

## **DRAFT**

SSEAC Meeting Minutes  
January 22-23, 2004

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### **Thursday, January 22, 2004**

The executive committee met at 7:30 to review the agenda. The full committee convened at 8:30.

**Present:** Charlene Christopher, Stan Boren, Emily Dreyfus, Stacie Ellis, Anne Fisher, David Martin, Carmen Sanchez, Leslie Snyder, Kevin Sutherland, Cindy Mills, Mike Wong

**Staff:** Pat Abrams, Doug Cox, Cathy Pomfrey, Diane Gillam, Judy Hudgins, Cheryl McGill, Susan Meslang

**Others:** Dale Matusевич, Marsha Goldberg, Michelle Young, Annette Sannuti, Mary Ann Discenza, Suzanne Stuart, Maureen Hollowell

Ms. Charlene Christopher welcomed members and introductions were made.

### **Accountability and Assessment**

Dr. Cheryl Magill, Director of Accreditation

Mr. Doug Cox introduced Dr. Cheryl Magill, director of Accreditation who provided information on Educational Accountability in Virginia's Public Schools. Dr. Magill distributed a handout and addressed several issues including:

- Accreditation of Public Schools in Virginia
- Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)
- How Virginia determines AYP for small schools having fewer than 50 students enrolled in grades or courses for which there are statewide assessments

### **IDEA Reauthorization Update**

Mr. Doug Cox, assistant superintendent, Division of Special Education and Student Services, discussed what is happening with the Reauthorization of IDEA. He distributed a handout and talked with members about the "1% Rule" relative to the participation of students with disabilities in state assessment/accountability systems.

### **Other Issues**

Ms. Emily Dreyfus asked for clarification on a recent newspaper article stating that federal funds were returned and Virginia was one of the states mentioned as returning funds. Mr. Cox stated that the article was misleading in that it included money that has not been expended but is still available. He also noted that some of the funds were those sub-granted to LEAs.

Ms. Anne Fischer asked for a definition of Sliver Grants. Mr. Cox stated this was a name created with the '97 IDEA amendments. At that time a cap was placed on the funds that a state could set aside for administration with the rest flowing through to local divisions. States could only receive increases equal to the inflationary rate. Sliver grants happen when the allocation exceeds

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the inflationary rate. States have the option of how they utilize that sliver grant money which goes to local school divisions. Virginia used grants with enough funding going to even the smaller school divisions for capacity building.

Ms. Emily Dreyfus asked how schools are defined as persistently dangerous. Mr. Cox responded that the Board of Education (BOE) passed our persistently dangerous definition in April 2003. We have established a system threshold approach. Points are assigned to schools based on the number of incidents that occur and the size of schools. If a school crosses the threshold for the third year, the school is labeled as persistently dangerous and parents have to be offered annual yearly progress (AYP).

### **Public Comment**

Ms. Carmen Sanchez had several issues with assessment. She questioned the kind of information the public receives and the accuracy of that information.

### **IDEA Reauthorization**

Mr. Cox provided an update on the reauthorization of IDEA and discussed how the House Bill and the pending Senate bill are alike and different.

### **Lunch**

### **Virginia's Secondary Transition Outcomes Project (VTOP)**

Mr. Dale Matusевич, Radford University, Training and Technical Assistance Staff (T/TAC)

Mr. Matusевич distributed handouts to members and summarized project activities. Using the experiences of states already using the Transition Outcomes Project (VTOP), Virginia will develop a model and process for meeting IDEA's secondary transition service requirements. VTOP emphasizes improving transition services, increasing graduation rates, showing results and increasing the likelihood that the student with disabilities will graduate and be employed.

Mr. Matusевич told members that Martha Lehman, previous director of the Montana Transition Outcomes Project and Dr. Ed O'Leary from the Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center had come to Virginia and worked with some of the Virginia Department of Education T/TAC teams, Virginia's Special Education Director's Council, and others.

### **Federal Annual Performance Report**

Dr. Patricia Abrams, Director, Special Education Instructional Services

Dr. Abrams distributed the January 17, 2004 draft of the Part B Annual Performance Report and reviewed the content and layout of the report. The report is organized by cluster areas including Cluster Area I: General Supervision, Cluster Area II: Early Childhood Transition, Cluster Area

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III: Parent Involvement, Cluster Area IV: Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment, and Cluster Area V: Secondary Transition.

Each area has a question given to us by the U. S. Department of Education and in some areas there are probes with more detailed information requested. The State Goal is blank as that is what states are asked to complete. Also included are performance indicators for the reporting period July 1, 2002 through June 30, 2003.

### **Other Issues**

A question was raised regarding the procedural safeguards document. Ms. Judy Hudgins told members that the procedural safeguards document is in the internal review process with a request for comments. There will be a Superintendent's Memo once the internal review is complete. There was some discussion about when the document would be completed and posted to the Web. Ms. Hudgins also told members that Anita Swan had resigned, after which the position was increased to a full time position that has been filled by Sandra Peterson.

### **Business session**

#### **Approval of October 2-3, 2003 meeting minutes**

Dr. Pat Abrams distributed copies of the October meeting minutes dated 1-12-04 that contained minor revisions to the document emailed earlier to members.

There was discussion regarding what should be included in minutes and the difficulties involved in meeting the requirements for public posting on the department web page. Charlene Christopher made a request that the recording secretary and SSEAC secretary confer to make sure the essence of the meeting is captured. Issues were raised regarding timelines and how the minutes are completed and the matter of the public's right to know.

Mr. Cox suggested that the committee prepare a very abbreviated version in draft form with motions and votes to meet the 10-day Town Hall requirement and provide a fuller more detailed version for committee approval. There may have to be discussion on how detailed minutes should be since meetings are open to the public.

**Motion:** Dr. David Martin moved to approve the minutes as distributed. Mr. Stan Boren seconded. The **minutes were approved.**

#### **Discussion Items**

**Motion:** Ms. Carmen Sanchez moved that all meetings of the state SSEAC be audio taped (digital or analog) in their entirety. Ms. Stacie Ellis seconded.

The **motion carried with 6 yes, 1 no and 3 abstentions.**

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**Motion:** Dr. David Martin moved that an abbreviated version (containing orders of business, who presented, motions, reports) of draft SSEAC minutes be posted within the 10 days required on the web Town Hall and that a fuller set of minutes will be developed and approved by email within a month of the SSEAC meeting to which the minutes refer.

Ms. Carmen Sanchez seconded and the **motion was approved.**

Ms. Charlene Christopher requested that members respond promptly whenever they receive requests regarding hotel rooms and meeting attendance.

Dr. David Martin asked about the possibility of having meetings at other sites throughout the state. He suggested that two be held in Richmond, one in Roanoke and one in Northern Virginia. Ms. Sanchez said she would like to see time scheduled in the evenings for members of the local advisory committees to come and present their concerns.

**Motion:** Dr. David Martin moved that the January and July meetings be held in Richmond and the April and October meetings be held outside of Richmond as soon as logistical and contractual obligations allow.

Ms. Carmen Sanchez seconded and the **motion was approved.**

Ms. Emily Dreyfus asked about follow up to the public comment from the October 2003 meeting. Dr. Abrams stated that she thought the issue had been resolved. Mr. Cox stated the department of education would follow up with a letter on behalf of the SSEAC.

Ms. Dreyfus asked about the SSEAC's annual report to the Board of Education (BOE). Ms. Christopher stated that she thought it was well received. There were a few questions regarding testing and the SSEAC's position in terms of IDEA.

Mr. Doug Cox reported that the USDOE has come forth with a new round of state improvement grant (SIGS) opportunities for states that have grants expiring in January 2004. The application has a very short deadline of 45 days considering what has to be included. The SIG is a very important part of the things Virginia has been able to accomplish over the last several years. Mr. Cox asked for input, focusing on specific issues including systemic change and capacity building. The focus area at this time is secondary programs. He asked that the agenda on Friday be adjusted to include a discussion on these issues.

Ms. Charlene Christopher requested that members bring their calendars to the April meeting and be prepared to set meeting dates for the next year looking at October 2004, January 2005, March/April 2005 and July 2005.

The meeting adjourned for day.

**Future Agenda Items**

- Report from Mr. Paul Raskopf - Amount of time students get SPED services
- Report from Ms. Judy Hudgins - family involvement priority project
- Information on graduation rates - 2003
- Annual performance report – presentation
- Modified/cut scores

**Friday January 23, 2004**

**Present:** Stan Boren, Emily Dreyfus, Stacie Ellis, Anne Fisher, David Martin, Fannie Page, Carmen Sanchez, Leslie Snyder, Kevin Sutherland, Cindy Mills, Mike Wong

**Staff:** Pat Abrams, Doug Cox, Cathy Pomfrey, Carol David, Judy Hudgins, Susan Meslang, Irene Walker-Bolton

**Others:** Marsha Goldberg, Annette Sannuti, Reverend Charles E. Swadley,

Leslie Snyder called the meeting to order in the absence of Chair, Charlene Christopher.

**Constituency Reports**

Ms. Carmen Sanchez referred to a newsletter to parents involved with local advisory committees (LACs). She mentioned emails from local LACs and parents associated with local LACs and talked about how they function, etc.

Ms. Stacie Ellis attended a Spotsylvania LAC meeting and inquired about regulations governing voting members

Dr. David Martin reported the opening of a Parent Resource Center in his county. One parent has started a respite care for disabled children and parents every weekend.

Ms. Anne Fischer said she has had contact with most of the school divisions in her region. A few of the issues mentioned included billing, disability awareness, parent education, LRE, misinformation, IEPs, and unfounded mandates.

**Report on Physical Restraint and Seclusion**

Kevin Sutherland reported on the activities of the subcommittee on restraint and seclusion. Subcommittee members: Kevin Sutherland, Irene Walker-Bolton, Heidi Lawyer, Stan Boren, David Martin, and Reverend Charles E. Swadley

The committee collected data through a survey that was distributed last fall. As of January 21, 2004, ninety-three (93) Restraint and Seclusion surveys were returned to the Virginia Department of Education. Of these returns, eighty-nine (89) came from school divisions. Other surveys were returned from the Southwestern Virginia Training Center, the Piedmont Regional

Education Center, the Virginia Department of Corrections and the Northern Neck Regional Special Education Program. Kevin stated that data received thus far is adequate enough to move forward.

### **State Improvement Grant**

At the request of Mr. Cox, members held a discussion of issues pertaining to secondary special education programs.

Ms. Leslie Snyder summarized the comments:

1. Vocational training – include assessment etc.
2. Independent/Interdependent living skills
3. Advocacy skills
4. Career Counseling/Awareness
5. Literacy/Numeracy skills
6. Co teaching of SOL classes
7. Looks at the big picture

### **Break**

Subcommittees met

### **Subcommittee Reports**

#### **Results**

Ms. Carmen Sanchez reported that this is a huge topic. It has been some time since the committee has met. The group came to the conclusion that for now serving as a major sounding board as the department develops its indicators. The group will be focusing on LRE issues.

#### **Restraint and Seclusion**

Ms. Irene Walker-Bolton said that Dr. Kevin Sutherland plans to come to the special education council meeting in March and will ask one of his colleagues from VCU to assist. The group will look at what other states have done and look at a model state policy.

#### **Parent Involvement**

Ms. Anne Fischer said that one of the first issues is a revision of the guidelines for the local advisory committee. On February 27, 2004 the draft will be completed for in-house review. She recommended that she, Ms. Stacie Ellis, and Mrs. Shirley Ricks review the February 27<sup>th</sup> draft, make comments and bring back to the April meeting.

One of the strategies for the continuous monitoring plan is to find out at the local level how local advisory committees are monitoring parent involvement and satisfaction. The department will only get data from parent resource centers. The committee would like to recommend the parent subcommittee, with the assistance of the parents on the SSEAC, survey each region within the

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next three months and find out how much parent involvement there is. They also need to record websites or any links they may have to other websites such as a link to the local school division.

Ms. Carmen Sanchez requested that a regional map be emailed to each member.

### **Other Issues**

Dr. Pat Abrams reported that a room at the hotel has been reserved for the night of March 31, 2004 to meet at 7:00 P.M. with supper included, for the executive committee to meet to discuss ideas for the annual report.

Dr. Abrams asked for clarification of the creation of the meeting agenda. Mr. Cox can create a draft agenda and send out for review and comments.

Ms. Fischer asked for clarification of adding an item on the second day regarding Public Comment Review, outlining the next steps or any follow-up that may be needed.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 A.M.