By August 15, subcommittees need to submit the roster of each committee, identifying a point person, and draft committee recommendations to Kate Neale.

## **Agency Update**

- ▶ A presentation was made to Andy Thacker for his dedicated, two-term service to the Council.
- ▶ Allocations from federal government are lean; school systems are also seeing cutbacks as well.
- ▶ State legislature is in town. One bill in the House is to offer tax credits to parents who choose to send their children to a private school. There is no mandate to serve children with disabilities in private schools.
- ▶ There is also a bill to increase per child allocation, put forth \$17 million in the bill. This is the closest ever to our annual request for \$25 million.
- ▶ Rep. Glazier proposed an additional \$6 million to this bill, raising the cap to 12.75% instead of 12.5%. This is very encouraging that state legislators are putting children with disabilities on their radar and attempting to provide monetary support.
- ▶ Rep. Glazier is also supporting an additional position for the EC Division.
- ▶ DPI has been in a reorganization focusing on comprehensive school support; especially for struggling schools. It seems the EC Division will stay in tact.
- ▶ A Blue Ribbon Commission has been working all year on testing issues. It's a high-level commission. A revised report handout was provided. Mary encouraged feedback from Council members. SBE is committed to see this through. SBE directs DPI to make the 2008-09 school year the bridge year to adjust/change current approach to writing assessment. Next year there will be a complete re-write of writing assessments. IDEA requires all SWD be included in testing program.
- ▶ The Division is experiencing changes by losing personnel to retirement. Diann Irwin announced her retirement; Mattie Muwakkil already retired; and Tony Mitchell announced his retirement. Diann and Tony have been with the Division for a long time. Tony has 20 years within the Division.
- ▶ Brochures providing general information and the organizational structure of the EC Division were provided.
- ▶ Division received OSEP letter of determination. NC did improve its status from last year – from *Needs Intervention* to *Needs Improvement*. NC's targets are high and we did make progress toward the graduation rate target. NC struggled with OSEP on after NC determined a school system was noncompliant demonstrating that the LEA has corrected noncompliance within one year. Mary is proud of the work and progress exceptional children and the Division have made.
- ▶ Many Summer Institutes are available for teacher training. UNC Greensboro is the location. It is also a teacher networking opportunity.
- ▶ Good teachers are essential. The Division provides a national online recruitment service, Teachers-Teachers.com. Mary advised also to encourage undecided students to pursue the teaching and special education professions.

Mary thanked everyone for their service to the Council and the State Board of Education.

Motion to adjourn made by Andy Thacker; seconded by Doris McCain.